



# Migrant Workers Colabs

Towards a Better Singapore for All

March 2021

# Foreword



Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has turned our lives upside down. In Singapore, most of our cases (90% as of 3 March 2021) were from the migrant workers dormitories. News of these opened our hearts and minds to workers' physical living conditions and mental well-being.

During this difficult time, there was a great groundswell of support from all corners of the community. As a society, we also realised that as much as 2020 was a year of upheaval, it gave us many opportunities to rediscover our common humanity.

The complexity and significance of the migrant workers landscape made it a ripe topic for Colabs, an initiative that brings together stakeholders from the public, private, and people sectors to discuss such complex issues. This document is a record of Colabs' intensive stakeholder engagement from August 2020 to March 2021.

As the migrant workers situation is constantly evolving, the document is a continuous work-in-progress. Nevertheless, we hope it helps you learn about the lived realities of the different stakeholders involved in the space. From this, we hope you will rally allies, align objectives, and act towards a better Singapore for all of us.

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# ***Part 1***

# ***Context***

*Singapore historically  
and globally*

# Migrant workers and the Singapore story



As of June/December 2020:

687,600 work permit holders  
(excluding foreign domestic workers)

351,800 in construction, marine  
shipyard, and process sectors

320,000 live in dormitories

Diverse  
origins including Bangladesh,  
India, China, Myanmar,  
Malaysia, and more

Sources for statistics: [MOM 2020](#); [MOM Dec 2020](#).

Photo credit: Justin Lim on Unsplash

# Migration and migrant workers are an intrinsic part of the Singapore story

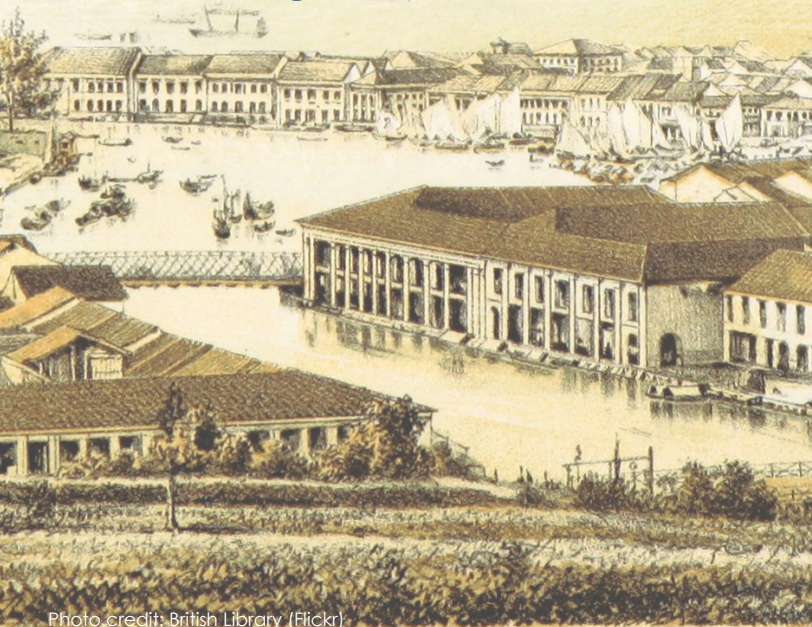


Photo credit: British Library (Flickr)

The contributions of migrant workers to our country's progress and prosperity are part of Singapore's story.

We have come a long way since our early days as a free port and British Colony: think Chinese coolies, Indian convict labour, and Samsui women, just to name a few (see more information on [Infopedia](#)).

We are now a leading city, admired for its safety, security, and for the opportunities available (see MOM's [Foreign Worker survey 2018](#)). The country's approach to migrant workers is multi-pronged, covering their entry, stay, and exit. This is achieved through legislation, partnership, and promotion/education (source: [MOM/ILO](#)).

Regulation and its broad implementation has resulted in the continual gradual improvement in workers' living standards and wellbeing.

This is not to deny that implementation gaps and errant behaviour exist. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic's effects on workers' physical and mental wellbeing brought these and other issues to light. But our approach should be holistic and balanced - we need to shift away from the blame game, but instead collaborate towards a better Singapore for all.

# Contextualising Singapore

Our stakeholder engagements focused on the migrant worker situation in Singapore. But knowing some of the similarities and differences between us and other countries can help contextualise our understanding, so that we do not understate our progress or overstate the gaps in our ecosystem.

For example,

- **Kuwait's** legacy Kafala system, where workers are legally bound to individual sponsors, left 'considerable room for exploitation'.
- Fragmented national and provincial regulations and historical circumstances in **Thailand** have contributed to high numbers of undocumented workers.
- There are an estimated 1 to 3 million undocumented workers in Malaysia, with raids during Covid-19 lockdowns to detain such workers. Furthermore, in December 2020, Malaysia's Human Resources Minister said that 91.1% or 1.4 million workers were not provided with accommodation compliant with regulations.
- In **Hong Kong**, regulations relating to the entry of low-skilled workers for the construction industry have resulted in low rates of employment of migrant workers, leading to 'high construction costs and significant delays in construction projects'.

For a more in-depth study, see Majority Trust's work [here](#).

# Perspectives on workers

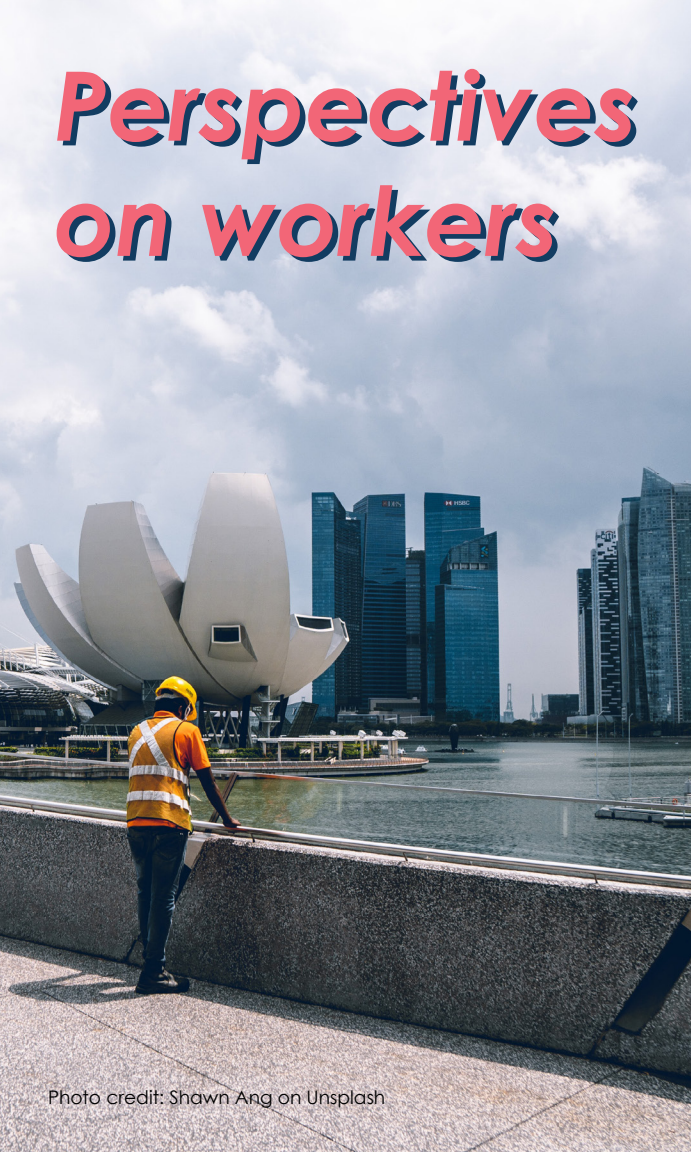


Photo credit: Shawn Ang on Unsplash

This is a compilation of research and opinions from various sources. Please note that each study and voice has its own insights, biases, and limitations, and inclusion does not reflect our endorsement.

## Coming to Singapore

1. A report suggests that **pre-departure costs** can take 10-22 months to be repaid.
2. **Agent fees** for Indians and Bangladeshis can range from \$6,000 - \$10,000.
3. The **top modes for financing debt** are loans, selling land, and mortgaging land.  
Sources: [Lien Centre for Social Innovation 2020](#); [TWC2 2019](#); [Platt et al. 2017](#); [ILO 2015](#)
4. On the contrary, some employers report that some local agents insist that employers, not workers, pay agency fees.
5. Other employers also dispute debt figures, and argue that workers are able to buy land and property back home (if, for example, a worker returns to Singapore for a second or third stint).

Source: post-Colabs series engagement with trade associations



## Settling in

1. Between Oct 2018 and Apr 2020, around 23,000 work permit holders attended the **Foreign Worker Settling-in Programme**. This programme is conducted in workers' native languages.

Sources: MOM correspondence

## Working conditions

1. **Wage differentials** exist between workers of different nationalities because of different skill levels & positions.
2. Of 417 construction workers surveyed in 2016, **23% worked  $\geq 12.5$  hours** on the most recent Friday at the time. (Companies need to apply for exemptions for workers to do overtime, but construction work is not an activity for which this is granted.)
3. From Jul 2017-Dec 2019, the construction industry was the **highest contributor of workplace fatal injuries**, at 2.9/100,000 for the industry, versus 1.1/100,000 overall (locals included).

Sources: [Boey & Yeoh 2015](#); [TWC2 2017](#); [MOM Workplace Safety & Health Report 2020](#)

## Living conditions

Improved living standards were announced in Jun 2020:

1. Living space per resident at  **$\geq 6$ sqm** (excluding shared facilities; previously  **$\geq 4.5$ sqm** (including shared facilities)).
2. Up to 10 **beds per room**; previously typically 12-16 beds.
3.  **$\geq 1$  set of toilet**, bathroom, sink & urinal per 5 beds; previously per 15 beds.

Source: [MOM 2020](#)

4. In addition, some employers report to have rented condominiums for migrant worker supervisors.
5. Many employers also recognise that newer Purpose-built dorms have high-standard gyms and multiple recreational facilities which go beyond regulation stipulations.
6. However, there are pre-existing discrepancies between the conditions in such residences and other kinds of accommodation like factory-converted dormitories.

Source: post-Colabs series engagement with trade associations

# Healthcare

Employers are required to buy and maintain a medical insurance plan for each of their work permit holders covering at least \$15,000 per year.

A 2017 survey found that:

1. 20.9% of 433 workers were **unsure if they had insurance.**
2. Among those given information about their insurance, **1/3 received the information in native languages.**

Source: [MOM](#), [BMJ Global Health 2017](#)

# Wellbeing

1. A 2015 study on 605 South Asian workers found that those with injury and salary claims were **5x more likely** than other workers to suffer from serious mental illness, (based on the Kessler 6 measure of psychological distress).
2. A 2020 op-ed argued that **key drivers of psychological distress** among some workers include housing woes (for injury/salary claim workers), threat of repatriation, and agent fee debt.  
Sources: [Lien Centre for Social Innovation 2015](#)
3. On the contrary, some employers report cases of “faked injuries” by a few workers, with time spent costs affecting employers adversely.
4. More significantly, the trade associations we engaged with note that welfare initiatives are regularly offered by some employers and dormitory operators, including - but not limited to - religious and cultural festivals, celebratory meals, sports activities, and passes to tourist attractions.  
Sources: post-Colabs series engagement with trade associations

# Businesses and workers before/during Covid-19

Employers and trade associations we engaged reported some challenges, adaptations, and support before/during Covid-19:

1. They continued to pay salaries for full-time workers, despite stopped/partial operations or poor business prospects.
2. They maintained close communications with their workers. One employer was reported to have met their workers every day, with regular check-ins by a certified psychologist.
3. In particular, the Association of Process Industry (ASPRI):
  - Partnered with MOM on a Change of Employer Program,
  - Organised a medical webinar support with MOM/MOH,
  - Shared resources and an information brochure for members and workers.
4. Another association, the Association of Singapore Marine Industries (ASMI), noted:
  - The provision of meals & care packs; the arrangement of Covid-19 tests;
  - Competitions for leisure and fun during lockdown, a helpline for workers, and free Wi-Fi connections.

During a later engagement with a trade association of employers, we learned of a company featured on [Mothership](#) which:

- Engaged decorators to transform a factory-converted dormitory with **Deepavali decorations**.
- Continued **paying workers in full** and guaranteed a bonus for 2020.

Before and beyond Covid-19,

- The company **hires workers directly**, bypassing agents and their fees.
- It also provides financial support for workers' **children's education** back home.
- Despite lower profits, the company has a **family-like atmosphere** and many employees have stayed on for more than five years.



# ***Part 2***      ***Our journey together***

*A co-creative and  
systems-based process  
for a complex issue*

# A complex issue

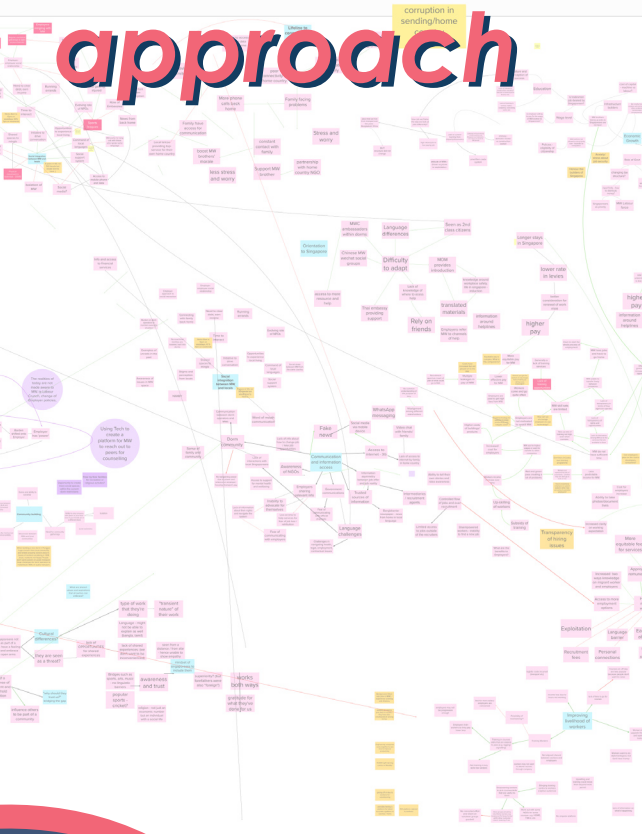
As we learned more about the migrant workers landscape, we realised that it was a truly complex issue, since it:

- Is emergent and changing.
- Has no single root cause.
- Requires multiple cross-sector stakeholders to work together.
- Requires designing systems-level interventions.

At Colabs, we see complex issues as positive opportunities for change. Instead of a problem statement, we crafted an aspiration statement to rally our community. Recognising how so many of us benefit from and are impacted by migrant workers in our midst, we asked:

**How do we improve the  
quality of life of migrant  
workers for a *better*  
Singapore for all?**

# A systems approach



Given how complex the situation is, Colabs used a systems approach to better understand the migrant workers landscape. We used this approach because:

- We do not fully understand what is happening.
- Different stakeholders have different levels of knowledge and opinions.
- There are many shifting interconnections between different people and issues in the migrant worker space.

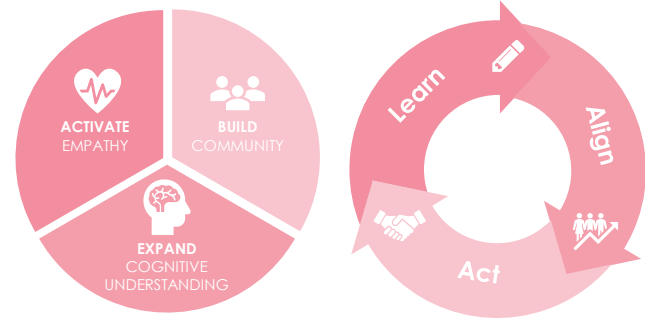
For us, a systems approach meant:

- Engaging stakeholders in-depth to empathise with their positive experiences and challenges.
- Understanding each stakeholder's interest and role in the landscape.
- Making connections between different issues to see how interwoven the system is.
- Allowing stakeholders to identify areas of opportunity to make meaningful change.

