

4ST

ROADMAP FOR THE **SOCIAL SERVICE SECTOR**

2022–2026



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INITIATED BY:



FOREWORD

by **MS ANITA FAM**

Chair, 4ST (2022-2026) Steering Committee

In 2017, I was involved in creating a shared vision for the social service sector to aspire to. These efforts culminated in the Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts, also known as the 4ST, a roadmap for the sector, by the sector. Five years on, I am pleased to note that Singapore has made headway in achieving our vision of empowering every person to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society.

We mark the next phase of the sector's journey with an updated set of strategic thrusts and outcomes. Some directions continue to be critical for our sector, and the refreshed 4ST for 2022 to 2026 recommends enhancing person-centred practices, developing strong and healthy organisations, and maximising social impact through collaboration.

The sector is also undoubtedly keen to respond to emerging trends and prepare for the future. In this iteration of the 4ST, a fourth strategic thrust has been added to emphasise the importance of being future-directed. We have reinforced the role that ecosystems play in providing more holistic support to individuals, families, and communities, as well as in bringing about change to the broader environments that they exist in.

The sector's contributions to the 4ST have been invaluable. My deepest appreciation goes to my fellow Steering Committee members and all who have journeyed together with us in this. Pursuing the sector's shared vision will require all of us to take on new mindsets and behaviours, and I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.

Change starts with each one of us. I firmly believe that everyone can play a part and call upon you to join me in shaping this next phase of our sector's growth.

MESSAGE

by **MR MASAGOS ZULKIFLI**

*Minister for Social and Family Development,
Second Minister for Health,
and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs*

The social service ecosystem plays a critical role in uplifting individuals, families, and communities in Singapore. With an evolving social compact and other challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was timely that the people, public and private sectors came together to renew our shared vision and update the sector's goals through the 4ST (2022-2026).

The refreshed 4ST articulates how the sector can achieve its goals over the next five years by placing individuals, families, and communities at the heart of all we do and by galvanising the wider community to empower Singaporeans facing social challenges. The key to our success will be investing in building sector capabilities and fostering partnerships so support can be rendered in a more comprehensive, convenient, and coordinated manner.

I would like to express my appreciation to the 4ST Steering Committee, supported by the National Council of Social Service, for their efforts and leadership. I would also like to thank the hundreds of sector partners who contributed along the way. Your insights on how the sector has developed and what we should think about for the future made it possible for the sector roadmap to reflect what the sector truly needs.

I hope that these refreshed strategic thrusts will guide Singapore's social service sector and our partners in strengthening our social structures and creating meaningful change. Each of us can contribute our skills, knowledge, time and other resources in networks of collective action for greater impact. **Let us continue to nurture and build lives together, for a caring society with strong families and resilient individuals.**

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”.



VISION

EVERY PERSON EMPOWERED TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY IN A CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

4ST ROADMAP FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICE SECTOR 2022-2026

STRATEGIC THRUSTS & OUTCOMES



STRATEGIC THRUST 4

Future-directed social service sector



The social service sector experiments to develop quality, innovative & sustainable solutions



The social service sector is well-positioned for the future



A digitally-enabled and data-driven social service sector

Efforts here help the other strategic thrusts move forward to transform our sector and achieve the 4ST vision.

HOW MIGHT WE ACHIEVE THIS?

- Implement innovative solutions to achieve sector goals
- Enhance strategic planning to better manage future challenges
- Apply person-centred practices to digital products and services
- Enable data sharing across stakeholders in sector
- Improve digital maturity of social purpose entities (SPEs)

STRATEGIC THRUST 1

Empowered and included individuals, families, and communities



Practices and solutions in the sector become more person-centred



Vulnerable groups have support to make well-informed decisions on how their needs and aspirations are met



The ecosystem leverages the assets of individuals, families, and communities to solve social challenges



More vulnerable people are included and participate in society

The quality of life of individuals, families, and communities will improve when actions are taken across the four strategic thrusts. Our goal is to empower them and create a society where they are included.

HOW MIGHT WE ACHIEVE THIS?

- Identify and mobilise assets of individuals and communities
- Develop, design and implement solutions with users
- Build capabilities in implementing person-centred practices and solutions; community development
- Enhance access to info and resources, reframe policies and models to facilitate vulnerable groups' abilities to make decisions for themselves
- Strengthen linkages and processes to address interconnected issues and ensure seamless care
- Inculcate values of inclusion, increase meaningful participation of vulnerable groups in society

STRATEGIC THRUST 2

Effective and impactful social purpose entities



SPEs serve with heart and demonstrate professionalism across all levels, backed by robust governance and strong people practices



SPEs are forward thinking and practise sustainable resourcing



SPEs collaborate across the sector and beyond to optimise resources and enhance effectiveness

SPEs can shape the ecosystems they are involved in through their actions. Our goal is to strengthen the capability and capacity of SPEs as channels to empower individuals, families and communities.

HOW MIGHT WE ACHIEVE THIS?

- Build capabilities and strengthen effectiveness of SPEs
- Uplift the value and attractiveness of the sector
- As SPEs, develop strategies to prepare for the future
- Pursue resource sustainability models
- Foster an environment for SPEs to engage in social innovation
- Establish structured collaboration and partnerships between SPEs and other partners, including volunteers

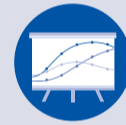


STRATEGIC THRUST 3

Caring, collaborative and impactful social service ecosystem



Strategic and sustainable partnerships are fostered between different sectors and stakeholders for greater impact



Improved diversity and sustainability of resources in the sector



Sector players take a systems approach to deliver quality, innovative & sustainable solutions and advance sector goals

The social service ecosystem is crucial in driving the other strategic thrusts. Our goal is to work together to deliver impactful and holistic support to individuals, families and communities effectively and efficiently.

HOW MIGHT WE ACHIEVE THIS?

- Grow ecosystems within and beyond the sector
- Foster a more conducive environment for collaboration
- Strengthen collaborative capability
- Develop and implement sector-level sustainable resourcing strategies
- Enhance the sector's resource management and philanthropic capabilities
- Adopt a systems-centred, whole of sector lens in planning

VALUE

Person-centred and holistic approach towards needs to advance the quality of life for individuals



INTRODUCTION



Over the next five years, we aspire to continue advancing towards a thriving social service sector where individuals, families, and communities are empowered through a person-centred approach.



The updated strategic thrusts for 2022 to 2026 serve as a guide for the next phase so that our sector's shared goals can be realised.

The outcomes under each thrust have been written to be concrete and actionable, with specific recommendations describing steps we can take to achieve these outcomes. These are not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive. Instead, they are intended to provide a sense of what we can do in our respective capacities and collectively as a sector. These recommendations will be regularly updated over the next five years.

THE 4ST JOURNEY THUS FAR

Since the 4ST roadmap was launched in 2017, multiple efforts have been undertaken across the existing three key thrusts to achieve their corresponding outcomes. The next few pages summarise where we are as a sector in the 4ST journey thus far and highlight some of the more pertinent observations for the sector in the next five years.³

4ST (2017-2021)



Empowered individuals, their families and communities

WHERE ARE WE?

- From 2015 to 2020, the income of the bottom 40% of Singapore's population grew at a rate higher than the national average.⁴
- individuals, families, and communities such as single parents and widows benefitted from programmes that connected them to support networks to cope with challenges more independently.
- Social service agencies (SSAs) working with persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, persons with dementia and their caregivers, as well as persons with mental health conditions created more opportunities for them to advocate for themselves. Nationwide Quality of Life studies conducted by NCSS have also helped to aggregate and communicate needs to bring about changes at a sector level.
- More than half of SSAs surveyed in 2018 practise empowerment to some extent.

OBSERVATIONS FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF THE 4ST JOURNEY

- Vulnerable groups were less satisfied with their opportunities to access information and skills required in day-to-day life, and this remained a challenge after COVID-19 broke out. Sector stakeholders would also like to improve service users' access to information so users can make well-informed decisions, such as by tapping on technology.
- Empowerment practices have not been widely adopted across the sector, be it within individual organisations or at a collective level. Multi-sector and eldercare agencies are particularly keen to improve in co-creating solutions and programmes with service users.

³ The data and observations in this section are based on findings from studies conducted by the National Council of Social Service – Quality of Life of vulnerable populations (2015, 2020-2021); Social Service Sector Survey (2018, 2021); Public Attitudes towards Persons with Disabilities (2019); Public Attitudes towards Persons with Mental Health Conditions (2021). Programme data and views gathered from engagements with sector stakeholders were also considered.

⁴ Singapore Department of Statistics. (2020). *Sustainable Development Goals – Target 10.1: Reduce Income Inequalities*. Data on annualised real change in average monthly household income from work per household member among resident employed households. The annualised real change from 2015 to 2020 was 1.9% for all resident employed households compared to 2.0% for resident employed households in the 1st to 40th percentiles.

4ST (2017-2021)

 **Effective social purpose entities that deliver quality, innovative and sustainable solutions**

WHERE ARE WE?

- SSAs reported increases across all domains of organisational effectiveness from 2018 to 2021, particularly in areas such as Service Quality, Culture and Human Resource.
- Over 100 SSAs were supported through 231 consultancy projects to enhance their human resource practices, with improvements in areas such as recognition, benefits, people engagement and succession planning.⁵ The journey of organisation development in the sector continues with 29 non-profit organisations working on transformation efforts.
- Sector-wide efforts to attract and develop talent were initiated, such as leadership programmes and raising awareness of careers in the sector. A variety of professional competency frameworks and resources were also rolled out to enhance the sector's capabilities in areas such as volunteer management.
- The government and community signalled support for long-term capability building and capacity-building in the sector with the provision of long-term funding for SSAs through the Community Capability Trust from FY2022 to end-FY2031.

