

DOING GOOD IN SINGAPORE

PART 1 —

**ADAPTING TO
THE FUTURE**

Edited by
Isabel Sim, Alfred Loh and Teo Chee Kiang

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ABOUT

Centre for Social Development Asia (CSDA)

The Centre for Social Development Asia (CSDA) was launched in July 2007 by then Minister for Finance Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam. It is under the purview of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. The Centre was established in collaboration with the Centre for Social Development, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis. The primary mission of CSDA is applied research and knowledge building to inform policies and programmes in social development, with a focus on Asia.

For more information about CSDA, please visit: http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/swk/partners_and_donors/research_partner/overview

For more information on the Department of Social Work, please visit: <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/swk/>

FOREWORD

Centre for Social Development Asia (CSDA)



Dr S. Vasoo

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Organisational capacity and capability are very critical as they are key to helping social service organisations adapt to the future and serve the community. The Centre for Social Development Asia (CSDA) is indeed appreciative of the support by Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) for sponsoring a grant to publish the books, titled *Doing Good in Singapore: Part 1 — Adapting to the Future* and *Part 2 — Resourcing for the Future*.

This book serves as a guide for social service organisations to widen their knowledge on how to adapt to changes in the social service sector and continue to serve the community in Singapore.

We are grateful to the authors, panellists, academic staff, peer-reviewers, charities, and interns who worked tirelessly to make this valuable publication possible.

ABOUT

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)

The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), founded in 1919, is the world's leading and largest professional body of management accountants, with over 232,000 members and students operating in 177 countries, working at the heart of business. CIMA members and students work in industry, commerce, the public sector, and not-for-profit organisations. CIMA works closely with employers and sponsors leading-edge research, constantly updating its qualifications, professional experience requirements, and continuing professional development to ensure it remains the employers' choice when recruiting financially-trained business leaders.

Together with the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA), CIMA has established the Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) designation. CGMA is the global quality standard that further elevates the profession of management accounting.

The AICPA and CIMA also make up the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants (the Association), which represents public and management accounting globally, advocating on behalf of the public's interest and advancing the quality, competency, and employability of CPAs, CGMAs, and other accounting and finance professionals worldwide.

FOREWORD

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
(CIMA)



Dr Noel Tagoe

FCMA, CGMA
Executive Vice President, Academics
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

The future of the social service sector is undoubtedly being impacted by the current disruption and rapid changes going on around us caused mainly by technological innovation. This sector must indeed take steps to be future-ready in adopting digital technology and navigating generational shifts in the way funds are donated.

We are seeing various types of social enterprises making their presence felt and new business models for charities are being developed. Ensuring a sustainable social service sector is therefore crucial, supported by good governance, ethical, and accountable leadership.

The CIMA Centre of Excellence would like to commend CSDA for its philanthropic approach to help charities be on the path of sustainable development. We applaud CSDA for this timely publication to build a stronger charity sector in Singapore.

ABOUT

Charity Council

The Charity Council aims to promote and encourage the adoption of good governance standards and best practices, to help enhance public confidence and promote self-regulation in the charity sector. It also helps to build governance capabilities of charities to enable them to comply with regulatory requirements and be more accountable.

The Council comprises 15 members, including the Chairman. 10 members are from the people sector, chosen for their expertise in accountancy, corporate governance, entrepreneurship, and law. They are also involved in volunteer and charity work in varied fields such as arts and heritage, community, education, health, and social services.

FOREWORD

Charity Council



Dr Gerard Ee

FCA (Singapore)
Chairman
Charity Council

Faced with ever-evolving social and technological trends, it is important for charities to build up their capabilities to manage the new challenges, as well as seize the opportunities lying ahead. To continue to serve the beneficiaries efficiently and effectively, charities need to adopt a progressive mindset and be adaptable to our changing environment.

This book is a compilation of valuable insights and perspectives of our thought leaders. Tap on this book to build up your knowledge on the charity sector and to be more aware of the shifting trends.

Thank you to our authors and charities who have contributed their wealth of knowledge and invested precious time for the production of this book. We can only make a positive difference to the community when our charities are well-prepared for the future landscape.

ABOUT

Commissioner of Charities

The Commissioner of Charities oversees the charities and Institutions of a Public Character (IPCs) in the charity sector, with the assistance of 5 Sector Administrators from the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, People's Association, and Sport Singapore. Its vision is to develop a well-governed and thriving charity sector with strong public support.

The objectives of the Commissioner as stated in the Charities Act are:

- to maintain public trust and confidence in charities;
- to promote a compliance by governing board members and key officers with their legal obligations in exercising control and management of the administration of their charities;
- to promote the effective use of charitable resources; and
- to enhance the accountability of charities to donors, beneficiaries, and the general public.

FOREWORD

Commissioner of Charities



Dr Ang Hak Seng

Commissioner of Charities
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

Charities play a critical role in society — meeting the needs of communities, impacting the lives of Singaporeans, and ensuring that no one gets left behind. And in order to do good even better, charities must be forward-looking, have the willingness and risk appetite to adapt and grow with the ever-changing social and technological environment.

This book draws valuable insights from the leaders in the charity sector. Thank you to the authors and contributors for sharing your knowledge and insights to assist charities. This is an inspiring trait that underpins the very essence of what the charity sector stands for – the willingness to support and help others. It is my hope that all charities will find this book useful in broadening your perspectives.

There is still much more to be done. We will work hand in hand with all charities to strengthen your governance and capabilities so that the sector can thrive for many more years to come. Your efforts, passion, and hard work continue to strengthen the fabric of our nation, and help foster a trusted and safe giving environment, where everyone can give confidently and do their part in building our caring society.

ABOUT

CFA Society Singapore

Established in September 1987, CFA Society Singapore (formerly known as the Singapore Society of Financial Analysts – SSFA) is a professional society that brings together practitioners in the investment and fund management industry in Singapore. Its principal objective is to promote and uphold professional standards and ethical practice in financial analysis and investment management in Singapore.

CFA Society Singapore is the 7th largest member society of CFA Institute, with more than 3,600 members.

CFA Society Singapore runs a whole host of programmes for members, CFA candidates and also the investment community, including professional development talks and seminars, networking sessions, CFA information sessions and examination review classes, and career development talks.

FOREWORD

CFA Society Singapore



Mr Simon Ng
Deputy President
CFA Society Singapore

Reserves play an important role in the financial stability and long-term sustainability of a charity. Managing reserves is an important aspect of the overall financial management of a charity – a crucial element of good charity governance. In line with good governance and proper risk management, a charity’s responsible persons i.e. its board, committee, or governing body should consider an appropriate level of reserves for its circumstances, as well as a strategy for building or spending its reserves in a way that is consistent with its purpose.

CFA Society Singapore is Singapore’s chapter of the CFA Institute. We are an association of investment professionals that sets standards of professional credentials; we champion ethical behaviour and professional conduct in the financial markets, and are a well-respected source of knowledge in the global financial community. Our objective is to create an environment where investors’ interests are placed first, markets operate at their optimal, which ultimately translates to growth of economies.

CFA Society Singapore is humbled and honoured to be invited by CSDA to contribute towards Managing Charities’ Financial Resources. I am proud to have the opportunity to work with CSDA and contribute to the writing of the chapter.

ABOUT

National Council of Social Service (NCSS)

The National Council of Social Service (NCSS) is the umbrella body for over 450-member social service organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in enhancing the capabilities and capacity of our members, advocating for social service needs, and strengthening strategic partnerships for an effective social service ecosystem. Community Chest and Social Service Institute (SSI) are part of NCSS.

For more information, please visit: www.ncss.gov.sg.

FOREWORD

National Council of Social Service (NCSS)



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National Council of Social Service

Social needs are becoming more complex in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment. With growing needs and limited resources, we cannot rely on yesterday's solutions to solve tomorrow's problems.

The sector has to adapt and develop more efficient and effective ways to address social needs. This requires us to move beyond current models of operating and explore new approaches to empower individuals and their communities, so that they may live with dignity and achieve their fullest potential. At the same time, social service organisations must continue to invest in and prioritise strengthening their organisational capabilities, so that collectively, they can deliver greater and sustained impact on the lives they serve.

I would like to commend the team on launching this meaningful initiative. This book is a wonderful collection of insights on issues that are most relevant and pertinent to any social service organisation's development journey. I hope that you will be enriched by the perspectives shared in this book, and that they will be useful in guiding you in meeting the challenges ahead.

DOING GOOD IN SINGAPORE

PART 1 — ADAPTING TO THE FUTURE

“

**We don't know about tomorrow,
but we know what we want
tomorrow to be like.**

Dr Gerard Ee
Chairman, Charity Council

”

PREFACE

Singapore's social service sector faces a future that looks nothing like the past. It has to deal with mounting challenges in social needs that are growing and changing, arising from a rapidly ageing population, changing family structures and other factors.

While the government has been boosting social spending and welfare provisions to strengthen the safety nets and stepping up social programmes, this has to be accompanied by financial prudence so that future generations of Singaporeans are not saddled with financial burden.

The first book *Doing Good in Singapore: Part 1 — Adapting to the Future*, explores the ways in which the social service sector can adapt to the future in order to serve growing needs. The second book, *Doing Good in Singapore: Part 2 — Resourcing for the Future*, extends the discussion by focusing on specific ways in which social service organisations (SSOrgs) can develop organisational competencies, build capacity and capability to tackle the rising social challenges as well as deliver high social impact.

This book, 'Doing Good in Singapore: Part 1 — Adapting to the Future', engages thought leaders for their views and insights on how the sector can better position itself in light of the changing social landscape. Before presenting their insights, **Chapter 1: Trends and Challenges in the Singapore Social Service Sector** surveys the status quo of Singapore's social services, as well as the contemporary social trends and their implications on social needs. It hopes to set the stage for the discussion in the following chapters in the rest of the book.

Chapter 2: Built to Last — The Social Service Ecosystem suggests strengthening the understanding of shared responsibility between stakeholders (namely the people, public and private sectors) to develop a sustainable ecosystem.

Chapter 3: Developing a Sustainable Social Service Sector argues that SSOrgs, as major stakeholders in service delivery, must evolve to become more inclusive, collaborative, and embrace innovation and productivity.

Chapter 4: Leading the Social Service Sector Towards Future-Readiness discusses the transformation plan for the social service sector and the various initiatives by the National Council of Social Service to help SSOrgs build capacities and capabilities for the future.

Chapter 5: Future-Ready Boards explains the need for SSOrgs to evolve and adapt to changing times. The boards of SSOrgs, therefore, must be forward-thinking and ensure that their organisations develop new capabilities to face these challenges.

Chapter 6: Ethics, Accountability and Stewardship in Social Service Organisations argues that ethics, accountability, and stewardship are the three principles essential in building a strong foundation for SSOrgs. The success of SSOrgs requires effective stewardship of donors' contributions and maintenance of public trust. By embodying these principles, SSOrgs can be in a better position to respond to challenges brought about by evolving social trends.

Lastly, **Chapter 7: Towards a New Frontier** summarises the themes and reiterates the vision for the future of the social service sector that has been articulated throughout the book. It also introduces the contents of the second part of this book series, *Doing Good in Singapore: Part 2 — Resourcing for the Future*, which explores how SSOrgs can better manage their resources.

Isabel Sim, Alfred Loh and Teo Chee Khiang

April 2019

Chapter 1

Trends and Challenges in the Singapore Social Service Sector

By Isabel Sim^a, Alfred Loh^b and Teo Chee Khiang^c

This chapter presents an overview of the changing trends that influence the social needs of Singaporeans and discusses their significance to various demographics. It emphasises that vulnerable groups can slip through the social safety net, despite government policies, creating a need for social service organisations (SSOrgs) to strengthen their support systems.

1. Overview of Singapore's Social Service Model

Singapore's social service model is built on three guiding principles — self-reliance, a strong family unit that can act as one's first line of support, and the Many Helping Hands (MHH) approach¹. As such, government policies revolving around the pillars of the social service ecosystem, namely in housing, education, and healthcare, have been designed to encourage and cultivate personal responsibility.

A strong family unit is integral to this process. Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, former Minister for Social and Family Development, has stated that the family has traditionally been the first line of care and support for individuals (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2015).

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¹ MHH is Singapore's approach to help those in the community who cannot keep pace with the rest of the population (Sim, Ghoh, Loh & Chiu, 2015). The MHH approach hinges on the belief that the responsibility for helping the vulnerable groups in the population should be shared by various segments of society, and that it is not the sole responsibility of the state to care for those in need of assistance (Mehta, 2006). The focus of the approach is in coordinating different parties who intend to help in a manner that ensures adequate and timely delivery of services (Ong, 2010).

Beyond that, the MHH approach aims to provide a wide range of services for its beneficiaries through a developed social network. It is a collaborative effort between many partners – government organisations, non-government organisations, and the community (Ang, 2015).

However, against a backdrop of changing social trends and needs, it is important to re-evaluate the status quo of Singapore’s social service sector. One of the biggest challenges for this sector is managing the multifaceted challenges of an ageing population, shrinking family unit, and technological disruptions.

To reposition the social service sector against the backdrop of changing social trends and needs, the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) has developed a five-year roadmap in 2017, known as the Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts, or 4ST in short (National Council of Social Service, 2017a).

The three key thrusts of the 4ST roadmap are as follows:

- i. Empowered individuals, their families, and communities;
- ii. Effective social purpose entities that deliver quality, innovative, and sustainable solutions; and
- iii. Caring, collaborative, and impactful social service ecosystem.

Most crucially, according to Ms Anita Fam, co-chair of the 4ST steering committee and President of NCSS, “the 4ST roadmap will have wide and long-ranging impact, not just for vulnerable populations, but for the entire nation as a whole” (Toh, 2017). The 4ST roadmap aims to broaden the scope of the social services.

NCSS has worked on other fronts to develop the social service sector. For one, more and more Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) are positioning themselves as SSOrgs (Tai, 2017). The change is not merely external. The professionalisation of the sector, which also involves internal restructuring to strengthen the functional capabilities of the organisations, is needed to attract support for resources such as manpower and funding (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2017).

The next section outlines the changing social trends and their implications on the social needs of different social groups in Singapore. It will lay the groundwork for later discussions on how the Singapore social service model, and the social service sector as a whole, should adapt in response.

2. Trends and Implications

Life expectancy in Singapore is increasing. Coupled with the country's steadily low fertility rate, one-quarter of Singapore's population is expected to be at least 65 years old by 2030 (National Population and Talent Division, 2016).

One of the biggest challenges for the social service sector is to gear itself up to manage the impacts of an ageing population (Seow, 2018). This is especially when the impact of an ageing population is compounded by other factors such as shrinking family sizes and disruptions to the economy.

This trend is not unique to Singapore and the social service sector can draw valuable lessons from examining the policies and programmes other countries have implemented to deal with their ageing dilemma. The cases of Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea are examined in Box Story 1.

More couples are choosing to remain childless after marriage, with the percentage of couple-based households without children rising by 3.3% from 14.3% in 2006 to 16.6% in 2016 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2017). In Asia, single-person households are also becoming more prevalent (Ng, 2016), and Singapore is no exception, with the percentage of single-person households increasing from 10.7% to 12.4% from 2006 to 2017 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2017).

Besides the increasing number of single-person households, there is also a rising number of single-parent households. While there are no official statistics on the number of single-parent households in Singapore, one can refer to the rising number of divorces which have roughly doubled from 1994 to 2015 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2017).

Box Story 1 Ageing in Asia

This box story illustrates how the ageing dilemma in Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea has shaped their respective social services. By focusing on healthcare, housing, and pension provision, this box story hopes to draw lessons applicable to Singapore.

Ageing in Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea

According to the table below, in these countries, life expectancy is relatively high at 80-odd years, while fertility rates remain far below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. By 2050, the population percentage of seniors in all four countries are expected to reach approximately 40%.

Country	Life Expectancy (in years)	Total Fertility Rate (children per woman)	Percentage of Population Aged 60 or Over (in 2017)	Percentage of Population Aged 60 or Over (in 2050)
Hong Kong	84	1.2	23.5	40.6
Japan	84	1.4	33.4	42.4
Singapore	83	1.2	19.5	40.1
South Korea	82	1.2	20.1	41.6

*Table 1: Life Expectancy, Total Fertility Rate, and Percentage of Population Aged 60 and Over (in 2017 and 2050) in Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and South Korea
Source: The World Bank*

The Healthcare Sector

The elderly inpatient ratio is expected to rise. The need to ensure that long-term elderly care remains both available and accessible strains public healthcare systems.

In Japan and South Korea, efforts are focused on insuring seniors requiring chronic care. This is known as the Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) System in both countries (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2002; National Health Insurance Service, 2014).

However, beneficiaries of the South Korean system reported low satisfaction in co-payments and service quality, and lack of support for mild dementia patients (National Health Insurance Service, 2014).

Similar difficulties plagued Japan's system, but reforms have ameliorated the situation. First, a community-based approach to healthcare was introduced. A New Orange Plan targeting dementia patients encourages the community life of affected seniors (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2016). Next, to maintain the economic sustainability of the LTCI System, co-payments paid by high-income, long-term care users were increased from 20% to 30% in 2017 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2017).

In Hong Kong, the government instead tackles this by diverting healthcare demands to private providers through a tax deduction, in a scheme known as the Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme (VHIS) (Voluntary Health Insurance System, 2018).

The Housing Sector

The housing concerns of the elderly in these societies can be narrowed down to two main ones: they are often either 'house-rich and cash-poor', or do not own property at all.

To assist the former group, a mortgage system is adopted in Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea, whereby the elderly can convert their housing assets into a steady cash flow, while staying in their own homes for the rest of their lives (Ronald & Druta, 2016). The Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation launched the Reverse Mortgage Programme (RMP) in 2011, and it is reported to have gained popularity amongst the elderly (Chow, 2018).

Going beyond the financial aspect, the Japanese government launched the Silver Housing Project in 1987, which provides elderly residents with specially-designed dwellings and home care services (Kose, 1997; Koshiba, Ikeda & Shimizu, 2010).

However, those who do not hold property have it difficult. In Hong Kong, senior citizens can remain on public rental housing waiting lists with an average waiting time of 4.6 years (Zhao, 2018). Likewise, those in Japan

must rely on a shrinking pool of public or private rental housing (Ronald & Druta, 2016).

The Pension System

Japan and South Korea's pension systems are both sustained by taxes (Japan Pension Service, 2018). This is increasingly unsustainable due to a shrinking workforce (White, 2018), posing huge burdens on younger taxpayers.

Cooling methods largely revolve around reducing the number of pension recipients. Japan decided to raise the official retirement age from 62 in 2016 to 65 by 2025 (Rodionova, 2016); in South Korea, elderly with children are disqualified from receiving an allowance of 200,000 Won (approximately S\$250) a month (National Pension Service, 2014). Critics, therefore, deem this social safety net too little and too late (Lam, 2017).

Hong Kong deals with the situation differently. Only about one-third of the workforce of 3.4 million people had retirement protection in December 2000 (GovHK, 2015). Instead of boosting welfare provisions directly, the government launched the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Scheme in December 2000, a scheme similar to Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF).

Lessons for Singapore

Policies implemented are affected by the various countries' specific national context, values, and governmental objectives. There are several learning points for Singapore; for example, programmes that offer two-in-one solutions, such as Japan's Silver Housing Project that focuses on both housing security and preventive healthcare.

Similarly, Singapore's CPF system offers a viable alternative to tax-dependent welfare systems (Central Provident Fund, 2018). Nonetheless, the implications of each policy are multifaceted. As the sustainability of methods become a key concern, emphasis on generating personal responsibility might be the way forward.

2.1 On Caregivers

The impacts of an ageing population are felt by the entire society. On a visceral level, old age affects not only the seniors themselves, but also their caregivers and future generations to come. The old-age support ratio has decreased from 8.4 in 2000 to 4.4 in 2017, and is projected to fall further to a staggering 2.4 in 2030 (Strategy Group, 2017). This is in large part due to shrinking family profiles.

There will thus be fewer adult children in each family to look after elderly family members. Working adults will have to care for their young children, elderly parents and in some instances, disabled family members². As such, it is likely that the sandwiched generation of informal adult caregivers will face increased emotional, psychological, and financial stress (Suen & Thang, 2017).

It does not help that disruptions to the job market are affecting more individuals. Large-scale displacement of middle and low-income production and service jobs, caused by technological advancement, threatens to upend the status quo – even knowledge-based jobs are at risk (Leipziger & Dodev, 2016).

Disruptions to the economy cause difficulties as employees have to adjust to redefined job scopes and new roles (Leipziger & Dodev, 2016). For most employees in Singapore, this signals a need to re-skill and upgrade, so as to remain competitive in the job market (Bhunias, 2018). Efforts to strengthen the capabilities of employees in Singapore are already underway, for instance the SkillsFuture programme that seeks to promote lifelong learning.

However, the informal caregivers who hold low-wage and unstable jobs bear the brunt of such disruptions. Digital disruptions in the form of online platforms such as Grab, a ride-hailing company, and Deliveroo, an on-demand premium food delivery service, could facilitate the rise of a gig economy, where workers hop from one job assignment to another. In light of this, employers have little incentive to invest long-term in their employees; as workers become more dispensable, this intensifies job insecurity (Doorn, 2016).

The stress from financial insecurity and familial responsibilities can culminate in poorer mental health, inevitably undermining their quality of life (Do, Cohen & Brown, 2014). The situation is exacerbated when the caregivers themselves are ageing and struggling

² The financial cost required to support a disabled family member can be hefty and is often unaffordable for the average Singaporean family (Mathi & Mohamed, 2011).

with their own health conditions (National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, 2017b). As of now, the Agency of Integrated Care (AIC) offers some support for caregivers³.

2.2 On Seniors

When caregivers cannot or do not support their elderly parents who need financial support or health and social care, the latter is often placed in a precarious and vulnerable position. This phenomenon speaks to a weakening of the family unit as an individual's first line of defence (Teo, 2013).

With the erosion of family support, more seniors are trapped in working past retirement, with a sizeable portion holding low-wage jobs (Mukhopadhaya & Venaik, 2014). The poverty rate among the working elderly has increased from 28% in 2005 to 41% in 2011 (Cunico, Lim & Han). Retirement is not an option due to paltry salaries and a CPF-based pension system that may not cover rising living costs and future medical bills (Mukhopadhaya & Venaik, 2014).

However, the problem goes beyond financial concerns. According to the Samaritans of Singapore (SOS), the number of elderly suicides increased to 129 cases in 2017, the highest since suicide tracking started in 1991 (Mahmud, 2018). One-fifth of Singapore's elderly population lives alone (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2017). Many of these seniors are estranged from their family or do not have any family (Ong, 2015). A lack of social support has been cited as one of the common struggles amongst the elderly. Elderly who are socially isolated are more prone to depression and suicidal thoughts, especially when they feel that their concerns are not being heard (Mahmud, 2018).

Access to healthcare is also a central concern. Reports have shown that a greater proportion of Singapore's population will be at risk of poor health and will therefore require long-term healthcare (Merchant, Chen, Tan, Lim, Ho, & van Dam, 2017)⁴. To ensure that healthcare remains affordable for the elderly, the government has put in place various schemes including the Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS) – a scheme that provides subsidies for nursing homes and home care as well as clinics that was recently extended to include those with middle incomes (Channel NewsAsia, 2017a).

³ The AIC provides training courses that impart caregiving skills, and centre-based weekend care for the elderly to allow caregivers weekly rest (Ministry of Health, 2016).

⁴ A substantial prevalence of frailty and pre-frailty amongst the elderly measures at 6.2% and 37% respectively (Merchant, Chen, Tan, Lim, Ho, & van Dam, 2017).

