

THE ROAD AHEAD FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICE SECTOR

In preparation for the refresh of the Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST), a five-year road map for the sector, we are partnering with the public, private and people sectors to re-imagine possibilities for the future.

We are at the start of the journey. Read on to find out what we have discovered from our research and engagement sessions.



INSIGHTS TO KICK-START OUR JOURNEY

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed gaps in our sector's preparedness and our agility to respond to a crisis situation. Social purpose entities have to change the way they operate and deliver social services.

Here are some thought starters we used to explore how we might better equip the social service ecosystem to meet changing social needs:



As user needs change and expectations towards service delivery increase, what is the **future of user empowerment and service delivery**?



With a changing workforce and the evolving needs of the sector, how might we **strengthen sector capability across all levels**?



With greater emphasis on the use of data and digital transformation, how might these **enable the sector** to achieve its desired outcomes?



How might we **create and sustain** a more enabling ecosystem?



EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

TRENDS



CHANGING/ SHIFTING SOCIAL NEEDS

- Societal issues may increase in diversity and complexity
- **Demographic changes** (e.g. ageing population, smaller family units)
- Issues that **emerge** or are **exacerbated due to COVID-19** (e.g. mental health)
- **Greater attention to social issues typically less discussed** as a result of globalisation
- **Changes to the economy** (e.g. shrinking middle class), which may lead to downstream social issues



SHIFTING EXPECTATIONS IN SERVICE DELIVERY

- Improved user experience through **integrated care**
- Growing desire for users to **voice their opinions and state their preferences**
- Sector dynamics to be more **user-driven** than provider-driven
- **Growing willingness to seek help** for some needs



EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

AREAS TO EXPLORE IN THE NEXT 4ST



EMPOWERMENT

- Provide **choices in services** to users
- Have clear **operating models** that encourage the adoption of empowerment practices
- **Equip professionals** with skills to adopt empowerment practices
- Strike a **balance between user preferences and constraints** faced by service providers
- Strike a **balance between the responsibilities of the individuals and other entities** in the community
- Measure **adoption level and impact of empowerment practices**



TECH AS AN ENABLER IN SERVICE

- Offer **choices on both physical & virtual platforms** to service users
- Use of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** for smart division of work
 - Free up professionals to focus on intervention that tech cannot replace
 - Balance productivity with efficacy derived from human touch
- Improve **digital literacy** of service users and professionals to access virtual info and support systems more easily



APPROACH TO DELIVERY

- Continue efforts to tackle **long-standing issues** (e.g. financial support, access to services, employment, societal inclusion) faced by individuals and families needing support
- Make service delivery more **person-centric**, especially when considering the complex needs of diverse user profiles
- Detect needs early and put in place **preventive measures**
- Innovate services quickly to **respond to and anticipate trends**
- **Harness resources** across different stakeholders to tackle multi-faceted issues
- Proactively **learning** from past experiences, and adopting overseas and local best practices



FUNDING AS A LEVER

- **Review and structure service and funding models to facilitate sector goals** (e.g. empowerment practices, collaboration)



IMPROVING SECTOR CAPABILITY

TRENDS



CHANGING WORKFORCE, EVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

- Need to increase manpower efficiency and maximise limited resources
- Changing demographics of workers with different expectations
- Individuals with diverse skill sets joining the sector
- Gaps in strategic HR, business process redesign, digital skills, project management and volunteer management



IMPROVING SECTOR CAPABILITY

AREAS TO EXPLORE IN THE NEXT 4ST



SECTOR PROFESSIONALS

Employee skills

- Equip staff with **relevant skills** (e.g. digital marketing, comms, IT, digital fundraising)
- Strengthen **supervisory skills and practices** to manage increasingly complex service users' needs
- Develop/strengthen competencies in **strategic thinking, crisis management and leadership**
- **Expand existing competency frameworks** to more roles

Organisation development

- Improve **staff wellbeing and welfare**
- **Change management** - Equip whole organisation with right tools, skills and mindsets to keep up with changing times
- **Build resilience and agility into the leadership pipeline**
- Increase **alignment within and across SSAs**



BOARD LEADERSHIP

- Promote **greater diversity**
- Find the **right composition** (backgrounds, expertise, perspectives)
- Strengthen **leadership capabilities**