# Colabs journey and participants

The Colabs journey uses a methodology involving intensive stakeholder engagement rather than academic research or large-scale surveys. We provide a neutral platform for different perspectives to be shared in a balanced manner. The journey is founded on 3 principles and 3 phases:

At the heart of our journey were five 3-hour virtual sessions. Across these sessions, we encountered:



Our three principles

Our three phases

**105** unique individuals (including 15 migrant workers)  
from **53** organisations from these categories:

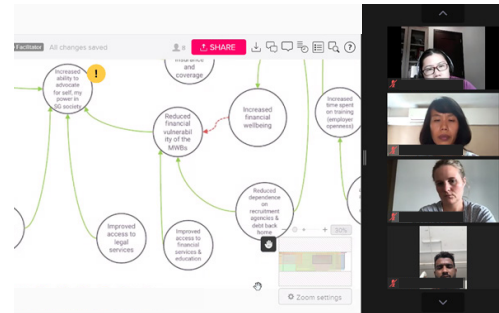
- Government agencies
- Businesses employing workers
- Trade associations & chambers
- Dormitory operators
- NPOs/Groupdups
- Foundations
- Religious Groups
- Companies
- Recruitment Agencies
- Academics

The Colabs journey is adaptive and co-creative: we sense the energy in the room to design the most meaningful sessions for our participants.

Before the series started, we asked our participants for their top three areas of interest in the migrant workers landscape. We got 143 open-ended answers, and the top 5 answers were:

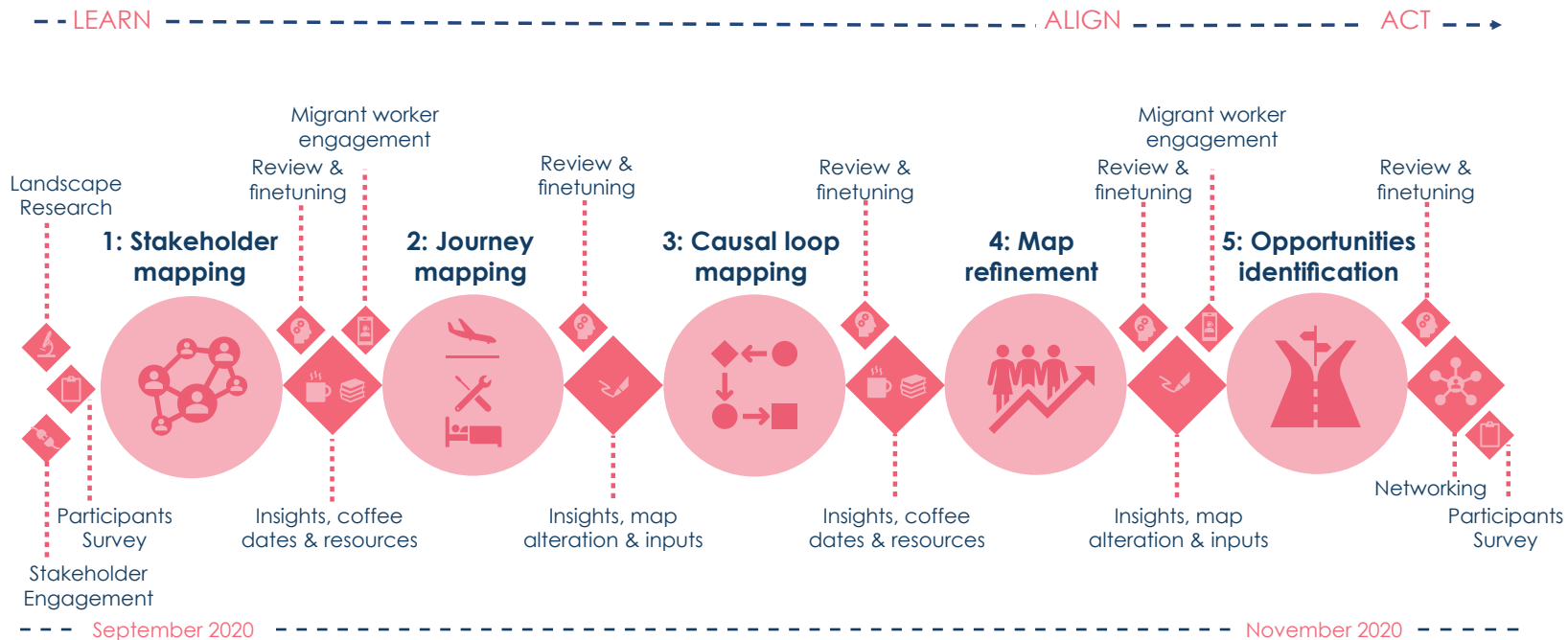
- Social integration, inclusion, acceptance, appreciation
- Living conditions
- Mental and emotional wellbeing
- Basic and employment rights
- Personal development, including education, training, skills.

Other responses included physical health and wellbeing, the recruitment process, dignity and value of persons, and language barriers.





# Series outline





# ***Part 3***      ***Complexity distilled***

*Co-discovered insights  
and visuals of the  
ecosystem*

# Two driving forces

characterise the experiences of many stakeholders

## Balance

Different individuals and stakeholders take significantly opposing directions. For example, some focus on long-term aspirations, while others focus on short-term realism and constraints. **It is difficult to find a suitable and balanced middle ground.** Furthermore, some of our stakeholders recognise that moving forward may require acting against the interests of other players in the landscape.

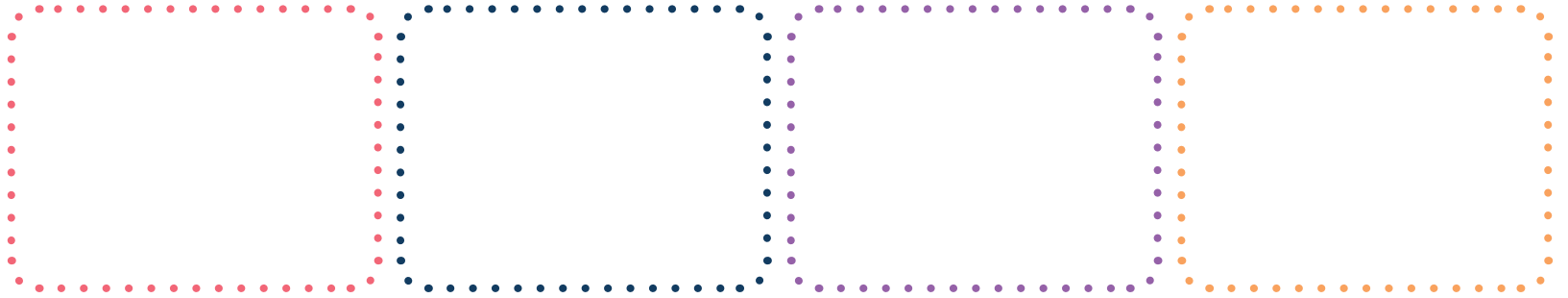
## Divergence


There is no 'typical' persona of any stakeholder group. Each person's choices and pathway are different; **we cannot generalise them.**

For example, we heard of a worker who progressed from a work permit to S Pass and is studying for a degree, but we also heard of one whose salary went down over the years and was unhappily repatriated. Just as we heard of exemplary employers and community support before and during Covid-19, we also heard of unfair treatments and closed mindsets.

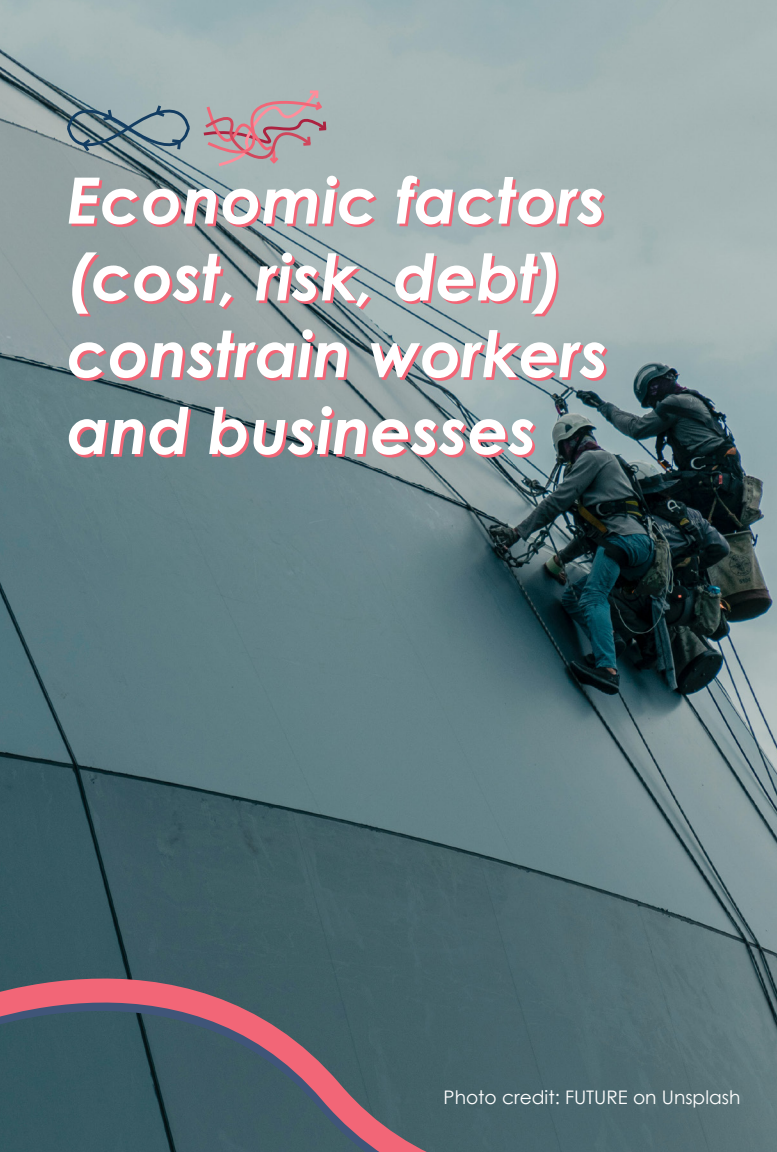
Look out for these symbols in the following pages to indicate where these two forces are at play

# *Insights gained during Colabs*





## Economic factors (cost, risk, debt) constrain workers and businesses



Businesses like employers and dormitory operators are under stress because they have to ensure the financial viability of their operations in a situation of high uncertainty and increasing costs, in part due to the effects of Covid-19.

Workers also bear significant risks and costs. Before coming to Singapore, they pay large amounts of recruitment or agent fees, financing these by loans, mortgages, or other options. These fees go to middlemen who may be outside our stakeholders' sphere of influence because they are in workers' home countries and communities.

All these economic factors are closely interlinked. We need more research and open sharing of the realities and challenges faced by all stakeholders, as well as the boundaries of the system.

## How might we...

- Identify economic drivers / trends so that we can plug economic leakages for system to operate more effectively?
- Leverage technology to positively 'disrupt' the recruitment / middleman industry, empowering all players with transparent data?
- Strike a balance between the benefits and costs of improving the quality of life of migrant workers?

“All things considered (there are many issues our migrant workers face) but there is a consistent point here, especially in how we hear them settling huge debts to contribute to us.”

- Employer participant

“[Our] key observations are that we have an employment structure for migrant workers where workers bear too much cost and employers bear too much risk.”

- Independent participant

Employers have had to manage uncertainties from safety time-outs & stop work orders during Covid-19, increased liabilities to clients, morale of confined workers, & rising business costs.

- Trade association input

“We need to not oversimplify the problems as there are a lot of interlinked causal factors. Employers also have pressures, constraints and stakeholders as well that add to the complexity.”

- Foundation participant



# Work-life balance and goals differ across individuals and stakeholder groups



Photo credit: sol on Unsplash

As our two driving forces show, we cannot generalise anyone's needs and attitudes because they depend on each individual and where they are in their journey (see for example the journey maps later in this document).

Some workers concentrate on providing for their families, sometimes even giving up off-days to earn more. Others look forward to rest and relaxation at recreation centres spread across Singapore. Others still try to learn new skills and develop themselves to be promoted, earn more, or find other jobs in Singapore or back home. Furthermore, industries may have different seasonal cycles, leading to quieter periods where workers have more time to do other activities.

Similarly, some in business and society focus on the short term and see workers as low-cost labour units. But we also heard of employers and trade associations who actively support their employees to upskill and gain valuable business exposure, since they recognise that skills and safety qualifications enhance their industry's productivity.

## How might we...

- Understand better individual motivations, different industries' needs, and specific job requirements, so that our collective investment in training and development benefits all?

“**K**, who has a diploma in electrical engineering, shared that his employer prioritises his learning and development, often paying for his training needs. As a result, he's learning and slowly taking on more responsibilities in different aspects of the business.”

- NGO participant

“There are bad employers, but most aren't bad.”  
“Please don't white wash all of us in a certain manner.”

- Employer participants

“**A** tries to work on Sundays/ holidays for a comfortable salary. He misses his family more when he is free, but forgets everything when he is working.”

- Reflection from engagements with workers

“**H**'s rest day date varies. On rest days he reads, attends MWC English courses, prays, practises English, and sometimes goes to the gym.”

- Reflection from engagements with workers



# Unequal power dynamics create fear and misunderstanding

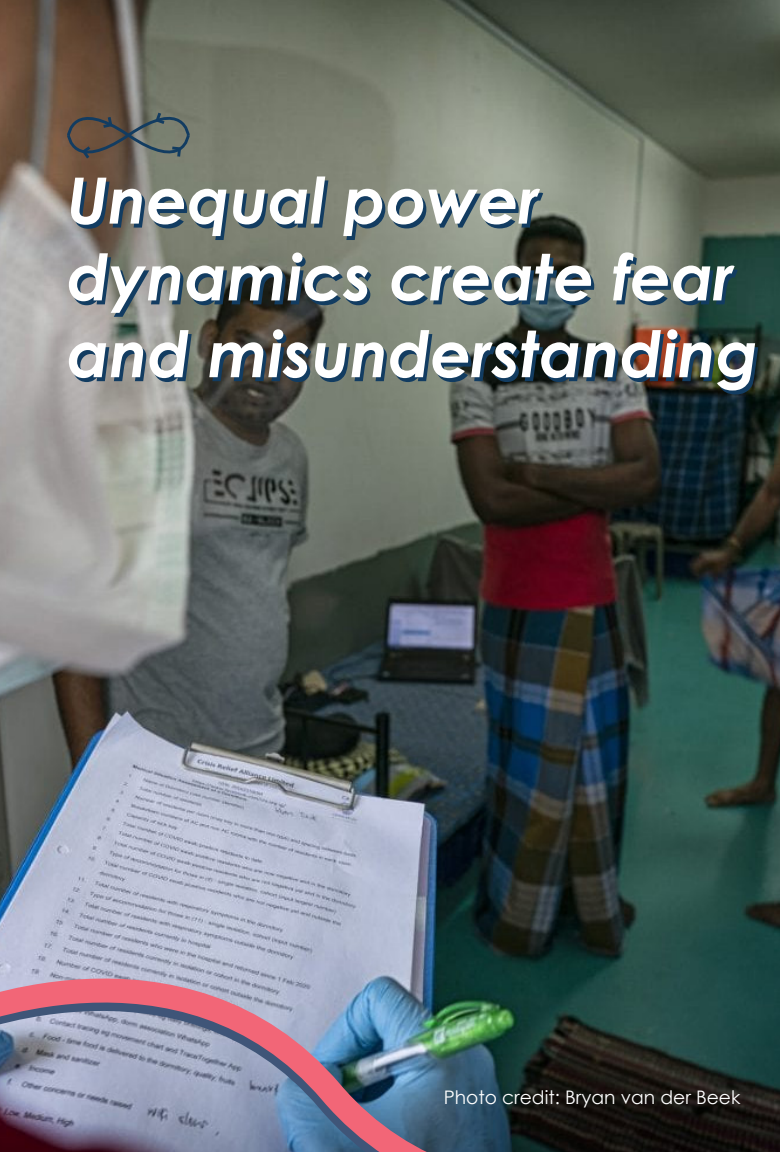


Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek

Power dynamics are difficult to understand and contested among stakeholders. Recognising this, we do not claim the following to be the norm, but as occasionally occurring.

