



# **Dr Tan Chi Chiu**

**Chairman,  
Study on  
“Unmet Social Needs”**



# Identifying Unmet Social Needs



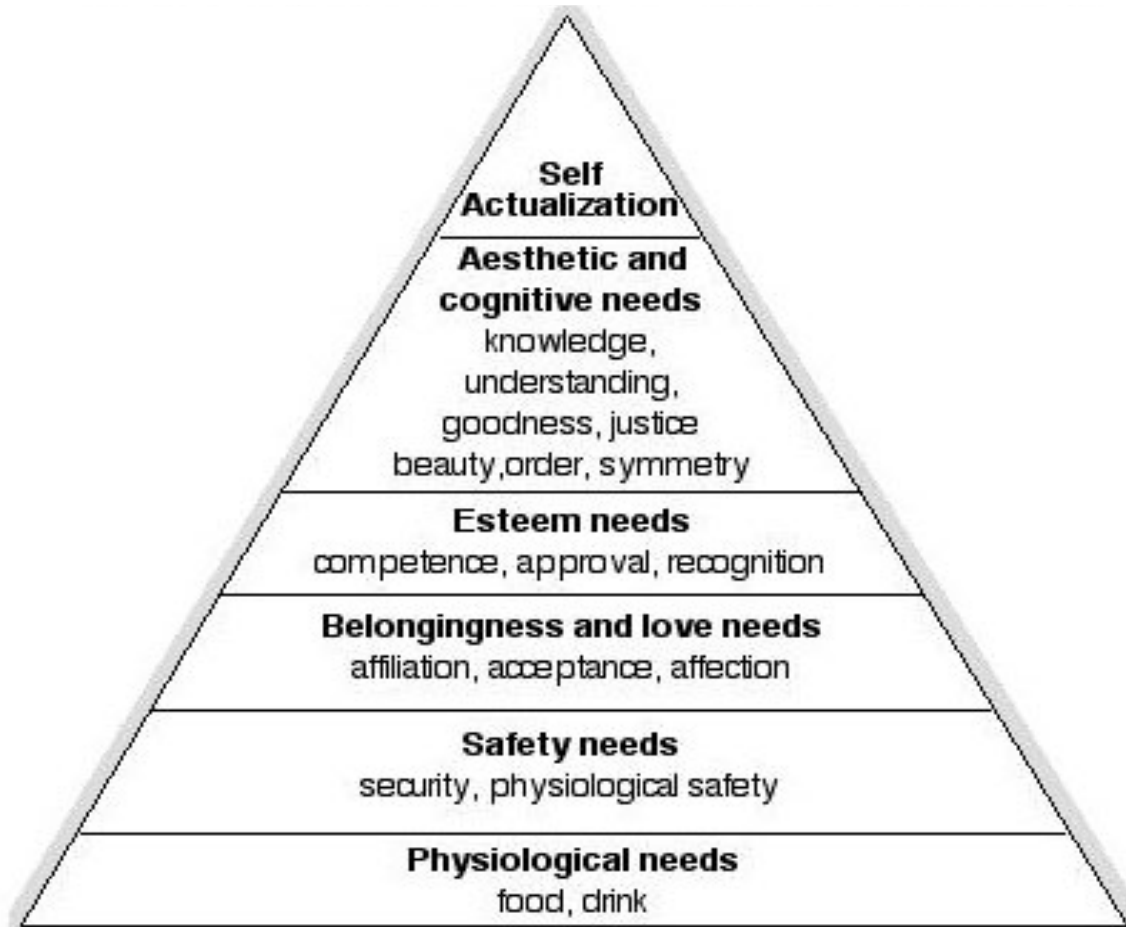
- The social sector exists to identify and seek solutions to unmet social needs.
- Ground up solutions typify the approach of the civil society sector.
- Macro approaches to identifying needs are few and far in between.
- Unmet needs of society are
  - Dependent on time, place, circumstances and
  - Relative to the perspective of the party answering the question.
- Throughout history, unmet needs have been examined at different levels of consideration.



# The Human Motivation Approach

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## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs





# The Economic Cost Benefit Approach



- The [Copenhagen Consensus](#) is an international Think Tank that prioritizes global welfare using methodologies based on the theory of welfare economics.
- Criticisms:
  - Prioritizes solutions based on resource optimization and cost efficiency rather than by importance.
  - Pragmatic but not truly impactful.
- Example: Malaria eradication deemed highly cost effective, versus ameliorating climate change even though climate change solutions have greater potential to save lives.



# The United Nations Approach



- The most comprehensive and ambitious global agenda for dealing with the world's greatest social economic problems is in the [UN's Millennium Development Goals](#).
- Despite criticisms of being detached from political and economic realities of countries, the MDG remains the most coherent global strategy to date that tackles worldwide poverty.
- Goals are related to: poverty, primary education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, diseases, environment and development.
- Note that the goals address basic and also higher order needs.



# Classification of Needs (1)

- Note that 'poverty' is not considered in isolation:
  - Multifaceted , causes and consequences intertwined and a vicious circle.
  - Poverty → hunger → failure of education → gender inequality → no economic opportunity → no health care → disease and shortened lifespan
  - Poverty → unsuitable habitats, lack of water and sanitation → disease, malnutrition → low priority on education etc.



## Classification of Needs (2)

- (I) Traditional basic needs:
  - Food: food security; maldistribution; “farming abroad”
  - Water & sanitation: health problems; labour diversions; water conflicts
  - Health: HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria, Influenza (H1N1)
- (II) Higher order needs which affect human prosperity and well being. Modern day needs arising from:
  - Human displacement: voluntary vs involuntary – conflicts, disasters, oppression
  - Environmental challenges: climate change & natural disasters
  - Problems of developed societies: ageing, mental health, family structure



# Unmet Needs in Singapore



- A study commissioned by the [Lien Centre for Social Innovation](#) at SMU, 2009.
- Addressed social policy systems, assessing needs of communities and valuing how well these needs have been met.
- Limitations of the study:
  - Unearthing of information in a much layered, complex social policy regime.
  - Difficulty in identifying marginalized communities in a scientific manner.
- The work is an assessment of known communities and reviewing the policy gaps in meeting their needs.



