

# The Next Leap



# Commemorating Five Years of Advocating for Social Enterprises in Singapore

Published By



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Be #partofthegood

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# Chairman's Foreword

The Singapore Centre for Social Enterprise, **raiSE** was launched by former President Tony Tan Keng Yam in May 2015 as the central body for the Social Enterprise sector in Singapore taking over the existing good work being done by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), the Social Enterprise Association, and the Social Enterprise Hub supported by the Singapore Totalisator Board (Tote Board). Today, **raiSE** working with the public and private sectors as well as the wider community, is firmly established as the sector developer for Social Enterprises in Singapore.

It has been an honour and pleasure for me to chair the **raiSE** board from the outset. At our very first meeting the **raiSE** board set out the vision and mission for the new organisation as follows:

## **Vision**

Sustainable Social Enterprises for a caring and inclusive society in Singapore.

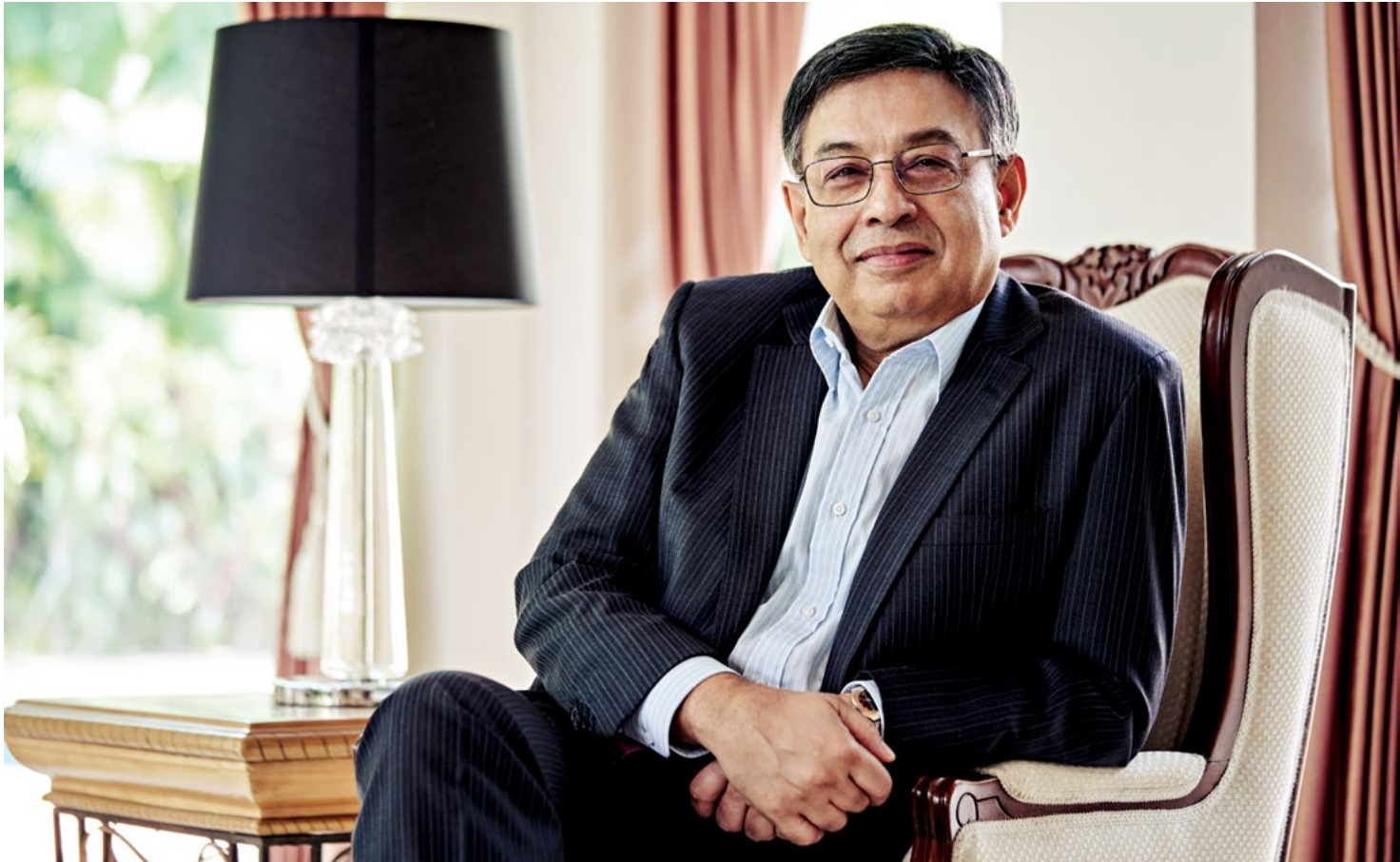
## **Mission**

**raiSE** awareness on social entrepreneurship.  
**raiSE** support for Social Enterprises.

Accordingly, **raiSE** in its first five years has focused on the following four broad areas:

- Being the national advocate for Social Enterprises in Singapore, raising awareness of what a Social Enterprise is and does and its relevance to society.
- Seeding and nurturing new Social Enterprises by providing grants, business advice, training, and development programmes.
- Enabling existing Social Enterprises to grow and become sustainable by providing access to financing, capacity building and mentorship.
- Connecting with Social Enterprises in the region and sharing best practices.

In this 5th anniversary commemorative publication, we are pleased to share with you highlights of our journey as Singapore's sector developer for Social Enterprises, our initiatives, and programmes to raise awareness of Social Enterprises, and the help rendered to individuals and businesses as they build scalable, and resilient Social Enterprises, which positively and meaningfully impact multiple stakeholders in the wider community in Singapore. As **raiSE** celebrates its fifth anniversary in a world engulfed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is an opportune time for us to reflect on our journey to date, and share with all our stakeholders and well-wishers our plans and aspirations for the future.



### The COVID-19 Pandemic and How It Is Changing the World

The COVID-19 global pandemic has glaringly exposed fault lines in societies and nations around the world – growing inequality, greater protectionism, and increasing insularity. While the pandemic has been first and foremost a health crisis, it has brought with it economic and financial misery and has adversely impacted all of us in some way or the other. However, in this increasingly unequal and unfair world, the worst affected have been the unskilled and poorly educated, the sick and elderly, the physically and mentally challenged, and other vulnerable groups often living in congested urban dwellings. In Singapore, the fight against this ubiquitous virus has driven home one very important point – we can only be safe if everyone in the community is safe together with us, because we are only as strong as our weakest link. Individuals, communities and as a nation, we are all ultimately inter-dependent on each other and must be socially responsible to look out and care for each other. Governments, multilateral agencies, civil societies, and charities alone cannot help us navigate out of this global crisis. All of us, individually and in groups, need to step up. In particular, businesses have a significant role to play in the ‘new normal’ that will emerge in the post-pandemic world.

## Making Every Enterprise A Social Enterprise

As we struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic the world over, it is becoming clearer that businesses need to give social, environmental, and sustainability issues in their community as much importance as profitability and shareholder returns. The business rationale for sustainable, purpose-driven business is now indisputable.

You can be the most efficient and well-run business but if there is a global health crisis that results in lockdowns around the world preventing people from travelling and going about their daily activities, then sooner or later your business will suffer. So, the message is clear, corporate profitability must coexist harmoniously with corporate purpose.

Companies must recognise that they have a responsibility for the wellbeing and sustainability of the people that work for them, the communities they operate in, and the surrounding environment. It is therefore not surprising that countries that have significant inequality resulting in inadequate public healthcare and welfare systems have had to struggle harder to tackle the 'lives versus livelihood' dilemma during this global pandemic.

Government cannot single-handedly tackle the myriad of challenges, from inequality to sustainability that have been so brutally and cruelly exposed by this global pandemic. Businesses must step up and work alongside government, civil society, academia, and the community at large continuously to address issues and challenges that impact a much broader and diverse group of stakeholders and not just their shareholders.

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**“ I believe a practical and sustainable way to do this is for every enterprise to be a Social Enterprise. As Social Enterprises embody a revenue-generating mindset with a deep commitment to address one or more social issues, they present themselves as an alternative corporate structure for all enterprises to evolve into and thereby enable them to achieve their environmental, social and governance goals seamlessly and sustainably.”**

**- Gautam Banerjee**

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**“I believe a practical and sustainable way to do this is for every enterprise to be a Social Enterprise. As Social Enterprises embody a revenue-generating mindset with a deep commitment to address one or more social issues, they present themselves as an alternative corporate structure for all enterprises to evolve into and thereby enable them to achieve their environmental, social and governance goals seamlessly and sustainably.”** In the post-COVID-19 world, sustainability and social equity must be central to business and commerce – at the heart of everything that the businesses do and at the top of mind for boards and c-suites, not something ancillary and a ‘nice to have’ that employees engage in during the annual Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) day!

Businesses must move beyond passive CSR and corporate philanthropy into active stakeholder engagement. For example, instead of just donating computers and other equipment to schools in financially deprived communities as part of a CSR initiative, Corporates must endeavour to take on ‘attributes of a Social Enterprise’ that will strive to tackle problems in a more purposeful, impactful, and enduring way. It could, for example, invest and engage in rolling out digital literacy programmes and then locate supply chains alongside the newly trained workforce to create higher-paying jobs in local communities.

Companies often have statements of corporate purposes that are broad and ambitious but in practice, many of their programmes are quite narrowly focused on aspects within the companies' comfort zones such as improving operational efficiency to reduce harmful emissions. The challenge for these companies is to move from current comfort zones, like good environmental conduct and sustainable sourcing to multi-stakeholder agendas related to excellence in and contribution to social governance and societal improvement. Socially responsible companies already recognise that business profits can only be sustained by delivering value to all stakeholders and are keen to identify pathways to progress on social impact and inequality issues. For example, many companies want to contribute to reducing inequality but need help to identify addressable opportunities and tangible ways to make a difference. This is where raISE, together with other like-minded organisations in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors, can help companies in their transformational journey towards ultimately becoming Social Enterprises.

## Conclusion

The success of raISE in its formative years is in large measure due to the strong support from MSF, the Tote Board, the National Council of Social Service, as well as our many partners in the public and private sectors. We would not have been here today without the help rendered by their officials and I would like to place on record my deep gratitude and appreciation to all of them. I would also like to thank my talented and energetic board members (past and present) who, together with the passionate and committed staff of raISE have made it their mission to further the cause of Social Enterprises in Singapore.