Coming to Singapore, migrant workers are often at a disadvantage, if they have debt or face information challenges (see next page). Fearing losing their work permit or being repatriated, some will endure unfair treatment by others to continue working here.

As a result, we continue to hear some stories of workers suffering from injustices like being cheated by agents (possibly in home countries), the non-payment of salaries, deductions in pay, or overtime pay disguised as “allowances”.

On the other hand, some employers may feel a loss of control and increased business uncertainty. From our engagements with employers and trade associations, reasons for this include:

- Workers being poached or complicating the transfers process through negotiations.
- Workers “threatening” to go to the authorities even when employers feel they are in the right.
- Workers going directly to authorities and for medical check-ups without the employer’s knowledge.

## How might we...

- Take the time to understand each other as persons more and to grow in empathy?
- Build on existing efforts to further ensure the protection of workers who may face wage, benefits, and rights exploitation?

“[Some workers] say that employers place unrealistic expectations for work schedule[s]. These cause a great deal of stress [and] they feel defenseless against such employers.”

- NPO participant

“[My] concerns regarding money across a number of dimensions [include a] lack of voice and feeling of fear/ no power to speak with the employer, and fear of being sent back/deported.”

- Academic participant

Some migrant workers “can threaten to go [to] MOM for the slightest issue that they face even when the employer is right.”

- Trade association input

S is worried because he is going to be sent back home by his employer; no salary for 5 months and the company does not want to extend his expired work permit.

- Reflection from engagement with workers



## Consolidating efforts can help overcome language and knowledge challenges

Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek

Sometimes, migrant workers face uncertainty in their day-to-day life in Singapore because of language barriers and information challenges (either too little, too much, or irrelevant information). These issues are complicated because they are all interconnected, and because of the high degree of mobile and digital connectivity in society today.

The existing onboarding processes and NPO initiatives to address these challenges have their strengths (for some examples, see Area of Opportunity 3) which we can build upon. As we move forward, it is not a straightforward "let's have more channels and programmes". In some cases, we may need to consolidate information channels.

### How might we...

- Lower further the remaining language and knowledge barriers so that workers can navigate Singapore more effectively, and so that Singaporeans can connect more with them?
- Make the availability of relevant information more efficient at all stages of a worker's journey, so that systems of support are more effective too?

“How or where do migrant workers get information from on support services, their rights, laws and social norms/customs... how can we make their arrival and transition more smooth?”

- Foundation participant

“In delivering the communications of what assistance [there is, key] is to use the informal leaders among [them] to convey this... these are people trusted by the workers.”

- NPO participant

“[We] believe there are initiatives in place to help with language barriers like [the] multi-language call centre at MWC, SDI Academy [and so on].”

“[Workers] must have basic knowledge of the industry [they are joining or] else they will not be able to pass [the] MOM safety-related test which is compulsory.”

- Trade association input





## Positive journeys reveal the good we need

As one corporate participant reflected, it is “good to see that migrant workers that have been better taken care of are more motivated in work and have better aspirations for their life when they go home. Not all gloom and doom here.”

We read stories of other-centred workers who support their communities, through volunteering or art, literature, and music. We also heard of career progressions, higher education opportunities, as well as supportive employers and the tireless efforts of government agencies and non-governmental advocates.

Not all stories are negative ones; neither are they all positive. But recognising the good already in our midst provides us with a guiding star for an even better future.

## How might we...

- Promote and celebrate stories of good in the migrant worker space, so that others are inspired to act and collaborate with one another?

Photo credit: Caroline Chia

A's supervisor lent him money for his studies. The company lets him leave at 4pm to study, and gives him good experience by letting him take on projects.

- Reflection from engagement with workers

Omar Shipon is a **President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Award winner** (2020, 'People of Good' category). He runs a Facebook page providing accurate/reliable information to 83,000 followers, including workers, their friends, and families.

N pursued a diploma and got a 'best learner' award. He then enrolled onto a degree programme. He recently got a new job and upgraded to a S Pass.

- Reflection from engagement with workers

21 years after first coming to Singapore, Rahim Islam now owns 3 properties and some land at home. He has also spent close to \$20,000 on improving himself.

- [Straits Times article on veteran migrant workers](#)



## Existing partnerships show the way for collaboration



Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek

As migrant workers remain a critical part of our workforce, it is even more important in our complex world for various stakeholders to collaborate.

Thankfully, we are not starting from zero. Existing partnerships, emergent changes to the ecosystem, and the tremendous groundswell of support should encourage and empower us to keep on building our efforts for a better Singapore for all.

### How might we...

- Bring together diverse stakeholders to co-create solutions that benefit everyone and build a future that all can be proud of?
- Create platforms for more positive stories and best practices to be shared across society?

“It’s nice and heartening to know that, besides us, there are so many different efforts by different groups - employers, NGOs. We’re always open to collaborating.”

- Government participant

“The only way we can all progress, is that all of us work together: government, employers, employees, and stakeholders.”

- Employer participant

### Example 1

**ASPRI-Westlife Dormitory – Papan** is the first of its kind, a purpose-built dorm to cater to workers’ housing and training needs. It features 26 kinds of communal facilities and value-added services, and is near more than 100 energy and chemical companies which reducing commute times and increasing rest time.

The dorm is integrated with the **ASPRI Integrated Training Centre**. The centre brings training right to residents’ doorsteps to promote skills upgrading to improve the industry’s productivity. With up to 90% subsidies for courses, more than 85% of the dorm residents have attended at least 1 training module since 2018.

### Example 2

**Project Dawn** is a taskforce established to build a support ecosystem for migrant workers’ mental health. It consists of representatives from the **Ministry of Manpower, government psychologists, Institute of Mental Health, Migrant Workers’ Centre, and HealthServe**.



Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek

## Reimagining our interactions leads to a more caring and inclusive society

Many of our stakeholders observe that workers seem to live in their own parallel system and networks, with few connections to mainstream Singapore society. Their social networks primarily consist of their family and peers, employers, government representatives, and ground-up or NPO volunteers.

While we learned of some workers being housed in private properties, most live in self-contained properties, like purpose-built dormitories which often provide all their needed goods and services. Dormitories tend to be further from residential neighbourhoods, although this is changing with new Quick Build Dormitories.

At the same time, workers have go-to hang outs in different parts of Singapore, often based on nationality and culture. This hampers opportunities for social interactions and cultural exposure between Singaporeans and migrant workers.

Multiculturalism and harmonious living between everyone are hallmarks of the Singapore story so far. In creating new stories by which we will be remembered, we should strive to create the conditions for more meaningful interactions and engagements between Singapore residents and workers.

### How might we...

- Broaden and deepen ties across society for awareness of each other's contributions and acceptance?
- Create a new social compact that Singaporean residents, including government, business, and society, and migrant workers are all comfortable with?

“Shared values can be/ should be reinforced with broader respect for the dignity and value of work - this is a human workforce that [is] doing very critical and skilled work.”

- NPO participant

As we emerge stronger from Covid-19, “some Singaporeans better appreciate migrant workers which helps to build the confidence and camaraderie with Singaporeans in terms of spirit.”

- Trade association input

“What changes in public sentiment will be required to facilitate change and help us move to a new system for migrant workers?”

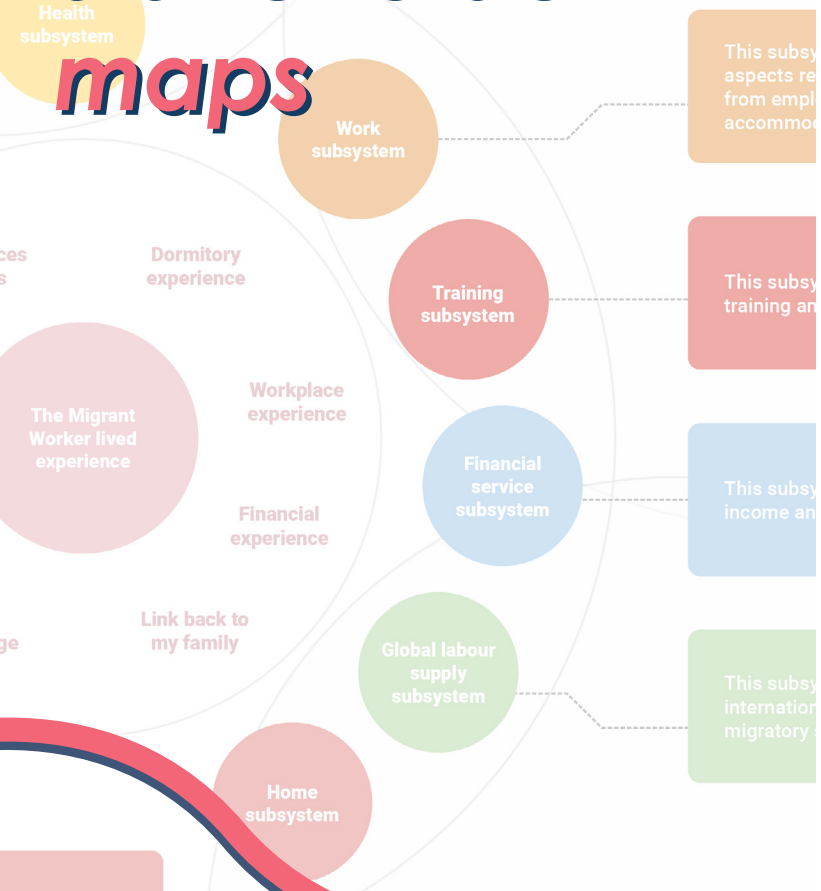
Government policy [and] employers' mindsets are influenced by the broader public sentiment, who will be the voters, customers, investors, and even employees.”

- NGO participant

# *Our maps*

# Ecosystem and stakeholder maps

This subsystem refers to the...  
 services and...  
 all... access to such services.



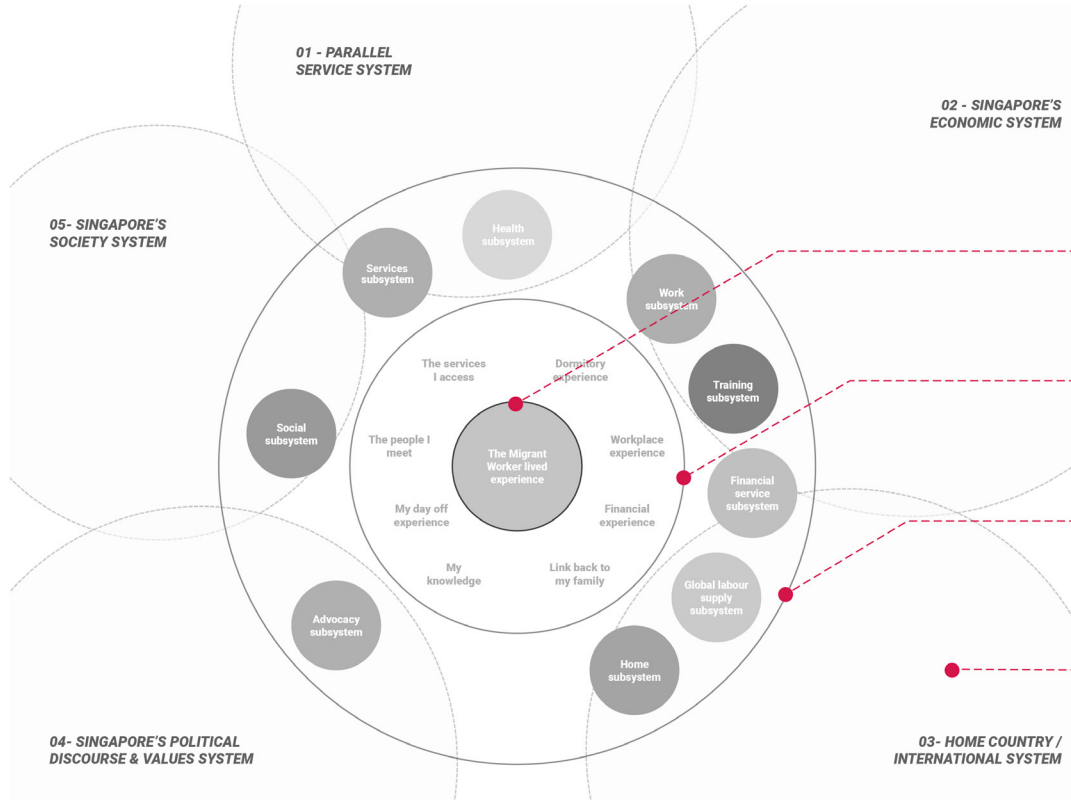
*Deepen empathy and understanding for the many subsystems and stakeholders involved in the space*

Use these maps to appreciate who is in the system: where are you in it, who can you work with, and how can you understand better the interests and constraints of others?

## The Systems-Subsystems framework

This is a sketch of how the different systems in a worker's life currently interact with one another.

# Map legend



### PERSONA

The key persona on this map is the migrant worker. We describe the activities of his everyday life as a worker, contributor, and member of Singapore's society.

### EXPERIENCE

The experience layer shows a worker's immediate needs and circle of daily interactions.

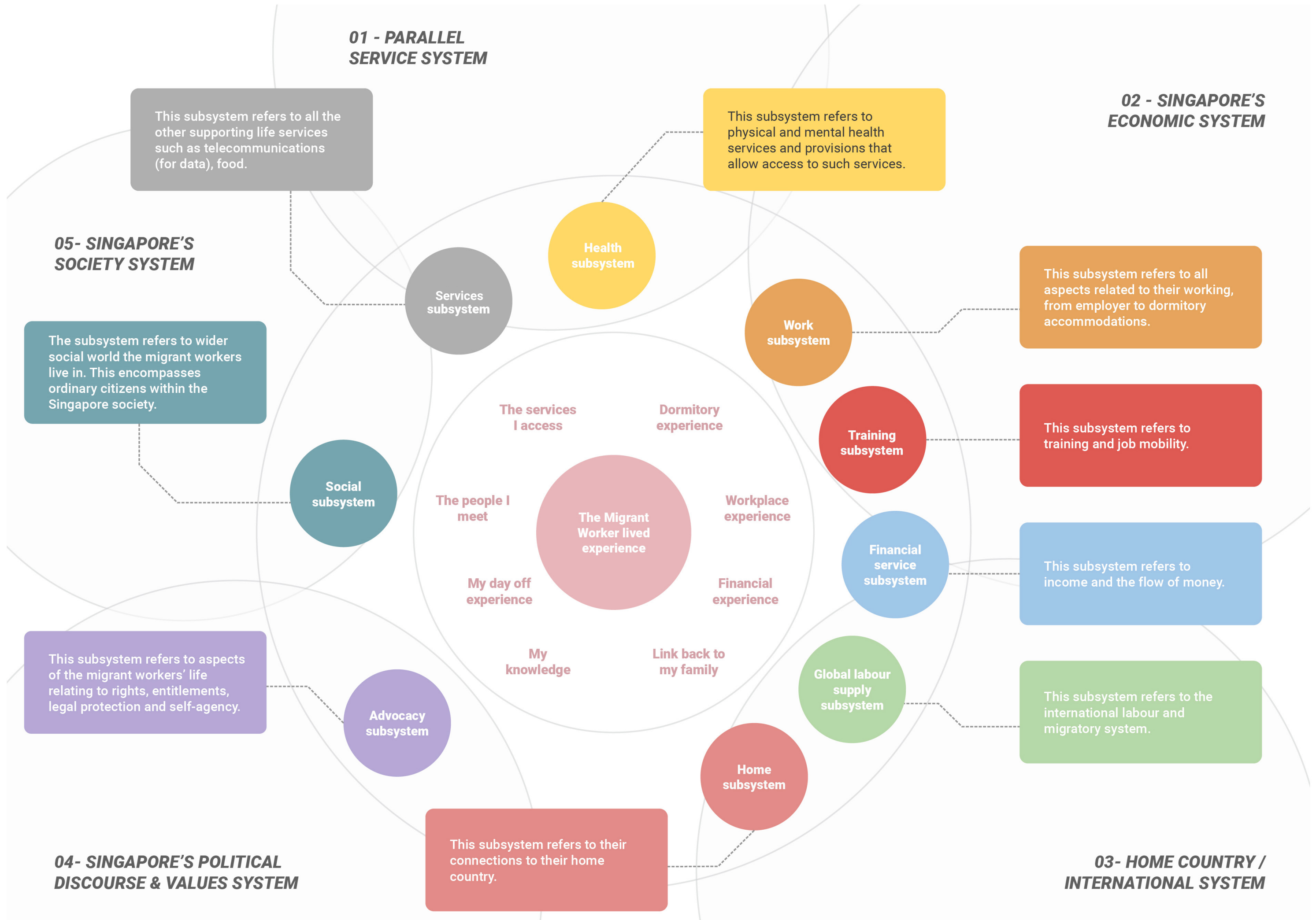
### SUBSYSTEMS

Subsystems zoom in on particular aspects of a worker's experience, like work, training, health, etc.