On top of that, Singapore's public healthcare sector is now restructured into three integrated clusters based on region. By ensuring that each cluster has acute hospital care, primary care, and community care facilities, Poon (2017) stated that the reorganisation would be able to better optimise resources and capabilities and strengthen the system for future challenges, such as dealing with an ageing population.

This regrouping also aims to transform the notion of healthcare from traditional hospital wardship to community-based⁵, facilitating a shift from disease-specific, fragmented care to person-centric care (Ministry of Health, 2016).

The social service sector thus has an important role to play in the context of an ageing society in Singapore. An example of this is the efforts undertaken by the Tsao Foundation to meet elderly care needs.

⁵ Both health and social care are being integrated into all-in-one eldercare facilities, with bundled home care, day care, and nursing home services under one roof (Ong, 2017). Active Ageing Hubs are also being introduced to at least 10 new housing estates, providing activities for active seniors and catering to the living needs of frail ones (HealthHub, 2015).

Box Story 2

Implications of Singapore's Ageing Society — Interview with Tsao Foundation

This box story is prepared by CSDA, based on an interview with Ms Peh Kim Choo, Chief Executive Officer of Tsao Foundation, and Director of Hua Mei Centre for Successful Ageing. It discusses the implications of an ageing population for Singapore's social service sector.

Tsao Foundation is a nonprofit family foundation that promotes successful active ageing. It envisions to build an inclusive society for all ages that optimises the opportunities of longevity and strengthens intergenerational solidarity.

Ms Peh stated that the majority of Singaporeans growing old should be healthy and active, spending only a minimum number of years in disability. Therefore, the way elderly care is organised will be critical. It should be sustainable, utilising both formal and informal care providers. According to Ms Peh, the following approaches are ways to improve elderly care:

- i. A population health approach — continuous care from preventive care to end-of-life care.
- ii. A community-based care approach — most of the care should happen within the community instead of institutions to facilitate ageing-in-place.
- iii. A systems approach — targeting intervention at different levels, family, private service providers, the community, government agencies or policies, thereby creating a care ecosystem.
- iv. A bio-psycho-social and team-based approach to care.

Ms Peh also elaborated on some developments in eldercare.

On Caregiver Well-being

Considering the impact that an ageing society has on caregivers, including family members and hired help, Ms Peh believed that addressing the needs of caregivers is also important. Caregivers should be included as part of the client system in the provision of bio-psycho-social care by service providers. Their role within the care ecosystem needs to be rationalised — capacity building, respite support, and psycho-emotional care.

On Financing Care

It is important for seniors to be able to self-finance care, in particular those with long-term care needs. Here, the role of the MHH approach needs to be reviewed to evaluate if such an approach is sufficient in meeting the financial needs of eldercare.

On Elderly Empowerment

Ms Peh stated that working not only provides financial security, but also adds meaning and purpose to the lives of seniors. Holding a meaningful job facilitates the empowerment of seniors and encourages participation in society, contributing to successful ageing. It is essential to build platforms for both formal and informal work to alleviate tendencies for social isolation, loneliness, and depression.

Looking Ahead

All in all, there needs to be a paradigm shift to see ageing as an opportunity for growth and contribution. This forms the basis for building an inclusive society in which ageing is celebrated, embraced, and supported. Singapore's social services should pick up on this trend and begin to:

- i. understand the ageing process and its implications in care needs across the bio-psycho-social spectrum;
- ii. embrace the abovementioned paradigm shift;
- iii. equip themselves with skills and knowledge of ageing across the life span, ability to work with multi- and inter-disciplinary teams of health, social, and economic care, and psychological care providers;
- iv. connect with the elderly and promote intergenerational interactions;
and
- v. include elderly as part of the family system intervention.

2.3 On People with Disabilities

Social help rendered to people with disabilities should move beyond the financial. More attention ought to be directed at improving social integration, empowerment, and their quality of life. A series of surveys conducted by NCSS in 2015 found that 6 in 10 people with disabilities did not feel socially included, accepted, or given opportunities to reach their full potential (Tai, 2016).

In general, workers with disabilities face more difficulties in keeping up with disruption than the average Singaporean worker (Tai, 2015). While this leaves them in greater danger of being left jobless and unable to support themselves, it also adversely affects their quality of life (Tai, 2016).

The financial resources required to support a disabled family member can be costly, and is often unaffordable for the average Singaporean family (Mathi & Mohamed, 2011). Instead of focusing on providing aid for caregivers, more opportunities and support can be directed towards people with disabilities to enable them to become self-sufficient.

3. Concluding Thoughts

On a concluding note, the many effects of the ageing population, shrinking family sizes and disruptions to the economy have intensified social, financial, and emotional burden on the generations to come. Teo (2013) argued that the integrity of the family unit is slowly being compromised, indicative of a departure the idealised principle of family as the first line of support. To move forward, the question of whether the existing social service ecosystem is sufficient has to be raised.

On this point, Ms Ang Bee Lian, a member on the board of trustees of the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), has suggested in the next chapter that the MHH approach remains relevant, but must be strengthened.

A more sustainable approach would perhaps catalyse more involvement and collaboration among other stakeholders in the social service ecosystem. To meet needs in a more effective, collective, and sustained manner, NCSS supports a person-centred and ecosystem approach towards helping individuals achieve a good quality of life (National Council of Social Service, 2017b). This is also the value which underlies the 4ST roadmap. The 4ST roadmap envisions a caring and inclusive society where every person is empowered to live with dignity (National Council of Social Service, 2017a).

To help the sector scale up and enlarge its capacity, the government has increased social spending from S\$12.7 billion in FY2006 to S\$34 billion in FY2016 (Channel NewsAsia, 2017b). However, Member of Parliament, Mr Edwin Tong has called for a balance to be struck to ensure that programmes have financial sustainability in the long-term (TODAY, 2014a). Indeed, with the government pumping so many resources into the sector, the sector must find ways to manage them. To overcome funding challenges, SSOrgs should improve accountability and organisational competency to better manage their resources.

The social service sector must do more with less. Mr Hsieh Fu Hua, former President of NCSS, has urged the social service sector to “move into a mindset of capabilities, solutions and resources”. Perhaps, as he has contended, a “heart of gold is not enough to sustain the developments in the sector” (TODAY, 2014b). In conclusion, the social service sector needs to transform and reinvent itself to remain relevant.

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Chapter 2

Built to Last — The Social Service Ecosystem

by Ang Bee Lian^d

This chapter explores how Singapore’s social policies and social service ecosystem are shaped by changing social needs. Two key population trends that will particularly impact the social service ecosystem are the ageing population and changing family profiles such as the increase in small families with fewer children. This chapter considers how stakeholders in the social service ecosystem can adapt to changes in the population and ensure sustainability in their service delivery.

1. The Changing Social Service Sector

The emerging shifts in social trends and changes to Singapore’s social context require the social service ecosystem to adjust accordingly to meet the needs of society. While policies, practice, and delivery methods may change, the principles on which the ecosystem is built upon remains core to its survival and flourishing. In Singapore, the social service system is built upon the principles of shared responsibility among individuals, the community, and the state. Beyond social spending, this shared responsibility is about the continuous calibration of the collective responsibility among individuals, community, and the state.

The evolution of the present system and the principles upon which it is built serve as a foundation for the social service ecosystem of the future. To ensure its sustainability in the long run, the social service ecosystem needs to be critically adaptable to the changing environmental trends and social expectations. With this in mind, this chapter will consider the principles underpinning Singapore’s social policies and how they have evolved, and explore the key factors that contribute to a sustainable social service ecosystem.

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2. Foundation of Social Policies

Social and economic policies in Singapore are inextricably linked. In the early years, the country's expenditure was mainly on education, the creation of jobs, and housing in order for Singapore to survive as a newly independent country. Singapore's focus on home ownership, rather than the mere provision of a house, also gave people a sense of pride and belonging. This allowed Singaporeans to not just survive, but thrive. Prior to understanding the social service ecosystem, it would be useful to understand the context of Singapore's social and economic policies, namely healthcare, education, and housing.

2.1 Housing

One of the first social policies that created substantial impact was housing grants. The Housing Development Board (HDB) was more than a housing authority – it was the state's mechanism to raise the standard of living of almost every citizen through a range of grants or subsidies for citizens to own a home. Low-income and middle-income households can apply for the Additional Central Provident Fund Housing Grant (AHG) and the Special CPF Housing Grant (SHG) respectively when buying Build-To-Order HDB flats for the first time (Housing & Development Board, n.d.).

The Singapore population has an estimated 87% home ownership rate, one of the highest home ownership rates in the world (Prime Minister's Office, 2018). This is made possible through the Central Provident Fund (CPF) which citizens can use to pay off their housing loans. CPF is a comprehensive social security system that enables working Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents to set aside funds for retirement. It also addresses healthcare, home ownership, family protection, and asset enhancement (Central Provident Fund Board, 2019).

Why is housing a crucial social policy related to social services? It is because housing promotes social mobility, financial security, and provides individuals and families with a safe and comfortable place to live. Housing is at times taken for granted in Singapore's social service deliberation. In many other countries, social services face greater challenges in securing permanent housing for clients.

For example, in the United States, low-income households can receive housing vouchers to pay for housing in the private market. The intention of providing these vouchers is to promote residential mobility, where low-income families can use these vouchers to purchase houses in better neighbourhoods with lower crime rates.

However, this is not the reality for many Americans. Not all families who receive vouchers are able to find suitable housing, due to the lack of moderately priced rental housing, ethnic discrimination, and poor local administration (Tighe, Hatch & Mead, 2017). It also takes many years for families to find a place of residence using the vouchers. This has an effect on the families' personal safety, social networks, and schooling options for children.

2.2 Education

The provision of education is a policy that has a strong social dimension. From the start of Singapore's independence, education has provided the foundation for a literate and thinking workforce to drive economic development. Not long after independence, education for adults was strongly promoted. This often took the form of night classes for working adults to enhance their competencies and to ensure that the workforce was sufficiently skilled.

Subsidised education has always been an integral part of Singapore's education policy. In the recent decade, subsidies in education have become more targeted for the lower income group, who have been receiving more subsidies from pre-school to tertiary level. Currently, the government spends about 50% more, per student, on those who have a weaker start in learning compared to the average student (Prime Minister's Office, 2018). Having more specialists, smaller-sized classes, and activities to enhance confidence among students are some of the efforts to better engage these students (Shanmugaratnam, 2015).

In recent years the Early Childhood Developmental Agency (ECDA) started KidSTART, an intervention programme, which enables young children from low-income and vulnerable families to have a good start in life. KidSTART supports and monitors the developmental progress of children from birth, up to the age of six. The programme builds a strong ecosystem of support for the child by coordinating holistic services among stakeholders such as preschools and hospitals for families, where needed (Early Childhood Development Agency, 2017).

2.3 Healthcare

The provision of primary healthcare is another policy that acts as a strong base for the social service system. The health of an individual is intricately tied to one's well-being that it often affects the level of social service support that the individual needs. For example, in Singapore's early years, healthcare provided by the state comprised

of home visitations and support to almost all mothers and babies known to the health system (Ministry of Health Holdings, 2015). These provisions have helped to reduce the chances of poor developmental growth among very young children. The provision of basic and affordable healthcare services in Singapore has been essential in ensuring that the population's health and social needs are being met.

Based on the philosophy of personal responsibility and shared payments with the government, the 3Ms were introduced — MediSave, MediFund, and MediShield Life (Ministry of Health Holdings, 2015). MediSave is a medical savings scheme to help Singaporeans meet immediate and future medical expenses, while MediShield Life is an insurance scheme that pays for large hospital bills and selected outpatient treatments. Finally, MediFund is an endowment fund that helps the needy who are unable to afford their medical expenses, even after subsidies (Ministry of Health, 2018). The 3M framework provides multiple layers of protection to ensure that no Singaporean is denied basic healthcare treatment due to affordability issues.

There has been a growing recognition of the need for agencies to provide both health and social support to clients as one's health and social well-being are closely intertwined. The Community Networks for Seniors (CNS), which will be expanded nationwide by 2020, is one example (Ministry of Finance, 2018). CNS provides social and healthcare support to seniors through a team of volunteers from the community, as well as government agencies. The CNS team promotes active ageing practices and care for seniors when they turn frail, such as accompanying the seniors for health screenings and encouraging them to participate in group exercises with other seniors (Siau, 2017).

Mental health support is also an important part of the social service continuum. Increasingly, community-based teams have been conducting mental health outreach and extending support to affected clients and their caregivers. One example is the Community Resource, Engagement and Support Team (CREST) which is made up of social service professionals who support residents with mental health issues as well as those who may be at risk. Their role is to link up their clients with the appropriate services and assistance. The Community Intervention Team (COMIT) is another community-based team that comprises multi-disciplinary professionals, such as counsellors and occupational therapists, who offer counselling and psychosocial therapeutic interventions and support for clients with mental health needs and their caregivers (Agency for Integrated Care, 2015).

These policies on education, housing, and healthcare serve as the three pillars that support the social and economic well-being of Singaporeans and the foundation of the social service ecosystem. It is essential to ensure that these policies are continually examined to foster social inclusion. The evolution of Singapore’s social service ecosystem is illustrated in greater detail in the following box story.

Box Story 3

Evolution of Singapore's Social Service Ecosystem — Interview with Associate Professor Ngiam Tee Liang

This box story is prepared by CSDA, based on an interview with Associate Professor Ngiam Tee Liang, the former Head of the Department of Social Work at the National University of Singapore.

It focuses on Associate Professor Ngiam's insights on the development of Singapore's social service sector over the past two decades and the progress achieved by the social services in the 21st century (SS21) strategic roadmap. He was involved in the making of the SS21, which was introduced in 1998 and articulated a shared vision for the sector. The SS21 plan is the predecessor of the 2017 Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST).

Achievements in the Past 20 Years

Healthcare

In the past, emphasis was placed on institutional care in the hospitals. Today, the Singapore healthcare sector is progressing towards community care, which includes a close collaboration between community-based and hospital-based intervention. Both types of intervention complement each other in ensuring an effective and efficient healthcare system.

One of the reasons that prompted this shift in the healthcare sector is an increasing trend of frequent flyers – patients who get well and are discharged from hospitals but are soon re-admitted due to a relapse of their medical issues. Often the relapse stems from inadequate, or an absence of, caregiving support from family members. Hence, there is a pressing need to have a holistic healthcare system that includes both community- and hospital-based care to ensure and further improve the health of the Singapore population.

Education

Over the past 20 years, there has been more attention and resources provided to children from lower income and less privileged families. The aim of this is to reduce intergenerational poverty and inequality. Inequality begins as early as when a child is first born (Currie, 2011). The hope is that by intervening at the initial stage of a child's life, the inequality gap will be minimised and the child can be placed in similar life trajectories as his or her peers.

One of these initiatives is before- and after-school care programmes, offered by many Student Care Centres in Singapore. This initiative allows children from dual-income families to be under adult supervision and hence greatly lowers their risk of being exposed to negative influences.

Among the students who attend such centres are latchkey children who return home to an empty house after school and spend their afternoons without parental supervision (Long & Long, 1983). The availability of Student Care Centres, thus, allows parents to work with peace of mind knowing that their children are under the care of adults, who are trained to assist them academically and socially.

Changing Family Profiles

Singapore has been actively attempting to raise marriage and fertility rates and reduce divorce rates. Over the years, many developmental and preventive measures were introduced to promote marriage, procreation, family life, and marital relationships. One of the many initiatives developed is marriage preparation courses for couples before they get married. These courses help couples prepare for their marital and family life together by providing a platform for them to learn about various aspects of their relationship as a marital pair and as a family. This helps both parties understand and learn how to deal with potential issues and conflicts that could arise in their relationship.

Professionalisation of Social Workers

There have been initiatives advocating for the professionalisation of social workers, mainly led by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF). Professionalisation, among other aspects, allows social workers to gain recognition in society and strengthens the status of social workers. The journey towards professionalisation was fraught with many challenges. It took persistent efforts by a whole spectrum of social work pioneers, such as Mrs Ann Wee and Ms Ang Bee Lian, to pave the way for social workers to be recognised as a profession.

One of the approaches to professionalisation has been through the accreditation of social workers. Presently, there is an accreditation system overseen by the Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board (SWAAB) which endorses qualified social workers. It was set up in 2009 jointly by MSF, the National Council for Social Service (NCSS) and the Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW). The system is recognised by the government, employers, and the public (Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board, 2015).

Through the years, the government, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector have been very supportive of the social work profession, sponsoring career development schemes, awards, and events and helping to raise the public profile of social workers, among other efforts. As a result, there is greater public awareness about social workers and the social work profession, which has helped to enhance the career prospects and professional development of social workers.

Governance and Management

Parts of the social service sector are moving towards collaborating and coordinating service delivery to better serve users using the ‘wraparound’ concept – having various agencies working together to provide a range of services to users. This is especially helpful for those users in need of multiple services. These efforts will hopefully lead to a more effective and efficient social service ecosystem. Some coordination attempts at the national level include SG Enable in the special needs and disability field, and Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) in the ageing field.

However, some agencies are concerned that collaboration with another organisation would mean a loss of their autonomy and independence. There is a need to reassure agencies that they will still retain their existing independence and to show these agencies the benefits of collaborations. Ultimately, good collaboration and partnership will yield better outcomes for beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries

It is recognised that many beneficiaries simultaneously face several social problems and therefore experience stress on several dimensions. As such, efforts to enhance collaboration and coordination between different social service organisations (SSOrgs) have been implemented, in order for them to work together to diagnose and solve unique and complex problems instead of working ineffectively in independent silos.

The concept of beneficiaries has been redefined and expanded. From its previous notion of the vulnerable and at-risk to include the general population, so that SSOrgs take on a more developmental and preventive approach. For example, the social service sector no longer just targets those undergoing divorce or marital conflicts. Marital preparation and enrichment workshops act as preventive measures to keep happy couples intact. More children are being reached out to as well to include not only children experiencing difficulties in school work, but also children that have been identified to show early signs of behavioural problems.

The Role of the Government

The government has played a key role in developing the social service sector in the past 20 years by supporting new SSOrgs like Family Service Centres (FSCs) and Social Service Offices (SSOs).

On top of funding SSOrgs, the government has also started to play a more active role in the collaboration of SSOrgs, as seen by its wraparound approach and increasing focus on regional planning. All this serves to elevate central-planning, funding, and coordinating within the social service sector.

3. The Social Service Ecosystem

A social service ecosystem constitutes a system of individuals and organisations functioning with a social purpose to serve various groups, such as families, children, youth, and seniors, as shown in the diagram below by National Council of Social Service (2017). Similar to an ecosystem, the social service ecosystem consists of interconnected parts that constantly interact and adapt to one another (Mattaini & Meyer, 2002).

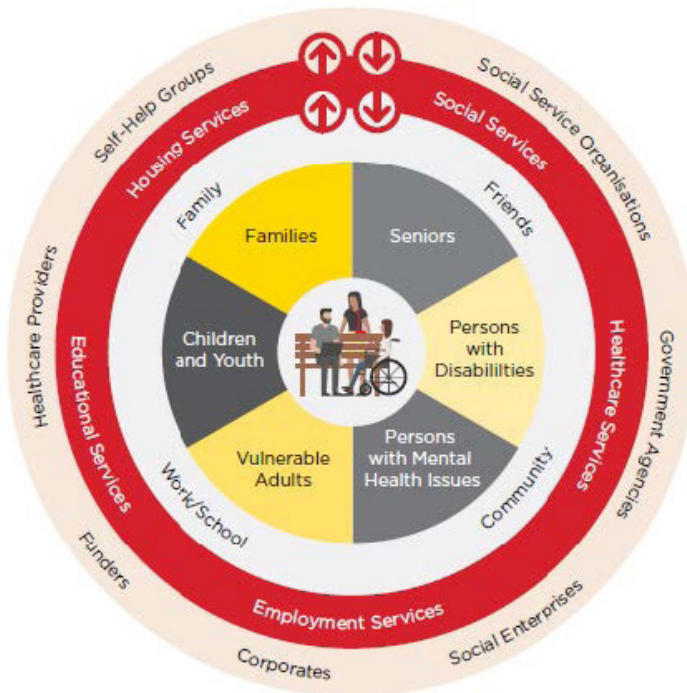


Figure 1: Diagram of the Social Service Ecosystem
Source: National Council of Social Service

The main players of the social service ecosystem are:

- i. The people sector — consists of individuals, non-governmental organisations, and service providers. Individuals support the community’s access to services and help by participating, providing help and giving constructive feedback to service providers and policymakers. Service providers provide good and safe services, which are regularly evaluated to ensure that they meet the needs of the population.
- ii. The private sector — fuels the growth of services and programmes by adopting or sponsoring them and lending their expertise to service providers.

- iii. The public sector — which includes the government, provides essential services to the population. It also provides funding for some programmes and social transfers for the most vulnerable members of society.

The people, private, and public sectors are all interconnected, such that each of their actions has an impact on the entire system. A successful ecosystem is premised on effective collaboration among these sectors. To understand how these sectors interact, it is useful to understand Singapore's social compact and the Many Helping Hands (MHH) approach. For the past few decades, Singapore's social compact was largely based on the MHH approach. Within this approach, many partners including government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and the community, provided a wide range of services to meet the needs of vulnerable people (Ang, 2015).

This approach aspires to create a fair, inclusive, and caring society, with an emphasis on collective responsibility among individuals, the community, and the state. The role of the government would be to provide social assistance for basic needs and focus on helping lower socio-economic groups gain self-reliance, by keeping their jobs to provide for their families and pay for their homes.

Since 2010, there has been a shift in Singapore's social compact in terms of the balance of roles among individuals, the community, and the government, with the latter injecting stronger support for grants and services. Beyond just co-funding social services, the government has started to play a more active role by giving more support and intervention for certain individuals and groups in society.

4. Trends Influencing the Social Service Ecosystem

In a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world, social issues are not just complicated, but increasingly complex. The landscape of social needs and trends is also changing as Singapore's population increases, ages, and becomes more diverse and educated. The effects of migration and globalisation have also gradually transformed the fabric of society (National Council for Social Service, 2017). There is a need to be critically aware of changing social trends and needs, and equip the social service sector to anticipate and respond accordingly. This will ensure a relevant and tenable social service ecosystem in the long run. There are two rising trends that the sector needs to take note of — an ageing population and the changing profiles of families.

4.1 An Ageing Population

In the last decade, the size of the elderly resident population in Singapore has increased. The proportion of residents aged 65 years and over has increased from 8.5% in 2007 to 13% in 2017 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2018). Between 2018 and 2030, the elderly population will grow by about 450,000 to 900,000 (Ministry of Finance, 2018). By 2030, the proportion of Singaporean residents aged 65 and above will more than double (Population.sg, 2017). From the diagram below, in 2015, 1 in 8 Singaporeans were aged 65 years and above. This is compared to 1 in 4 Singaporeans who will be aged 65 and above in 2030.

