

## **OPSG'S RESPONSE TO THE IPS-ONEPEOPLE.SG INDICATORS OF RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS HARMONY 2018 FINDINGS**

One People.sg (OPSG) is heartened by the results of the 2018 wave of the IPS-OnePeople.sg Indicators of Racial and Religious Harmony.

Singapore has continued to experience a strengthening of harmony. Two results in the survey especially support this; the increased levels of trust between racial groups and the number of Singaporeans who have close cross-racial friendships. This is particularly more common among the young.

The study also demonstrates gaps which need to be addressed. More respondents from racial minority backgrounds perceive discrimination at work – both in finding work and in obtaining job promotions. Although this represents less than a third of racial minority respondents, this is still disconcerting. The report notes that this increase in perceptions of work-related discrimination may stem from greater public awareness of discrimination. Our other work at OPSG, together with our community partners affirms that there have been increased perceptions of workplace discrimination. Singaporeans of minority ethnic backgrounds have made significant progress in education and have appropriately increased aspirations. They are increasingly competing for work across all industries and businesses.

If we are to ensure that the harmonious social relations we enjoy translate into the workplace, there will have to be concerted efforts to tackle this issue. We will work to support greater education and engagement of both employers and employees to address key issues such as bias and stereotypes. We will work with relevant groups - employers, SNEF, TAFEP and champions of diversity and inclusion --to address racial discrimination at work. We will continue to send the clear message to all in Singapore that all forms of racism and racial discrimination are not acceptable in our multi-racial and multi-religious society.

The many areas of improvement and progress demonstrated by this study, such as the growing levels of inter-racial trust and cross ethnic friendships; the low levels of discrimination in public services; and a low incidence of racial and religious tension, provide a strong foundation to address the issue of workplace discrimination.

As an organisation that promotes racial harmony, we will continue to build inter-racial discourse, trust and friendships through our wide range of activities. We will work with our partners such as self-help groups, Community Development Councils and the People's Association as well as schools, government agencies, community groups and religious organisations. Key to these efforts are OPSG's initiatives to discuss difficult issues among our youth. We organise dialogues, cross cultural learning journeys and leadership programmes to help Singaporeans, especially the young, learn the nuances of cultural diversity, challenge stereotypes and lead efforts at overcoming racism. OPSG also develops resources that help the community better understand the practices of racial and religious groups and debunk misconceptions. Through such initiatives, we aim to foster a culture of respect, understanding, trust and friendship in strengthening inter-racial relationships and communal ties.