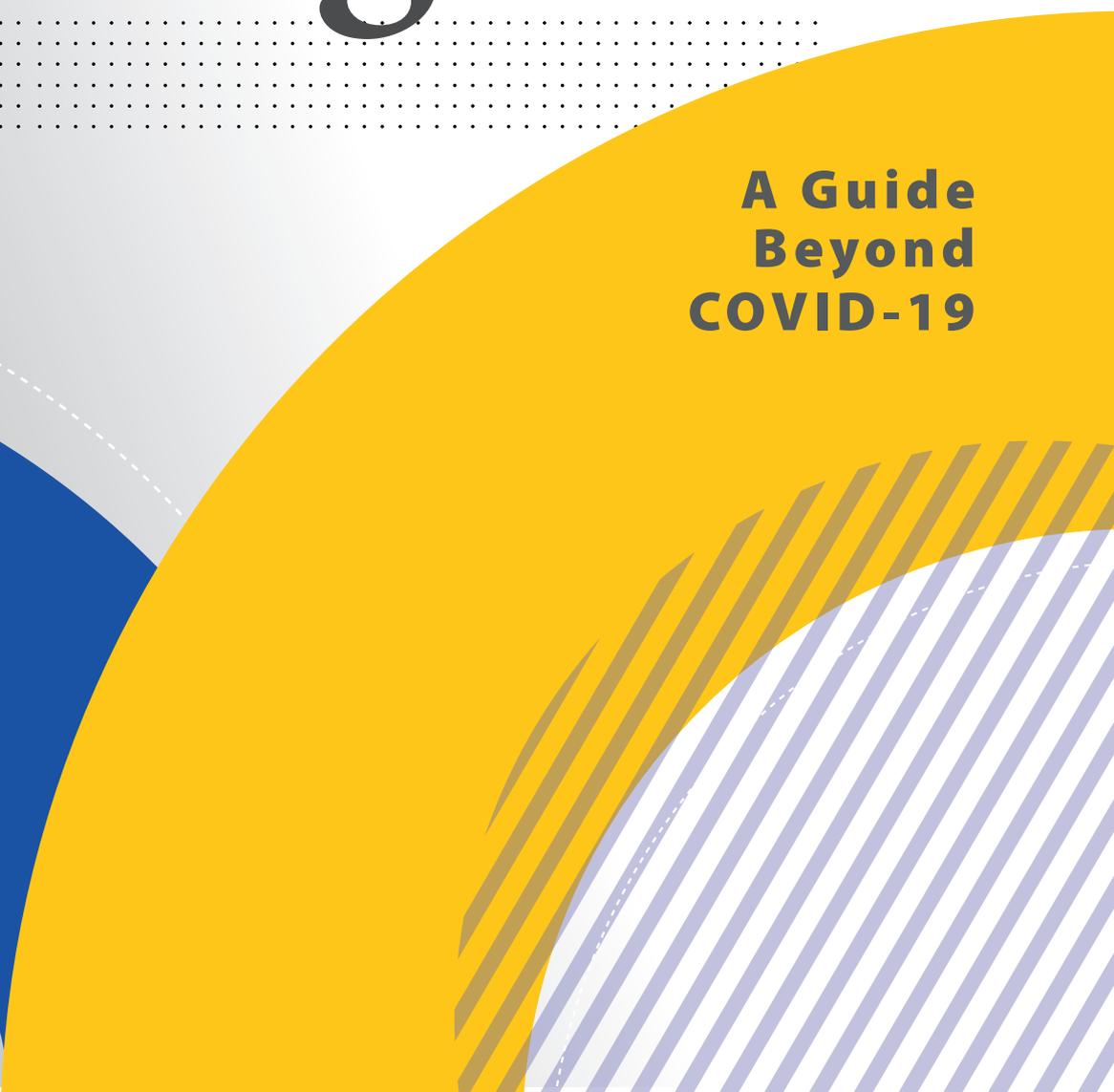


# Emerging Stronger Together



**A Guide  
Beyond  
COVID-19**



# Foreword by Ms Anita Fam

**Chairperson of the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce and  
President of the National Council of Social Service**



In the early months of 2020, COVID-19 started showing itself to be a serious public health concern unlike any that we had faced before. Together with my colleagues at the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), we began to change our engagement with Social Service Agencies (SSAs) to online mode, organising many of these sessions to understand and provide support to our SSAs as they addressed the concerns and challenges faced at the onset of the pandemic. Throughout these sessions, it was apparent that in spite of the immediate challenges faced, SSAs remained positive and saw this as an opportunity for our sector to build resilience and emerge stronger beyond the pandemic. Many contributed ideas and offered to help. This was deeply encouraging.

In response, we convened the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce in May 2020, bringing together the experience and perspectives from various sectors to develop plans so that we might emerge stronger together for the next normal. In the past year, the Taskforce has provided invaluable guidance to the social service sector and its response to COVID-19 and developed ideas on how the sector might step up and build capabilities. With the Taskforce's guidance, NCSS has rolled out several schemes and resources to support our SSAs in this journey. There is more that we need to work on together so this report also outlines the Taskforce's recommendations on the strategic capabilities which we as a sector will need to build for the medium to longer term.

As we work together on these longer-term initiatives, we hope that you will find these recommendations useful to your organisation's journey of building capability and organisation resilience.

I would like to thank my fellow Taskforce members and workstream members for all their contributions, insights and ideas, for working through thought-provoking questions and challenging the sector to achieve greater impact in our communities and for those whom we serve.



# Message by Mr Masagos Zulkifli

**Minister for Social and Family Development and  
Second Minister for Health**



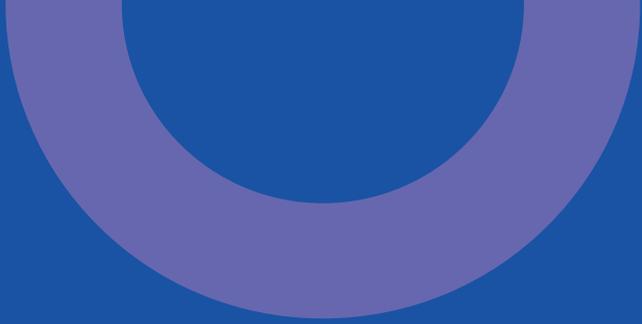
2020 was a challenging year for the social service sector as we found ourselves in the crisis of a generation. We had to put in place measures to ensure a safe environment for service users, staff and volunteers. During the Circuit Breaker period, many latent and new social needs were brought to the forefront. Social service agencies (SSAs) stepped up to serve the needs of the community in various ways, working with MSF and other community partners to provide financial assistance, man the National CARE Hotline to provide psychological first aid, and ensure safe shelter and food support to those in need, contributing in whatever ways they could.

SSAs had to change the way they work and deliver social services, leveraging technology and exploring innovative ways to manage operations, so that communities and service users could continue to receive the support they need. Many corporate partners and community volunteers stepped up to provide expertise, and to augment the capability of the sector. This brings us closer to achieving the SSA 3.0 vision of SSAs that are driven by committed social service professionals, augmented by volunteers and enabled by technology so that we can better serve the needs of Singaporeans.

COVID-19 has underscored the importance of strong partnerships, in the spirit of Singapore Together, that can enable us to address challenges and emerge stronger together. The Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce, convened by the National Council of Social Service, brought together members with diverse perspectives, which helped to support the sector in responding and adapting to COVID-19 in the past year. Their ideas will also stand us in good stead to strengthen the resilience of the sector for the longer term.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Taskforce members for their active contributions and good ideas. I look forward to strengthening partnerships with SSAs and other stakeholders to better serve the needs of Singaporeans and create a more inclusive society.





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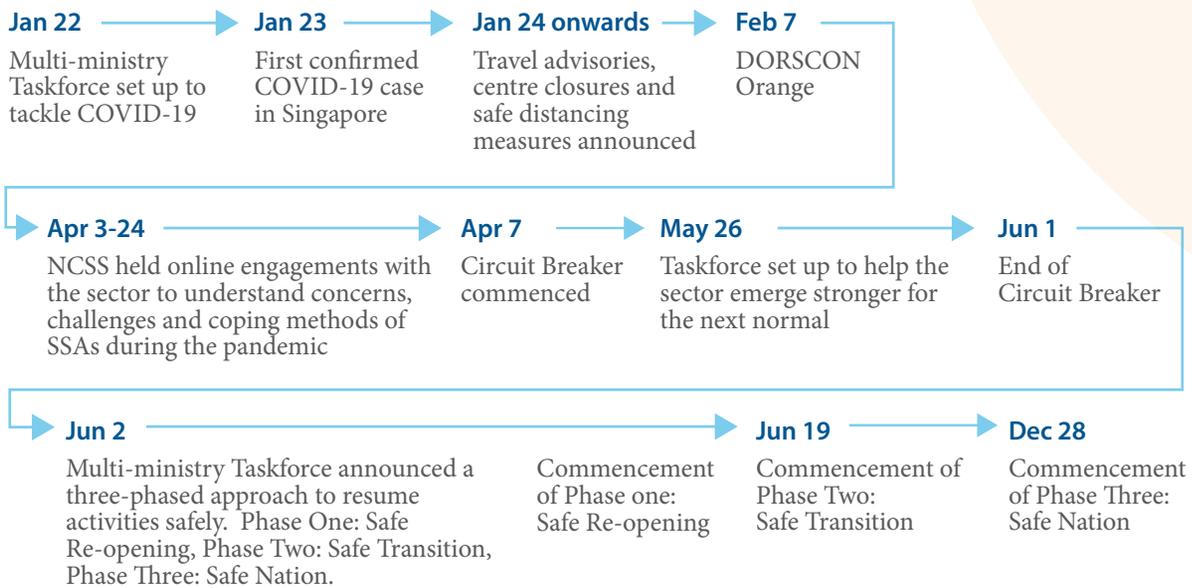
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**Taskforce Members and  
Workstream Members**



# Impact of COVID-19

## Timeline Of Events



The Taskforce was set up to achieve the following:

- 1** Develop plans and guidelines to strengthen the resilience of SSAs after the Circuit Breaker is lifted

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- 2** Propose directions to establishing the “next normal” for a stronger social service sector in the medium to longer term

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- 3** Provide feedback and insights from the ground to inform national plans





## Impact of COVID-19 On Service Users

Given the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation, the Taskforce kept their pulse on the ground through short polls, surveys, focus group discussions and online engagement sessions. The data was used to calibrate responses, address pressing challenges and plug gaps.