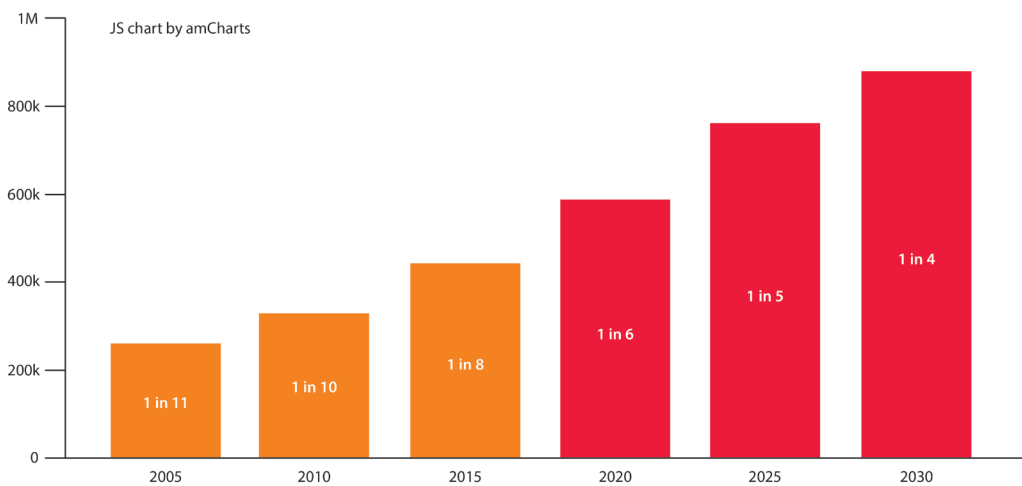


Figure 2: Number of Singapore Citizens Aged 65 and Above

Note:

Adapted from “Older Singaporeans to Double by 2030”, by Population.sg, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.population.sg/articles/older-singaporeans-to-double-by-2030>. Copyright by National Population and Talent Division, 2016. Reproduced with permission.

This is a major shift in the composition of Singapore’s population. This phenomenon is occurring at a faster pace in Singapore, compared to many other developed or mature countries that are also experiencing an ageing population as the baby boom generation moves into their senior years (Shiao, 2017).

The government has been expanding its social and healthcare schemes and initiatives to meet the needs of the growing ageing population. This can be seen in recent developments such as the Pioneer Generation Package, which was introduced in 2014,

and CareShield Life, which will be launched in 2020. CareShield Life will address the long-term care needs of the ageing population, especially those with severe disability.

Aside from the government providing programmes and services for the elderly, there is also a need to challenge the social mindset on ageing. The common misconception that ageing is a physically and mentally deteriorative process needs to be corrected. Instead, ageing should be seen as an active and progressive stage of life continued. The concept of active ageing encourages seniors to have active lifestyles, be engaged in suitable work opportunities and be socially connected. Creating socially inclusive communities where the elderly can interact with different age groups is also important as this reduces the social stigma of ageing and furthers the active ageing concept.

Programmes, such as CNS and CREST, are some examples of the community stepping up to play a bigger role in engaging and caring for the elderly population. Social engagement and support are key in sustaining the mental and physical health of seniors. This will be increasingly important with the rising trend of single seniors who lack family support. It will also be helpful to involve seniors in the co-creation of programmes and services. The elderly will be able to design programmes that are more attuned to the needs and interests of their population, and will thus enable a wider participation in the service delivery process.

To keep the elderly population socially engaged, digital platforms can be used to create support networks on mobile platforms, in addition to their current communities. Digital platforms and tools can also be utilised to transform jobs to be more elderly-friendly. Some examples include using technology to do laborious aspects of the job or teleconferencing for seniors who are less mobile. This will be welcomed by the more digitally savvy elderly population of the future.

4.2 Changing Profiles of Families

Singapore's household family structures are changing, with a growing proportion of non-nuclear types of households. More than a decade ago, a typical two-generation family (married couple living with their children or parents under the same roof) made up 60% of all resident households in Singapore. In 2014, this proportion had fallen to less than half of Singapore's households (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2015). From 2000 to 2014, the proportion of married couples who do not live with their children had increased from 11% to 14% (Mathews and Straughan, 2015). One-person households have also increased from 8% to 11.9%, from 2000 to 2014 (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2015). Another trend is the rise in smaller families where couples are

having fewer children. All these changes impose different demands on the type of social service support needed.

As Singapore's ageing population grows, more families will experience the phenomenon of caring for older family members, as well as their growing children. This group of people is referred to as the sandwiched generation. In most of these families, both parents are working. Besides facing pressures at work, they are responsible for the caregiving of the children and older family members.

Those in the sandwiched generation need to make deliberate efforts to manage their work, caregiving, and household responsibilities. On top of the complexity of juggling work and caregiving, they have the responsibility of ensuring that young children do not have unprecedented and unguided access to information and influences in this digital age. Given the multiple responsibilities that families face, support services for families have to be more intuitive and accessible in their daily lives. A good example would be flexible work arrangements which would be crucial in helping families cope and thrive.

Another emerging trend is the rise in marriage dissolution rates among recent marriage cohorts. In 2016, there was a 1.2% increase in marital dissolutions from the year before, tallying to more than 7,600 divorces and annulments ("Fewer Marriages", 2017). The impact of divorce goes beyond the husband and wife. In 2014, around 4,728 children, below 21 years of age, were affected by their parents' divorce (Goy, 2016).

Over the past few years, there has also been a significant increase in transnational families in Singapore, which often takes on a multi-cultural dimension. More than 3 in 10 marriages in Singapore involve a foreign spouse (National Population and Talent Division, 2017). These transnational families face significant challenges in areas such as obtaining citizenship for the foreign spouse, housing, employment, finance as well as assimilating foreign spouses to the new culture and environment.

As family structures change, assistance schemes and policies need to be re-examined to ensure that the needs of families are met in relevant ways. Families are the first line of care and support in Singapore's initiatives. However, this principle will be increasingly tested, with the emergence of family structures which lack family support, such as couples with fewer or no children and single-person households. Hence, it will be helpful to see if a broader sense of family support can be encouraged, such as roping the community in to play a bigger role in caring for individuals who do not have strong family support.

In 2014, the Divorce Support Specialist Agencies (DSSAs) were set up to provide stronger support to divorcing and divorced families and children, as well as to encourage cooperative co-parenting for divorced families with a child-centric approach (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2018a). The agencies offer specialised services for divorced families, such as counselling, parenting, and family dispute management. Parents with children below the age of 21 will need to attend the Mandatory Parenting Programme, a consultation session conducted by DSSA counsellors, prior to the couple's act to file for divorce. The programme encourages divorcing couples to make informed decisions that prioritise the well-being of children and better understand the importance of co-parenting (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2016).

Transnational Family Support Programme agencies were also established in 2014, to help the growing number of transnational families prepare for their cross-cultural marriages. These agencies run programmes to help couples manage cross-cultural differences in their marriages and integrate into the community. These include the Marriage Preparation Programme, which is offered prior to marriage, and the Marriage Support Programme, which provides information on community resources for foreign spouses to adapt to life in Singapore (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2018b).

5. Building a Sustainable Social Service Ecosystem

The sector is mindful of the increasing challenges that lie ahead. On the economic front, business cycles have become shorter and more volatile, causing workers who are less skilled or older, to be concerned about whether they can keep up. On the social front, the increasing life-span of Singaporeans indicates new demands for social support.

As family structures and population demographics change, the social service sector plays an important part in addressing emerging trends and challenges. This will ensure that services and programmes stay relevant, which will be important in keeping the social service ecosystem sustainable. Investing in people, driving transformation and innovation, having a strong continuum of service, and enhancing service delivery and collaboration are key factors that contribute towards a sustainable social service ecosystem.

5.1 Investing in People

People form the core of social service sector work. There is currently a social service industry manpower plan to build a future-ready sector, which already employs more

than 13,000 people across a range of professions (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2017). Investing well in people, in terms of their capabilities and competencies, is important in preparing the social service ecosystem to face present and future opportunities and demands.

As identified in the 4ST, one of the challenges that the sector faces is resource constraints. The social service industry manpower plan aims to tackle organisational and manpower challenges in the sector (National Council of Social Service, 2017). The plan intends to build up the sector's manpower by expanding the volunteer pool, reviewing professional conversion programmes, and using resources in a more optimised manner. It also aims to enhance career and professional development through the development of a Skills Framework to promote a better understanding of job roles and career pathways, and to enhance training delivery to upgrade the skill sets of professionals (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2017a).

Social service leadership is also key in the development of social service professionals. Unique to the social service sector is the promotion of team leadership where leaders from various sub-sectors collaborate with each other, rather than to compete with one another. The sharing of expertise, best practices, and vision among sector leaders will help raise the standards of different sub-sectors and bring the entire sector to greater heights. The ability to innovate, implement, manage outcomes, and produce quality improvements are important qualities to cultivate among social service leaders too.

5.2 Driving Transformation and Innovation

Being innovative is important in ensuring the social service sector remains relevant and impactful in enhancing the well-being of service users. Innovation is about having a spirit of curiosity and creativity, questioning the status quo, thinking out of the box or enhancing existing ideas.

This is particularly salient in the current environment, where emerging research and changing trends may challenge conventional wisdom and assumptions. SSOrgs need to constantly re-evaluate current designs of policies and programmes, and question if they are the best ways of reaching the desired outcomes. One possible idea to encourage innovative thinking would be making innovation a key criteria of funding proposals. This would incentivise agencies to be inventive in planning and implementing services and programmes, and to constantly examine how they can improve.

The current age of digital disruption is another reason why innovation is ever so crucial in today's context. The present Fourth Industrial Revolution represents new and unanticipated ways of technology becoming embedded within societies and even in human bodies (Davis, 2016). This can be seen in recent technological advancements, such as big data analytics and real-time Internet-based communications (Kinzel, 2017). These digital changes have completely revolutionised the way things are being done. It has changed the way consumers demand for services such as expecting services to be delivered instantaneously or having greater control over service delivery, as seen in the increasing use of self-service portals.

While the sector has started to use some technologies, such as tele-rehabilitation for seniors and e-counselling, there is still much room for the sector to harness the potential of technology to transform services and work processes. For example, data analytics is an area that can be greater utilised in the social and healthcare services. One possibility would be using data analytics to turn complex medical information from clients into insights so that doctors, social workers, and healthcare providers can make better decisions from the data presented (Getz, 2014). These technological innovations will raise productivity so that professionals and practitioners can focus on more important and client-centric aspects of work such as casework and intervention. Social service professionals need to be open to continue learning and adapting to new technologies in creating client-centric and sustainable services in the long run.

5.3 Continuum of Service

Having a continuum of service refers to having an array of services such as preventive services, rehabilitative and protective services, acute services, step-down support, and long-term maintenance services in the social service sector. A strong continuum of service is key in ensuring that the social service sector can appropriately respond to a demand or supply of resources that arises from the social service ecosystem. The wide range of services also better facilitates a match between the presenting need and the required services.

A good outcome of a well-designed system and continuum of service promotes the values of individual responsibility over one's welfare and self-reliance while receiving support from neighbours, the community, and acute services when necessary. The unified responsibility and action of individuals, community, and the state will continuously shape the ecosystem.

One of the challenges in service delivery is not to assume that more is good but to apply wisdom gained from deep experiences to stretch the continuum of service for appropriate deployment of resources and capabilities. There is a need to regularly identify changing needs and environmental trends, analyse whether services meet these needs, and re-design programmes if necessary, in order to ensure a strong continuum of service. Relevant resources should be set aside for the needs and services identified, ensuring that there are adequate resources for current and future use for social services.

5.4 Enhancing Social Service Delivery to the Last Mile

A client-centric social service ecosystem is one where services are delivered seamlessly to the last mile. It must be grounded in strong planning and coordination to support individuals and families in need. How can holistic and integrated help for clients and their families be achieved?

Firstly, help from government and organisations from the social service sector must be accessible so that those in need can seek and receive assistance easily. MSF has 24 Social Service Offices (SSOs) that are located in HDB towns. Their core function is to assess clients who are in financial need and administer ComCare assistance to those eligible.

To ensure that client's needs are addressed holistically, these SSOs may refer these clients to other agencies if needed. Since 2015, MSF has been piloting various integrated service delivery models, to enable clients to access more services with greater convenience. Through co-location with other service providers, some SSOs are able to offer family services and employment assistance to their clients at the same premises. Other SSOs have started 'virtual co-location' through video-conferencing. In these SSOs, clients can be virtually linked up with HDB and SG Enable, so that they can have their queries addressed immediately.

Secondly, there must be close coordination across agencies to minimise unintended friction for clients and help them resolve their issues more holistically. With good information sharing across agencies, clients need not repeat their circumstances or submit similar documents multiple times. When agencies collaborate to align their action plans, their interventions can reinforce one another to help clients regain stability. Where cases are complex and difficult to advance, agencies should consider escalating these cases to relevant ministries or agencies for prompt resolution.

Lastly, the community-at-large has to be involved to complement the work of the government and organisations from the social sector. Last mile service delivery depends critically on resources like networks and volunteers. Since 2018, regular community networking sessions have been organised by SSOs and the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), under the ambit of SG Cares. These sessions bring community partners like SSOrgs, schools, government agencies, and grassroots organisations together to build relationships and collaborate to serve local needs.

Taken together, these efforts will bring more holistic and integrated help for clients and their families, and give them greater opportunities to regain stability and fulfil their potential.

5.5 Collaboration is a Necessity

To build a sustainable social service ecosystem, collaboration is a necessity, not a ‘good to have’. Collaboration will enable agencies, professionals, and funders to have a holistic view of the problem. Once these stakeholders share a common goal, they create synergy. Collaboration is crucial due to resource constraints in the social service sector, especially in manpower and expertise.

The collaborative synergies amongst stakeholders help to fill the gaps in knowledge, skills, and capacity which individual entities may not be able to address if they work independently. By working together, these stakeholders can pool their resources to create and provide integrated service delivery that is highly valued by clients.

To help clients resolve their issues more holistically, there must be close coordination across agencies. When agencies collaborate to align their action plans, their interventions can reinforce one another to help clients regain stability. Complex issues require multi-disciplinary interventions and inputs from relevant stakeholders. Where cases are complex and difficult to resolve, agencies should consider escalating these cases to relevant Ministries or agencies for prompt resolution.

For practitioners to collaborate effectively, specific skills are required. To work together, all practitioners must have a clear understanding of the purpose and vision of their collaboration. Communication, trust, and a healthy culture of give and take are essential for practitioners to work together.

Collaboration should not be limited to just within the social service sector. The social service sector needs to collaborate with the private sector. Private sector involvement

could bring expertise in areas less familiar to the social sector, such as supply-chain management, social media, knowledge management, and customer care.

5.6 Contributing Towards Sustainability

What other factors are necessary for a sustainable social service ecosystem? A sustainable social service ecosystem has to be maintained by the principle of collective responsibility. It should not be just reliant on policies and funding. Instead, a sustainable social service ecosystem should be backed by strong support networks on the ground.

The social service ecosystem is built on a sense of care and inclusion that sustains the community. At present, there are several networks that reach out extensively to the community. These networks include the SSOs, SSOrgs, CNS, and childcare centres. These networks are touchpoints for those in need to access services.

The key factor in maintaining a sustainable ecosystem is who pays for the service. In the case of healthcare, there is a tested system of sharing the payment responsibility amongst the individual or family, the state, and the community through a national insurance scheme. It is crucial to have the right balance in the distribution of collective responsibility. Too much reliance on the individual and family to pay for healthcare costs may be deemed inequitable.

It is also worth understanding that when the state pays, it comes from taxes, be it personal tax, corporate tax or the Goods and Services Tax (GST). If there is a high dependence on insurance schemes, consumers may overuse the services. This will inevitably lead to an increase in the state's cost of maintaining the insurance scheme. Ongoing calibration on who bears what proportion of the cost is necessary.

The individual and family, in particular, have the greatest impact on the preventive part of the continuum. Strong social support and community bonds also help to combat deterioration. While the state continues to play an active, interventionist role, it must not be the sole provider as it is unable to singlehandedly shape Singapore's social service ecosystem.

The responsibility remains largely with the social service providers, community, and the philanthropic circle in society. Having partners from different backgrounds come together to support the social service ecosystem will contribute to its sustainability, by drawing on each other's expertise to resolve the increasingly multi-dimensional and complex problems.

6. Looking Ahead

The future offers opportunities and challenges. The trends and changes in family structure are not unusual in the current environment that is dynamic and constantly open to change. If the social service sector adheres to the principles that build its foundation, it will be able to continue building an inclusive and progressive society. A more caring social service ecosystem will lead to greater social acceptance of the vulnerable and influence the community to play a bigger role in supporting them. Embracing the concept of active and productive ageing will also change mindsets towards seniors and enable them to participate and contribute back to society. Nurturing a culture of collective responsibility further motivates us to take initiative to offer help as individuals, as voluntary bodies, and as businesses.

These networks of support and empathy will encourage individuals to take more responsibility for themselves and make the right choices in life. It is about how people relate to one another and the respect they extend to each other as fellow citizens in their contributions to the community.

The social service sector will be part of Singapore's fair and inclusive society, with a foundation built by government social policies and redistributive schemes, urban planning strategies, and economic capabilities. It is after all a sector that upholds the dignity of individuals who desire to take ownership of their lives and their family, and to continually do better and lead better lives.

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Chapter 3

Developing a Sustainable Social Service Sector

by Mathew Mathews^e

This chapter discusses how social service organisations (SSOrgs) can remain effective in the long-term. It covers the changing social landscape and the development of a sustainable social service sector. The content was developed based on panel interviews with leaders from the social service sector. They are:



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Dr Fermin Diez

Deputy Chief Executive Officer &
Group Director, Human Capital and Organisation Development,
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)



Dr Gerard Ee

Chairman,
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Mr Hsieh Fu Hua

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The author wishes to acknowledge the help of Andrew Jae Lim in the preparation of this chapter.

1. Introduction

Social care needs and the corresponding social spending are expected to rise in Singapore. Much of this has been attributed to an ageing population, where healthcare and eldercare spending was expected to rise by S\$550 million in the financial year 2018 (Chuang, 2018). Besides this consideration, increased social spending is needed to address the widening social inequality. Robust interventions must be in place so that those at the bottom of the socio-economic structure can achieve upward social mobility, especially in an era where rapid technological advances can result in substantial disruption to people's livelihood. Social spending is also needed to facilitate the greater inclusion of the disabled and other marginalised communities.

The Singaporean model of welfare has however eschewed universal assistance schemes. The situations in other societies are clear examples of how generous schemes can be abused and can be a disincentive to hard work, especially in the long-term (Lindbeck, 2006). Moreover, as Singapore politicians have affirmed, addressing increased social needs through more spending is insufficient as a strategy – there must also be a strong support structure in the community (Au-Yong, 2017).

It is crucial then that there is a strong social service sector to support the broader visions of the community in providing adequate care and upliftment. For the social service sector to remain relevant and future-ready, it is important to evaluate its sustainability and redefine what it means as well as how best to achieve it.

SSOrgs are a large group of stakeholders in the social service sector. They provide services to the poor, needy, and vulnerable. For the sector to achieve sustainability, SSOrgs have to think strategically and respond creatively, in order to reinvent and transform themselves.

2. The Changing Social Landscape

2.1 Rapid Advances in Technology

Advances in technology, such as data analytics, have opened new ways of redefining service delivery and enabling service providers to access new clients, partners, and alternative sources of manpower or partners to deliver care jointly.

Mr Hsieh gave an example of the emerging possibilities that technology could provide. He cited an article by The Straits Times that showed how apps and chat groups in local

universities helped reduce food wastage from campus buffet leftovers, which would have otherwise been thrown away (Koh, 2017). In the same way, he suggested that technology can provide new ways of filling gaps in society.

Technology has enabled people to share ideas more freely and in unconventional and innovative ways. With the evolving social landscape, SSOrgs need to reinvent and transform themselves to remain sustainable. According to Mr Hsieh, having a heart of gold alone no longer suffices. He added that SSOrgs that lack imagination will face disruption and soon become unnecessary.

2.2 Disruption and Competition

Mr Hsieh noted that the sector is going through disruption as for-profit organisations are entering the social service sector to provide services in a more cost-effective manner. For example, the idea that nursing homes can only be operated by SSOrgs is no longer valid. In fact, nursing homes can be operated by for-profit organisations. In Singapore, some of the private nursing home operators include ECON Healthcare Group, Orange Valley Nursing Homes Pte Ltd, and United Medicare Pte Ltd.

While competition spurs SSOrgs to improve their quality of service, it inevitably leads to increased costs. To offset the increase in operation costs, SSOrgs might require additional government subsidies. Since financial sustainability is key to SSOrgs, they have to look for new ways to gather and use resources to remain competitive and provide up-to-par services.

Disruption can result in new social issues. Thus, SSOrgs, regardless of their size, need to review their organisation's mission as well as programmes to stay relevant.

2.3 An Ageing Population

Demographic shifts to a rapidly ageing population will mean an increase in needs. By 2030, over 900,000 Singaporeans, or about 1 in 4 Singaporeans, will be aged 65 years and above (Population.sg, 2016). Refer to Figure 2 in Chapter 2 for details.

At the same time, family size is shrinking. An older population can also mean higher care needs – there will be more frail seniors who need assistance with activities of daily living, as well as healthcare services. The need for formal care and social services is likely to increase as informal family support weakens. For example, one key challenge is addressing needs that arise from social isolation. The number of seniors living alone

or senior couples living alone, also known as empty nesters, is expected to increase to 83,000 by 2030 (Tan, 2014). This is a concerning number given that social isolation can increase seniors' risk of mental health issues and worsen physical health. Studies have also shown that loneliness is an issue, not just among seniors living alone, but seniors who live with their families as well.

2.4 Pressure on the Sandwiched Generation

The growing number of seniors has led to rising pressure on the sandwiched generation, the stratum of people looking after their children while caring for their ageing parents at the same time. From increased medical bills to physical and emotional fallout, this can add pressure on the social service sector to extend help beyond the low-income group alone.

In particular, Ms Ang opined that the sandwiched generation faces challenges from re-skilling towards reemployment in an increasingly volatile global economy to fulfilling various obligations at home. The issue is compounded by the fact that families today have fewer children, and fewer adults to share the burden of supervising and caring for both the young and old. As such, the sandwiched generation could do with greater help from the state and the community. Having accessible and affordable services to provide care and support, such as befriending services, would be helpful.

3. Developing a Sustainable Social Service Sector

A sustainable social service sector, as Dr Ee emphasised, must regard sustainability not just in terms of financial survival but also the continuous production of good outcomes. This can be done through the regular review of programmes, being in tune with research, and designing with empathy.

Ms Ang reflected that as major stakeholders in service delivery, SSOrgs need to develop deep knowledge and think strategically on how to develop a sustainable social service sector. They can respond adaptively and creatively by engaging and forging partnerships with other stakeholders.

Specific to the aged care sector, Ms Teoh highlighted that organisations serving seniors would have to scale and evolve their services to meet growing needs successfully; to achieve this, they will have to develop strong organisational capabilities, be it in manpower, finance, or governance systems.

This section provides an in-depth discussion on sustainability. It includes a box story by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) on ensuring financial sustainability in the social service sector and discussion on seven aspects of sustainability. The seven aspects of sustainability are scaling up, productivity and innovation, technology and data, manpower, organisational competencies, adopting a preventive approach, and building community capacity.

Box Story 4 Ensuring Financial Sustainability in the Social Service Sector

This box story is provided by Mr Sim Gim Guan, Chief Executive Officer of NCSS. NCSS is the umbrella body for some 450 member SSORgs in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in social services, to enhance the capabilities of SSORgs, and to provide strategic partnerships for social services.

The box story is about the four types of funding streams that are available for SSORgs and how they can tap on these fundings to remain financially sustainable.

Mainstream Funding by the Government

Traditionally, subvention funding is channelled to statutory support services and key social support services for the more vulnerable populations in the society. Examples include support services in residential facilities for adults with severe disabilities and seniors ageing alone. This income source has been increasing yearly as needs increase and become more complex.

The advantages of such a funding stream are that funding norms are regularly reviewed according to market trends and that service models would be regularly tested to ensure that they remain relevant. Leaders should be prepared to set up processes that ensure timely reporting of deliverables to the relevant government ministries. In addition, organisations should be prepared for even more stringent regulations for selected programme types such as licensing for residential facilities.

Community-based Funding from the Tote Board Social Service Fund and the Community Chest

These two organisations are the largest community-based funders for social services outside of the government.

