



Leading from the ground up

A handbook by NVPC on everything you
need to know about starting and running
a groundup in Singapore

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Foreword by Minister Edwin Tong

A thriving society depends on all its members – government, businesses, communities and individuals – working together and doing their part to address society's needs. The community sector is a diverse one, ranging from community organisations, neighbourhood, and civic groups and groundups.

Groundups exemplify what active citizenry means. Self-organised and voluntary, they tend to be small and informal in nature. Yet, they make a significant difference to the local community by addressing problems or opportunities that they identified on the ground.

Many groundups are born out of a desire to address an unmet need, enrich community life, and to make a difference to the lives of others. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw numerous groundups form and step up to serve pressing needs on the ground. Many supported vulnerable individuals and communities through initiatives such as food distribution drives, mental health support and digital skills training.

This handbook provides a one-stop guide to groundup initiatives at different stages of their community-serving journey, with research insights, activity templates, real-life examples, and resource tables. Through the sharing of resources and exchanging best practices, we can maximise the positive outcomes of our collective efforts.

Each of us has the power to make a difference in our communities. We can all contribute to building a more resilient, inclusive, and caring Singapore. Regardless of the part you play in the groundup space, I encourage all of you to step forward and help shape our shared future by collaborating and engaging with your fellow Singaporeans.

From the ground up, let us continue to support and nurture such initiatives, to build a better Singapore together.

Edwin Tong

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Second Minister for Law



Message from Tony Soh

Over the years and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen an increasing number of Singaporeans stepping forward to make a difference and better the lives of the people in their community. They did not wait for things to improve or for others to solve the problem. Instead, they took the initiative to distribute food to their neighbours who could not afford it, supported others to help them to get through life's difficulties and played their part in improving their communities and Singapore as a whole.

Why and how do these 'heroes' step forward? How many of them are there? How can the community, grant givers and policymakers support them? What makes them effective? How are they making an impact in the community?

To answer such questions, we undertook the first-ever comprehensive study of groundups (GU) and their ecosystem in Singapore. The Groundup Initiative Study (GUIS) 2023 revealed the diverse and valuable contributions of groundups to our society and the need for practical and effective support for this rapidly growing community throughout different stages of a groundup's lifecycle. This handbook presents the findings from this landmark study. It seeks to provide the toolkits, guides and links to resources that will enable you to start, sustain and grow your groundup more effectively. The handbook weaves together the vast array of information for groundups available from different sources into a single go-to resource.

At NVPC, we are committed to enable and empower every person with the passion to make a difference to build a more compassionate, inclusive and caring society. Together, we can become the City of Good.

Tony Soh

Chief Executive Officer, NVPC



Message from Dr. Ingmar van Meerkerk

Groundup Initiatives and Community-Based Initiatives – A Global Perspective

Citizens taking the initiative to self-organise to contribute to the provision of community or public services is a growing phenomenon in various countries across the globe. In international literature, these are also known as community-based initiatives (CBIs). Groundup initiatives are a relatively recent, interesting, and inspiring example of CBIs in the context of Singapore.

In these initiatives, citizens determine the aims, means, and actual implementation of their projects and activities. They are also relevant and interesting to civic engagement and public value creation. As the GUIIS nicely shows, CBIs, like groundups, can provide innovative, hands-on responses and solutions to specific community needs, complementing existing services provided by governments, markets or institutionalised non-profit organisations.

Interestingly, due to their more informal nature, close ties to the community they serve, and their often-small scale, they can be flexible, creative, and responsive. However, these very same assets also make it challenging for them to be recognised as valuable partners and to create broader impact. The relationship with governmental institutions and the wider ecosystem can be supportive, but also challenging to navigate.

This unique handbook is based on study findings, and provides resources and solutions to help groundups navigate the Singapore context; be clearer about their strategies and impacts; and deal with challenges and needs. It adds new perspectives to a more global trend of CBIs.

Dr Ingmar Van Meerkerk

Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration and Sociology,
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Background

This handbook was developed based on findings gathered from NVPC's Groundup Initiative Study (GIS) 2023.¹ This is the largest dataset covering groundups ever generated in Singapore and it comprises over 1,000 unique variables available for analysis. The graphic below showcases the various data collection methods used and their respective statistics.



1. The study was sponsored by Tote Board and developed in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

Furthermore, we have consulted major stakeholders and groundups themselves through multiple workshop sessions for the development of this handbook. In this handbook, you will find the following:



References to our interactive **activity book** to help you succeed in your groundup's journey



Extensive **resources** for each stage of a groundup's journey



Real-world examples and illustrations of key challenges and ways to overcome them across the groundup lifecycle.



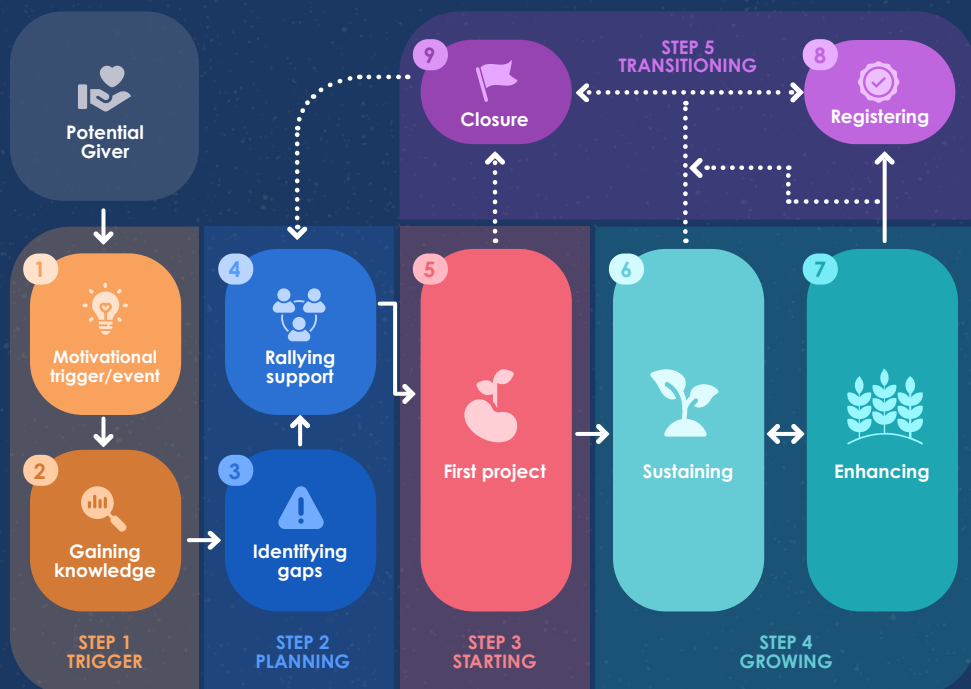
Links to external organisations and stakeholders who work directly with groundups



How To Use This Handbook

The diagram below illustrates the usual journey taken by groundups. This life cycle of a groundup guides the flow of the handbook where each chapter corresponds to a particular stage of the lifecycle. Regardless of what stage of the lifecycle you are at, you will definitely find something useful in the respective chapters. Alongside this handbook, we have also curated a list of activities you can do to complement the insights you find.

Click here for the link: [Boosting Your Groundup](#)



Whether you are new or a veteran in the groundup space, you will definitely find something useful in this handbook



I'm new to the groundup space and want to know more!

You can read:

Chapter 1: Motivational Triggers and Events

Chapter 2: Gaining Knowledge

I know a little bit about groundups, but how can I be more involved?

You can read:

Chapter 3: Identifying Gaps

Chapter 4: Rallying Support



I want to start my own groundup, what should I do?

You can read:

Chapter 5: First Project



I want to make a bigger impact with my groundup!

You can read:

Chapter 6: Sustaining

Chapter 7: Enhancing



I want to know whether I should register my groundup or close it?

You can read:

Chapter 8: Registering

Chapter 9: Closure





What is a Groundup?