# Summary of Findings (1)



- The social policy system makes a determined effort to meet people's basic needs of food, shelter, education and health:
  - Institutional structures are strong
  - Services are accessed via a network of channels called the **Many- Helping-Hands** (MHH) concept.
  - The government maintains an ecosystem for meeting the needs of people.
- From third world to first in one generation means that:
  - Some communities have moved higher to another set of needs, while
  - There are others trying to get off the starting blocks and limit their dependence on the government.



## Summary of Findings (2)

- Social policies have been adequate in meeting people's needs over the past 4 decades – lives have improved.
- Some policies remain inadequate for vulnerable groups who have fallen out of the ecosystem of support:
  - Disabled
  - Mentally ill
  - Single person headed households
  - Lower income bracket who do not fulfill the criteria to access housing or medical needs in a non emergency manner
  - Foreign workers and new communities



## Summary of Findings (3)

- Key deficiencies at a policy level:
  - Social connectedness & building bonds between ‘new communities’ and old require more attention.
  - Social policies currently emphasize protection function and less the transformative function. Many programs are of short duration, too short for transformation and self empowerment to take its course.
  - The approaches are not holistic enough – needs a pre-emptive care plan as well as a ‘treatment plan’.



## Summary of Findings (4)



- Perception changes are required:
  - Acceptance of those who do not ‘cut it’ and ‘fall out of society’.
  - Concepts such as ‘crutch mentality’, ‘soft options’, ‘complacency’ are demeaning and deepen resentment, versus transformative processes such as the ‘Yellow Ribbon Project’.
  - Need to move away from a welfare perspective to a rights based perspective – away from being treated as ‘exceptions’ with arbitrary case by case solutions, to acceptance of their rights as full members of society.
  - Many Helping Hands is struggling to make inroads into the community because of the myriad programmes and stakeholders involved and inadequate resources to administer care plans. There remains a gap between needs and schemes. Bridging must be done at a level higher than at the grassroots.



## Summary of Findings (5)

- Two key social security schemes may need review:
  - CPF
  - Public housing policy
  - Current policies may not be sustainable in the face of changing demographics and different lifestyles.