# EMERGING FROM COVID-19:

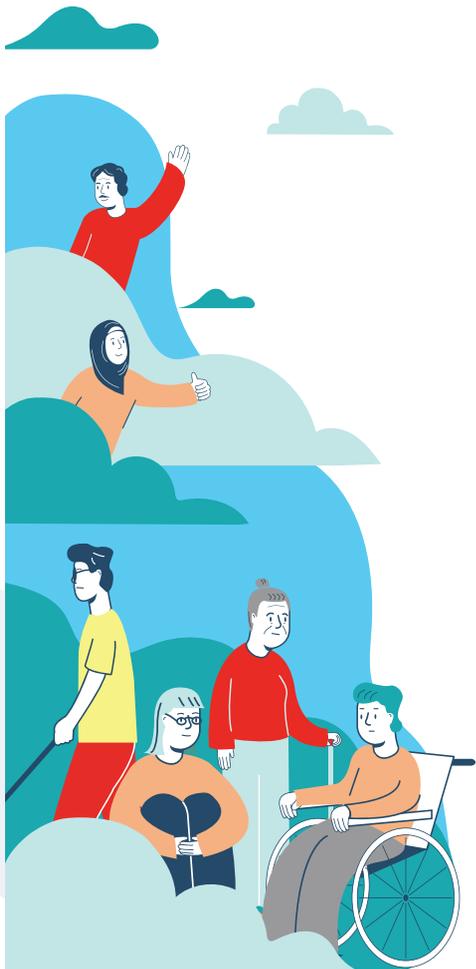
DOING MORE FOR THOSE IN NEED

From the circuit breaker period to Phase 2 of Singapore's reopening, the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) conducted over 1,800 phone interviews to understand how COVID-19 had affected the quality of life (QOL) of Singaporeans.

## QOL OF SINGAPOREANS IN PHASE 2 OF SINGAPORE'S REOPENING VS THE CIRCUIT BREAKER PERIOD

While QOL for the general population appeared to be on the recovery in Phase 2 of Singapore's reopening of the economy, the QOL for specific groups like seniors and persons with disabilities had not improved since the Circuit Breaker period.

On the other hand, persons with mental health conditions who remained connected to social services showed improvements in their QOL, thus demonstrating the importance of seeking help.

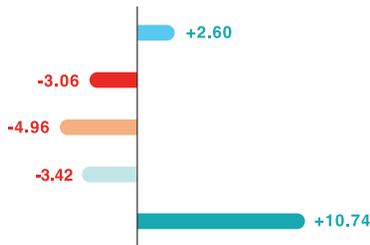


### Changes on selected QOL facets between Circuit Breaker and Phase 2:

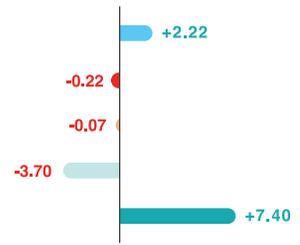
#### GROUPS

- General Population
- Seniors (65 & Abv)
- HDB 1 – 2 Roomers
- Persons with Disabilities
- Persons with Mental Health Conditions, Accessing Social Services

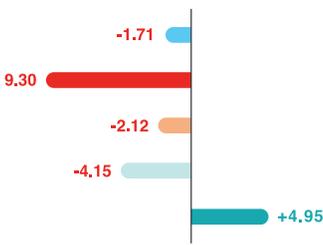
#### Work Capacity



#### Social Support



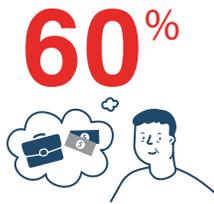
#### Energy and Fatigue



#### Activities of Daily Living

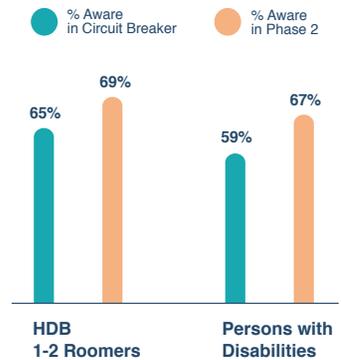


# GOVERNMENT SUPPORT SCHEMES DURING THE PANDEMIC

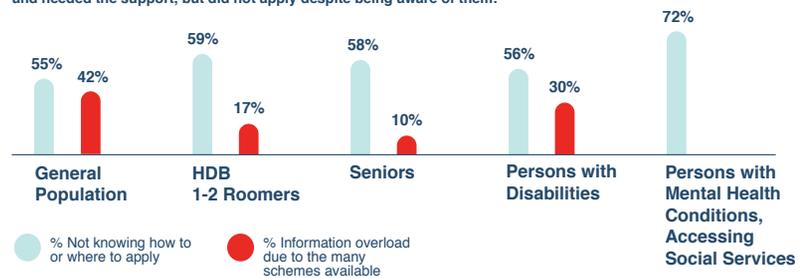


Anxieties regarding jobs and finances were expressed by Singaporeans surveyed but over 60%, across the general population as well as groups like seniors and persons with disabilities, agreed that they had benefitted from government support schemes during the pandemic.

In general, there was greater awareness of COVID-19 related support schemes in Phase 2, as compared to during the circuit breaker period, especially for persons with disabilities and those living in lower-income households. This could be attributed to targeted outreach efforts by the government and social service agencies (SSAs) during and after the circuit breaker period.



Reasons cited among respondents who thought they were eligible for schemes and needed the support, but did not apply despite being aware of them:



However, more than 1 in 4 respondents, who thought they were eligible for schemes and needed the support, did not apply for the schemes despite being aware of them. The main reasons cited were not knowing how to or where to apply and information overload due to the many schemes available.

## ACT TODAY!



### IF YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW NEEDS HELP

Please call the National CARE Hotline **1800-202-6868** (8am to midnight daily), or use **Mindline.sg** or **Belle**, the **Beyond the Label helpbot**, to access available mental health resources.



### DONATE AND VOLUNTEER

to support SSAs and social service users. Visit **comchest.gov.sg** and **Giving.sg** to contribute today.



### BEFRIEND, KEEP A LOOKOUT

Share government support and community resources available at **supportgowhere.gov.sg** with those who will benefit or refer them to the ComCare hotline **1800-222-0000**.

#### METHODOLOGY

This survey takes reference from the World Health Organisation Quality of Life (WHOQOL) framework, which is used to assess the quality of life (QOL) of Singaporeans across different facets.

In each wave of data collection, responses from respondents in the same group were scored and averaged, and then transformed into a score ranging from 0 to 100, 0 being most negative state of well-being and 100 being the most positive state of well-being. The change in QOL score reported between the circuit breaker period and Phase 2 of Singapore's reopening reflects the average difference in QOL score for a person in the group, after adjusting for demographic differences (like gender, age-band, ethnicity, housing type and marital status) between the two waves.

#### PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



##### Adults

Adults who did not have any disability or mental health condition, and who were between 18 and 64 years old, served as a general population comparison group.



##### Specific groups

- Seniors (≥ 65 years old)
- Those staying in HDB 1 or 2-room flats
- Persons with disabilities (physical, sensory, cognitive or multiple disabilities)
- Persons with mental health conditions accessing social services



## Impact of COVID-19 on SSAs

### Responses from Executive Directors and Social Service Professionals

April 2020

#### Online Chats with SSAs

Key challenges identified

June 2020

#### Townhall Poll with SSAs

Similar challenges identified

July 2020

#### Survey with SSA EDs & SSPs

Read more in the [Beyond COVID-19 - Re-opening Guide for SSAs](#)

### 1. Digitalisation



**40%** identified digital transformation as a weakness

**81%** had IT infrastructure that was able to support telecommuting from a moderate to a very large extent

**50%** mentioned digitalisation as the most positive outcome of COVID-19

**56%** wanted digitalisation to continue beyond COVID-19

### 2. Manpower & Volunteers



**24%** identified HR practices as not ready for 'future way of work'

**67%** indicated they still required volunteers during Covid-19

### 3. Fundraising & Funding Sustainability



**44%** identified that the organisation will find this most challenging over the next 6 months

**67%** of SSAs reported a decreased in cash donations

**41%** had incurred a deficit over the last 3 months

### 4. Continuity in Service Delivery



**20%** identified that the organisation will find this most challenging over the next 6 months

About **25%** reported that they were not able to augment services with technology for service continuity or only to a small extent.

### 5. Business Continuity



**12%** identified that the organisation will find this most challenging over the next 6 months

**42%** of EDs who saw positive outcomes mentioned that their organisations saw new/improved operations over the last 3 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Across various engagements with the sector, SSAs reported largest gaps and opportunities in Digitalisation, Manpower & Volunteers, Fundraising and Funding Sustainability, Service Delivery and Leadership in SSAs.

## GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS

### Digitalisation



#### GAPS

- The sector has varied capabilities in digitalisation, with roughly half of small SSAs yet to have digitalisation plans mainly due to lack of knowledge in relation to current state, resources, and how to progress their digital maturity
- There is a need for diversity in digital solutions, and supporting all SSAs to meet a tech baseline that enables them to benefit from digitalisation



#### OPPORTUNITIES

- The use of technology to sustain operations during remote working has helped to normalise and even accelerate digitalisation in the sector
- The acceleration in digitalisation has resulted in productivity gains that the sector could continue leveraging on (e.g. storing and accessing information via cloud platforms)



#### IMPLICATIONS ON THE NEXT NORMAL

- SSAs need to build up competencies and capabilities to manage data. Digital hardware, software, integration and change management need to be factored in SSA's digitalisation journey
- With the increasing use of technology within the sector, there is a need to also develop service users' digital literacy so they are equipped to access online information and support systems
- Data security and privacy concerns involved in technological solutions need to be reviewed continuously



## GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS Manpower & Volunteers



### GAPS

- Poor staff engagement in SSAs pre-COVID-19 became a larger challenge with hybrid work arrangements, increased workload and concerns over staff wellbeing due to COVID-19 and hybrid work arrangements
- SSAs faced challenges in recruiting volunteers when the need for manpower was most crucial
- COVID-19 has highlighted the sector's skills gaps in Strategic HR, Business Process Redesign, Digital Skills, Project Management and Volunteer Management



### OPPORTUNITIES

- There is an opportunity to absorb displaced workforce into the sector, which could (i) strengthen organisation capabilities with mid-careerists' skills and experience (ii) diversify the skill sets of the sector
- SSAs can harness the community's increased social consciousness and interest in volunteerism to support organisation's needs through skill-based/time-based volunteerism



### IMPLICATIONS ON THE NEXT NORMAL

- More needs to be done in the area of supporting employees' wellbeing
- Work processes need to be reviewed and transformed for efficiency, with employees being involved more in strategic decision making process, work roles, expectations and KPIs
- Volunteer management capabilities will become more essential to a SSA, as the sector responds to the increased interest in volunteerism amid transforming business operations and service delivery



## GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS Fundraising & Funding Sustainability



### GAPS

- Lack of diversity in funding sources and fundraising modality led to a decrease in SSAs' donations, as donors' budget reduced and traditional fundraisers unable to proceed with safe management measures in place



### OPPORTUNITIES

- Emergence of new fundraising modes and individual donors contributing larger donation amounts
- General public was ready to give and keen to support the needs of the community, as observed in the outpouring of donations during the first few months of the pandemic

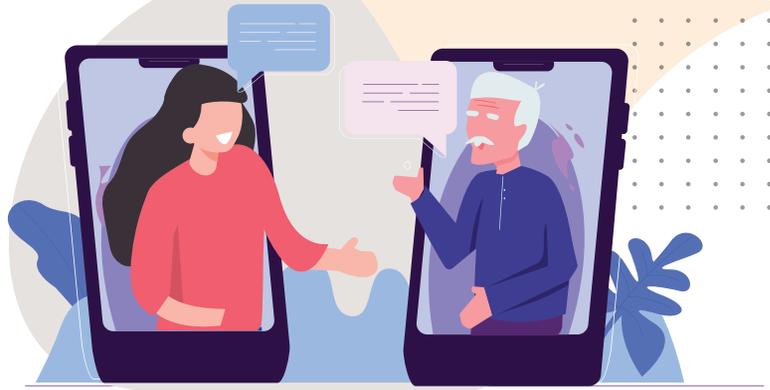


### IMPLICATIONS ON THE NEXT NORMAL

- Global recessions will affect funding available to support social causes, and the sector's ability to bring in funds at least for the mid-term. Consequently, funders may place greater emphasis on robust impact measurement to ensure funds are used well
- Aside from exploring ways to diversify funding sources and fundraising modalities to increase donations, SSAs should also reconsider their expenditures and find ways to achieve cost savings amid changing organisation needs, e.g. increased need for tech infrastructure, hybrid and flexible work arrangements



## GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS Service Delivery



### GAPS

- Current service models tend to lack risk mitigation and service contingency planning
- Most 'service types' reported majority of service users only had their needs partially met during and post Circuit Breaker, due to reduced sighting and ability to build rapport, which affected social service professionals' ability to accurately assess the state of the service user



### OPPORTUNITIES

- There was an increase in SSAs' willingness to innovate, and service users also displayed a great amount of resilience and adaptability during uncertainty
- Online service delivery has helped reach out to new groups of service users (e.g. service users who faced constraints in attending in-person services, either due to privacy concerns or time management issues)



### IMPLICATIONS ON THE NEXT NORMAL

- SSAs should leverage on the strengths and gifts of service users to co-create user-centric solutions that empower them
- More innovative and flexible resourcing models are needed to allow SSAs to adapt to service users' needs promptly (especially during crises)
- Service delivery needs to be rethought post-COVID to achieve same outcomes while ensuring safety and upholding quality
- Alongside the national direction towards greater citizen engagement and community involvement, the sector should reconsider the ecosystem of support for service users, and involve the community and general public in a more active role to support vulnerable population

## GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS Leadership in SSAs



### GAPS

- Leaders lack capabilities and experience to lead through uncertainty and crisis situations
- There is a need to enhance leadership skills to strengthen communication and engagement with staff to overcome stress and feelings of uncertainty



### OPPORTUNITIES

- Crisis puts an organisation's people and systems under unanticipated pressure, which allows leaders an opportunity to rethink their assumptions and identify weak points within the organisation
- There was a growing acceptance and desire for peer and collective learning



### IMPLICATIONS ON THE NEXT NORMAL

- The sector needs to continue building up crisis management capabilities
- Leadership is multi-faceted, and needs to be reviewed at three different levels; Governance, Mission-based Management, Ecosystem leadership. Aside from governing an organisation, leaders should also ground its staff in a mutual sense of purpose where their work is connected to the broader aims of the organisation. Beyond that, leaders should develop an in-depth understanding of their organisation's interconnected position and interdependencies within the ecosystem that informs their work
- COVID-19 had further blurred the divide between the health, business and social sectors. There is an increased need for the sector to collaborate and diversify its partnerships. Consequently, SSAs should consider reviewing its leadership and develop a more versatile team with diverse skillsets

# Responding to the Crisis

The pandemic has revealed gaps in the sector's preparedness and agility to respond in a crisis. With the rapidly changing environment where 'non-essential services' and physical operations had to stop, a big part of the sector had to leverage on technology to sustain business operations and meet evolving social needs. Consequently, new manpower skills were needed to support this increasingly digitised workplace.

In response to the crisis, the Taskforce proposed supporting the sector in the following ways:

- 1 Sense-making a crisis**
- 2 Leveraging on technology to sustain operations**
- 3 Supplementing manpower gaps that emerged during the crisis**



## 1. Sensemaking a Crisis

The Taskforce highlighted the urgent need for clear and timely guidance for SSAs, and to harness collective strengths and wisdom to tackle the evolving needs in the social service sector together. In response, NCSS worked with the sector to curate resources, reflections and best practices in managing a crisis.

- NCSS, together with KPMG, organised three **Capability Circles Peer Learning Sessions** in August – September 2020 with 37 SSAs to discuss experiences and learnings from managing operations and engaging service users during the pandemic. Participants reflected on their organisations’ readiness to handle crises, innovative approaches to navigate the constraints during COVID-19, caring for staff wellbeing, as well as practical steps to address immediate and future challenges resulting from COVID-19.



Singapore Cancer Society shared learnings from the team’s experience of adapting the “Relay for Life” fund-raising event to an online fund-raising event within a short span of time. Some of the key learnings include the importance of staying guided by a clear purpose and maintaining strong communication with stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation of the event.

A series of guides and crisis management templates have been developed to facilitate business continuity planning for SSAs:

- **Beyond COVID-19 Re-opening Guide** was launched in July 2020 to support SSAs in the immediate aftermath of Circuit Breaker being lifted. The Guide contained advisories, resources

and collected ground wisdom that emerged from the crisis to help fellow SSAs navigate through the uncertainties of COVID-19 and prepare for the next normal. Five key themes were covered: Opening Safely, Going Digital, Fundraising & Funding/Financial Support, Engaging Staff and Volunteers, and Engaging Service Users. A second edition of the Guide was released in Nov 2020 to showcase more good practices from SSAs.

- The **Guide on Manpower and Workforce Management for Social Service Professionals** will be launched in Q1 FY2021. It was curated to guide SSAs on good practices to manage manpower costs, remote working and sustaining the well-being of social service professionals, beyond COVID-19. Click [here](#) to access the **Guide on Manpower and Workforce Management for Social Service Professionals**.
- The **Service Continuity Checklist** was developed to guide SSAs in profiling their service users’ needs and identifying the most optimal service delivery method for each service user during a crisis. Click [here](#) to access the **Service Continuity Checklist**.
- The **Volunteer Continuity Planning (VCP) Guide** was launched in June 2020 to support the sector in its volunteer management during a crisis and planning for effective recovery. Since February 2021, NCSS has also embarked on developing a comprehensive VCP implementation plan with several SSAs and enhancing the Guide to include a VCP Framework to enable SSAs to better react to future crises. Click [here](#) to access the **Volunteer Continuity Planning Guide**.

- NCSS partnered six agencies to showcase how they have adapted to engage service users and fundraise in creative ways amidst the challenges brought about by COVID-19. Click [here](#) to view the video on engaging service users and [here](#) to view the video on fundraising.

