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The Gen2050 Journey

Redefining youth engagement through public-private-people partnerships



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The future facing Singapore's youths

Singapore's younger generation faces a growing set of economic, technological, and social challenges. They will enter a workforce being reshaped by AI, economic uncertainty and evolving workplace expectations, while also confronting societal challenges ranging from sustainability and social mobility to digital trust and resilience.

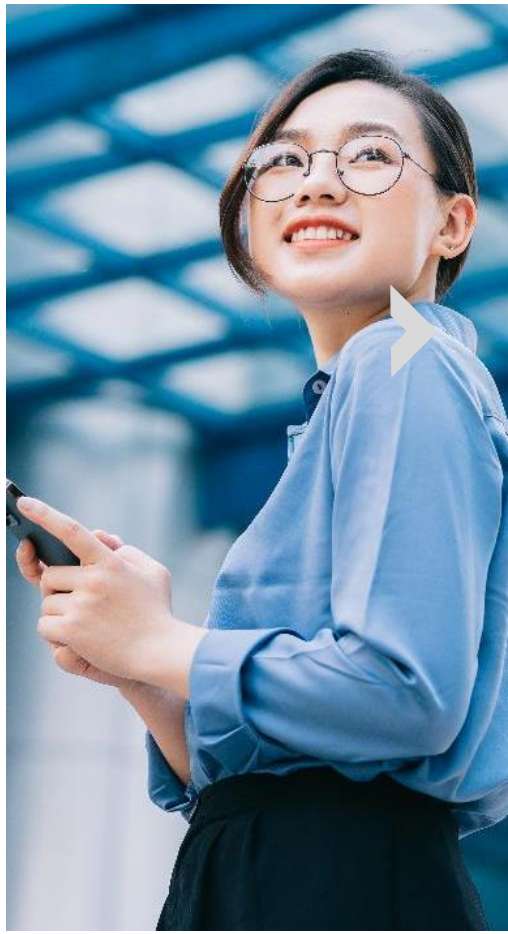
Overcoming these will not be straightforward. Youths are aware these issues, and are looking for ways to contribute and build a better future for themselves. Providing these opportunities was at the heart of the Gen2050 project, a strategic initiative designed and launched in June 2025 by the National Youth Council (NYC), KPMG in Singapore, and the Institute of Public Relations of Singapore (IPRS). It offered a platform for youths to bridge the gap between passion and real-world impact, enabling them to play an active role in shaping the communities they are part of.

Importantly, Gen2050 was structured as a collaborative ecosystem based on a public-private-people (3P) partnership model, enabling youths to play an active role in shaping economic and social outcomes. It showed that this 3P approach can build the capabilities youths need, giving them agency, providing them with pathways to success, and empowering them to "step up, speak out and be in front".

This agency focus is vital because youths need to overcome their inertia to get involved, whether that is due to apathy, a belief that they lack the power to change the status quo, or both. To succeed in shaping their futures, youths must feel they have agency to take action.

Gen2050's focus is to help youths access the training they require. As Lee Sze Yeng, Managing Partner, KPMG in Singapore, said, youths understand the skills they will need and are actively seeking support to get them. However, awareness alone does not bring the confidence or ability to act, which is why many face a gap between knowing and doing.

"Gen2050 is our response to that need," she said, "as it provides not just a platform for their voices, but also the technical competencies and mentorship they need to navigate the future and bring about lasting change through their work."



The three co-designers: NYC, KPMG and IPRS

Gen2050 is a collaboration that brings together the strengths of the public, private and people sectors to empower youths. As part of the National Youth Council's SG Youth Plan engagements, it comprised a year-long series of connected projects that were created to understand youths' aspirations and concerns.

The SG Youth Plan was recently launched by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), and NYC in July. The plan is five-year action plan designed to help youths become confident, connected and contributing citizens. More than 60,000 youths provided over 415,000 responses to help shape the SG Youth Plan, and more than 200 partner organisations supported its engagements.

To achieve its goals, the SG Youth Plan has more than 20 youth development initiatives which are designed to provide practical, real-world support, and resources. These include offering up to 30,000 job taster and 20,000 mentoring opportunities annually by 2030 and $20 million to support up to 3,000 youth-led projects over the next five years through a new Microgrant and Youth Action Marketplace. It was developed for youths, with youths, and supported by the whole of Singapore, to help every youth become the best version of themselves.