# **Dr Mathew Mathews**

**Lead Researcher,  
Study of the Poor**

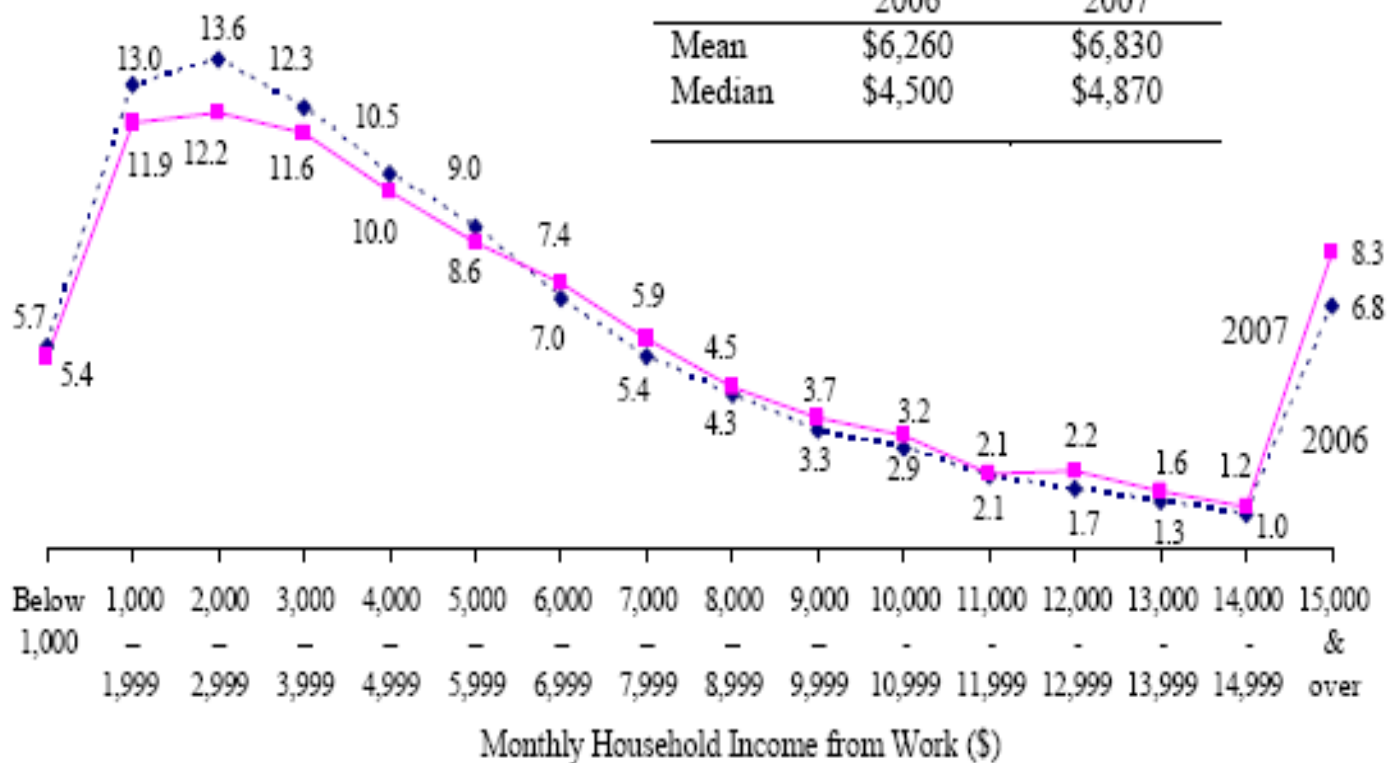


# Are there Poor People in Singapore?

Per Cent

Monthly Household Income from Work

	2006	2007
Mean	\$6,260	\$6,830
Median	\$4,500	\$4,870





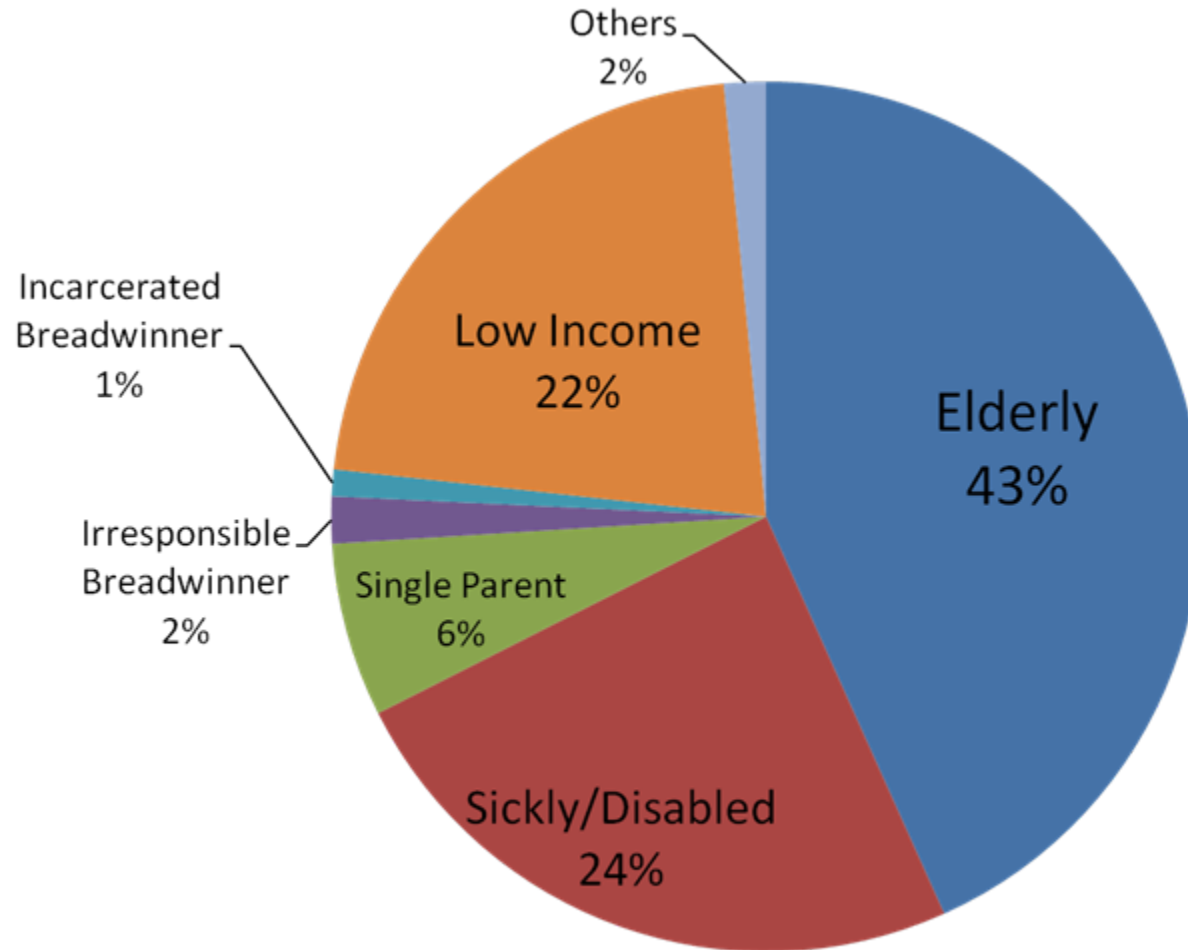
## What we know from official sources

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- 240,000 full time workers earn less than \$1,000 a month (Ministerial Committee on Low Wage Earners)
- Around 2000+ people live in acute poverty
- Income of top 20% is about 30 times greater than bottom 20%



# Who are the Poor in Singapore?





# Existing Strategies Employed to Help the Poor

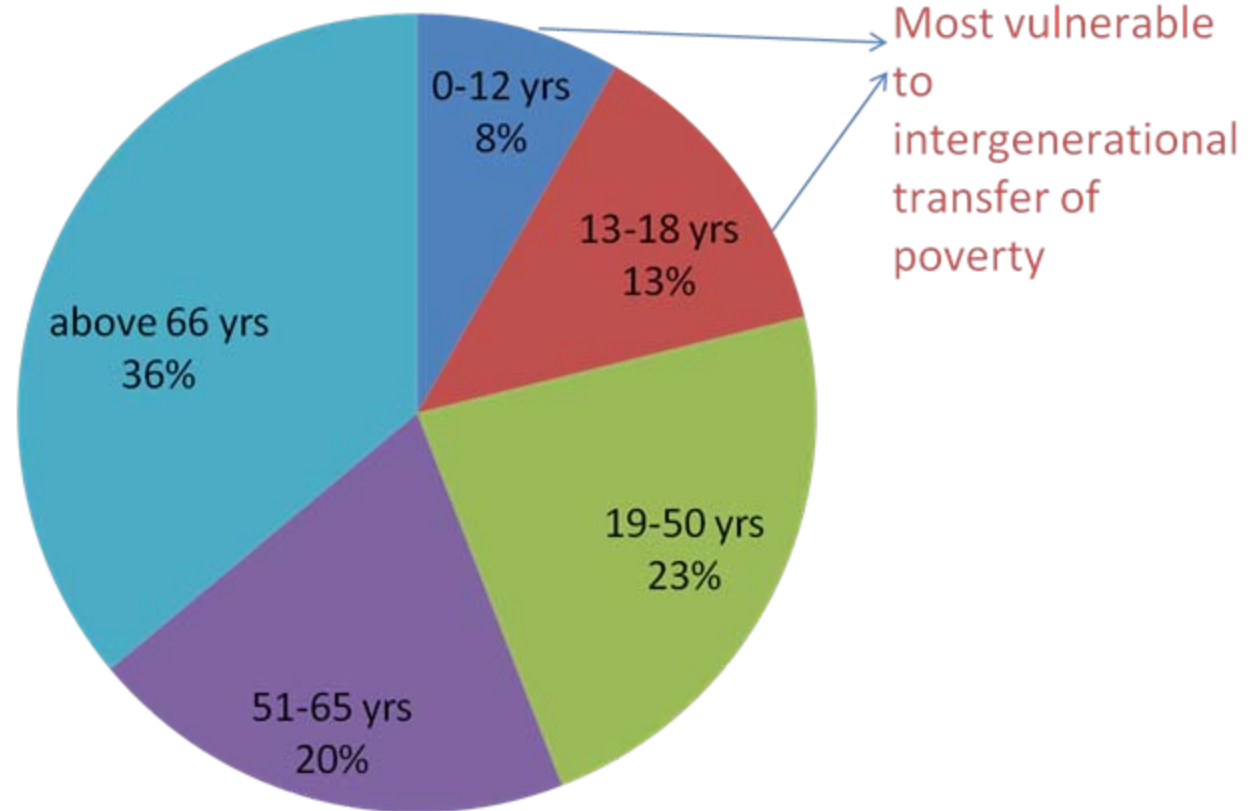
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- Financial Aid
- Food rations / Soup Kitchen
- Supplementing health care needs
- Educational Grants / Tuition
- Professional services – eg free legal/medical consultation