The transformational journey that raISE aspires to embark on in the next chapter of its evolution will be challenging and a step up from what it has done so far. raISE will have to overcome challenges of size, resources, and clout to work with a larger group of stakeholders and partners to bring about change in mindset and behaviour. It will have to convince multiple stakeholders to do things differently and accept a tradeoff where there could be short term pain for a few in return for long term gain for all. I look forward to your continued encouragement, support, and guidance as we aspire to make **EVERY ENTERPRISE IN SINGAPORE A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE** – Impactful, Scalable, Resilient, and Inclusive.



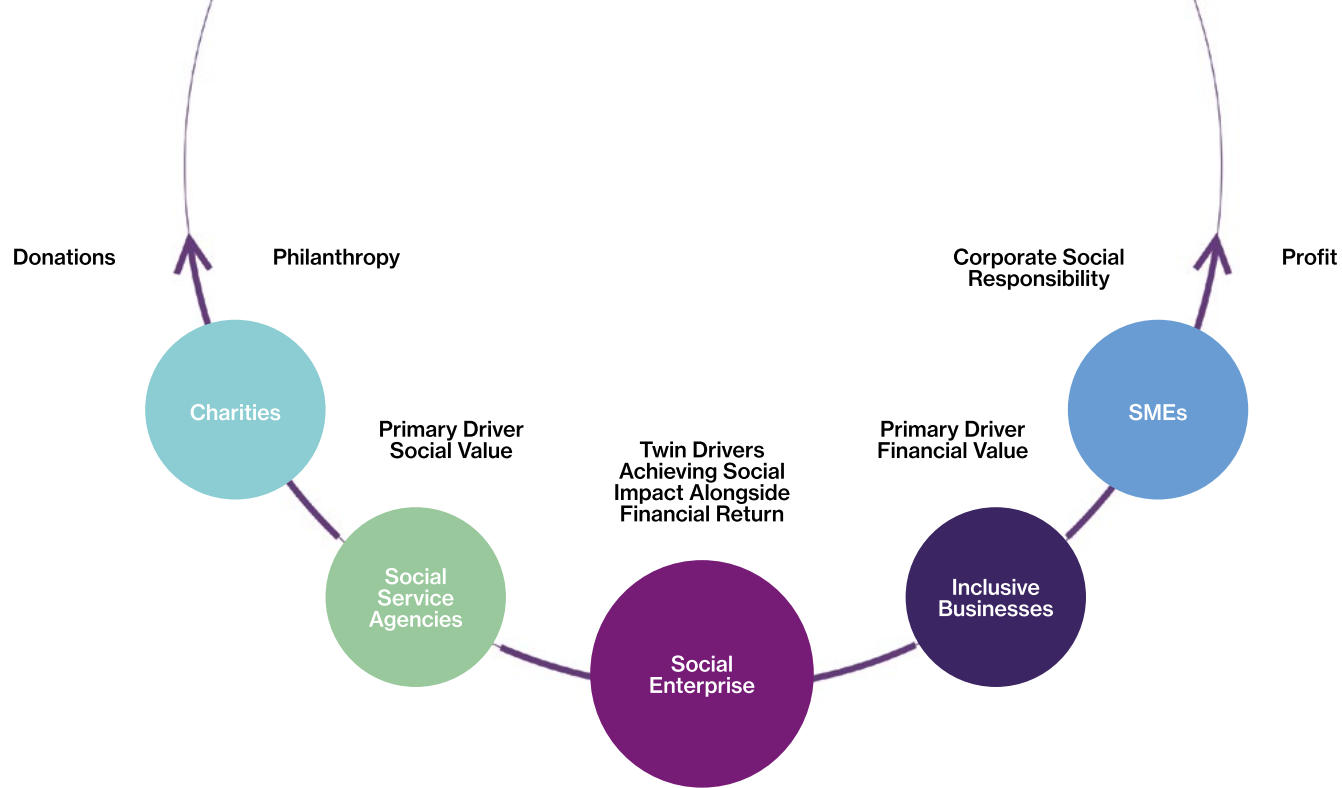
GAUTAM BANERJEE



# What Does It Mean to Be a Social Enterprise?

In our mission to raise awareness for our Social Enterprise members and their products and services, one of our key messages has always been that Social Enterprises are not to be mistaken with charities. We see Social Enterprises as businesses with demonstrable business sustainability and social value, where their collective identity is strengthened through our mark of membership. To qualify as a member of **raiSE**, Social Enterprises have to derive majority of their revenue from commercial activities, deliver competitive products and services and yet be able to prove that they have a deep-rooted social purpose and provide social value and outcomes. It has also been heartening to hear from Social Enterprise members that they value the recognition gained by being a part of the **raiSE** community.





# Defining Social Enterprises

raiSE defines Social Enterprises as business entities set up with clear social goals where there is clear management intent and resources allocated to fulfil social gaps and needs. Within the Social Enterprise ecosystem, traditional charities are focused on delivering social value and are not profit-driven. SMEs and MNCs on the other hand are focused on delivering financial value with a responsive approach to addressing community needs through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes or better still, inclusive hiring practices.

However, Social Enterprises have a double bottom line, building social impact into their core business models in order to achieve social impact alongside sustainable financial returns. They also exist

across a variety of business sectors with different social impact focus.

**BUSINESS  
FOR GOOD**

.....  
Social Enterprise Member of **raiSE**  
SINGAPORE

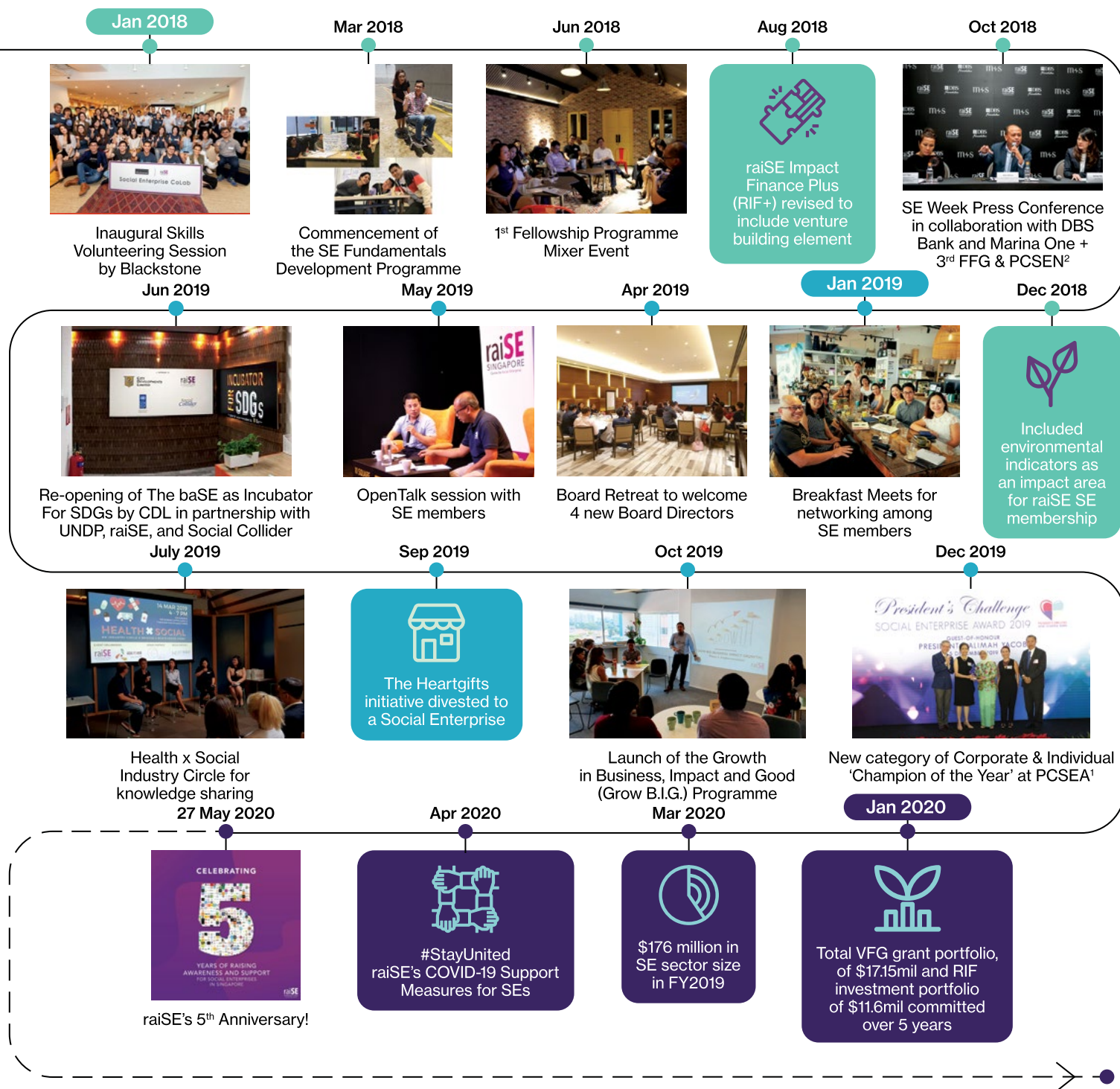
The BusinessForGood logo was created as a means of recognising and acknowledging that our Social Enterprise members are businesses that achieve social impact alongside sustainable financial returns. More importantly, it helps the public to identify raiSE's Social Enterprise members.

# Our Five Year Journey



1 President's Challenge Social Enterprise Award  
2 President's Challenge Social Enterprise Networking





# The Social Enterprise Sector Through the Years

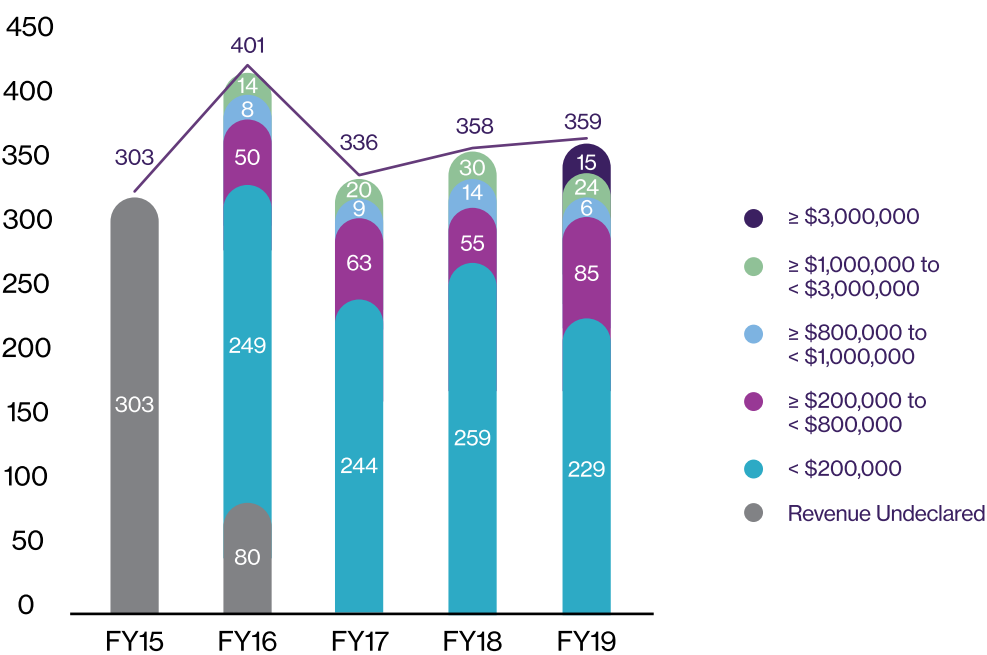
As a sector developer and apex body for all matters concerning Social Enterprises in Singapore, **raiSE** acts as a qualifier for Social Enterprises and endeavours to increase the awareness of its members across all growth stages and shed light on their impactful contributions towards unmet needs within the society.