“A groundup is a group of individuals who voluntarily come together to carry out a self-organised project or initiative to benefit the community. Groundups are not-for-profit and are not registered organisations.”

better>sg

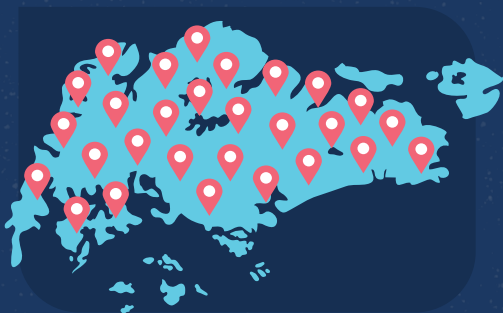
February 2023

The Universe of Groundup Initiatives in Singapore²

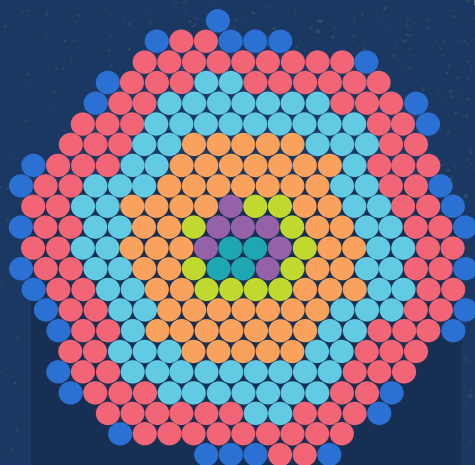
Ask yourself if this sounds familiar – classmates who started off tutoring underprivileged children as part of their school activities and continue to do so after graduation; or a group of like-minded youths who decided to take action and spread environmental awareness through social media campaigns and structured programmes; or perhaps colleagues and friends who started engaging underserved seniors in a rental block weekly, bonded by a common interest to give back to the community.

Everywhere you look, there are signs of passionate individuals starting their own movements to do good and build better communities for those in need.

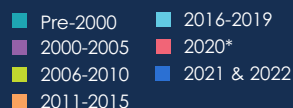
Today, we estimate that there are roughly **1,000 unique groundups in Singapore.**



This landscape continues to grow, with projects targeting a multitude of causes from community building, social, and welfare services to the environment and sports. While many initiatives began before COVID-19, the pandemic saw a surge in the number of people boldly stepping up to organise their own community efforts.

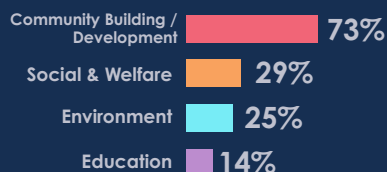


Year Groundup started



*Surge in the number of groundups during the pandemic

Top 4 Causes



Top Target Groups



Top 3 Services Offered



2. Data derived from GUIS 2023

3. Examples include residents in Bedok rental flats

Step 1: Triggers



ACTIVITY #2 Motivational triggers

Chapter 1: Motivational Triggers and Events

Getting motivated to do something about an issue close to your heart is often the starting point in the groundup lifecycle: from witnessing lonely seniors in your neighbourhood, to experiencing grief and loss of a family member or friend. We have spoken to many people going through important life events and experiencing what you may feel now.

Trust us, you are not alone!




Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"During my secondary school years, I was bullied extensively and developed depression and social anxiety...if I can change the life of one person, then they need not go through the trials and obstacles that were (unfairly) thrown my way. At least, they can have a shot at happiness..."

This was how my vision, and the seed for what will become The Catalyst Collective, was born – you do not need to be someone special for change to happen. Sometimes, all it takes is an act of compassion from someone for one's life to change for the better."

- Ryan, The Catalyst Collective

Reading about the stories of various changemakers and groundup founders can help to put your own experiences into context. Make yourself a cup of tea and let the story begin.

RESOURCES		Table 1: Stories of Changemakers	
Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect	
Gov.sg	Social and Community Stories	Stories detailing everyday Singaporeans doing their part for the community	
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY)	Kaya	Stories of individuals making a difference in the arts, heritage, community and youth, and sports sector	
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)	Our Stories	Stories of social service sector professionals' journeys in empowering others	
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)	1. Case Study on GUs 2. BAGUS Together Stories	Stories about existing groundup founders and why they started their initiatives	
The Majority Trust (TMT)	SGStrong Stories	Stories of SGStrong grantees and the initiatives they have started during the COVID-19 pandemic	

Chapter 2: Gaining Knowledge

Getting inspired by the stories and finding resonance? Great! Having the heart gives you a good start, but we need to do more with the head involved. Understanding the issue in a broader social context will help better channel your precious time and energy.

What are the issues affecting our lives in Singapore? What is causing the issues we face? Who is affected in what ways? What are the government, non-profit organisations, companies and grassroots currently doing to help?

Below are some useful resources to learn about the issues in society, what the government is doing to help, and what change-making looks like.



RESOURCES⁴

Table 2: Issues in Society

Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
ForwardSG	Findings from the ForwardSG Engagement	A consolidated list of the various concerns and actions arising from citizen engagement across different areas such as employment, health and social support
Lien Centre for Social Innovation, Singapore Management University (SMU)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Research Social Space Magazine 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reports on unmet social needs, social finance and corporate philanthropy in Singapore and beyond Articles which cover various topics related to social impact, sustainability and innovative solutions to social challenges
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY)	Emerging Stronger Conversations	Sector-based insights gathered from the participants in the Emerging Stronger Conversations
Ministry of Finance (MOF)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Social Safety Nets Singapore Budget 	Statistics on how well Singapore has addressed societal gaps and key highlights from the past Singapore Budget.
Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What We Do Media Room 	Overview of MSF's programmes, resources and information on various social and family-related topics
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> National Studies Sector Insights UNFILTERED by NVPC Groundup Initiative Study 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Research work on national level trends of volunteerism and philanthropy Reports, studies, and publications of Singapore's non-profit and social service sectors A podcast series where guests are invited to share their philanthropic stories. The first-ever national-level Groundup Initiative Study in Singapore done by NVPC which features valuable insights on the groundup landscape
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)	Translational Social Research Division	Research on Singapore's social service sector to promote and support the development of evidence-based practices
National Youth Council (NYC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Research & Engagement - Youth Insights Youthopia — Converse 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Youth-related information to help sector partners better understand youths Youth-centred discussions around pressing national and social issues
Presencing Institute	u-school for Transformation — Theory U	An awareness-based method for changing systems
Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS)	SingStat	Official statistical data and information about various aspects of Singapore's economy, society and population

4. The current set of resources are meant to be a guide on various channels of information relating to the social service sector. Do augment any research you have done with your own ground sensing and knowledge.

Step 2: Planning

Chapter 3: Identifying Gaps



ACTIVITY #4
Volunteer
and reflect

ACTIVITY #5
Search for
relevant
organisations

Now that you have read up more on various social issues, did you feel strongly about any areas? The next step is to go deeper into particular causes and topics that you care about or issues in your local community, especially what is known and what has been done.

You can refer to the 'Primary Sector' listed on the [Charities Portal](#) for a list of causes. Do be cautious of tagging yourself to certain causes for popularity's sake – we should always be driven by gaps and needs, rather than what is trendy. **Within a cause, be specific about the target group you want to help.** For example, narrowing 'elderly' down to 'elderly lacking social support' can make your project more focused. If you're having trouble finding your target group, reflect on your purpose and broaden your network. You can also scope your target group based on their geographical location.



Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"What triggered the groundup movement was when I was volunteering with Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore to help hawkers, Grab drivers, taxi drivers to e-file their taxes for about 10 years...and because they actually terminated the programme in 2016 quite suddenly, I actually found that definitely there are still people who are still not so tech savvy..."

- Paul, Community E-Filing Service Group (CES)

In addition, volunteering for the specific cause/issue you care about is one good way to gain first-hand knowledge that can help you craft an innovative solution/service. There are many key organisations and sites with aggregated resources and volunteering opportunities that you can explore. For example, [Giving.sg](#) is a national platform where volunteering opportunities with non-profit organisations (NPOs) in Singapore can be easily filtered and found. Others like this can be found in the resource table below.

