

# SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY COVID-19

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## DESCRIPTION

The COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying public health measures has caused immense disruptions to the daily lives of people worldwide, affecting economic, social, familial and personal lives. Even so, there are certain communities of people who are harder hit than others.

For those of us who have managed to cope well in today's climate and are able to take good care of ourselves and our loved ones, how can we start looking out for those around us – to support them in navigating through this crisis, to be a source of emotional and social support, to tangibly provide the necessary support? All these so that we do not forget those who need help so that we can get through this pandemic together.

## KEY LEARNING POINTS

- COVID-19 has a widespread impact on society, economy, livelihoods and families.
- Explore the impact of COVID-19 and its accompanying public measures on the various groups of people in Singapore.
- Look for opportunities to look out for one another, and if we can, to offer help and support to those around us.

# SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY COVID-19

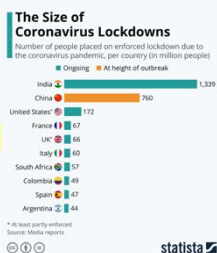
Influence and gain commitment from people

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY COVID-19 – Part 1 (Exploring the Topic)

### COVID-19 HAS WIDESPREAD IMPACT ON SOCIETY



### MORE THAN 20% OF WORLD POPULATION UNDER LOCKDOWN



**COVID-19: Activities for seniors suspended for another 14 days as part of stricter safe distancing measures**

**No entry or transit through Singapore for all short-term visitors amid heightened risk of imported COVID-19 cases: MOH**

### IN SINGAPORE, COVID-19 HAD LED TO VARIOUS MEASURES

**COVID-19 temporary measures: Gatherings outside of school and work limited to 10 people, entertainment venues to close**

**COVID-19: Schools to conduct home-based learning once a week from April**

### BUILDING CONTEXT

COVID-19 has had a widespread impact on our society, businesses, schools and personal lives

*Educators may ask students to name the areas of impact*

Based on reports by The Guardian and Statista, between 20-25% of world population is under varying degrees of lockdown (data correct as at 25 March 2020), and this is growing as nations scramble to contain the outbreak.

In Singapore, while we might not have imposed a lockdown, we have a series of precautionary measures aimed at reducing the spread and protecting the vulnerable population. This includes border closure to reduce imported cases, social distancing measures, suspension of various events and activities, suspension of entertainment venues / tuition centres/ religious services and more recently, home-based learning for schools.

**WHO ARE AFFECTED BY COVID-19?**

**WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON THESE COMMUNITIES?**

## UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

[Quick Discussion]

Who (which community/ which groups of people) are affected by COVID-19? How are they affected?

- Freelancers – without the security of a fixed salary, freelancers in many industries see their income dry up as events/ projects/ jobs are suspended/ cancelled
- Frontline workers – healthcare workers, lab technicians/ researchers in healthcare settings/ security guards. Working overtime to assess and treat suspect and confirmed cases, handling increased administrative workload to keep occupants safe
- Businesses & Employees – many businesses are affected, including food & beverages (F&B), entertainment venues (e.g. cinemas, arcades), event companies, aviation, tourism, tuition/ enrichment industry. This in turn affects employment and salaries needed to support families
  - Foreign workers (e.g. Malaysian workers from Johor, migrant workers in construction) – leaving their families behind to work in Singapore and facing challenges in securing accommodation
  - Foreign Domestic Workers – increased workload as people stay at home more, increased cleaning frequency, some are restricted from going out on their off days/ unable to take off days
- People under Stay-Home Notice (SHN)/ Quarantine Orders (QO) – Find their daily routine disrupted. They have to face the prospect of isolation and loneliness.
- Elderly – With the suspension of activities for senior citizens, where will they go to meet their friends, to pass time, to engage in social and physical activities?

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY COVID-19 – Part 2 (Exploring Impact of the Problem)

### IMPACT: LIVELIHOODS

**Covid-19: DJ-turned-F&B owner Daniel Ong pleads with landlords to waive 2 to 3 months rental for tenants like him**

He revealed he is paying S\$25,000 rental for one of his F&B establishments.