Two distinct traits between a community-based funding stream and that of the government are — (i) funding quantum; and (ii) frequency of recurrent funding. A funding quantum at 50% is currently adopted for most social service programmes receiving community-based funding. Exceptions may be made for pilot initiatives on a case-by-case basis, to ease the fundraising burden during the start-up and pioneering phase. In addition, the funding period is typically capped at three years, with renewals subject to reviews made by the administering body, in this case, NCSS.

Community funding has also been an important income stream in supporting service users who require additional funding on top of subvention funding. Service users accessing programmes subjected to a means-tested framework will receive the incremental increase in subsidies if they are eligible under the framework developed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF).

One-off Funding

The sources of one-off funding options vary and are often subject to specific terms and conditions to guide its intended use. The funds typically cover expenditure beyond manpower and programme needs such as facility management. The more commonly tapped on resources would be the VWOs-Charities Capability Fund (VCF), Care & Share, and one-off grants and donations as a result of ongoing fundraising efforts by individual organisations.

Fundraising efforts by NCSS' member organisations are categorised here as the majority of them require regular fundraising activities to sustain their operating expenditure annually. Exceptions might be SSOrgs affiliated with religious institutions which receive regular streams of funding support.

Another exception will be large SSOrgs⁶. They are at an organisational phase where they have the maturity to explore new means of financial sustainability. They can also learn good financial practices from the private sector.

Others

This category includes programme fees and investment returns from reserves, if relevant. This is likely to be the smallest funding stream as majority of the SSOrgs are likely to have received either mainstream or community-based funding, or both. From past observations of our member organisations, it is highly unlikely that organisations would sustain their operations based on this marginal income source alone.

However, it is still possible to grow resources from this stream regardless of the amount. Depending on the reserves accumulated, funding streams, and the long-term needs of the organisations, leaders of SSOrgs could pool all these resources together and set aside earned revenue for endowment purposes. This is commonly practised in universities and hospitals. To ensure that it is aligned with the organisation's mission, it should be done with inputs from individuals with the relevant skill sets and under the advice of the organisation's board.

⁶ Large Charity refers to a charity with gross annual receipts in each financial year of not less than \$10 million in the 2 financial years immediately preceding the current financial year of the charity (Charities Act, 2008).

3.1 Scaling Up

In growing the social service sector to meet the needs of an ageing population, the government seeks to meet care needs in a few ways. First, the government invests in expanding the capacity of aged care services (Table 2).

Service	End - 2011	End - 2017	2020 Target
Nursing Home <i>(licensed capacity)</i>	9,600 beds	14,900 beds	17,000 beds
Centre-based Care	2,100 day places	5,000 day places	6,200 day places
Home Care	3,800 places	8,000 places	10,000 places

Table 2: Capacity of Aged Care Services
Source: Ministry of Health

The government's Build-Own-Lease (BOL) scheme for aged care facilities enables such organisations to more easily expand their services, by reducing the substantial upfront capital investments. Under this scheme, the government pays for the construction as well as the upfront furniture and equipment of aged care facilities, such as eldercare centres and nursing homes, and requests for proposals from providers to operate these government-owned facilities. In addition, the government provides pre-operations funding to help BOL operators defray the start-up costs and to enable them to ramp-up operations quickly. This reduces the financial barriers for SSORgs to enter or expand their services.

Ms Teoh further indicated that the government works with SSORgs to improve the quality of aged care services. In 2014, the Ministry of Health (MOH) introduced the Enhanced Nursing Home Standards, which is a set of standards co-developed with the nursing home sector, to ensure that seniors can obtain safe as well as dignified care in nursing homes.

Supporting SSORgs and encouraging them to scale up have been important aspects of the government's sector development efforts. However, it is equally important for different players to form strong partnerships among themselves. This would allow

SSOrgs to better serve clients with complex issues, rather than leave clients to approach different organisations for different needs.

3.2 Productivity and Innovation

According to Dr Fermin Diez, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Group Director of Human Capital and Organisational Development at NCSS, productivity is not well understood. In the social service sector, it simply means maximising existing services with available resources. Improving productivity can mean greater collaboration to pool knowledge and resources, automating processes, piloting new and more effective solutions, or enhancing the capabilities of existing staff.

Dr Diez noted that NCSS is currently exploring various forms of productivity-type measures, one of which is a shared services organisation that NCSS has embarked on in partnership with Singapore Post that would provide back-office support to participating social service organisations. At the same time, NCSS is also looking at how to help SSOrgs in ways that would help them maximise their resources, be it space planning to processing efficiency or using the latest technologies to improve productivity.

To foster productivity and innovation, several initiatives have been instituted by the government to enable providers to try new ideas. NCSS administers the VWO-Charities Fund Innovation & Productivity Grant (VCF-IPG), which supports SSOrgs in adopting and scaling innovative and technological solutions to optimise resources and improve productivity. The Infocomm Media Development Authority also hosts the Social Innovation programme, which funds 75% of the cost of 10 projects spearheaded by SSOrgs to adopt IT solutions.

In addition, there is funding from the Community Silver Trust. Managed by MOH, the trust aims to encourage donations and provide additional resources in the form of dollar-for-dollar matching grants for eligible organisations in the intermediate and long-term care sector to build capabilities and enhance care quality. This complements the Tote Board Community Healthcare Fund that provides seed funding for new innovative projects. The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) also supports providers in improving productivity given tighter manpower constraints and amidst rising demands for healthcare services. Under the Healthcare Productivity Roadmap launched in 2012, AIC has set up schemes to support community care providers to improve manpower productivity in key areas such as process and job review, training, and adoption of technology and assistive equipment. Additionally, AIC has facilitated the central bulk

procurement of common goods and services, such as diapers, milk feeds, and electricity, to aggregate demand and reduce costs for individual aged care providers.

3.3 Technology and Data

Technology and productivity come hand-in-hand, though its use in social service delivery is relatively nascent. Some examples include start-ups, such as Homage and Jaga-Me, which connect nurses and home care providers to patients in need of care through the use of an app. Community groups such as RSVP Singapore The Organisation of Senior Volunteers have started to apply crowdsourcing to match senior volunteers with volunteer opportunities, according to location and interest. Furthermore, NCSS is working on a big digital dashboard, tapping on big data and data analytics to better understand the supply and demand of services.

The government has sought to catalyse the use of technology among SSOrgs to reinvent social services. For instance, as part of the National Innovation Challenge (NIC) on Active and Confident Ageing, MOH launched the Care-At-Home Innovation Grant in August 2015, which sought to bring technology companies and aged care providers together to co-create innovative solutions towards improved home care delivery and productivity. Under the grant, TOUCH Community Services partnered with PulseSync to make use of mobile technology to identify, connect, and match volunteers based on their interests and availability to real-time needs of frail seniors, such as meal delivery and transport escort services. The AIC has also promoted information technology (IT) enablement among aged care providers to improve business effectiveness, such as its IT system NHELP, which helps nursing homes to better manage clinical care processes, human resources, and finances.

Technology can do more for us than integrating or quickening work processes. As Ms Ang noted, technology can be harnessed to generate new data and information through processes of evaluation, research, observation, and feedback. One needs to be conscious of the data's inherent context and implied audience, especially when the data is used for other initiatives, studies, or decision making processes.

Dr Ee added that SSOrgs should use data analytics to derive useful clues about the root causes of social issues, find better solutions and produce better outcomes. This requires a large base of data, which can be consolidated if SSOrgs collaborate and share their data. Such inter-agency sharing of data would provide for a better understanding of issues and the sharing of experiences and knowledge towards advancing overall ability and effectiveness. In contrast, operating in silos works against everybody. If big data

is to be employed, depending on what data is collected and analysed, organisations would be enabled to design more effective programmes. However, he cautioned that organisations must be willing to abandon or change existing programmes. This would also require management skills and efforts as this may result in a need to reorganise or retrain existing staff.

The rapid development in connected big data and data analytics will enable the government and SSOrgs to better coordinate services and understand the cause of social issues. However, Dr Ee felt that the government is better resourced and positioned to coordinate the collection, collation, and analyses of data, and to disseminate insights to the ground for deliberation. This results in more effective policies and programmes being created.

Box Story 5 Metta Welfare Association's Use of Web-Based Customer Relationship Management, Donor and Volunteer Engagement (DoVE)

This box story is a case study of Metta Welfare Association (thereafter, 'Metta'), a member organisation of NCSS, and its use of technology to improve the efficiency of work processes. This case study is jointly provided by Metta and Mr Sim Gim Guan, Chief Executive Officer of NCSS.

From the young to the elderly, the infirm to the terminally ill, Metta transcends racial and religious barriers to enhance their quality of life. Metta is dedicated to working closely with its clients, donors, partners, suppliers, and community organisations for the provision of welfare services to meet the needs of the community at its centres.

Metta faces a challenge that is not unique to many SSOrgs — connecting different stakeholders with key information to provide better care for their service users. Using spreadsheets and older technology to manage all business processes, from contacting donors to care management plans, Metta found that processes were inefficient. They found that its staff ended up with a duplication of efforts, and experienced frustration because it can be time-consuming and tedious to carry out the work. Some of the activities such as fundraising and volunteer events were affected as information was inaccessible.

In 2015, Metta approached a consulting firm to customise a donation and volunteer-management product called DoVE to address this issue. Today, Metta staff are not only able to access up-to-date information about their donors across its organisation, but also able to better develop fundraising strategies through data analysis. In addition, Metta is also able to raise funds through DoVE due to the add-on function.

3.4 Manpower

As manpower is key to growing the social services, Ms Teoh pointed out that the government has been helping to build and develop the community care workforce's capabilities. For instance, the AIC has been organising recruitment fairs to help support providers in hiring locals. In 2017, more than 1,000 locals were recruited into the community care sector through AIC's employment facilitation efforts. More structured and bite-sized training courses have also been introduced under the Community Care Training Programme to reduce barriers to entry for Singaporeans, who are interested in healthcare and therapy assistant roles. AIC also introduced on-the-job training funding support to employers for each local support care staff hired, to facilitate the induction of new hires.

Besides support care staff, MOH and AIC have also supported providers in recruiting nurses, another core group of staff in nursing homes. They have enhanced funding under the Return-to-Nursing programme, to encourage non-practising local nurses to join the community care sector. The Community Nursing Scholarship was also launched in July 2017 to build a strong pipeline of community nurse leaders.

MOH and AIC also work actively with the sector to develop their staff. AIC administers subsidies to community care providers to send staff for basic modular training offered by the AIC-appointed Learning Institutes (AIC-appointed LIs), which offer a wide range of courses. These courses include clinical skills, and leadership and people management. Community care providers can also tap on the Community Care Manpower Development Award for formal skills upgrading of new entrants and in-service staff, as well as skills training by invited local and overseas experts. Ms Teoh said that over 700 community care staff have been supported to further their education and fulfil their career aspirations since 2012. Providers can also receive support under the Community Care Training Grant for external conferences and training programmes.

There will be constraints in the local workforce given an ageing population. While foreign manpower serves to augment the local labour supply, an over-reliance on foreign workforce may not be sustainable. On how to sustain services in the context of tight manpower constraints, Ms Teoh pointed out that the growing young-old⁷ population might be a new, rich resource in the midst of a population that is not only living longer, but living longer healthily. Many of them are looking for meaningful second careers in the

⁷ Young-old refers to a person aged approximately between 65 and 74 years old. For more details, please refer to <https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter13-aging-and-the-elderly/>

aged care sector, while others are keen to engage in volunteer work in their retirement years. SSORgs should consider tapping on the young-old population to fill in the gap in the labour supply.

Box Story 6 Resourcefulness in Social Service Organisations — Interview with Pertapis Education and Welfare Centre

This box story is prepared by CSDA, based on an interview with Mr Abdul Wahab Hussein, Executive Director of Pertapis Education and Welfare Centre. It discusses the challenges SSORgs face in securing manpower.

Pertapis Education and Welfare Centre (thereafter known as ‘Pertapis’) provides quality educational and social services by empowering its beneficiaries to work hand-in-hand with its stakeholders to be a community of excellence. Its principal activity is the running of welfare projects designed to address social problems faced by the community.

Mr Wahab shared that with Singapore’s ageing population and low birth rates, SSORgs have to engage more experienced and dedicated full-time staff as well as passionate volunteers to offer services that meet Singaporeans’ increasingly complex social needs.

These demographic trends also mean that manpower in Singapore is limited. It is thus necessary for SSORgs to be more flexible and efficient in the way they develop and use manpower.

Due to a shrinking workforce, younger workers with relevant experience tend to expect high salaries, leading to high costs for SSORgs. To tackle this challenge, Pertapis recruits older workers as a short-term measure to fill up manpower gaps.

As the government is requiring a higher standard of care from SSORgs, Pertapis has made staff training a priority. Pertapis is able to tap on available government grants to train its social service professionals. Mr Wahab added that other SSORgs should also seek to make the most of these grants for staff training.

3.5 Organisational Competencies

Dr Ee observed that high staff turnover, inadequate manpower, and underqualified staff are common complaints in the charity sector. He explained that these human resource challenges could be attributed to two key factors. Firstly, many charities do not pay competitive salaries. Secondly, many charities do not provide sufficient training for their staff as their boards do not place importance in staff development. He said that SSOrg leaders often have good intentions but they may lack experience or understanding of how to manage charities.

To overcome the human resource challenges, Dr Ee highlighted the need to professionalise the charity sector and to help SSOrgs run professionally. For example, SSOrgs should recruit board members who can help the management to develop the charity's capability and capacity. Moreover, the management and staff need to improve themselves through training and skills upgrading so that they can execute their duties professionally.

Ms Ang added that building the capacity of organisations within the charity sector encompasses having the know-how, resources, and time to produce satisfactory outcomes, including programme, fundraising, and basic organisational skills. Other essential capabilities include the knowledge and skills to manage finances, deliver quality services, and contribute productively to the community.

SSOrgs can move forward by adopting good charity governance. Dr Ee explained that adopting practices of good charity governance is a journey and being focused is important. While the push for charity governance has begun, Dr Ee noted that many organisations are slow or reluctant to make major changes. He felt that there is a greater need for the management and the board members to be aware of their position as stewards. Their charity exists because of their service users, and they should be accountable to their public funders and private donors.

For the sector to thrive in the disruptive age, it needs to be able to manage change, which necessitates the development of strong organisational capabilities beyond governance. Ms Ang noted that this can be accomplished in a few ways explained below.

To manage change in any organisation, management and operational processes as well as measurement procedures, setting targets, rewards, and recognition systems, must be consistent with the behaviour that staff are asked to demonstrate. When an organisation's goals for new behaviour are not reinforced, the staff is less likely to adopt it consistently. For example, if senior staff are encouraged to spend time coaching junior

staff but coaching is not part of their performance appraisal, they are not likely to do it well.

Secondly, strategic thinking is required. Strategic thinking is about understanding the complex relationship between an agency and its environment. It is about being able to respond efficiently to change in order to devise ideas and solutions. Agencies need to have a clear and actionable vision for strategic thinking to occur. This vision should have the power to inspire and activate people within and outside the agency to think big, do big, and invest big.

Thirdly, the move from strategic thinking to acting involves taking decisive and sometimes courageous action that is consistent with the strategic direction. This requires leaders and management staff to have foresight, wisdom, and gumption to make critical decisions when called for. Strategic action also involves bringing change through relevant levers of power such as institutions, people, policies, and resources, to further enhance the sustainability of the sector. It is thus essential for leaders to know how to lead change through the respective levers of power and at the same time, prepare their organisations to manage and respond well to change.

3.6 Building Community Capability and Capacity

While SSOrgs should focus on building organisational capacity, Ms Ang believed that they can foster capacity development in the community. This means striving towards an empowered community that uses its strengths to respond to opportunities, overcome challenges, and achieve its goals. This is also closely related to funding, as SSOrgs can tap on the community for fundraising.

SSOrgs can develop the community's capacity by developing more sophisticated diagnostic tools, engaging teams rather than individuals and ensuring that change management is part of the capacity building process. They should develop the capacity of their partner agencies by ensuring diversity and inclusion.

In particular, there is a need to recognise businesses as a key player in the social service ecosystem in serving clients and building a more sustainable sector.

Clearly, businesses can provide jobs. For example, in partnership with the Autism Resource Centre (Singapore), United Overseas Bank (UOB) has managed to employ and train people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to work at its UOB Scan Hub. They make up about a third of the 50-strong team (United Overseas Bank, 2015).

UOB attributes the success of this initiative to a good match between Scan Hub’s job requirements, which necessitates a methodical approach as well as an eye for detail, and the abilities of many with ASD. Such examples of inclusive workplaces can work symbiotically to engender workplaces that are more patient and caring. In focusing on an individual’s ability rather than his or her disability, this example has demonstrated that there exists a large labour pool that has not been tapped upon.

3.7 Adopting a Preventive Approach

Finally, a sustainable sector means focusing on prevention rather than cure. Dr Ee believed that it is better for the government and private sector to sponsor front-end costs to eliminate causes of social issues. This will be money well spent as funds required for intervention programmes would normally cost more, and it will eventually drain a country’s resources.

Preventive measures are always less costly than the eventual medicine when the issues have taken hold of the community. In discussing the poor, needy, and vulnerable, sector professionals need to go beyond symptoms and conduct research on the possible causes of a person becoming poor, needy or vulnerable. Without understanding and dealing with the causes, the sector would simply sustain a dependency mentality through stop-gap measures. As the saying goes, “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.”

Nonetheless, few SSOrgs have the capability or see focusing on prevention as part of their mission as they grapple with the day-to-day service delivery problems. There is thus a need for advocacy groups and think-tank organisations to work with government agencies to focus on and give priority to these areas. Outcome measurements and targets should also be developed and tracked.

4. Conclusion

Given Singapore’s changing social landscape, a rapidly ageing population, rising pressure on a sandwiched generation of citizens, and rapid technological advances that disrupt normal ways of doing, the social service sector needs to evolve. It needs to encompass ideas of future-readiness and sustainability.

A sector that is sustainable implies that its participants, traditionally SSOrgs, need to be aware of what sustainability means and how best to achieve it. This implies embracing

innovation and productivity beyond scaling up, tinkering with new technologies, and navigating manpower constraints creatively, developing organisational competencies and community capacities, and prioritising prevention rather than cure.

Inevitably, this entire discourse and the expectations implied that there is a need to reach out to more players and participants beyond the traditional groups that the social service has been reaching out to. It requires a new vision of the social service ecosystem. This is an idea mooted in the recent five-year Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST) roadmap, comprising not only SSOrgs and the government but the community-at-large, civic-minded individuals, and businesses.

With the growing competition coming from the for-profit sector, it is important that SSOrgs do not operate in silos. As they strive to deliver services, they should look towards sharing the breadth of their experiences, knowledge, and data with other organisations. Doing so could result in better outcomes because of a better understanding of issues, improving efficiency, and effectiveness. Additionally, they should look to deepen collaborations with one another and explore how to do things more productively and innovatively rather than focus on quantity alone.

To build a more sustainable social service sector, the state as a key funder of social services needs to evolve to play a larger, catalytic role in building a more sustainable social service sector. In addition, there needs to be increased collaboration between agencies. They can do so through scaling up, productivity and innovation, technology and data, manpower, organisational competencies, adopting a preventive approach, and building community capacity.

The state could initiate collaborative efforts between SSOrgs, rewarding or supporting it where due. Collaborations could be in the form of conceptualising and delivering joint services, improving the flow of expertise and knowledge flows, or sharing resources and data. While many SSOrgs see the benefits of collaboration, it is usually not undertaken. Some SSOrgs view collaboration negatively because collaboration often involves trade-offs. For example, there may be a diversion of resources such as funding and manpower when SSOrgs collaborate in joint projects. The state could do more to catalyse collaboration through exploring how best to mitigate these costs.

Having an extensive reach across social services also means that the state has access to a wealth of data. This effectively means that the state is both well-resourced and well-positioned to be a data convener and custodian, taking stock of and coordinating the collection, collation and analyses of data, and to disseminate insights across the

sector. One such example is the Social Service Net (SSNet), an integrated information and case management system developed by MSF and the Government Technology Agency (GovTech).

At the same time, the state must also be cognisant of, and sensitive to, challenges faced by SSOrgs in this regard. Faced with both financial and social bottom lines, SSOrgs may not be as able to accommodate additional infrastructure or manpower, find time amidst everyday work to compile quality data or adapt as readily to new systems.

Box Story 7 MINDS' Model of Providing Sustainable Client-Centric Services

This box story is provided by Movement for the Intellectually Disabled in Singapore (MINDS). It explores how MINDS has been able to remain sustainable and relevant, and collaborate with community partners to meet the needs of the individuals.

MINDS aims to provide a comprehensive range of services that best cater to the educational, social, vocational, and psychological needs of both children and adults with intellectual disability.

Holistic Healthcare Provision for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

MINDS has made attempts to scale up its operations by opening the MINDS Development Disabilities Medical Clinic in March 2018. It aims to address gaps in the sector, including insufficient health promotion, and prevention activities that target people with disabilities, as well as the lack of an integrated health management system for the IDD population.

As it is likely that a person with disabilities receives a myriad of medical services at different times or even at any given time in his or her life that may be uncoordinated, the MINDS Clinic aims to take on the role of a centralised healthcare management system. In this system, all medical services that a person is accessing throughout his or her lifespan are consolidated. Persons with IDD also receive holistic healthcare throughout his or her lifespan, as well as access to timely health promotion and prevention programmes.

Enhancing Organisational Competencies through a Lifespan Approach and Evidence-based Approach

In line with the aforementioned importance of honing organisational competencies, MINDS recognises the importance of seamless, progressive, and comprehensive services and programmes. This is achieved by

continually evaluating and understanding the needs of persons with IDD across different stages of development. In particular, there is a big gap in the post-18 sector, the sector catering to individuals aged above 18, that MINDS aims to address.

Whilst Special Education (SPED) schools have a curriculum framework that informs student learning outcomes and have structured learning pathways, there is no integrated curriculum framework and standards for persons with IDD in adult services in Singapore. Training pathways and outcomes for adults with IDD are also not clearly defined.

This lack of integrated frameworks and clearly defined pathways leads to another related issue – the lack of staff competency standards across adult disability services. As the specific areas of competencies that adults with IDD need to be trained in are not known, it is not possible to clearly outline the staff competencies and training required. To meet this need, MINDS is focused on developing a lifespan integrated post-18 curriculum for adults with IDD.

MINDS is developing this curriculum in partnership with international experts with the objective of producing an accredited and robust post-18 curriculum that is articulated seamlessly from the SPED curriculum.

The accredited post-18 curriculum will help streamline and improve the quality of MINDS adult services, allow for outcome-driven services as well as inform decision making and fund allocation. Importantly, it will ensure that adults with IDD continue their learning into adulthood and are supported throughout their lifespan to live their lives as contributing members of society.

MINDS also recognises that for staff to deliver the client curriculum effectively, they need to possess the right knowledge and skills. The development of a lifespan integrated post-18 curriculum is also intended to inform required staff competencies and the relevant training pathways for staff who support adults with IDD. This serves to professionalise the role of the disability support staff as well as contribute positively to staff

development and retention.

For example, MINDS recognises the increase in intake of persons with IDD having a co-morbid diagnosis of autism. As such, it has established a partnership with an international centre for excellence in autism to deliver accredited autism courses for its staff. The courses are offered at different levels (foundation, graduate certificate, and masters) to cater to staff, who have different educational backgrounds and competency levels.

As a leader in disability services in Singapore, MINDS aims to build organisational capabilities by maintaining the quality of its services and programmes such that it is contemporary and in line with international best practices. The MINDS Institute of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MIIDD) was started to drive evidence-based practice and applied research.