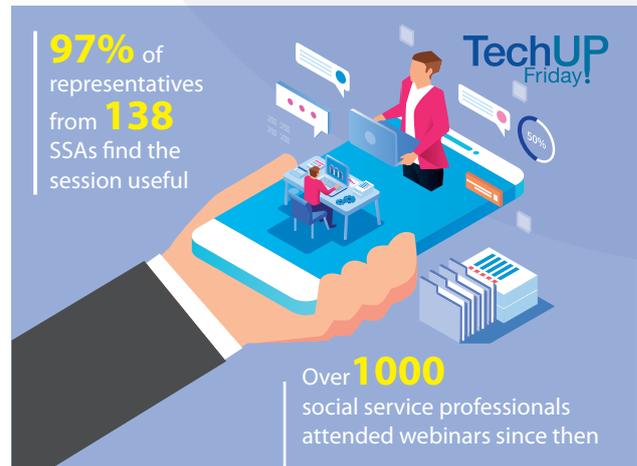


## 2. Leveraging on technology to sustain operations

While technology has been an effective medium for SSAs to continue operating and engaging service users, it brought attention to gaps in the sector’s digital capabilities, in terms of infrastructure, skills and mindsets. In addressing these gaps, the Taskforce provided inputs to NCSS on considering the diversity among SSAs, their differing needs, and the need to lower barriers to technology adoption in order to achieve SSAs’ envisaged tech levels quickly.

Together with ongoing sector feedback and various poll findings, this contributed towards evolving the initiatives rolled out over time, starting with immediate efforts to build baseline digital capabilities during the Circuit Breaker period to ensure service and business continuity, to more recent initiatives to support SSAs in their digital transformation when there was greater clarity regarding the need and level of digital capabilities in the sector.

- Through **TechUP Friday!**s and other webinars, SSAs got to see demonstrations by vendors and learn firsthand from early adopter SSAs on their experience with technology implementation. The first session in October 2020 was attended by representatives from 138 SSAs, with 97% of them finding the session useful. With more than 10 sessions organised since then, more than 1,000 social service professionals have attended the webinars to grow awareness in digital tools and knowledge.



“I heard about TechUP Friday!s through eDMs. I find TechUP Friday!s to be a good opportunity for users like me to be aware of what kind of systems are currently out in the market, how far technology in this area has progressed, and what types of processes and functions can be automated. I may not be using a particular system now, but it allows me an avenue or platform to be aware of the existence of other systems in a “non-obligatory” way, and to evaluate at our own time and pace the suitability of each against my company’s unique needs. What I particularly found useful is the Demo and the Q&A session.

I am using AdobeSign now through Tech-and-GO!. It saves me both time and cost. I used to have to travel to authorisers’ offices to get physical “wet ink on paper” signatures. Now I can do away with that and have final copies maintained by both signer and preparer. The vendor was responsive in helping us iron out minor teething problems we had at the beginning.”

**Ms Anne Lai**  
**Head of Finance and Corporate Administration,**  
**Mercy Relief Limited**

- **Tech-and-GO!**, a one-stop technology hub, makes technology and IT equipment more accessible to SSAs by listing pre-scoped funded solutions. This cuts down a significant amount of time needed by SSAs to search for suitable digital solutions. SSAs can also benefit from one-to-one diagnosis and fully-funded advisory to address pain-points. In addition, “Tech-and-GO!” Hub offers curated training courses for SSAs at the strategic, managerial, and operational levels.

To date, more than  
**150** SSAs have  
 benefitted from digital  
 solutions and advisory  
 services from Tech-and-GO!



“The introduction of The Invictus Fund and Tech-and-GO! through eDM was timely in supporting AMP’s digital transformation plans. Our physical operations were affected during the pandemic and the funding support from Invictus Fund was pivotal at this point to help defray the upfront costs of executing our digital enhancement plans.

The provision of a list of pre-approved vendors by The Invictus Fund also sped up our selection process in engaging appropriate solution providers for our digital needs. In addition, the Consultancy@Tech-and-GO! session was also useful in assisting AMP to identify our most critical IT needs and to plug digital gaps within our operations.

This grant has significantly assisted AMP to leverage on technology to enhance our operations. Our staff productivity is increased through the implementation of Microsoft 365, while new video conferencing and webinar solutions have helped us seamlessly transition our physical events into the digital space. These solutions have made it possible for us to meet our beneficiaries’ needs through counselling and case work via video conferencing, particularly during the Circuit Breaker period, while our donors were able to continue supporting our cause through online donations.”

*Ms Shiffa Khumaira*  
**Fundraising Manager, AMP Singapore**

“We heard about Tech-and-GO! through eDMs sent by NCSS staff. We applied for Tech-and-GO! funding because we recognised that with the increase in online interactions and hosting of meetings, we would need to ensure that our cybersecurity processes were adequate. Tech-and-GO! funding thus came as a blessing during a time when our agency funds became inevitably limited and stretched due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the grant helped us to address urgent needs that were costly for a small charity.

In addition to procuring a cybersecurity software for all our employees' computer devices, which helped prevent any cybersecurity breach that could compromise our data, using the grant, we procured an online CRM system which helped to streamline and more efficiently manage our volunteers. With more people looking for online volunteering opportunities, COVID-19 has inevitably complicated volunteer management. This CRM system has enabled us to more effectively plan and manage the online projects that volunteers can contribute towards, and for volunteers to track their volunteer activities and progress.

With increased productivity and more efficient processes, we are now more confident in embarking on more digitalisation projects within our organisation.”

**Ms Rei Tian Foo**  
**Executive, Corporate Communications,**  
**Youth Guidance Outreach Services**

To help the sector achieve and sustain successful digital transformation, the Taskforce identified the need for SSAs to develop their human capital by upskilling and reskilling their workforce.

- For this purpose, NCSS collaborated with four Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) and Continuous Education and Training Centre – Singapore Management University, National University of Singapore-Institute of Systems Science, Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Lithan Academy to launch **Digitalisation Training Programmes** in November 2020. These programmes focus on the strategic, managerial, operational and tactical levels in SSAs to help with their transformation. They are tailor-made for the non-profit sector and are heavily subsidised (up to 90%) by SkillsFuture Singapore. More programmes with other training partners – catering to different domains – will be available over the coming months.

### 3. Supplementing Manpower Gaps

The pandemic has surfaced new manpower gaps, in the area of an organisation’s ability to facilitate remote working and to continue engaging employees in such an environment. Amidst adapting to these internal changes, SSAs also need to operate with less manpower whilst accommodating the changing needs of their service users.

The Taskforce highlighted that the sector could think of employment opportunities at various levels, ranging from permanent headcount to short-term consultancy headcount. SSAs with developed volunteer management capabilities could also leverage on volunteers to augment manpower effectively. The sector can tap on corresponding “build”, “buy” and “borrow” manpower strategies to meet growing needs.

#### To borrow/buy

- The **SGUnited Traineeship** was introduced to support SSAs in meeting increased manpower needs during COVID-19. The scheme provided fresh graduates with meaningful traineeship opportunities amidst the COVID-19 economic downturn, and funding support for 80% of the training allowance during the entire traineeship (up to 9 months). 81 SSAs participated in this scheme and offered 424 traineeship positions.

To-date, **211** of the **424** traineeship positions have been filled, the majority of which were for corporate functions, e.g. marketing and corporate communications, finance.



“Canossaville Children and Community Services has been blessed with quality trainees who displayed diligence and proactive behaviours in contributing to our organisation during their time with us. Though the trainees joined us with a fresh or different background, they have shown great potential to work in the social sector. The SGUnited Traineeships Programme has indeed been beneficial in supporting our manpower needs!”

*Sr Theresa Seow*  
Executive Director,  
Canossaville Children and Community Services

“The SGUnited Traineeships has provided SINDA with the unique opportunity to show our support to the national initiative, and also play a positive role in paving the path for aspiring jobseekers, both fresh and experienced. Through this initiative, we are able to identify Trainees who understand SINDA’s purpose and the important role we have in the community. This helps us identify emerging talent, who are also encouraged to consider further development within SINDA beyond the Traineeship, as they bring with them skillsets which are very refreshing and timely, and which SINDA is benefiting from.”

*Mr Anbarasu Rajendran*  
Chief Executive Officer, SINDA

Click [here](#) for for information on SGUnited Traineeships

## To build

- 21 **HR workshops and clinics** were conducted in 2020 to develop HR practices in the sector and bridge capability gaps which surfaced during COVID-19. Some of these HR workshops and clinics included topics on 'Managing of Manpower & Compensation during periods of uncertainty', 'Job Redesign', 'Manpower Costs & Employment Act', 'Ensuring Organizational Sustainability in a Rapidly Evolving Landscape' and 'Performance Management in The New Normal'.



- The **Enhanced Volunteer Manager Funding Scheme** was launched on 19 August 2020 to provide SSAs with funding support for 50 dedicated volunteer managers over two years. The objective is to strengthen SSAs' Volunteer Management capacity and to complement national re-employment strategy. By recruiting PMEs from outside the sector through this programme, the aim is for the new hires to bring with them transferable skills and build up the professionalism of volunteer management in the sector.

"Volunteers are one of the pillars that keep a Charity standing. The Volunteer Manager is the steel foundation that keeps this pillar firmly attached to the building."

**Ms Maureen Goh**  
*Executive Director, Very Special Arts Singapore Ltd*

"SSAs thrive when they have well motivated, well trained, well matched and deployed volunteers supporting their work. Such volunteers don't come by chance. The hard work, thoughtfulness and ingenuity of good Volunteer Managers are keys to making this happen."

**Mr Ho Siew Cheong**  
*Chief Executive Officer,*  
*REACH Community Services Society*

- **NCSS In-Conversation Series** led by Volunteer Management (VM) Champions kickstarted on 18 December 2020 to develop the sector's volunteer culture through small group discussions on good practices, common issues and challenges faced by Volunteer Management Practitioners. Two sessions of In-Conversations have since been conducted to help SSAs deal with the challenges that arose from the pandemic. Topics included sustaining a positive culture amidst remote working, and redesigning volunteer opportunities to better engage volunteers. Participants were also invited to share their resources and challenges through an online platform to provide support within the volunteer management community amidst difficult times.