### SYSTEMS

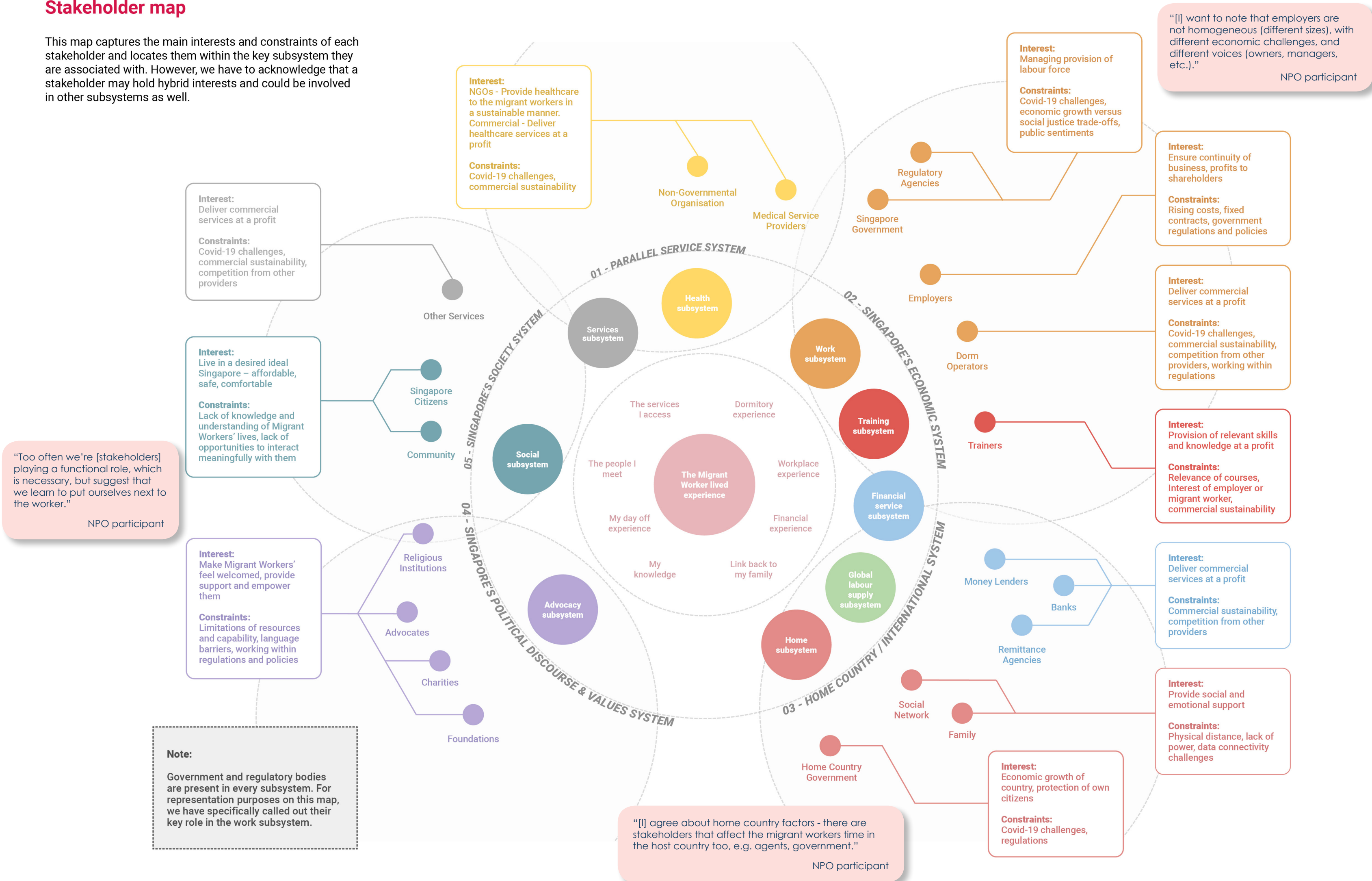
The overarching systems narrative is described through these 5 pillars.

# Systems and subsystems



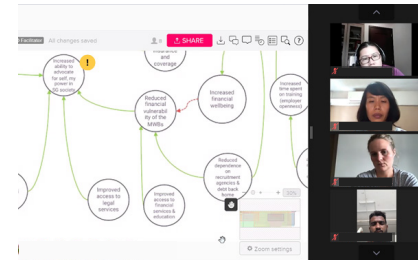
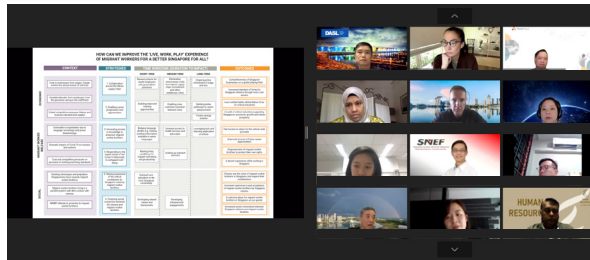
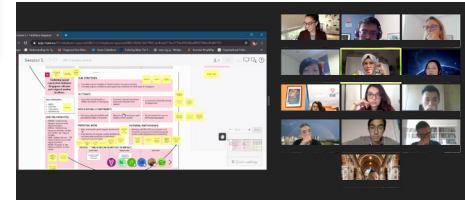
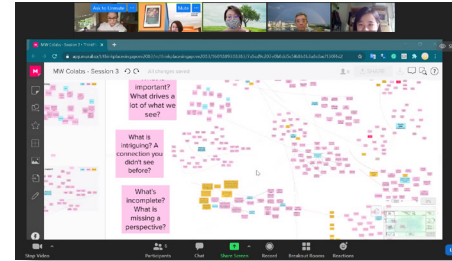
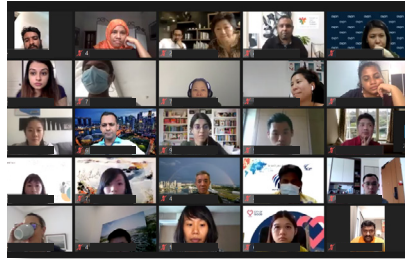
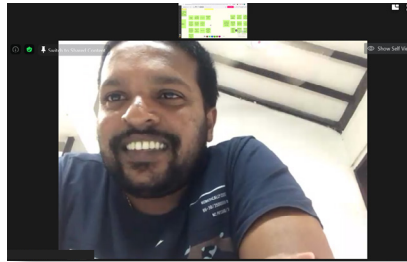
# Stakeholder map

This map captures the main interests and constraints of each stakeholder and locates them within the key subsystem they are associated with. However, we have to acknowledge that a stakeholder may hold hybrid interests and could be involved in other subsystems as well.





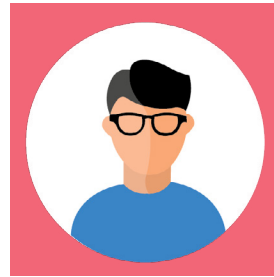
# Screenshots from our sessions



# Composite journey maps

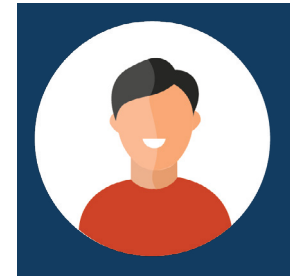
## Encounter migrant workers on diverging life journeys

We have consolidated our encounters with a few workers into two personae. Use these maps to put yourself in a worker's shoes: what matters to them, and what lived realities can we positively influence?



**“Muthu”**

- 32 year old Indian
- Marine/shipyard industry
- 3 years in Singapore
- Visited home once
- Family: parents, wife, 2 children, ages 5 & 6
- Factory-converted dorm



**“Ahmed”**

- 40 years old Bangladeshi
- Construction supervisor
- 8 years in Singapore
- Visited home thrice
- Family: parents, wife, 2 teenage children
- Purpose-built dorm

# These maps feature the following details:



Flow of the persona's journey



Thoughts and opinions on different stages in the journey



Pain point quotes are in **red bubbles**  
Positive quotes are in **green bubbles**



Feelings at different stages in the journey



Activities



Goals



Pain points



Opportunity areas








# 01: Muthu's journey to and from Singapore

	PRE- ARRIVAL					ARRIVAL AND LIVING IN SINGAPORE				LEAVING FOR HOME		
STAGES	1   Finding an opportunity	2   Saving up for fees	3   Being recruited	4   Training (4-6 months)	5   Getting visa / work permit	6   Transfer to dorm in Singapore	7   Orientation	8   Start work with company	9   Education / skills upgrading	10   Switching jobs	11   Work pass expiring	12   Going home / coming back
FEELINGS	Excited	Worried	Nervous	Hopeful	Expectant, Confident	Expectant, Anxious	Excited, Nervous	Anxious, Tired	Envious, Unhappy	Troubled	Worried	Dejected
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of opportunities in home country, Hears about opportunities in Singapore from his relatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs around SGD8,000) to come to Singapore</li> <li>Takes a loan and signs an agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local recruiter sets him up for an interview with a Singapore agent</li> <li>Takes an exam and pays a huge exam fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training for 6 months for skills evaluation certification</li> <li>Waits for visa approval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visa is approved!! He has to pay for his own flight ticket to Singapore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pick-up at the airport by Singapore agent and brought to the dorm residence</li> <li>With peers, feels less anxious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settling in process by Migrant Workers Centre (MWC) -1-day course completed within 14 days of arrival; the \$75 course cost is borne by the employer</li> <li>Download necessary apps e.g. FWMOMCares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salary is not enough for saving up. It goes towards paying his debts.</li> <li>May face verbal threats from supervisors to send him home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No time and money for studies.</li> <li>No support from employer to study a course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many difficulties trying to change jobs; need to cancel work permit, get consent from current employer and may have to return home first before applying once more, get middlemen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers starting a small business when returning home, but realises more money is required. Decides that he wants to stay in Singapore to earn money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If he returns home and has limited opportunities, he may have to return back to Singapore</li> </ul>
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants to give his family and children a better life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Willing to pay a significant amount to change his life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hopes the agent is able to secure him a job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hopes the visa goes through without issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get his work permit approved and prepare to leave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making sure his documents are right, to quickly meet the agent and settle in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring he is well prepared to start work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working hard, even overtime to make sure he earns as much as he can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being very focused on his work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding another employer, hoping he can find someone better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking about his future back home, he weighs the potential impact if he stays in SG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure he is still able to secure a job, be it at home or in Singapore</li> </ul>
PAIN POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to get a job with good pay in home country, chose Singapore as it is safe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incurring a debt even before starting a job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not being able to verify the local recruiter to check if they are registered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language barrier</li> <li>Feels very uncertain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional costs again</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a newcomer to Singapore, they are worried about running into legal issues</li> <li>Language challenges</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants to visit home but flight tickets are too expensive</li> <li>Feels disheartened to learn that others did not get promoted or get wage increment even after 10 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hears how his peers are offered upskilling or education opportunities by their boss, but he does not get the same</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If transfer is not feasible, they try to stay with current employer, but employer may have quota in re-hiring workers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He has been consistently paying back his debt but still owes around SGD1,000 when he is due to return home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He worries about the debt should he have to engage an agent once again</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITY AREAS	<p>How might we reduce the barriers to information and help workers experience greater certainty in their journey by building an ecosystem of support?</p>		<p>How might we leverage technology to disrupt the industry in a positive way, so that workers start their journey in Singapore on a more equitable footing?</p>		<p>What if it was beneficial for employers to invest in their workers and make skills improvement an integral part of the workers' work life?</p>				<p>What would it mean for workers to enjoy greater job security and how can we build a better system where good workers are not trapped by bad employers?</p>			

# 02: Muthu's typical work day

	BEFORE WORK				DURING WORK			AFTER WORK			
STAGES	1   5.45am Wake up	2   6.30am Wash and pray	3   6.50am Travel	4   7.30am Arrive and eat	5   8.00am Briefing and start work	6   12 midday Lunch	7   6.00pm Overtime	8   8.00pm Return home	9   8.30pm Dinner	10   9.00pm Relax	11   10.30pm Sleep
FEELINGS	Tired	Centered	Impatient	Hungry	Expectant	Relaxed	Tired	Thankful	Unsatisfied	Happy	Tired
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gets up between 5.45am and 6am every day. He is used to early starts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showers and gets ready for the day</li> <li>Checks messages and the news from home quickly</li> <li>Goes to the space reserved for prayer within the dorm complex to pray</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waits in the parking bay until a bus is full</li> <li>Boards the bus, usually filled with 20 people, and heads to the work site which is very close</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grabs food from the site canteen</li> <li>Has around 20 mins to eat and be ready for the briefing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole team briefing starts every day</li> <li>He's given his tasks for the day which his supervisor allocated every morning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has lunch with workmates in the on-site canteen</li> <li>He gets around 45 minutes break which he uses to eat, message friends and catch up on news on his phone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overtime is on offer from 6-8pm most night, which he always volunteers for</li> <li>The extra money becomes his spending money, as he tries to send his full salary back to his family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He boards the bus for the dorm, along with the others who have worked overtime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He quickly bathes and changes out of work clothes</li> <li>He buys dinner from the local hawker and sometimes the on-site canteen</li> <li>There's not much choice left by the time he is home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He calls home every night to speak to family, messages friends, watches YouTube and looks at Facebook</li> <li>He sometimes needs to do washing which he can do at the dorm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He falls into bed, tired from the day. He tries to sleep by 11pm each night so he has energy for the next day.</li> </ul>
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants to wake up feeling energised after a good night's sleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants a bit of time and space to himself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get to the work site without having to wait too long for the bus to fill up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get sustenance for the day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for the day, understand what he needs to do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have some time out and enjoy a quick break over lunch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit to overtime every night to ensure he has the opportunity to earn additional income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finally sit down on the bus and have 10 mins break</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding something decent for dinner and bathing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs to connect with family and catch up on news online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get a proper rest before having to do it all over again tomorrow</li> </ul>
PAIN POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of the week he is tired from the early starts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During Covid the area reserved for prayer was closed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While waiting for others to board the bus, he wishes he could have slept for the extra 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little choice for breakfast, and nothing like what he would have at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worried about getting through everything on time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little choice for lunch</li> <li>Lunch is more expensive than he'd like but he has no choice as his dorm has no facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wishes he could just go home at 6pm each night to have more downtime, but without the extra money from overtime he can't support his family</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the time he finishes, gets back to the dorm and bathes, some of the dinner options are no longer available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The wifi in the dorm is patchy and was only recently installed</li> <li>He can't always afford to use lots of data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He worries at night about how his family are doing, in particular his aging parents</li> <li>Stresses about trying to get a promotion to earn more</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITY AREAS	<p>How might we encourage employers and stakeholders to re-think processes so that there is a better work-rest balance for workers to do their work well?</p>										