OBSERVATIONS FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF THE 4ST JOURNEY

- SSAs indicated that they would like to pay more attention to resourcing strategies and leadership capabilities. Fundraising remains the weakest domain of SSA organisational effectiveness, and senior leadership was rated as the most important factor towards achieving organisational effectiveness.
- While SSAs would like to grow research capabilities, they are also likely to deprioritise such efforts amid resource constraints. It is important for SSAs to prioritise and invest in capability building according to their present and future needs, as well as to explore different ways to do so to optimise their resources.
- Besides SSAs, the sector should consider how other social purpose entities (SPEs) and non-traditional players can be involved in meeting the needs of individuals, families, and communities and complement the work of existing service providers.
- Sector stakeholders hope that SPEs can be developed and supported as organisations more holistically, beyond building specific capabilities and capacities separately.

⁵ Based on data of SSAs who worked on enhancing their practices in the areas identified through the People Practice Consultancy.



4ST (2017-2021)

 **Caring, collaborative and impactful social service ecosystem**

WHERE ARE WE?

- Public attitudes towards persons with mental health conditions have improved. More in the general population were willing to work with persons with mental health conditions in 2021 compared to 2017.
- From 2018 to 2021, SSAs rated themselves to have higher competencies in leveraging technology effectively to increase efficiency within the organisation, as well as effectively seeking new solutions to solve existing problems.
- Singapore is seeing an acceleration in informal individual and community-led giving initiatives.⁶
- The government is actively driving cross-sector collaborations through the Alliances for Action under the Singapore Together movement.⁷
- Financial support to the sector has increased. The total annual receipts to the social & welfare sector grew by over 20% from 2015 to 2019, fuelled mainly by increases in government grants and other income.⁸

OBSERVATIONS FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF THE 4ST JOURNEY

- While public awareness of social issues has increased, this has not been translated widely into changed mindsets and behaviours to make society more inclusive. For example, although the employment rate of persons with disabilities has increased⁹, public attitudes towards their employment are a key area for improvement.
- Sector stakeholders are concerned about the digital literacy of service users, as well as how data should be used. Besides enhancing the digital capabilities of service providers, they would also like clear frameworks on issues such as data ownership, sharing and access.
- Meaningful and sustainable collaboration continues to be of interest in the sector. There is room to promote partnerships between non-profit organisations and ground-up groups to ensure sustainability of both formal and informal giving.¹⁰
- Majority of corporate funders have explored alternative funding models (86% in 2021), presenting opportunities to involve corporates more deeply in creating a steady supply of resources for the sector, together with the community.

⁶ National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre. (2021, November 19). NVPC Individual Giving Study 2021.
⁷ SG Together. (2021). Building Singapore Together Through Partnerships.
⁸ Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. (2016-2020). Commissioner of Charities Annual Report. Annual receipts comprise government grants, donations, as well as fees and charges. Other sources of receipts include income from programmes and services rendered.
⁹ Qing, A. (2022, March 9). More People with Disabilities Employed During Covid-19 Pandemic. The Straits Times. The average resident employment for people with disabilities aged 15 to 64 increased from 28.2% in 2018-2019 to 30.1% in 2020-2021.
¹⁰ National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre. (2021, November 19). NVPC Individual Giving Study 2021.

WHAT LIES AHEAD



Changing social issues, needs and expectations

Greater diversity and complexity in societal issues

- Demographic changes
- Issues emerging or are exacerbated due to COVID-19
- Greater attention given to certain social issues as a result of globalisation
- Changes to the economy that could lead to downstream social issues

Sector dynamics are user-driven rather than provider-driven

- Shift towards improved user experience through integrated care
- Growing desire of users to voice their opinions and play a greater role in decision-making



Evolving sector workforce and ways of working

- Competition for talent in sector
- Digitalisation of work processes and implications on profile and use of manpower
- Greater focus on developing manpower and strengthening organisational health of social purpose entities to maximise limited resources
- Changing demographics of workers joining the sector, bringing more diverse skill sets and different expectations
- Changes in national and global labour policies (e.g. regulations, quotas on foreign manpower) may have disruptive effects on Singapore's social and healthcare workforce



Accelerated digital transformation in service delivery to improve user experience and optimise resources

- Expanded outreach to new service users who previously faced challenges accessing services in-person
- Increased utilisation of new technology and data to identify and reach out proactively to those who need help



Changing expectations and practices in giving

- New forms of giving (e.g. online giving)
- Greater interest and involvement by corporates, evolving nature of engagement and partnerships
- Diversion of resources to other sectors and other environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues may add to resource constraints faced in the sector
- Overall drop in non-government funding for the sector



Growing awareness of social issues

- Increased willingness to seek help
- Greater community giving towards social causes
- More community and ground-up movements
- Rise in volunteerism

Stakeholders' views gathered against the backdrop of a global pandemic, as well as the abovementioned societal shifts, have shown that there is a need to place greater thought into planning for the future. These driving forces and trends present both challenges and opportunities for our social service sector, and will shape the strategies we implement in the next few years.

We should continue to think about how major events such as the COVID-19 pandemic have influenced, and will continue to influence, the environment in which we operate in, resourcing streams and mechanisms, and the types of transformation needed in the sector.

The 4ST (2022-2026) therefore aims to guide our sector in staying abreast and ahead through the updated strategic thrusts and outcomes, which are elaborated on in the next section. A new thrust has also been added to emphasise the need for the sector to be future-directed, and forms the basis behind this iteration of the roadmap.

“We need to iterate, prototype and innovate but are our funding bodies ready to fund risks? Are our funding structures ready to make space for failures, which can still be an opportunity for learning?”

Participant in 4ST small group discussions¹¹

¹¹ These engagements were held with social service agency leaders and sector professionals, as well as representatives from other agencies closely involved in the social service sector.



THE STRATEGIC THRUSTS FOR 2022 TO 2026

- 1 Empowered and included individuals, families, and communities
- 2 Effective and impactful social purpose entities
- 3 Caring, collaborative and impactful social service ecosystem
- 4 Future-directed social service sector



The 4ST (2022-2026) lays out four strategic thrusts to pursue our shared vision of

“every person empowered to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society”:

STRATEGIC THRUST 4

Future-directed social service sector

- Focuses on the need to be future-directed to transform our sector
- Our intention is for the efforts under this thrust to help the other thrusts move forward so that ultimately, we can achieve our 4ST vision.

STRATEGIC THRUST 1

Empowered and included individuals, families, and communities

- Focuses on individuals, families, and communities – the target groups whose quality of life will improve as a result of actions taken across the four strategic thrusts.
- Our goal for this strategic thrust is to empower these target groups and create a society where they are included.

STRATEGIC THRUST 2

Effective and impactful social purpose entities

- Focuses on strengthening social purpose entities (SPEs) as channels to empower the individuals, families, and communities referred to in Strategic Thrust 1 – helping them to gain relevant skills, perspectives, and resources for economic and social inclusion.
- Recognises that SPEs can shape the ecosystems they are involved in through their actions.
- Our goal for this thrust is to build effective and impactful SPEs by strengthening their organisational capability and capacity, so that in turn, they can generate more social impact.

STRATEGIC THRUST 3

Caring, collaborative and impactful social service ecosystem

- Highlights the role of the social service ecosystem in driving and supporting Strategic Thrusts 1 and 2, and the need to work together to deliver impactful and holistic support to individuals, families, and communities effectively and efficiently.
- Our goals for this thrust are to generate greater social impact through strategic and longer-term partnerships, and to find more diverse and sustainable ways of fulfilling our missions, underscored by taking a systems approach in what we do.

All four strategic thrusts are mutually reinforcing. They work together to support the 4ST vision together with our 4ST values.

STRATEGIC THRUST 1**EMPOWERED AND INCLUDED
INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND
COMMUNITIES****RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the next 5 years, the social service sector should...

Involve users in development, design and implementation of solutions

- Co-create empowering solutions with users
- Introduce service and financing models to allow greater ownership and choice by service users

Build capabilities of SPEs to implement person-centred practices and solutions

- Embed person-centred approaches in organisational practices
- Equip social service professionals with knowledge of and skills in adopting a person-centred approach

Design solutions in an integrated manner to address interconnected issues and ensure seamless care, within and across sectors

- Strengthen linkages and processes across different supports accessed by service users
- Centralise data on vulnerable groups and services across the people and public sector for a more holistic, person-centred understanding of needs
- Review and better organise resourcing of support for target groups across their different needs and stages of their user journeys, including preventive / upstream work



**Practices and solutions in the sector
become more person-centred**

Create more opportunities for individuals, families, and communities to decide on appropriate supports that meet their needs

Equip service users and sector professionals with access to clear, relevant information and resources that best meet their needs

For example, we can centralise information on services and schemes for ease of navigation.

Reframe policies and models to facilitate vulnerable groups' ability to make decisions for themselves

For example, we can educate 3P stakeholders and shift mindsets to improve the ability of vulnerable persons to make decisions.



Vulnerable groups have support to make well-informed decisions on how their needs and aspirations are met

Identify and mobilise assets of individuals, families, and communities

- Develop and scale initiatives that tap on assets of individuals, families, and communities
- Bring in diverse perspectives and strengths to create solutions that address complex needs, including the individuals, families, and communities themselves, such as through convening more conversations among different stakeholder groups
- Consolidate and make community resources accessible
- Nurture the abilities of individuals, families, and communities to lead efforts in addressing social challenges

Enhance the sector's capability in community development approaches

- Equip sector stakeholders with know-how on involving service users in design and implementation of solutions
- Provide support for wider adoption of community development approaches



The ecosystem leverages the assets of individuals, families, and communities to solve social challenges

¹²Indicators and targets will be set to facilitate the implementation of efforts under the 4ST (2022-2026).