The applied research projects span a range of topic areas such as quality of life, employment, speech and communication, community engagement, and positive behaviour support. At an organisation-wide applied research forum held in 2018, applied researchers shared their findings with staff of all levels and had discussions on translating findings to practice and improving service delivery.

MIIDD also aims to drive thought and practice leadership to the disability sector in Singapore. MIIDD has been actively involved in the NCSS Coalition of Research, which looks at sector level research to improve service outcomes. In the past year, MIIDD released two technical reports — Transition to Retirement and Inclusive Education.

Empowering Persons with IDD

Consistent with the theme of empowerment and building the community's capacity, MINDS partnered with Down Syndrome Association (DSA) to start the first ever self-advocacy development programme for persons with IDD called Our Lives, Our Voices.

The key aims of this initiative are to develop and build self-advocacy for Singaporeans with IDD, empower persons with IDD to speak up for themselves with confidence as well as develop and coach the self-advocates to understand what their rights and responsibilities are and express themselves as active citizens.

More importantly, this initiative is the first collaborative approach of its kind by two SSOrgs. In its conceptualisation and operationalisation of innovative programmes and projects, MINDS illustrates the need for SSOrgs to undertake a more progressive and collaborative stance.

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Chapter 4

Leading the Social Service Sector Towards Future-Readiness

by Sim Gim Guan^f

This chapter outlines the Organisational Effectiveness Framework developed by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS). This framework comprises four domains — strong leadership, effective resource management, collaborative organisation, and service quality. The chapter aims to serve as a guide for leaders in building capacity and capability in their organisations.

1. The Changing Social Service Sector

The increasing pace and volume of change in today's high-flux environment is often described as volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). This calls for leaders to revolutionise the way they lead in the face of the changing environment (George, 2017). The ever-evolving changes in a VUCA environment also affect social service organisations (SSOrgs). SSOrgs have limited resources to meet growing and complex social needs. In order to continue making social impact, they need to improve their future-readiness.

SSOrgs are expected to achieve both effective social service delivery and sustainable financial position. This is a double bottom line challenge for SSOrgs. On the one hand, they are expected to cater to multi-faceted human needs and to ensure that their efforts achieve social impact. On the other hand, they have to maintain a healthy financial position while carrying out their mission. In addition, SSOrgs are facing profound pressure in anticipating and positioning themselves to meet growing and increasingly complex social needs in a VUCA environment. The VUCA environment is likely to persist.

To improve their SSOrgs' relevance and readiness for the future, leaders need to embark on their organisations' transformation today.

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For the social service sector to be future-ready, it must meet the needs of today and remain relevant for tomorrow. It has to be ready for change. The ability of SSOrgs to be future-ready depends on leadership. Leadership expert John C. Maxwell (1998) explained that everything rises and falls on leadership. Aside from planning for the future, it is paramount that leaders begin implementing change in the present.

Although there is no clear or linear solution to achieve future-readiness, the ability of SSOrgs and leaders to respond to the future can be enhanced through collaboration. These organisations share the fundamental mission of supporting persons in need, empowering them, and enabling them to live a life of dignity, regardless of the SSOrgs' nature, scope, and years of operation. In the collective pursuit of this mission, it is essential that SSOrg leaders engage in information-sharing and build on each other's collective expertise. By doing so, leaders will be able to accelerate the progress towards a more caring and inclusive society.

2. Creating a Transformation Plan Towards Future-Readiness

In a dialogue between NCSS and the late President Mr S. R. Nathan in 2013, he remarked that, “We were in the kampong, the problem of one family was the problem of the whole neighbourhood”. The unique trait of this sector is that its roots stem from the kampong spirit. This spirit remains today, and leaders need to broaden their outlook to understand that they belong to and operate in a larger ecosystem. As social issues are complex, they require complex solutions. Thus, the social service sector needs to function as an ecosystem, that is, for organisations and other stakeholders to recognise their interdependence and collaborate to enhance social impact. The common goal of the sector is to improve the quality of life of service users.

To support the progress of the sector towards future-readiness, the Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST) was launched in 2017. The 4ST, a five-year roadmap for the sector, offers guidelines for leaders to create a transformation plan towards future-readiness for their organisations (National Council of Social Service, 2018b). While the transformation plans of organisations will differ based on their organisational nature, the essence of transformation is for leaders to adopt major mindset shifts.

Anchored by a person-centred approach arising from the World Health Organization (WHO) Quality of Life (QOL) framework, these mindset shifts are encapsulated in three key thrusts of the 4ST.

They are:

- i. Go beyond supporting beneficiaries and clients to empowering individuals, their families, and communities.
- ii. Go beyond charities and voluntary welfare organisations to becoming effective social purpose entities.
- iii. Go beyond being a social service sector to becoming a social service ecosystem.

Strong leadership is required to steer the social service sector and SSOrgs in meeting future challenges. A good way for SSOrg leaders to get started is to first revisit their organisations' vision and core values and evaluate its relevance against the sector's backdrop of evolving trends. SSOrg leaders could make the review a regular exercise involving their board and staff. Having access to information and ensuring adequate understanding of the sector and the organisation's situation are critical in ensuring informed decision-making throughout this process. Just as needs in the sector have evolved, SSOrg leaders have to stay open to new ideas and innovative solutions. This requires SSOrg leaders to have the courage to try and to remain adaptable.

Going forward, SSOrg leaders need to constantly evolve their organisations and deepen competencies. It is only by doing so that organisations will be able to ensure their relevance in the future and respond effectively to social needs.

NCSS, being a membership organisation, supports member organisations in this transformation journey to be future-ready. The next section will provide background on how NCSS is leading the sector to be future-ready and includes several case studies based on experiences of NCSS' member organisations, to give insights on how SSOrg leaders transform their organisations.

3. The National Council of Social Service's Journey

To be future-ready, SSOrg leaders in the social service sector need to ensure that their organisations have a vision, remain committed to it, and have the courage and nimbleness to deploy bold strategies to actualise the vision. SSOrg leaders can learn from each other's collective expertise to accelerate progress towards a more caring and inclusive society. Below is an example of how the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and NCSS are committed to transforming the sector by refining its role and reviewing its strategies.

In November 2012, the then-Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports was restructured into MSF, with the intention to strengthen families, enhance social safety nets, and grow more services and programmes to meet increasing needs. MSF sought to improve the social service delivery system and provide better clarity on the roles of related agencies.

To support MSF in its alignment towards better service delivery, a few of the service development and implementation functions within NCSS were transferred back to MSF. NCSS underwent a strategic review to identify and align new priorities and strategies to pursue in light of environmental changes in 2012. Tapping on the organisational experiences of McKinsey & Company, NCSS took the opportunity to take stock, reflect on, and review its role in the social service landscape. NCSS also considered how it can best complement various players in the space to serve the disadvantaged in Singapore with more impact.

Since then, NCSS underwent several reviews. These review exercises were made possible with the pro-bono assistance of McKinsey & Company, Palladium Group, and Bain & Company. In 2015, the review led to NCSS' refinement of its role in the social service sector. In 2017, another review was carried out, and a social service ecosystem perspective was adopted. It resulted in organisational change in NCSS, so that it is better positioned to address the sector's priorities and strategies.

These changes were possible with the support of the board, the senior management, and the staff in NCSS. During these reviews, the board was engaged, the CEO led and rallied the senior management to re-shape the mission and deliverables. There were also multiple staff engagement sessions to seek input and to provide updates on the progress of each review. These sessions were held at large-scale Townhall sessions, as well as small group discussions.

4. Capability and Capacity — Building for the Social Service Sector

Former NCSS President, Mr Hsieh Fu Hua said, “underlying the success of an initiative or organisation is the passion and quality of the people involved” (National Council of Social Service, 2017c). With a clear vision, the sector must next have the ability to develop an in-depth understanding of their organisation's capabilities and strategies for execution (George, 2017).

Human resources are critical to the operations of SSOrgs. The sector is set to require more manpower against a backdrop of evolving and increasing social service needs (“Social Service Sector Manpower Projected to Grow”, 2017). It is important to identify how future changes in the social service sector will impact the human resource requirement in SSOrgs. With Singapore’s low birth rates and declining labour force growth, it will be a greater challenge for SSOrgs to fill the perpetual manpower shortage in the future (Lim, 2018). What can SSOrg leaders do to respond to this situation?

Focusing on the present situation, SSOrgs’ leaders should utilise available resources aimed at strengthening their organisational capability. MSF is working with NCSS to implement an industry manpower plan to build a future-ready sector. A three-pronged holistic approach of talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention was developed for the social service sector (“Social Service Sector Manpower Projected to Grow”, 2017).

In line with this holistic approach, NCSS has created key initiatives to encourage its member SSOrgs to collaborate, access shared resources, and address the human resource challenges faced by the social service sector. These initiatives include the Social Service Tribe, People Practice Consultancy, Sun Ray scheme, and Project Back-to-Basics. They are illustrated as below.

4.1 Social Service Tribe — Sector-Wide Re-Branding

In August 2016, NCSS commissioned a research on Social Service Brand Study — Improving perception towards Social Service Careers in Singapore. The findings by Asia Insight Pte Ltd uncovered four myths that hindered individuals from pursuing and anchoring a career in the social service sector. They are:

- i. no career opportunities in the social service sector;
- ii. no professional development of in-service staff;
- iii. social service professionals are not well paid; and
- iv. all it takes is a good heart to work in the social service sector.

In response to these misconceptions, a multi-year nation-wide brand awareness exercise, Social Service Tribe, commenced in July 2017.

The Social Service Tribe brings together people to serve a shared purpose and strive towards a common cause. This message helps to unify the more than 150,000 professionals working in over 450 SSOrgs to empower those in need (Social Service Tribe, 2018). A key factor to the success of this brand awareness exercise was the active participation of leaders and human resource personnel in adopting the same branding used for their organisational recruitment.

4.2 People Practice Consultancy — Attract, Motivate and Retain Talent in Social Service Organisations

NCSS launched a human resource consultancy project in 2016 known as the People Practice Consultancy, which provides individual organisations with the resources to discover its human capital needs and develop individualised solutions (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2017). The consultancy covers processes broadly categorised under (i) recruitment and selection, (ii) compensation and benefits, (iii) performance management, and (iv) career planning.

The People Practice Consultancy aims to help SSOrgs improve their human resource practices. It is an organisational-level effort that aims to help SSOrgs provide better service to their clients (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2017).

4.3 Sun Ray Scheme — Leadership Development

Succession planning should be a key priority among the management of SSOrgs. This is to ensure a pipeline of both professional and organisational leaders (National Council of Social Service, 2018c).

To support member organisations in these efforts, NCSS has made available a centralised scheme which develops individuals with strong leadership qualities, Sun Ray scheme. The Sun Ray scheme administered by NCSS enables individuals to develop cross-organisational exposure. This experience will develop the leadership potential in individuals to lead SSOrg's efforts (National Council of Social Service, 2018c).

Services extended to member organisations under the Sun Ray scheme is highly consultative and customised accordingly to organisation's staffing and manpower planning needs. The services include:

- i. Attraction efforts — Member organisations on board are assured that the pool of talents attracted to the sector increases through NCSS' dedicated promotional efforts.

- ii. Identification and matching of right talents to organisations — NCSS plays an intermediary role in shortlisting and providing best-matched candidates according to the needs in consultation with the member organisations.
- iii. Planned career development for Sun Rayz (candidates on Sun Ray scheme) — NCSS undertakes leadership and career development opportunities for Sun Rayz by working closely with member organisations to curate opportunities that develop rich, cross-sector experience and exposure. With these, it is expected that organisations have access to candidates armed with all-rounder experiences to build organisation’s capabilities and capacity.
- iv. Salary subsidies — Member organisations with right candidates matched would only have to pay a secondment fee, which is a subsidised rate of the salary and benefits that NCSS offers to Sun Rayz.

4.4 Project Back-to-Basics — Business Process Reengineering

The manpower growth rate of social service professionals will not be able to match up with the increasing needs of the sector. The efforts pumped in to increase the number of social service professionals will, at best, narrow the shortfall required. The Ministry of Manpower’s call for the nation to be more innovative, manpower-lean, and productive applies to the social service sector as well (Lim, 2018).

The following example about Project Back-to-Basics pans out how productivity looks like for a small yet critical segment of the sector, therapy services. The demand for therapy support will continue to increase in the social service sector in the years to come. It is estimated that by 2030, an additional 350 therapists across the fields of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy would be required for the social service sector.

SSOrg leaders have to exercise flexibility in restructuring their execution model by exploring how SSOrgs can operate with fewer therapists while meeting growing needs. NCSS is attempting to alleviate this shortage of therapists is through Project Back-to-Basics, a Business Process Reengineering initiative. Project Back-to-Basics essentially covers three aspects:

- i. Process redesign to challenge the need for existing work processes and streamline processes to achieve a quantum jump in productivity.
- ii. Adoption of technology based on organisation’s requirements to deliver the services required.

- iii. Job redesign to facilitate re-allocation of work, which arose from changes in job scope after process redesign and prompt technology adoption. This will also allay the workers' general fear of having their jobs replaced.

5. Involving Donors

SSOrg leaders also need to initiate strategies to attract and sustain donors. Co-opting key donors into the charity's board is a very common strategy adopted by SSOrg leaders. These key donors lend their technical expertise and networks to bring the mission of the SSOrg to fruition. However, there remain untapped platforms where donors can be engaged beyond the boardroom setting. With a better understanding of the social service sector, their interest will be sustained, presenting an opportunity for them to continue to give back to society.

Community Chest, the fundraising arm of NCSS, has found that information sharing with donors is a key lever. Sharing of information on the social service landscape, research insights on sub-segments of vulnerable groups, and evidence-based social interventions that empower service users and improve their quality of life appeals to donors.

Moreover, Community Chest has observed a shift in the way people are giving. Donors want to give beyond monetary terms, value add, and bring impact to the lives of those being helped (Low, 2018a). It is a growing trend that is set to stay. To address this, Community Chest has piloted a new platform, the Venture Philanthropy Partners, which enables donors to participate in the process of caring and sharing for the disadvantaged.

A good reference is the case study on the Venture Philanthropy Partners. The Venture Philanthropy Partners initiative by Community Chest is modelled after Venture Philanthropy (VP). Coined by American philanthropist John D Rockefeller III in 1969, VP applies the principles of venture capital financing to achieve philanthropic outcomes. Venture Philanthropy Partners adopts from VP the fundraising approach that is based on the principles of high-engagement, performance-based, and sustainability (John, 2006).

Community Chest convened a network of venture philanthropists, who share the common goal of giving to a longer-term social change in a sustainable manner. These venture philanthropists are interested in being involved in the organisations they

support, seeking to know how their funds and support are utilised, and whether social impact is achieved (Ng, 2018). In response to this, Community Chest organises quarterly meetings, which keeps them updated on the progress of projects.

ELEVATE was created in 2017, as a result of the collaboration between Community Chest and the VP partners. ELEVATE aims to empower 540 youths over a three-year period through service learning, using their vocational skills to serve less privileged communities (Low, 2018b). The project is still in its pilot phase, and it is made possible through a series of collaborations involving the Institute of Technical Education, AWWA Ltd, TOUCH Community Services Ltd, and Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Singapore. This case study of VP thus highlights the importance of collaboration in getting bold new projects in the social service sector off the ground.

6. Mobilising Service Users

SSOrgs should tap on their service users as a key resource. Service users bring their life experiences and strengths to provide solutions and encouragement to others facing the same challenges.

The demographics of service users in the social service sector has changed. Due to the overall increase in Singapore's standard of living and increasing educational literacy, there are rising expectations and demands on how social services are accessed and delivered. In light of this, SSOrgs are challenged to innovate and explore new ways to deliver their services. SSOrg leaders are expected to lead their organisations in reviewing their service models to remain relevant. Under the WHO QOL framework adopted by NCSS, studies have shown that creating opportunities to socially include individuals with disabilities and mental health issues will significantly improve their quality of life (National Council of Social Service, 2017b). This is one way that SSOrgs can use research insights to review its service model and make changes to meet service users' needs.

An example of an initiative that taps on service users as a key resource is the Peer Support Specialist Programme. The programme aims to provide opportunities for persons with mental health issues to leverage their lived experience of recovery to support others in their recovery journey (Social Service Institute, 2018).

These individuals undergo a 180-hour training to become Peer Support Specialists and

are hired to work in both the social service and healthcare sectors. By embodying the hope for others, Peer Support Specialists encourage help-seeking behaviours, challenge societal mindsets, and help to combat stigma. Studies have shown that persons with mental health issues achieved better recovery outcomes when they received support from both traditional mental healthcare professionals and Peer Support Specialists (Grant, Reinhart, Wituk, & Meissen, 2012). As of October 2018, 62 individuals have completed the training and 27 have been employed in peer support roles (National Council of Social Service, 2018a).

7. Future-Ready Social Service Sector — Panel Discussion with C-Suite Executives

This chapter concludes with a panel discussion with C-suite executives in the social service sector. So far, the chapter's discussion has centred around NCSS' transformation and its approach to future challenges. However, it is important to get the perspectives of SSOrg leaders regarding the sector's adaptation to future challenges. The leaders in the sector agreed and saw the importance to transform and future-proof the social service sector.

The discussion covered three areas. Firstly, the three leaders discussed the problems the social service sector is likely to face in the future. They included the need to have good charity governance, the importance of financial sustainability, and the prevalence of social problems like the ageing population. Secondly, the leaders proposed solutions to these issues, recommending that the sector balance tradition with innovation. The final topic for discussion was organisational culture, where the leaders commented that SSOrgs need to be cognisant of the organisation's mission and focus on creating social impact.

Box Story 8 Panel Discussion with C-Suite Executives on a Future-Ready Social Service Sector in Singapore

This box story discusses the challenges faced by SSOrgs. It is based on an interview conducted by CSDA with three leaders in the social service sector.

Mr Lo Chee Wen is the former General Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Singapore, a volunteer-based Christian organisation with the aim of nurturing community champions by developing their body, mind, and spirit to serve. He is currently the Chairman of Grace Orchard School. Mr Tim Oei is the CEO of the National Kidney Foundation (NKF). NKF is a nonprofit healthcare organisation in Singapore that aims to address and prevent kidney disease through a community-centred approach. Mr Chris Ong is the former CEO of Shared Services for Charities (SSC), a charity that aims to introduce professional shared services such as internal auditing and consultancy services to charities, improving governance and organisation.

Challenges of the Social Service Sector

The three chief executives brought up three main areas of concern on the challenges that the social service sector is likely to face.

Firstly, the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment is a cause for concern as it will put more strain on the social service sector. More than ever, SSOrgs need to focus on servicing the community with limited resources. Mr Oei pointed out that the sector continues to face manpower and financial challenges. In addition, Mr Lo questioned the definition of good financial stewardship and how SSOrgs' board and management can continue to deliver services despite limited financial resources.

Secondly, all three chief executives raised their concern about financial sustainability. Mr Lo explained that the social service sector is currently highly reliant on government funding or donations, or both. To be financially sustainable, it will be prudent for SSOrgs to focus on lowering their operation costs. He further cautioned that some SSOrgs may prioritise financial and economic sustainability over the needs of the community, which, he highlighted, runs counter to the purpose of the social service sector.

Finally, an ageing population is a pressing social issue. Mr Oei observed that an ageing population would have direct effects on the social service sector. He emphasised that the SSOrg leaders need to pay attention to the wider effects of an ageing population. Increased spending on eldercare is expected. For example, he pointed out that family members have to double as both breadwinners and caregivers to elderly family members. These are the potential areas where SSOrgs can step up to provide support services for working adults with caregiving responsibilities.

Being a Future-Ready Sector

To prepare the social service sector to be future-ready, the three chief executives urged SSOrg leaders to focus their efforts on (i) strengthening the family unit; (ii) balancing tradition with innovation; and (iii) being nimble in utilising resources.

Firstly, given the context of an ageing population in Singapore, an approach to becoming more future-ready should involve strengthening the family unit. As suggested by Mr Oei, SSOrgs should collaborate with other SSOrgs and stakeholders to address the wider issues brought about by an ageing population.

Secondly, leaders in the social service sector need to balance tradition with innovation. This means that SSOrgs should not let past events affect present-day decision-making. For example, YMCA continues to empower youth leaders and encourage staff and volunteers in developing new initiatives to plan programmes and activities that contribute positively to the community. Innovation could also come in the form of technological advancements that enable SSOrgs to overcome challenges, especially in the healthcare sector.

Lastly, Mr Oei pointed out that it is good for SSOrgs to adopt a dynamic organisational model that can quickly adapt to the changes in funding models. By being nimble in terms of utilising resources and manpower,

SSOrgs can try out new programmes and experiment with previously untested models. It is important for SSOrgs to experiment with new practices and programmes as it enables SSOrgs to respond to future challenges.

Future-Ready SSOrgs – Organisational Transformation Required

This final section summarises the three chief executives' perspectives on the importance of organisational transformation in creating a future-ready social service sector.

Social Impact

Mr Oei argued that SSOrgs should focus on providing the right interventions for social problems and not financial objectives. To do so, it is important that the SSOrgs' board and management work together to focus on achieving greater social impact, rather than outputs or simple outcomes.

In addition, Mr Lo emphasised about the importance of having a board and management who understands how the social service sector works. They need to embrace their organisation's mission and vision, to create social impact through the organisation's programmes and services. To do so, he suggested that SSOrgs need to balance being corporate and taking risks, as some decisions may incur financial costs in the short run, but they are necessary for the organisation to achieve social impact.

Mindset Shifts

To be future-ready, Mr Oei advocated that there must be mindset shifts for organisational transformation. Using the framework developed by Sachs and Kundu (2015), he explained that SSOrgs should focus on purpose and not profits, they should work in networks and not hierarchies. He elaborated that their management should be empowering rather than controlling, and SSOrgs should be encouraging to experiment and prioritise transparency with their stakeholders. For further details, refer to Figure 3.