Register your interest with [volunteer\\_resource@ncss.gov.sg](mailto:volunteer_resource@ncss.gov.sg) for the upcoming sessions in June and September 2021



## THE INVICTUS FUND AS A KEY RESOURCE

Seeded by generous private donations, NCSS set up The Invictus Fund in April 2020 at the onset of COVID-19 to enable SSAs to continue delivering critical services to the vulnerable during the pandemic. This was to address the financial concerns of SSAs with fundraising having been greatly affected and unplanned expenses needed for safe management measures.

With an outpouring of generosity from the public, including support from SSAs like Sian Chay Medical Institution, which donated \$1 million to benefit other SSAs who may be in a more dire financial situation. The Community Chest raised about \$10.1 million from the community.

This enabled 89 SSAs to be supported, with close to \$6 million disbursed from the first tranche of The Invictus Fund. The funds allocated went towards supporting these SSAs so that they could maintain their operations, adopt technology and other business continuity initiatives to continue serving their service users, as well as to build their digital capability and infrastructure to emerge stronger through the pandemic.

In addition, \$1.15 million of the Fund have been committed to increasing the capacity of 3 counselling programmes and another \$2.1 million committed to facilitate transformation in SSAs by enhancing manpower capability.

As at 1 February 2021, \$9.1 million has been allocated to the sector.

## Second tranche of THE INVICTUS FUND

As part of the Fortitude Budget, Government injected

**\$18.3m**

1

**Drive SSAs' transformative efforts**  
for effective service delivery and operations in the new normal.

2

**Continue to support SSAs**  
to maintain their operations. More SSAs can now tap on the Fund to acquire a variety of digital tools.

*Eg: Small SSAs can benefit from business continuity and productivity tools.*

*Other SSAs that are further along in their digital journey can tap on the Fund for more specialised and complex systems to better manage their operations and improve service to users.*

The first 2 application windows\* for the second tranche supported the transformation efforts of

**126** SSAs **\$1.93m** of funds approved

**8** SSAs will also benefit from about **\$0.11 m**

*of the funds approved for the purpose of ensuring business and service continuity.*

*\*(in September 2020 and January 2021)*

# Recovering And Building Resilience

As the sector responds to COVID-19 and gradually recovers from its impact, it is timely to reflect on what is essential to an SSA in the next normal. A few observations have been made during the pandemic:

- **Vulnerable populations are most affected during a crisis, and it is especially important that services remain accessible to them.**
- **Technology has helped to transform the way SSAs operate and deliver services.**
- **SSAs need to build agility to adapt to changing manpower needs and challenges.**
- **Leaders need to be equipped with crisis management skills to effectively communicate and navigate their SSAs during a crisis.**

## 1 Advancing Digital Capabilities within the Sector

## 2 Applying Person-Centred Services

## 3 Growing Future-Proofed Manpower

## 4 Developing Resilient Organisations and Leaders



## 1. Advancing Digital Capabilities within the Sector

The pandemic has provided the impetus for SSAs to embrace and leverage technology to transform their operations and mode of delivering services. With digitalisation rated as the topmost “positive outcome” arising from the crisis, SSAs hoped to continue their digital transformation and strengthen service delivery and operations, emerging stronger from the crisis.

“It was heartening that what started off as challenges to the SSAs during the COVID-19 pandemic, having to adapt to new ways for service delivery and operations, with the use of technology and digital tools, became an opportunity. Digitalisation was rated as topmost “positive outcome” with the SSAs recognising the benefits. Collectively, we can build on it to attain greater resilience and sustainability for SSAs and users.”

*Ms Janet Young  
Member of the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce and  
Lead of the Digitalisation Workstream*

To ride on this momentum and catalyse overall sector transformation, the following initiatives are recommended to support SSAs to build capabilities, integrate technology into the way they work, and ensure that their staff are equipped to reap the full benefits of these technologies.

- While the social service sector has been receptive to digitalisation, the **Industry Digital Plan for Social Services (IDPSS)** is timely and necessary to provide more systematic and structured digitalisation support for the sector’s transformation efforts. Currently, NCSS is working on the details of the IDPSS, in consultation with industry and technology experts, and guided by an Advisory Panel. The IDPSS will focus on achieving three objectives: raising productivity, improving

client outcomes, and enhancing capabilities and skills. This will be achieved through structured step-by-step guidance in the areas of technology adoption, training roadmap, funding and digital readiness assessments. More than 450 SSAs are expected to benefit from the IDPSS. Further details of the IDPSS will be announced during its launch at the Social Service Summit in July 2021.

- A **Digital Maturity Index and Playbook** will enable SSAs to assess their own digital readiness and subsequently develop an action plan for their digital agenda. By identifying the starting point of their digital transformation process, SSAs will be better placed to close the gap to achieve their envisaged tech level. This index also serves as a measurement tool for NCSS to track the progress of digital maturity in the sector, whilst tapping on insights into the sector’s digital maturity and best practices to review digitalisation initiatives. Details will be made available by March 2022.

### Involving Service Users in the Sector Digital Transformation



Beyond upskilling and reskilling SSA staff to adopt and adapt to the changes arising from digitalisation, a successful sector digital transformation must involve service users too.

Service users’ familiarity with new technologies will ensure that their needs

continue to be served, leading to overall uplifting of the sector.

The pandemic has also shown that while technology is capable of enhancing service experience and user outcomes, vulnerable populations might not be able to reap the full benefits if digital literacy and access remain low. The Taskforce has recommended for digital access and capabilities of especially the vulnerable populations to be uplifted in tandem with the national plans for SMART Nation.

To support this, NCSS is also partnering other government agencies like IMDA to build a digitally inclusive society, as technology is a key enabler for communication, work and education. One of which is through the Digital for Life Fund which the Community Chest is facilitating community donations to IMDA to support the digital needs of low-income households and vulnerable population.

## 2. Applying Person-Centred Services



Through over 1,800 phone interviews conducted by NCSS to understand how COVID-19 had affected the Quality Of Life (QOL) of Singaporeans, findings showed that persons with mental health conditions who remained connected to social services showed improvements in their QOL from the Circuit Breaker period to Phase 2 of Singapore's reopening, thus

demonstrating the importance of ensuring services can continue amidst a crisis.

Many SSAs demonstrated adaptability in the way they coped with the barriers to service delivery. One particularly common approach was the use of digital means to deliver services, so that service users remained engaged and had their needs met during this difficult time.

During the Circuit Breaker, the Government had rolled out advisories encouraging the public to stay at home as much as possible. This was especially challenging for single parents with young children, as they were unable to leave home to run errands without bringing their children with them.



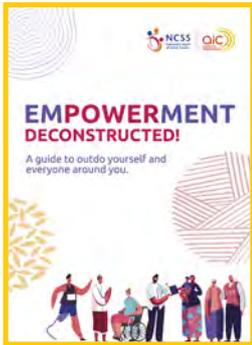
With majority of service users from HCSA Dayspring SPIN programme being single parents with young children facing limited or no support, HCSA learned about their challenges with purchasing groceries and essentials. HCSA worked closely with their partners to secure donations and sponsorships of these necessities, and rallied volunteers to support with deliveries. Collectively, they were able to ensure provision of essentials, cooked meals and home-based materials for these vulnerable families.

While a hybrid of both remote and face to face mode of service delivery is likely to remain in the next normal, the Taskforce also recognised that some groups have not been able to benefit as much from services being delivered remotely. These service users and their caregivers either lack the knowledge, equipment or necessary environment to access online resources and services. This reinforces the need for person-centredness in designing services.

Part of being person-centred involves empowering users. This means that service delivery is modelled to provide opportunities for service users to use their strengths, exercise choices, make decisions, own



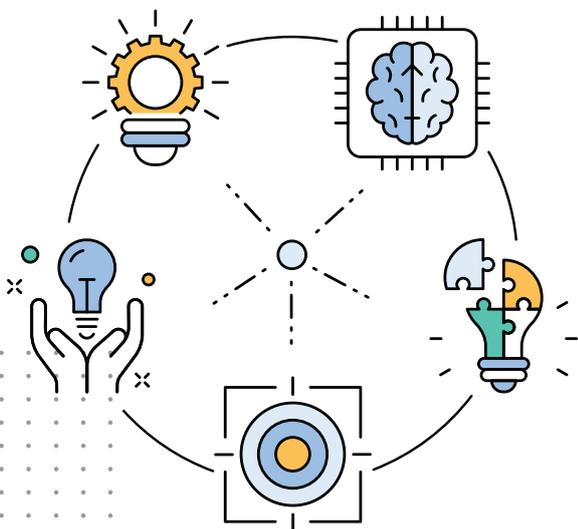
issues and take charge of their lives. This can take the form of practitioners assessing the strengths of service users to design activities within the community for meaningful engagement or creating conducive environments where users are encouraged to speak up, participate, and contribute.



The Empowerment Guide will be launched in May 2021 to share knowledge with SSAs on how they can apply the person-centred approach in service delivery.

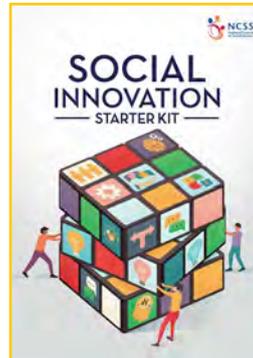
The Taskforce has recommended the use of Design Thinking to innovate and reinvent service delivery, focusing on user centricity and design thinking methods to map user journey and improve user experience.

