

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE NEXT PHASE OF THE 4ST JOURNEY

The 4ST (2017-2021) brought together stakeholders from across Singapore's social service sector to re-examine our roles for the future, to develop a collective vision for the sector and to lay out the roadmap to achieve it. This shared vision and approach remains the cornerstone of our 4ST journey.

Since the launch of the 4ST roadmap in 2017¹, the sector has matured in many areas, while new trends and challenges have emerged, including those brought about by COVID-19. The social service sector therefore continues the 4ST journey with a refreshed roadmap for 2022 to 2026, building on the progress made and preparing for the future.

In the process of updating the 4ST roadmap, conversations across the sector uncovered a strong desire to respond to changes around us, be they within organisations, sub-sectors, or at a wider scale. The trajectory of some of these changes may be difficult to anticipate, with some happening faster than expected. However, as a sector, we are increasingly mindful of the need to navigate through these changes and to think of the longer-term, so that we can remain relevant and continue to bring value to individuals, families, and communities.²

Sector stakeholders shared that they see more value in having different parties come together to tackle complex issues for more effective outcomes. At the same time, the sector is engaging in more innovative

pursuits and experiencing greater interest from non-traditional players to be involved in conversations. The 4ST (2022-2026) thus widens the interpretation of social purpose entities (SPEs) to acknowledge that our sector has grown in diversity, where fulfilling a social purpose is not limited to delivering services, and to emphasise the variety of roles within ecosystems that contribute towards achieving our shared goals.

Social purpose entities (SPEs) are organisations with social purpose at the core of what they do. Their major activity is addressing social issues and needs, but how they do so is not limited to direct service delivery.

The desired outcomes for effective and impactful SPEs are explained further under Strategic Thrust 2.

¹ The strategic thrusts and outcomes under the 4ST (2017-2021) can be found in Annex B.

² Lumley, T. (2015). *Managing Change – a Unique Challenge for Charities*; Ang, B. L. (2016, November 25). *Managing Change*. Office of the Director-General of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social and Family Development; Goldman, P. (2019). *Nonprofit Change Management Strategies are Critical*; Cannell, P. (2020). *Why Nonprofit Boards Must Be Masters of Change Management*; National Council for Voluntary Organisations. (2020). *What is Managing Change?*; Paterson, A. (2020). *A Charity Guide to Change Management*.



The key shifts and focal areas identified by stakeholders are:

1. The sector should seek to be *effective and impactful* to ensure we are **well-positioned for the future**.
2. With *evolving needs and complexity of social issues*, there is a *greater need for resource diversity and sustainability*, supported by **more innovative approaches to philanthropy**.
3. **Person-centredness** *remains critical* and should continue to be *top-of-mind*, guiding the sector's **systems approach** to meet needs more holistically.
4. **Collaboration** is a *catalyst to maximise impact, optimise resources, and tackle present and future challenges*.

Desired philanthropic practices involve shifting from ad-hoc, short-term giving to strategic, long-term giving, and attracting resources in more innovative ways.

Here, funders are not passive providers of monetary and volunteering resources, but actively participate in the solutioning process with the organisations they support and other partners. This is sometimes referred to as **relational, trust-based philanthropy**.

More details on what this entails can be found under Strategic Thrust 3.

Being **person-centred** means we value users as persons first and place them at the heart of everything. We believe that an individual has the capacity to understand, articulate and work through his or her problems and make decisions on how to overcome them.

Strategic Thrust 1 explains what person-centred care is and suggests how we might become more person-centred in our practices.

A **systems approach** appreciates the system as a whole and its constituent parts. It recognises interdependence and focuses on the way different parts interact, including the need for enabling structures and processes. Taking such an approach allows for change to be generated across different levels through more collaborative and trusting relationships.

This approach is explored further under Strategic Thrust 3.

A social service sector that supports individuals, families, and communities to thrive

The refreshed 4ST roadmap was developed under the guidance of a 20-member Steering Committee. It calls for SPEs, funders, corporates, government agencies, partners in adjacent sectors, and the wider community to:

- Recognise the linkages between the various aspects that affect the well-being of individuals, families, and communities; and consider how different parts of the social sector and other sectors play a role in meeting their needs and aspirations as a whole system, rather than by individual entities and supports
- Nurture mutually rewarding relationships centred on trust, transparency and shared values
- Design solutions and provide support in a more customised manner, such as by looking at the needs and circumstances of individuals, families, and communities; or by considering the profiles and operating environments of service providers
- Leverage each other's assets (including that of the individuals, families, and communities that we serve) to solve social challenges
- Adopt a long-term and holistic perspective in resourcing and capability building practices (whether as providers, users, or facilitators), where experimental practices can help us to innovate for better outcomes and use of resources



What to expect in this report

This publication documents the common aspirations of our sector and the pathways to fulfil them based on the landscape of traditional and new players, views on present and future challenges, and existing social data.

The Introduction section summarises the progress made in our 4ST journey to date and highlights emerging trends that the sector should pay closer attention to.

Based on these reflections and insights from the sector, the next section reaffirms our shared vision and introduces the updated strategic thrusts, including a new fourth thrust which focuses on being future-directed. Each of these thrusts is explained further, including the desired outcomes that we can pursue as a sector. A glossary has also been added to explain the key concepts on which this roadmap has been built.

The next step

By highlighting the value of a systems approach to the sector, the 4ST (2022-2026) will also expand upon the collective impact approach first articulated in the 4ST (2017-2021) by establishing sector-wide implementation plans with clearer calls to action.

To kickstart the next phase of the 4ST journey, a 4ST Playbook has been created with concrete steps for different stakeholders to lead the refreshed 4ST forward, as well as examples and new ideas that the sector can explore together to achieve our desired outcomes.

Each of us can take the lead in different initiatives and contribute our strengths, so that our passion and collective action can realise the 4ST vision of:

“Every person empowered to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society”.