Over the years, our Social Enterprise members have grown both financially and impactfully. In order to maintain the credibility of the sector, we have incrementally raised the bar by tightening

membership evaluation criteria and deepening our engagements with the social entrepreneurs to understand their social impact and business models for annual membership renewals. Our Social Enterprise members are provided with business mentorship options, various alternative financing opportunities and capacity building expertise to ensure their sustained growth.

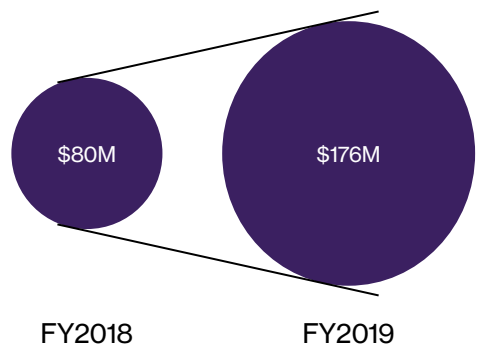
In FY2019, 10% of our Social Enterprise members have an annual revenue of above \$1 million.

Social Enterprise Members by Revenue Breakdown



## Total Sector Size

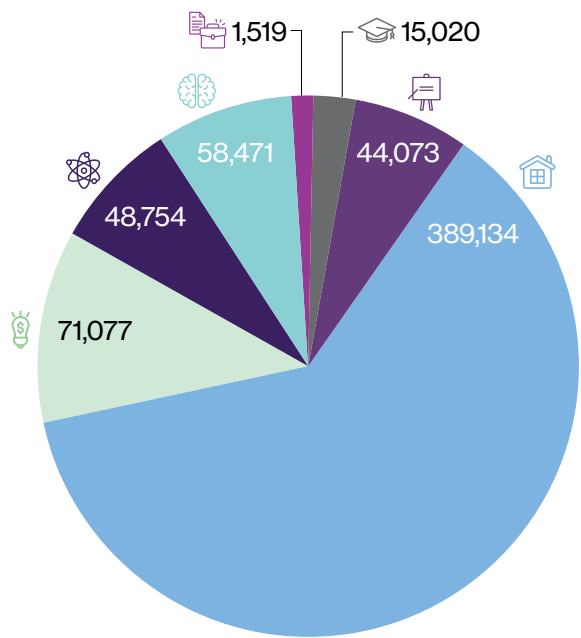
With effect from FY2018, all members were required to provide their absolute annual revenue instead of a range, thus allowing us to share the SE sector size by total revenue in the last 2 years.



Overall sector size for FY2018 is reflective of only 60% of raiSE's membership base.

Overall sector size for FY2019 is reflective of 97% of raiSE's membership base.

## Overall Impact of the Sector in FY2019



### Total of 628,048

instances where beneficiaries were impacted by the various products & services offered by our Social Enterprises

- Beneficiaries provided with employment opportunities
- Beneficiaries provided with education opportunities
- Beneficiaries provided with training opportunities
- Beneficiaries gained access to basic human needs
- Beneficiaries gained access to economic tools & services
- Beneficiaries gained access to healthcare products & services
- Beneficiaries gained access to products & services for mental health & well-being

## The 8<sup>th</sup> Impact Area - Capacity Building for Social Organisations

In addition to the creation of direct impact for beneficiaries, there are also Social Enterprises that create impact through capacity building for social organisations. Over 1,500 social organisations were provided with over \$10 million worth of capacity building products & services enabling them to impact more lives.

<sup>^</sup>FY2019 impact data accounts for both primary & secondary impact areas

# Trends Across Business Sectors and Impact Areas

Social Enterprises cut across varying industries and thrive on multiple business models (e.g. B2C, B2B, B2B2C). They also serve different beneficiaries according to their chosen social mission. But ultimately, all Social Enterprises aim to make a positive impact on society through their combined mission of social and business objectives.

## Trend of SE Members Across Top 5 Business Sectors

In the last 3 years, there has been a consistent trend in the top 3 business sectors that SE members operate in. Education & Training related businesses remained the most prevalent.



## Trend of SE Members Across Impact Areas

































In the last 3 years, there has been a consistent trend in the top 3 impact areas that SE members are contributing towards as well as 2 emerging impact areas.



# Measuring Impact Through UNSDG

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action to all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership.

raiSE's social value toolkit assesses its Social Enterprise members and provides substantive support and capacity-building opportunities in accordance to nine impact areas which are in line with several sustainable development goals. In order to make this global agenda a reality, Social Enterprises must translate the broad co-relation between UNSDGs into a strong commitment towards outcomes in their chosen impact areas.

raiSE Social Value Toolkit Impact Areas and Descriptions	United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (UNSDG)
 <b>Provision of Employment Opportunities</b> Empowering the underprivileged to be independent, self-sufficient and financially sustainable	  
 <b>Provision of Education</b> Providing access to academic resources, educational support, and toolkits to enhance learning capabilities.	
 <b>Provision of Skill Development</b> Providing training and mentorship to enhance individuals' self-development, leadership & life skills.	
 <b>Provision of Basic Human Needs</b> Providing universal access to basic human needs such as housing, water, food, transportation, and sanitation to increase quality of life for disadvantaged communities.	   
 <b>Provision of Economic Tools &amp; Services</b> Enhancing access to economic tools such as finances, crowdfunding, and e-commerce platforms.	  
 <b>Provision of Healthcare/Social Care Products &amp; Services</b> Providing access to quality healthcare and social care through products and services for disease prevention and mitigation.	
 <b>Provision of Products &amp; Services To Improve Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> Providing access to quality healthcare and social care through products and services for disease prevention and mitigation.	
 <b>Capacity Building For Organisations In The Social Sector</b> Providing social service organisations and Social Enterprises with technology, skills, knowledge, and training to enhance internal organisational capabilities.	 
 <b>Environmental Sustainability (new)</b> Providing solutions for the creation of a circular economy by limiting consumption, reducing the waste of resources (raw materials, water and energy) as well as minimising the production of waste.	      

Indicators may vary depending on the nature of the business and impact.



# From the CEO's Desk



We have all heard the saying, “time flies”. The last 5 years flew by with our work at raiSE. Looking back, it was a very eventful journey; we won as much as we learned. When we started raiSE in 2015, the task was to develop the Social Enterprise (SE) Sector which some coined, the “new sector”. Today, we are no longer considered new as our sector is emerging and full of potential. A sector that could provide a useful avenue to balance doing good for society with running a scalable business.

From a sector developer, we will have to evolve into an ecosystem builder for our SEs. This means we will continue to develop the sector with our core work of building capacity, growing the networks,

providing engagement platforms, and financing options. On top of this, to be an ecosystem builder, we will forge new partnerships and strengthen existing ones with stakeholders such as corporations, Social Service Agencies (SSAs), and community organisations to ensure that they are well connected to the heart of the SE ecosystem; our SEs.

Over the last year, there has been an increase in both interest and actual investments from private investors into SEs. As we partner with more corporations for their business expertise and market networks, we show them the value SEs could bring to their sustainability goals. The same interest has been observed from the social sector as we engage with more SSAs to create an alternate avenue

of creating impact with a financially sustainable model. Similarly, when SSAs partner with us to provide expert knowledge in the various impact areas, they also get a glimpse of how the SE model allows them to create sustained social impact and financial returns.

Just as importantly to build a vibrant ecosystem, we need the community to also partake in either starting up a SE or supporting one through their purchasing power or investing time to partner with one. We hope you are encouraged by our work and excited about the potential impact the SE sector can have in our society for generations to come. It is tough work; but when we manage to convince one person at a time, one will become a few, and eventually, we hope many will join us.

Lastly, to our stakeholders, the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Tote Board, and the National Council of Social Service, we appreciate your continued support. To our Chairman and Board members, without your guidance, we would not come to this good state that we are in now. Finally, to my colleagues, I thank all of you for your support, commitment, and understanding. A team that jumps into the water together will always find a way to stay afloat together.

**ALFIE OTHMAN**

“Today, we are no longer considered new as our sector is emerging and full of potential. A sector that could provide a useful avenue to balance doing good for society with running a scalable business.”

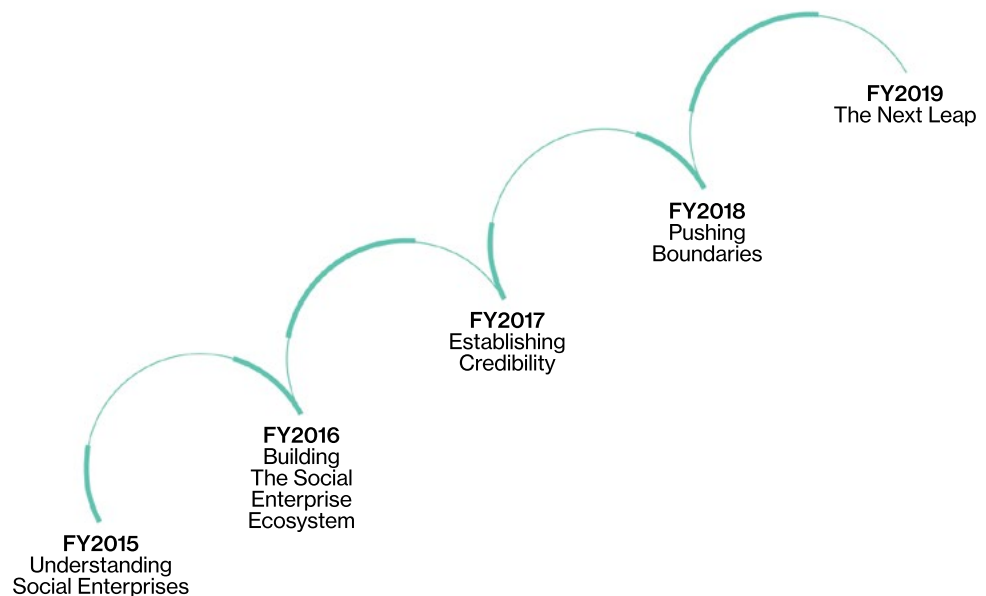
– Alfie Othman

## raiSE's Roles as an Ecosystem Builder



## The Next Leap

As we turn 5 years young, we will naturally evolve from a role of a sector developer to that of an ecosystem builder. While we remain true to our mission of raising awareness and support for Social Enterprises (SE) in Singapore, we have witnessed a growing interest from the public, people and private sectors in the Social Enterprise business model. This has kick-started our journey of building an ecosystem that will allow SEs to thrive through stronger connections to the other stakeholders in the ecosystem.