- SG Enable, MINDS and other SSAs (running Sheltered Workshop programmes) are partnering DesignSingapore Council in using the Design Thinking methodology to collectively establish the challenge areas to be focused on, and to generate innovative operating models to address these challenges.



“Adopting the Design Thinking approach helps equip the team with techniques to frame complex challenges, challenge assumptions and generate impactful and innovative options.”

*Ms Ku Geok Boon,  
Member of the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce  
Chief Executive Officer, SG Enable*



Click [here](#) to view Social Innovation Starter Kit

The social service sector has traditionally been a high touch sector, effecting change and impact mainly by way of person-centred services and delivery. Moving into the next normal, the Taskforce recognises the need for the sector to recalibrate its service models and consider what high touch and high-tech social services will look like going forward. It will be a time for reimagination and SSAs must involve their service users and stakeholders to lead the change.



"In a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world, every day presents a mini crisis. Manpower & Volunteers must be prepared, be self-aware and adapt proactively. This requires an attitude of curiosity to understand why, what and how change can happen and courage to challenge what is the right thing to do."

**Ms Theresa Goh**  
*Member of the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce and  
 Lead of the Manpower & Volunteers Workstream*

### 3. Growing 'Future-Proofed' Manpower

The pandemic has caused a significant shift in the manpower needs of an organisation with the increasingly digitised workplace and the blurring of lines between work and personal life with remote working.

This has highlighted the importance of an organisation's ability to adapt and cope with radical changes taking place in the work and social environment. The Taskforce has proposed the following initiatives to support SSAs in their ability to build organisational and manpower resilience.

### Developing Organisational Resilience

- The **Transformation Support Scheme** was launched on 4 January 2021 to (i) accelerate sector transformation, (ii) provide manpower support to strengthen SSAs' capabilities to build organisational resilience, and (iii) leverage experience and skills of current job-seekers.

"The Transformation Support Scheme has provided timely support for SUN-DAC to bring in an experienced HR Manager to strengthen our HR structures and processes in line with best practices. Ensuring that our people resources are well managed, and staff have opportunities for personal and career development is a strategic focus for SUN-DAC. By building our people capabilities, we will be able to add greater value in serving our service users better than before."

**Mr Quek Hong Choon**  
*Executive Director, SUN-DAC*

- The **People Practice Consultancy** will be implemented to address sector-wide gaps in people practices. This scheme will provide co-funding of up to 90% for 20 more SSAs in addition to the current 90 SSAs on board the programme. This project will be launched by March 2022.
- To improve **sector-wide tools and framework for People Practice Capability building**, the existing Employee Engagement Survey (POS) and People Practice Maturity Index (PPI) tools will be reviewed and updated.



### Developing Manpower Resilience

- The **Employee Assistance Programme Support** will provide SSAs with funding support (co-funding of up to 90% of counselling sessions) so that social service professionals can access external counselling services. The funding will be tiered based on SSA headcount.
- The **Learning & Development Roadmap for Volunteer Management (VM) Practitioner** will be launched in July 2021 to strengthen development pathways for VM practitioners. The Roadmap will include (i) Responsibilities of VM practitioners, (ii) Recommendations on knowledge and skills to acquire for VM roles in SSAs, and (iii) Recommended training workshops and learning platforms to address proficiency gaps.
- **NCSS' Volunteer Management Masterclass** was held in March 2021 to prepare SSAs for future and broader strategies. More than 300 non-profit leaders and volunteer management practitioners attended the masterclass to build a 'future-proofed' volunteer strategy and set a course for purposeful growth that is realistic and achievable in the current environment.



## 4. Developing Resilient Organisations and Leaders

SSA leaders will face increasing challenges in the future. We need to learn from this pandemic and strengthen the sector's capabilities to lead through crisis into the next normal and emerge more resilient and ready for future crisis regardless of the nature and form that might take.

"I believe we will see profound changes as we emerge from this crisis, some of these changes will be here to stay. We will see new vulnerable populations, new needs emerging. Given this context, SSAs will likely need to rethink their models to better achieve their mission and intended impact. This is an important and unique opportunity for SSA leaders to lead from the front, retool their organisations for the new world so they can stay relevant, meet the new needs of their clients, of our community. This is also a call for action for SSA leaders to come together to shape how the sector can emerge stronger."

**Ms Chew Seow-Chien**  
*Member of the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce and  
 Lead of the Leadership Capabilities Workstream*

Beyond being able to develop business continuity plans, SSAs also need leaders who can lead them through a crisis and emerge stronger. The Taskforce has therefore put together a collection of insights and tips gleaned from ground conversations with SSA leaders as food for thought for the leadership community.



## Food for Thought: Insights and Tips for SSA Leaders

Theme	Insights	Tips for SSA Leaders
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now is the time for adaptive leadership.</li> <li>• Leaders should use this disruptive period as a time for self-reflection and an opportunity to re-frame their mindset to be better prepared when the next crisis comes along.</li> <li>• Agile leaders can anticipate change – such as the necessity of working remotely – and turn it into a positive new way of working. They can also drive a sense of collective purpose and optimism, accelerate innovation and test new ideas, partner with others, and build trust.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Adopt an expansion mentality to find new ways to create and act on opportunities, and keep your teams aligned to a common purpose.</li> <li>ii. Overcommunicate to reduce uncertainty.</li> <li>iii. Be authentic and humble.</li> <li>iv. Make hard decisions and move on.</li> <li>v. Look after your ecosystem (e.g. talents, clients, etc.)</li> <li>vi. Take care of yourself.</li> </ol>
<b>Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It takes a crisis to force change upon us and make us re-think our assumptions.</li> <li>• The current pandemic is a true test of any organisation's culture – how well its people and systems can operate under unanticipated pressure.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Identify the weak points, i.e. the organisation's Achilles heel.</li> <li>ii. Build capabilities quickly.</li> <li>iii. Set up centres of excellence framework to manage the 'next normal'.</li> </ol>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In business-as-usual periods, employee engagement focuses on how empowered, motivated and positive employees feel about their work – whether they have the right systems and structures in place to be productive, and do their best work.</li> <li>• During not business-as-usual periods, there are additional emotional and wellbeing factors at play.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Focus on the future.</li> <li>ii. Act on feedback.</li> <li>iii. Embrace new ways of working.</li> <li>iv. Use this time wisely.</li> <li>v. Reflect on engagement during the recovery.</li> </ol>
<b>Performance and rewards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee rewards and performance management plans keep your talent motivated, engaged, and aligned with business objectives.</li> <li>• In uncertain times, organisations need to avoid making rash, short-term decisions that could lead to future retention challenges.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Differentiate between short-term setback and long-term change.</li> <li>ii. Size up your people.</li> <li>iii. Consider new alternatives.</li> <li>iv. Recruit for resilience.</li> </ol>
<b>Recruitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every organisation needs the right people to adapt to unanticipated change and ensure business continuity.</li> <li>• This could also be an opportunity to make changes that may not have been possible before.</li> <li>• Build resilience into talent pipeline – This is a unique window of opportunity to upgrade the talent pool.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Differentiate between short-term setback and long-term change. Size up your people.</li> <li>ii. Consider new alternatives.</li> <li>iii. Recruit for resilience.</li> </ol>



- The Taskforce has recommended that a **Crisis Management Playbook** be developed to provide practical guidance for leaders facing crises. This Playbook will also guide SSA leaders in planning ahead and to put in place structures that will see them through the uncertainty that the next phase of this pandemic will bring.

The Playbook will cover topics including Crisis Management Leadership Inventory, Life Cycle of a Crisis, Exemplary Crisis Management Values & Practices, Crisis Management Framework, and Crisis Management Templates. NCSS, through SSI, will engage adult educators or subject matter experts to develop the Playbook by end 2021.

Contact [socialserviceinstitute@ncss.gov.sg](mailto:socialserviceinstitute@ncss.gov.sg) to contribute to the Playbook.

- **Contextualised leadership training programmes** to develop core competencies of non-profit leaders for crisis management should also be provided to strengthen leadership capabilities to be future ready. For this, the Taskforce has identified ten competency areas to equip leaders with skills to lead agencies out of crisis, sustain agencies in the next normal, and reimagine the next normal and transform agencies. NCSS, through SSI, will collaborate with various Institutes of Higher Learning to roll out these training programmes progressively in 2022.

- The Taskforce recommended **Developing Ground-up Alliances for Leaders to Strengthen Crisis Management Efforts**. It would be useful for SSAs to form ground-up alliances to facilitate scenario planning, and develop and test ideas to navigate the challenges faced in future pandemics. Such efforts would complement national guidelines and plans, expedite learning and solutioning during the crisis so that the sector can adapt quickly and focus on supporting the urgent needs in the community.

“Leaders will benefit greatly from an exchange of ideas during both crisis and non-crisis times. In the event of a crisis in future, we will all benefit from having a network to discuss issues, test solutions and learn from them together.”

*Mr Eugene Seow  
Member of the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce and  
Board Member of TOUCH Community Services*

# Emerging Stronger Together

The experiences with COVID-19 has shown us that we are stronger and more resilient as a collective, instead of individual agencies. As we continue to build organisational capabilities to operate effectively, we must also seize the opportunity to reimagine how social services can be enhanced in the next normal and work towards this vision together.

For a start, the Taskforce identified several areas that we can work on together.

- 1 Drive Collective Learning Continually**
- 2 Strengthen Partnerships to Address Social Issues Together**
- 3 Grow Funding and Resources together with Stakeholders in the Eco-System**
- 4 Anticipate Future Needs and Build Agility to Address Needs Effectively**



## 1. Drive Collective Learning Continually

In 2020, there was a strong interest all around for opportunities to connect and learn from each other about how best to navigate the challenges and changes brought about by COVID-19. We called our contacts, convened learning platforms, attended workshops and dialogues to learn and share what we could.