Gen2050 falls squarely within this aspiration. By integrating the strengths of NYC, KPMG in Singapore and IPRS, Gen2050 offers a tripartite value proposition that creates a holistic ecosystem that gives youths unparalleled access to the spheres of policy, industry and advocacy, and transitions them from being passive observers to active architects of their and the nation's future.





National Youth Council (NYC)

As the public-sector partner, NYC connects youth-driven initiatives to national frameworks, bringing deep expertise in engaging youths that is founded on its nuanced understanding of their motivations and aspirations. NYC also facilitates regular youths dialogues like its Youth Panels and the National Youth Dialogues, partnering with ministries to provide spaces where youths can share their perspectives and concerns, and ensure their voices can inform policy.

During Gen2050, NYC connected youths directly with policymakers, and polled them to hear their aspirations, views and insights, which were incorporated into the SG Youth Plan.

"This tripartite collaboration demonstrates how the whole of society, and not just the government, can collaborate as a collective to give our youths opportunities to learn, grow and drive impact at the same time," said David Chua, Chief Executive Officer, NYC. "And if they do not succeed in implementing their ideas, they will still gain invaluable lessons, connections and insights that will shore up their confidence. We also aim to give youths with less access the opportunity to go through this programme."

KPMG in Singapore

KPMG in Singapore provided extensive industry insights and the private sector acumen necessary for youths to develop commercially viable and scalable projects. It also brought access to global mentorship opportunities with the help of its worldwide footprint through the Leaders 2050 initiative – a professional network of up-and-coming leaders across sectors keen to make an impact and build a sustainable future. This network is driven by professionals with a passion for guiding the next generation. "At KPMG, our experience with global youth programmes gives us a deep understanding of our next generation talents' challenges and potential," said Lee Sze Yeng, Managing Partner, KPMG in Singapore. "Through Gen2050, we are dedicated to equipping youths with the guidance, skills and networks they need to transform their aspirations into impactful, lasting change."

The Institute of Public Relations of Singapore (IPRS)

IPRS is a non-profit that brings specialised expertise to equip youths with the communication, advocacy and narrative-shaping skills needed to articulate, pitch and champion the ideas they feel are important, while also connecting participants to national frameworks like the SG Youth Plan.

"Great ideas often make their biggest impact when they are clearly and authentically communicated in a manner that rallies others to the vision," said Ross Gan, President of IPRS, at the programme's launch in June 2025. "At IPRS, one of our focus areas is on equipping youth and participants with practical strategies and skills to sharpen their messaging, build credibility and drive action, ensuring their go-to-market solutions translate into real-world, measurable outcomes."



Since its June 2025 launch, Gen2050 has delivered numerous notable outcomes. These included the policy-focused Youth Action Forum in November 2025, where youths heard from speakers including Mr Dinesh Vasu Dash, Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Manpower, as well as other industry experts. Additionally, researchers presented the results of Gen2050's survey findings on the skills that youths say they need to thrive in the future of work.

Youths attending Gen2050 events also benefited from listening to and taking part in discussions with policymakers – including Ms Goh Hanyan, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment – as well as industry leaders, mentors and other experts. In these ways, they benefited from core Gen2050 goals: To arm them with the skills they need to drive change and, in some cases, to deliver funding for the most promising youth-led projects that are aimed at tackling key societal challenges.

Giving youths a voice



Many youths are held back by gaps in their confidence and capabilities, and that leaves them feeling disconnected and unheard. While traditional routes of tackling youths' needs – engagement models built around dialogue, awareness campaigns and standalone training options – are powerful, it has become clear that youths need something more if they are to feel they have a voice.

"By equipping young people with the tools and platforms they need, we can help them to get that confidence to contribute meaningfully to their world and address capability gaps proactively, to thrive in an AI-disrupted world," said VC John, Chief Marketing Officer, KPMG in Singapore. "Programmes such as Gen2050 ensure that youths stay ahead of the curve and are empowered to define their futures in the ways most important to them."

This will become more pronounced going forward:
As economies transform faster than institutions can adapt, governments and businesses recognise that preparing youths for the future of work means more than just providing technical skills. Youths require confidence, legitimacy and practical opportunities to contribute to real-world outcomes, said John, which Gen2050's approach of providing actionable pathways offers.