Encourage the public to adopt more positive attitudes towards vulnerable groups and social needs, inculcate values of inclusion

- Increase the public's understanding of social needs and their role in supporting individuals, families and communities
- Educate younger generations on social inclusion through adjustments in school curriculum

Increase meaningful participation of vulnerable groups in society

- Encourage employers to practise inclusive hiring
- Educate and upskill individuals, families, and communities needing support
- Enhance public and private infrastructure and facilities to enable vulnerable persons to live, work and play



More vulnerable people are included and participate in society

Refer to the 4ST Playbook for ideas and examples on how we might:

- Become more person-centred in our practices
- Implement asset-based approaches
- Encourage greater social inclusion

How might we know that we are on track to achieving our goal for Strategic Thrust 1?¹²

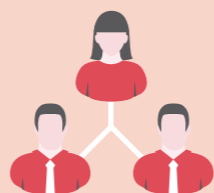
- More solutions designed, implemented or enhanced where **service users influence the use of resources in meeting their needs and aspirations**
- Increase in proportion of vulnerable groups who are **meaningfully engaged in society**
- Improvement in **service user experience & quality of life**



Thrust 1 focuses on the individuals, families, and communities who are at the heart of what we do in the social service sector. We refer to them as service users, their families and caregivers, and other groups that our sector sees and interacts with on a day-to-day basis.

In a broader sense, it also refers to communities such as the neighbourhoods that surround us, or specific population groups such as persons with disabilities or persons with mental health conditions. These include those who may benefit from support to meet their needs, but may not be accessing support for various reasons.

Our goal for this thrust is to empower these target groups and create a society where they are included.



The emphasis on empowerment continues from the previous 4ST, as it is a long-term goal that requires shifts in mindsets and behaviours beyond individuals, families, and communities, but also across ecosystems and sectors.



The concept of 'inclusion' has also been folded into this thrust. This is because empowerment refers to the expansion of assets and capabilities of people in vulnerabilities such that they may participate in, negotiate with, influence, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives¹³; and an inclusive society is a key enabler in this process.



¹³World Bank. (2002). Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook.

OUTCOMES TO ADVANCE STRATEGIC THRUST 1



Practices and solutions in the sector become more person-centred

In person-centred care, we:

- View people using health and social services as necessary partners in the planning, developing, and monitoring of support to make sure it meets their needs. Social service professionals and others in their support networks work with them to get the best outcome.
- Put people and their families at the centre of decisions and see them as individuals who have the capacity to work through their problems. It is important to involve and strengthen families in this journey as families play a pivotal role in supporting persons to achieve their goals.

How might we become more person-centred in our practices?

As service providers

Take a flexible approach to solutions to meet people's needs in a manner that is best for them.¹⁴

For example,

- On a one-to-one basis – individuals take part in decisions about their choice of service, which is determined according to their needs and preferences.
- On a collective basis – groups are involved in decisions about the design and delivery of services or have a say in how certain resources are allocated in meeting their needs, rather than being forced to fit into fixed models of support that may not address their needs adequately.

As social purpose entities (SPEs)

Embrace a person-centred culture and acquire relevant knowledge and skills to support the implementation of these practices.

SPEs can:

- Learn from one another through the sharing of best practices
- Encourage their social service professionals to attend training on person-centred care

Across the sector

Design social service solutions in an integrated manner to ensure seamless care.

What happens in one part of someone's life may affect other domains of their wellbeing. Strong case management and greater use of transdisciplinary approaches will allow service users and professionals to have a comprehensive understanding of the potential barriers faced and the enablers needed to reach the desired goals for the users' and their families' wellbeing.

There is also a role for digital platforms and data to play in facilitating better person-centred care, and this is explained further under Strategic Thrust 4.

The underlying philosophy is about doing things with people, rather than 'to' them or 'for' them.¹⁵

¹⁴ The Health Foundation. (2016). Person-centred Care Made Simple; British Association of Social Workers. (n.d.). Person-centred Care Made Simple.

¹⁵ Health Innovation Network South London. (n.d.). What is Person-centred Care and Why is It Important?



Vulnerable groups have support to make well-informed decisions on how their needs and aspirations are met

For individuals, families, and communities to make well-informed decisions about their pathways to achieve goals and aspirations, it is important that they, together with the social service professionals that work with them, have easy access to relevant and comprehensive information about viable options.

Having clear information on hand, coupled with advice and support to consider the costs and benefits of each choice, can help service users to navigate the decision-making process more smoothly.

Consolidating the information on services and schemes will therefore help to facilitate this process for both users and professionals.



The ecosystem leverages the assets of individuals, families, and communities to solve social challenges

We should shift from a deficit-based approach to an asset-based one in supporting individuals, families, and communities, where more focus is placed on opportunities and what is present that can be built upon, rather than only their problems and weaknesses.¹⁶

This means that we:

- Recognise that individuals, families, and communities can be contributors and change agents rather than just recipients of support.
- Are person-centred and community-centred.¹⁷
- Leverage the capacity, skills, knowledge, experiences, connections, and potential¹⁸ in the communities we work in to solve social challenges.
- Unlock new ideas and resources to address growing needs and achieve greater impact.

How might we implement asset-based approaches?



Adopt principles that enable a shift in power towards individuals, families, and communities,

so that “skills, gifts, talents and networks... (can be) harnessed to provide self-sustaining solutions and a deep reservoir of community resources that people can draw upon to live well”.¹⁹



Draw upon a diverse range of perspectives and strengths.

Convene conversations amongst different stakeholder groups to increase opportunities to tap on the ecosystem’s assets and foster collective impact.

The collective impact approach recognises the importance of representation and commitment from a group of stakeholders across different backgrounds, experiences, and expertise in addressing a social issue. Informed by data and facilitated by a backbone infrastructure, all participating representatives create a shared vision and embark on various activities that are mutually reinforcing to achieve the goal.²⁰

¹⁶ The University of Memphis. (n.d.). Comparison Between Asset and Deficit Based Approaches.

¹⁷ Public Health England. (2020). Community-centred Public Health: Taking a Whole System Approach. Community-centred approaches are those that mobilise assets within communities, encourage equity and social connectedness and increase people’s control over their health and lives.

¹⁸ National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre. (2021). A Guide to Asset-Based Community Development.

¹⁹ Local Area Coordination Network. (n.d.). Local Area Coordination.

²⁰ Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 9(1), 36-41.



More vulnerable people are included and participate in society

Beyond SPEs, there is a need for all segments of society, including the government, employers, community organisations, and members of the public, to recognise that they play a significant role in the ecosystem of support to empower vulnerable groups. Ultimately, our aim is for individuals, families, and communities to feel accepted and respected, and be able to participate actively in activities that shape their lives.²¹

How might we encourage the inclusion of vulnerable people in society?

Adopt positive attitudes towards these groups and their needs.



While campaigns such as “See the True Me” for persons with disabilities and “Beyond the Label” for persons with mental health conditions have raised awareness of these groups, more can be done to increase the community’s understanding and inculcate the value of social inclusion, especially among the younger generations who are keen to create meaningful social change.²²

Stakeholders across the people, public and private sectors (including SPEs and the wider community) can actively seek to involve and partner individuals, families, and communities in meaningful ways.



For example, service users can contribute their lived experiences to companies in the design of an everyday product, which would help to increase its usefulness.

Practise inclusive employment.



Employment is valuable not just for financial reasons, but the opportunities it provides for these communities to interact with others, leading to social inclusion and increased psychological well-being. It also promotes independence and self-worth which are important factors that contribute to quality of life.

Enhance public and private infrastructure and facilities²³ to enable vulnerable persons to live, work and play in the community.



For example, additional design features can be incorporated into the community to make the environment more dementia-friendly. Murals depicting scenes from the past can help persons with dementia to reminisce and serve as landmarks to navigate their neighbourhoods more easily.²⁴



²¹ United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs. (2007). Final Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration.

²² Kwek, T. (2019, July 24). How Singapore’s Youth are Changing the Social Sector by Going Beyond Volunteerism. TODAY.

²³ Kersley, R., Rochon, S. & O’Sullivan, M. (2008, December 8). Intangible Infrastructure: The Key to Growth. Credit Suisse Research Institute. Infrastructure can be in tangible forms (physical facilities and systems such as roads, railways, and power stations) or intangible forms (political, legal and socio-economic factors pertaining to human capital and services such as education, healthcare, finance, business services and technology).

²⁴ Yuen, B., Bhuyan, M. R., Močnik, S. & Yap, W. (2020). Six Principles of Dementia-friendly Neighbourhood.

STRATEGIC THRUST 2

**EFFECTIVE & IMPACTFUL
SOCIAL PURPOSE ENTITIES
(SPEs)**



RECOMMENDATIONS

In the next 5 years, the social service sector should...

Build capabilities and strengthen effectiveness

- Strengthen organisational health of SPEs
- Strengthen leadership capabilities and practices across SPEs
 - Enhance board diversity (in skills, expertise, age, gender) and put in place more consistent and formal board training and/or accreditation to professionalise SPEs’ boards
 - Enhance organisation-wide succession planning
- Improve professionalism of staff in SPEs
- Encourage and incentivise SPEs to improve how they are meeting needs through the use of impact measurement and productivity gains

Uplift the value and attractiveness of the sector

- Continue to educate the public, potential job seekers, and social service professionals about careers in the social service sector
- Increase interest in joining the sector as a professional
- Improve talent management, engagement, and retention of sector workforce



SPEs serve with heart and demonstrate professionalism across all levels, backed by robust governance and strong people practices



Develop strategies to prepare for the future (linked to Thrust 4)

- SPEs strengthen their capabilities to plan for the future
- SPEs put in place organisational strategies for the short, mid and longer term

Pursue resource sustainability models on a long-term basis

- SPEs cultivate entrepreneurial capabilities for greater resource sustainability
- SPEs strategise beyond funding cycles
- SPEs use impact measurement and strong organisational health to improve services and organisational outcomes (e.g. bringing in resources)

Foster an environment for SPEs to engage in social innovation

- SPEs improve in applying innovation to service delivery and operational processes
- Set up platforms to encourage ideation and scaling of innovative solutions



SPEs are forward thinking and practise sustainable resourcing

Establish structured collaboration and partnerships between SPEs and other partners (including volunteers) (linked to Thrust 3)

- SPEs form vertical and horizontal networks with a diverse range of stakeholders to achieve common objectives and exchange knowledge
- SPEs review their internal job architecture to better define and establish how different partners can complement their work
- SPEs cultivate sustained partnerships



SPEs collaborate across the sector and beyond to optimise resources and enhance effectiveness

Refer to the 4ST Playbook for ideas and examples on how we might:

- Enhance their capabilities
- Plan and act for the future
- Pursue strategies to improve resource sustainability
- Build meaningful partnerships

How might we know that we are on track to achieving our goal for Strategic Thrust 2?²⁵

- Improved **organisational health of SPEs**, with stronger capabilities in areas including strategy and leadership, governance, people practice, finances, digitalisation, communications and partnerships, and user-centred services.²⁶

Thrust 2 focuses on social purpose entities (SPEs). These are organisations with a social purpose at the core of what they do, where addressing social issues and needs are their main activities.