# 03: Muthu's typical rest day pre-Covid-19

	MORNING		AFTERNOON			NIGHT	
STAGES	1   Getting up	2   Goes to work	3   Lunch	4   Post-work leisure time	5   Sports or run errands	6   Dinner and errands	7   Returns to dorm
+							
+	"It is Sunday, but time to get up for work again."	"I cannot wait until it is 4:30pm, so I can get off work and do what I want."	"The food is always the same."	"Finally, I have time for myself."	"I can have some leisure time now, play sports or go to Little India."	"After a hard day of work, I'll treat myself to my favourite food in Little India"	"Time to go back now. Have to work again tomorrow."
FEELINGS	Tired	Indifferent	Tired, but looking forward to end work	Tired   Happy	Excited   happy	Happy	Tired   Dreading
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even though Sunday is the usual rest day, he chooses to work until late afternoon because there is double pay</li> <li>• Wakes up at 5.30am</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels like it is a normal work day</li> <li>• The company bus picks him up at 6.30m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has lunch at work, catered by his company from the on-site canteen</li> <li>• Works until 4.30pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goes to the temple e.g. Murugan temple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes he will play cricket at nearby playground with the same group of friends living on the same dormitory premises</li> <li>• Sometimes, he goes to Little India to buy necessities like phone top ups and snacks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If he is at Little India, buys dinner there as a treat</li> <li>• Send money home through the local money transfer shops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heads back to dorm at 9.30pm</li> </ul>
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants to earn as much money as he can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get through the day which ends at 4.30pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get an affordable meal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do prayers for his family, fulfil religious needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have fun with his friends</li> <li>• Head outdoors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a good meal that is like what he would eat in his home country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that he is back before the midnight curfew</li> </ul>
PAIN POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sacrifice his rest day, so he does not get much leisure time to relax</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Envious of his dorm mates who do not work on Sunday, although most seem to volunteer for overtime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels like a routine work day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs to travel a distance and take public transport from dorm to get to places to pray, meet friends and chill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unable to go to the Recreation Centre because it is too far and he does not have enough time</li> <li>• Ensure that he doesn't spend too much money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels like splurging on a good meal, but knows he still must not overspend his money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often feels his personal time is too limited</li> <li>• No real chance to relax and take a proper break</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITY AREAS	<p><i>What more can we do to ensure that workers who are essential to Singapore's future are well integrated into our society, and treated with dignity and respect even during times of crisis?</i></p>						

# 04: Ahmed's journey to and from Singapore

	PRE- ARRIVAL					ARRIVAL AND LIVING IN SINGAPORE				LEAVING FOR HOME		
	1   Finding an opportunity	2   Saving up for fees	3   Being recruited	4   Training (4-6 months)	5   Getting visa / work permit	6   Transfer to dorm in Singapore	7   Orientation	8   Start work with company	9   Education / Skills upgrading	10   Switching jobs	11   Work pass expiring	12   Renewing work pass
	"I may be able to join others in Singapore who are earning good money for their families"	"The fees are the biggest challenge; the agents are the ones earning the money here"	"I'm nervous I won't pass the test and not be able to go"		"I am excited to be able to support my family better, even though it means I have to leave"	"I really have no idea what my life will be like here"	"There are more costs than I ever expected"	"After working hard, I was able to get a promotion and small pay rise"	"I am so thankful that I am able to learn and better my skills while I am here"	"It seems like there are a couple of opportunities out there, but I only know about them through my friends"		"I am lucky to keep getting my work pass renewed without too much trouble"
FEELINGS	Hopeful	Worried	Nervous	Hopeful	Expectant, Confident	Anxious	Excited, Nervous	Tired	Happy	Open	Worried	Optimistic
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finds out through word of mouth in his community that there are possible jobs opening in Singapore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeing how this is a good opportunity, he takes out a loan and signs a repayment schedule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local recruiter sets him up for an interview with a SG agent. Interview is done in Bangladesh</li> <li>He takes an entrance exam for which there is a fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completes training for 6 months to get a labouring certification</li> <li>Waits for visa approval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visa is approved! He has to pay for his own flight ticket to Singapore but he has been saving up for it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pick-up at the airport by Singapore agent and brought to the dorm residence</li> <li>Arrives with a group of workers, he feels more assured but still fears what is to come</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settling in process by Migrant Worker's Centre (MWC) - 1-day course completed within 14 days of arrival. Course costs \$75</li> <li>Download necessary apps (work entry)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a good experience with his employer, works hard and after a few years he is offered a promotion</li> <li>Works long hours as a supervisor and always works as much overtime as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer supports him to study English as well as work towards workplace safety and construction qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hears through Bangladeshi friends at a different dorm that there are other opportunities on offer</li> <li>He investigates but decides paying to change jobs is not worth it as he'd have to pay transfer fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each time his work pass comes up for renewal he is worried, but so far he has not had any issues</li> <li>He speaks to the management about the possibility of a promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>His work pass is renewed and he feels positive about staying in Singapore</li> <li>Is unsure when he'll have enough money to be able to return home</li> </ul>
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He wants to give his family and children a better life by working in Singapore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Willing to pay a significant amount to change his life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He hopes the agent is able to secure him a job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He hopes the visa goes through without issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get his work permit approved and start planning his move to SG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making sure his documents are right, to quickly meet the agent and settle in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring he is well prepared to start work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working hard and maximising overtime to make sure he earns as much as he can</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upskilling to improve work opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand if there are other jobs out there and how he might switch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking about his future back home, weighing the potential impact if he stays in SG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue to earn to provide for his family back home</li> </ul>
PAIN POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to get a job with good pay in home country, chose Singapore as it is safe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incurring debts even before starting a job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having no other option but to pay the recruitment agent. Would prefer if there was another way to get the job</li> <li>Have to just rely on trust that the agent he gets is legitimate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He may face language barrier issues</li> <li>Feels very uncertain and unclear if the job will eventuate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional costs of relocation are adding up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsure of the rules and regulations in this new country</li> <li>Everything is explained in English and all paperwork is also in English</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very long days and long weeks start to take their toll</li> <li>He can visit home once for a family wedding, but the flights are expensive, and time off work means lost earnings</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feels like the process of changing jobs is not fair - it's all about who you know and the workers bear the costs of the change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is always a feeling of fear every time his pass is up for renewal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worries about missing seeing his kids grow up and about not being able to afford good education for them</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITY AREAS	<p>How might we reduce the barriers to information and help workers experience greater certainty in their journey by building an ecosystem of support?</p>					<p>How might we leverage technology to disrupt the industry in a positive way, so that workers start their journey in Singapore on a more equitable footing?</p>						

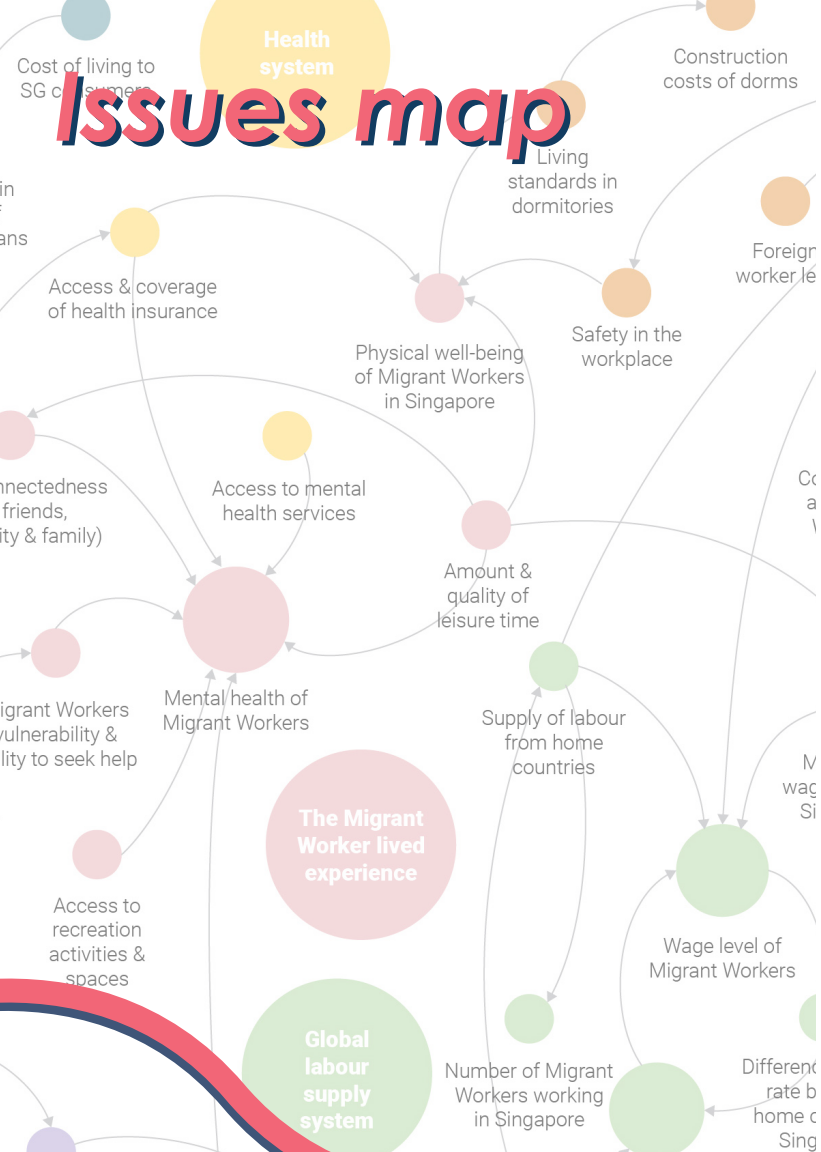
# 05: Ahmed's typical work day

	BEFORE WORK				DURING WORK				AFTER WORK		
STAGES	1   6.00am Wake up	2   6.20am Wash and pray	3   6.45am Breakfast	4   7.20am Bus to work	5   8.00am Briefing and start work	6   12 midday Lunch	7   6.00pm Overtime	8   7.30pm Return home	9   8.00pm Cook dinner	10   9.00pm Relax	11   10.30pm Sleep
FEELINGS	Tired	Centered	Satiated	Frustrated	Expectant	Relaxed	Tired	Thankful	Content	Happy	Tired
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gets up around 6am every day</li> <li>Some early starts are harder than others but he doesn't mind as he quite likes his job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Showers and gets ready for the day</li> <li>Checks messages and the news from home</li> <li>Goes to the space reserved for prayer within the dorm complex to pray</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes a simple, quick, pre-prepared breakfast like rice and vegetables or dosa</li> <li>lunch for the day from last night's meal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lines up to get the bus which takes 40 workers</li> <li>The trip to the site takes around 30 mins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As he is a supervisor he helps to organise his crew and supports the morning briefing</li> <li>Supervises his team all day to work safely and efficiently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He gets around 30-45 minutes break which he uses to eat his packed lunch, message friends and catch up on news on his phone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overtime is on offer from 6-7.30pm most night, which he always volunteers for</li> <li>The extra money is important to top up what he sends home and to pay for incidentals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He boards the bus for the dorm, along with the others who have worked overtime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He quickly bathes and changes out of work clothes</li> <li>He cooks dinner along with the other people he shares the kitchen with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He calls home every night to speak to his family and friends</li> <li>Catches up with the news from home by reading Bangla websites</li> <li>Does laundry on weeknights sometimes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He tries to go to bed around 10.30pm to have a good rest</li> </ul>
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants to wake up feeling energised after a good nights' sleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants a bit of time and space to himself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants time to enjoy a hot breakfast as he will have a cold lunch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get to the work site without having to wait too long for the bus to fill up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for the day, understand what he and his team need to do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have some time out and enjoy a quick break over lunch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit to overtime every night to ensure he has the opportunity to earn additional income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finally sit down on the bus and have 10 mins break</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cook a good meal quickly and with little mess that satisfies him</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs to connect with family and catch up on news online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get a proper rest before having to do it all over again tomorrow</li> </ul>
PAIN POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of the week he is tired from the early starts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During Covid the area reserved for prayer was closed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The morning is always a rush as everyone needs to use the kitchen within a tight timeframe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waiting for others to board the bus, he wishes he could have slept for the extra 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worried about getting through everything on time</li> <li>Concerned for his workers who are ill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wishes there were facilities to heat up his lunch as he's cooked it himself and wants to enjoy it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would like on occasion to feel okay about declining overtime but feels guilty turning down the extra money he knows is important to his family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After the long day, the 30 min bus ride can be tedious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There can be a wait to use the gas hobs in the kitchen if everyone arrives at once to cook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The wifi in the dorm is patchy and was only recently installed</li> <li>He can't always afford to use lots of data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He worries at night about how his family are doing and when he'll have enough money to finally be able to move back home to start a business</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITY AREAS	<p><i>How might we encourage employers and stakeholders to re-think processes so that there is a better work-rest balance for workers to do their work well?</i></p>										



# 06: Ahmed's typical rest day pre-Covid-19

	MORNING			AFTERNOON			NIGHT	
STAGES	1   Getting up	2   Personal self-study	3   Prepares to go out to socialise	4   Lunch	5   Hangout and play sports	6   Heads back to the dorm	7   Dinner	8   Rest
FEELINGS	Relaxed	Trying to focus	Excited	Happy   Excited	Happy   Enjoyment	Tired   Happy	Happy	Tired
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wakes up at a slightly later time than a work day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking classes for his advanced diploma certification in English</li> <li>He has online classes for 2-3 hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With his friends, they will pick different places to hang out each week</li> <li>Examples are recreation centres, Jurong East, East Coast Park, Changi Village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes, he would join in picnics or self-organised BBQs with his fellow workers.</li> <li>They buy food from the supermarket to cook together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play sports e.g. football with his friends</li> <li>If he is at east coast park, he goes to the beach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes the journey back to his dorm</li> <li>Will run errands such as buying necessities or topping up SIM card on the way back</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will buy or make his own food</li> <li>Will usually choose to eat comfort food from home: egg, rice, veggies, mutton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settling in to rest</li> <li>Will call home or use social media to keep in touch with friends/family</li> <li>Watch English movies to practice</li> </ul>
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He wants to make good use of his only rest day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants to complete his course to get his diploma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have fun, enjoy a relaxing time, meet up with friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a relaxing time, chat with other workers about their week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercise and have fun with his friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants to go back to rest in preparation for another work week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a good meal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay connected with family and friends</li> <li>Rest to prepare for the next day</li> </ul>
PAIN POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has concerns about spending too much money on his rest day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes he is tired but has to force himself to pay attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to wait for the shuttle buses that take them to the nearby train stations</li> <li>The recreation centres do not feel like a hangout spot, but it is the only place they are allowed to hangout during Covid-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>His social circle is limited to workers that he knows</li> <li>He does not have any local Singaporean friends but he would like to make some</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes, when in a shared public space like East Coast Park, he feels a bit self-conscious around Singaporeans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He has to spend quite a bit of time travelling back to the dorms after spending the day out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feels like splurging on a good meal, but knows he still must not overspend his money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Missing his loved ones back home</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITY AREAS	<p><i>What more can we do to ensure that workers who are essential to Singapore's future are treated with dignity and respect even during times of crisis?</i></p>							



*Stimulate your thinking by seeing how issues are interconnected*

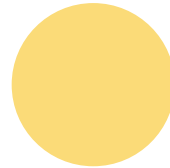
Use it to see how changing one thing affects many other parts of the system: what change would be influential and effective, what are the consequences, and whom will you impact?