From the CEO's Desk

# Venture Builder

As our network of Social Enterprises focus on how they can sustainably deliver social impact to communities in need, we are committed to supporting them on this journey.

Our plans for the next five years include building deeper capabilities for SEs, over and above the funding levers that we can provide. In playing the role of a Venture Builder, raISE's programmes seek to identify emerging needs, encourage the ideation of innovative solutions, help to equip leaders for the future, provide capital, qualify and manage the SEs through dedicated account managers and provide shared services such as legal, accounting, and marketing services.

## Funding

Through the grants and investment for SEs across various growth stages.

### raISE VentureForGood Grant

Supports new and existing Social Enterprises who are starting up or expanding their operations with up to \$300,000 in grants.

### raISE Impact Finance +

Provides growth capital and capability building support to SEs with innovative solutions, a clear social mission and a scalable business plan.

## Network

As an ecosystem builder, raISE seeks to connect Social Enterprises with intermediaries in the region and share best practices with each other.

### Connecting SEs to the Ecosystem

Through events and programmes where raISE brings together SEs, industry experts, funders, corporations and government organisations to form a vibrant ecosystem for our SEs to grow in and benefit from.

### Marketing & PR Communications

To increase awareness of Social Enterprises in Singapore and encourage key stakeholders to support them, raISE leverages on our network to provide a platform for SEs to share their social entrepreneurial journeys and social impact stories.

## Capacity Building

Programmes that improve the capacity and capabilities of our SEs in running their business and creating their social impact.

### raISE Grow in Business, Impact, Good Programme (Grow B.I.G.)

Guides SEs through an Organisational Health Check to identify growth opportunities. Social Enterprises are then supported with strategy coaching and guidance on growth-oriented projects.

### raISE Fellowship Programme

Supports Social Enterprises in improving their capabilities and financial sustainability through curated matching to experienced professionals for a four to six-month engagement.

### raISE LeapForGood Programme

Helps passionate change-makers take thoughtful and innovative ideas and turn them into real and sustainable business solutions through an ideation hackathon, prototyping bootcamp and demo day.



# Social Enterprise Impact Stories

In this section, you will read about 15 Social Enterprises who have been a part of raISE's venture building journey and how they have grown their businesses through our key support areas such as funding and capacity building. Their notable achievements have been denoted by the following icons.



Environmentally Sustainable



Secured 3rd Party Investment



Received Awards and Recognition



Completed Five Years of raISE Membership



Benefited From raISE's Network



Collaborated With Government or Corporations

Social Enterprise members measure their social impact with the help of raISE's Social Value Toolkit. The nine impact areas mapped to UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) are highlighted in each profile.





## Adrenalin Group



## Pivoting Towards an Era of Virtual Events

When founder Richardo Chua started the Adrenalin Group in 2008, he had a dual purpose: to bring people together through his love for organising events, and to use events as an opportunity to do good. Today, Adrenalin hires inclusively, providing employment and upskilling opportunities for persons with special needs, ex-offenders and youth-at-risk. In addition, they provide event management services to non-profits and other social service agencies at a subsidised rate. Adrenalin has been a member of raISE since its inception in 2015. “The intent to be a Social Enterprise was always there, but the formalisation evolved over time. raISE helped us structure our business as a Social Enterprise,” explained Richardo.

While looking for ways to grow their revenue stream, Adrenalin embarked on the raISE Fellowship Programme in hopes of penetrating the eSports market. raISE was able to link them up with a suitable Fellow, Mr John

Kaaiohelo who had experience and strong networks in the eSports industry, giving them first-hand insights into the mechanics of the business. After several meetings and speaking with various stakeholders in the region, Adrenalin realised that it wasn't the right move for them. "The experience we gained stopped us from making a costly expansion decision, and instead pushed us to look within and retool, which kickstarted Aether – our innovation arm," explained Richardo.

With the help of the raISE Impact Finance Plus (RIF+) team, Adrenalin managed to leverage on Aether and grow their revenue streams. Today, they have developed in-house expertise in gaming and software development, creating games for their clients' events and marketing needs. This additional revenue stream was especially crucial for Adrenalin

during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite being badly hit by the sudden halt of physical events, they managed to retain all their beneficiaries' jobs by focusing efforts on online and offline hybrid virtual events.



**"The Fellowship experience stopped us from making a costly expansion decision, and instead pushed us to look within and retool, which kickstarted Aether – our innovation arm."**  
– Richardo Chua, Founder

**"We've received various funding support over the years but that's not the key. For raISE, there is deep involvement in a constructive way. As an investor, raISE looked into our numbers in a very respectful way, asking important questions, identifying pitfalls, and most importantly providing suggestions. That was what I truly appreciated, the walk that we had together. You always get a sense that raISE is behind you and with you, and I really appreciate that as a business owner,"** said Richardo as he shared about what raISE's involvement meant to him personally.

As a mature SE, Adrenalin now shares their experience and expertise with other up-and-coming SEs in the sector through raISE-organised talks and events. "Ultimately, raISE provides that platform with Breakfast Meets, the President's Challenge Social Enterprise Award, FestivalForGood and training sessions where SEs from different industries attend, creating an interesting diversity," quipped Richardo. "The other SEs I've met have become my friends and beyond that, our organisations work and learn from each other because we trust each other, and raISE is the catalyst behind all of that," said Richardo in conclusion.



# How Fellowship Blossomed Explosive Growth



## BloomBack



Floral decorations immediately bring joy to any event, but this feeling is often short-lived as the flowers are chucked into the bin at the end of the day. With the motivation to give these flowers a second lease of joy, Hazel Kweh started repurposing event flowers into beautiful bouquets for nursing home patients. In partnership with her sister who is hearing-impaired, this passion project soon inspired a business idea to continuously create social impact, but they did not know where to begin.

Hazel then began her search online for a community that could support them in their social entrepreneurship endeavour, and that is where their journey with **raiSE** began. Three years on, BloomBack is a floral e-commerce platform that continues to bring joy through preserved flowers, whilst empowering marginalised women by hiring inclusively – the impact of the latter being further amplified by the provisions of the **raiSE** VentureForGood grant. Looking back, Hazel recalled the **raiSE** Fellowship programme being

the initiative that benefitted BloomBack the most. When her fellowship journey first started, she had a different idea of what her business problems were, but the appointed Fellow, Mr Lim Song Joo, was quick to identify the root cause and offered solutions which allowed her to achieve exponential growth. “Without raiSE’s guidance, we wouldn’t even know what we don’t know, and therefore we couldn’t have known whom we should approach to mentor us. raiSE has been very integral to our growth year on year,” Hazel elaborated.

“Without raiSE’s guidance, we wouldn’t even know what we don’t know, and therefore we couldn’t have known whom we should approach to mentor us. raiSE has been very integral to our growth year on year.”

– Hazel Kweh, Founder



With a clearer picture of their business roadmap, BloomBack enrolled themselves in the Grow B.I.G. programme with the goal to strengthen their marketing plans. Through the programme, they built a strong foundation that instilled confidence in the team as they gained the relevant skills to handle their online marketing independently. Today, BloomBack gives back by actively guiding fellow Social Enterprises who reach out to them for tips on how to create and maintain a strong digital presence. “The Social Enterprise (SE) sector is a small circle, made up of very kind-hearted people who are willing to help each other out. Attending talks, events and programmes organised by raiSE, helped me to be a part of this SE family. I’m no longer as lonely as I was before.” Hazel added. Looking forward, she hopes that raiSE can continue acting as the ‘mother hen’ for all SEs by connecting like-minded social entrepreneurs to one another and fostering a greater sense of shared purpose through skills sharing, resources and strengthening the sector’s community spirit.



# Center Pottery



Dr Joan Huang had no thoughts of starting a new business when she first signed up for a mental health awareness workshop organised by **raiSE**. She participated in her capacity as a doctor, to share her anecdotes on working with patients with mental health issues and to learn from others' experiences. Little did she expect to be inspired enough to kickstart a new Social Enterprise and arm herself with a **raiSE** membership in quick succession.

Through the **LeapForGood** programme, Joan realised that she could combine her passion for pottery with her interest in mental health to create therapeutic art sessions. “**raiSE** was very active in brainstorming with us through the year-long journey. They gave us a lot of help and guidance especially in the area of business, as I was new to this,” explained Joan. **Center Pottery** is a Social Enterprise (SE) that conducts clay workshops and sells handmade ceramic wares. The proceeds from these ceramic wares go towards funding subsidised clay classes for patients with mental health issues, terminally ill patients, and the elderly. All these ideas were born out of the **LeapForGood** programme that Joan attended, four years ago.

After solidifying the groundworks for **Center Pottery**, Joan progressed to the **Grow B.I.G.** Programme, which helped give her a framework to differentiate and refine the services she was offering. “The programme

## Firing Up Social Impact Through a Passion for Pottery

allowed us to pick an area of focus and I was very fixated on marketing but raISE recommended that we work on our product differentiation instead. I went with what they thought was best for us, since raISE was with us from the beginning and we needed an outsider perspective of the business,” said Joan candidly. In hindsight, Joan shared that she didn’t pick product differentiation initially because she didn’t understand what it entailed at first, but through the experience of the Grow B.I.G. Programme the team had indeed gained new insights.

Today, Center Pottery differentiates itself from other studios by offering Mindful Pottery – a proprietary curriculum that was co-created with two psychologists, to help participants regulate their emotions better. Through raISE, they have also partnered with organisations such as hospitals, the Agency for Integrated Care, and the National Council of Social Service to organise programmes and classes for its beneficiaries. **“When raISE meets other stakeholders in the space of mental health or art, they always remember to share about our work. I feel like raISE has our back, they’re always looking for ideas and opportunities to link SEs to their new contacts,”** said Joan unabashedly.