While the most common SPEs are social service agencies (SSAs), which typically deliver social services to enable and empower individuals, their families, and communities in need, SPEs can also include organisations such as social enterprises, ground-up movements, and private organisations focussing on social purposes, who may not directly deliver services.

In the 4ST (2022-2026), the definition of SPEs has been broadened to capture the diversity of players and their roles in addressing the increasingly complex social issues and needs in the sector.

Our goal for this thrust is to build effective and impactful SPEs by strengthening their organisational capability and capacity, so that in turn, they can generate more social impact.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that SPEs need to be equipped to deal with crises, and they must also be able to meet evolving needs and thrive amidst changing times.²⁷

²⁵ Indicators and targets will be set to facilitate the implementation of efforts under the 4ST (2022-2026).

²⁶ National Council of Social Service. (2022). Organisational Health Framework & Guidebook for Social Services. The Framework and Guidebook can be found at [https://www.ncss.gov.sg/press-room/publications/detail-page/organisational-health-guidebook-for-social-services-\(ohgss\)](https://www.ncss.gov.sg/press-room/publications/detail-page/organisational-health-guidebook-for-social-services-(ohgss)).

²⁷ National Council of Social Service. (2021). *Emerging Stronger Together: A Guide Beyond COVID-19*; National Council of Social Service. (2021). *Taskforce to Launch Guide on Strengthening the Social Service Sector Beyond Covid-19*.



OUTCOMES TO ADVANCE STRATEGIC THRUST 2

SPEs serve with heart and demonstrate professionalism across all levels, backed by robust governance and strong people practices

To grow the effectiveness of SPEs, we need to focus on building leadership, manpower and organisation capabilities. With strong organisational practices and well-supported staff, SPEs will be able to render quality support to the target groups they serve.

SPEs with strong leadership and organisation capabilities:



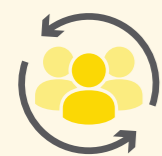
Are led by board members who are diverse in skills, expertise, age, and gender.

These board members should bring different areas of knowledge and experiences into our sector, yet also understand and grasp the intricacies and challenges that are unique to our sector and the individuals, families, and communities that we serve.



Have collective leadership across the board and management, where they work together to better define their roles and responsibilities and to ensure strategic alignment.

This alignment helps to provide greater clarity on the direction of the organisation and the outcomes that it seeks to achieve. Succession planning should also be factored into organisational practices to ensure continuity in leadership and enhance the organisation's ability to pursue longer-term goals.



Have robust governance and strong processes in place to uphold high standards of accountability and compliance, as part of their responsibility towards various stakeholders.

How might SPEs enhance their manpower capabilities?



Put in place good people practices and enabling structures within organisations to create a culture of trust, underscored by strong relationships.



Create a culture of continuous learning and development by providing opportunities to learn from role models and best standards in the sector, training opportunities, and career progression and movement opportunities. This could take place within and across SPEs, or across sectors.



Continuously train, upgrade, and upskill across all levels within SPEs to ensure that they are equipped with relevant skill sets and competencies.

How might we uplift the value and attractiveness of working in the sector?



We should **continue efforts to bring in and retain talent** by educating the public, potential jobseekers and existing professionals about careers in the social service sector, as well as increasing interest in joining the sector. Some ways this can be done include enhancing talent management and staff engagement practices, and conducting public communications on working in the sector.





SPEs are forward thinking and practise sustainable resourcing

SPEs that are future-directed:

- Proactively anticipate and prepare for possible needs in the sector. They plan ahead while being flexible to adapt to changing challenges and environments.
- Use good data and research to guide planning processes.
- Think out of the box and innovate. They experiment with new ideas and continuously improve upon existing practices and processes.
- Adopt sustainable resourcing strategies to consistently support and fulfil their missions²⁸ over the long-term.²⁹

In sustainable resourcing, SPEs:

- Strategise how they acquire, use and manage their resources³⁰ (monetary and non-monetary), so that they can optimise these resources and create the most impact for the organisation.

How might SPEs practise sustainable resourcing?

- Plan for finances beyond existing funding cycles
- Explore new ways to unlock resources, such as by working with new stakeholders
- Enhance the productivity and efficiency of existing processes
- Build capabilities in measuring and articulating the value and impact brought across various levels, to work more effectively with resource providers such as funders who are increasingly keen on results and decisions informed by impact.



SPEs collaborate across the sector and beyond to optimise resources and enhance effectiveness

Why should SPEs actively build meaningful partnerships?

- To benefit service users whose needs may be multi-faceted by addressing their needs more holistically
- To meet organisational needs

How might we do this?



Adopt a collective approach and improve coordination

to enable service users to access their needed support and services quickly, and in a seamless manner.



Tap on volunteers to complement the roles played by sector professionals.³¹

In addition to traditional volunteering activities such as assisting with direct service delivery, this could also include emerging forms of giving such as rallying the general public to support a social cause.



Explore new ways of partnering the private sector by drawing on their expertise, experience, and resources creatively.

For instance, a corporate can offer marketing expertise to an SSA looking to rebrand its corporate website. This is also timely as private sector stakeholders seek out more advanced roles as social partners and adopt more rigorous standards and expectations.



As with all relationships, **SPEs should invest time in fostering close ties and trust with their partners³²**, as well as **strengthen their capabilities in managing volunteers and various types of collaborations.**



²⁸ National Council for Voluntary Organisations. (n.d.). *The Sustainable Sun Tool: Steps to Sustainability*.

²⁹ National Council of Nonprofits. (n.d.). *Nonprofit Sustainability*.

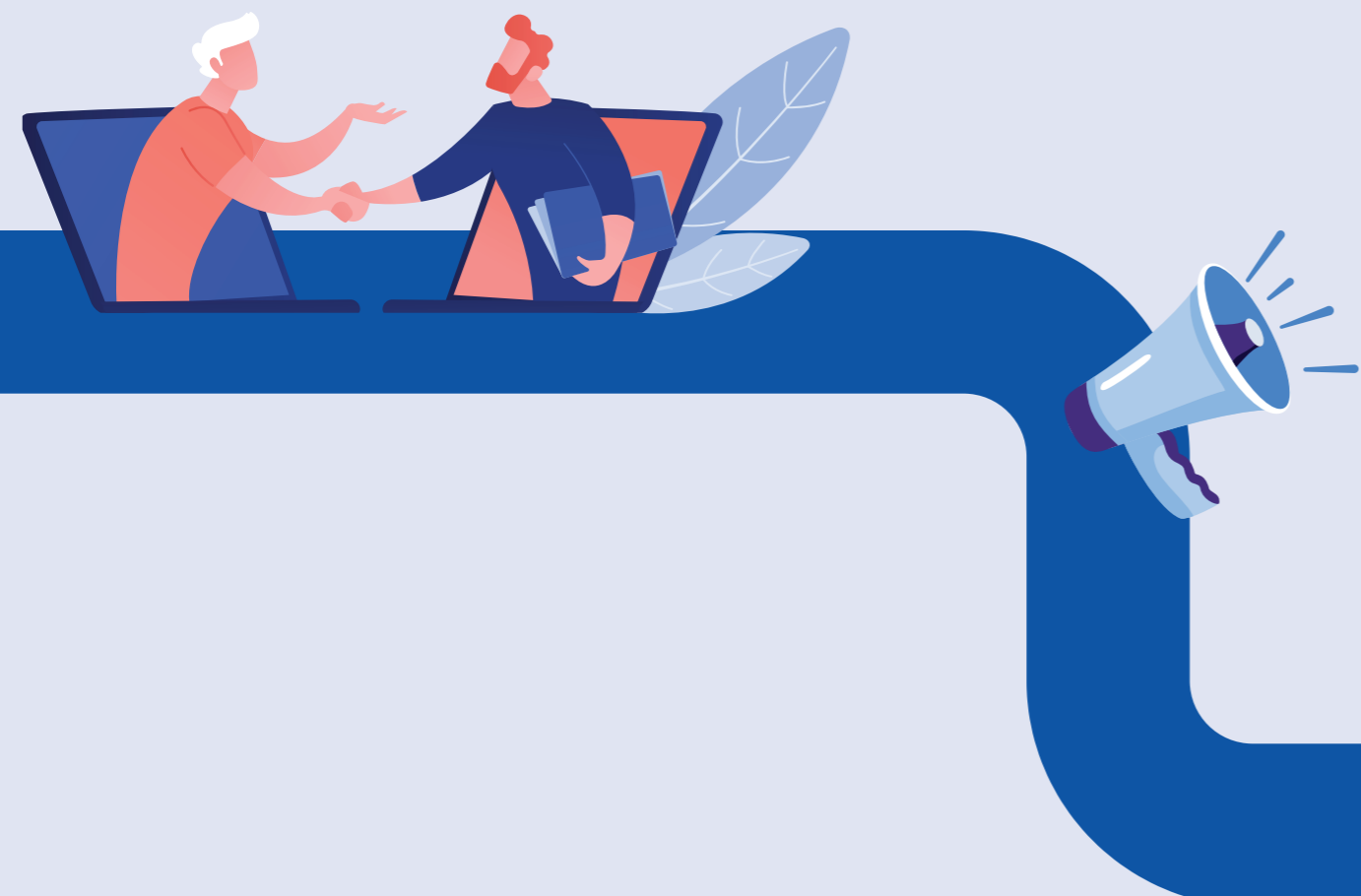
³⁰ National Council for Voluntary Organisations. (n.d.). *Certificate in Financial Sustainability*.