# Age Distribution of Persons Helped



Data based on 2876 persons Currently assisted by SSVP



# Upward Mobility only Likely with Higher Educational Attainment

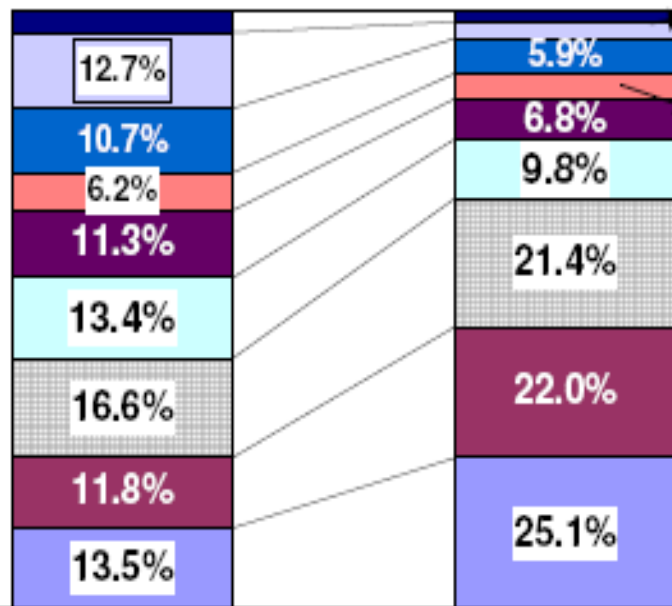
Population and Income Share of Employed Workers in Singapore  
By Occupation - 2001

Population and Income Share

100%  
90%  
80%  
70%  
60%  
50%  
40%  
30%  
20%  
10%  
0%

Population Share (%)

Income Share (%)



- Others
- Cleaners, Labourers and Related Workers
- Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers
- Production Craftsmen and Related Workers
- Service Workers, Shop and Market and Related Sales Workers
- Clerical Workers
- Technicians and Associate Professionals
- Professionals
- Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers



# Curbing Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty through Increasing Opportunities...



- How?
  - Access to good education/school performance
  - Enhancement of social and cultural capital
- Barriers?
  - Culture of poverty



# John Gee

**President,  
Transient Workers Count Too**



# The jobs we don't want to do

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## Some Numbers



- Work permit holders: paid S\$1,800 or less
- S-Pass Holders: paid over S\$1,800, under S\$2,500
- 856,000 Work permit holders, including over 190,000 domestic workers (end 2009)
- 82,000 S-Pass holders



## Where From?



- Domestic workers:
  - Mainly from Indonesia and Philippines
- Male workers:
  - Largely from China, Bangladesh and India



## Problems-Examples only!



- No days off for half the domestic workers in Singapore
- Heavy placement debts
- Overwork, inadequate food, unfair salary deductions, bad accommodation, promises of jobs that don't exist, delays in compensation for injuries, forcible repatriation.....



# Trafficking?

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- The critical additional factor that distinguishes trafficking from migrant smuggling is the presence of force, coercion and/or deception throughout or at some stage in the process—such deception, force or coercion being used for the purpose of exploitation