**“raISE was very active in brainstorming with us through the year-long journey. They gave us a lot of help and guidance especially in the area of business, as I was new to this.”**

**– Dr Joan Huang, Founder**

Looking back, Joan recollects raISE’s flagship FestivalForGood marketplace as the most memorable event that Center Pottery has participated in, as the festival brings together like-minded social businesses and conscious consumers. According to Joan, “The members of the public who come are those that are so passionate about social causes. Every customer that you speak to has different interests, it’s not like going to a shopping event for materialistic things, these are people who come to buy things by beneficiaries because they care.”

On a more personal level, she pegs her most unforgettable experience as an entrepreneur to the time her business was unable to operate during the COVID-19 circuit breaker and within an hour of writing to her raISE account manager, she received a thorough compilation of loans and support packages that she could apply for. “We know raISE is always there to help us and that we can always pop into their office if we needed any help. They hire all these very passionate individuals that really make the organisation shine,” cited Joan.





We are all taught that water is a limited and precious resource, but often not educated on how the lack of water security can drastically transform our lives. Thankfully, this is a cause that Ecosoftt is championing in Singaporean classrooms today. Ecosoftt is a Singapore-based Social Enterprise that is focused on using technology and education to address the global challenge of water scarcity and water sustainability. Today, their operations span 5 markets, serving both developed and developing countries.

Ecosoftt first started with projects in India as there was a massive demand for sustainable water and sanitation solutions. Founders Stanley Samuel and Marcus Lim then brainstormed with **raiSE** on how their technology can be used to bring about social impact locally. Over time, they evolved their technology offerings and engineering solutions to be relevant in Singapore, Hong Kong and other developed regions. **“raiSE asked us some tough questions, like how we were going to become relevant and remain relevant for Singapore. With that mindset, we localised our product. That advice I will never forget, it was priceless,”** exclaimed Stanley.

Besides the advice on how to shape their Social Enterprise model, **raiSE** also invested in Ecosoftt's product development of their decentralised wastewater treatment systems. In explaining that **raiSE's** investment is not just about money unlike

## Pooling Resources to Make an Impact in Singapore



from borrowing from a bank, Marcus shared that “with raISE, it’s different. They invested in us with the objective of generating social impact in Singapore. They’re an impact-first investor who co-created the solution with us, through pooling both our resources together.”

Marcus also credits raISE for giving Ecosoftt the visibility and platform to champion their cause to a wider audience. Participation at raISE’s annual FestivalForGood marketplace has connected them to corporations, schools, and even other regional communities who have expressed interest in their public education and school outreach programmes. Through these opportunities, several students have been enlightened on how modular water solutions can transform the lives of, for example, women in developing countries, by freeing up their time spent on collecting water from wells.

“We are thankful that raISE has presented us in a good light within the larger ecosystems without even letting us know. During the inauguration of raISE by former President Tony Tan, they shared our story too. They’ve since connected us to regional sector builders too.” added Marcus. Ecosoftt has since gone on to receive international recognition for its business model and technologies through 15 awards, including the first ever winner of the Zayed Sustainability Prize - Water Category in 2019.



“They invested in us with the objective of generating social impact in Singapore. They’re an impact-first investor who co-created the solution with us, through pooling both our resources together.”

– Marcus Lim, Co-founder



# Threading the Needle Between Social Impact and Business Strategy



## Eden + Elie



When co-founder Stephanie Choo decided to create jewellery brand Eden + Elie, she knew that she wanted to give back to the community through training and employment opportunities. So, she travelled to different countries to find potential communities to work with but unfortunately, could not find a suitable match. Then, she attended raISE's Social Enterprise Conference

in 2016, in a bid to find beneficiaries locally. "I stood up to ask a question about which group of people I should hire and was subsequently introduced to SG Enable and through them, to The Autism Resource Centre," noted Stephanie.

Eden + Elie is a local jewellery brand that prides itself in creating uniquely Singaporean statement

pieces through handweaving and beadwork. They partner with the Autism Resource Centre (ARC) to train and employ adults with autism as artisans. Co-founder Leon Toh shared how delighted they were to find a very good match with their beneficiaries as adults with autism have a very strong ability to be meticulous and are careful about the way they use materials, which





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is exactly what is needed when crafting jewellery.

To expand their business and impact, Eden + Elie then applied for the VentureForGood Grant which enabled them to train and employ their first group of beneficiaries from ARC. While the application process involved forecasting financial projections for the next five years, it earned them a dedicated raISE account manager who supported them through quarterly check-ins. “At every meeting, we really look forward to seeing the raISE team because we know the people at raISE have journeyed with us and they’re invested in our success. It’s not easy to do what they do for the SE community,” explained Stephanie.

Their journey with raISE evolved from being a grantee to getting more support as an investee. Leon recalls how the raISE Impact Finance Plus (RIF+) team helped Eden + Elie to sharpen the business strategy and strengthen the delivery of their

**“They challenged us on our business model and the type of impact we were creating, then guided us through the process of achieving it, which was very helpful.”**

**– Leon Toh, Co-founder**

social impact. “They challenged us on our business model and the type of impact we were creating, then guided us through the process of achieving it, which was very helpful,” recalled Leon.

By partnering with raISE, Eden + Elie gives back to the community through building capabilities for Social Service Agencies and fellow Social Enterprises. “We hope to share our experience with fellow social entrepreneurs as we have gone through some of these lessons and have benefitted from raISE’s guidance,” noted Leon. Reminiscing on their four-year journey together, Stephanie fondly recalls how raISE has been able to provide different perspectives and solutions to their business challenges. **“It’s nice knowing we have someone we can count on, because that is something money can’t buy. The ability to bounce off ideas with raISE is important to me as a business owner on an emotional level,”** concluded Stephanie.



# Growing Towards a Sustainable Garden City



When Bjorn Low decided to dive into farming in 2012, he quickly realised that there weren't many opportunities for individuals like him to start farms. It was also apparent that the only available farmlands were in far, hard-to-reach locations in land-scarce Singapore. However, while walking through the city he spotted prospects for smaller farming projects. He then partnered with restaurants and hotels to grow rooftop food gardens thus calling his business venture, Edible Garden City.

Today, Edible Garden City is a Social Enterprise that creates food gardens, conducts gardening classes, and grows produce for Singaporeans. It has also achieved its goal of securing suitable spaces to farm in central Singapore. Despite the various roadblocks he faced, Bjorn never gave up on his goal as he firmly believed that Singapore needed to be more self-sufficient given that she imports over 90% of the food she consumes. He approached raISE for help and through an introduction to the Ministry of National Development, Edible Garden City secured a space to pilot the country's first closed-loop farm.

To kickstart the setup of the farm, raISE also provided funding through the VentureForGood grant. "I'd never seen so many social

## Edible Garden City







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“I’d never seen so many social impact metrics before applying for the VentureForGood grant, it was really well thought out and helped us set up and formalise our new farm.”

— Bjorn Low, Executive Director

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impact metrics before applying for the VentureForGood grant, it was really well thought out and helped us set up and formalise our new farm,” explained Bjorn. On top of monetary assistance, raISE also connected Edible Garden City to various beneficiary groups for employment opportunities on the farm and mentors that guided their business through the early days. **“Whether it is a business link-up or mentoring opportunity, it’s been very helpful to get that connection through raISE. We’ve gotten many mentoring opportunities over the years!”** exclaimed the founder.

Yet, according to Bjorn, the most unforgettable raISE connection has been one to the President Mdm Halimah Yacob, “Being invited to the Istana along with raISE for the Chinese New Year Tea Party gave us that opportunity to share our ideas with the President and other office holders, giving social entrepreneurship visibility and creating connections that can influence policy change.”

Looking into the future, Edible Garden City hopes to work with policymakers to reshape Singapore’s healthcare system through urban care farms that do not just produce food but also provide a state of mental wellness to the community. “There is strong scientific evidence that gardening can reduce stress. Imagine one day going to a polyclinic, and instead of getting a prescription for medication, you’re given one to visit an urban care farm instead.” shared Bjorn with a smile.

# Valuable Insights That Led to a Recruitment Innovation



Their goal is to connect non tech-savvy workers, matured PMETs, active seniors and the chronically unemployed to job opportunities readily. Since becoming a raISE member in 2018, they have transformed the way that job seekers access online jobs on-the-go through their apps and smart job kiosks.

Through raISE's outreach programmes, Ivan realised that many low-income job seekers did not have access to the internet or own smartphones. This meant they had to rely on others to help them apply for jobs advertised on mobile apps. "Before joining raISE, I didn't think of creating kiosks. But through their networking events, the exposure to the Social Service Offices (SSOs) and their beneficiaries inspired us to transform our existing mobile applications into standalone kiosks to make it easier for low-income job seekers without smartphones or data plans to access jobs," explained Ivan, Chief Product Officer.

Once the founders decided to embark on their new product innovation, raISE supported the development of these smart job kiosks. To place them strategically where beneficiaries frequented, raISE then connected the founders to SSOs and the Employment and Employability Institute (e2i). Today, these kiosks are available at 30

## Findjobs



In 2016, while helping their mum search for a job, brothers Stanley and Ivan Lim noticed an increasing trend of blue-collar jobs being advertised online, although workers were still using traditional means to source for jobs. Harnessing 20 years of experience in the recruitment industry between them, they founded Findjobs to connect online jobs to offline job seekers.

Findjobs is a jobs and skills marketplace that is accessible in all four official languages in Singapore.



locations across the country. “Without **raiSE**, we wouldn’t have been able to expand as quickly. **raiSE**’s investment allowed us to validate our product rapidly and attract partnerships from other agencies, which enabled us to create even more impact,” noted Stanley, CEO of Findjobs.

While the founders focused their efforts on fine-tuning their product, **raiSE** advised them on building the brand for a corporate audience and provided strategic guidance for their marketing plan. **“The **raiSE** team consists of professionals from diverse backgrounds, so they helped us identify which areas we’re lacking in. They’re not just funders or investors but beyond that, their marketers assisted with our communications strategy and they’ve connected us to the networks they have, allowing us to forge relationships with agencies like the Ministry of Social and Family Development,”** noted Stanley.

