

Chapter 6

Ethics, Accountability and Stewardship in Social Service Organisations

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

1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Symbiotic Relationship Between Stakeholders in the Social Service Sector

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

This network comprises stakeholders, which includes:

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

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

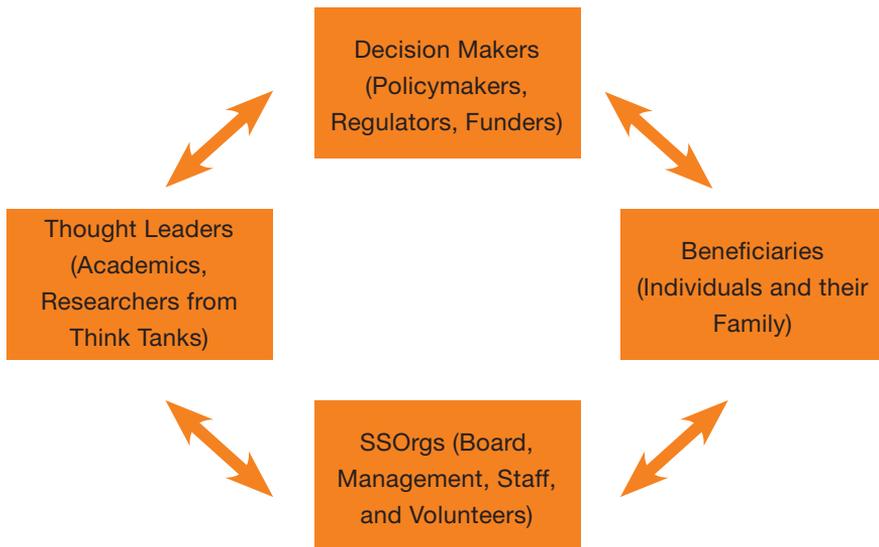


Figure 4: Symbiotic Relationship Between Stakeholders in the Social Service Sector

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

3. Ethics and Accountability in Social Service Organisations

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

3.1 Ethics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2 Accountability

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

Ebrahim (2005) expounds that accountability can be:

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

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

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

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

4. Stewardship in Social Service Organisations

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

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

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

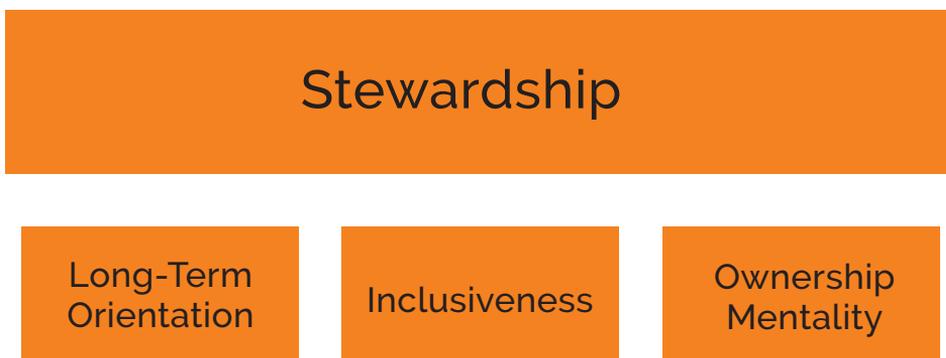


Figure 5: Common Virtues Undergirding Stewardship

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

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

4.1 Undertaking a Long-Term Perspective

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

4.2 Embracing Inclusiveness

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

4.3 Adopting an Ownership Mentality

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.1 Intent

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2 Impact

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Box Story 10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.3 Sustainability

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The box story explores how the organisation remains sustainable.

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

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

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

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

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

5.4 Professionalism

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.5 Collaboration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Box Story 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Concluding Remarks

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

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

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

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

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