RESOURCES		Table 3: Volunteering Opportunities	
Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect	
Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF)	MSFCare Network	A portal which connects like-minded volunteers with volunteering opportunities and updates from the MSF-Family and its partners	
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and SG Cares	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discover the Undiscovered You - Find Your inspiration Turn Passion into Action - View Opportunities Volunteer Centres (VCs) 	Platforms to identify volunteer opportunities based on your interest and geographical location	
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)	Giving.sg	National platform of volunteering opportunities for a wide range of different causes	
People's Association (PA)	Volunteering Opportunities	Your nearest Community Centres/Clubs (CCs) often have volunteering opportunities you can explore!	
SG Assist	SG Assist app	A mobile app to crowdsource nearby volunteers to provide community assistance	
susGain	susGain app	A rewards-based engagement app to drive sustainable behavioural change within communities	
Open Jio, Volunteer Jio	Telegram Channels: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Open Jio Volunteer jio 	A collection of the latest events and volunteering opportunities in the social sector	
The Volunteer Switchboard	The Volunteer Switchboard - Upcoming Events	A calendar of volunteering events with their accompanying details and vacancies	
Youth Corps Singapore (YCS)	Volunteering Opportunities	Volunteering opportunities for youths to positively impact society	
Zeles	Zeles VMS App	A platform that allows you to browse and join activities as well as be rewarded with treats from corporate sponsors	

As you identify and address the gaps, it is important to have a good sense of what work is already being done. Being inspired by others is great, but be careful not to directly duplicate existing measures.



Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"I realised that some areas such as Chinatown are always served by groups and organisations. After much researching, I found that the rental estates in Jalan Bukit Merah do not have many groups serving the seniors there. That's one of the reasons why I started my project in Jalan Bukit Merah. For those who want to start their own distribution projects, it is important to do a landscape scan to check where and what are the needs, and if they are already served."

- Vincent, A Packet Of Rice

In summary, these are the different ways for you to understand needs and gaps:

What you can do....



Research online about key issues in your local/interest area



Search for volunteering opportunities in the community



Search for local groundups or NPOs doing work in your local/interest area



Speak to those in NPOs or other groups about what they think the gaps are



Speak to your neighbours/other relevant people about the issues they face

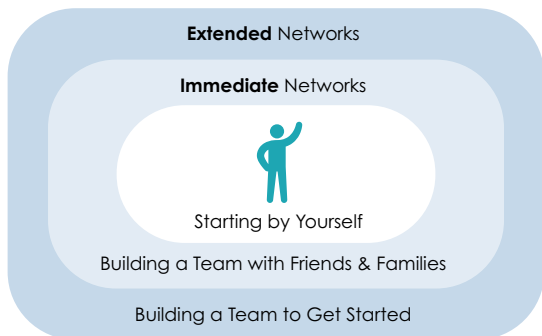


Attend events in your community or sharing sessions from local groups

Chapter 4:

Rallying Support

Now that you have a better idea of what needs to be done, it is time to rally support for your idea. This chapter covers how to recruit and rally people to support your cause.



4.1 Starting by Yourself

We understand that sometimes it's easier to start by yourself. Many groundups in Singapore were started by sole leaders, and many of them have been successful (e.g., [Stigma2Strength Singapore](#)). However, do look out for learning opportunities and events that can connect you to the wider groundup ecosystem. Opportunities for collaboration and access to certain stakeholders are often easier when you know the right people in the right networks.

NOTE TO SELF

Even if it's daunting to start alone, believe in yourself and give it your best shot! You'll meet lots of people who care about an issue as much as you do in the process.

RESOURCES

Table 4: Starting by Yourself

Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
FriendzoneSG	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Importance of Making Diverse Friendships Overcoming Your Fears: Speaking to New People 	Articles sharing how diverse friendships can improve your quality of life and useful tips on engaging new friends!
National Youth Council (NYC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Young Changemakers Youth Action Plan - Youth Action Challenge 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A grant which supports youth-initiated projects that benefit Singapore community and society An avenue for youths to collaborate with various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to address social issues and enact positive change

4.2 Build a Team With Friends and Family

Often, new groundup founders work within their immediate networks to recruit members. There are many examples of families starting a volunteering project together (e.g., [Smiles Salam SG](#)) or a group of friends or students coming together to tackle a social issue (e.g., [Singapore Youth for Climate Action \(SYCA\)](#)). There are also examples of colleagues with specific skills coming together to meet a need in the community (e.g., [Contribute SG](#)).



4.3 Build a Team With Like-minded Individuals



You can also look beyond your immediate network for potential supporters. Attending networking events (e.g., visit [LepakInSG](#) for a calendar of environmental-based activities and events) or even neighbourhood meetups (e.g., [Friendzone](#)) can help connect you to like-minded individuals.

An important factor in rallying support is having an emotionally compelling story to draw people to join your groundup. Beyond what you want to do, you'll most likely be asked "So, what's your story?" Think about your own experiences and how they made you interested in your cause of interest. If you are having trouble articulating your story, consider doing **Activities #6 and #7** in our activity book to develop a convincing argument.



4.4 Getting Help to Get Started


Starting is the hardest, they say. If you have an idea, go for it! Participate in hackathons and sandbox programmes such as NYC's [Young Changemakers Programme](#) or the [Hungry for Change Challenge](#) organised by the National Environment Agency (NEA), or join networks like [Social Impact Catalyst!](#)⁵ These will give you additional inputs, add value to your project ideas and allow you to build new connections within the existing groundup ecosystem.

We have also curated a list of other readable guides to help you get started on making your ideas concrete and building your own community.



RESOURCES

Table 5: Getting Started

Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
National Youth Council (NYC)	So You Want to Start a Ground-up Project Guidebook	This guidebook introduces common frameworks and tools as well as provides tips and real-life case studies to help you start your own groundup project
Singapore Kindness Movement (SKM)	Ground-up Movement (GUM) e-Playbook	A comprehensive guide for individuals or informal groups interested in initiating their own movements to promote the message of kindness, graciousness and consideration
Third Sector Project (UK)	How to Set Up a Community Group Successfully	A handy guide to help you start, promote and run a successful community group to create tangible impact on future communities.

5. More focused on social enterprises and startups, but still useful for aspiring groundups.

Step 3: Starting

Chapter 5: First Project

Congratulations on reaching this step! This is where things get real (but fun). Hopefully by now, you would have done your research, identified a gap you want to address and are ready to start planning your first project.

This chapter will guide you on how to build a strong core team, formulate an idea, identify and secure relevant resources needed, as well as have a think about what initial measurements your groundup should keep track of.

In practice, not all groundups will sit down and go through these choices explicitly. However, if you prefer a more structured approach, this chapter alongside the activity book can serve as a guide.

As a start, it is important to always remember your motivations. **Being clear on your 'Why' builds resilience when things get tough and can offer refreshed perspectives on current project ideas.** Always remember that the people you are helping should be the core of your 'Why' and that keeping their perspectives in mind is imperative to your groundup's success.



5.1 Team



As a groundup, you are likely to possess limited resources. Thus, it is important to identify the strengths and passions/interests of each team member. Use **Activities #8 and #9** to identify and understand the skillsets of each member within the team to **determine clear roles and responsibilities** for higher efficiency in project implementation. This can also help reduce confusion and misunderstanding in achieving the goals.

As you plan and execute your project, don't forget to continuously **ask for your members' inputs** – this can help to uncover hidden biases. Lastly, don't forget to **support them emotionally** as this can immensely help to boost group morale and foster a close-knit community for the long haul.



Insights From Our Research:

Certain groundups who have a core team said they benefitted from a group with complementary skill sets that have different areas of responsibility for the groundup, allowing an overall better decision-making process.

TIPS AND TRICKS


Build a culture of checking in to understand your members' expectations and commitments. This will help you manage workloads and come up with plans to engage members even when life priorities change.

5.2 Services/Project Ideas

One way of coming up with a project idea is to look at what others are doing. At this point, you would most likely have volunteered with other groups working in the same cause that you are interested in. Think about what they are doing well, what gaps can be filled and how your service can add value. In addition, consider if there is room for collaboration and leverage each other's resources. From there, you can fine-tune your project ideas.