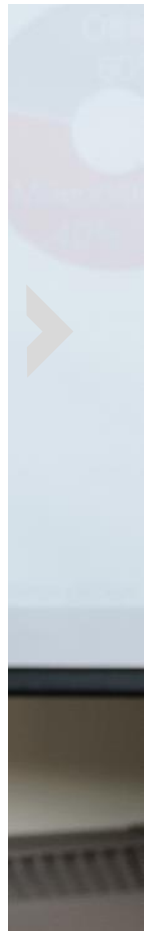
"Initiatives such as Gen2050 reframe complex societal challenges into strategic opportunities," John said. "Ultimately the goal is to ensure youths have the foresight and real-world exposure they will need to transition from being passive observers to becoming active architects of a future where their dreams and ambitions come to fruition."

Attaining these goals set out for the programme also meant that a baseline understanding was first needed to comprehend the needs of Singapore's youths. This was where our poll of 1,000 youths at the Gen2050 Youth Action Forum, which was hosted in November 2025 by NYC, KPMG in Singapore and IPRS, provided crucial insights. A key finding is that youths want more support to plan their careers (65 percent) and to develop the soft skills necessary for success (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Soft skills lead the list of skills youths need



Source: 2025 Gen2050 Quick Poll of youthss



We also found an increased demand for hard skills, including technical skills in specific domains and for AI and digital literacy – though these scored lower, indicating that human-centric capabilities could well remain key as technology adoption accelerates. Youths also feel they lack sufficient adaptability and resilience, which underscores our observation that confidence gaps matter as much as skills gaps.

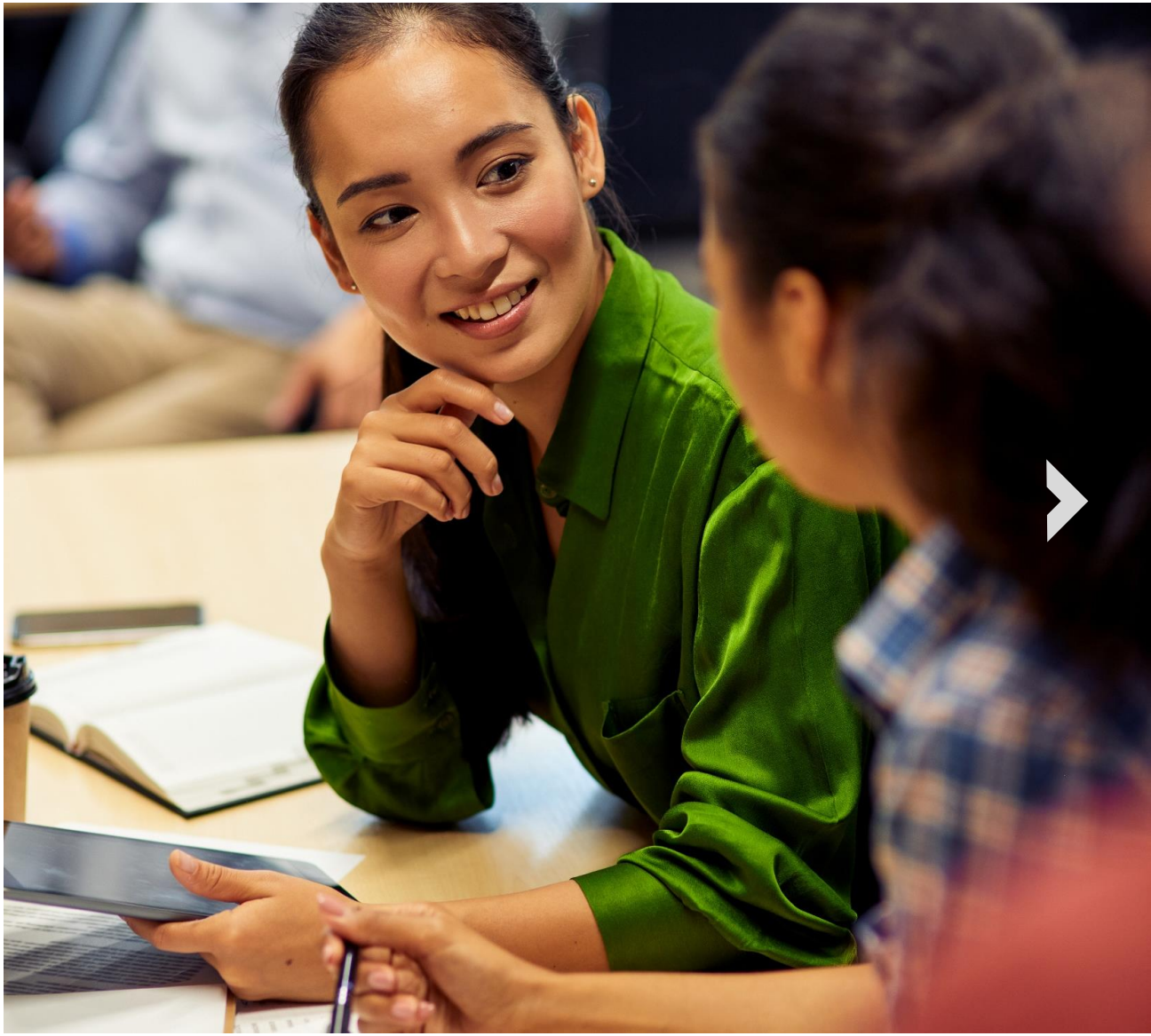
Youths see future readiness as a collective responsibility. When asked who should share the responsibility of creating a better future, they identified the government (59 percent), educational institutes (53 percent) and employers (49 percent) as those best placed to help them access the tools and mentorship required to design their journeys.