As for the future, the founders hope to create larger social impact at a national level, with aspirations to penetrate mass transport stations and food centres island wide. Currently, **raiSE** has linked Findjobs with relevant stakeholders to kickstart efforts in making this a reality. “The day before the meeting, I couldn’t sleep because it’s a goal that has been in my heart for so long. When **raiSE** connected us, even if it was just



**“Before joining **raiSE**, I didn’t think of creating kiosks. But through their networking events, the exposure to the Social Service Offices and their beneficiaries inspired us to transform our existing mobile applications into standalone kiosks to make it easier for low-income job seekers without smartphones or data plans to access jobs.”**

**– Ivan Lim, Chief Product Officer**

for a discussion, it made me very excited and it is an unforgettable experience that I’ll always be grateful for,” quipped Ivan with a smile on his face.

Reflecting on their journey, Stanley noted that being a **raiSE** member has given Findjobs invaluable insights into the challenges that disadvantaged groups face while looking for a job. He shared their aspirations to make **raiSE** proud of them as they endeavour to help beneficiaries at a national level. “We want to be able to say that we’re a **raiSE** member and that we did something impactful nationwide,” concluded Ivan.



## Foreword Coffee



## Brewing Connections & Branches Islandwide

When co-founder Lim Wei Jie decided to start a Social Enterprise (SE), he made sure that becoming a *raiSE* member was one of the first things on his to-do list. Having already interned at a Social Enterprise while in university and familiar with the Social Enterprise ecosystem, he knew that *raiSE* could lend him support in his new venture. In 2017, founders Nadi Chan and Lim Wei Jie applied for Foreword Coffee to be a *raiSE* member. They started with a hole-in-the-wall cafe at the National University of Singapore but have since expanded to three cafe outlets across Singapore, providing training and employment opportunities for persons with autism, and physical disabilities.

Sharing more about their choice to anchor their business in coffee roasting and running a cafe, Wei Jie explained that the general public doesn't have the opportunity to interact with people with special needs or disabilities on a daily basis; but they drink coffee every day. Hence, training beneficiaries in coffee making and giving them the opportunity to be at the counter encourages them to interact with the public and gain confidence.



“There was a lot of guidance during the application process from our account manager, **raiSE** is quite nurturing in that sense. Even during the pitch for the grant, the panel, which consisted of several accomplished individuals provided us with valuable advice and inputs on how we could improve our business model.”

– Nadi Chan, Co-founder

The opening of their outlets was supported by the VentureForGood grant. More than just financial support rendered to purchase equipment, train and employ the beneficiaries, the guidance from the **raiSE** team on tightening the business processes and strategy helped them stay on track to balance their business goals and social impact. “There was a lot of guidance during the application process from our account manager, **raiSE** is quite nurturing in that sense. Even during the pitch for the grant, the panel, which consisted of several accomplished individuals provided us with valuable advice and inputs on how we could improve our business model,” said Nadi.

When Nadi and Wei Jie wanted more guidance as young business owners, they signed up for the **raiSE** Fellowship Programme. Through the programme, Foreword Coffee was paired with Fellow, Mr Lim Song



Joo, who taught them how to take a step back from the frontlines and provided guidance on the business strategy and operations, as well as coached them in the area of leadership and grooming the staff, including beneficiaries, to take on middle management roles. On top of helping them tighten processes, Mr Lim was also able to introduce them to useful business connections.

Being a regular at **raiSE** networking events, Foreword Coffee had the opportunity to network and connect with other Social Enterprises. These connections have also resulted in fruitful collaborations in the form of curating product bundles and hosting gatherings amongst Social Enterprises to share updates and ideas. **raiSE** also connected Foreword Coffee to the Housing Development Board, which expedited their process of securing their 4th upcoming outlet. Recollecting their journey with **raiSE**, Wei Jie shares that the VentureForGood grant is a year-long journey which they have done twice now. **“For me, the most memorable moment in my journey with **raiSE** is submitting the final report for the VentureForGood Grant. Every time we manage to finish drawing down the last tranche of the grant, it also means we hit our milestones and managed to increase our social impact. With **raiSE** being five years old, we feel very honoured and humbled to have been on this two-year journey together.”**

# Jaga-Me



Jaga-Me started with a simple mission: to make universal healthcare accessible while not compromising on quality of life. That is why the online platform works with hospitals and beneficiary groups to bring professional medical services to patients in the comfort of their own homes. Since partnering with raISE, they have not only managed to expand their beneficiary list, but also their investor list and connections.

Julian Koo, co-founder of Jaga-Me explained that the raISE Impact Finance Plus (RIF+) support was extremely helpful as there weren't many options for Social Enterprises (SE) to secure capital investment. He noted that while charities could fundraise through philanthropic groups and from the public, SEs are mainly reliant on revenue generated from the sale of products and services. On the other hand, being an SE might not entirely appeal to traditional for-profit investors who assess deals solely on their revenue generation abilities. "Capitalism is impatient that way. With raISE, the capital is a lot more patient and they gave us the runway to validate the idea and accelerate to a point where we were getting enough traction. raISE really helped us get to the next level in our first year and a half," explained Julian.

Their journey with raISE did not stop at just funding. "raISE's Investment Committee comprises of experienced investors who introduced us to their contacts which opened up opportunities for Jaga-Me." said Julian. As first investors, raISE helped Jaga-Me to polish up their business plan until it was

## Patient Capital That Nursed an Innovative Start-Up

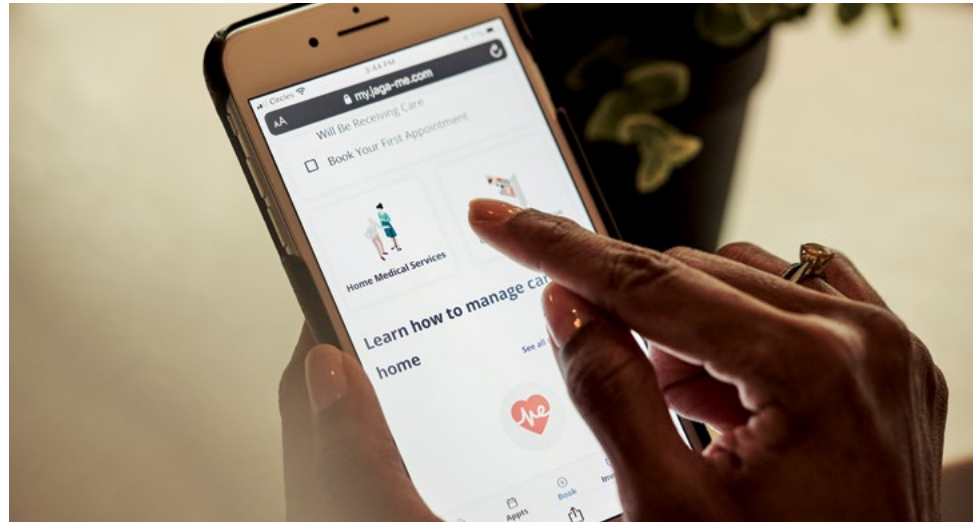


investor-ready, which enabled them to secure 3rd party investments.

Once they became a sustainable business, raiSE then shared the opportunity for them to apply for the President's Challenge Social Enterprise Award. Although doubtful if they would make the cut, Julian heeded raiSE's advice and applied. Jaga-Me won 'Start Up of The Year' in 2017. Through the process, Julian noted that **"there's a lot of methodology that goes into measuring social impact created by the contesting Social Enterprises. The application and assessment processes were rigorous, but it helped us to get a glimpse of the impact metrics and forced us to be clear about our social impact."**

Despite achieving many significant milestones, the most memorable experience for Julian was sharing Jaga-Me's vision with the President of Singapore, Mdm Halimah Yacob, as well as Minister Desmond Lee. He shared that they were both welcoming and gave him a listening ear, an opportunity that would not have been possible without a connector like raiSE. "raiSE is like that really well-connected friend for start-ups, connecting us to influential people whom we can bounce our solutions with," said Julian

Julian concluded, "credit must be given to the fact that raiSE is a convener of changemakers, impact investors, as well as the traditional charitable sector. More than just injecting capital, raiSE allowed us to accelerate our growth and provided a foundation that was credible such that others would also give us a chance."



**"Capitalism is impatient that way. With raiSE, the capital is a lot more patient and they gave us the runway to validate the idea and accelerate to a point where we were getting enough traction. raiSE really helped us get to the next level in our first year and a half."**

**— Julian Koo, Co-founder**



# When raiSE's Endorsement Is a Key Ingredient



## Samsui Supplies & Services



As the leader of Soup Restaurant Group's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm, Ang Kian Peng wanted to move away from one-off annual events and reinvent the recipe of doing good at a sustained pace all-year-round. This led to the creation of Samsui Supplies & Services, the Social Enterprise (SE) spin-off of Soup Restaurant Group.

Today, Samsui has created an ecosystem of kindness, with food at the centre of their business. They hire inclusively and operate out of two central kitchens at Enabling Village and the Changi Prison facility. They are also part of Touch Community's Meals-On-Wheels programme, that serves up to a few thousand beneficiaries with healthy, delicious meals daily.



Their journey with raiSE began through the VentureForGood grant support, which allowed them to employ and upskill beneficiaries to prepare dim sum dishes for five-star hotels. However, Kian Peng noted that “securing the grant money wasn’t the main objective; it was the endorsement from raiSE that the ‘good’ we do is validated. That was important to us.” According to Kian Peng, an endorsement from raiSE made it easier for them to collaborate with government agencies like the Ministry of Social and Family Development as well as forge partnerships with fellow Social Enterprises.

On top of these connections, raiSE has also introduced Samsui to another Social Enterprise, a student care provider, thus marking their first foray into supplying meals to the student care market. “raiSE is proactive in helping us look for beneficiaries. With an introduction from raiSE, we do not need to go knocking on doors alone, and it’s easier to penetrate different markets.” To add on, raiSE shared the



**“Securing the grant money wasn’t the main objective; it was the endorsement from raiSE that the ‘good’ we do is validated. That was important to us.”**

**— Ang Kian Peng, Director**



opportunity for Kian Peng to seek national recognition by participating in the President’s Challenge Social Enterprise Awards in 2019. After going through evaluation by an independent committee, Samsui went on to clinch the title of ‘Social Enterprise of The Year’ at the award ceremony held at the Istana which was conferred by President Halimah Yacob.

As one of the more established SEs, Samsui also gives back to the SE community by sharing their insights and tips at raiSE-organised Breakfast Meet sessions and Industry Circles. **“We also share the lessons we learnt on what to look out for when balancing their business with social impact. Through raiSE, we are able to act as a mentor and use our connections to help our fellow SEs.”** At the end of the day, Samsui aims to continue growing alongside other Social Enterprises, lending a helping hand where possible and striving for collaborative efforts in creating a more caring society.



