

TODAY
WESET YOU THINKING

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More than autonomy needed for NYC 2.0 to work

FROM KWAN JIN YAO

It is encouraging that the National Youth Council (NYC) is no longer under the purview of the People's Association (PA). ("National Youth Council to be autonomous body under MCCY"; June 14)

Despite reassurances that the PA's work as a statutory board is non-political, some have decried the perceived politicisation of the grassroots. Making a distinction between the political and the grassroots was ideal but difficult.

Now, as an autonomous agency under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, the NYC should attract a greater diversity of youth.

Yet, I temper my optimism with a tinge of scepticism.

As a participant and facilitator in the National Youth Forum and ASEAN Regional Forum, I never fancied the old NYC's predilection for large-scale conferences.

“For its restructuring to be more productive, the MCCY should engage youth in conversations – and not only the same individuals who have populated the NYC for too long.”

The interfaith engagement and friendships forged were often overshadowed by the extravagance, the confusing assortment of programmes and the efforts to rush presentations for showcases. The forums were hardly sustainable.

Anecdotally, the way funds for community projects are dispensed through the Young ChangeMakers scheme has been criticised too.

And what happened to the old NYC's INSPIRIT, a community of young leaders who “will advocate for youth on community and national issues, campaigning youth causes”, which was launched in 2012? Has anything significant emerged from the group?

Will the volunteer youth corps meet with the same fate? Former NYC chairman Chan Chun Sing said during one of INSPIRIT's first few events: “We want to draw political leaders from all walks of life. Some might come from this group.”

Perhaps removing that layer of PA bureaucracy bodes well for NYC 2.0.

For its restructuring to be more productive, the MCCY should engage youth in conversations — and not only the same individuals who have populated the NYC for too long.

It should go to schools, neighbourhoods and the hangouts of young Singaporeans. It should hear from past participants in the NYC's endeavours, especially those who did not enjoy the experience. It should not hesitate to eliminate the relics.

It is a different world, where youth involvement has soared and flourished. The number of youth organisations and youth participation in social groups have grown, the latter from 44 per cent a decade ago to two-thirds last year.

NYC 2.0 must fit in, not stand out, within this landscape. It may have the funds, but without an understanding of the ground, another restructuring could be on the horizon.

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Civilised public drinking possible with respect

FROM ELIUD CABRERA CASTILLO

I refer to the report “Government lays out four models to control public drinking” (June 17).

In countries such as Germany, drinking in public, on the street or even in front of the police is fine as long

as one is respectful towards strangers and does not bother anyone or make much noise.

Singapore is a nice city and I hope that all who have the privilege of living here respect one another. That is the best way to have a happy life, whether one drinks alcohol or not.

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