Mindset Shifts for Organisational Transformation

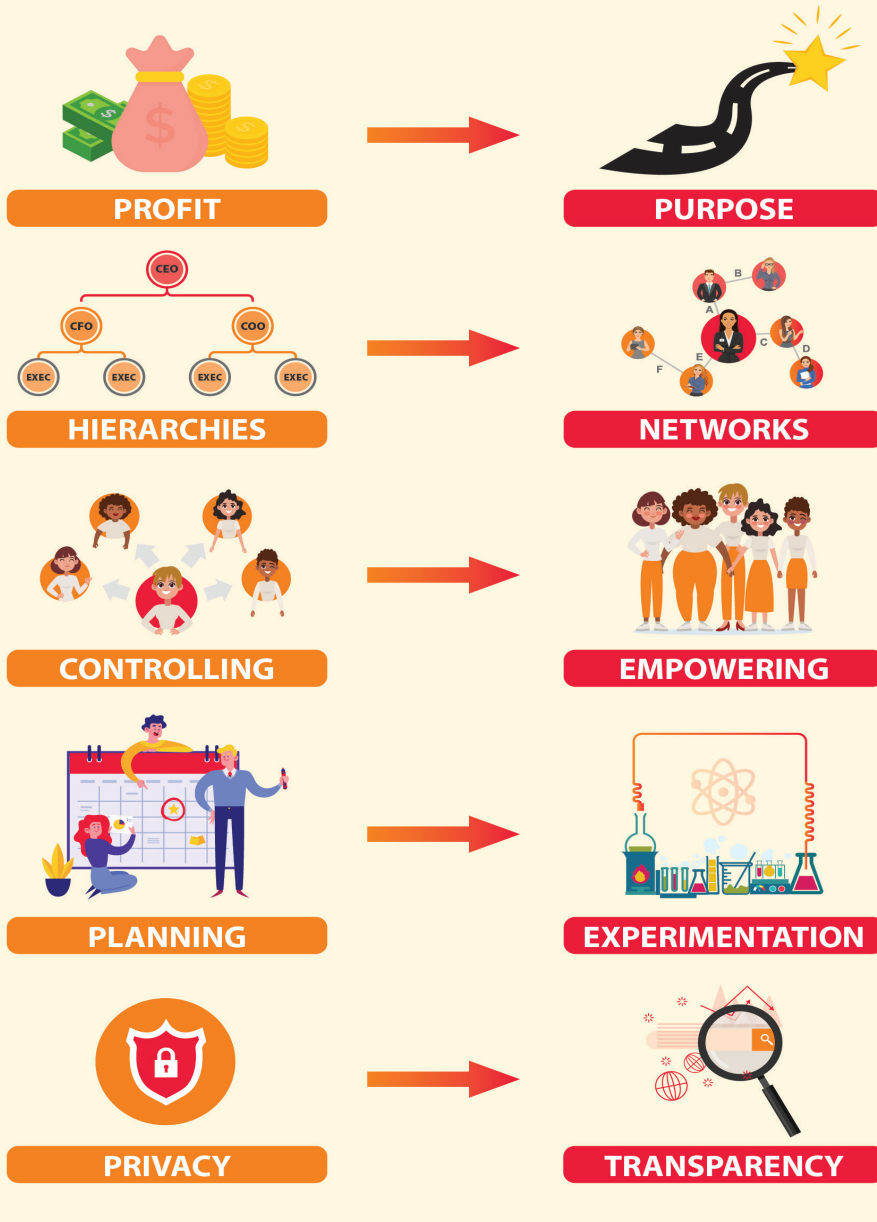


Figure 3: Mindset Shifts for Organisational Transformation
Source: Sachs and Kundu

Board and Management – Realignment of Priorities

Besides a change in their mindset, SSOrgs need to evolve and relook into its organisational priorities, expertise, and structure. Mr Ong advocated for the social service sector to re-examine the role of SSOrgs' boards, subcommittees, and management.

He explained that SSOrgs' boards tend to have members from corporate backgrounds who are not familiar with the social service sector. As a result, SSOrgs' boards often set priorities based on financial metrics. This may be misleading, as the SSOrg's key priority is to fulfil the organisation's mission by meeting the needs of their service users through programmes and services.

He urged SSOrgs' management and leadership to balance good financial acumen with a social service mindset. The quality of services is as important as outputs. The board needs to lead their SSOrg through proper guidance to be financially sustainable in the VUCA environment. To do so, boards need to have the right goals in mind.

Mr Ong noted that many SSOrgs often have multiple subcommittees. Given SSOrgs' limited resources, he suggested that it would be prudent for these organisations to streamline and limit the number of subcommittees.

To have a clear division of responsibilities, the board should only focus on setting policies, guidelines, and reviewing operations. Mr Ong explained that the board should leave the details of the organisation's operations to their management.

Strategy for the Future

To be future-ready, Mr Lo elaborated that SSOrgs' board and management need to have a good understanding of social trends and its implications on SSOrgs' future operations. Once that is in place, the SSOrgs' can have their strategic direction clearly written and articulated. For organisations with a long history, while the purpose of its establishment should not be forgotten, there is a need to take the leap of faith required to move forward.

Finally, Mr Lo highlighted that the board and management need to be open and listen to their stakeholders. To create social impact, their stakeholders' concerns should be incorporated into the organisation's plans and strategies.

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Chapter 5

Future-Ready Boards

by Willie Cheng⁹

This chapter discusses the importance of future-readiness for boards of social service organisations (SSOrgs). It incorporates comments from a panel interview. The panel discussion gathered insights from leaders in the social service sector on how SSOrg boards can be future-ready. The panellists involved include:



Dr Fermin Diez

Deputy Chief Executive Officer &
Group Director, Human Capital and Organisation Development,
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)



Mr Hsieh Fu Hua

Former President,
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)



Mrs Mildred Tan

Chairperson,
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)

1. The Social Service Sector's Changing Landscape

In Singapore, SSOrgs play an important role in serving the poor, needy, and vulnerable in the community. With the rapidly changing economy and operating environment, the social service sector is facing a future that is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. No organisation is immune to changes. SSOrgs must evolve and adapt to the changing times. SSOrg boards need to be forward-thinking and ensure that their organisations develop new capabilities to face these challenges.

⁹ Immediate Past Chairman, Singapore Institute of Directors

1.1 Technology

Rapid advances in digital technology are key drivers of change. Technology enables more people to be reached than before. Arrillaga-Andreessen (2015) suggests that technology is changing philanthropy in fundamental ways – making it potentially more rational, effective, collaborative, transparent, and democratic.

Mrs Mildred Tan, who chairs the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC), observed that technology has changed the way people give back to society. She noted that modern technology has enabled and evolved new forms of online giving, such as peer-to-peer (P2P) giving methods and collaborative giving through crowdfunding. She shared that NVPC's Individual Giving Survey 2016 showed that there has been a significant increase in informal giving, where people prefer to give directly to beneficiaries. Many donors respond to online charity campaigns through ground-up movements facilitated by technology.

1.2 Stakeholder Pressures

Apart from technology, SSOrgs must deal with the pressures from various stakeholders. Many donors come from the results-driven corporate sector, and apply the rules of accountability from the private sector to the nonprofit sector. As a result, donors are demanding greater accountability, especially in how charities are using the funds they receive and the tangible impact of their work.

The operating environment in the social service sector is getting tougher with competition from the increasing number of charities getting into the fray. The government is responding to the changing landscape by making policy changes and coming up with new regulations. These factors lead to increased compliance and other overhead costs, which SSOrgs need to incur despite their limited funding.

2. Digital Disruption and the Social Service Sector

Digital transformation and disruption have affected many industries. Although information technology and the Internet have been around for decades, exponential technologies such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, robotics, and cloud computing have accelerated the rate of change. This is the Fourth Industrial Revolution, as termed by the World Economic Forum (Schwab, 2016).

Digital disruption is the change that occurs when innovative digital technologies and business models disproportionately affect the value proposition of existing goods and services (Rouse, 2014). The sharing economy is a prime example of such a change in the business model. It is an economic model based on P2P transactions facilitated via community-based online platforms. Companies like Grab and Airbnb have risen from the creation of sharing economy platforms. Grab is an on-demand car service that disrupted the taxi industry while Airbnb is an online accommodation-rental that disrupted the hotel industry.

Will digital disruption affect the social service sector? The three panellists, who are leaders to the social service sector, believe that it will affect the social service sector in different ways and with varying degrees.

2.1 Effect of Digital Disruption on the Social Service Sector

Mr Hsieh Fu Hua, the former president of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), said that the opportunities and risks in the innovative application of disruptive technologies are similar for businesses and SSOrgs. For example, with the aid of technology, SSOrgs can reach out to larger groups of donors, volunteers, and service users. SSOrgs can use big data analytics to obtain insights from stakeholders and implement innovative solutions for their service users.

Dr Fermin Diez, Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Group Director of Human Capital and Organisation Development at NCSS, agreed with Mr Hsieh that SSOrgs should leverage technology. He cited the Special Education (SPED) schools and the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) centres as examples of how technology can be used to deliver better services at a fraction of the existing cost.

On the other hand, the advent of technology may affect the social service sector indirectly. Dr Diez pointed out that through the use of technology, for-profit organisations may be able to provide services of better quality and at lower costs. As a result, there may be disruption in the social service sector and SSOrgs may face difficulties in competing with these for-profit organisations.

In addition, Mrs Tan explained that it is important for SSOrgs to use technology to maintain online advocacy and to sustain donors' interests and giving efforts. Although the use of technology may alienate the growing elderly population, SSOrgs need to appeal to the millennials who prefer online coordination and engagement.

Mrs Tan observed that with digital disruption, the traditional notion of a person doing only one job and working from 9 to 5 is no longer the norm, especially for millennials. It is becoming more common for a person to hold multiple jobs, work while commuting, and flexibly integrate their professional and personal lives. SSOrgs will now have to contend with and adjust to the new work styles and norms.

Mrs Tan highlighted that SSOrgs should pay attention to how the changing nature of paid work may affect the availability of volunteers. She explained that the new worker works on multiple jobs, with time available in between jobs. Time is a prized commodity in the digital era, and it could be a viable giving currency. People may offer their skills and services in exchange for time spent in specific communities such as corporates, academic institutions, and retirement villages. If SSOrgs are willing to accept the smaller amount of volunteer time available for each engagement, it could mean a greater pool of volunteers available. As such, it may be helpful for SSOrgs to respond by repackaging voluntary work into bite-sized micro-tasks that can be done remotely.

2.2 Digital Disruption — Limited Effects on the Social Service Sector

Technology will undoubtedly change the sector, however the extent of the disruption may be limited. The social service sector has traditionally lagged behind businesses and the public sector in the adoption of technology. There are many reasons why the social service sector is slow in the adoption of exponential technologies.

Firstly, the board, management, and staff of SSOrgs may not have the strategic or operational digital skills to actively pursue digital transformation. Secondly, spending on exponential technologies can be expensive, difficult, and risky. SSOrgs are generally more conservative and less risk-taking as they are responsible for stewarding donations and reserves. Thirdly, there is a lack of significant examples of digital transformations in the social service sector. As such, SSOrgs may be less encouraged to adopt exponential technologies.

Mrs Tan felt that to some extent, SSOrgs being nonprofit organisations will need to step up to respond to changes in technology. They act as intermediaries in the community, providing information to their donors, volunteers, and service users. In her view, the SSOrgs play a key role in facilitating collaboration in the community.

However, SSOrgs should not ignore or downplay the significance of the impact of technology on the social service sector. Social enterprises can be the catalyst and inspiration for the innovative application of technology in the social service sector. Tech

start-ups that are seeking to be socially impactful are coming up with digital innovations that can lead the way.

Stakeholders may expect SSORgs to adopt certain technologies. For example, stakeholders may want to be able to donate and volunteer quickly and effortlessly through their mobile phones. Thus, it is important that SSORgs understand the modes and channels preferred by their stakeholders. Mrs Tan added that to remain relevant, SSORgs must adapt to the new giving landscape, respond to stakeholder's expectations, and adopt new technology.

Technology is disrupting the way businesses are carried out. As Singapore goes through digital transformation, a cyber attack can affect anyone. SSORgs should not ignore cyber threats, as they are growing in pace and intensity. While SSORgs have not generally been targeted, in time they will be. As the saying goes, "it is a matter of when, not if".

In light of these new challenges and opportunities presented by the future economy, SSORgs and their boards need to review their strategic direction and operations, and respond accordingly, or risk being obsolete. According to Mrs Tan, SSORgs can do so by upskilling and increasing their nimbleness and innovativeness.

3. A Board for the Future

A board for the future needs to respond to the challenges of the rapidly evolving future economy. To do so, boards need to be cognisant of how they see the future and themselves. The panellists identified several perspectives that forward-looking boards should have.

Firstly, SSORgs and their boards should recognise that the social needs of the population and the needs of their service users will change. For example, in the new digital economy, the digital divide will only become wider. The digital have-nots, those losing their jobs and confidence due to the forces of disruption, will increase and will need social support. To remain relevant, SSORgs need to understand the changes in society, how it would affect their service users, and develop strategies to respond accordingly.

Secondly, boards themselves should embrace the future economy and the changes that come with it. In particular, SSORg boards should embrace, and proactively respond to, digital disruption. They must recognise that disruption represents both threats and opportunities.

In terms of threats, Dr Diez said that boards should have a stronger focus on risk management, be it preventing cyber attacks or improving internal controls. The challenge is to learn from the past and apply the lessons in the new context. In terms of opportunities, Dr Diez noted that the board of the future should have a mindset that focuses on finding new and better ways to do things. It should push management to find more efficient methods and support new initiatives that involve technology. Only then will progress be achieved.

Thirdly, boards should understand that SSORgs cannot and should not do everything. In the face of so many changes, threats, and opportunities, the board needs to be strategic and disciplined about what it does. Mr Hsieh explained that SSORgs should prioritise what the organisation can and should do, and develop the capabilities accordingly. He noted that many SSORgs have management and board members who are passionate about their causes. He felt that besides passion, the board needs to be professionally run with a certain strategic perspective and discipline.

Mr Hsieh observed that many SSORgs want to be self-reliant in almost everything, from solutions to capabilities and resources. In reality, no organisation can be totally self-reliant. SSORgs must come together and look for ways to collaborate, share, and tap on joint resources. To encourage SSORgs to collaborate, NCSS is creating platforms for organisations to come together and share resources.

Lastly, Mr Hsieh said that SSORgs should function more like an enterprise. As many SSORg board members come from the private sector, they are used to running a business in a resourceful and accountable manner. Mr Hsieh felt that SSORgs will benefit from the board member's experience and approach. He explained that the level of effectiveness and accountability in SSORgs may be inadequate, compared to the level of accountability in the private sector. This is because the companies in the private sector operate in a highly competitive environment where they are required to be more resourceful and efficient in their use of resources.

Box Story 9 Enhancing the Effectiveness of Boards in Social Service Organisations – Interview with Ren Ci Hospital

This box story prepared by CSDA, based on an interview with Mr Yap Wai Ming, Board Member and Chairman of the Governance and Risk Committee in Ren Ci Hospital.

Ren Ci Hospital's primary mission is to provide affordable medical, nursing, and rehabilitative care services for the community, living up to its name which means 'compassion' and 'benevolence' in English.

This box story demonstrates how SSOrgs can cultivate a forward-thinking and effective board.

Increasing Board Diversity

Over the last three years, Ren Ci has expanded its board. Mr Yap explained that this was to bring in different sets of expertise and experience to form specialised subcommittees to guide management in monitoring, evaluating, and responding to the changing trends.

For instance, its Medical Advisory Committee oversees the clinical needs of beneficiaries and ensures that appropriate care models are adopted. Together with its Governance & Risk Committee, it also conducts annual risk reviews to identify new areas of improvement to meet the changing needs of the society, stakeholders, and beneficiaries.

Ensuring a Good Board-Management Relationship and Strategic Alignment

One critical area in which the board and management can and should work closely together is in strategy development.

At Ren Ci, Mr Yap noted that the board and management have sought to stay aligned in the organisation's strategic direction.

Together, they have come up with Ren Ci's Vision 2020 strategy which will focus on three key areas:

- i. Organisational Development – to enhance the internal capabilities to support the future expansion of Ren Ci;
- ii. Process Optimisation – to improve its efficiencies by adopting technology, innovation, and lean methodology as enablers; and
- iii. Development of Community Health Services – to support its beneficiaries from the first point of contact until the end-of-life within the community as far as possible.

4. Developing an Effective and Forward-Looking Board

According to the Singapore Institute of Directors (SID) (2018), whether it is a for-profit or nonprofit organisation, there are two dimensions of the board's role – conformance and performance. Conformance involves safeguarding the assets and stakeholders' interests in compliance with existing rules and regulations. While performance involves ensuring that the company's resources are used efficiently and productively in accordance with the SSOrg's mission and in the best interests of its stakeholders.

For the board to be forward-looking, it needs to be able to conform and perform in this rapidly evolving environment in the context of the future economy. The ability of the board to address these challenges depends on how well it upholds the attributes of an effective board. An effective board embraces an appropriate board culture which prioritises diversity, good renewal and succession policies, effective board dynamics, and a good board-management relationship.

Board culture refers to the tone that is set by the board for itself and the rest of the organisation. It establishes what values, attitudes, and ways of behaving are important to the board. The process of establishing a board culture is often done implicitly and based on board decisions and the director's behaviour.

Dr Diez pointed out that the social service sector is fundamentally about values. It is essential for SSOrg boards to explicitly set out the values it supports and a code of ethical behaviour. Boards should then seek to manifest these values in the board's decisions and behaviours.

4.1 Board Composition

Mr Hsieh noted that many organisations struggle with board diversity and board renewal. A diverse board is deemed necessary to avoid groupthink⁸. He added that a diverse board lead to better decisions. There are many aspects of board diversity, including gender, age, skills, sectors, ethnicity, and geography.

Mrs Tan observed that most SSOrg boards have a good mix of female directors, and being a woman is not a barrier to becoming a board member in the social service sector. She felt that the main issue with SSOrg boards is the lack of explicit focus

⁸ Groupthink occurs when a group's strong desire for conformity leads to irrational decision-making.

on board composition. Many SSOrg boards simply look for people who have good standing, stature, and networks, and can contribute directly or indirectly to the needs of the organisation.

The board should be comprised of members with complementary skill sets. Given to that the social service sector is affected by the digital transformation and disruption to the new economy, SSOrg boards should seek a digital director to be part of the board. A digital director is someone with board or management experience at a company where digital business contributes a large portion of its revenue, or where digital channels are critical enablers of business, or where the company is a digital transformation leader in the industry. The digital director can help the board assess the implications of the digital economy and help it embrace a digital agenda.

4.2 Board Renewal and Succession

Board renewal and succession is a thorny issue in the social service sector. Dr Diez observed that many directors have been on their boards since the founding of the organisations. He argued that many SSOrg boards have had little board renewal due to the lack of explicit guidelines on the tenure of nonprofit directors. He explained that, in a recent Board Members Network Session organised by the Social Service Institute (SSI), there was an oversupply of volunteers who applied for a limited number of board positions in SSOrgs.

In the corporate sector, the best practice is to have regular and progressive board renewal. For corporate boards, one or two board members usually step down and are replaced each year. All board members are subjected to periodic re-appointments, usually every three years, even if they continue to be on the board. Some organisations have maximum term limits for different types of directors. For example, the Code of Corporate Governance, which applies to listed companies, has a nine-year limit for independent directors.

It is observed that the nonprofit sector is following many of the corporate sector's board practices. Since January 2018, the revised Code of Governance for Charities and Institutions of a Public Character has established several guidelines for board renewal. According to the guidelines, board members must submit themselves for renomination and reappointment at least once every three years, and no board member should serve for more than 10 consecutive years. The charity governance guidelines also stipulate that an SSOrg's treasurer, or their equivalent, has a maximum limit of four consecutive

years on the board. What might be missing from these guidelines is a maximum tenure for the board chair, which is often less than the maximum term of any board member.

Mr Hsieh urged for charity boards to have an appropriate mechanism in place for directors to rotate in a planned fashion. This enables the renewal of the board and ensures its continuity. Mrs Tan added that succession planning is needed not just for the board, but also for the management. This can be done by clearly setting out the immediate, medium-term, and long-term successor for each leadership position. Dr Diez observed that while a nominating committee is common on corporate boards, it is less so for an SSOrg board. He felt that a properly constituted nominating committee would ensure a more formalised and disciplined approach to succession planning, board renewal, the appointment of directors, and related governance matters.

4.3 Boardroom Dynamics

Boardroom dynamics refers to how the directors work with each other to collectively make decisions, and set the right directions, for the organisation. A common mistake in director appointments is that it is too often seen as simply getting competent individuals to join a board. However, it is how the interpersonal dynamics play out among the board members that ultimately decides how well decisions are made, or if any decisions can be made in the first place.

The fit of an incoming board member to the rest of the board needs to be taken into account. For example, although diversity creates contention, the contention may not always be constructive, and can sometimes create fault lines that impair communication and cooperation among board members.

Good boardroom dynamics require a board environment that promotes openness, shared values, and collegiate behaviour. This is especially important in the context of a fast-changing environment, where there are hard challenges and issues that need to be debated and decided by the board. Mr Hsieh said the role of the chairman is key to ensuring good boardroom dynamics. He or she should set the right tone and direction for the board, and orchestrate a harmonious and functioning board.

4.4 Board-Management Relationship

It is important that the board and management work well together to fulfil the mission of the organisation. In theory, the board governs and sets the strategic direction, while the management and staff implement the strategy and manage the operations. But in practice, where the line is drawn between the roles of the board and management can differ from board to board, especially when it comes to matters of strategy.

The line is even more contentious with SSOrgs due to the voluntary nature of their board members. Most SSOrg board members do not distinguish between their board roles and their roles as volunteer.

Dr Diez said that no matter where and how the lines are drawn, it is more important that there is clarity and understanding between the board and management. Otherwise, there will be frustration and loss of productivity. In the context of a rapidly changing environment, the grey areas will be greater and broader. So, an agreed framework and working relationship between the board and management is even more critical.

Within the board-management relationship, Mrs Tan believed that the key relationship is between the chairman and the executive director (ED). The chairman needs to work well with and support the ED. Their smooth working relationship would make a big difference in the functioning of the board and the staff.

4.5 Director's Remuneration

Remuneration for directors in nonprofits emerged as a topic for debate in the panel discussion. In Singapore, SSOrg boards do not compensate their directors, as they are volunteers. The panellists discussed the implications of remuneration for nonprofit directors.

According to Mrs Tan, being on an SSOrg board should remain a service to the community and society, and not a paid job. The social service sector allows directors and other volunteers to make a meaningful difference to those in need. Mrs Tan felt strongly that offering remuneration to SSOrg board members is contrary to the culture of the social service sector. The social service sector is driven by the values of compassion and generosity, rather than monetary rewards.

Mr Hsieh questioned how the social service sector could demand professionalism or a higher level of accomplishment since SSOrg boards only consist of volunteers. He

suggested that the sector should be open-minded about how boards can be constructed and compensated.

Mr Hsieh pointed out that there are some social enterprises that are established within charities. These social enterprises are operating for-profit businesses that are able to offer employment to those with disabilities, for example. He added that it is common for for-profit boards, including social enterprises, to compensate their directors. However, board members who sit on the charity's board responsible for the social enterprise, are not paid. Thus, the social service sector finds itself in an odd position with two sets of directors — social enterprise board members who are compensated, and charity board members who are not compensated.

Dr Diez added that the sector should consider reviewing how organisations behave, with any introduction of remuneration for board directors. For example, would a limit be imposed on the number of board directors recruited, and would there be more willingness and deliberate efforts to source for experts with specific competencies in alignment with the organisation's mission?

5. Equipping the Board

Recent research by SSI found that talent management at both management and board levels is important as it enables SSORgs to reach their organisational visions and strategic goals. The professional development of directors in SSORgs should be on a continual basis and not just when they first become board members.

The panellists agreed that SID, NCSS and its training arm, SSI provide most of the resources and education for SSORg boards. However, all the panellists felt that the government could also provide more support to the sector in this area.

5.1 Singapore Institute of Directors (SID)

SID is the national association of directors. Its members are directors in listed companies, private companies and nonprofit organisations, including social enterprises, charities, and SSORgs. It has a comprehensive professional development curriculum that ranges from fundamental and essential courses, to advanced courses. SID caters to the directorship journeys of the different types of directors and conducts more than 100 training sessions for directors annually.

Its nonprofit training track has introductory sessions for aspiring directors, such as ‘So, You Want to be a Nonprofit Director’, as well as more in-depth courses on the various aspects of nonprofit leadership and functions for experienced directors. Many of its nonprofit courses are conducted in collaboration with NCSS, the Charity Council, and the Centre for Nonprofit Leadership (CNPL).

SID’s flagship annual conference, which sees an attendance of over 1,000 participants, is also themed on some relevant aspects of the future economy. For example, the last five conference themes were — New Capitalism (2014), Innovation (2015), Digital Disruption (2016), Sustainability (2017), and Globalisation (2018). In all its conferences so far, it had a concurrent exhibition in which organisations, including social enterprises and SSOrgs, could showcase their innovations and solutions.