Moving forward, we need to continue strengthening the connections that have been forged and keep up a strong culture of collective learning in the social service sector.

### GatherHere

Join us on **GatherHere** to connect with others in the Social Service Tribe and stay up-to-date with the latest happenings in the social service sector. Social Service Professionals can join various community groups, engage in discussions on specific topics and stay connected with the Social Service Tribe.

Write to us [here](#) today to sign up for GatherHere.

## 2. Strengthen Partnerships to Address Social Issues Together

COVID-19 has further highlighted the importance of strong collaborations between stakeholders to support the needs of the community. As a social service sector, we need to continually strengthen partnerships between the people, private and public sectors to build capabilities and create a sustainable impact in our communities and those we serve.

For example, corporate organisations can lend valuable expertise to the social service sector through skills-based volunteerism in areas such as IT, marketing and branding, fund-raising and legal services.

At the onset of COVID-19, ThunderQuote, a Business to Business company that matches digital solutions according to the needs, stepped up to support Social Service Agencies in their digital transformation by providing resources and webinars to build knowledge and guide SSAs in their implementation of digital solutions.

With the support of ThunderQuote, many SSAs were able to adopt digital solutions such as cloud based telephony and e-payment, which helped agencies sustain operations and conduct fund-raising during the pandemic.



## 3. Grow Funding and Resources together with Stakeholders in the Eco-System

Resourcing will continue to be a pressing issue in the uncertain economic climate. As a sector, we need to grow resources to support the needs of the community. To do this, we need to work on the following:

### Grow Capabilities to Fundraise more Effectively

Singaporeans are giving and keen to support the needs of the community. In January to May 2020, \$90 Million was donated to the Community Chest and the Community Foundation of Singapore's Sayang Sayang Fund and through online donation platform Giving.sg.

This amount is equal to the overall donations received by the Community Chest and Giving.sg throughout 2019<sup>1</sup>. How do we continue to harness the community's desire to contribute and channel it to where the needs are?

### The Tote Board Enhanced Fund-Raising Programme

The Tote Board Enhanced Fund-Raising Programme : On 16 February 2021, as part of the Budget 2021 Statement, Deputy Prime Minister, Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies and Minister of Finance Heng Swee Keat announced the extension of the Enhanced Fund-Raising Programme (the "EFR") for an additional year in FY21.

The EFR programme was launched on 17 April 2020 to support charities in fundraising during COVID-19. Charities can apply for the EFR to receive dollar-for-dollar matching on eligible donations raised from projects in FY2021, up to a cap of \$250,000 per applicant.

Click [here](#) to find out more.

### National Volunteer And Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)

NVPC works with partners to provide opportunities for Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) to build key skills in fund-raising, such as story-telling, creating content, using social media and emerging channels like Tik Tok, and measuring and evaluating fund-raising effectiveness.

NPOs may also approach NVPC for support in strategy development, programme development and implementation.

For more information, please contact [admin@cnpl.org.sg](mailto:admin@cnpl.org.sg) for Board-related resources and [digitalmarketing@nvcp.org.sg](mailto:digitalmarketing@nvcp.org.sg) for other support.

### Share and Maximise Existing Resources

The Taskforce recommended to explore sharing of resources among SSAs where possible to achieve cost savings and maximise the use of existing resources."



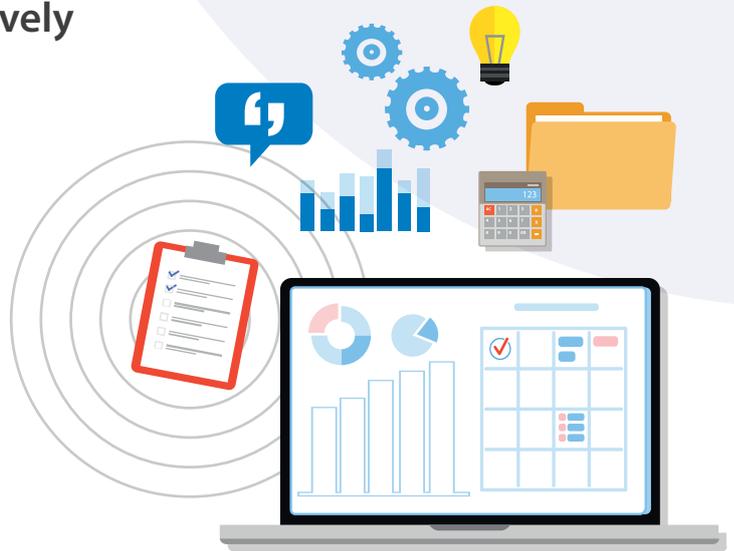
During the Circuit Breaker period, employees from Mercy Relief stepped up to volunteer and help Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) man the SOS hotline, managing the increase in the number of calls amid the pandemic, and offering comfort to callers in distress. By pooling together our resources, we can do so much more to support the needs of the community!

<sup>1</sup>The Straits Times - S'poreans donated \$90m in first five months of 2020, equal to whole of last year's donations (<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singaporeans-donate-90million-in-first-five-months-of-2020-equal-to-whole-of-last-years>)

## 4. Anticipate Future Needs and Build Agility to Address Needs Effectively

In spite of the challenges faced during the pandemic, COVID-19 has presented an opportunity to review our current capabilities, reorganise the way we work and reimagine how we can work more effectively than before.

Beyond the pandemic, we need to adapt the delivery of social services according to the changing preferences and needs of service users. Beyond digitalising to ensure operations can continue in the face of disruptions, how can we digitalise and develop 'smart' SSAs that harness data and technology effectively to carry out their mission?

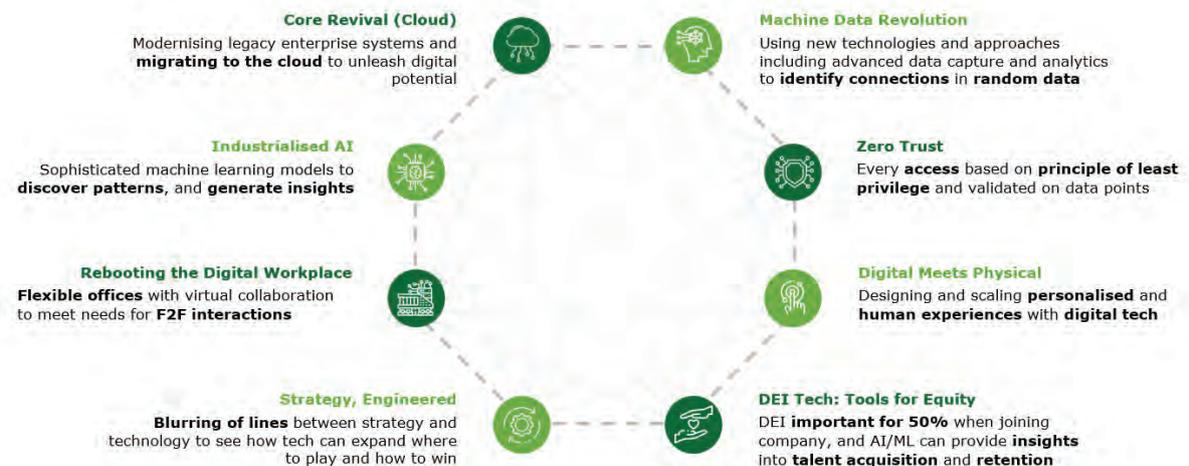


### What would a 'Smart' SSA look like?

Deloitte Consulting offers insights into technology trends that are likely to transform businesses in the longer term, which should be considered in the enablement of the social service sector. Click [here](#) to view the full report.

#### Technology Trends

Deloitte has identified technology trends most likely to transform businesses in the long term, and these should be considered in the enablement of the social service sector



Here are some examples of how Non-Profit Organisations are using technology in social services:

### Art of the Possible: Global Social Service and Technology to Inspire

<p>Free, open-source <b>games</b> that use <b>machine learning</b> to boost autism attention spans</p>  <p>Attention span of children rises to between 45 and 50 minutes from 15 minutes.</p>	<p>Eldercare <b>AI</b> personal assistant for rehabilitation and interactions</p>  <p>Seniors' autonomy, sociability, mood, and communication improved along with a better quality of life over all (34%)</p>	<p>Home based <b>digital therapy programme</b> that <b>matches</b> participants for stroke rehabilitation</p>  <p>Cost half as much as conventional training and showed 100% engagement and 26% improvement in motor function</p>	<p>VMware <b>Zero Trust security</b> model enables <b>mobile digital workplaces</b> for welfare and healthcare organisations</p>  <p>Delivers secure access to corporate data from any device to any application</p>
<p>PhysioQ uses the <b>cloud</b> to <b>create</b> and <b>scale</b> a <b>platform</b> for early detection of COVID-19 signs</p>  <p>Scaled from being in 1 country to over 12 in the span of 3 months using affordable consumer wearables</p>	<p><b>DEI tech</b> by Kanarys to develop talented underserved youth in business and industry</p>  <p>Tracks over 1000 companies DEI efforts through employee reviews, company policies and organisational data</p>	<p>Mobile App, Greta &amp; Starks Providing <b>Captioning And Audio Description</b> In Cinemas</p>  <p>Over 30,000 people used the app between 2014 and 2018, and 80 to 100 films are added each year.</p>	

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In the face of complex social issues and tightened resources, the social service sector needs to collaborate and work towards collective impact in our community, in order to address social needs sustainably. We can use an eco-system approach to build stronger collaboration amongst stakeholders by sharing data to identify and address needs more effectively.