³¹ National Council of Social Service. (2021). *Social Service Sector Survey*. 86% of SSAs surveyed viewed volunteers as essential.

³² National Council of Social Service. (2018). *Social Service Sector Survey*. Most respondents indicated that trust in an SSA was significantly important in their decision to support an SSA.

STRATEGIC THRUST 3

CARING, COLLABORATIVE AND IMPACTFUL SOCIAL SERVICE ECOSYSTEM



RECOMMENDATIONS

In the next 5 years, the social service sector should...

Grow ecosystems within and beyond the sector

- Create platforms for sector professionals to share, network and collaborate
- Form vertical and horizontal networks with a diverse range of stakeholders to achieve common objectives and exchange knowledge
- Establish sustained partnerships between stakeholders in the sector (e.g. SSAs-donors, SSAs-SSAs, SSAs-SEs)
- Establish more issue-based/user need-driven ecosystems
- Foster closer cross-sector integration to align mission, relational and operational objectives

Foster a more conducive environment for collaboration

- Enhance data sharing across the people and public sector for more holistic support of service users and greater efficiency
- Innovate beyond existing resourcing models to encourage collaborative behaviour

Strengthen collaborative capability

- Encourage wider adoption of collaborative practices
- Leverage community, ground-up movements and grassroots to solve social issues
- Develop a strategy to grow more philanthropic entities into strong social partners
- SPEs enhance their capabilities in engaging partners



Strategic and sustainable partnerships are fostered between different sectors and stakeholders for greater impact

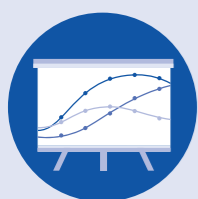


Develop and implement sector-level sustainable resourcing strategy

- Leverage a variety of resources (monetary and non-monetary) effectively to achieve better outcomes
- Set up structures and processes to facilitate the sharing of information and resources across the sector
- Implement new financing instruments to maximise existing monies and unlock new monies for sector
- Rally stakeholders to resource costs for capability-building and overheads, on top of direct service provision
- Deploy trust capital to empower players towards sector goals (e.g. build strong organisational capabilities, spur innovation)
- Enhance impact measurement in the sector by establishing clear criteria to prioritise and measure the efficacy of resources used
- Identify more ways to allocate resources efficiently across the sector

Enhance the sector’s resource management and philanthropic capabilities

- Grow expertise in best philanthropic practices of funders, fund recipients, and enablers
- Encourage resource providers to adopt a long-term and holistic perspective in their practices



Improved diversity and sustainability of resources in the sector

(where resources include money, data, tech tools, systems, space, manpower, skills, time, etc)



Adopt a systems-centred, whole of sector lens in planning

(linked to Thrust 1 and 4)

- Review and initiate plans to better organise the sector
- Convene stakeholders to define roles in solving social issues and develop plans to enhance efficiency in the sector
- Set up processes and structures to facilitate systems-centred practices in the sector
- Identify and reduce structural barriers to collaboration and other sector goals



Sector players take a systems approach to deliver quality, innovative & sustainable solutions and advance sector goals

Refer to the 4ST Playbook for ideas and examples on how we might:

- Build partnerships for greater impact
- Engage in relational, trust-based philanthropy
- Direct resources to areas of greatest need in a sustainable manner
- Effect change at a systems-level

How might we know that we are on track to achieving our goal for Strategic Thrust 3?³³

- **Meaningful partnerships** are fostered on a longer-term basis, involving a greater variety of stakeholders across different sectors (e.g. SPEs-funders, SPEs-SPEs, 3P, across health & social sectors)
- The **use of sector resources is optimised** through more efficient and innovative ways of working
- More **resourcing decisions** are made **based on a longer-term outlook and the use of impact measurement**

Our refreshed goals for this thrust are to generate greater social impact through strategic and longer-term partnerships, and to find more diverse and sustainable ways of fulfilling our missions, underscored by taking a systems approach in what we do.

Ecosystems can be formed across geographical or socio-economic boundaries, or around specific needs or issues. The social service ecosystem comprises people and organisations from the People, Public and Private (3P) sectors who are related by a common objective and social purpose, and work together in a way that reflects a sense of interconnectedness.

The ecosystem perspective in this thrust requires different stakeholders to come together and partner each other to achieve our shared vision for the sector, beyond agency-to-agency

and government-to-agency efforts. While each entity has its own mission, we achieve greater impact by collaborating with and supporting each other.³⁴

In this refreshed 4ST, greater emphasis has been placed on the need for collaboration among different stakeholders such as SPEs, volunteers and funders, as well as across sectors such as social, health and education. We should also think about how we can contribute and leverage a variety of resources (existing and new, monetary and non-monetary) to achieve better and longer-lasting outcomes together.

³³ Indicators and targets will be set to facilitate the implementation of efforts under the 4ST (2022-2026).
³⁴ Bloom, P. N., & Dees, J. G. (2008). Cultivate Your Ecosystem.

OUTCOMES TO ADVANCE STRATEGIC THRUST 3



Strategic and sustainable partnerships are fostered between different sectors and stakeholders for greater impact

When multiple stakeholders combine various strengths, expertise, and perspectives, we can bring about more resources and ideas to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities. Under this outcome, the partnerships envisioned are those that nurture long-term relationships, with clear directions and plans to support common user groups and strive towards shared objectives.

Strategic and sustainable partnerships:



Form vertical and horizontal networks with a diverse range of stakeholders (traditional and new) to achieve common objectives and exchange knowledge. This will enable us to enrich our understanding of each other's interests and needs, so that we may better respond to and work with each other.



Actively seek to involve target groups and other stakeholders in meaningful ways



Are cultivated by mutually respectful and rewarding relationships



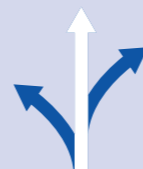
Are centred on **trust, transparency, shared values, and co-creation**; supported by **active, regular and open communication**

How might we achieve this?

- Network with our peers and potential partners. This will help to create more linkages, improve the coordination of existing efforts and identify new possibilities to work together.
- Ensure common understanding of the issues to be addressed and seek out enabling environments for collaboration.
- Put in place incentives and mechanisms to facilitate collaboration, such as through service design and funding structures.
- Match those seeking resources with resource providers, based on information about their needs, gaps and expertise needed; and types of resources available, such as skills, time and money.
- Explore how the sector can be better organised so relevant players can collaborate more efficiently to address complex issues.

One approach that can be more widely embraced by funders and SPEs is philanthropy based on trust and strong relationships. This involves shifting from ad-hoc, short-term giving to strategic, long-term giving. 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. These practices also contribute to the outcome on improving the diversity and sustainability of resources in the sector.

What does philanthropy entail?



Ongoing bilateral communication and long-term, mutually rewarding partnerships that give funders the confidence to offer support such as long-term and flexible funding.



Provision of "trust capital"³⁵ that will empower SPEs to engage in planning based on a longer time horizon, as well as enable SPEs to invest in critical areas to strengthen service delivery and organisation effectiveness.



SPEs and resource providers acknowledge and appreciate the full costs involved in delivering quality social services, which includes general operating costs and capacity building, and strategise their resourcing with these in mind.

Through stronger and more strategic partnerships, we can make better use of limited resources and go further in addressing needs holistically. This will also allow us to maximise our social impact, especially as stakeholders such as funders and donors increasingly seek greater social returns on the resources invested towards social causes.



³⁵ Synergos. (2020). *Funding from a Place of Trust*. "Trust capital" refers to capital provided in a trust-based relationship, which seeks to establish a level playing field between funder and fund recipient and allows for an authentically aligned partnership.



Improved diversity and sustainability of resources in the sector

(where resources include money, data, tech tools, systems, physical space, manpower, skills, time, etc)

We need to access and increase the variety of resources (existing and new, monetary and non-monetary) used in our sector, in ways that enhance our abilities to pursue strategic goals and better outcomes. Ideally, resources are planned and invested for the present, the mid-term (two to three years) and the longer-term (five years and beyond). Besides managing the use of these resources to meet needs and grow the sector, more critically, we should ensure that resources are directed to areas of greatest need in a sustainable manner.

How might we achieve this?



Ensure existing resources are used efficiently and effectively, and unlock new resources.

This can be done through sharing, aggregation, better planning, increased productivity, as well as the use of innovative social provisioning models and financing instruments.



Structured collaboration and partnerships mentioned in the previous outcome can propel such efforts, as can a **willingness to challenge old ways of thinking** and **actively seek out good ideas to improve outcomes**.



SPEs can enhance data collection and management practices to enable more precise identification and analyses of needs, and allow transparent sharing of data with key stakeholders like funders.

This will allow funders to have a more accurate understanding of the needs on the ground and gain confidence in providing longer-term support.



Place greater focus on impact as funders and fund recipients.

- Have clear criteria to prioritise the use of resources
- Apply these criteria to evaluate the efficacy of resources used and make decisions³⁶

These will help grow philanthropic expertise and practices in the sector.



Coordinate the demand and supply of resources more carefully across ecosystems and the sector.

For example, a directory hosted on a shared platform could facilitate the matching of those seeking resources with resource providers, based on information about their needs and types of resources available, such as expertise, time and money.

³⁶ Butte-Dahl, J. (2020). Philanthropic Best Practices for Companies in 2021.



Sector players take a systems approach to deliver quality, innovative & sustainable solutions and advance sector goals

In systems thinking³⁷, we recognise the linkages between different parties and activities, and think about how our actions will interact with other parties and activities connected to us³⁸, such as service users, programmes run by another SPE, government policies and the wider community. Different parties and effects can reinforce or counter each other's goals and interests.

Quality, innovative and sustainable solutions create positive³⁹, long-lasting changes that significantly improve service users' quality of life, through actions such as more widespread empowerment practices, process improvements, enhancing service and resourcing models, and building capabilities across various levels.

How might we generate such solutions and effect change at a systems-level?