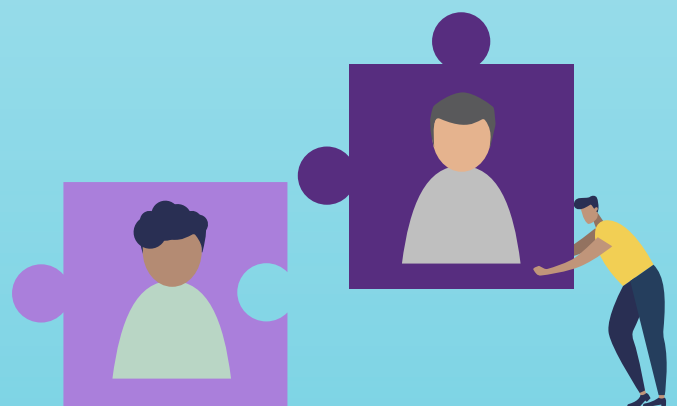
VOLUNTEERS & STRATEGIC PARTNERS

- Grow volunteer pool by **tapping on service users, seniors**
- **Leverage new volunteering trends** (e.g. skills-based/virtual/micro volunteering)
- **Retain existing volunteers and convert ad hoc volunteers** to regular ones
- Use **skilled volunteers** to complement professional work
- Leverage **community and ground-up movements** to meet organisation's and service users' needs more effectively
- **Partner strategically** with corporate or other entities to tap on their expertise



SECTOR CAPABILITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

- **Encourage rotation of talent** in the ecosystem more freely
- Provide **greater, long-term support for corporate functions** (e.g. common manpower pool, higher quality consultants who understand sector needs)
- Continue **professionalising the sector**
- **Empower SSAs to identify their own areas of need and improvement** with tools (e.g. Digital Readiness Self-Assessment Checklist)



LEVERAGING DATA & DIGITALISATION

TRENDS



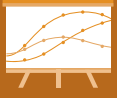
TECHNOLOGY

- Accelerated digital transformation in service delivery
- Facilitated outreach to new service users who previously faced challenges accessing services in-person
- Increased utilisation of new technology (e.g. predictive AI) with data to identify and reach out proactively to those who need help



LEVERAGING DATA & DIGITALISATION

AREAS TO EXPLORE IN THE NEXT 4ST



USE OF DATA

Research/data sharing

- Increase sharing of research findings and data within the sector to help SSAs better detect needs and address gaps, improve coordination
- Facilitate more research in understanding the impact of technology on service users
- Sharing of best practices across different sub-sectors
- Continuously review data security and privacy concerns



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Diversity of digital solutions

- Customise digital solutions to different needs (e.g. scale of operations, current capabilities)
- Establish common digital platforms that all SSAs can tap on
- Consider accessibility and user-friendliness of digital tools to support those in need, and for social service professionals

Supporting professionals in their work

- Recruit committed professionals with tech expertise
- Augment manpower with the use of technology (e.g. robots), coupled with job redesign and staff reskilling and redeployment



ENABLING THE ECOSYSTEM

TRENDS



CHANGING FUNDERS AND DONORS' EXPECTATIONS AND BEHAVIOUR

- New forms of giving (e.g. online giving)
- Greater interest and involvement by corporates
- Diversion of resources to other sectors
- Overall drop in non-government funding for the sector



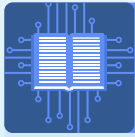
GROWING AWARENESS OF SOCIAL ISSUES

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



ENABLING THE ECOSYSTEM

AREAS TO EXPLORE IN THE NEXT 45T



FUNDING & RESOURCE SUSTAINABILITY

Funding models and structure

- Review funding support for corporate headcounts
- Review current funding models and guidelines to encourage collaboration, empowerment and effective use of resources
- Support SSAs to reconsider business models (e.g. partnering with corporates, other income-generating activities)
- Examine the future of philanthropy

Resource optimisation

- Explore ways to optimise resources (e.g. money, space, manpower)

Managing expectations and requirements of funders

- Improve measurement and articulation of impact
- Improve mutual understanding of funders' and fundees' work and



PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Harnessing strengths of partners

- Review roles of different players in the ecosystem to identify how to leverage unique strengths to balance out weaknesses and mitigate risks
- Consider how existing players can better work with corporates, social tech businesses, art-related groups, ground-up movements, etc.
- Help different players to navigate the sector and collaborate
- Develop alliances amongst key stakeholders for cross-cutting issues

Creating a more conducive environment for collaboration

- Steer existing platforms and initiatives to facilitate collaboration
- Manage tension between collaboration (to better serve users, leverage each other's resources) and competition (same resources, target groups, opportunities)
- Establish common goals across the sector to unite stakeholders
- Greater use of levers to incentivise collaboration





**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE
SOCIAL SERVICE SUMMIT 2021!**



<https://go.gov.sg/summit2021-about-4st-infographic>

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
THE SOCIAL SERVICE SECTOR
STRATEGIC THRUSTS (4ST)**



<https://go.gov.sg/summit-pre-reads-infographic>

**READ UP ON OTHER
SUMMIT MATERIALS**