*(UN High Commissioner for Human Rights)*



# **Dr John Hui**

**Former Master,  
Catholic Medical Guild**



# The Family in Singapore

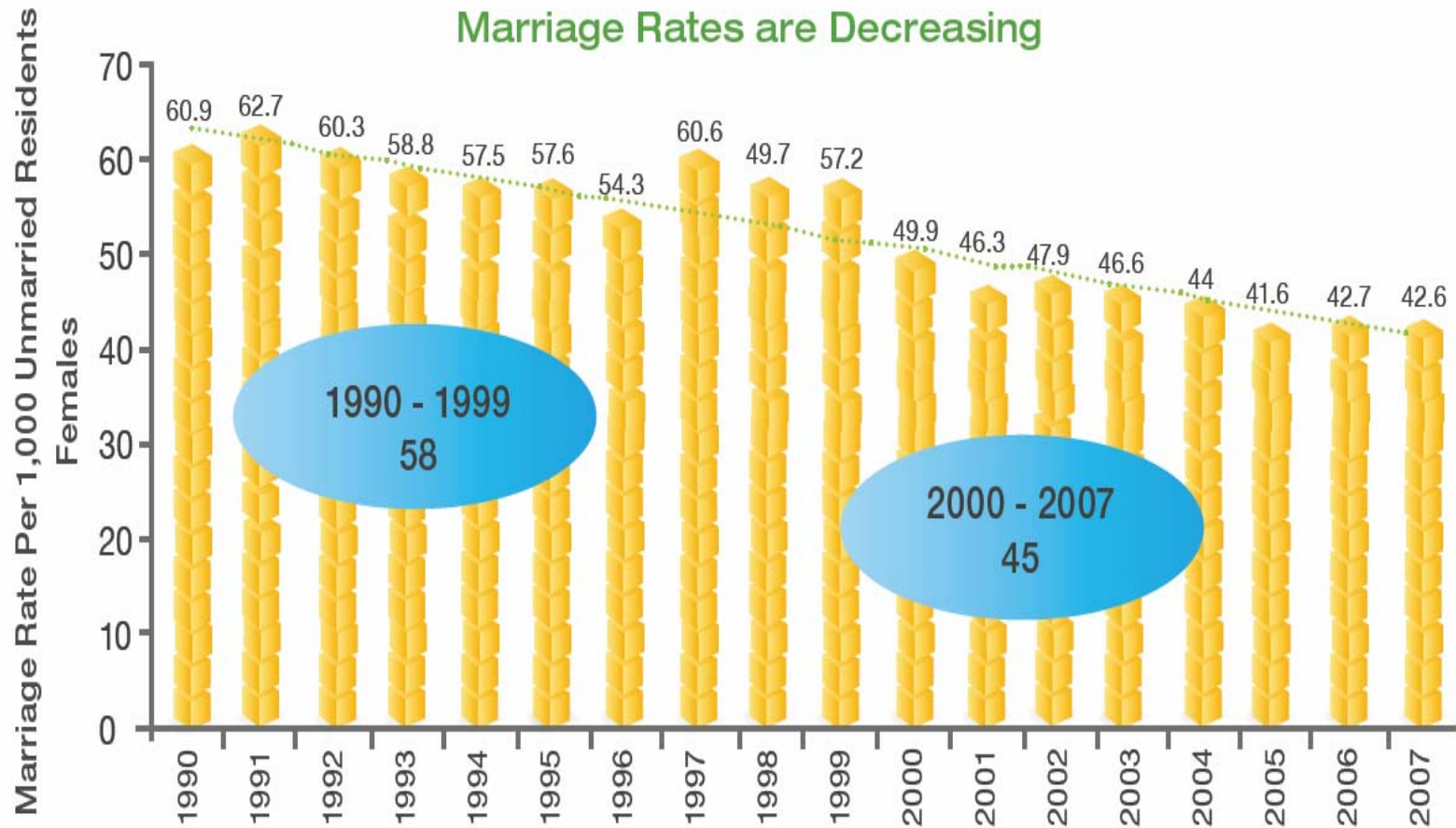


the majority of Singaporeans “hold pro-family values and attitudes, and enjoy close ties with their family members.”

Family First, State of the Family Report 2009, jointly published by the National Family Council and the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports



# Marriage Rates Decreasing

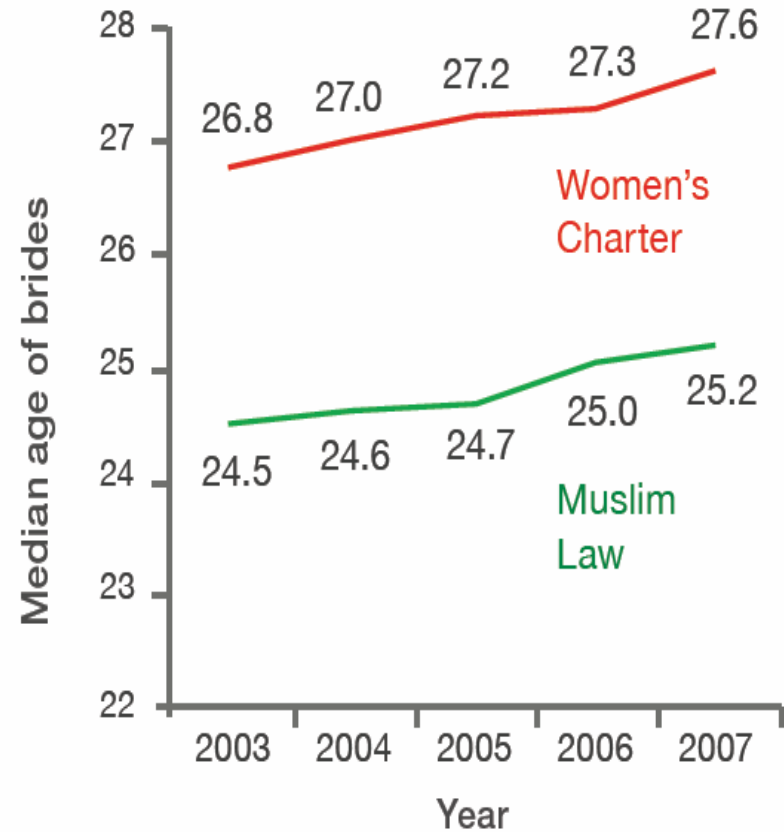
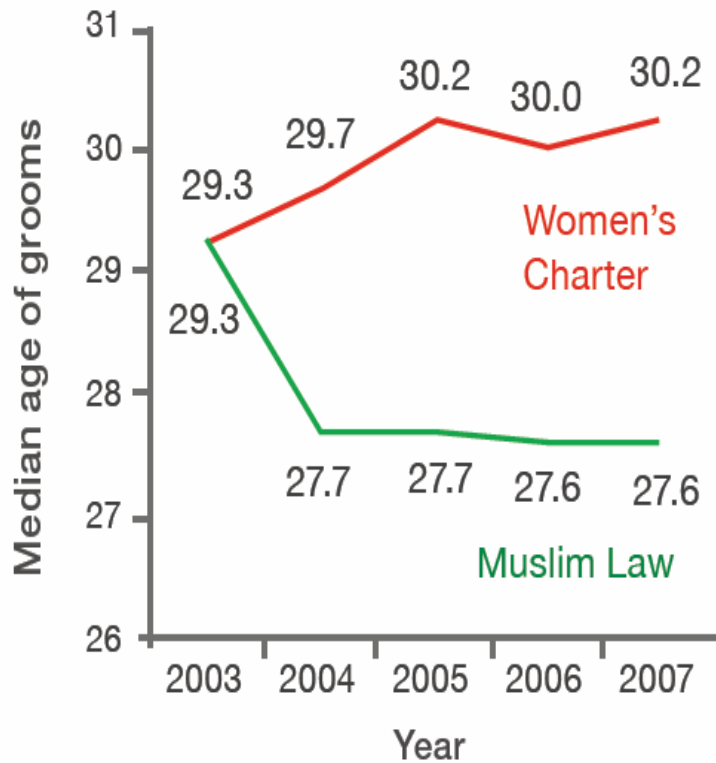