## School of Concepts



## Why Education is a Lifelong Investment

It is a universal truth that education can transform the lives of students. Mint Lim, founder of School of Concepts (SoC), is taking it a step further by proving that it can do the same for teachers, too. School of Concepts believes in empowerment through literacy. That is why they not only offer subsidised rates to underprivileged students, but also hire inclusively through organisations such as the Association for Persons with Special Needs (APSN) – a partnership which Mint believes was expedited due to their affiliation with raISE.

Today, the School of Concepts conducts training programmes to help teaching assistants from APSN gain confidence in the classroom. In turn, hiring inclusively has also helped students understand and empathise that society is made up of different types of people who have different strengths. But how did SoC go from supporting 50 monthly beneficiaries to impacting over 200 marginalised families in three years? With no experience running



a Social Enterprise, SoC in their early days functioned on a pay-what-you-want model for beneficiaries. Unfortunately, that proved unsustainable in the long run. Coincidentally, a visually impaired teacher whom they hired, was the one who introduced them to raISE and the possibility of a Social Enterprise (SE) model.

Eager to figure out a sustainable model for the business, SoC joined raISE as a member and participated in the Fellowship Programme. Through the programme, SoC was paired with Fellow, Ms Joyce Sit, who guided them on becoming investor ready. **“We discovered a more structured way of reaching out to beneficiaries, learnt how to fine tune and measure our social impact in a clearer manner, and got insights on how investors think and how to pitch to them.”** It did not stop there. raISE then became SoC’s first investors for their Paya Lebar branch, catalysing opportunities for 3rd party investment. “When investors know that we are an investee of raISE, it gives them more confidence that we



**“With raISE walking with us through it, I don’t ever feel like I have to enter the lion’s den alone, as there’s always a big brother to follow me.”**  
– Mint Lim, Founder

are a sustainable business. Having that endorsement was very critical for us,” explained Mint. As a result, SoC clinched a third-party investor which helped them with the expansion of their West Gate branch. “With raISE walking with us through it, I don’t ever feel like I have to enter the lion’s den alone, as there’s always a big brother to follow me,” concluded Mint.

On top of helping them get their financial books in check and working with them to be investor ready, SoC also benefits from the raISE network in the form of media feature opportunities and connections to organisations such as Housing Development Board for space rental, PAP Community Foundation for training partnerships, as well as connections to other SEs like Edible Garden City and Center Pottery for preschool excursions.

Despite being a young business, SoC is now standing proud with two main outlets and run their classes in close to 20 community centres, plus tailored programmes at 15 Social Service Agency locations. Looking towards the future, Mint hopes that her business’s success can help to prove that SEs can do good while being scalable, encouraging more people to give back to society in sustainable ways.



# Singapore Delivery Services



Singapore Delivery Services (SDS) has come a long way from where it first began in 2015. Back then, founder Josephine Chew had no prior experience in the industry but knew she wanted to help transform the lives of ex-offenders through a new business venture. So, she turned to the internet and found raISE, who helped connect her to Singapore Prison Service Centres for employment matching. Singapore Delivery Services is a logistics provider that offers last-mile delivery services while creating employment opportunities for marginalised individuals from low income families and ex-offenders. Today, they are successfully serving multinational corporations with their 'container-to-consumer' delivery services.

But just three years back, they were in a very different situation. Josephine hit her lowest point in 2017 when her then-partner needed to resign from the business. Keeping SDS afloat with her personal funds and worried about the retention of the six delivery drivers under her payroll, she turned to raISE for assistance. SDS was quickly enrolled in the first edition

## How Persistence Delivered a 500% Revenue Increase



of the Fellowship Programme and matched with an ex-Mckinsey Operations Specialist, Mr David Lee who streamlined their delivery processes and optimised their fleet and driver configuration to achieve incredible results. In just four months, SDS increased their revenue by 240%. That figure now stands at 500%.

“raiSE recognised my determination and persistence and encouraged me to push through the tough times. Although it was a rollercoaster, raiSE took the ride with me,” recalled Josephine. With support from the VentureForGood grant, SDS also expanded their fleet to employ 30 delivery drivers, transforming more lives.

To date, SDS has helped six of their beneficiaries become debt-free and witnessed other employees go from renting flats to owning four-room HDB flats. This, in part, was a result of the system that Mr David Lee suggested that they implement. By optimising the fleet and driver configuration, SDS was able to lower the rate of non-attendance while increasing the minimum



pay of their delivery drivers. “As an entrepreneur, we knew the direction we wanted to head in, but we needed guidance on how to get there. And that’s where raiSE stepped in to help,” explained Josephine.

“raiSE recognised my determination and persistence and encouraged me to push through the tough times. Although it was a rollercoaster, raiSE took the ride with me.”

— Josephine Chew, Founder

Reminiscing on their five-year journey, Josephine commented on how much the Social Enterprise sector has grown. She recalled needing to constantly explain what a Social Enterprise was; however, knowledge of the sector has greatly improved through raiSE’s events and marketing outreach campaigns. Speaking about the most memorable experience she’s had with raiSE, Josephine noted that it was when “raiSE told me not to give up. Although I am not the type to easily give up, but in 2017, I was really thinking about it. They told me not to give up, and that’s the one moment I can never forget.”

# How One Conversation Inspired a Breakthrough Cleaning Technology



## Spic & Span



Four years ago, with little to no experience in the cleaning industry, Benjamin rose to the task of helping retrenched senior workers secure housekeeping jobs. From a single mission of empowering people through employment, Spic & Span was born. Since then, the Social Enterprise has grown from a seven-man team to over 100 workers.

Through the support and funding from **raiSE**, Spic & Span was able to provide more employment opportunities to marginalised communities and invest in Research & Development (R&D) to reposition themselves from being a cleaning company, to a cleaning technology

firm that manufactures protective disinfection products. Filling the gap in the cleaning market is their proprietary **Speco®** formula, a disinfectant coating liquid used before regular cleaning takes place, which provides long-lasting protection for surfaces even after they are cleaned and dried.

**“raiSE is not just an investor or grant giver. Even calling them a “capacity builder” is an understatement. The people within raiSE are good people who believe in what raiSE is doing, and when that happens, they do more than their job scope to help Social Enterprises like us,”** founder, Benjamin Chua recounted.



He recalled the turning point for Spic & Span came during a conversation with raISE CEO, Alfie Othman, urging Benjamin to think about how he wanted to scale the company five years down the road. Through that one conversation, Benjamin realised then that he would have to invest in and adopt technology so that Spic & Span could scale up quickly and grow beyond just being a cleaning services company.

After the invention of Speco®, raISE's Grow B.I.G. programme provided Spic & Span with an opportunity to test the response to the product amongst new market segments. With support from industry professionals and provision of implementation credits, Spic & Span could procure various marketing and consulting services from raISE's pre-approved vendors. Through the programme, Spic & Span gained greater clarity in their business strategy and decided to focus on marketing Speco® to the B2B segment.

**“He (raISE’s CEO) asked me where I’d want to be in five years while I was still in the trenches fighting on the frontlines.”**

**– Benjamin Chua, Founder**



Combining a strong business proposition with clear social impact, Spic & Span now services a strong portfolio of corporations while still ensuring that their protective technology is accessible to those who need it the most such as the vulnerable in our community. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, they have disinfected the premises of many social service agencies and charitable organisations on a pro-bono basis and committed to keeping the premises of other Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) safe, in exchange for their pledge to pay-it-forward when times are better.

In evaluating his successes thus far, Benjamin reflects that raISE believed in them and “gave this small company a chance, and that’s what a lot of SMEs need – a chance.” Benjamin shared that he appreciates the team at raISE for their support, partnership and most importantly their understanding through his social entrepreneurship journey.

# The Bettr Group



A pioneer in the Social Enterprise sector and the first certified B-corporation in Singapore, Bettr Barista's journey with raISE started from the day raISE was established in 2015. Today, the specialty coffee company is known as The Bettr Group with eight retail bars, a coffee roastery, and a coffee academy where they train beneficiaries with specialty coffee skills and emotional resilience skills through their Bettr Holistic Training Programme. Bettr Barista also extends their impact by directly employing beneficiaries.

In 2017, raISE invested in them to help increase their capacity to scale up their business operations. Through raISE, Bettr Barista also fostered a partnership with Community Foundation of Singapore for more beneficiary referrals into the Bettr Holistic Training Programme. Since then, Bettr Barista has trained over 135 women and youth-at-risk, with over 400 dependents. **"Our retail coffee bar is the main vehicle by which we provide employment for a lot of beneficiaries and raISE investing in us definitely tripled our ability to hire. That was quite pivotal, otherwise we would not have been able to expand as quickly as we liked,"** noted Pamela Chng, founder of Bettr Barista.

On top of the investment, raISE worked closely with Bettr Barista to create several financial projection templates to refine their revenue model. Through the years, Bettr Barista has also empowered their employees through raISE

## Paving the Way for a More Resilient Singapore



workshops on social impact measurement, marketing and more.

Walking this journey together, Pamela recalls raISE encouraging Bettr Barista to get recognition on a national level. Thus, they applied for and subsequently, won the President's Challenge Social Enterprise 'Start-up of the Year' Award in 2013. As part of the awards, raISE commissioned a promotional video for Bettr Barista, which they still play in their coffee bars today. "Having been awarded the 'Social Enterprise of The Year' accolade in 2017, we were privileged to be on the evaluation committee for the subsequent year's awards. I personally enjoyed connecting with the other members of the evaluation committee and learning from the younger Social Enterprises who applied for the awards too. It was inspiring, encouraging, and I got a lot from that process," explained Pamela.

Looking towards the future, Pamela hopes to continue working closely with raISE as they set their sights on going regional. She also hopes that The Bettr Group will set an example so that all businesses endeavour to become social businesses one day. Pamela concluded, "As business owners, we can make a positive change, and I see it happening already. But I hope to inspire more businesses to take on this responsibility of using business as a force for good, making sure we are contributing value and doing good instead of extracting value and exploiting resources."



**"As business owners, we can make a positive change, and I see it happening already. But I hope to inspire more businesses to take on this responsibility of using business as a force for good, making sure we are contributing value and doing good instead of extracting value and exploiting resources."**

**– Pamela Chng, Founder**





## The Social Space



## Securing Spaces for Socially Conscious Businesses

After five years of running her first Social Enterprise, The Nail Social, founder Cheryl Ou wanted to prove that SEs could capitalise on a lot more business opportunities to create greater impact for a wider range of beneficiaries. So, together with Daniel Yeow, she started her second SE, The Social Space. “Many different people from raISE were very involved in the ideation of The Social Space. They were very supportive of the idea and encouraged me to apply for the VentureForGood grant for additional support,” mentioned Cheryl recounting how her journey began with raISE in 2015.