5.2 National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and Social Service Institute (SSI)

NCSS is the umbrella body for some 450 member SSOrgs. It provides leadership and direction in social services and seeks to enhance the capabilities of the SSOrgs. One way that increases the capacity of the sector is through SSI which offers more than 400 training programmes a year for SSOrgs and other nonprofit organisations. It uses a range of teaching approaches such as e-learning, distant learning, blended learning, and flipped classroom learning. Dr Diez, who also helms SSI, said that SSI is one of the leading Continuing Education and Training (CET) centres, out of the current 23 in Singapore, in the use of technology for education.

Specifically, in the area of board-level training, SSI has been working with SID and other relevant bodies to deliver training. NCSS also plays a constructive role in grooming future leaders. Dr Diez explained that it has programmes like Sun Ray, where NCSS hires people identified as future or current leaders to be seconded to the SSOrgs (National Council of Social Service, 2018).

There is also a whole suite of leadership training programmes to ensure that the sector shares the same leadership traits (Social Service Institute, 2018). In time, there will be a core group of leaders in different SSOrgs that share a similar mindset about how the sector can be more efficient.

To respond to the sector's growing resource needs, Dr Diez opined that technology can be used to address issues and increase productivity. iShine Cloud is one example of a shared services platform where charities can access an integrated suite of business IT productivity tools at subsidised prices. This platform is made possible by Singapore Pools Limited and NCSS.

5.3 The Role of the Government

The panellists agreed that the government can play an important role in the development of boards and the social service sector. Some suggestions include the sharing of information, providing funding, and catalysing action.

Government agencies can share their research on current and future population trends and social issues with SSOrgs. On top of that, they can also offer guidance on how SSOrgs can deal with, and prepare for, these challenges.

Many SSOrgs rely on the government for funding. The financial support can go towards the education of their boards, management, and staff on future technologies. In this respect, SSOrgs can work with SSI and the VWOs-Charities Capability Fund (VCF) to provide consistent and supportive training in these areas.

The government can also help to fund future-oriented projects and further catalyse action. For example, future-oriented projects can be further promoted through the establishment of incubators and other capacity building organisations.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, one of the main insights provided by the panellists is that the current defining trend is digital transformation. Boards must be willing to embrace changing technologies and social needs. Disruption comes from the use of exponential technologies in conjunction with innovative business and operating models. Digital disruption will come to the social service sector, although not as quickly and as impactful as in the private and public sectors. Nevertheless, SSOrgs should not ignore it as their stakeholders would expect them to embrace technology, and cyber threats are ignored at SSOrgs' peril.

Beyond technology, SSOrgs must deal with greater expectations from various stakeholders – donors, volunteers, service users, and the government, including regulators. To survive and thrive in a rapidly evolving environment, SSOrgs should be future-ready. This means recognising that change is a constant, embracing digital disruption, being strategic and disciplined about what they do, and functioning more like enterprises.

An effective and future-ready board needs to have several key attributes. Firstly, the board should set the right tone for the values, attitudes, and ways of behaving that are important. Next, there should be board diversity, which in today's context, should include one or more digital directors. There should also be regular and progressive renewal of the board, which the revised Code of Governance for Charities and Institutions of a Public Character is addressing, and preferably through the functioning of a nominating committee. It is also essential to have good boardroom dynamics with openness, shared values, and collegiate behaviour, led by an effective board chair. Lastly, there should be a healthy board-management relationship, including board chair-ED relationship, where the roles and lines are clear.

As the national association of directors, SID provides a range of board-level training for an SSOrg director's journey. NCSS and SSI provide training programmes for SSOrg staff and volunteers. NCSS also plays a proactive and constructive role in grooming future leaders, of significance is its Social Service Tribe branding programme to help to promote the social service sector (as detailed in Chapter 4). Overall, the government can always help to improve the sector through the sharing of information, more funding, and catalysing actions through incubators and capacity building organisations.

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Chapter 6

Ethics, Accountability and Stewardship in Social Service Organisations

by Gerard Ee^h, Ong Boon Hweeⁱ, Yancy Toh^j

This chapter discusses the significance of ethics, accountability, and stewardship, and their application to Singapore’s social service organisations (SSOrgs). It provides SSOrgs with a framework to operationalise ethics, accountability, and stewardship, aimed at improving service delivery in the social service sector.

1. Introduction

SSOrgs play an important role against a dynamic socio-economic landscape in Singapore, with changing family structures and ageing demographics. SSOrgs mobilise resources to provide public goods and services to help those in need. Given their close connection to the ground, SSOrgs are deemed to be better poised to provide targeted assistance and support to those in need. This includes the delivery of humanistic care, advocating for under-represented groups, building cohesive communities, and proffering solutions to social and environmental challenges (Bhandari, 2010).

Mr Chan Chun Sing, former Minister for Social Family Development, said that there is “much to do” in building new social service capabilities and deepening competencies to better serve the needs of the various groups (Chia, 2014). SSOrgs face longstanding challenges and tensions that can potentially undermine their viability. There are mounting pressures for SSOrgs to be — (i) accountable to a growing number of stakeholders; (ii) sustainable in their funding; and (iii) committed to their mission.

SSOrg’s missions are people-centred and intervention-based. With limited resources, SSOrgs must rely on social capital and the goodwill of other stakeholders. SSOrgs

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need to be creative in terms of raising funds, mobilising a wide array of resources, and sustaining relationships amongst sponsors, donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries.

They tend to struggle between the decision to channel limited resources to help more beneficiaries directly, or to hire more staff to professionalise work processes, or to invest their funding for skills upgrading and new infrastructure.

SSOrgs need to avoid duplication and create more synergy to solve social problems. Such social problems are typically multi-faceted in nature and require a holistic approach. To provide a more targeted solution for the beneficiaries, SSOrgs need to leverage on complementary expertise – inter-agency collaboration is the way to go.

This chapter shows how SSOrgs can be better positioned to respond to these challenges by applying the principles of ethics, accountability, and stewardship. It provides the following discussions:

- i. the symbiotic relationship between stakeholders in the social service sector;
- ii. the importance of ethics and accountability in SSOrgs;
- iii. the principle of stewardship and how long-term orientation, inclusiveness, and ownership mentality are incorporated in this principle; and
- iv. the five aspects of intent, impact, sustainability, professionalism, and collaboration.

2. Symbiotic Relationship Between Stakeholders in the Social Service Sector

Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Shanmugaratnam, said that a more holistic and people-centric approach is required when tackling social needs. There is a need to understand vulnerable individuals and their environments, so that there can be better coordination of policies and services. In an interview with The Straits Times in 2018, Singapore Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Shanmugaratnam said that, to do so, Singapore needs to leverage both personal and collective responsibility to pool together a network capable of contributing, helping, and caring for each other (Shanmugaratnam, 2018).

This network comprises stakeholders, which includes:

- i. Decision makers — such as policymakers, regulators, and funders;
- ii. Thought leaders — such as academics and researchers from think tanks;
- iii. SSOrgs — including the board, management, staff, and volunteers; and
- iv. Beneficiaries — including their family members.

Figure 4 illustrates the symbiotic relationship between stakeholders. It is observed in the figure that communication between stakeholders provides opportunities for the views of beneficiaries, thought leaders, and service providers to percolate to decision makers. Using this framework, beneficiaries and their families will be given the opportunity to articulate their views through SSOrgs (National Council of Social Service, 2017). This is a milestone achievement as there is a shift from a deficiency mindset to an empowering mindset, paving the way for a more symbiotic relationship amongst the stakeholders.

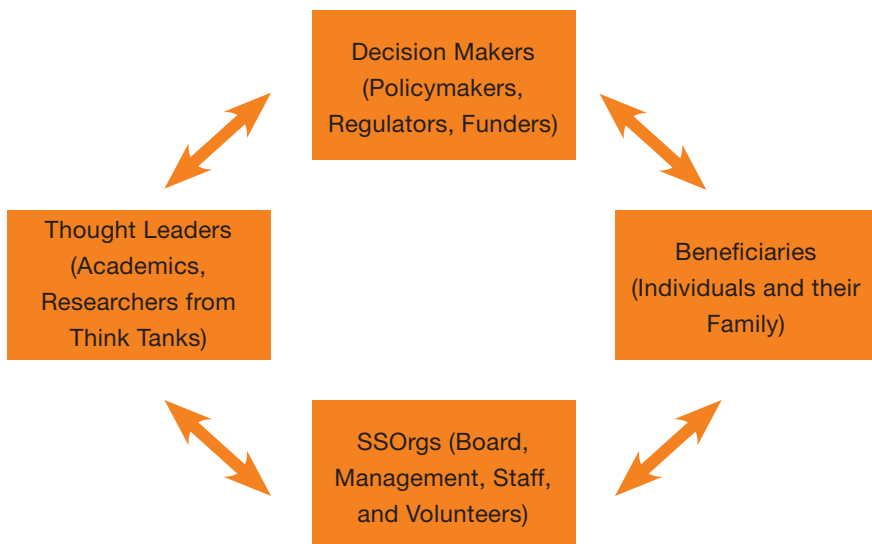


Figure 4: Symbiotic Relationship Between Stakeholders in the Social Service Sector

With the understanding of the symbiotic relationship between stakeholders in the social service sector, attention can be directed towards the use of the principles of stewardship, accountability, and ethics, and how they can be applied to mitigate the challenges in the sector.

3. Ethics and Accountability in Social Service Organisations

This section covers the importance of ethics and accountability in SSOrgs.

3.1 Ethics

Ethical dilemmas are inherent and inevitable in the delivery of social services. The discussion of ethics will be at two levels, at the organisational level and in the professional practice of social work.

Ethical issues are complex, in which honouring one situation may result in conflicts in other related situations and SSOrgs are often subjected to such moral dilemmas. One example is the concept of inclusiveness and how this may affect the provision and delivery of social services. It is challenging as there are moral dilemmas in the decision-making process, given the competing priorities amongst stakeholders.

Most programmes administered by SSOrgs are designed to benefit the poor, even though the programme may also benefit the financially endowed. However, is it ethical to design a programme which only benefits the poor? Is it ethical to operate a programme that helps children with a particular affliction, but restricts access to that programme to only those who are poor?

The need to make an ethical judgement arises when two or more moral principles are in conflict. The crux of the issue is that no one should be deprived of access to a beneficial programme simply because they cannot afford to do so. However, limiting services to only the poor is a problem that stems from a dated understanding of the concept of charity. One can argue that the focus of any programme should be to provide assistance to all with affliction, regardless of their financial status, as afflictions affect both the rich and poor.

Another ethical dilemma is the notion of growth for SSOrgs. In the social service sector, where resources are scarce, it is common for a good programme to be expanded to serve more clients. Often, the SSOrgs are able to serve more clients, but they may operate at a lower standard and reduced outcomes.

For example, if an SSOrg expands their counselling programme to accommodate an additional 100 clients without ensuring that the clients are served at a level that achieves good outcomes. Surely, this is not an ethical decision.

Output measurements, like the number of clients served, can be misleading. They create the illusion that SSOrgs are doing a lot of good and gives the impression that only outputs matter. Such practices to boost quantitative outputs in the short-term without ensuring the sustainability of quality in the long-term shows the lack of long-term perspective. Perhaps funders, grant makers, policymakers, and service providers need to re-examine the notion of growth and social impact, beyond quantitative output measurements.

Besides dealing with ethical dilemmas at the organisational level, SSOrgs have to manage ethical issues at the professional level. According to the Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW), the social work profession is based on the belief in the value and dignity of all human beings, and a concern for their well-being.

SASW adopts and subscribes to six core values of the profession prescribed by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). They are – service to humanity, social justice, dignity and worth of person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. The six core values form the foundation of the social work mission and they are embedded in ethical responsibilities, which are relevant to the professional activities of social workers (Singapore Association of Social Work, 2017). They include responsibility to their clients, the social work profession, and society. SSOrgs should be aware and adopt these core values in their operations and service delivery.

3.2 Accountability

According to Ebrahim (2010), accountability should be mission driven. It refers to an organisation's proactive and self-imposed approach to improve performance and achieve its mission of serving the needs of its stakeholders.

Ebrahim (2005) expounds that accountability can be:

- i. upwards to regulators such as government, funders, supporters, and patrons;
- ii. downwards to beneficiaries receiving the aid and in a broader sense, to the staff administering them; and
- iii. internally within the organisation itself, including the organisation's responsibility to their mission and staff, decision makers, and implementers on the ground.

The demands and expectations of these related parties vary and SSOrgs often have to find a balance in meeting these competing demands. For example, regulators expect compliance with the law and the relevant regulatory framework. Donors look towards the fulfilment of commitments made when their donations are solicited for. Beneficiaries hope that SSOrgs are able to efficiently resolve their problems.

SSOrgs are expected to be accountable to regulatory standards, especially in the aspects of finances, governance, and performance (Behn, 2001; Ebrahim, 2010). In response to these external regulatory demands, SSOrgs are required to make full disclosure and ensure clarity in the fiduciary role of their board of directors. These are compliant-driven impetus for accountability, to address concerns about public trust to prevent fraud or malfeasance.

Accountability requires transparency, justification, and compliance, all of which require strong administrative capability. When constrained by time and limited resources, SSOrgs may feel the pressure to gravitate towards making decisions that satisfy the interests of the most powerful actors. This could perhaps explain why accountability to decision makers is generally more prevalent than accountability to beneficiaries (Argandoña, 2009; Ebrahim, 2010). This may result in SSOrgs side-lining other accountability mechanisms that are vital to their long-term survival and well-being of their beneficiaries. To commit the organisation to long-term growth, SSOrgs should be intrinsically motivated to be accountable to all their stakeholders.

4. Stewardship in Social Service Organisations

Similar to leadership, stewardship involves leading members of an organisation towards realising a common vision, as well as building a culture that supports its overarching goal. Stewardship embodies the responsible planning and management of resources.

A steward's intent is to nurture the organisation to have an ongoing capacity for learning, innovation, self-organisation, and ultimately, to be a thriving organisation. Beyond these, stewardship involves a strong focus on growing the organisations' tangible and intangible assets, so that the organisation can be handed over to the next leadership in a better shape.

Figure 5 provides an overview on how the principle of stewardship manifests through the virtues of a long-term orientation, inclusiveness, and ownership mentality.

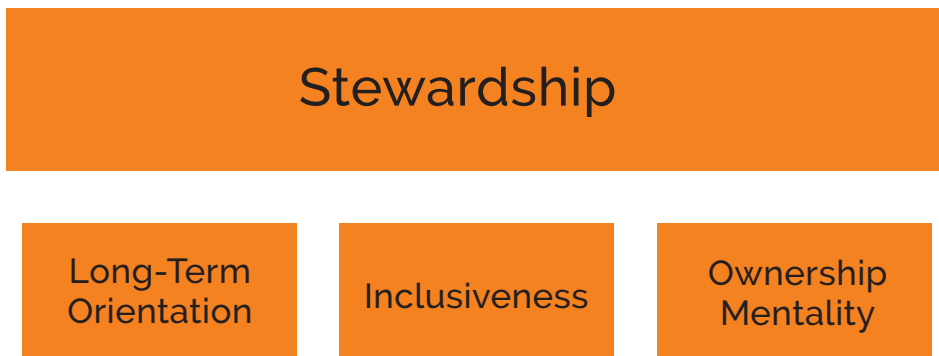


Figure 5: Common Virtues Undergirding Stewardship

An SSOrg with good stewardship is a responsible, engaging, and growing organisation that enhances the well-being of all its stakeholders, and the larger community in the long run. To achieve this, SSOrgs need to fulfil their mission, grow the resources entrusted to them, and ensure its long-term viability. They have to be accountable for the well-being of their beneficiaries, as well as manage their organisation's financial resources and human capital — which includes both staff and volunteers. Leaders in the social service sector need to serve as stewards, to be the custodians of Singapore's social wealth, serving the social and emotional needs of diverse stakeholders.

In essence, stewardship focuses on the commitment to do the right thing and the conviction to do them right. It embodies the undertaking of long-term perspective, embracing inclusiveness, and adopting an ownership mentality.

4.1 Undertaking a Long-Term Perspective

Given the uncertain funding climate, it is essential for SSORgs to undertake a long-term perspective. SSORg leaders need to adopt strategies to grow their organisations' financial as well as non-financial capabilities and capacities, such as internal capacity, reputation, and social capital. With long-term financial viability, SSORgs will be able to provide for their beneficiaries in the long run. To do so, SSORgs need to have sound charity governance and develop stewards who place priority on sustainable growth.

4.2 Embracing Inclusiveness

As stewards, SSORg leaders are entrusted with the responsibility to deliver social services with social impact. To promote inclusiveness, SSORgs should be committed to helping the vulnerable and marginalised populations in society, so that these beneficiaries can eventually be integrated into mainstream society. To do so, SSORgs need to have close connections with all the stakeholders in the social service sector, working together to align their interests.

4.3 Adopting an Ownership Mentality

Ownership should not be mistaken for a sense of entitlement. It refers to a stakeholder's initiative and responsibility to act as a steward to develop proactive and integrative solutions to mitigate challenges.

For an SSORg leader, good stewardship entails taking ownership of the efficacy of the various intervention programmes administered to the beneficiaries. Stewards also have a responsibility to make sure that beneficiaries develop the capability of self-reliance in the long run.

5. Five Aspects to Operationalise Ethics, Accountability and Stewardship Principles

This section outlines how the principles of ethics, accountability, and stewardship can be operationalised through the five aspects that SSORgs can adopt. They are intent, impact, sustainability, professionalism, and collaboration. Figure 6 offers a summary of these five aspects.

<p>1. Intent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a clear sense of purpose that drives SSOrg's existence and activities. • This can be fostered by having a clear mandate and frequent engagements with stakeholders.
<p>2. Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring SSOrg's impact and making sure their achievements are relevant to the beneficiaries served. • This can be fostered by mapping out the Theory of Change and Most Significant Change Technique with stakeholders.
<p>3. Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring sustainability in terms of funding, programmes, social capital, and values. • This can be fostered by well-executed leadership renewal as well community development to maintain coherence in SSOrg's undertakings.
<p>4. Professionalism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being committed to improving the ethical, technical, and managerial know-how of stakeholders who are involved in the running of SSOrgs. • This can be fostered by skills upgrading, lifelong learning, values-based education, peer apprenticeship, and long-term enculturation.
<p>5. Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating and coordinating services provided by SSOrgs to ensure efficiency and innovation in the value chain. • This can be fostered by convening multiple parties through networking platforms and tapping on social technologies.

Figure 6: Summary of How Social Service Organisations Can Operationalise the Principles of Ethics, Accountability and Stewardship Through Five Aspects

5.1 Intent

A well-defined and relevant intent is critical as it will guide SSOrgs in its organisation's purpose, stakeholder engagement, board, and resource management. With a clear intent, SSOrgs would be better positioned to resolve any ethical dilemma that they may face in the course of carrying out their mission.

By nature, SSOrgs are an integral part of society, they need to be clear about the gaps that they are filling in relation to the larger community. Hence, SSOrgs must start with intent – a clear sense of purpose that drives their existence and activities. They need

to have frequent dialogues with stakeholders to promote a common understanding of its intent. This can be carried out through various types of engagement modes, such as public meetings or hearings, surveys, consultation with community leaders, frequent contact, feedback, and evaluations (Ebrahim, 2010).

Clarity about their intent helps the SSOrgs stay focused on their vision and mission, and to know where they are able to make a difference. SSOrgs need to maintain the organisation's legitimacy by staying focused on its original intent. Once organisations are clear about their intent, it will be easier for them to be accountable to their mission. With a clear intent, SSOrg's management can focus on long-term goals, rather than working towards gaining quick results to meet key performance indicators.

As suggested by Goyder and Ong (2015), a clear intent and mandate is a good starting point for the board of directors. Good stewardship takes place when the organisation's purpose, values, and ways to uphold the organisation's integrity are clearly spelt out.

The board of an SSOrg is entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that the organisation works towards its core mission. According to Ong (2016), the board needs to have a deep understanding of the organisation, the stakeholders, and its community. With the ability to make good judgements for short-term and long-term decisions, the board is able to leverage tangible and intangible assets to sustain the well-being of the organisation and community alike (Ong, 2016).

When confronted by an ethical dilemma, SSOrgs should fall back on their organisation's mission, vision, and intent. SSOrgs need to take a systematic approach in resolving the issues arising. Reamer (2000) and Grobman (2015) provided the following approach:

- i. Understanding the crux of the controversy;
- ii. Identifying who will be affected;
- iii. Establishing how they would be affected;
- iv. Formulating potential courses of action;
- v. Evaluating how the decision may be aligned with the mission; and
- vi. Identifying the outcomes of the decision.

Having a clear intent helps SSORgs determine how, where, and when to invest their time and effort. With scarce resources, SSORgs cannot afford to work in different directions and spread themselves too thin. SSORgs with a clear intent are thus better positioned to orchestrate their resources efficiently to be a force for good. In the area of human capital, SSORgs with a clear intent are able to attract like-minded and talented individuals who are more aligned with the organisation's values.

5.2 Impact

SSORgs need to establish the critical linkage between intent and impact. Impact should be measured against the intent of SSORgs. This will help them maintain their focus on the 'why' of the work they are doing, while having a certain level of flexibility to adjust the 'how' in their approach to maximise the impact they wish to achieve.

It is important to note that there are limited available resources, practices and methodologies to measure social impact (So & Capanyola, 2016). Despite the challenges, SSORgs need to invest in impact evaluation and measurement to ensure that their intent and purpose are aligned with their impact.

To begin evaluating and measuring the social impact of their work, SSORgs must go beyond using standardised key performance indicators to measure project and service outcomes. They need to understand the multiple needs of their stakeholders, look at the longitudinal effects and even the intangible, less visible results of their actions.

The notion of impact can be interpreted differently by different stakeholders. There are two possible ways in which SSORgs can achieve a consensus about how to measure and evaluate social impact. They are the Theory of Change (ToC) and the Most Significant Change Technique (MSC).

The ToC is a methodology for planning, participation, and evaluation to promote social change. It explicitly maps out the organisation's fundamental assumptions, intent, desired outcomes and the ways to achieve them, while paying attention to the logic of action and consequences (Brest, 2010). By sharing this information with stakeholders such as external evaluators, SSORgs can facilitate a better understanding about the mission of their organisation. Thus, more accurate evaluations of the social impact of the organisation's programmes can be made (Wong & Selvarajan, 2016).

Besides the ToC, SSORgs can also apply the Most Significant Change Technique to monitor and evaluate the impact of their activities. It is a qualitative, participatory

approach that would focus on generating significant change stories from various stakeholders about the impact of the organisation's services and programmes (Dart & Davies, 2003). The stories with the most significant changes are chosen, and discussed in-depth by evaluators. This allows SSOrgs to articulate their organisational intent and identify leverage points with related actors, thus potentially informing the future direction of policy setting for SSOrgs to achieve greater impact (Ebrahim, 2010).

Box Story 10

Impact Assessment — Interview with The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund (STSPMF)

This box story is prepared by CSDA, based on an interview with Ms Tan Bee Heong, General Manager of The Straits Times Pocket Money Fund (STSPMF).

STSPMF was started in 2000 as a community project initiated by The Straits Times, the English flagship daily of Singapore Press Holdings. It aims to provide pocket money to primary school, secondary school and post-secondary school students from low-income families to help them through school. Since the project started, the Fund has disbursed more than S\$60 million and helped over 160,000 cases of children and youth.

Ms Tan shared about her organisation's work with children and youth from low-income families and how they assess the impact of their work.

Ms Tan explained that there is no easy formula to determine if a service has indeed created an impact. Instead, STSPMF keeps track of two key statistics to measure the outcomes of their programme. They are (i) the number of students from low-income families who have benefitted from the STSPMF; and (ii) the number of needy students who dropped out from schools due to financial reasons.