Adopt the right mindsets and take greater ownership in social change.

- Put in place systems and cultures that will encourage stakeholders to interact more closely and gain exposure to different viewpoints.
- Provide more opportunities to build relationships and exchange knowledge.
- Step up to lead and initiate change for the communities we support, beyond our respective organisations.

Uphold standards and improve practices in the sector.

- Establish criteria and mechanisms to uphold sector standards, which can be applied to develop quality players in the sector.
- Put in place incentives and mechanisms to encourage improved practices and outcomes across various levels, such as within individual entities or subsectors.

Create more favourable conditions to nurture desired sector behaviours.

- Identify and reduce structural barriers to sector goals. This can be done through means like policies, processes, and the use of levers.

For example, the 3P sectors could transform service and resourcing models together to offer greater flexibility in implementation and better cater to different user profiles. Such approaches can also promote more innovation and facilitate collaboration.

At the end of the day, it is about taking an end-to-end approach in considering strategies and resources, rather than looking at entities, functions, and supports individually.⁴⁰ For example, when we make decisions pertaining to one group of service users, we should also think about whether the change may affect other stakeholders and ways of working, such as how SPEs serving multiple groups of service users may have to adjust their internal processes and use of resources to respond to this change.

³⁷ Acaroglu, L. (2017). Tools for Systems Thinkers: The 6 Fundamental Concepts of Systems Thinking; Gopal, S., Secondo, D. & Kane, R. (2017). Systems Thinking: A View from the Trenches. Stanford Social Innovation Review.

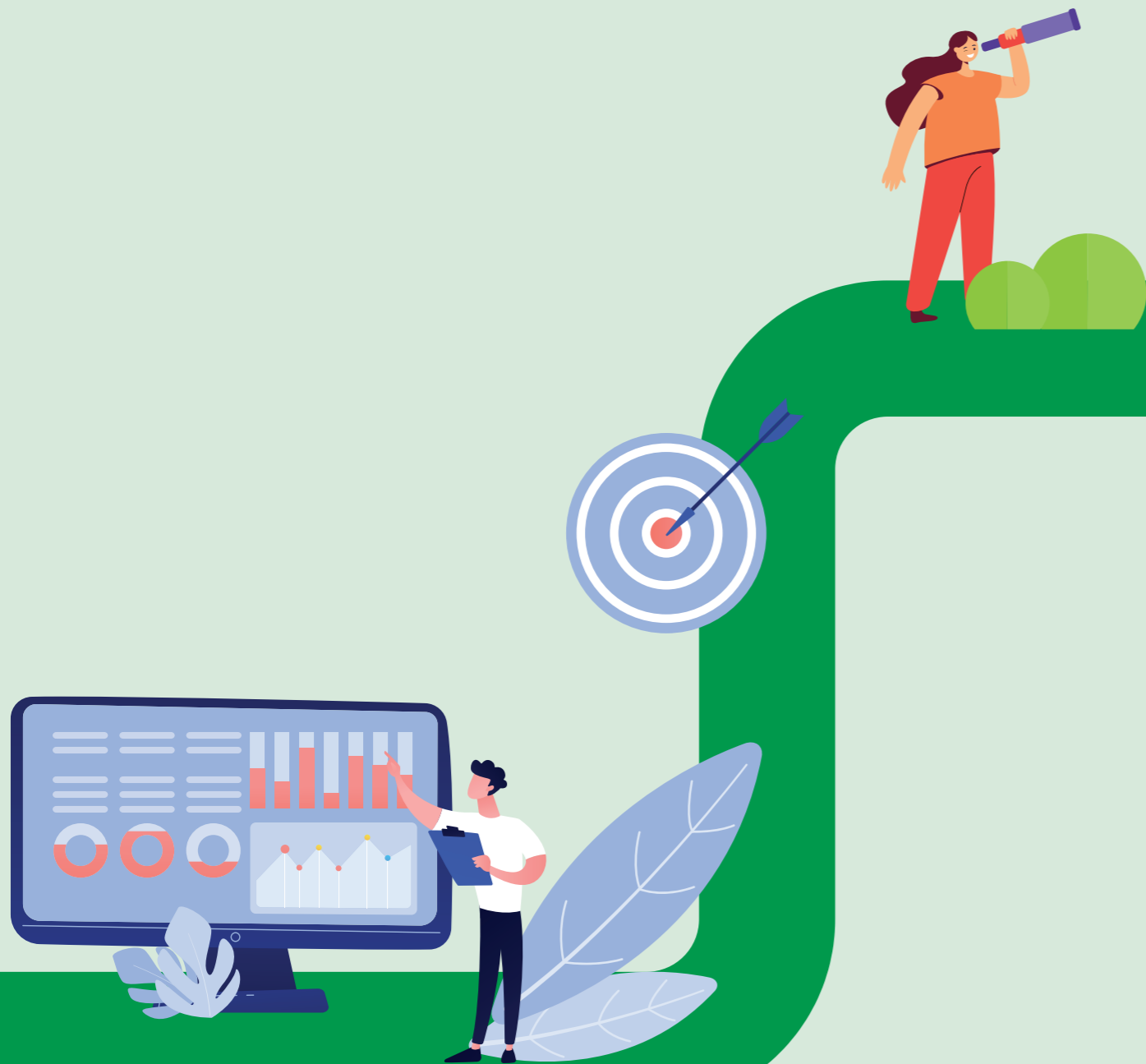
³⁸ Lutkevich, B. (n.d.). Systems Thinking.

³⁹ National University of Singapore. (2019). *Doing Good in Singapore Part 2 – Resourcing for the Future*.

⁴⁰ Lutkevich, B. (n.d.). Systems Thinking.

STRATEGIC THRUST 4

**FUTURE-DIRECTED
SOCIAL SERVICE SECTOR**



RECOMMENDATIONS

In the next 5 years, the social service sector should...

Implement innovative solutions to achieve sector goals

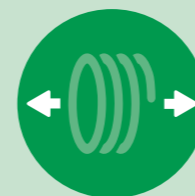
- Grow culture of experimentation and learning
- Explore if a proportion of the sector's resources should be ringfenced for experimental initiatives
- Identify and adjust service and funding models that need a longer runway to ascertain efficacy, and put in place post-pilot commitments, where necessary



The social service sector experiments to develop quality, innovative & sustainable solutions

Enhance strategic planning to better manage future challenges

- Use data and research to attain better outcomes
- Establish sector level risk management and business continuity plan (BCP) practices
- Conduct foresight, horizon scanning studies to plan for the future
- Identify common platforms and tools that can be tapped on by different SPEs



The social service sector is well-positioned for the future

Apply person-centred practices to digital products and services

- Leverage a suite of technology platforms and enablers to meet needs more seamlessly
- Equip vulnerable groups with relevant skill sets and resources to benefit from digital products and services
- Develop digital products and services with users to ensure they are inclusive

Enable data sharing across stakeholders in sector

- Aggregate and connect existing databases and knowledge
- Create a common data taxonomy for the sector
- Establish clear policies and guidelines on data-related issues such as protection, cyber security, ownership, sharing, access, roles and responsibilities
- Improve sector capabilities in collection and management of data

Improve digital maturity of SPEs

- Increase adoption of digital solutions in SPEs
- Develop pipeline of digital talent and equip sector professionals with relevant digital skills



A digitally-enabled and data-driven social service sector

Refer to the 4ST Playbook for ideas and examples on how we might:

- Cultivate an entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit in the sector
- Position our sector well for the future
- Empower individuals, families, and communities with the use of digital tools and data

How might we know that we are on track to achieving our goal for Strategic Thrust 4?⁴¹

- Greater use of **strategic planning**⁴² at entity- and sector-level to inform key decisions, set priorities and implement efforts to enhance effectiveness
- More **experimental initiatives with positive results** that are **replicated or mainstreamed**
- Improvement in **Digital Acceleration Index (DAI)** at entity- and sector- level
More SPEs **use data centralised across people and public sectors to facilitate support of service users**

⁴¹ Indicators and targets will be set to facilitate the implementation of efforts under the 4ST (2022-2026).
⁴² The Bridgespan Group. (n.d.). Strategic Planning.

Our intention is for the efforts under this thrust to help the other thrusts move forward so that ultimately, we can achieve our 4ST vision.

Accelerating change and complexity opens up new possibilities, and some thinking and practices of today may not align with our desired tomorrow. Thus, we need to continuously learn and unlearn, and reposition ourselves to operate within emerging paradigms. This includes making better use of data and technology, and planning for the longer-term.

This new thrust therefore forms the mainstay of the 4ST (2022-2026). The outcomes in this thrust reflect a system-centric view⁴³, where we appreciate that actions in the social service sector are carried out as a whole system, as well as in its constituent parts.⁴⁴ This view also recognises interdependence between players, and the need for trusting relationships, enabling structures and processes to generate change across different levels.

“There needs to be more clarity and forward thinking about how global movements will impact us.”

– Participant in 4ST small group discussions⁴⁵

To prepare for these changes, we need to cultivate the right mindsets. This journey will not be smooth sailing. We need to be prepared to handle obstacles that crop up along the way while embracing the opportunity to develop new capabilities and seek out good ideas regardless of origin.⁴⁶ Leaders play a crucial role in guiding their organisations through such ventures by exemplifying these traits and shaping organisational culture.



⁴³ Acaroglu, L. (2017). Tools for Systems Thinkers: The 6 Fundamental Concepts of Systems Thinking; Gopal, S., Secondo, D. & Kane, R. (2017). Systems Thinking: A View from the Trenches. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.
⁴⁴ Bar-Yam, Y. (2011). *Concepts: System Perspective*. New England Complex Systems Institute.
⁴⁵ These engagements were held with social service agency leaders and sector professionals, as well as representatives from other agencies closely involved in the social service sector.
⁴⁶ Smet, A. D., Gagnon, C. & Mygatt, E. (2021, March 1). Organizing for the Future: Nine Keys to Becoming a Future-ready Company. *McKinsey & Company*.

