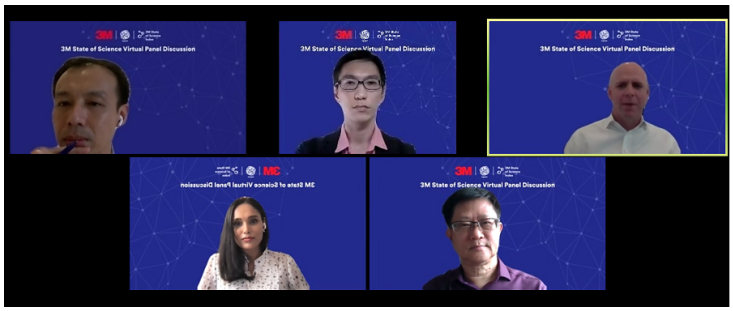
BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

Global study by 3M unravels Singapore's hope and image of science

June 22, 2021 | Analysis

Revealed results within the themes of STEM Equity, Sustainability, and Shared Responsibility



More than one year into the pandemic, the power of science has brought hope to Singapore and the world, and trust in science has grown since 2018, revealed the 2021 3M State of Science Index (SOSI). Despite these positive findings, more needs to be done to ensure this appreciation for science lasts.

First started in 2018, SOSI is an annual, third-party, independently researched study commissioned by global science company 3M to track attitudes towards science. Fielded from February to March this year, the 2021 edition includes 17 countries, up from 14 in its previous editions – making it the largest data pool to date. It involved about 1,000 respondents in each country, including Singapore.

The theme of hope rings clear in this year's findings. Singaporeans are counting on science to restore and rejuvenate their lives and enable the road to recovery. A large majority agreed that science gives them hope for the future (92% vs. 89% globally) and are hopeful that 2021 will be a better year than 2020 because of science (92% vs. 87% globally).

More Singaporeans also trust science today. Those who trust science has grown significantly since SOSI began in 2018 (92%, up seven percentage points from 2018) while 84% also agreed that the pandemic has made them more environmentally conscious (vs. 77% globally), and 93% believe that people should follow the science to make the world more sustainable (vs. 89% globally).

Still, more needs to be done. While a minority in Singapore are unsure or do not believe this appreciation for science will continue post-COVID (34% vs. 41% globally), most view scientific advancement as a shared responsibility that requires cross-border and crosssector collaboration. A strong majority feel that countries should collaborate to create solutions based in science to address major challenges (95% vs. 91% globally), and that there should be more collaboration across public and private sectors to advance science (94% vs. 92% globally).

Besides Hope and the Image of Science, the survey also revealed results within the themes of STEM Equity, Sustainability, and Shared Responsibility.

Results launched and discussed in a virtual panel on 3M State of Science Virtual Panel Discussion 2021. Organized by 3M and Science Centre Singapore (SCS), and joined by more than 100 attendees, panelists were invited to share insights on bridging these gaps. The pannelists were

- Associate Prof. Lim Tit Meng, Chief Executive, Science Centre Board

- Mr Kevin McGuigan, Vice President and Managing Director, 3M South East Asia Region and Country Leader, Singapore
- Dr Mark Chong, PhD, Senior Lecturer, Department of Biomedical Engineering, National University of Singapore and Faculty Fellowship Head, Singapore Biodesign
- Dr Suhina Singh, COO / Investor at Macan Pte. Ltd.
- Dr Lee Song Choon, Director, KidsSTOP™ and Events and Engagement at Science

Bridging the gaps: 3M

This year's 3M State of Science Virtual Panel Discussion 2021 is one of the various programs under the partnership between 3M and Science Centre Singapore to advocate for science.

This includes the 3M Tinkering Headstart program, which organizes STEM workshops for underprivileged children from 7-12 years old. From June to end November, 3M and SCS will also be distributing Science at Home kits to children from underserved backgrounds, to spark curiosity, inspire them in science and promote family bonding at home. Both Tinkering Headstart and Science at Home kits are made possible through 3M's social investment arm 3Mgives, which supports initiatives that positively impact communities and provide solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

3M also partners with non-profit organizations United Women Singapore, the Ministry of Education, and the School of Science and Technology to advance access to quality STEM education in Singapore. In addition, 3M is organizing The 3M Inspire Challenge, a regional case challenge that calls on undergraduate students across Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam to submit ideas in Technology, Sustainability and Innovation.

Bridging the gaps: Science Centre Singapore

At Science Centre Singapore, a key ambition is to make STEM more accessible and attractive amongst people of all ages and from all walks of life. This means breaking down the barriers of this seemingly remote field, through interactive experiences while introducing the more approachable topics of arts and humanities into the mix. Last year, the Centre held its inaugural suite of blended learning, digital-first events, known as UNTAME. This was an immersive, cross-platform series of initiatives for STEM exploration, targeted at children, families, educators and industry professionals.

Science Centre is also highly focused on cultivating new generations of critical and creative thinkers and tinkerers, which it exercises through a host of signature competitions held throughout the year. Organized in collaboration with valued, long-time partners, these competitions cater to students as young as Primary One all the way to tertiary education leaders, and create opportunities to encounter a myriad of STEM-based topics, including sustainability, robotics and even toy-making. Science Centre is also passionate about championing diversity through STEM, with ongoing efforts to close the industry gender gap through celebration of women in STEM, along with making infrastructural and programmatic changes at the Centre to foster total inclusivity in STEM learning for the differently-abled.