Even for a seasoned entrepreneur like Cheryl, she shared that the thorough application process required her to rethink her business model and social impact indicators in greater detail, ensuring better sustainability of her business. The raiSE team then helped both Daniel and Cheryl to prepare for the interview to ensure they were well-equipped to secure the grant. Through the VentureForGood grant, The Social Space was able to increase its impact by providing employment opportunities to more beneficiaries. “It was a big help to us, but all things considered, it’s not just the money; we knew that if we were really in a bad state, there was someone we could turn to,” mentioned Daniel.

The journey to securing the space was not an easy one. When Cheryl embarked on a hunt for a viable location to set up shop, she waited several months for the availability of a unit in Chinatown – due to its proximity to rental flats that would presumably be a catchment pool for future beneficiaries. She fondly recalls logging onto Housing Development Board (HDB)’s website upon sighting an empty unit, checking daily for two months to see if she could place a bid for the unit but



“It was fate. If not for raiSE coming in, I do not think we would have ever secured this first unit at Chinatown.”

– Cheryl Ou, Co-founder



to no avail. Eventually, she reached out to raiSE for assistance, and she was connected to an official from HDB within a week. “Although we still had to pitch our idea to the Board, but with raiSE’s endorsement, they were very open to leasing the space to us. It was fate. If not for raiSE coming in, I do not think we would have ever secured this first unit at Chinatown,” said Cheryl. “And I probably would not have left my job,” chimed Daniel, who only left his corporate job once the space was secured.

Today, The Social Space is a multi-concept store that features a fair trade retail area, a cafe, a nail salon and an event space which employs 18 beneficiaries such as persons with special needs, mental health issues, and other disadvantaged backgrounds across two outlets and has bigger dreams for the future. “We hope one day the label of being an Social Enterprise doesn’t mean anything anymore, because there won’t be a distinction between a commercial business and a Social Enterprise,” noted Daniel. “I truly believe that all businesses should be a Social Enterprise,” Cheryl concluded.



# Words That Leave a Lasting Impact

## From the Board of Directors

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“The brightest stars are those who shine for the benefit of others. Over the past years, we witnessed the birth of many new stars in the SE ecosystem and I do hope we see many more. This is what I find most inspiring in my journey with raISE as we co-create an inclusive and caring society together.”

– Theresa Sim, Chairperson,  
Audit Committee

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“It has been a privilege to work with the raISE team and its member companies. Starting a company and making it successful in a competitive marketplace is already a tough undertaking. Doing all that and at the same time taking on beneficiaries is doubly hard. It is raISE’s job to help level the playing field for our members, and to the extent that the Grant Committee has contributed to this effort has brought much personal satisfaction and purpose.”

– John Tang, Chairperson,  
Grant Committee

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“We have experienced a new paradigm of business in recent years. Especially since Social Enterprises are capable of creating deep social impact, the need to raise awareness of their good work is imperative. The public outreach efforts that our committee oversees has seen good traction, with a steady upward trend of socially conscious consumers year on year. But, the fact that there is still so much more we can do for the SEs, inspires me to continue contributing at raISE.”

– Killick Datta, Chairperson, Public Engagement & Partnership Committee

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“2020 has been a most unusual year, and a challenging one for enterprises, Social Enterprises, and Social Service Agencies alike. The National Council of Social Service is happy to work alongside raISE to support and help our Social Enterprises emerge stronger, and to achieve the vision of every enterprise a Social Enterprise.”

– Tan Li San, Executive Committee and  
Member of the Company, raISE Ltd

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“To seed a start-up and watch it grow into a sturdy tree that provides good shade for all, it brings great joy to those who labour in the undertaking. For that start-up to also be a sustainable Social Enterprise that is dedicated to benefit the underserved, their joy is multiplied a hundredfold.”

– Sin Boon Ann, Chairperson,  
Investment Committee

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## From the Team at raiSE

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“As an individual, I create ripples; as a group, we create waves; but as a movement, we can create change. In the last five years, I have witnessed the birth of an SE movement made up of Social Entrepreneurs, Beneficiaries, Business & Government Leaders, and Consumers, that has brought about more sustainable social change. Our waves of change are no longer confined to Singapore as we are now part of a global SE community, and this is inspiring.”

– Casper Ng, Head,  
Sector Engagement & Capacity Building

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“At the heart of membership work, is knowing about the SEs and then making them known. Being able to facilitate transformative confidence and empowerment in others through partnerships and flagship campaigns like FestivalForGood and the President’s Challenge Social Enterprise Awards has been rewarding. Just like Social Enterprises, I strive to effect maximum change with presented resources, bringing ideas to fruition.”

– Harriet Lee, Senior Executive,  
Partnership & Engagement

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“I count myself incredibly fortunate to have been part of the social entrepreneurs’ journeys through my work at raiSE. It has been a fulfilling few years seeing the entrepreneurs grow their business from an early stage start-up when they first approached us, to where some of them are now, having achieved their intended impact and even scaling operations. I am deeply inspired by the passion, determination, and resilience of these social entrepreneurs and I look forward to continuing to support more of them during my time here.”

– Fairuz Fadhiah, Manager,  
Social Finance

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“Enabling Social Enterprises to Grow B.I.G. (Business. Impact. Good) gives my team the purpose to labour alongside passionate social entrepreneurs to envision bold endeavours, cultivate solutions for emerging issues, catalyse impactful and collaborative leadership, and strengthen dynamic social-business capabilities. These efforts pave the way for an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable economy where every business is empowered to do good.”

– Serene Tay, Senior Manager,  
Capacity Building

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“Seeing more corporations, social organisations, and the public take greater interest in the Social Enterprise sector over the years has been inspiring for me. I am grateful to be able to contribute through telling the stories of our Social Enterprises and building their capabilities so that they too, are empowered to share about how they use business solutions to create sustained social impact.”

– Koh Wei Shan, Senior Executive,  
Corporate Communications

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We hope that you have gained a deeper understanding of the Social Enterprise sector through raISE's work and the impact stories that have been shared.

Have you thought of how you would like to be a #partofthegood?

## Your Journey With raISE Begins Here



### As a Corporation

#### Make SEs a Part of Your Sustainability Journey Through raISE

1. Support Social Enterprises through raISE's Programmes
2. Engage in skills-based volunteering
3. Provide preferential rates for our Social Enterprises
4. Integrate Social Enterprises into your operations or procure from them
5. Spin off a Social Enterprise subsidiary
6. Align core business interests through investments or acquisitions
7. Set up a Foundation to deliver support to the Social Enterprise sector

#### Steps YOU Can Take To Work With raISE To Support SEs

1. Follow us on our social channels (@RAISE SG) to learn more about our Social Enterprises
2. Spread the good word
3. Get involved in events
4. Purchase from Social Enterprises
5. Share expertise and resources
6. Become an Individual member of raISE
7. Become a raISE Mentor or Fellow



### As an Individual



### As a Potential SE

#### Join The Community!

Are you a Social Enterprise looking to join raISE and gain access to the Social Enterprise ecosystem in Singapore? Perhaps you are a business interested to make the transition into a Social Enterprise?

The raISE membership is open to all registered companies that possess the qualities of a Social Enterprise with a proven social impact track record. Upon submission, your application will undergo the necessary validation process to evaluate if your company meets the requirements.

Find out more at [www.raise.sg](http://www.raise.sg)







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# Financial Statement



# Statement of Comprehensive Income

		FY19	FY18
Income	Operating Grants	3,496,490	2,981,226
	Capital Grants	4,386,473	3,381,952
	Investment Income	100,612	157,675
	Membership Fees	65,920	41,150
	Other Income Sources	116,383	1,533,620
	<b>Total Income Sources</b>	<b>8,165,878</b>	<b>8,095,623</b>
Operating Costs	Manpower Costs	2,122,482	2,107,802
	General and Administrative Costs	463,511	490,469
	<b>Total Operating Costs</b>	<b>2,585,993</b>	<b>2,598,271</b>
Programme Costs	Programmes and Services	616,846	1,125,315
	Public Education and Publicity	139,725	96,372
	<b>Total Programme Costs</b>	<b>756,571</b>	<b>1,221,687</b>
Grants to Social Enterprises	<b>Grants to Social Enterprises</b>	<b>4,401,606</b>	<b>2,881,952</b>
Other Losses	Share of Losses from Associated Companies	142,645	-
	Other Losses	36,902	504,082
	<b>Total Other Losses</b>	<b>179,547</b>	<b>504,082</b>
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>7,923,717</b>	<b>7,205,992</b>
Other Gains	Share of Profits from Associated Company	-	7,232
	<b>Net Surplus before Tax Expenses</b>	<b>242,161</b>	<b>896,863</b>
	Tax Expense	82,332	31,996
	<b>Net Surplus after Tax Expenses</b>	<b>159,829</b>	<b>864,867</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Year</b>		<b>159,829</b>	<b>864,867</b>

# Statement of Financial Position

		FY19	FY18
Assets	Non-Current Assets	3,049,979	3,249,737
	Current Assets	11,903,700	11,292,655
	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>14,953,679</b>	<b>14,542,392</b>
Liabilities	Non-Current Liabilities	6,789,085	6,495,687
	Current Liabilities	491,014	532,954
	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>7,280,099</b>	<b>7,028,641</b>
Funds	Unrestricted Fund	2,771,208	2,448,445
	Restricted Fund	4,902,372	5,065,306
	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>7,673,580</b>	<b>7,513,751</b>

# Segment Reporting FY19

Statement of Comprehensive Income	Total	Sector Development	Grant Administration	Investment
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>8,165,878</b>	<b>3,749,872</b>	<b>3,039,903</b>	<b>1,376,103</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>				
General, Admin and Manpower Costs	2,585,993	2,560,063	25,930	-
Programme Costs	756,571	756,571	-	-
Grants to Social Enterprises	4,401,606	-	3,029,106	1,372,500
Other Losses	36,902	13,010	-	23,892
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>7,781,072</b>	<b>3,329,644</b>	<b>3,055,036</b>	<b>1,396,392</b>
Share of Loss from Associated Companies	142,645	-	-	142,645
<b>Net Surplus before Tax Expenses</b>	<b>242,161</b>	<b>420,228</b>	<b>(15,133)</b>	<b>(162,934)</b>
Income Tax Expense	82,332	82,332	-	-
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Year</b>	<b>159,829</b>	<b>337,896</b>	<b>(15,133)</b>	<b>(162,934)</b>
Balance at 1 April 2019	7,513,751	2,448,445	-	5,065,306
<b>Balance at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>7,673,580</b>	<b>2,786,341</b>	<b>(15,133)</b>	<b>4,902,372</b>

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