Gen2050 participants were also open about their needs. One wanted "more mentorship and educational opportunities on how to make a social impact"; a second said a high value would be placed on "communication, creativity as well as empathy because these are skills that AI cannot easily replace"; a third noted that having soft skills "is key in trying to put your idea across. It does help you integrate the upcoming age of AI."

David Chua, Chief Executive Officer, NYC, said young Singaporeans "are much more acutely aware of the complexities around them".

"They are being inundated with many narratives about how technology is changing their lives," he shared at the Youth Action Forum.

That makes a platform like Gen2050 useful, Chua said, as it can connect youths with industry leaders and policymakers "to gain insights into emerging shifts that affect the future of work and the kind of skills and attributes required to stay relevant".



The Gen2050 model as a 3P ecosystem design

As careers become increasingly fluid, interdisciplinary and constantly evolving, youths need to be adaptable, entrepreneurial and purpose-driven as they navigate uncertainties around identity, financial security and career prospects. Yet skills development alone is not enough. Equally important are the pathways that allow youths to translate learning into action through opportunities to experiment, collaborate and influence outcomes.

Creating an end-to-end journey that builds on the focus of traditional programmes – which revolve around exposure, skills and consultation – gives youths the opportunities and agency they need: By testing their ideas, building credibility and navigating complex, real-world challenges, youths can marry their technical capabilities with skills like the ability to collaborate, to be adaptable and to apply a systems-thinking approach.

This twin need for agency and pathways is at the heart of Gen2050. Conceived as a structural intervention rather than a standalone programme, its design rests on two principles:

- Youth agency must be practised, not taught.
- Legitimacy and action pathways require alignment across public, private and people sector expertise, supported by youth participation – the 3P partnership model.

To that end, Gen2050's two-track approach supports depth and scale to enable youth-driven impact.



Track A

provided a fast-track deep dive for a select group of youths interested in sustainability, community involvement and leadership to co-create solutions for key challenges. This track sought to equip participants with critical skills including social entrepreneurship, problem-solving, stakeholder management and the ability to craft impactful, scalable solutions. To that end, they benefited from insights shared by industry experts, as well as mentorships and funding to pilot feasible projects in the real world.

Track B

focused on broad engagement and discourse via a curated series of engagements that offered youths the chance to engage directly to policymakers, industry leaders and peers on critical societal issues including AI, social sustainability and equitable access to digital skills. The discussions from Track B, which was designed to spark youths' curiosity and engage civic participation, fed into insights that were incorporated into the NYC's SG Youth Plan.





Sharon Son, Deputy Director (Mentoring and Youth Transitions, Partnership Lab), NYC, said Track A provided participants with the opportunity to generate solutions to social sustainability issues, while Track B allowed them to engage with policymakers and subject matter experts "in relation to AI-driven change and the shifting nature of work".