OUTCOMES TO ADVANCE STRATEGIC THRUST 4

The social service sector experiments to develop quality, innovative & sustainable solutions

As needs evolve in the sector, challenges in addressing these needs will undoubtedly emerge. These challenges present us with opportunities to find ways to address them.

The good practices in the sector today were achieved through the courage of those who dared to accept new paradigms, and are often a result of their perseverance when they did not succeed at first. Having a mindset of embracing challenges, coupled with a willingness to fail and learn from those experiences, will spur us to find better solutions for today and tomorrow.

How might we cultivate an entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit in the sector?



Experiment more, reflect more, and share wisdom gained from such experiences more actively with others; so that they may be encouraged to embark on such journeys themselves – to find creative ways of tackling issues while considering lessons from past failures.



Challenge existing ways of thinking through questioning and engaging in innovative practices.

These could include testing out a different service model to respond to the changing needs and preferences of service users, or building a strategy to tackle an emerging area of concern.

Not all attempts will succeed, but each attempt will bring us closer to a better answer.



Identify and adjust service and funding models that need a longer runway to ascertain efficacy, and **put in place post-pilot commitments** to ensure a smooth transition to a stable state such as scaling up.

This is because some changes may require a longer time to produce observable results, and some models need to be continually adjusted as they are rolled out, especially in new areas or needs being addressed.



Foster a culture of learning by:

- Dedicating resources towards higher-risk, more experimental initiatives
- Working with stakeholders who are more willing to participate and invest in new initiatives that may fail

Such experiments could be scoped within safer boundaries like sandboxes.

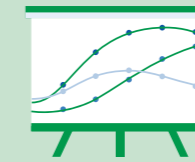
The social service sector is well-positioned for the future

Being well-positioned for the future requires foresight and the ability to act upon it. At the same time, many issues in the social service sector are difficult to define as they may involve multiple stakeholders, and there is often no single “right” answer.

How might we position our sector well for the future?



Dedicate adequate resources to planning and development work



Develop and implement strategies to manage risks and emerging issues



Plan for the longer term at the entity- and sector-levels, and organise ourselves more effectively



Continuously learn, adapt and innovate for better outcomes

– be it in how service users are supported, how individual and organisation capabilities are strengthened, or how we create impact collectively



Go wide and deep

- Look at the world and at emerging situations more broadly
- Appreciate needs and changes more deeply through research and data

Why is it important to think and act for the future?

- Thinking about the future can help us to better anticipate needs in advance, and therefore provide us with the flexibility to respond and adapt to disruptions and changes over time. This will ensure that our sector does not stagnate, but instead remains relevant and becomes more resilient, including to shocks and disruptions such as the recent global pandemic.
- Greater awareness of driving forces beyond the social service sector and our local context allows us to consider implications more rigorously across different levels – national, sectoral, organisational leadership, and individual.

A digitally-enabled and data-driven social service sector

In the vision for a digital-first Singapore, technology effects transformation for better lives in the way we work, live and play.⁴⁷ In the context of the 4ST, technology can empower vulnerable groups and facilitate the work in the systems supporting them.⁴⁸

How might we empower individuals, families, and communities with the use of digital tools and data?



Remain person-centred

For example,

- Digital products and services should be developed together with users to ensure they are inclusive
- Individuals, families, and communities should be equipped with the right skill sets and resources to benefit from digital products and services.

Such efforts are not limited to the social service sector.



Balance “high-tech” and “high-touch” in service delivery

While some service users are increasingly tech-savvy, others may face challenges in accessing and using technology.

We need:

- To rethink how we can tap on new digital capabilities⁴⁹ to maintain strong relationships with service users, and to improve service users’ experiences and outcomes.
- To leverage technology platforms and enablers to meet needs seamlessly
- Infrastructure to accelerate our digital strategies



SPEs need to:

- Build a strong digital foundation for efficient and resilient operations
- Make progressive and effective use of technology to enhance their digital maturity

In addition, data and analytics are assets that can help us to make informed decisions about operations, policies, planning and innovation. Greater data sharing and service integration can also contribute to more holistic support for service users and efficiency. This can be achieved through:

- A common data taxonomy and single source of truth in the sector
- All agencies involved in supporting the same users having visibility of the other services that the users are accessing
- Clear policies, guidelines, models and frameworks on data-related issues such as protection, cyber security, ownership, sharing, access, roles and responsibilities

⁴⁷ Smart Nation Singapore. (2022). Transforming Singapore Through Technology.

⁴⁸ National Council of Social Service. (2021). Social Service Sector Survey. Digitalisation was rated by SSAs as the biggest upcoming opportunity.

⁴⁹ Dörner, K. & Edelman, D. (2015, July 1). What ‘Digital’ Really Means. McKinsey & Company.

CONCLUSION

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The strategic thrusts and outcomes in this roadmap, refreshed with the participation of stakeholders in the sector, serve as a guide for us to generate greater impact in our 4ST journey.

Every player in the ecosystem must take action to sustain this collective process and achieve social change. This refreshed 4ST calls for active participation and a spirit of collaboration and learning among all of us.

Expanding upon the collective impact approach first articulated in the 4ST (2017-2021), the 4ST (2022-2026) roadmap will be complemented by implementation plans that the social service sector will design and carry out together. Initiatives co-created through this process will be led by a variety of sector stakeholders who will contribute different strengths, build upon existing efforts, nurture budding ideas, and sow the seeds for future iterations of the 4ST. To support change in the sector, the 4ST Playbook curates concrete steps for different stakeholders to lead the refreshed 4ST forward. It will be updated over time as ideas and efforts materialise.

Some of us will play the role of champions who pave the way for others, by taking on new endeavours or advocating for society to pay more attention to certain issues. Some of us will be conveners, who bring together different partners to solve specific problems. Others will be capacity builders, who,

through providing resources and expertise, will be able to raise sector capability and push boundaries for new solutions.

It is important to acknowledge that there are, and will be, barriers to implementing this roadmap, such as gaps in capability, inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and fixed mindsets. We should thus be mindful of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that could affect our progress and seek to minimise them.

At the same time, there are catalysts that will propel us towards success, such as open minds, foresights gleaned from data, and the drive to constantly innovate and improve for the future. In addition, some of the possibilities envisaged in this roadmap will not happen without a willingness to take on risk – to venture into new spaces – and the openness of hearts and minds of joining forces across and beyond the social service sector.

Regardless of the role we play, it is crucial for all of us to see this next five-year journey as collaborative and dynamic, intentional in effort, and to be open to new opportunities and ideas. It is through our passion and collective action that we will be able to realise the 4ST vision of **“every person empowered to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society”**.

ANNEX A: GLOSSARY

Asset-based approach

An asset-based approach makes visible and values the skills, knowledge, connections and potential. It promotes capacity, connectedness and social capital, and seeks to meet needs while nurturing the strengths and resources of people and communities. Individuals, families, and communities have assets which they can contribute to solve social challenges and promote better outcomes.

Community

A group that shares something in common, such as experiences, interests, and values. Communities can be united across geographical or socio-economic boundaries and are linked by networks.

Empowerment

The expansion of assets and capabilities of people in vulnerabilities such that they may participate in, negotiate with, influence, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.⁵⁰

Future-directed

Being future-directed means seeking to meet the needs of today while taking action to remain relevant for tomorrow and beyond. This requires us to be adaptable, think about different possibilities and develop new capabilities through learning and innovation, among other qualities.

Inclusive society

An inclusive society embraces diversity and is a society for all. It is equipped with mechanisms that will allow one to

feel accepted, respected and involved in meaningful ways. Individuals living in such a society are able to access information, infrastructure and facilities and have opportunities to participate in activities that shape their lives.⁵¹

Person-centredness

A person-centred approach values individuals as persons first and places them at the heart of everything.

It operates on the belief that an individual has the capacity to understand, articulate and work through his or her problems and make decisions on how to overcome them.

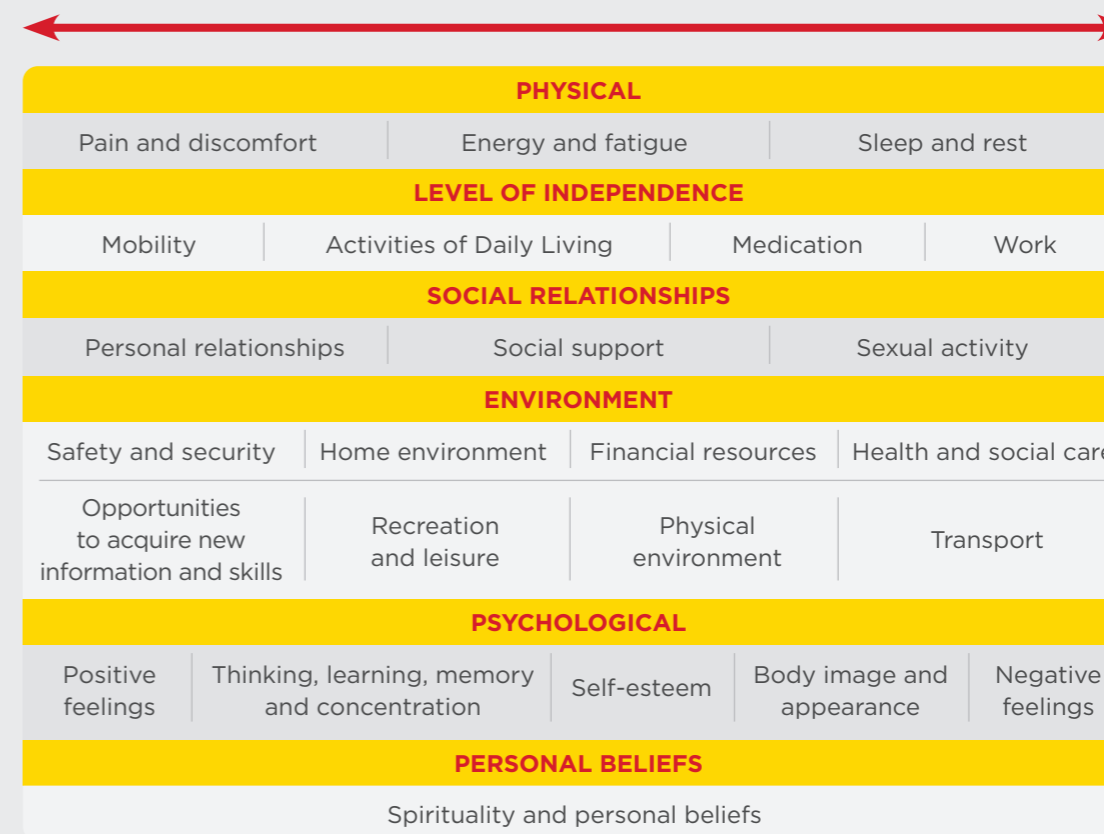
It sees users as necessary partners that collaborate with professionals and others, and recognises that the ecosystem (which includes the family) plays an instrumental role in supporting the person.