# Map explainer

*This map shows what happens if changes are made at different parts of the whole system.*

*It is a value-neutral map, and it does not show what “should” be.*

*Nor is the map “complete”. We encourage you to improve on it by printing it and adding new aspects and arrows.*



*The big circles represent the systems in the ecosystem/stakeholder maps*



*The small circles are aspects of each system (real or proposed)*



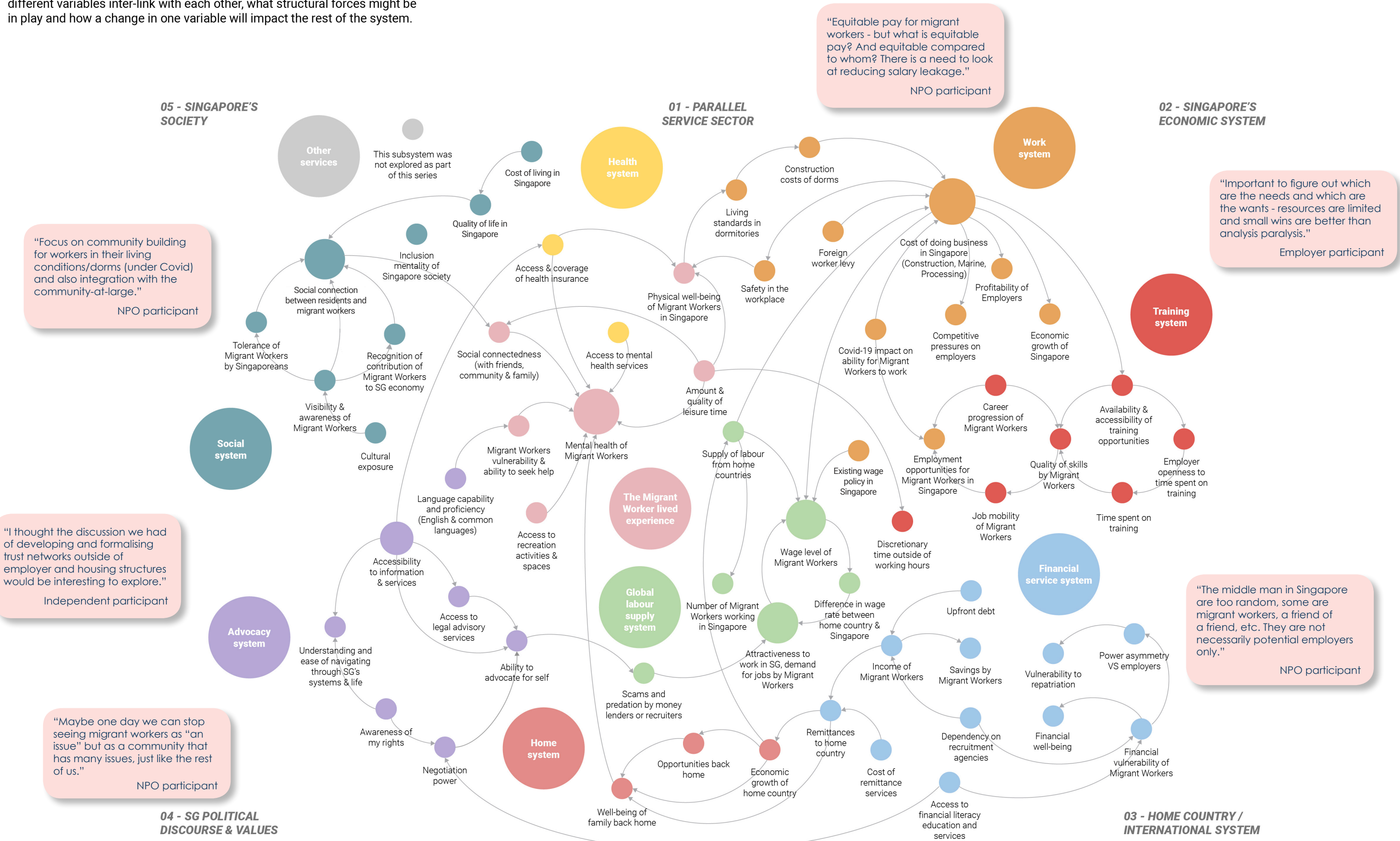
*Differently sized circles indicate their differing significance to the system*



*Arrows indicate direction of influence (A affects B), as co-discovered by our participants*

# Issues Map

This map explores the issues within each subsystem. It shows how the different variables inter-link with each other, what structural forces might be in play and how a change in one variable will impact the rest of the system.



"Equitable pay for migrant workers - but what is equitable pay? And equitable compared to whom? There is a need to look at reducing salary leakage."  
NPO participant

"Focus on community building for workers in their living conditions/dorms (under Covid) and also integration with the community-at-large."  
NPO participant

"Important to figure out which are the needs and which are the wants - resources are limited and small wins are better than analysis paralysis."  
Employer participant

"I thought the discussion we had of developing and formalising trust networks outside of employer and housing structures would be interesting to explore."  
Independent participant

"Maybe one day we can stop seeing migrant workers as 'an issue' but as a community that has many issues, just like the rest of us."  
NPO participant

"The middle man in Singapore are too random, some are migrant workers, a friend of a friend, etc. They are not necessarily potential employers only."  
NPO participant

"D explained, 'we save for our family... we need to give our family love. Surely, everybody don't want to go [to] other country, [they] need to stay together with family'.  
Reflection from migrant worker engagements



Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek



Photo credit: Caroline Chia



Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek



Photo credit: Shawn Ang on Unsplash



Photo credit: Justin Lim on Unsplash



Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek



Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek



# ***Part 4***      ***The future and you***

*Co-create a desired  
future which we can all  
be proud of*

# Explainer



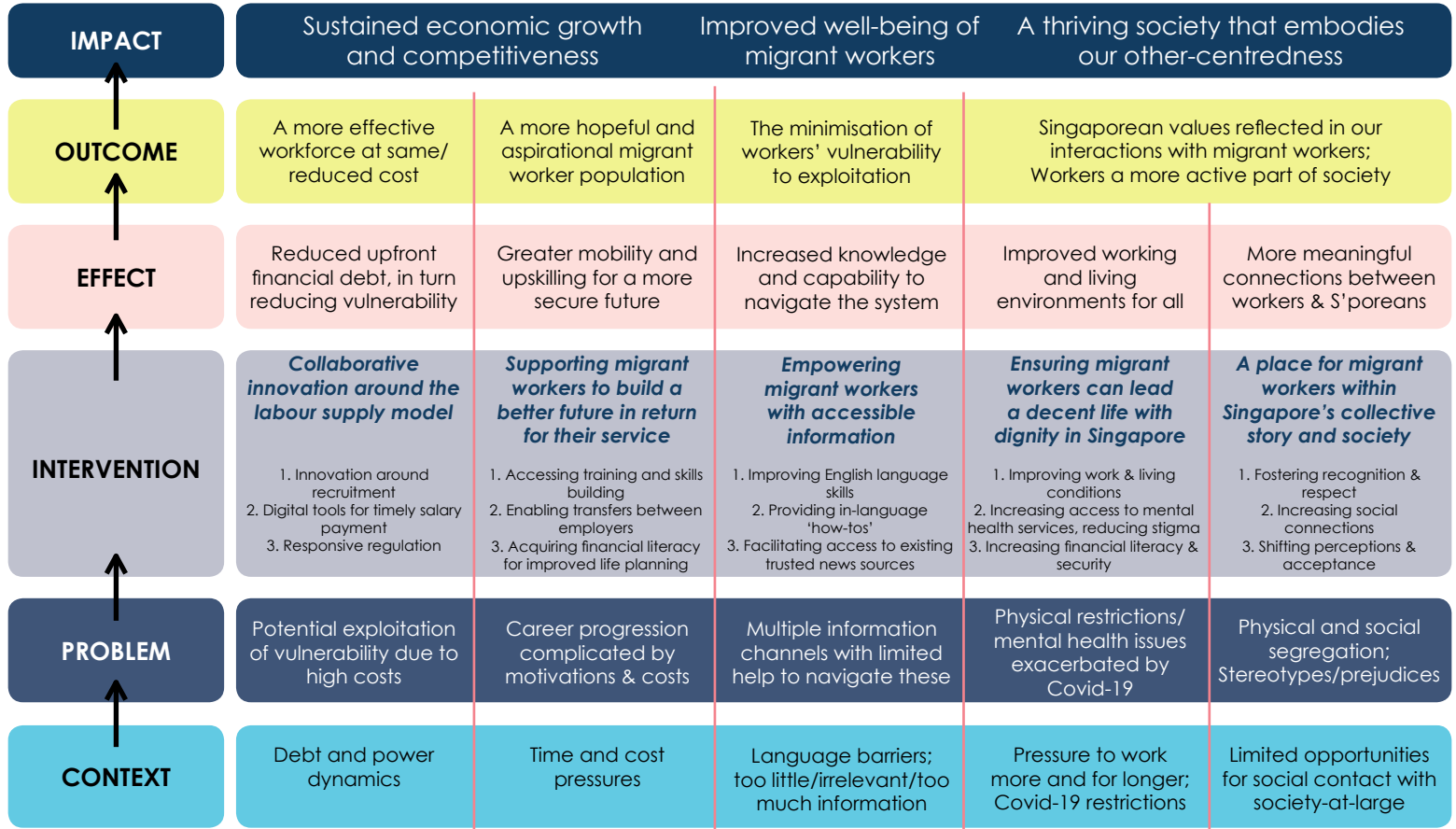
Photo credit: Bryan van der Beek

*After co-creating the three kinds of maps in the previous part, our participants identified possible areas of opportunity.*

*They are not intended as “strategic roadmaps”, but areas of existing and potential leverage to realise our aspiration statement.*

*Take inspiration, refine them, and find collaboration opportunities as the migrant workers situation continually evolves.*

# A suggested theory of change





# Areas of opportunity

## Key Pillars

## Opportunity Areas

1

**COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION  
AROUND THE LABOUR SUPPLY  
MODEL**

1. Innovation around recruitment to reduce migrant workers' debt up front.

2. Digital tools to facilitate timely payment of salary by employer and better financial management.

3. Responsive regulation to reward the good employers, & enforcement against the bad.

2

**SUPPORTING MIGRANT WORKERS  
TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE IN  
RETURN FOR THEIR SERVICE**

1. Access to training and skills building.

2. Enabling transfers between employers.

3. Acquiring financial literacy for improved life planning.

3

**EMPOWERING MIGRANT  
WORKERS WITH ACCESSIBLE  
INFORMATION**

1. Improving English language skills.

2. Providing 'how-to' guides in native languages on all the relevant services needed.

3. Giving access to existing trusted news sources in native languages; moving towards a one-stop service channel.

4

**ENSURING MIGRANT WORKERS  
CAN LEAD A DECENT LIFE WITH  
DIGNITY IN SINGAPORE**

1. Keeping workers fit and healthy through improved work and living environments.

2. Increasing access to mental health services and reducing stigma.

3. Increasing financial literacy and security through awareness and access to support services.

5

**A PLACE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS  
WITHIN SINGAPORE'S COLLECTIVE  
STORY AND SOCIETY**

1. Fostering recognition and respect for migrant workers' contributions.

2. Increasing social connection between migrant workers and Singaporean locals.

3. Shifting perceptions and acceptance of migrant workers in Singaporean society.

**Click on each pillar to explore more**

# Collaborative innovation around the labour supply model

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Government
2. Employers
3. NGOs
4. Tech companies

## EXISTING INITIATIVES

1. **MOM**: App to indicate if they have been paid, and how much.
2. **MOM**: Educating migrant workers to ensure they are aware of the avenues of help.
3. **MWC & POSB Membership programme** + **MOM**: Platform for e-crediting of salary. Account opening process has been integrated with MOM work pass issuance system.
4. Digital salary tool for clients to pay salary straight to migrant workers' wallets.
5. **Sama** - linked to reducing middleman costs during recruitment and adding value to the ecosystem.

## OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Innovation around recruitment to reduce migrant workers' debt up front

Digital tools to facilitate timely payment of salary by employer and better financial management

Responsive regulation to reward the good employers, and enforcement against the bad employers

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Migrant workers are able to start work in Singapore with minimised debt.

Greater adoption of digital payment modes among workers and employers.

Workers are paid on time and able to remit money back home without incurring high fees.

Workers are protected from exploitative practices by middle men and bad employers.

## NATURE OF TACTICS AND TIME HORIZON

### LONG TERM

Effecting the global system by providing a home-based alternative that is linked with Singapore-based solution.

Secure local licensing in markets to prevent people from exploiting margins - ancillary fees.

Socialisation of alternative by workers back home who have worked in Singapore before.

Refinement of regulatory frameworks to blacklist and penalise errant employers.

Refinement of regulatory frameworks to blacklist and penalise errant employers.

### MEDIUM TERM

Re-imagining the middleman role by tapping on technology while ensuring business is still viable.

Work with NGOs, governments, and workers to close gap between actual cost and prices charged.

Disrupt market with process engineering.

Facilitate partnership building with champions and other interested parties (E.g. Sama with mentors).

Reward schemes for model employers with good labour practices specific to migrant workers

Policy driven initiatives to ensure that bad employers do not get away with exploitative practices.

Reward schemes for model employers with good labour practices specific to migrant workers

Policy driven initiatives to ensure that bad employers do not get away with exploitative practices.

### SHORT TERM

Interventions by stakeholders or groups of stakeholders may result in working against the interests of other actors in the landscape. Partners working in collaboration with one another should examine carefully the knock-on effects of their efforts.

We need to consider if small and medium enterprises across different industries will be able to afford implementation of digital solutions.

There is a need to consider the limits of Singapore's reach if middlemen are under different jurisdictions; Middleman roles also exist for a reason; what takes their place that can improve how the system works?

Workers may be afraid to use digital payments as they cannot see where their cash is going to. Education is need to give them assurance and possibly work with banks to have more ATMs in dormitories.

Bring greater awareness to current efforts that are making good impact.

Create awareness to convince employers and workers to get on digital payrolls.

Leverage on technology and other platforms to accelerate information flow on initiatives between different stakeholders and workers.

Bring greater awareness to current efforts that are making good impact.

NGOs highlight the good work of good employers to drive recognition.

On remittances, we also need to consider if there are issues of mistrust of financial institutions which may hinder use of digital facilities.

## GENERAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Interventions by stakeholders or groups of stakeholders may result in working against the interests of other actors in the landscape. Partners working in collaboration with one another should examine carefully the knock-on effects of their efforts.

We need to consider if small and medium enterprises across different industries will be able to afford implementation of digital solutions.

There is a need to consider the limits of Singapore's reach if middlemen are under different jurisdictions; Middleman roles also exist for a reason; what takes their place that can improve how the system works?

Workers may be afraid to use digital payments as they cannot see where their cash is going to. Education is need to give them assurance and possibly work with banks to have more ATMs in dormitories.

There are underlying reasons why workers prefer cash; it may work better for several reasons. This needs to be taken into account when considering digital platforms.

On remittances, we also need to consider if there are issues of mistrust of financial institutions which may hinder use of digital facilities.

Create awareness to convince employers and workers to get on digital payrolls.

Leverage on technology and other platforms to accelerate information flow on initiatives between different stakeholders and workers.

Bring greater awareness to current efforts that are making good impact.

NGOs highlight the good work of good employers to drive recognition.

On remittances, we also need to consider if there are issues of mistrust of financial institutions which may hinder use of digital facilities.