Source: Singapore Department of Statistics



# Getting Married Later

## Men and Women are Getting Married Later

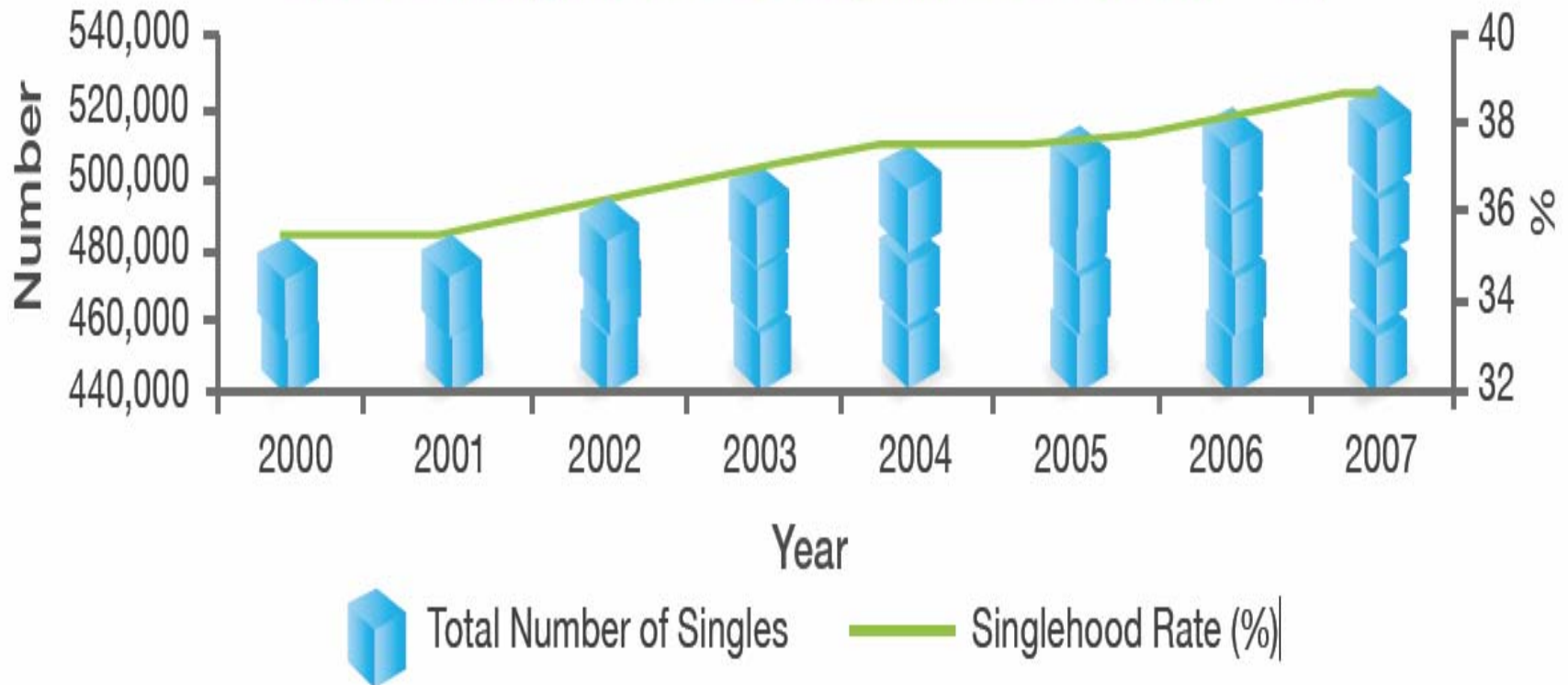


Source: Singapore Department of Statistics



# Singlehood

## Resident Singlehood and Singlehood Rates (20 - 44)

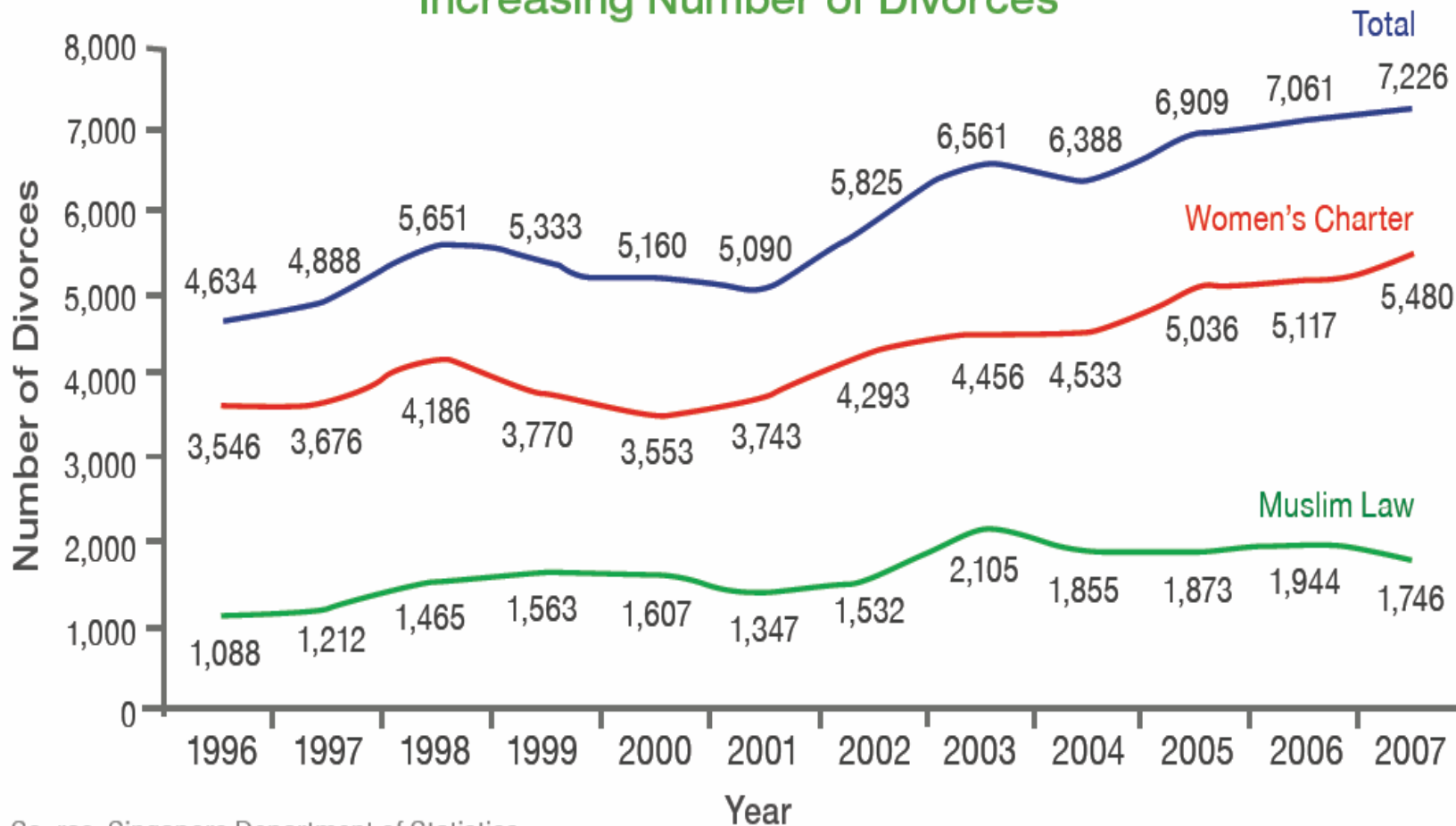


Source: Singapore Department of Statistics



# Divorces

## Increasing Number of Divorces



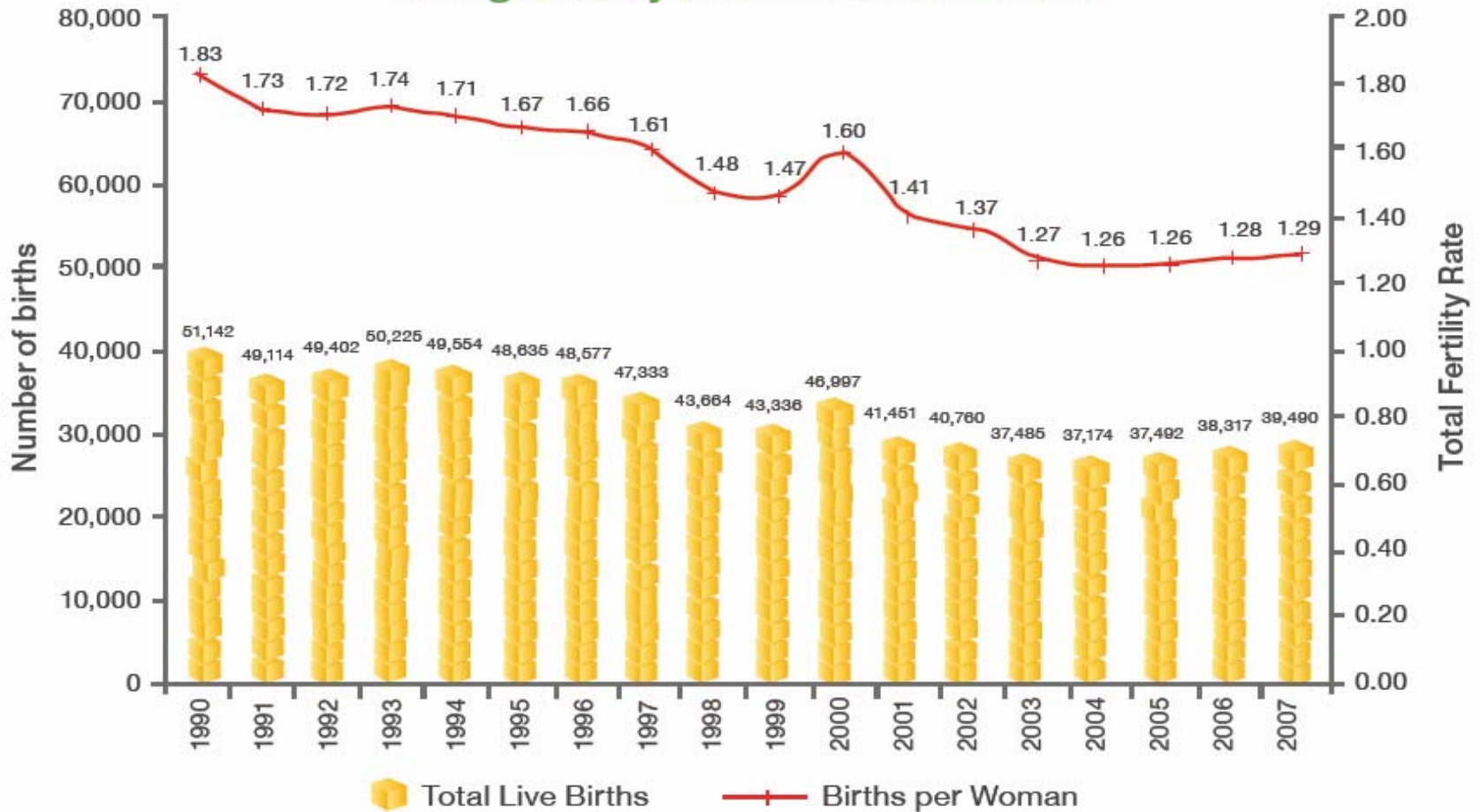