To augment your ideation step, consider incorporating elements of design thinking to ensure your project is meeting the intended needs of the target group you wish to help.

Want more inspiration? You can read more about innovation and design thinking in the table below. There is also research on the inclusive design of products and services for disadvantaged groups to expand your horizons.

RESOURCES		Table 6: Design Thinking
Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
MIT Sloan	Design thinking, explained	Guide on how to come up with innovative ideas that effectively tackle the problem at hand
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)	Social Innovation Starter Kit	A practical guidebook with tools and templates on how to better design ideas and services
Singapore Centre for Social Enterprise, raise	Inclusive Design of Products and Services DRIVE Toolkit	Toolkit to help facilitate self-assessment and the mapping out of a roadmap to implementation
Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR)	Convening by Design	An article which contains principles and tactics for creating strategic convenings that foster meaningful interaction and outcomes

Finally, if you are overwhelmed and simply want someone to bounce off ideas with, there are also friendly faces whom you can speak to from the [Ministry of Culture, Community & Youth](#) and the [National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre's BAGUS Together team!](#)

5.3 Channels

There are a few factors to consider when choosing a specific channel to better connect with your target group and boost publicity for your groundup. Firstly, **identify the rationale behind the engagement**. Is it to increase publicity, increase awareness, or to disseminate information? Knowing the reasons behind your engagement will help streamline the channels used for effective outreach.

Try to keep your engagements fun and interesting to captivate your audience. If you have members with an aptitude for graphic design, they can even do up eye-catching infographics using tools like [Canva](#) to reach your intended audience in a more interactive manner.

Don't limit your creativity as well! You can even partner with like-minded organisations for diversified outreach and engagement approaches.









Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"Maybe for some events, you have managed to reach certain people and they spread the message and, you know, you have to keep doing it. So, that alongside raising awareness, it's also reaching out to different groups of people... We actually partnered with The Projector. So, we managed to screen a film together, and there were like discussions that took place after. So, it was a good way of reaching out to new people..."

- Mathilda, Advocates For Refugees-Singapore (AFR-SG)

Photo credits: Millennials of Singapore

Channel	Benefits	Drawbacks
 SOCIAL MEDIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide reach • Easy to post • Easy to engage with audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skewed to a certain audience • May be difficult to directly reach and engage with each individual
 ONLINE MEETINGS/ WEBINARS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to access • Wide reach • Small setup costs • More engagement with a smaller audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skewed to a certain audience • May be difficult to directly reach and engage with each individual
 FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS WITH INDIVIDUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep engagement with each person • Easier to understand personal experiences and perspectives of target groups • Team can have a presence on the ground with the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More costly to arrange • More resource intensive for a smaller reach • May be difficult to accommodate the meeting timings
 FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good engagement with the audience • The attendees can network among themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most costly to arrange • Need to prepare content and logistics for the events

5.4 Spaces/Venues

Groundups often need to have their own spaces or access to spaces to execute their projects. While it may be possible to utilise team members' homes or common spaces such as the HDB void decks or libraries, sometimes these may have restrictions and are not ideal for collaborative work.

If you're ever in a bind, the [NVPC BAGUS Together Space Directory](#) contains a list of partners who are able to offer discounted rates or even free spaces for groundups to use for various types of activities, subject to availability.

5.5 Initial Funds

The majority of groundups are primarily self-funded – most of the money comes from within the team itself.

If your groundup requires more funding, external funding can be acquired via crowdfunding or grants. However, it is important to clearly define your project goals and objectives and have a well-thought-out plan for how the funding will be used. Depending on the nature of your groundup activity, you could potentially be eligible for [grants offered by various agencies](#).

In deciding between self-funding and external funding, do consider the following funding options (and remember, you can always use a combination of them!):

TIPS AND TRICKS

Using simple templates to track your funds and expenditure can go a long way in establishing your groundup's credibility and continued trust from supporters.

Self-funding

This is the easiest method but may not be sustainable if you intend to run your activity for a prolonged period of time.

Crowdfunding

(Collecting funds from friends, volunteers and/or through crowdfunding websites)

Success hinges on your ability to tell a convincing story to rally support as well as how well you can manage donors and remain accountable for the funds collected.

Grants

Grants can give your initiatives a financial boost, but often require significant time and effort to complete the administrative process (e.g., filling out forms, answering questions from funder, post-event reporting, etc...).

Important to note that grants typically cover up to a certain percentage of the expenditure and are often on a reimbursement basis (i.e., you will still need to pay first).



Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"We will buy from the supplier and take pictures of the receipts to show the donor... to build the relationship with the donor...I would also, you know, WhatsApp them or sometimes give them a thank you letter for supporting us."

- Azlina, Smiles Salam SG

5.6 Initial Measurements

It is useful to start thinking about measuring your achievements even if you are planning for your first-ever project. These can be simple indicators to show any tangible changes through a 'before' and 'after' comparison.

Potential stakeholders will be looking out for this type of information when deciding whether or not to collaborate with your groundup.

TIPS AND TRICKS

Don't try to measure everything you do. Instead, focus on the specific changes that you wish to make.

Some examples of questions you may pose to your target groups are: "Have we been helpful to you? In what ways? What is something that you can do now that you could not before?" to your target group

Possible Metrics of Success



No. of events ran

35%

Level of satisfaction of target groups

20%

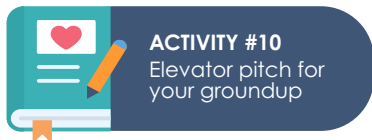
Size of target group reached

30%

Number of items distributed

40%

We will talk more about measurement later in the handbook – check out Chapter 7 on 'Enhancing' if you want to adopt a more structured approach.



ACTIVITY #10

Elevator pitch for your groundup

Now that you have reflected on all aspects of your groundup, it is time to summarise your ideas! **Activity #10** will help you come up with a succinct "profile" description of your groundup.

You can use this short description to introduce yourself to other groups and stakeholders. Do refer back to it when calibrating operations – reflect, refine and revise it when improving your projects and approaches as your groundup grows.



Step 4: Growing

Chapter 6: Sustaining

What often helps an embryonic groundup project grow and sustain is its team's ability to go beyond the direct needs of its service users to address the root cause of the problem they are tackling. Groundups which have just started their first projects might be meeting certain basic needs – but as they build on their knowledge and experiences acquired throughout the journey, they are more likely to go deeper and thus be more targeted with their solutions.



Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"The way that 6th Sense grows is based on interacting with others in the ecosystem and learning from them and a lot of it is by trial and error...because only by trial and errors, we can figure out our role better."

- Abhishek Bajaj, 6th Sense

Keep in mind that oftentimes, growing your groundup entails a lot of trial and error – and there is no one 'correct' way to grow your groundup. In this chapter, we will cover how to manage your own expectations and goals, steward leadership and monitor progress, as well as how to cast your networks wider and increase the visibility of your groundup.


6.1 Sustaining Yourself

As changemakers, groundups are often very passionate about their causes and are likely to dive fully into the projects they work on. This is great but you should also try to be realistic about the amount of time and energy you can dedicate to the project and stick to your limits. Burnout can get the best of us.



RESOURCES

Table 7: Sustaining Yourself

Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)	WARNING: Burnout Alert	A podcast interview with Megan from Limitless, discussing what burnout entails, how it manifests and ways to overcome it.

Setting smaller, more manageable goals can help reduce burnout and manage expectations. You can pilot your programmes on a smaller scale to tease out the best approach to maximise its potential at launch and scale your projects as you grow.

It may sound like a cliché, but it is true that “If you want to go quickly go alone – but if you want to go far, go together.” Team members can help to bounce ideas, ease your burden, and act as pillars of emotional support as you work together on the project.

Additionally, some groundups may find mentorship with more experienced volunteers to be immensely helpful. Mentors can help assess your project ideas and offer valuable inputs to improve your groundup’s operations.

Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:



“Mentorship, first of all, it helped me a lot to start a project from just like a Junior College (JC) kid who doesn’t know anything about leading a project, having a project lead from another project join mine to actually help tell me what to do... was a very good thing for Better.SG... Mentorship has actually helped me a lot in learning how to organise the team, organise meetings as well as meeting a deadline.”

- Neo Zhi Xuan, Better.SG

6.2 Leadership and Monitoring Progress During Growth

As your project continues and the team grows, leadership would necessarily entail putting some new structures and processes in place. Remember to delegate early – do not let the daily tasks overwhelm you. Instead, focus on the core contributions your groundup is making to the target audience.

Repeat **Activity #8: Delegating responsibilities** again to periodically assess the distribution of tasks among your team members based on their respective interests and abilities. These tasks could be divided broadly along the lines of programmes, marketing, fundraising and finance, volunteer management, stakeholder engagement etc.

As more projects are carried out, it can be easy to follow the same formula for your programmes without evaluating whether they still work as well as before. But do take a step back and **remember your target groups are at the core of your groundup**. Having regular catch-ups with them or even conducting a quick survey on the effectiveness of your services can help identify areas of improvement.



Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

“To start on the right foot, it has to be needs-based. Really addressing the needs, not based on assumptions. So gather evidence to prove that there’s a real need to meet.”

- Andrew Ong, Break the Cycle SG


Try out **Activity #11** to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of how well your groundup meets the needs of your target group.



ACTIVITY #11
Understanding your target group better

RESOURCES

Table 8: Leadership and Monitoring Progress

Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR)	Listening to Those Who Matter Most: the Beneficiaries	An article on the importance of consulting beneficiaries in shaping social programmes, services, and policies
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)	Empowerment Deconstructed! A Guide to Grow Empowering Practices	A guidebook on empowerment that provides a structured 4-step process for promoting empowerment, as well as various tools and resources to help you evaluate your progress.

6.3 Amplifying Your Groundup

Growing your groundup entails harnessing resources available in the wider ecosystem. As such, it is important to establish strong connections with various stakeholders. **Curate your personal story to better align with your potential stakeholders' interest areas to establish a win-win collaboration.**



Case in Point: YouthHarmony



YouthHarmony's founder, Yi Terng, first reached out to TuneCore to pitch a partnership for Youth Music Day 2021. TuneCore felt that YouthHarmony deeply resonated with TuneCore's own values and was thus very willing to sponsor and be a part of their programme. They shared the various ways to help and educate musicians on potential career pathways in their organisations.

To this day, YouthHarmony's partnership with TuneCore has only grown. TuneCore's Head of SouthEast Asia, Cyrus Chen, is now on YouthHarmony's Advisory Council as a Corporate Advisor and regularly partakes in their programmes.




ACTIVITY #12

Communicate with stakeholders

This is where things get tough for the introvert in all of us. Consider rotating your groundup core team members to get out there and attend events around the cause area your groundup operates in or networking events for changemakers. Whether it is to warm relationships with existing funders, swapping experiences and contacts for good vendors, or even forging new connections with potential collaborators, there are many benefits to expanding your network.

As you widen your network, use **Activity #12** to help identify and decide how you approach each type of stakeholder.

In addition, as a fledgling organisation with limited presence, increasing your publicity could be key to growing your overall footprint. Apart from tapping on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) to tell your story, it is also worthwhile to explore opportunities with external established organisations to feature your impact story or even publicise your upcoming event for greater outreach.

RESOURCES		Table 9: Amplifying Your Groundup
Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
A Good Space (AGS)	Join our mailing list!	Subscribe for access to networking events for changemakers
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)	BAGUS Together - Programmes	Networking events for groundups and publicity opportunities
People's Association (PA)	onePA Residents' Committees	Your nearest Community Centres/Clubs (CCs) often have volunteering opportunities you can explore!
Singapore Kindness Movement (SKM)	Kindred Spirit Circle Events	Regular networking, funding, and publicity opportunities are available when you sign up as a Ground Up Movement with SKM

Chapter 7: Enhancing

At this point in your groundup journey, you are already familiar with running projects, meeting beneficiaries and meeting others in the ecosystem. The next step is about enhancing the good work in the long run.

In this chapter, we dive deeper into elements that can enhance the effectiveness of your groundup and some possible frameworks you can adopt to help structure it.



7.1 Organisational Performance



ACTIVITY #13 Evaluate and monitor progress

The word 'performance' is daunting – we know. We bet you have been focusing on executing your projects as well as you can and on the people you help. However, reviewing your organisational performance as a groundup (i.e., how well you are meeting your objectives) can better help articulate your impact to any potential partners and funders you hope to work with.


Activity #13 involves using a Value Proposition Canvas to help you better understand how well your groundup is currently meeting the needs and shaping the experiences of your target groups. Beyond that, the resource table contains some more comprehensive and commonly utilised tools, such as:

- The **Theory of Change** encourages us to reflect on our objectives and guides us on how to achieve them in certain structured steps. This can help set up the foundation of your strategy, evaluation and communication. Use the resources in the table to give it a try!
- **Logic frameworks or models** are used to help design, plan, execute and evaluate projects. You can also apply it to your groundup to examine the relationships among the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.

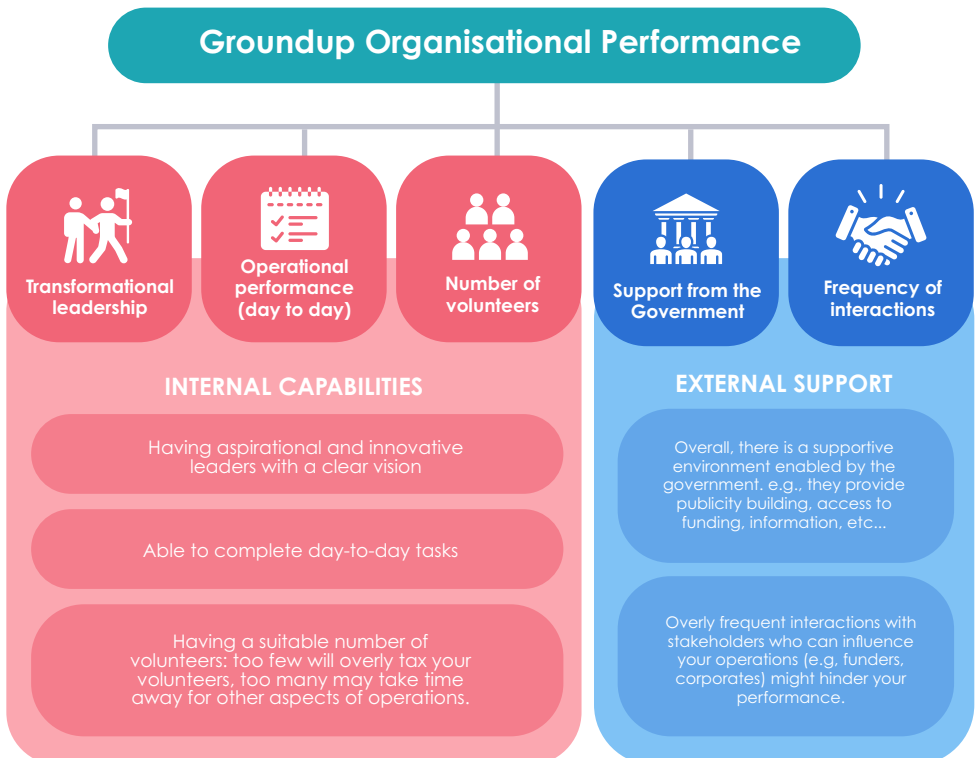


RESOURCES

Table 10: Performance Measurement

Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
National Youth Council	Developing a Programme Logic Model	Guide on how to use a logic model in the implementation of a programme
Miro	Theory of Change Template	A comprehensive template for you to apply the Theory of Change to your groupup
New Philanthropy Capital UK	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Theory of change in ten steps Understanding Impact Starting to measure your impact 	A detailed, step-by-step guide in crafting your own Theory of Change and other useful guides to understand, measure and improve impact

In addition, based on our research, five overarching factors can impact a groupup's organisational performance.