Finally, person-centredness looks different for everyone as support is tailored to users' needs, as well as their unique circumstances and preferences.

Quality of Life

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Quality of Life as "individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns".⁵² As an example of what constitutes Quality of Life, the WHO Quality of Life framework (Figure 1) details the various aspects of life that contribute to the overall well-being of a person. By applying this framework, NCSS has uncovered how vulnerable persons perceive their quality of life and identified linkages and areas that can contribute to improving their quality of life.

FIGURE 1: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION QUALITY OF LIFE FRAMEWORK



Resource sustainability

A resource sustainable organisation, ecosystem or sector can consistently support and deliver its mission, making the most of changing environments. In the social or nonprofit context, it refers to the ability to fulfil a mission over the long-term.

The objective is to reduce exposure to risk while increasing the ability to pursue strategic goals. This involves approaches that will best enable one to achieve a mission, effective planning and management, and flexibility. Besides drawing upon different ecosystems and their parts, it is also imperative to make decisions about resourcing with longer-

term implications in mind, as well as to consider the importance of ethics, organisational values, and culture.

Sustainable resourcing strategies therefore examine all ways in which resources are acquired and consider how resources are used and managed optimally. The aim is that resources work harder, more resources are drawn in, and resources get to where they are most needed; thus creating the most impact.

Social purpose entities (SPEs)

Organisations with social purpose at the core of what they do. Their major activity is addressing social issues and needs, and how they do so is not limited to direct service delivery.

⁵⁰ World Bank, (2002). Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook.

⁵¹ United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs. (2007). Final Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration.

⁵² World Health Organization. (2012). The World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL).

Social service ecosystem

An ecosystem refers to the broader context in which an entity operates. It is made up of all the relevant players in that space and the environmental conditions that affect, or have the potential to influence, the entity's impact on others.

In the social service ecosystem (Figure 2), people are seen as part of a larger system of individuals and organisations functioning with a social purpose. These players belong to the People, Public and Private sectors and their actions have consequences for the entire system. The well-being of the system is also affected by environmental conditions such as demographics, regulations, the economy and culture.

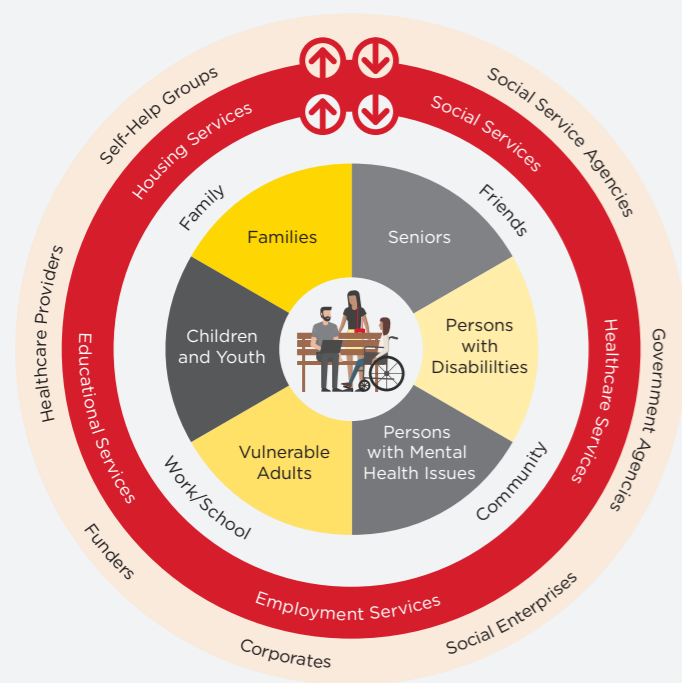
People with the ecosystem perspective see everyone as interconnected, with relationships underpinning how the ecosystem functions:

- A system and its functions are linked by a common purpose or goal.
- All parts provide support to each other while retaining their own mission and goal.
- What happens to one part of the system has implications on others and the system as a whole.
- At the same time, ecosystems can be fluid and dynamic – parts can enter and exit an ecosystem, through the formation and dissolution of connections.

Systems approach

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.

FIGURE 2: SOCIAL SERVICE ECOSYSTEM



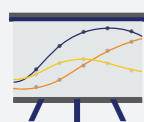
ANNEX B: 4ST (2017-2021)

EVERY PERSON EMPOWERED TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY IN A CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY



ANNEX C: METHODOLOGY

A consultative approach was used to refresh the sector's shared goals and outcomes. Stakeholders across the People, Public and Private sectors were involved in identifying key issues, developing ideas, and strengthening recommendations to shape the social service sector's future.



Under the guidance of the 4ST Steering Committee, efforts undertaken under the previous roadmap and driving forces that were likely to affect the social service sector in the next few years were studied.⁵³



These were used to kickstart engagements with sector stakeholders to gain clarity on important issues to address in the sector.



Specific topics were examined more deeply to understand challenges and opportunities. Ideas were generated for implementation, which were then translated into the new strategic thrusts, outcomes, and playbook.



Discussions were held to plan how the next 4ST roadmap would be implemented, which included conceptualising specific initiatives and identifying partners for implementation.

The process drew on insights from multiple sources:

Research and data

- Surveys with service users, social service agencies, social funders, sector partners and the general public
- Literature on local and overseas practices

Interviews and small group discussions⁵⁴

- In-depth interviews with 18 leaders from the People, Public and Private sectors
- Small group discussions with more than 90 social service agency leaders and professionals

Social Service Summit⁵⁵

- Large-scale deep dive into specific sector issues and areas for exploration, conducted through breakout sessions on:
 - Future of service delivery for user empowerment
 - Sector leadership – Defining social purpose entities of the future
 - Sector leadership – High tech X high touch
 - Partnerships in the sector – Exploring collaborations and competition
- Participants included over 130 representatives from social service agencies, social enterprises, public agencies, and corporates

⁵³ Ideas were also distilled from the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce, a Singapore Together Alliance for Action set up in 2020 to provide guidance to the sector in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify directions for the sector post-pandemic. The Taskforce released a guide for the sector which can be found at <https://www.ncss.gov.sg/docs/default-source/ncss-publications-doc/pdfdocument/emerging-stronger-together-guide.pdf>.

⁵⁴ A summary of the insights from these engagements can be found at <https://www.ncss.gov.sg/press-room/publications/detail-page/the-road-ahead-for-the-social-service-sector>.

⁵⁵ A summary of the insights from these discussions can be found at https://www.ncss.gov.sg/docs/default-source/ncss-publications-doc/final-ebrochure-2_summit-insights.pdf.

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ANNEX E: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Steering Committee and Secretariat would like to express our deepest gratitude to the organisations and individuals who contributed their time, effort and wisdom to this roadmap. We hope that it reflects the sector's renewed aspiration for every person to be empowered to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society.

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Ms Chew Seow Chien

Partner, Bain & Company

Mr Chew Sutat

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Vice-Chairman, Community Chest

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Mr Seah Chin Siong

Chairman, National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)
President & CEO, Singapore Institute of Management

Mr Eugene Seow

Board Member, NCSS
Partner, E3TWENTY

Mr Martin Tan

Board Member, NCSS
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CEO, Yayasan MENDAKI

Leaders from the People, Public and Private sectors who participated in in-depth interviews

Public sector

Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies

Mr Chew Hock Yong Permanent Secretary, Social and Family Development (until 31 March 2022)
Permanent Secretary, Home Affairs Development

Mr Stanley Loh Second Permanent Secretary, Social and Family Development (until 31 March 2022)
Permanent Secretary (Development), Foreign Affairs
Second Permanent Secretary (Special Duties), Prime Minister's Office
Permanent Secretary (Sustainability and the Environment) (from 1 April 2022)

Mr Ng How Yue Permanent Secretary (Health Development), Health

Mrs Tan Ching Yee Permanent Secretary, Finance
Permanent Secretary (Special Duties), Prime Minister's Office

Mr Janadas Devan Deputy Secretary (Communications), Prime Minister's Office
Chief of Government Communications, Ministry of Communications and Information



People and private sectors

Mr Chew Sutat	Chairman, Caregivers Alliance Limited; Vice-Chairman, Community Chest
Ms Ivy Choo	Head, Changi Foundation
Ms Sharon Eng	Head, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability, Maybank Singapore
Ms Goh Swee Chen	President, Global Compact Network Singapore (GCNS)
Ms Theresa Goh	Member, Singapore Institute of Directors Governing Council
Mr Hsieh Fu Hua	Chair, SBF Foundation
Ms Lee Huay Leng	Editor-in-Chief, Chinese Media Group, Singapore Press Holdings
Mr Jimmy Ong	Vice President, Global Public Affairs (Corporate Citizenship), Citibank Singapore
Dr Thang Leng Leng	President, Fei Yue Family Service Centre Management Committee & Member, Fei Yue Community Services Management Committee
Mr Wan Chee-Foong	Board Chairman, SHINE Children & Youth Services
Ms Wee Wei Ling	Executive Director of Sustainability Partnerships, Lifestyle and Asset, Pan Pacific Hotels Group
Ms Wong Su-Yen	Chairman, Singapore Institute of Directors

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