## POTENTIAL IDEAS

1. Leveraging on technology and other platforms to accelerate information flow on initiatives between service providers & workers.
2. Digital payroll adopted by more employers and other stakeholders. Cash may be preferred for now, and smaller companies may not be able to afford the costs.
3. A fair employment framework as a form of accreditation, perhaps taking reference from the current Green Mark Certification Scheme.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. STEP expressed willingness to work with trisector partners.
2. Sama can work with employers on retention, to gather and share data.
3. Strengthening ties between employers associations & MWC.

# Supporting migrant workers to build a better future in return for their service

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Government
2. Employers
3. NGOs + Foundations

## EXISTING INITIATIVES

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1. SCAL + MOM: Construction Manpower Exchange Scheme (Job-matching).
2. SCAL: Foreign Construction Workers Directory (FCWDS) for hiring worker with expiring work permits.
3. MOM + TACs, particularly ASPRI: Change of Employer Scheme.
4. MOM + SBF: [Manpower Connect](#).

### SKILLS AND TRAINING

1. [SDI Academy](#), RLAf: Provide skills training (English classes, IT classes).
2. TSL/ICF International: Mentorship of Migrant Worker by supervisors.

## OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Access to training and skills building

Enabling transfers between employers

Acquiring financial literacy for improved life planning

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Greater mobility  
Greater versatility (able to be deployed across different work roles)  
Increased productivity  
Higher salaries

Greater mobility for workers  
More exposure and skills for future  
Less cost incurred - no additional recruitment fees  
Job security for workers

Better life planning (savings for future investment, unforeseen life circumstances)

## NATURE OF TACTICS AND TIME HORIZON

### LONG TERM

Institutionalising the current temporary transfer schemes that were set up due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Savings scheme "Save as you earn".

### MEDIUM TERM

One-stop portal,  
Job portal for migrant workers with expired passes / info center at recreation centres.

More specialised knowledge e.g. savings for life events.

### SHORT TERM

Courses available by NPOs (English, communication skills, financial literacy).  
Enabling pathways to transfer employers - COE MOM policy.  
Initiatives that enable transfer schemes to be matched with training schemes.

NGOs highlight the good work of good employers to drive recognition.

## GENERAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Increased cost for employers

Lack of time for workers when they may prefer to be earning income

There is a need to further unpack how employer-employee relationships will be affected, e.g. increased ability of migrant workers to find other jobs may disincentivise employers to action

## POTENTIAL IDEAS

1. Job fairs for migrant workers in Singapore
2. Establish a 'CPF-like savings for migrant workers.
3. Re-training in field of food production aligned to Singapore's development plans – future partner producers when they are in home country.
4. Upskilling through entrepreneurship bootcamps.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. Employers + BCA: Re-training of workers at subsidised rates locally to incentivise more employers to send their workers for training.
2. Foundations with other stakeholders to fuel research/innovation, programmes/platforms.

# Empowering migrant workers with accessible information

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. NGOs + Foundations
2. Dormitories
3. Government

## EXISTING INITIATIVES

1. MOM: "FWHandy" guidebook since 2010, covering topics like work permit conditions, safety tips, offences/penalties, assistance channels; available in 6 languages
2. Migrant Workers' Assistance Fund (MWAF) helps workers redress employment disputes, furthers education and awareness of their employment rights.
3. Law Society Pro Bono Services: Work-in-progress care hotline, remote clinics and group sessions on specific issues that they may require help in. Legal clinics for individuals.
4. GlobalSign.in: app to assist workers gain access to resources and enable self-help, through IMDA's Open Innovation Platform (OIP) with NVPC.
5. TWC2: Research and advocacy – for easier job mobility, online direct assistance.

## OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Improving English language skills

Providing 'how-to' guides in native languages on all the relevant services needed.

Giving access to existing trusted news sources in-language, moving towards a one-stop service channel

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Improved English language skills.

Improved workplace comprehension, performance and safety.

Resistance to fake news.

Empowered migrant workers who can better navigate life and work in Singapore.

Better able to advocate for self, entitlements and rights.

Less vulnerable to exploitation by those information advantages.

## NATURE OF TACTICS AND TIME HORIZON

### LONG TERM

Improvements in English proficiency for each migrant worker coming to Singapore.

A trusted ecosystem of digital access to news, information and services.

### MEDIUM TERM

Holistic, in-language, migrant worker-centric how-tos on all major services.

Launching the trusted one-stop.

### SHORT TERM

Continue and scale language tuition efforts.

Consolidation of the resources already existing.

Identifying gaps and coordinating content production.

Mapping the existing digital tools, including MOM's FWMOMCare app and bulletins disseminated through dormitory managements.

Experiments with outreach over preferred channels.

## GENERAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Language acquisition is hard, and time-consuming, and workers are time-poor.

More empowered workers may mean more conflict with employers and other stakeholders.

Adoption of apps and information sources is a human choice, and top-down introductions may not work.

Many resources already exist, and we should not further duplicate efforts.

Interpretation is currently labour and resource intensive.

## POTENTIAL IDEAS

1. Peer mentorship.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. DASL expressed possibility of linking GSI with MOM on information aggregator.
2. Collaboration between GSI and other partners to enable the adoption of web-based solutions.
3. Establish network of linkages to link workers to NGOs in home country.
4. Foundations with other stakeholders to fuel research/innovation, programmes/platforms.

# Ensuring migrant workers can lead a decent life with dignity in Singapore

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. NGOs + Foundations 2. Dormitories 3. Volunteers 4. Government

## EXISTING INITIATIVES

1. Project Dawn (see page 16): framework to build support ecosystem for better mental health awareness and better access to care services.
2. Quick build dormitories with better living conditions + recreation centres.
3. DASL, SCAL, MOM, MOH: ensuring dorms/workplaces are safe; DASL: New dorm design/infrastructure to be more pandemic-resilient.
4. Partnership between MWC and Leap201 on new insurance scheme (Care4MigrantWorkers) underwritten by NTUC Income.
5. Woh Hup Workers' welfare committee: personalised messages/birthday cards from charities; celebrating International Migrants' Day at project sites
6. Maybank: Working with Malaysian Association in Singapore to support low-wage Malaysian workers.
7. Migrant Workers' Assistance Fund (MwAF) helps workers redress employment disputes, furthers education and awareness of their employment rights.
8. AGWO: Adopt-a-dorm; dorm-to-home initiative; Christmas cupcakes & muffins (10k distributed); Christmas parties in dorms; mental wellness/virtual Crossfit/virtual English classes; counselling, case management, befriending.
9. STEP: early-stage piloting tripartite approach focused on workers' journeys.
10. Collaborations between RLAf, MUIS, and mosques for access to prayers, recreational programmes, religious festivals, and outreach.
11. We The Good, SCAL, HIA, Contentment Foundation: training on mental health resilience.
12. Social Collider: adopting 80 workers at Tagore Lane to support living needs.

## OPPORTUNITY AREAS

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

## NATURE OF TACTICS AND TIME HORIZON

### LONG TERM

### MEDIUM TERM

### SHORT TERM

## GENERAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

## POTENTIAL IDEAS

Keeping migrant workers fit and healthy through improved work and living environments	<p>Future-ready system surrounding migrant workers for future pandemics.</p> <p>Environments with holistic work, live, play elements.</p> <p>Safe workplaces.</p>	<p>Future-ready system surrounding migrant workers for future pandemics.</p>	<p>Encouraged work-life balance - including 'enforced' 1 day off a week as either policy or best practice.</p>	<p>Continuation of safe workplace practices.</p> <p>Sharing best practices on dorm design/ environments; improving communal facilities within dorms by learning from exemplars.</p> <p>Improving access to social/recreational facilities, following gradual resumption of communal facilities.</p>	<p>Cultural aspects of behavioural change.</p> <p>Potentially increased costs to multiple stakeholders.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scale 'Contentment Foundation' training platform and curriculum after modifying content.</li> <li>2. Sports/recreation activities, e.g. cricket league for workers.</li> </ol>
Increasing access to mental health services and reducing stigma	<p>Protection for more against vulnerability.</p> <p>Access help without fear of negative consequences.</p> <p>Consideration of their religious/spiritual lives.</p>		<p>Partnerships with religious institutions / organisations.</p>	<p>Scale up befriender model.</p> <p>Have workers be para-counsellors. / well-being ambassadors /informal migrant worker leaders.</p> <p>Training in dorms on mental health resources.</p> <p>Programmes to reduce stigma about asking for help.</p>	<p>Desire to work more and earn more conflicting with desire for greater work-life balance.</p> <p>Fear of repercussions.</p>	<h3>POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recreation centres + NGOs.</li> <li>2. Foundations with other stakeholders to fuel research/ innovation, programmes/ platforms.</li> <li>3. Working with Project Dawn on enhancing mental health care support for migrant workers.</li> </ol>
Increasing financial literacy and security through awareness and access to support services	<p>Knowledge about grievance channels.</p> <p>Knowledge about how to manage their financials.</p>		<p>Knowledge about how to manage their financials.</p>	<p>Growing knowledge about grievance channels and the consideration of (more) anonymous/two-way channels to raise concerns or exchange ideas.</p>	<p>Need to consult multiple stakeholders.</p> <p>Challenge of finding the time for training (both employers and workers).</p>	

# A place for migrant workers within Singapore's collective story and society

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. NGOs + Foundations
2. Volunteers
3. Groundups
4. Dormitories
5. Employers
6. Government
7. General Public
8. Media
9. Schools

## EXISTING INITIATIVES

1. MWC: Makan with me: Singaporean families hosting meals with workers.
2. WIMBY: Youth-driven hangout sessions with migrant workers.
3. A Better World: Cqovid-19 features.
4. AGWO: Programme to get migrant workers to meet locals; and further initiatives cited in the previous area of opportunity, e.g. adopt-a-dorm, befriending & outreach
5. We The Good: storytelling through images.
6. We The Good X AGWO: changing perceptions.
7. WePals: Online group hangouts between youths and similar age migrant workers.

## OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Fostering recognition and respect for migrant workers' contributions

Increasing social connections between migrant workers and Singaporean locals

Shifting perceptions and acceptance of migrant workers in Singapore's society

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Shift in attitudes across society to view and treat migrant workers with greater respect.

Deeper mutual understanding through increasing meaningful interactions.

Authentic connections.

## NATURE OF TACTICS AND TIME HORIZON

### LONG TERM

Mapping out various initiatives run by different ground-ups and NGOs to develop future collective initiatives.

Identify synergy and coordination of efforts to achieve greater impact.

Building up a shared value system.

### MEDIUM TERM

Embed into school curriculum the sharing of migrant workers' stories and outreach to students.

Scaling up interactions through organised activities via RCs/CCs.

Tapping on interest-based groups and associations to provide regular touchpoints for interaction at scale, e.g. sports leagues.

Inculcate a shift away from using language that positions migrant workers as "other" in our everyday/ media discourse.

### SHORT TERM

Media stories to raise profile and highlight contribution of migrant workers to our society.

Organised and structured interaction opportunities led by groundups.

Utilise social media to address and myth-bust common stereotypes.

## GENERAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

We require whole-of-society approaches to move together in this direction.

We require stronger coordination across various initiatives and players involved.

As noted on the "work-life balance" insights page, people's needs and goals differ per person and across time. This means that the opportunities for interactions between migrant workers and locals may be limited.

We may not see strong indications of impact in a short time – since it takes a long time to shift mindsets/ perceptions.

## POTENTIAL IDEAS

1. Inter-community sport leagues in the post-Covid-19 life.
2. Programmes to foster mutual sharing and create shared experiences between migrant workers and residents (e.g. over meals, sharing of culture & practices, volunteering, or visiting a place of interest together).
3. Befriender programme with local Singaporeans.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. Working with RCs/CCs on outreach and friendship programmes between migrant workers and neighbourhood community.

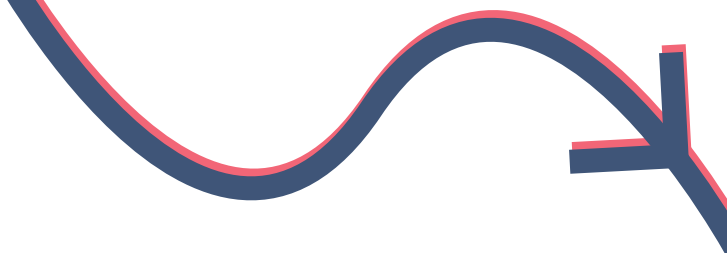
# Future state stories

## Visions of a future already budding in our midst

Peter runs a small construction company. During a 'best practices' session run by his trade association, he connects with an ethical digital recruitment agent. Peter is able to streamline his recruitment process, reducing costs; he hires Tin Win, a young father who only pays a small fee to come to Singapore. As Tin Win settles into his new job, Peter's company sets up a digital wallet for easy and low-cost tracking of finances.

Charmaine, a HR manager, accepts the transfer of Faisal from another company. She talks to him about possible training courses, but because the economy is not doing well, the company might have trouble covering 100% of the course fees. Charmaine connects with non-profits and groundups to ensure that Faisal can attend the courses he needs to. Through these organisations, Faisal also access free financial literacy videos.





When Mahmud moves into his dormitory, the staff and his new friends encourage him to download InfoApp. On InfoApp he finds all the relevant and trusted information he needs to settle into Singapore. While the information is available in his native language, Mahmud chooses to use English to improve his skills. Each day, after work, he also chats with the dormitory's security guard, who helps him with his conversational skills.

Wei Liang is stressed because his father is very ill. He has been saving money through a NPO-led initiative, so he can cover the bills. But he is depressed because he has to keep on working and cannot go home. Nonetheless, his supervisor and fellow workers see this and give him emotional support. They also volunteer to top-up his mobile data so he can call his family more often.

A new dormitory is built next to Subramaniam's HDB estate. His own grandfather migrated to Singapore, and he wants to learn more about his new neighbours. Through the dormitory operator, community centre, and ground-up movements, he brings his kids for a friendly futsal match with workers. Subramaniam learns that the workers sometimes volunteer at a local mosque. Thankful to them, he brings them out for lunch.







# Kick-start your actions together



Together we can realise  
our desired future

1. The **stakeholder cards** can help us quickly find existing initiatives and potential partners.
2. The **journey map template** can lead to deeper encounters with migrant workers.
3. The **Collaborate for Good platform** is a place for posting or finding collaboration opportunities.
4. The Colabs team is ready to support you. Contact us at **[connect@colabs.sg](mailto:connect@colabs.sg)**.

# Stakeholder cards

## What are these?

Stakeholder cards provide a quick and easy look into the current initiatives and partnerships in the migrant worker landscape.

This information was collated from the sharings of the Colabs series' participants. It is neither exhaustive nor complete, but it is a starting point to understand the various initiatives and activities happening in the ecosystem.

## How this could be used:

By realising how much is going in the space already, we hope that these cards will enable you to find - in reference to our insights and areas of opportunity - either possible synergies with current initiatives or partnerships, or untapped areas of need or opportunity.

## Guiding questions:

1. What are others already doing in this space?
2. Where can my current efforts and contributions join up with that of others to create greater impact?
3. What other areas do I see that could amplify the current efforts done by others in the system?
4. Who can I connect with?

If you would like to update us on your own stakeholder card below, we welcome submissions to [this form](#).