"So, Track B complements Track A," Son said. "Besides the opportunity to take action, we know youths are curious and anxious about joining the workforce and thriving at their workplaces, and appreciate the opportunity to raise questions and engage with a panel of professionals."

Gen2050's approach, she said, with its platform, mentorships, resources and other support, gives youths the confidence that they are not facing the future alone.

By combining capability-building and practical engagement, it ensured participants could tackle societal and economic challenges with mentorship and exposure to industry perspectives, and integrate their voices into conversations about Singapore's future economy and workforce.

Gen2050's emphasis on mentorship directly aligns with broader sustainability objectives, said Sharad Somani, Partner and Head of ESG, KPMG in Singapore, and one of the firms' Leaders2050 teams. Addressing the "S" in environmental, social and governance (ESG), he noted, requires hands-on investment in human capital – something Gen2050's mentoring focus helped to deliver.

"Sustainability isn't only about the environment; it's also about people and the strength of the relationships we build across society," Somani said. "Mentoring is one of the most tangible ways to invest in that. When experience is passed from one generation to the next, we are not just developing individuals – we are building the social capital that allows communities and businesses to grow together. Gen2050 showed how that connection between generations creates leaders who are both capable and grounded in a sense of shared responsibility."



Taking a mentoring approach will help Singapore in its efforts to prepare the next generation of leaders – an issue of paramount importance, Somani said, not only because the country must keep developing such capabilities, but because it needs an abundance of innovative ideas that can address the climate challenge in a socially sustainable and economically responsible manner.

One of Gen2050's mentors was Louis Puah, Director at Praxium, a career guidance consultancy. He observed firsthand how a programme like Gen2050 helped youths turn their awareness of social needs and passions into impactful action.

"The young people who have participated in Gen2050 all came in with some social challenge they wanted to tackle. They approached it from an ownership and empowerment angle," he said. "By opting in for such a programme, they were showing initiative. They were not waiting for permission; if they wanted to make things better, they could. We need more of such programmes so more people can keep saying yes."

With his years of experience and expertise, Puah guided his group of participants through the process of turning their ideas into sustainable initiatives, from identifying the right stakeholders to crafting a compelling business plan. His team walked away with a deeper appreciation of how the public, private, and people sectors each play a role in driving meaningful change in the community. Puah extends his passion for youth development as a mentor on Discover by NYC, where he continues to guide and inspire the next generation of changemakers.

In this way, Gen2050 shifted how youths can be engaged – not simply by preparing them for the future of work, but by helping them to shape it to link work and purpose with resilience, inclusion, trust and civic participation.



Designing around youths realities: Building with evidence, mentorship and lived experience

Around the world, impactful youth programmes are those built around the real needs and aspirations of youths, and Gen2050 was designed with this in mind. Gen2050 used an evidence-based approach to its design, asking youths to tell us their needs and thoughts on the future of work. Gen2050 then incorporated those perspectives as design inputs, shaping its emphasis on awareness gaps, confidence levels and competencies.

Our polling also revealed that youths are not just conscious of economic and technological disruption; they also need more support to translate this awareness into action. And while career planning, adaptability, digital capabilities and confidence-building were recurring concerns, youths also want more meaningful participation in the conversations shaping Singapore's future.

This reinforced an important programme design principle: Youths do not simply need opportunities; they need institutional support and validation to participate meaningfully. That reinforced the importance of mentorship – which is why mentors are at the heart of the Gen2050 approach. One of these mentors was Khairul Khair, a registered psychologist.

"Mentors, like me and many others, are quite plugged in. We form the bridge for those who may not have the networks and the capital to come together to do good. Mentors can help you jump start your initiative and navigate the nuances and complexities in the ecosystem," he said. "In a programme like Gen2050, which provides participants with a safe environment to experience the real world, mentors can also help them cultivate the important lifelong skills of critical thinking and problem solving."

Another Gen2050 mentor was Jim Kung, Director, Corporate Finance, Deal Valuation, KPMG in Singapore. He first joined the programme as a breakout group facilitator, and expanded his involvement to mentor a group of five students through a sustainability project.

Impressed by the group's passion for social issues, Kung was glad for the opportunity to help them turn their good intentions into a viable proposal.