- During the Circuit Breaker period, several food charities, including Food from the Heart, Willing Hearts, Food Bank and Free Food for All, were whitelisted by MSF and NCSS to serve as providers of food support. The charities agreed to share data on service users, allowing MSF and NCSS to pull together a 'central repository' to enable more efficient channeling of referrals, reduce duplication of efforts and minimise wastage. This coordination ensured that those in need continued to receive essential food support.
- The SG Cares Digital Kampong, a collaboration between MCCY and NVPC expected to be launched in 2023, will publish information on causes that are currently hosted on multiple platforms, such as Giving.sg, volunteer.sg or the websites of participating charities, into a centralised platform for donors, volunteers and charities.





With shared data on the needs in the community, the Taskforce also suggested developing a Community Scorecard that establishes common goals and outcomes to guide stakeholders in addressing these needs together. The Quality of Life framework, for example, may provide a common lens to the needs of population groups and how we may support these groups together.

Click [here](#) to reference the Quality of Life Studies conducted by NCSS

## The Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST) – A 5-Year Roadmap for the Social Service Sector

The 4ST was launched in 2017 as a 5-year roadmap towards a shared vision for the sector, based on the challenges and opportunities identified then. With the changes in the sector, which have been accelerated by COVID-19, as well as larger shifts in the nation's social dynamics, it is opportune for us to refresh the roadmap for the sector for the next 5 years and beyond.

The experience of managing and adapting to COVID-19 highlighted possibilities for new ways of working as a social service sector. To develop these possibilities further and facilitate plans for action, NCSS will be conducting an exercise to refresh the Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST) to guide the development of the sector for the next 5 years.

The recommendations developed by the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce has been centred on building capabilities for the immediate term, while this exercise will allow us to take a deeper look at the ideas mentioned above, which will need to be addressed over a longer period of time.

From now till the later part of the year, NCSS will be convening a series of engagement sessions for SSAs and stakeholders in the public and private sectors to discuss our aspirations for the sector and how we may work towards the shared vision together. We invite you to join us in this important exercise for the journey ahead to reimagine the future of social services together.

Register your interest at [planning@ncss.gov.sg](mailto:planning@ncss.gov.sg) to participate in the development of the 4ST for 2022 – 2026.

# Acknowledgement

## of Taskforce Members and Workstream Members



- Row 1: **Mr Gasper Tan**, CEO, Samaritans of Singapore. **Mr Eugene Seow**, Board Member, TOUCH Community Services. **Ms Ku Geok Boon**, CEO, SG Enable. **Dr Lee Tung Jean**, First Deputy Secretary, MSF. **Ms Anita Fam**, Chairperson, President, NCSS
- Row 2: **Ms Sim Bee Hia**, CEO, Food from the Heart. **Ms Melissa Kwee**, CEO, National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre. **Mr Yap Poh Kheng**, CEO, Care Corner Singapore Ltd. **Dr Goh Wei-Leong**, Co-Founder & Advisor, HealthServe. **Mr Robert Chew**, Board Member, Dover Park Hospice.
- Row 3: **Ms Tan Li San**, CEO, NCSS. **Ms Theresa Goh**, Board Advisor, SATA CommHealth Ltd. **Ms Chew Seow-Chien**, Partner, Bain & Co. **Mr Mohamad Helmy Mohd Isa**, Senior Director, Mosques & Community Development, Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura.
- Row 4: **Mr Augustin Lee**, Chairperson, MINDS. **Dr Md Badrun Nafis Saion**, Chairperson, AMP Singapore. **Mr Mark Wee**, Executive Director, DesignSingapore Council. **Mr Bernard Menon**, Executive Director, Migrant Workers' Centre. **Ms Angie Chew**, CEO & Mindfulness Principal, Brahm Centre.
- Row 5: **Mr Chern Siang Jye**, Group Chief, Sector and Partnerships Division, Agency for Integrated Care. **Dr Vincent Ng**, CEO, AMKFSC Community Services Ltd. **Ms Janet Young**, Managing Director and Head (Group Channels & Digitalisation), United Overseas Bank Limited

# Acknowledgement

## List of Workstream Members

### Digitalisation Workstream

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### Service Delivery Workstream

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Co-Founder & Advisor,  
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**Mr Jacks Yeo**

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**Mr Kelvin Koh**

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MINDS

**Ms Ku Geok Boon**

CEO,  
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**Mr Mark Wee**

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**Ms Stephanie Tan**

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**Ms Wu Mei Ling**

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Impact and Sustainability,  
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**Mr Yap Poh Kheng**

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### Manpower & Volunteers Workstream

**Ms Theresa Goh**

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**Mr Gaspar Tan**

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**Ms Ivy Tse**

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**Ms Melissa Kwee**

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National Volunteer and  
Philanthropy Centre

**Dr Soon Su-Chuin**

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### Leadership Workstream

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**Mr Eugene Seow**

Board Member,  
TOUCH Community Services

**Ms Theresa Goh**

Board Advisor,  
SATA CommHealth Ltd

**Mr Tim Oei**

CEO,  
National Kidney Foundation

**Dr Roland Yeow**

Executive Director,  
Boys' Town

# Hopes and Aspirations

The world will never go back to the way it was, pre-COVID-19 days. As we continue pushing the envelope in our respective agencies and domains, I do hope that our experiences since the start of the pandemic and our plans ahead will inspire us and others to look forward with greater anticipation to a social service sector that is even better and stronger. We need to continue building a caring and inclusive society together where every person is empowered to live with dignity.

*Ms Anita Fam*  
*Chairperson*  
*President, NCSS*

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The response of social service agencies to the COVID-19 crisis showed that we can be adaptable and creative, even in the face of unprecedented challenges. As we continue to navigate uncharted waters in the months and years ahead, I am confident that by working together and harnessing our collective strengths, we will be able to emerge stronger and create a dynamic and impactful social service ecosystem.

*Ms Tan Li San*  
*Chef Executive Officer, NCSS*

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Crisis sparks innovation and innovation sparks progress. We saw this during the COVID-19 pandemic when SSAs adopted digital technology to provide services remotely. This positions the SSAs well to use technology to create and enhance their services more pervasively and effectively.

*Mr Robert Chew*  
*Board Member, Dover Park Hospice*

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Covid-19 has awakened us as a social service sector to not just be Future-Ready but more importantly Crisis-Ready. By that I do not mean having a mindset resigned to anxiety and fear, but a preparedness and alertness, that flows from a deep sense of responsibility to the vulnerable and the disadvantaged communities that we serve.

*Mr Eugene Seow*  
*Board Member, TOUCH Community Services*

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Seek a collective approach whether your charity is on the Respond, Recover, Repurpose or Reform part of the crisis curve. There is always something to learn from each other.

*Ms Theresa Goh*  
*Chairperson, SATA CommHealth Ltd*

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Covid-19 brought out the best in our SSAs in adapting quickly and continue serving our clients despite the restrictions. It is my hope that the same spirit of inventiveness, adaptability and responsiveness will continue into the future as SSAs strive to serve the evolving needs of our clients.

*Mr Augustin Lee*  
*Chairperson, MINDS*

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My hope is for the sector to be more collaborative and find ways to work with each other. Finding common ground in both opportunities and challenges. This taskforce has shown that we can work together even though we all have different aims and objectives. We all have a common goal - helping Singapore's community in some form or the other. If our sector is strong and resilient, our country will have a strong base to grow and further development from.

*Dr Badrun Nafis*  
*Chairperson, AMP Singapore*

# Hopes and Aspirations

We need to adapt to the new norm of no norm. Hope, trust and confidence will see us through. For our beneficiaries we serve, we must and will emerge stronger, more nimble, resourceful and more resolved.

*Ms Sim Bee Hia*  
*CEO, Food from the Heart*

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The taskforce, aligned by the vision of working together for a common cause and not for applause, signifies the tireless work put behind-the-scenes by many in the social service sector. Unity and collaboration has been key in ensuring that we continue to provide support those around us during and beyond difficult times.

*Mr Gasper Tan*  
*CEO, Samaritans of Singapore*

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My hope is that we will forge new pathways in delivering relevant and innovative solutions with greater collective impact to the community. Fostering a community where everyone is valued and supported with opportunities at every stage of their life to fully participate and live a meaningful life.

*Mr Yap Poh Kheng*  
*CEO, Care Corner Singapore Ltd*

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Singaporeans and residents learn from the Pandemic to become more caring, more resilient, more resourceful, and overall making Singapore a greater place to live, work and play.

*Ms Janet Young*  
*Managing Director and Head,*  
*Group Channels & Digitalisation,*  
*United Overseas Bank Limited*

Prior to COVID-19, the social service sector has mostly been agency or geography centric. It was common for each agency to preserve and project its own identity and purpose, while upholding quality service for their respective clients. Within sub-sectors and geographical locations, there were sometimes organic partnerships, but that's about it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undeniably brought the entire sector closer together. It has been a unifying force in the face of a common threat, where our survival and future are uncertain. It has also bonded us with a common purpose, regardless of who we are and whom we serve. What has emerged from the partnerships of previously disparate agencies were shared resources, mutual support and joint solutions.

My wish is for us to usher in a new era of collaboration from all agencies in the sector. We must guard against returning to a silo mentality of "us versus them" and instead, work together to better serve the vulnerable in the community.

*Dr Vincent Ng*  
*CEO, AMKFSC Community Services Ltd*

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As COVID-19 has disrupted existing social service delivery models, many experiences need to be reimaged. It is my hope that the design community can work with our social service agencies to redesign the future of social services for a new better future.

*Mr Mark Wee*  
*Executive Director, DesignSingapore Council*

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A cohesive sector that builds on strong partnerships, harnesses the passion and experience of volunteers, and strengthens the capabilities of a professional workforce to better serve our communities. With this, I am optimistic that we will remain resilient and ready to meet the evolving needs of society.

*Dr Lee Tung Jean*  
*First Deputy Secretary, MSF*