## MY ORGANISATION AND/OR MYSELF

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANISATION: \_\_\_\_\_

OBJECTIVES: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT INITIATIVES & PARTNERSHIPS: \_\_\_\_\_

### AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY I CAN BEST SUPPORT:

- 1. Collaborative innovation around the labour supply model
- 2. Supporting migrant workers to build a better future in return for their service
- 3. Empowering migrant workers with accessible information
- 4. Ensuring migrant workers can lead a decent life with dignity in Singapore
- 5. A place for migrant workers in Singapore's collective story and society

POTENTIAL PARTNERS/PARTNERSHIPS: \_\_\_\_\_

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?: \_\_\_\_\_

## GOVERNMENT / REGULATORY AGENCIES

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. Regulations: Employment Act, Employment Agencies Act, Work Injury Compensation Act, Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices, Employment Claims Tribunal, Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management, Foreign Employee Dormitories Act
2. MOM's ACE Group: BluePass tokens, FWMOMCare App, Foreign Worker Levy rebates during Covid-19
3. BCA: All construction firms received a 100% Foreign Worker Levy waiver and \$750 Foreign Worker Levy rebate in June 2020, as well as a 50% Foreign Worker Levy waiver and \$375 Foreign Worker Levy rebate in July 2020
4. Covid-19 Inter-Agency Taskforce

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

1. SCAL + MOM – Construction Manpower Exchange Scheme (Job-matching)
2. MOM + various TACs e.g. ASPRI – Change of Employer Scheme
3. MND + MOM – New dorm guidelines
4. IMDA + Singtel/Circles Life: data / entertainment through YouTube
5. IMDA + NVPC + GS: Informational aggregator for workers

## EMPLOYERS

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. TSL / ICF International: Mentorship of migrant workers by supervisors
2. Woh Hup: Workers' welfare committee: personalised messages/birthday cards from charities; celebration of International Migrants' Day at respective project sites.

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

1. HSL + EDB/MOM: Local contractors upskilling programme

## INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. SCAL: Emphasis of safety, training and awareness, Foreign Construction Workers Directory System (FCWDS) for hiring of workers with expiring work permits

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

1. SCAL + MOM – Construction Manpower Exchange Scheme (Job-matching)

## DORMITORY OPERATORS / RECREATION CENTRES

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. DASL: Recreational centres/social spaces for migrant workers
2. Tuas South RC: Turn into space for Friday prayers

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

1. DASL + MOM/MOH + SCAL: Implement Covid-19 response and ensuring dorm/workplace safety
2. DASL + Temasek/Surbana Jurong: Organise safe movement of migrant workers (TraceTogether/Bluepass)

## NGOs

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. SDI Academy: Engaging with larger corporations/organisations e.g. UIC, Deloitte, MUIS for staff volunteers to teach English
2. TWC2: Research and advocacy – for easier job mobility, online direct assistance to Migrant Workers who have problems
3. Law Society: Foster greater alignment and collaboration in enhancing legal awareness and access to justice in Migrant Worker community
4. MWC: Come Makan With Me – Singaporean family hosting meals for workers, youth outreach on how to understand workers, among other initiatives
5. Touch International: Role of connector between local community and migrant workers, promote message to appreciate workers among us and help cultivate friendships
6. STEP: early-stage piloting tripartite approach focused on migrant workers' journeys.
7. HealthServe: Scaling up outreach from 10K to 100K workers

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

## CHARITIES / FOUNDATIONS

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. Fullerton Health: Healthcare provider at the quarantine floating hotels, 20 medical dormitory posts, ad-hoc clothes drive, runs a clinic at Cochrane RC
2. Magnuson Trust: Working with organisations in home countries (Southeast Asia) on labour issues; forming NGO partnerships across home/host countries.
3. Community Foundation of Singapore: (1) SSF, (2) MEANS Fund, (3) Approved programmes, (4) Donor recommendations (e.g. SembCorp for Good)

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

## GROUNDUPS / VOLUNTEERS

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. WIMBY: youth-driven hangout sessions with Migrant Workers e.g. boardgames,
2. WePals: Online group hangouts between youths and similar age migrant workers. Volunteers are trained by professional counsellors to look for signs of distress
3. Independent volunteers: helping factory-converted dormitories with meal provisions

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

## RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. Network of mosques offering services in Bengali.
2. RLAF: Mosques provide programmes to enhance abilities in IT literacy, English, sewing, cooking and religious celebrations (with mosques around dorms).
3. Collaborations between RLAF, MUIS, and mosques for access to prayers, recreational programmes, religious festivals, and outreach.
4. Indian Migrant Workers' volunteering: Volunteer at Sri Narayana Nursing homes and Peruma Temple.
5. Bangladeshi Migrant Workers' volunteer opportunities: Mosques (during fasting month and for afternoon prayers).

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

## COMMERCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

### CURRENT INITIATIVES

1. Sama: Providing unique secure IDs for digital services
2. Maybank: Working with Malaysian Association in Singapore to support low-wage Malaysian workers.

### CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

# Journey map template

**What is this?**

Journey maps are useful for empathy building. They aid us in thoroughly unpacking the lived experiences of other people. They help us identify the challenges, constraints and gaps of current experiences.

Here is a template or you to get started on this empathy-building exercise.

**How this could be used:**

Have a conversation with a migrant worker and ask them to tell you stories around three aspects of their lives:

1. Journeys to and from Singapore
2. Work day
3. Rest day

**Guiding questions for the conversation:**

1. Introduction
  - a. What is your name?
  - b. Where are you from? / Where is your hometown?
  - c. How old are you?
  - d. How long have you been in Singapore?
  - e. What do you do?
2. Journey to and from Singapore
  - a. Share with me the story of how you came to Singapore to work. How did it start? How did you find your job? What did your family think?
  - b. What was coming to Singapore like, at first? What do you remember most? What happened when you arrived?
  - c. What has changed since then? Has your job changed? How have you changed?
  - d. Have you been home since you arrived? What was that like?
  - e. How long do you expect, or hope, to be here? What happens when you leave? What have you heard from others (or experienced yourself)
3. Work day
  - a. Share with me what is your work day like. Talk us through a typical day (from wake-up to sleep). What usually happens?

- b. Which part do you enjoy most? Which parts are hardest?
- c. What is your workplace like? Can you describe it to us?
- d. Who do you meet during the day? What do you talk about with them?
- e. Is there anything that you sometimes worry about? What are you usually thinking about when you're at work?
- f. What do you do outside of work?
- g. Where do you live? Describe it to us?
- h. How do you get news and information? What kind?
- i. Is this similar to the experiences of your friends? What is different?

4. Rest day
  - a. What do you do on your rest day? Talk us through a typical day (from waking to sleep).
  - b. What are some of your favourite things to do on your rest day?
  - c. What is your highest priority on your day off?
  - d. Where do you go?
  - e. Do you join any activities organised by volunteer groups? What are they?
  - f. Who do you meet and talk to?
  - g. How do you talk to people (e.g. phone, credit)?
  - h. How do you get news or information? What kind?
  - i. Is this similar to the experiences of your friends? What is different?

**JOURNEY TYPE (cancel where appropriate):**

To and from Singapore / Work day / Rest day

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Years in Singapore: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation & Industry: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Accommodation type: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family: \_\_\_\_\_

**FIELD NOTES:**

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		JOURNEY MAP											
		STAGES											
		FEELINGS											
		ACTIVITIES											
		GOALS											
		PAIN POINTS											
		OPPORTUNITY AREAS											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

- Step 1: Input main flow of journey (e.g. pre-arrival in Singapore).
- Step 2: Input particular stages (e.g. learning about Singapore, applying for a job, training).
- Step 3: Track positive and negative points in the journey, adding the bullet points and speech bubbles (to record thoughts and opinions) provided here:
  - 
  - 
  -
- Step 4: Fill in insights on the other headings (e.g. Feeling: "hopeful"; Goals: "provide for family"; Opportunity Areas: "enabling access to social networks").

# Appendix: Resources

Here is a list of online resources the NVPC Colabs team came across during the Migrant Workers Colabs series.

Each title is hyper-linked to the respective source.

Please note that the list is non-exhaustive. Internet websites and other sources cited here may have changed or been removed since the time they were accessed and the compilation of resources.

Any views or opinions represented in any of these resources are those of the respective authors and do not represent those of NVPC or its employees, nor does inclusion in this list represent endorsement of the respective views by NVPC or its employees.

## General

Source	Title	Date
Ministry of Manpower	Foreign Worker Survey 2014	7-Dec-14
Dutta & Kaur-Gill	Precarities of Migrant Work in Singapore: Migration, (Im)mobility, and Neoliberal Governmentality	2018
CNA Insider	Ramadan Diaries: The Secret Life Of Migrant Workers	2-Jun-18
CNA Insider	Ramadan Diaries: Migrant Workers Try To Make A Home Away From Home	9-Jun-18
Baey & Yeoh	"The lottery of my life": Migration trajectories and the production of precarity among Bangladeshi migrant workers in Singapore's construction industry	21-Jun-18
Chin, C.F.	Precarious Work and its Complicit Network: Migrant Labour in Singapore	16-Feb-19
Hamid & Tuff	"Thrown away like a banana leaf": precarity of labour and precarity of place for Tamil migrant construction workers in Singapore	28-May-19
MOM	Foreign Worker Survey 2017/18	9-Jun-19
CNA Insider	Life As A Migrant Worker In Singapore	9-Feb-20
Loong, S.	Who is responsible for Singapore's migrant workers, and why does it matter?	5-May-20
Ng & Ong	The Big Read: Solving Singapore's foreign workers problem requires serious soul searching, from top to bottom	11-May-20
Our Better World	Far from home, but not forgotten	Sep-20
Coca, N.	How can we better protect migrant workers in the next global crisis?	24-Sep-20
TWC2 & HOME	UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Shadow Report	12-Oct-20
Tan, T.	Veteran migrant workers: Singapore is land of opportunity	26-Oct-20
The Straits Times	Go-Far: Journalism students uncover stories of migrant workers in lockdown	26-Oct-20
Ho, O.	Will S'poreans, migrant workers take different roads after pandemic?	22-Nov-20
Tan et al.	Crisis and connection	25-Nov-20
Davis & Tan	Singapore's national identity is in the skyline	17-Dec-20

## Covid-19 pandemic

Source	Title	Date
Md Omar Faruq	See you soon (poem)	2020
Asif Kumar Baroi	A Request to Covid19 Virus (poem)	2020
Mohiuddin Sarkar	Corona (poem)	2020
Kiron MD Manna	Good Days Will Return (poem)	2020
Kiron MD Manna	What a life! (poem)	2020
Md Omar Faruque	Loneliness at Dormitory (poem)	2020
CNA Insider	Life In Isolation: Inside Singapore's Foreign Worker Dormitories During COVID-19	12-Apr-20
CNA Insider	Life In Isolation: When A Migrant Worker Gets COVID-19 In Singapore	17-Apr-20
Ratcliffe, R.	Singapore's cramped migrant worker dorms hide Covid-19 surge risk	17-Apr-20
Yea, S.	This is why Singapore's coronavirus cases are growing: a look inside the dismal living conditions of migrant workers	30-Apr-20
Kopi	Poetry From Migrant Workers Shines a Light on Their COVID-19 Plight	17-May-20
Li, A.J.J.	The invisible during the pandemic	5-Aug-20
Heijmans, P.	Singapore's Poorest Stay in Lockdown As Others Move Freely	9-Sep-20
Phua & Ang	In focus: The long, challenging journey to bring COVID-19 under control in migrant worker dormitories	12-Sep-20
Aravindan, A.	Singapore grapples with coronavirus in migrant workers' dormitories	14-Sep-20
Teh, C.	Home Team officer assigned to workers' dorm forms friendship with migrant worker	16-Sep-20
Ministry of Manpower	Measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak in migrant worker dormitories	14-Dec-20

## Finances

Source	Title	Date
ILO Country Office for Bangladesh	The Cost Causes of and potential redress for high recruitment and migration costs in Bangladesh	31-Aug-14
Platt et al.	Debt, precarity and gender: male and female temporary labour migrants in Singapore	29-Aug-16
H.O.M.E	Wage theft & exploitation among Singapore's migrant workers	Jan-17
Teo et al.	Costs of Low-waged Labour Migration: Difficulties, Implications and Recommendations	26-Nov-18
TWC2	Recruitment cost up to 22 months' salary for shipyard workers	9-Nov-19

Madhavan, R.	\$salary Day	25-Apr-20
Tan, X.M.	Insights Into the Migrant Worker Issue: Perspectives From a Subcontractor	18-Jun-20

## Home Country

Source	Title	Date
The Best of You	Mohsin: Do you know what Bangla means?	30-Apr-17
CNA Insider	The Migrant Worker Who Founded A Polytechnic	6-Jul-19
CNA Insider	The Bangladeshi Town With A Singapore Dream	20-Jul-19

## Social Integration

Source	Title	Date
Familiar Strangers	Migrant workers respond to comments made by Singaporeans	17-Jan-16
TEDx Talks	Building Bridges - A Migrant Story   Saiful Islam	15-Jun-17
Zhang, J.	Young girl in S'pore plays board game together with migrant workers while waiting for rain to stop	23-Sep-20

## Legal concerns and issues

Source	Title	Date
Neo, J.L.	Riots and Rights: Law and Exclusion in Singapore's Migrant Worker Regime	17-Feb-15
Bal, C.S.	Dealing with Deportability: Deportation Laws and the Political Personhood of Temporary Migrant Workers in Singapore	17-Aug-15
Fillinger et al.	Labour protection for the vulnerable: an evaluation of the salary and injury claims system for migrant workers in Singapore	2017
Loong, S.	'This country, law very strong': Securitization beyond the border in the everyday lives of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Singapore	Mar-18
H.O.M.E	Migrant Workers' Access to Justice in Singapore's Employment Claims Tribunal: Preliminary Findings of a Qualitative Study	Jul-18
TWC2	Half-naked man running in the night	12-Sep-20
Phua, R.	The lawyers doing pro bono work helping migrant workers get 'equal access to justice'	27-Sep-20

## Wellbeing

Source	Title	Date
Lee et al.	Health-seeking behaviour of male foreign migrant workers living in a dormitory in Singapore	10-Jul-14
Chok, S.	Risky Business: Death & Injury on Singapore's Construction Sites	Aug-14
Dutta, M.J.	Food Insecurity and Health of Bangladeshi Workers in Singapore: A Culture-Centered Study	2015
Harrigan & Koh	Vital yet Vulnerable: Mental and emotional health of South Asian migrant workers in Singapore	2015
Dutta, M.J.	Migration and Health in the Construction Industry: Culturally Centering Voices of Bangladeshi Workers in Singapore	29-Jan-17
Chan & Chia	Practical advice for doctors treating foreign workers	Feb-17
Ang et al.	Healthcare-seeking behaviour, barriers and mental health of non-domestic migrant workers in Singapore	9-Mar-17
Sadarangani et al.	Infectious diseases and migrant worker health in Singapore: a receiving country's perspective	30-Mar-17
Tam et al.	健康是本钱 - Health is my capital: a qualitative study of access to healthcare by Chinese migrants in Singapore	15-Jun-17
The Best of You	Mohiuddin: How do you get to work every day?	16-Dec-18
Ang et al.	Are migrant workers in Singapore receiving adequate healthcare? A survey of doctors working in public tertiary healthcare institutions	6-Sep-19
Davis, C.	How to address 3 distress factors for Singapore's migrant workers	5-Jun-20
H.O.M.E	Coming Clean: A Study on the Wellbeing of Bangladeshi Conservancy Workers in Singapore	Aug-20
Rajaraman et al.	Exclusion of Migrant Workers from National UHC Systems—Perspectives from HealthServe, a Non-profit Organisation in Singapore	3-Aug-20
Goh et al.	Towards health market systems changes for migrant workers based on the COVID-19 experience in Singapore	1-Sep-20
Wong, P.T.	'I don't wish to stay alive', migrant worker with Covid-19 said before dying from fall at hospital: Coroner's inquiry	24-Sep-20

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Kirtan Patel | Co-Founder & CEO | Sama  
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If you need more information on Colabs, you may visit [cityofgood.sg/colabs](https://cityofgood.sg/colabs). Do write in to [connect@colabs.sg](mailto:connect@colabs.sg) if you have any questions or would simply like to get in touch.

## About NVPC

The National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) is the steward of the City of Good vision for Singapore, where individuals, organisations, and leaders come together to give their best for others. Through our brands, programmes, and initiatives, we facilitate partnerships with Non-Profit Organisations, public sector bodies, and individuals to enliven the giving ecosystem within Singapore.

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