"A textbook can't give you the real-world 'so what?' In deal advisory and valuation, which is essentially what I do every day, we pressure-test whether the value actually holds up, who it creates value for and whether the numbers and assumptions behind it can withstand scrutiny," he said. "As professionals who are still navigating these challenges every day, we have a firsthand view of how ideas get funded, how people really behave and where good intentions run into hard constraints. To me, that's the real value of Gen2050. It brings youths together with active professionals so their ideas don't just stay ideas but are shaped into practical solutions that can genuinely create the social impact they're aiming for."

"It was one of the more rewarding things I've done in a while," Kung added.

The value of mentoring is widely recognised within Singapore as seen through the Mentoring SG Movement under NYC. The movement brings together mentees, mentors and organisations, while providing resources to boost mentoring accessibility for youths, connecting them with industry professionals to build their capabilities and confidence.



Crafting the outcomes that matter

While the inputs from Gen2050's evidence-informed approach were vital in shaping the programme, the designers were well aware that good design alone would not necessarily deliver the real-world outputs and measurable changes needed to validate its approach. In seeking to measure Gen2050's impact, therefore, they focused on two sets of outcomes.

Lens 1: Youth-level outcomes

The first was to assess Gen2050 through the lens of youth-level outcomes. To that end, 13 participants ranked eight aspects anonymously on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). On average, they scored them at 4.5, revealing capability shifts across two areas:

- Rather than simply discussing issues, they felt better equipped to analyse them, propose solutions and work better with stakeholders.
- Individual concerns became collaborative problem-solving exercises supported by mentors, peers and institutional stakeholders, reflecting a better sense of their role in shaping societal and economic outcomes, greater confidence in their future and a stronger conviction to give back to their community.

These outcomes were particularly evident during Track A's Pitch Event, which saw ideas move from discussion to proposal. Youths articulated their ideas, then had to defend them, engage stakeholders and translate those concerns into actionable recommendations. In short, instead of being passive participants, they took ownership of ideas and outcomes, and were more confident in articulating their viewpoints publicly – which, for a programme seeking to drive greater agency, was crucial.

This underscores the importance of giving youths the opportunity to practise agency – treating them as contributors who can shape conversations around work, sustainability and social resilience. By emphasising real-world validation and cross-sector collaboration, participants understood that their ideas resonated well beyond Gen2050.

Lens 2: System-level outcomes

The second lens was system-level outcomes, where Gen2050 underscored the importance of the 3P approach in addressing workforce and societal challenges. The 3P interaction between NYC, KPMG in Singapore and IPRS, combined with the involvement of industry experts, mentors and youths, delivered credibility and scale well beyond what any actor could have done alone.

Gen2050 provides a model that others can use to build similar pathways for youths. In that way, we can ensure that Singapore's youths can keep contributing ideas, testing solutions and playing a meaningful role in conversations about the future of work and the array of societal issues that the country must face.



A blueprint for more engaged and empowered youths

For organisations looking to emulate its successes in preparing youths for a rapidly evolving world, Gen2050 offers four standout lessons:

- ***Lesson 1:*** Agency must be practised, not taught. Relying on passive instruction, as some traditional models do, does not provide what youths need to prepare for an unpredictable future. To be empowered, youths must be enabled – and that means designing programmes that provide them with the tools, confidence and mentoring opportunities they need to test their ideas and shape their outcomes.

- ***Lesson 2:*** Youth development must be designed as a journey, not a set of standalone moments. While one-off events and workshops can spark awareness and interest, lasting impact and sustained agency comes from providing access to opportunities for youths to participate in, keeping them engaged while they learn and build on their experiences.

- ***Lesson 3:*** Partnerships have the greatest impact when they go beyond sponsorship to become models of shared ownership. Gen2050's strength lies in the cross-sectoral alignment between public, private and people sector partners and youth participants. This created legitimacy, scale and pathways that individual organisations cannot achieve alone.

- ***Lesson 4:*** Success metrics for future-of-work initiatives must move with the times. Traditional metrics focus on participation numbers or training completion rates, but these capture only part of the picture. Agency is far more important, because it shows whether youths have the confidence and ability to translate their ideas into action. In short, success should be measured by more than just participation, to include the action, ownership and capability development youths develop along the journey.

For Felicia Wee, Gen2050 Programme Lead and Council Member of IPRS, Gen2050 empowered students by providing a platform that brought together participants with different perspectives from different tertiary institutions "to speak while they're on their feet and presenting their ideas". That aligns with a key IPRS focus to equip youths with the strategies and skills to communicate ideas clearly to others – building credibility, driving action and ensuring their solutions generate real-world, measurable outcomes.