Source: Singapore Department of Statistics



# Fertility Rates & Live Births



### Falling Fertility Rates and Live Births

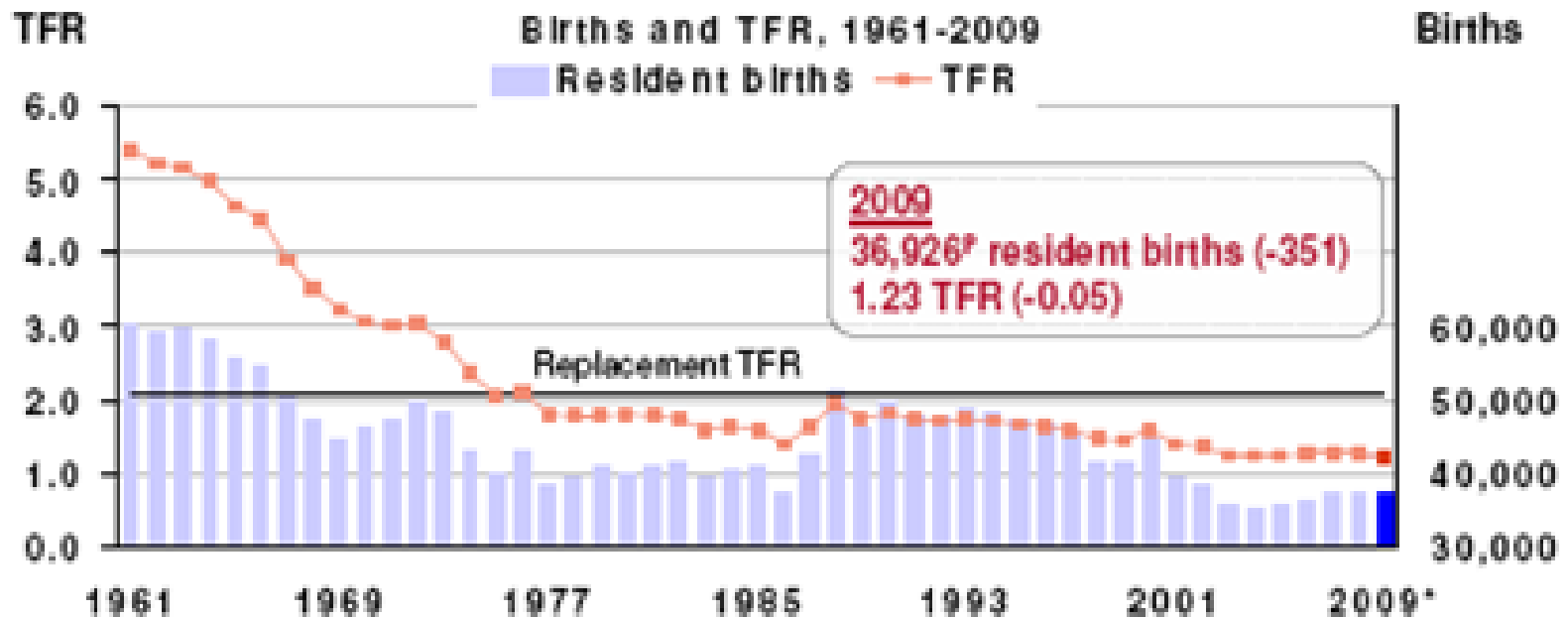


Source: Singapore Department of Statistics



# Decline in Births

**Chart 3: Long-term decline in births put fertility well below replacement level**



\*2009 TFR is based on registered births.