Ms Tan shared that they have commissioned an independent study to examine how the STSPMF has impacted these children and youth. The research was conducted in 2009 and 2010 by the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore. The results indicated that the children and youth who have benefitted from the Fund are more likely to do better in school, be more active in co-curricular activities and are less self-conscious about not having money.

Ms Tan added that, by providing financial relief, the fund is able to bring about intangible impact, such as improved family relations. By easing the family's burden of providing pocket money for the children, it allows families to focus on other challenges.

5.3 Sustainability

To be impactful, SSOrg's work and contributions must be ongoing rather than episodic. SSOrgs need to operate sustainably by having good leadership, stable funding, and impactful programmes that involve the community in order to build a legacy over time.

To maintain organisational intent, SSOrgs need well-conceived and well-executed leadership renewal. This will ensure that the SSOrg's core values will not be diluted due to leadership change.

SSOrgs have to be financially sustainable. Most SSOrgs are dependent on external sources such as donations, funds from fund-raising efforts, and government grants to sustain themselves financially (Sim, Ghoh, Loh, & Chiu, 2015). Given the importance of these financial sources, SSOrgs should work with their donors and funders to achieve sustainable support. However, SSOrgs should not compromise the core purpose and values of the organisation. Ultimately, SSOrgs must ensure that the sourcing and utilisation of these funds are ethical, as they have to be financially accountable to their stakeholders.

SSOrgs also need to have programmes that are impactful and viable in the long run. They need to take a holistic approach on the social issues that they are addressing. Hence, SSOrgs need to think strategically about how to design their activities and

projects to be more effective in the long-term. One good example is Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS) in their provision of a continuum of services for people with mental health issues (PMHI). Refer to Box Story 12 for more details.

Community development is an important building block to an SSOrg's sustainability. As discussed by Lee, Matthews and Tan (2017), the end goal for SSOrgs is to build a sustainable resource in the form of social capital that will go beyond the limits of any time-bound intervention. To achieve this, there needs to be a symbiotic relationship between those who give and those who receive. SSOrgs need to work with their beneficiaries to forge a sense of ownership and mobilise community action to ensure that the efforts by the SSOrgs are sustainable in the long run. See Box Story 11 on how the Singapore Cancer Society achieved sustainability through community development.

Finally, SSOrgs should aim to build a legacy over time, so that the effects of their promising work will last. To do so, SSOrgs need to build trust and goodwill with their stakeholders to maintain a good reputation and increase their social capital.

Box Story 11 Sustainability — Interview with Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)

This box story is prepared by CSDA, based on an interview with Mr Tay Kuan Ming, Director of Corporate Services, Singapore Cancer Society.

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) is a community-based voluntary welfare organisation dedicated to maximising life by minimising the impact of cancer through effective programmes. Their efforts include research and advocacy, public education, health screenings, financial assistance, patient services and support, and rehabilitation. SCS was established in 1964. In 2016, a new SCS Cancer Rehabilitation Centre started its operations. It is Singapore's first community-based cancer rehabilitation centre, providing convenient access to integrated, person-centred, and holistic rehabilitative care tailored to the specific needs of cancer patients and survivors.

The box story explores how the organisation remains sustainable.

Stewardship is one of their core values. SCS aims to make the best use of their resources, time, talents, and funds to realise its mission and vision to be Singapore's leading charity in the fight for a cancer free community. They aim to be the first port of call for all cancer patients in Singapore, especially those who are financially disadvantaged.

Mr Tay shared that SCS strives to constantly evolve and stay relevant in the changing healthcare landscape. Public trust and support is paramount as SCS relies on public funding.

To achieve sustainability, SCS sets its focus on relevance, impact, and financial reserves. SCS needs to be prudent in managing financial reserves to fulfil the needs and goals of the organisation, and to run relevant and impactful programmes that meet the needs of the community. Some of the needs include the challenges of an ageing community, building a value system of caring and sharing, as well as ensuring that there is always space for people who do not fit into the box.

In 2009, SCS launched the Singapore Cancer Society Charity Athletes Programme to give sportsmen and sportswomen the opportunity to dedicate their passion to a meaningful cause to save lives. Each year, they participate in the annual fundraising event, the Race Against Cancer as well as other sporting events, to help raise funds towards SCS.

Mr Tay shared that the Singapore Cancer Society Charity Athletes Programme is important for SCS as it helps to sustain positive impact. Evidently, these athletes and ambassadors not only help raise awareness, but also contribute to the financial sustainability of the organisation. He added that SCS Charity Athletes are making a difference by empowering cancer survivors.

5.4 Professionalism

Competence and skillsets are important in ensuring that SSOrgs are able to deliver their services professionally to the beneficiaries and the community. While many social service professionals are passionate about the causes they are championing, it is not enough to create real impact. The sector needs to uphold professionalism. Professionalism can be defined as the continued commitment to improve the ethical, technical, and managerial know-how of stakeholders, who are involved in the running of the organisations (Argandoña, 2009). It can be fostered by skills upgrading, lifelong learning, and strategic resource allocation.

Tackling the issue of professionalism in the social service sector is challenging. There is an urgent need for capacity and capability building for the sector. It is estimated that the social service sector needs another 1,000 professionals by 2019 (Ministry of Manpower, 2018). According to Sim and Tay (2017), the social service sector faces problems relating to:

- i. Difficulties in attracting new board members;
- ii. Board members lacking understanding of the sector;
- iii. Challenges due to rapidly changing environment;
- iv. High staff turnover;
- v. Stretched resources between serving clients and corporate functions; and
- vi. New forms of risk in managing charities' public image, especially with the advent of social media.

Besides the challenges in getting new volunteers to be board members and staff to serve in the social service sector, the sector also lacks staff who are trained for the charity's back-end offices. SSOrgs must realise that they cannot neglect the back-end office as it may lead to a higher probability of ethical breaches, resulting in poorer accountability. This can work against the goodwill and support received, thereby affecting the charity's public image. Poor charity governance and the lack of accountability will ultimately erode the public's confidence in the nonprofit sector. Hence, it is important for all the stakeholders in the sector to allocate resources to professionalise the SSOrg's back-end offices to ensure the well-functioning of the social welfare sector.

To support the continued upgrading of the skills of personnel in the social service sector, the Office of the Commissioner of Charities and Charity Council have provided resources in the form of training courses, templates and funding (Sim, Loh, Tay, & Hoe, 2017). The Centre for Non-Profit Leadership (CNPL), the consulting arm of National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC), also conducts leadership courses for the nonprofit sector. A skills framework for the social service sector will also be made available in due course, to support skills development and to build capabilities for the sector to meet changing manpower needs (Ministry of Manpower, 2018).

The ability and desire for SSOrgs to adopt lifelong learning is crucial to professionalism. SSOrgs should aim to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills of their professionals, thereby allowing them to adapt to emergent developments. Increasingly, technologies are applied to the various functions in the social service sector.

The staff in the social service sector need to professionalise and adapt to changes. This skill of adaptivity is especially pertinent in the disruptive age, where emerging technologies are revolutionising how information and data can be used and aggregated, and how work will be carried out.

On top of this, professionals require certain soft skills. This tacit knowledge could potentially be cultivated through values-based education, situated peer apprenticeship, and long-term enculturation.

SSOrg leaders need to be guided by the philosophy of providing opportunities for people to grow with dignity. They must build expertise to pinpoint inherent issues and broker the relationships between multiple parties to bring forth meaningful change to the beneficiaries.

Professionalism includes and reflects good leadership, ethical values, teamwork, and a constant drive to innovate and improve to be accountable to stakeholders. As good stewards, SSOrg leaders need to do all they can to raise and maintain professionalism. The benefits of these practices will be seen through the social impact of their organisation's work.

5.5 Collaboration

For SSORgs, collaboration with other stakeholders would go a long way to enhance stewardship in the entire community and in channelling the available resources to the right places, where they can meet the biggest needs and do the most good. Collaboration and partnership with stakeholders in the social service sector reinforces the idea that the resultant synergy would be greater than the sum of all the individual SSORg's efforts. The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) has advocated for collaboration through partnership with SSORgs, government agencies, community organisations, academics, media, corporations, and social service professionals. During the Social Service Partners Conference organised by MSF in 2014 and 2015, the importance of collaboration was emphasised and discussed in detail.

MSF's focus is to reach out to the most vulnerable in the community. Although it is easy to identify people with needs, it is challenging to address those needs in an integrated manner (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2014).

To develop sustainable local solutions that meet local community needs, MSF has initiated and recommended the creation of a community of support. This is made up of government agencies, SSORgs, social service professionals, community partners from the Community Development Council, the media, the academics, the business corporations, and other stakeholders.

SSORgs need to work and collaborate with other SSORgs, community partners, and government agencies, to help their beneficiaries access services such as financial assistance, education, healthcare, and housing. They need to work closely with MSF in collaborating with other government agencies, such as the Housing and Development Board, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Finance.

It is important for SSORgs to collaborate to build economies of scale, increase efficiencies, enhance professionalism, and encourage innovation in the social service sector. Van Slyke (2006) advocates the need to enter into long-term negotiated relationships that involve trust, discretion, joint problem solving, and information exchange.

SSORgs need to create their own competitive advantages through fair competition based on truthful disclosure about the organisation's scale, activities, and representativeness (Argandoña, 2009). However, it must be cautioned as unnecessary competition may result in inefficiency and wastage of resources that could have been used for the community.

Collaboration and coordination of services among SSOrgs is needed to ensure efficiency and innovation in the value-chain. Collaboration between SSOrgs should be based on respect and equality in mutual relations, and consensus in action (Argandoña, 2009). By adhering to these ethical guidelines, SSOrgs can collaborate and work together to avoid duplicating services to the same beneficiaries. Rather than competing for limited resources among themselves, SSOrgs can share the available resources and maximise their outcomes.

One way to facilitate collaboration within the sector is by leveraging technology. Technologies can be applied to promote open and decentralised interorganisational collaboration (Wong & Selvarajan, 2016). Technological platforms enables self-organised collaborations amongst stakeholders in the social service sector by connecting people across groups.

Box Story 12 comprehensively illustrates efforts by the Singapore Anglican Community Services to collaborate with other SSOrgs and government agencies to reach out to persons with mental health issues (PMHI).

Box Story 12

Collaboration with Other Stakeholders — Interview with Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS)

This box story is prepared by CSDA, based on an interview with Dr Arthur Chern, Group Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS) and St. Andrew's Mission Hospital.

SACS, an affiliate of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), serves the community through the provision of psychiatric services as well as services for seniors and special groups. Their mission is to provide refuge and relief for the psychiatrically-disabled and for people in crisis. They aim to be an excellent caring Christian welfare organisation, effectively accomplishing rehabilitation of those under their care.

Today, SACS is one of the leading and largest SSOrgs in Singapore, especially in mental health services. Their psychiatric services arm includes Residential and Day Rehabilitation Services at Hougang Care Centre and Simei Care Centre, Community Rehabilitation Support and Services at Bukit Batok, Pasir Ris, and Yishun and Integrated Employment Support Services. Together, they provide a seamless continuum of psychiatric rehabilitation services to 2,000 persons with mental health issues annually.

Dr Chern shared his views on how the social service ecosystem can be enhanced through collaboration.

Dr Chern explained how SACS collaborates with mental health institutions, government ministries, NCSS, and the private sector to provide a seamless continuum of psychiatric rehabilitation services for persons with mental health issues (PMHI).

SACS collaborates and works closely with other mental health rehabilitation service providers, such as the Institute of Mental Health and Singapore Association of Mental Health. For instance, the Ministry of Health has appointed SACS to operate Singapore's only psychiatric shelter, the Anglican Care Centre.

The Anglican Care Centre supports people recovering from mental health issues. It can house 60 adults and 20 youths (aged 16-21) who require temporary accommodation after treatment and are ready to return to live independently in the community. Besides receiving help from rehabilitation counsellors, they can attend programmes for counselling, psycho-education and personal effectiveness skills, family engagement and support, vocational and skills support, as well as participate in social and recreational activities (Singapore Anglican Community Services, n.d.-a).

To help PMHI prepare for and find suitable employment, SACS has partnered with NCSS to launch a pilot programme, Employment Internship Programme (EIP). The EIP provides on-the-job training for persons in recovery to prepare them for employment in various industries such as retail, admin, and logistics. Internship placement for PMHI provides on-site job coaching and collaborates with employers to design work function that utilises the strengths of PMHI and minimise stigmatisation in the workplace.

Dr Chern explained how SACS is able to collaborate and work with other charities serving PMHI. He gave the example of a collaboration between MINDSET Care Limited (MINDSET) and SACS, where MINDSET provided funding for one of SACS's initiatives.

MINDSET is a registered charity founded by the Jardine Matheson Group of Companies to make a difference in the area of mental health. It aims to change people's attitudes by raising awareness and understanding of mental health issues, as well as providing direct assistance for individuals, families, and organisations in need of help.

Something Old Something New (SOSN) is a thrift shop run by SACS. SOSN provides training and employment opportunities to persons recovering from psychiatric conditions. They train and equip their beneficiaries with retail and logistic skills to boost their employability, while at the same time supporting the green initiative through efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle (Singapore Anglican Community Services, n.d.-b). In 2014, SOSN received funding from MINDSET.

Through these collaborations mentioned above, SACS is able to share experiences as well as tap on their collaborator's expertise. This enhances SACS' core competency, which will benefit their beneficiaries in the long run.

Dr Chern strongly encouraged collaboration within the sector. He hoped that there can be more platforms for interaction and information sharing in the social service sector. This can be done by having more conferences and workshops. Lastly, he suggested that the government ministry or NCSS can play a more active role. They can play the role of the coordinator and involve various social service sector stakeholders in projects.

6. Concluding Remarks

SSOrgs are facing mounting pressures to navigate the changing social service landscape with a growing number of stakeholders and limited resources. This chapter explains how ethics, accountability, and stewardship are important principles that SSOrgs should embrace. It suggests ways to operationalise ethics, accountability, and stewardship through the five aspects of intent, impact, sustainability, professionalism, and collaboration.

To conclude, a set of guiding questions has been developed to help SSOrgs to operationalise ethics, accountability, and stewardship (see Table 3).

	Ethics	Accountability	Stewardship
Intent	While we want to be inclusive, how do we reconcile competing priorities amongst our stakeholders?	Who has oversight over our mission accountability? How can we exercise self-regulation to check if we have achieved our intent?	What is our intent? What is our mandate? To whom or what are we stewards to?
Impact	How do we boost quantitative outputs without compromising the quality of service provided?	To whom and for what are we accountable to? How do we measure impact that are relevant to our beneficiaries?	What is the purpose of measuring impact? Is the impact we intend to measure aligned with our values and intent? How can we reach a consensus on what impact we should focus upon?
Sustainability	How can we ensure that our core values will not be diluted over time?	How do we exercise self and collective accountability in programme sustainability? How do we ensure our funds are ethically utilised so as to achieve financial sustainability?	How do we ensure responsible and inclusive long-term growth?
Professionalism	How do we channel limited resources for capacity building and helping beneficiaries directly?	How can we professionalise, recruit, develop, and retain talent to be accountable to our stakeholders?	How can we improve the ethical, technical, and managerial know-how of our stakeholders?
Collaboration	How do we ensure that our collaboration with other parties is premised on respect and equality in mutual relations?	How do we embed collective accountability in all our partnerships?	How can we increase our social capital and build long-standing relationships with our collaborators?

Table 3: Guiding Questions on Operationalising Ethics, Accountability and Stewardship in the Social Service Sector

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Chapter 7

Towards a New Frontier

by Isabel Sim^a, Alfred Loh^b and Teo Chee Kiang^c

This chapter concludes with a summary of the themes discussed in the book. It states that while the Many Helping Hands (MHH) approach remains relevant, it must be reassessed to ensure that future service delivery is sufficient in meeting needs. Social service organisations (SSOrgs) have to be future-ready and sustainable, while service delivery has to be guided with compassion. It also introduces the contents of the second book in this series, *Doing Good in Singapore: Part 2 — Resourcing for the Future*.

1. The Social Service Ecosystem and Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST)

Singapore's social services have been evolving, with the government becoming more involved in the sector as the country progresses. But in order not to turn Singapore into a welfare state in which the disadvantaged rely heavily on the state for support, the government has, since the 1990s, adopted the MHH approach as the basis upon which the sector would operate.

The aim of MHH is to create a compassionate society to help people in the community who cannot keep pace with the rest of the population (Ang, 2015).

With self-reliance as a guiding principle, this approach requires the participation of all sectors of society to support those who are in need. The first line of support involves the family being the ones who would be in a position to identify when help is needed and would usually take on the role of the primary caregivers. Forming the next line of support is the community; it includes the SSOrgs which provide services, as well as the private sector which contributes to the funding of SSOrgs through corporate social responsibility. Finally, the government sets out the policy framework, and provides the

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infrastructure and resources necessary for the other stakeholders to play their part. The government provides funding to the various SSOrgs through the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) as well as other agencies.

Relying on family as the first line of support is, however, increasingly becoming unsustainable, in light of the trends of smaller families and a rapidly ageing population, amongst many other factors. As pointed out by Tai (2016), social issues have become more complex and multifaceted in an increasingly globalised and fast-paced world. She suggested that the social service sector needs more than many helping hands to meet those challenges. The sector needs all hands on deck.

This raises important questions for the sector. What can be done to bring all hands on deck? How should the social service ecosystem be strengthened? How can SSOrgs become more effective to adapt to future challenges?

Currently, the principles laid out in the Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST), issued by the NCSS, offers a model for the sector to aspire towards. It highlights the importance of cultivating a caring and collaborative social service ecosystem so that service can remain impactful (National Council of Social Service, 2017).

2. Adapting to the Future - A Summary

Echoing this sentiment, the respective thought leaders engaged in this book have consistently emphasised the need for SSOrgs to be future-ready and sustainable.

Insofar as the people sector, public sector, and private sector function interconnectedly within the social service ecosystem, it is crucial for stakeholders to cultivate an understanding of shared responsibility (see Chapter 2). A key strategy for SSOrgs is to reinvent and transform themselves. They have to think strategically and creatively, embracing collaboration with other stakeholders (see Chapter 3). In this way, they can remain relevant to changing needs.

SSOrg leaders should possess the foresight to pre-empt challenges. By strengthening the capabilities and capacities of their organisations and being adaptable in the face of uncertainty, SSOrgs can transition towards future-readiness (see Chapter 4). Specifically, the boards of SSOrgs have a responsibility to review the organisation's strategic direction and operations. They need to be cognisant of how they see the future and themselves, understanding that they are not immune from market forces (see Chapter 5). They must compete to be successful, or risk being obsolete.

Yet, the success of SSOrgs also hinges on factors external to themselves — contributions by donors and the maintenance of public trust. In this regard, the importance of ethics, accountability, and stewardship in SSOrgs is discussed in Chapter 6.

Only when these different perspectives are taken collectively, and implemented in practice, can SSOrgs be better positioned to respond to the complexity of today's challenges and needs. By consolidating the opinions of thought leaders in the field, this book has sought to underscore the different ways in which positive change can be effected in the social service sector.

3. Towards a Society of Compassion

At the end of the 4ST roadmap lies a caring and inclusive society (National Council of Social Service, 2017). However, what would such a society look like in practice? In an article for *The Straits Times* in 2018, Mr Hsieh Fu Hua, former President of NCSS, reflected that “providing care with dignity today would require us to re-examine the basic conditions of many of our services that were sufficient for our living standards in the past”. Stakeholders of the social service sector need to assume the mantle of reimagining and redefining what care means beyond basic care, and how best to achieve it.

To be a force for good, SSOrgs must, as succinctly articulated by Grant and Crutchfield (2007), actively seek ways to mobilise every sector of society – government, business, nonprofits, and the public to make use of valuable resources and data that could enhance the social impact of their service delivery. Mother Teresa once said, “I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples”. While individual contributions may be modest, the collective effort can effect change.

An opinion piece on *TODAY* by Ho (2018) expressed that service providers and stakeholders should strive towards a society of compassion. They need to be sensitive and empathetic towards people with different backgrounds, with different privileges and circumstances. A caring and inclusive community can make life better for those who find it extremely tough or even hopeless in Singapore (Ho, 2018).

How then can the leaders of SSOrgs stay in touch with the lived experiences on the ground? How can they empathise with poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged communities, especially as they bear the brunt of changing social trends? It is important that leaders do not lose sight of their organisations' primary purpose.

Part 1 of this book series has articulated a vision for the future of the social service sector. How can SSORgs better manage their resources to achieve this vision? The second part seeks to address this question.

4. Resourcing for the Future

SSORgs need to be responsive to changes in the environment to prepare for the new frontier. This underscores the crucial need for these organisations to build an active and strategically-oriented board with the right skills, to anticipate and adapt to these changes, and to rally the team, from the CEO to the staff members, the volunteers, and all stakeholders. Together, they can work towards meeting the mission and goals of their organisations. Part 2 — Resourcing for the Future explores how the team can come together to deliver social impact.

To ground the following chapters in context, Chapter 1 first opens with an outline of how Singapore's social service sector is transforming. It will then move on to introduce the organisational frameworks useful for SSORgs in developing resource management and refining their strategic directions.

Given that an effective board leadership is particularly crucial in guiding organisations through today's complex environment, Chapter 2 examines the characteristics of effective shared leadership. It also explains the importance of clarifying the relationships and roles between CEOs and boards.

The core resources and capabilities of any SSORg lie in its human capital. The talent of staff members and volunteers can truly turn an average organisation into one with high social impact. Confronted with pressures to become more competitive, knowledge about how to effectively and efficiently manage human capital is therefore vital.

Recognising the importance of managing human capital, NCSS has launched the People Practice Consultancy, which seeks to help SSORgs improve their human resource practices in the areas of recruitment and selection, compensation and benefits, performance management, and career planning. This is discussed in Chapter 4 — Leading the Social Service Sector Towards Future-Readiness. Chapter 3 in Part 2, however, focuses on strategies for organising a strong volunteer structure.

Chapters 4 and 5 look at the future of fundraising and philanthropy; and what it takes to be a responsible steward of financial resources. With SSORgs facing mounting pressures by donors to remain accountable and provide measurable proof of their impact on the

communities they serve, it is essential for these organisations to have an effective programme evaluation process. Chapter 6, therefore, explains the need to measure social impact and the problems that could be associated with the measurement. To become high impact organisations, SSOrgs need to build business skill sets and foster entrepreneurial spirit to develop innovative ways to address social needs. Additionally, SSOrgs would also have to go beyond their organisations and build partnerships and alliances with others in the social service ecosystem.

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Social Service Organisations (SSOrgs) play an important role in developing a strong and caring community. Besides serving the poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged, there has been a call for SSOrgs to further develop their capacities and capabilities to address the mounting social needs in Singapore. These changing needs arise from social trends such as the ageing population, shrinking family unit, as well as economic disruptions due to globalisation and technology. Rapid technological changes are also transforming the shape of many institutions and the ways in which people interact with them, and with each other. Indeed, SSOrgs face a future that could potentially look nothing like the past.

This book engages thought leaders for their views and insights on how the sector can better position itself in light of the changing social landscape. It is hoped that, together with the second book, Part 2 — Resourcing for the Future, this book will serve as a useful resource for SSOrgs. Hopefully, SSOrgs can use this resource to develop a forward-thinking approach in enhancing their organisational capacities and capabilities to remain relevant.

With regard to the essays by the thought leaders, the editors have sought to preserve the wordings used by the authors as far as possible. The content is also supplemented by box stories developed with inputs from other stakeholders – including primarily local SSOrgs, government agencies, reviewers, and interns from the National University of Singapore (NUS).

This book would not have been possible without the contributions and support of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), the Charity Council, CFA Society Singapore, and many charities in the sector.

A PROJECT IN COLLABORATION WITH:



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