"The students we've interacted with are very grateful," she said. "They'd not had the opportunity to work with major partners like KPMG in Singapore and NYC – yet at Gen2050 they networked with these people, they got to know these people. That's a lasting legacy."

Ultimately, Gen2050 highlighted the importance of five main themes:

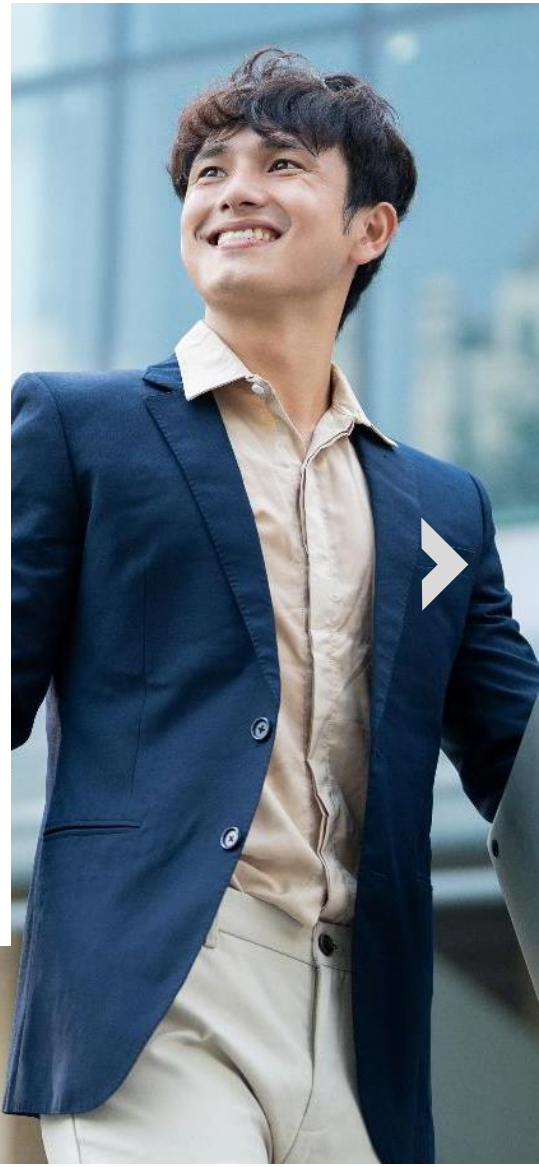
- Youth want pathways, not just inspiration.
- Closing confidence gaps matters as much as closing skills gaps.
- Mentorship is crucial as it builds confidence for youths to take meaningful steps forward.
- Active participation is more important than passive engagement.
- Futurse-of-work conversations must increasingly be tied to social sustainability.

Looking ahead, our approach to workforce development needs to combine these themes, moving beyond dialogue to craft a structured, systematic approach to change-making.Gen2050's approach, founded on the ethos of encouraging youths to "step up, speak out and be in front", showed that while youthful passion is vital, real-world execution requires professional rigour, advocacy and the ability to build momentum – "and that's much like the approach taken by startups," said Jeanie Lee, Gen2050 Programme Lead and Head of Communications and Corporate Affairs, KPMG in Singapore.

By equipping youths with these capabilities, and by providing mentorship and funding, said Lee, Gen2050 functioned as a launchpad from which they could build a community of like-minded advocates, navigate complex ecosystems and pitch viable solutions in their efforts to build a robust society.

"We know passion on its own isn't enough for youths to drive meaningful change – it requires a systematic way of thinking, a well-thought-out strategy and the confidence to advocate for ideas," said Lee. "Gen2050 was designed to give youths that structured starting point – not just to express their views, but to learn how to test solutions, build a supportive ecosystem and convert their early ideas into impactful movements."

In an era of constant change, Gen2050's 3P model offers a compelling case study and framework for cross-sector collaboration, incorporating specific steps to help youths be effective changemakers. At the same time, it is part of a bigger journey to ensure Singapore's youths are equipped to build a more socially aware and supportive society. By embedding the programme's successes into other projects, organisations can create a multiplier effect – ensuring that youths' voices are not just heard, but that they are equipped to shape a more resilient, more equitable Singapore.





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