7.2 Transformational Leadership

Very often, we find groundup leaders to be 'accidental leaders' – they start an initiative with a focus on solving a social issue, but realise that as their groundup grows, they often find themselves struggling with leading others – a role that they may have never envisioned themselves being in.



Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"When I started having more volunteers, with an expanding team and working with more partners, my problem became knowing how to manage my volunteers and how I should go about communicating to the different stakeholders. I didn't also know how to communicate with my own volunteers. Yes, I was a volunteer once but you know, as a volunteer and now as someone managing volunteers, is there a difference in how we should approach it? There's a lot of questions I have."

- Phui Yi, Heart over Mind

This is certainly no easy feat – everyone in the groundup is a volunteer, the founder included. How does a volunteer leader motivate and influence another to carry out the tasks required, while at the same time upholding certain standards and quality?

Among the various types of leadership we observe, one model which has demonstrated positive correlation with overall performance across different settings (e.g., corporate and public) is the Transformational Leadership (TFL) style. Learning TFL can enable you to better inspire your team, navigate external trends and build innovativeness and creativity in the group.⁶

6. Igalla, M., Edelenbos, J., & van Meerkerk, I. (2020). What explains the performance of community-based initiatives? Testing the impact of leadership, social capital, organisational capacity, and government support. *Public Management Review*, 22(4), 602-632.

To assess whether you are exhibiting TFL qualities, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you have a clear idea and long-term vision of where your groundup is heading?
- Are you able to articulate a clear and inspirational agenda of change, and express an appealing vision of your groundup's mission and future?
- Are you able to stimulate and encourage creativity and innovativeness to those around you to solve your existing problems?

Feeling lost?

BAGUS Together's Leadership Huddle sessions offers a safe space for groundups to leverage collective wisdom to improve their leadership capabilities.

For more examples of how TFL practitioners act, you can refer to this [article](#).

7.3 Operational Performance

We will now dive more into operational performance (i.e., how well the groundup runs on a day-to-day basis).

We segment operational performance into five key areas, namely:



SKILLS,
PROGRAMMES
& STRATEGY



PRACTICAL
RESOURCES



RECRUITMENT
& RETENTION

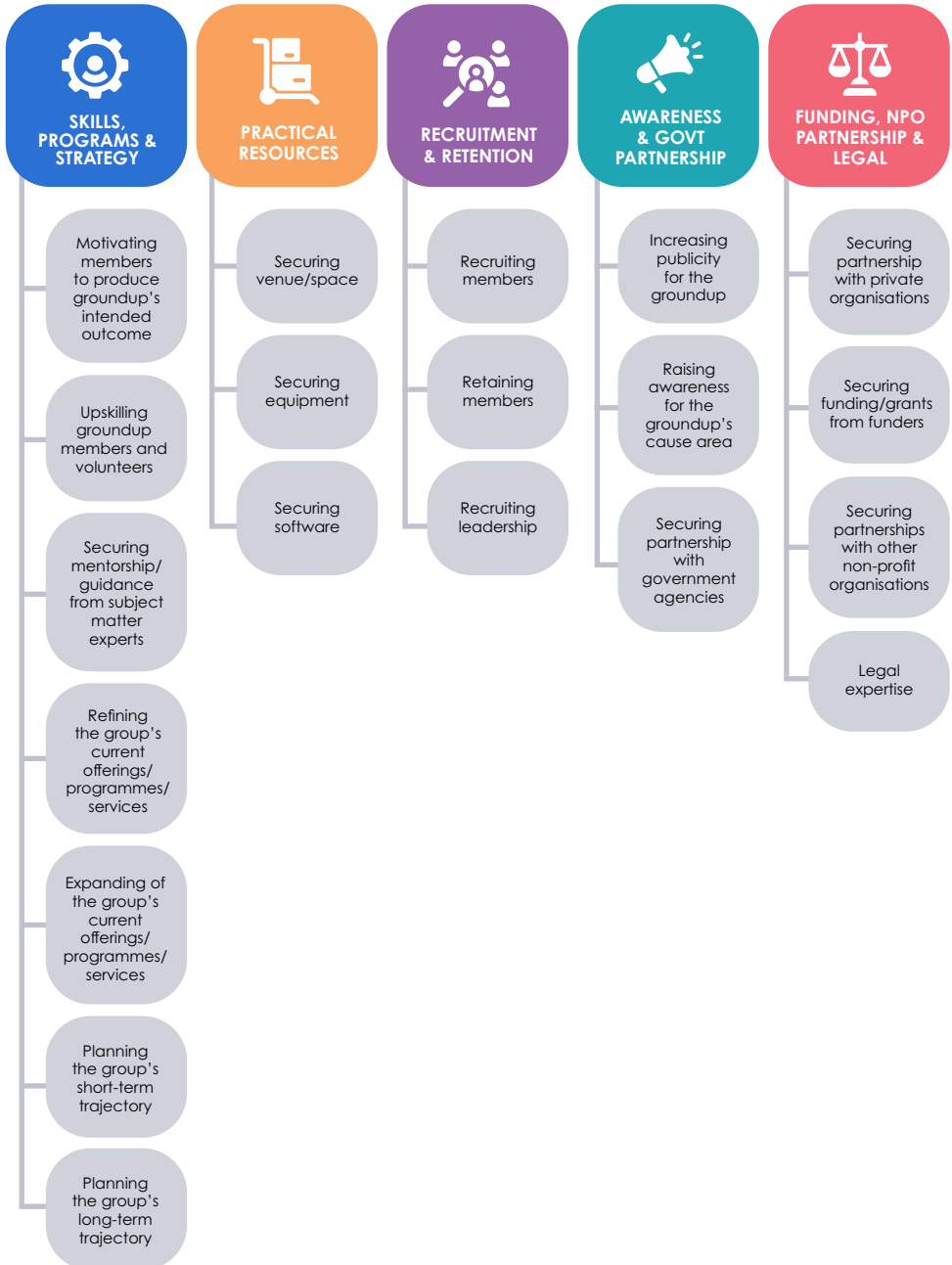


AWARENESS
& GOVT
PARTNERSHIP



FUNDING, NPO
PARTNERSHIP &
LEGAL

Within each area, there are specific factors to be considered when examining your groundup's performance. See the framework below for details.



For example, one factor of operational performance is to consider the skills, programmes, and strategy of your groundup. You can consider reaching out to relevant stakeholders to run training programmes for your volunteers and members so as to increase your overall operational performance.

Case in Point: Campus PSY (Singapore)



Back in 2021, Campus PSY (Singapore) partnered with TikTok SG to launch 'Youth for Good Initiative', an 8-weeks long training programme where youths learnt content creation. This enabled the sharing of personal stories of hope and recovery to 10,000 people, which helped advance their organisational goal of heightening mental health awareness in Singapore.

Other areas which contribute to the operational performance include volunteer management, leadership succession and sustainable funding.

7.4 Volunteer Management


It may seem that having additional manpower at the start of your groundup journey was just to get things moving (e.g., having enough people to move the goods around to set up a community grocery, or having enough people to knock on doors across your target area). It is important to think about your volunteer pool not just as manpower but as one of your most valuable resources.

The groundups we have spoken to often say that their long-term volunteers are the most valuable in terms of gathering inputs, new project ideas, and providing quality services.

Volunteers can vary in their commitment level and interests. Providing well thought out meaningful experiences allows your volunteers to better contribute, resonate more with the cause and your organisation, experience the impact they make, and motivate them to continue.

RESOURCES

Table 11: Volunteer Management

Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)	Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0	Handbook with practical tools and guidelines on how to attract, retain, and manage volunteers
	Volunteer Role Redesign Guide for Social Service Agencies	Guide on how to create new volunteer roles and adapt existing volunteer roles to better enhance the project and volunteer engagement (for SSAs but useful to think about)
	Volunteer Continuity Planning Guide	Guide containing information and practical tools like templates to manage volunteer activities quicker and more effectively
	Professional and Capability Development	Consolidated list of initiatives for volunteer management
	Volunteer Management Resources	Consolidated list of resources on how to leverage the strength of volunteers and overcome manpower challenges

7.5 Succession Planning



Succession planning helps the groundup to continue their good work even when the original leaders are no longer able to commit. Rather than a direct replacement of leaders, it is more a process of developing a plan to rejuvenate the leadership and identify what is needed in the next stage of growth.



