

Balancing priorities in Budget an exercise in leadership, says Indranee at youth dialogue



Ms Indranee Rajah speaking at an event to mark the 21st anniversary of Heartware Network, on Jan 7, 2022. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY



Tham Yuen-C
Senior Political Correspondent

PUBLISHED JAN 7, 2022, 6:17 PM SGT

[f](#) [t](#) [...](#)

SINGAPORE - In every Budget exercise, the minister of finance has to allocate finite resources based on what is best for Singapore and Singaporeans, and this involves making difficult decisions and trade-offs, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Indranee Rajah at a dialogue with young people on Friday (Jan 7).

For the upcoming Budget, some of the priorities include growing the economy and creating jobs, helping vulnerable groups, investing in education and also protecting Singapore against climate change, she added.

Speaking at an event to mark the 21st anniversary of Heartware Network, a youth-focused charity, Ms Indranee, who is also Second Minister for Finance, said deciding how much money to spend on each priority encapsulates what leadership is about.

The real test for leaders, whether they are leading a small team or a country, is how they decide when there is no one there to tell them what to do, she added.

The ministers always ask themselves what is good for the country and the people, she said, responding to a question on how young people can develop leadership skills.

"Ultimately, for leadership, it is just one simple test, which is really what is the best for the team or the group or the people that you lead. You have to look after their interests, and that must be your guiding mantra," she added.

Ms Indranee was having a dialogue with eight volunteers from the Heartware Network, which launched a commemorative e-book on Friday.

In its 21 years, the volunteer network has engaged 22,495 young people and put in 787,055 volunteer hours for activities such as teaching the elderly IT skills and giving tuition to underprivileged students.

Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam, who is patron of the charity and launched the book on Friday, said that the young people who have benefited from the programmes run by the charity often go back to volunteer, making a positive impact in the community.

He added that this positive circle is important as the Government alone cannot do everything.

During Ms Indranee's dialogue with the eight young people aged 17 to 21, some participants had cited sustainability as a cause they want to champion, with one lamenting that she felt she was not doing enough about the use of plastics.

Ms Indranee noted that Parliament would be debating a motion on how to move towards a low carbon society at its sitting next week.

She added that sustainability and climate change are also issues that the Budget will deal with, in terms of which direction Singapore is heading.

Urging the young in Singapore not to be too pessimistic about climate change, she cited how the Government is exploring harnessing solar and hydrogen energy. She also said that Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has said Singapore will invest \$100 billion over the next 100 years to safeguard the island against rising water levels.

She added that innovative solutions are what will move the needle in the area of environmental protection.