\*Data prior to 1980 are based on total live births.



# Older Persons

**Table 1: Number and Proportion of Older Persons**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>No. of persons aged 65+ (in thousands)</b>	<b>315.8</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>1,424</b>
<b>Proportion of persons aged 65+*</b>	<b>6.53</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>25.8</b>
<b>Median Age (Yrs)</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>45.7</b>
<b>Dependency Ratio</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>73.0</b>
<b>D.R. (Young) 0-14 years</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>D.R. (Old) 65+ years</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>45</b>



# Households & Family Nuclei



**Table 2: Residents Households and Family Nuclei**

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<b>Household Structure</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>	
	<b><u>1990</u></b>	<b><u>2000</u></b>
<b>No. Family Nucleus</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>12.3</b>
<b>One Family Nucleus</b>	<b>84.6</b>	<b>82.1</b>
<b>Multi Family Nuclei</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>5.6</b>

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Source: Singapore Census of Population, 2000, Advance Data Release No 6: 4



# Sexually Transmitted Infections

## STI's among teens in Singapore

2002	238
2005	678
2008	787



Sex



Prevalence of Singapore students  
aged 14+ to 19+ who are sexually active

8%

Remarks by Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence on  
Sexuality Education Programmes in Schools, 19 May 2009

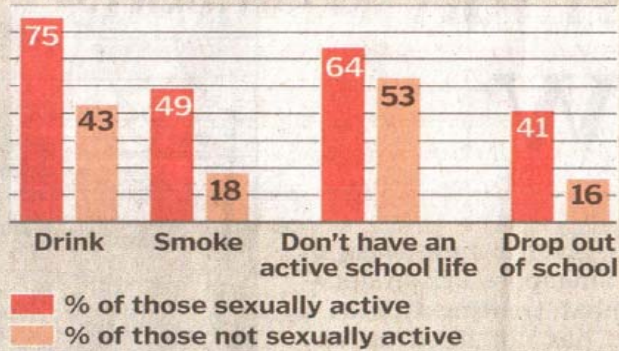


# Attitudes Towards Sex

## KEY FINDINGS

1,000 teenagers in Singapore aged between 14 and 19, half of whom were sexually active, were surveyed by the DSC Clinic and National University of Singapore about their attitudes towards sex.

### TEENS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE SEX IF THEY



### LOVE AND CURIOSITY WERE TOP REASONS FOR TEENS' FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

Boys		Girls	
1 Curiosity	59%	Love	49%
2 Love	37%	Curiosity	39%
3 Inability to control themselves	21%	Don't know how to say "no"	20%

NOTE: Figures do not add up to 100 as respondents could name multiple reasons.

### MORE SEX EDUCATION THROUGH THE MEDIA MAY HELP REDUCE PREMARITAL TEEN SEX

	% of those sexually active	% of those not sexually active
Read or watched movies, TV and videos about sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV or Aids	16	48
Parents never discussed sex or STIs with child	55	49

### BOYS ARE ALSO MORE LIKELY TO HAVE SEX IF THEY

	% of those sexually active	% of those not sexually active
Read or watch pornography	95	79

### WHEREAS GIRLS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE SEX IF THEY

	% of those sexually active	% of those not sexually active
Were sexually abused	23	3

Sources: DEPARTMENT OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS CONTROL CLINIC and NUS

ST GRAPHICS



# Statutory Rape



## Statutory rape cases in Singapore

2006	38
2007	57
2008	61
2009	83

[http://www.spf.gov.sg/stats/stats2007\\_areasinterest.htm](http://www.spf.gov.sg/stats/stats2007_areasinterest.htm)

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/singaporelocalnews/view/1036102/1/.html>



# Drug Abuse



## Number of youth arrested for drug abuse

2007	266
2008	286
2009	309



# Binge Drinking



Prevalence of binge drinking  
among Singapore youth

10%



# Suicides

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## MORE SUICIDES

**401** There were 401 suicides last year, 37 more than in 2008.

**72** The biggest rise was among those aged 20 to 29, with 72 deaths, up from 52.

**19** Those aged 10 to 19 hit a six-year high, with 19 resorting to suicide, up from 12 in 2008.

One reason for suicide among young people is relationship problems with peers or family members. ST PHOTO: CAROLINE CHIA



# Zulkifli Baharudin

**Former Chairman,  
Mercy Relief**



# THERE WILL ALWAYS BE DISASTERS AROUND US!

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We live in the middle of a geographically troubled region





# CULTIVATING THE HUMAN SPIRIT



“We must help others when a disaster like this befall them, if we want others to help us when we need help” PM

But,

- Will our humanitarian effort make the difference?
- Will our generosity be abused especially by officials?
- How best can we make our contribution?



# MAKING THE DIFFERENCE - “PROFESSIONALISM”



Emergency Response  
Is Best Left To  
Professionals

- EVACUATION
- DECONTAMINATION
- MEDICAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- SHELTER

Singaporeans with special  
skills can help to rebuild  
lives through consistent  
sustainable engagement  
and support

- COMMUNITY BUILDING
- EDUCATION
- SOCIAL SUPPORT



# SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION



- Sustainable engagement and participation as part of the community building
- Important to have long-term plans and goals
- Must work in partnership with local authorities and communities
- Must be clear on the commitments and deliverables



# THE SOCIAL MISSION

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THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOU LEARN AND ACHIEVE MORE OUT OF GIVING; THAT THE HUMANITARIAN EXPERIENCE IS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN ONE'S LIFE.