the Singapore WAY

TEACHER GUIDE

Civic Engagement and Community Building

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1. Introduction to the Case

Why This Case Matters

In many parts of the world today, **communities are coming apart—polarized by politics, isolated by housing or divided by faith and fear**. But Singapore chose a different path. It invested deeply in the **architecture of cohesion**: neighbourhood design, youth leadership, community centres, and shared rituals.

This case explores how Singapore designed **social trust at scale**—turning strangers into neighbours, and neighbours into a connected, multi-faith, multi-cultural nation.

- The founding and function of **People's Association Community Centres (CCs)**
- How e**thnic housing quotas and block integration** created everyday diversity
- The strategic use of **multicultural festivals, common languages, and food diplomacy**
- The role of **faith leaders, youth groups, and national rituals** in trust-building
- How Singapore turned **empathy and proximity** into national infrastructure

Global Relevance

All over the world, nations face division, distrust, and disconnection. Whether by race, religion, class, or urban design, fragmentation threatens civic life.

Singapore's story offers a blueprint for deliberate cohesion—and invites your students to explore:

- How communities are built, not born
- How unity is designed through ritual, language, space, and youth
- What happens when a government invests in everyday peace and social glue

What Students Will Learn

Students will explore:
- The strategies and systems behind community trust
- The role of youth, faith, and civic rituals in multicultural harmony
- How neighbourhood architecture affects human connection
- What it means to design for not just safety—but belonging
- How community is both a value and a skill

Framing Questions for Class

- What builds trust between people who are different?
- Can governments "create" community—or only support it?
- What's the role of ritual, language, and food in unity?
- What happens when youth are excluded from civic life?
- How do housing and neighbourhood spaces influence inclusion or isolation?