Case in Point: Matchsticks of IMH



Matchsticks of IMH looked to its volunteers for succession potential. They shortlisted long-serving volunteers who shared their values and mindsets as potential leaders for the group. This groundup prioritised passion, commitment to the cause, and shared values as paramount for potential successors.

"I think we had a six-month transition period. So, throughout that time I would involve the two new leaders in everything that I did. So, all the way from the admin to the discussions with the senior management, the corporate comms department and all the different engagements that I had, I make sure to involve them and to also closely mentor and explain why certain things have to be done a certain way. And like to further share kind of my vision and my thought processes and hopefully, they are able to then pick up on them and know what to look out for in the future."

- Jonathan, Matchsticks of IMH

Top picture: 1st and 2nd generation leaders

Bottom picture: 2nd and 3rd generation leaders

Succession can come from within or outside of the group, with its respective pros and cons. Do align internally as a group on the most important principles to uphold when it comes to the appointment of leaders. You can find more tips in our article [here](#) on how to plan a successful leadership succession (for groundups, non-profits and communities).

7.6 Sustainable Funding

Moving from a single grant to a longer-term funding approach contributes to the sustainability of the groundup and allows the group to better plan for projects in the long run and focus on the work they do.

Funding sustainability can come from donor engagement, successful fundraising campaigns, longer-term funding agreements with partners and diversification of funding sources. The charity sector has many resources assisting professional fundraisers – with some examples listed below. While many of the resources are aimed at registered charities, there are still parallel insights for groundups to consider when carrying out fundraising:



RESOURCES		Table 12: Sustainable funding
Source	Title (Click to access!) 	What you can expect
Conjunct Consulting	Donor Landscape Report	Sections 4 and 5 of the report contain recommendations and guides on how to develop effective outreach and attract potential donors, as well as some good practices to observe when handling financial transactions
Empact	A Step Towards Long-term Sustainability for Fundraising in the Arts Sector	Research paper that studied donors and external stakeholders on the topic of funding and financial sustainability in the arts sector
National Council of Social Service (NCSS)	4ST Playbook	This guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for your organisation, as well as tips on fundraising.
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Charities Unit	Donors and Fundraising	Video recordings of sessions held by MCCY that discuss various aspects of fundraising
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)	BAGUS Together - Eight Tips for Running a Successful Social Crowdfunding Campaign	Article to guide the running of crowdsourcing campaigns

Step 5: Transitioning

Chapter 8: Registering

Registration is a big step for any group. While you don't have to register to be successful, registration does bring you extra leverage in scaling the impact of your work. This chapter covers the topic of registration and factors to consider.

8.1 Why and When to Register

Benefits of registration range from increased credibility and greater access to funding, networks and potential government partnerships. On the legal front, registering an organisation can reduce the personal liability of the group and its team. However, **registering also means increased administrative responsibilities and potentially reduced flexibility and freedom in running your group's operations.** On top of this, there will be certain costs associated with registration, such as setup and compliance costs, as well as fees associated with a corporate banking account.

In addition to why you want to register, you need to consider when is the right time to register too. If your operations are largely stabilised and you are being limited by your unregistered status when engaging donors or expanding your network; or your organisation has grown substantially to a point where it becomes a full-time job to run it (and you are prepared to take on that challenge) – it may be the right time to register.

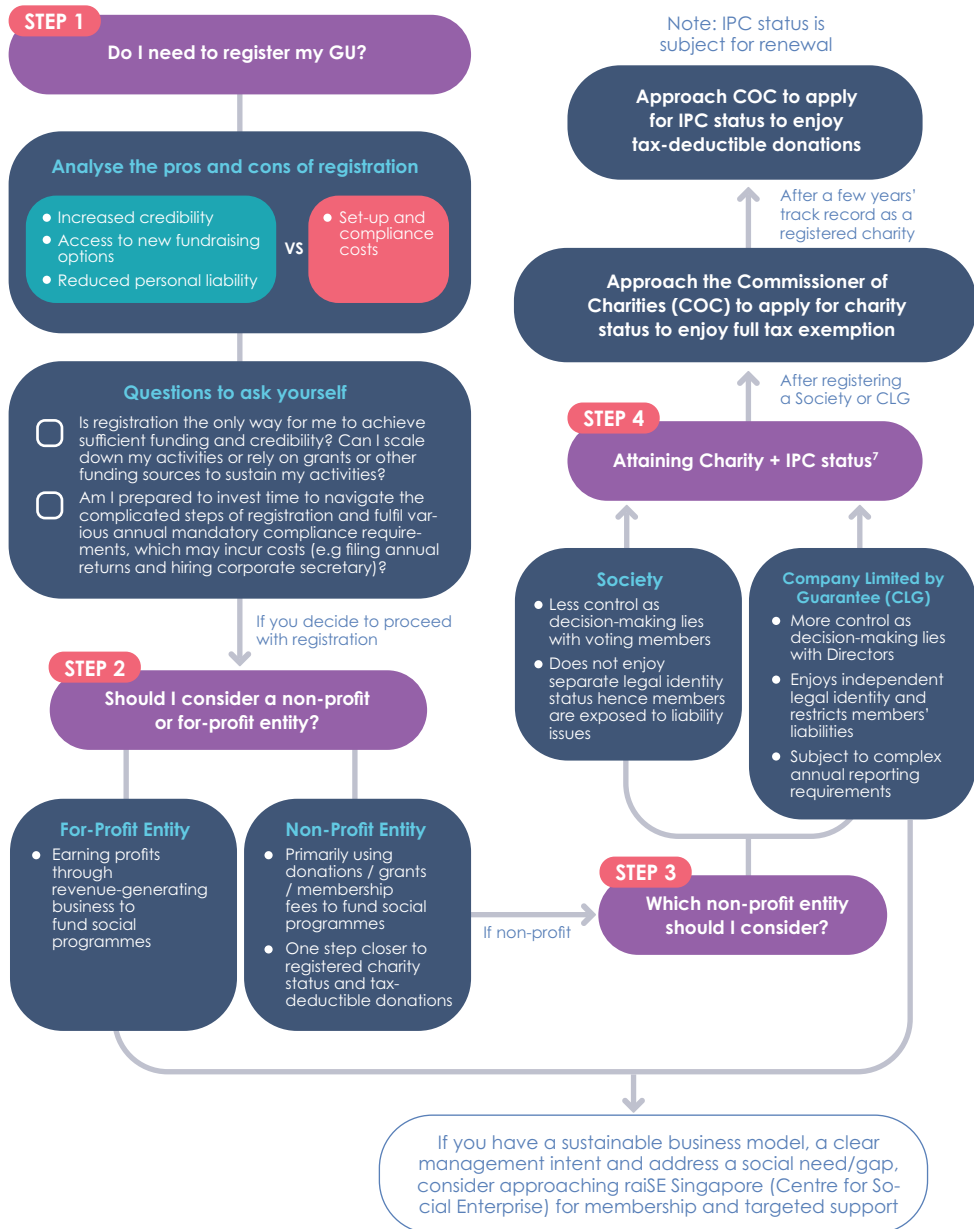
However, there are also large and long-running group-ups that have remained unregistered. Some had proceeded to register but subsequently deregistered to stay low-maintenance, and focus the time and energy on making a difference to their target audience. Make sure to carry out a thorough cost-benefit analysis before making your decision.



8.2 Options to Register

If you have decided to register and are wondering which type of organisation to register as, the flowchart below can help to guide your thinking.

This flowchart is intended to provide general guidance and does not constitute legal advice.



7. Institute of Public Character (IPC): An IPC is an organisation approved by the Commissioner of Charities to receive tax deductible donations.

Whilst we have provided a structured flowchart to follow, in reality, the choice to register rests on a myriad of different factors. Below are two stories of groundup founders and what factors they considered when thinking about registering their groundup.



Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"Well, I think funding is one thing...because I think a lot of groundups, they want to do good work, but...they can't continue doing free work. The thing is if you're not registered as an entity in Singapore, no funders will fund you. So, I think that's a perpetual problem for groundup initiatives."

- Ming Xiu Cho, Executive Director,
Campus PSY (Singapore)



Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"I have to think about what are the benefits of getting registered and the things that I have to go through. Because I think getting registered...[is] going to add onto the work that I'm already doing, and it's only me doing that."

- Azlina Ahmad, Smiles Salam SG

You may also seek advice from our colleagues here at NVPC during our ['What's Next GU?' Registration Consultation](#) to learn more about the different non-profit entity structures.

Chapter 9: Closure

Be realistic! If your goals are achieved (either by yourself or another group who does it better) or you find yourself needing a pause or lacking support, closure may be better for the groundup – with the exact duration of closure depending on your circumstances and personal preferences. In this final chapter, we look at the things to note if you do decide to close or take a pause.

9.1 Why and When to Close

One reason for closure is the completion of the project. Issues addressed, gaps bridged, and needs fulfilled – which in this case implies a fantastic job well-done!





Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"I think I'll choose to end the project because it could mean that there's no purpose of this project anymore. Because...as a groundup starter, we must face the facts. Your project cannot last forever. [When] there's a gap, that's why you are there. If the gap is taken care of, you should not be there anymore...So we must have an endpoint for the groundup."

- Vincent, A Packet of Rice

However, there could also be operational constraints. For instance, it may be getting increasingly hard to gain traction, secure funding, or ramp up manpower. It may also be that your other commitments and constraints in your life are getting too much.

If there's still a chance for succession planning, read Chapter 7 and do it. If circumstances do not permit, see if anyone else can take on part of your services whilst your group takes a pause. Do not simply disappear from the scene, especially if your work is making someone's life better. Consider the following when wrapping up your operations:

1. Your relations with service users

Remember that your groundup was working towards addressing issues in the community, and thus your exit from the community should not be disruptive and harmful to those you were trying to help. If you have a core group of service users, keep them well-informed and connect them with others in the same space who can meet their needs sufficiently after your exit.



2. Your partnerships with stakeholders and expectations from volunteers and core members

Communicate with people who have supported you throughout your journey. Acknowledge their support, explain your exit decision tactfully, and keep the relations strong even after the project has officially concluded. You can also refer them to other groundups or organisations supporting a similar cause area. Time the communication and closure and try not to break any commitments you have made. Check out this [article](#) for more practical advice on wrapping things up neatly and facilitating a good exit.



9.2 Restart the Cycle with Your Next Idea

Still thinking of how to revive your initial project and/or remain in the groundup scene? Don't worry, it is always possible to start the cycle again so long as you set your mind to it. There are 'serial founders' of groundups who have started multiple groups – each dealing with completely different social causes.

These 'serial founders' have a common passion for impacting society beyond merely filling one gap, and it was through their multiple iterations of projects and groundups that they learnt when and how to stop/restart their journey.

If this sounds like you, we would strongly encourage you to go back to the start of the groundup journey, revisit your motivations ("Why") and see if there is space for a new idea to flourish.

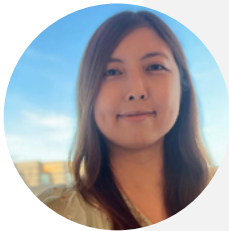


Lived Experience From a Groundup Founder:

"Through my first groundup, Autoimmune Diseases Singapore (ADSG), I found a sense of community among fellow individuals grappling with autoimmune diseases, reminding me that I was not navigating this journey in isolation. As my professional career progressed, I gained insights into the challenges faced by children and youths with ADHD, ASD and other special needs. This led to a strong conviction to support these individuals and their caregivers, with the overarching goal of nurturing inclusivity. This led me to establish my next groundup, Be Kind SG. Through Be Kind SG, I aspire to offer them the same sense of support and reassurance that I had received from my own community.

When starting a groundup, it is important to understand our 'why' while staying true to our personal values."

- Sherry Soon, Be Kind SG



ACTIVITY #15

Restarting the cycle with your next groundup

You can find some guiding questions in **Activity #15** to help you make sense of your past project and embark on a new one, be it for the same or a different cause. Besides helping to rationalise your past, this short reflective activity would also enable you to write and share your personal story to inspire others who may be willing to join forces or take an interest in your groundup initiative.

9.3 Keep Connected to The Sector

Whether you are going ahead with a new idea or not, it is always good to keep a close eye on the latest happenings in the sector. Consider attending an event every now and then, or keeping the lines of communication open with your stakeholders and partners. These can help you to stay updated on the most pressing needs and remain easily contactable to other like-minded individuals – you might even be inspired to re-enter the groundup scene with a more ingenious idea than your original intervention.



RESOURCES

Table 13: Keep Connected to The Sector

Source	Title (Click to access!) 
Friendzone	Telegram Channel: https://t.me/friendzonesg
MSFCares	Telegram Channel: https://t.me/msfcares
National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> BAGUS Together Telegram Channel: http://t.me/bagustgether Giving.sg: https://www.giving.sg/ (Sign up for an account to start receiving newsletters!) NVPC Telegram Channel: https://t.me/givingsingapore
Open Jio	Telegram Channel: https://t.me/s/OpenJio
SG Arts Channel	Telegram Channel: https://t.me/SGArtsChannel
SG Caregivers	Telegram Channel: https://t.me/SGCaregivers
VolunteersSG	Telegram Channel: https://t.me/volunteersingapore
Youth Corps Singapore (YCS)	Telegram Channel: https://t.me/YouthCorpsSG



Breaking New Ground, Together

As we reach the end of this handbook, we would like to go back to where we started: What is a groundup?

Whilst we have segmented the groundup journey into five consecutive steps and nine stages, it does not always follow a linear pathway. In reality, the groundup journey could be vastly different for different people. But what underpins the personalised journeys and experiences is what makes groundups who they are – a community of dedicated individuals who have put their hearts, minds and hands into creating a positive impact, for now and for generations to come.

Some may say that Singaporeans focus too much on the 'hardware' and too little on strengthening the 'heartware' - we prioritise the material aspects of life and end up neglecting the importance of nurturing values like compassion and empathy. But through the collective stories of the groundups, we have seen examples of how seemingly ordinary citizens have the power and autonomy to bring about great change. They embody the gotong royong⁸ spirit that binds us together as one people and demonstrates how individual efforts, no matter big or small, can make a difference.

Here at NVPC, we hope that the stories and resources provided will inspire and equip you with the tools to launch your very own groundup with more clarity and confidence.

We wish you the very best in continuing the good work that you are doing and contributing to a City of Good!

Let us break new ground together, starting from the ground up!

8. Gotong royong involves the spirit of volunteerism, and working together for the benefits of the people of the same community.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all groundups and not-for-profit organisations for sharing their collective real-life experiences:



BeTheWire

better>sg



COMMUNITY E-FILEING SERVICE



CRATER



Friendzone

Gentle Tech





ground-up
initiative
聚友爱



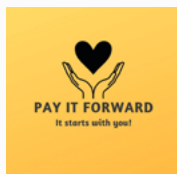
#LEPAKINGSG

openjio



HOMELESS HEARTS
OF SINGAPORE

Matchsticks
Ignite your passion. Spark a difference.



#SmilesSalamSg
Do Good Bring Smiles



Masks Sewn
WITH LOVE

PENpALS
IN THE COMMUNITY



soundball

the **volunteer**
switchboard



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nvpc  Towards a
City of Good

**tote
board**


Giving Hope
Improving Lives

mccy
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

SG Cares

Thank you

The National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) is an organisation that brings the people, government and private sectors together to make Singapore become a City of Good where everyone gives their best towards a more **compassionate, inclusive, and caring society**.

We work with groups of like-minded **individuals, communities, businesses, and leaders** to encourage a giving culture in Singapore and we do this by collaborating and finding solutions together through various initiatives and programs across multiple platforms such as Giving.sg and Company of Good.

Learn more about how we can become The City of Good at www.cityofgood.sg