**Covid-19: As airlines reel, some cabin crew turn to odd jobs to get by**

By NADARAJA MEHAR, MATTHEW LOH

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Image Source: Shutterstock by Chris, Tobi, Dorian, Dorian

### IMPACT: LIVELIHOODS

**LATEST TALLY:  
\$27,113,034**

LAST UPDATE: MARCH 31, 2020 4:40 PM



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Image Source: Shutterstock

### IMPACT: LIVELIHOODS

Called for a Grab. Car shows up. It's a slightly older guy. Grizzled. Masked. Sunglasses.

"Good afternoon, sir! How are you today? Is the aircon OK?"

Standard spiel. I've heard it many times before. Plus, I'm feeling a strange mixture of irritation and embarrassment: I've never heard older folks calling me "sir".

But something is not right. His voice is tremulous. I imagine him biting his lip. I look up, he catches my eye in the rearview mirror and quickly looks away.

Tentatively, I ask, "Mister, are you OK?" Boy, did that sound dumb coming out of my mouth.

He is silent. Like the streets.

"You are my second passenger today. Just my second."

All I see is a blue mask, getting soaked. But another mask has cracked. And, there and then, my Grab – my Grab driver – broke down.

I ask him to pull over a while. Do you want to talk? It is as though I hit a release valve: the fears and anxiety, the bills, the mortgage, the autistic child. All of this, our shared humanity.

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Image Source: Shutterstock

## EXPOUNDING ON IMPACT

### #1 Livelihoods

One major impact is economic – livelihoods are affected. Business closures are not straightforward – businesses don't simply "save money" when they close shops.

Despite being closed, certain costs are still ongoing, especially rental and staff costs. If business don't pay their rental, they can't keep the shopfront when restrictions are lifted. If businesses don't pay their staff, they will lose their employees in due time.

On the other side of it, employees might face pay cuts or retrenchment.

For example, the airlines like SIA have most, if not all, their fleet grounded. Aircrew typically have a salary plus a variable component based on the number of flights they serve. Without any flights scheduled, their base salary might not be enough to support themselves and their families. We see some aircrew having to find odd jobs in the meantime to get by, like F&B and retail.

Freelancers in various sectors are especially vulnerable too. In support for freelancers, someone set up a website that compiles opportunities. They are also compiling the impact COVID-19 has had on freelancers, with the impact tallying S\$27 million as of 31 March, based on self-reporting.

One prevalent group of freelancers are the grab drivers (and more generally, cab drivers). With tourism coming to a halt, with Work-from-Home and social distancing measures, demand for cab rides fall, affecting their incomes.

Job losses are not just "adult things", nor are they just "statistics". With every number of job loss/ pay cut, it translates to families having to tighten their belts – some families might not be eating out as much, some families might see the breadwinners stressing over income and household expenses, some families might see parents flipping through job ads/ housewives rejoining the workforce to make ends meet, some families might have to sell their family cars, some of us might see our allowances being reduced etc.

### IMPACT: SACRIFICES MADE

Singapore

#### The Big Read: The untold sacrifices by frontline healthcare workers as they soldier on against COVID-19

For more than a month now, frontline healthcare workers have been grappling with lost time with family members and disruptions to their personal routines and plans.



### IMPACT: SACRIFICES MADE

#### S'porean woman, 66, walks from JB to S'pore to care for ill husband after M'sia lockdown

She had to walk because there are no vehicles.

Herman told Malaysian news outlet Astro Awani that his mother took "more than an hour" to cross the Causeway, as she would stop to take a break every few minutes.

She started her journey at JB Customs at 5:00pm and only reached Boon Lay in Singapore at 9:30 pm.



### [Quick Sharing]

#### Did you notice the impact of COVID-19 on your neighbours' livelihoods?

- *Could angle this on students' own families and their financial status if deemed appropriate - will require students to be vulnerable and mature about listening to someone else's struggles*
- What has changed for you/ them?
- What do you think they need right now?

### #2 Sacrifices Made

While the streets and malls are emptier, hospitals remain a flurry of activity. Our healthcare workers have been working round the clock to provide timely and quality care to both suspect and confirmed patients of COVID-19.

Being at the frontline battling COVID-19 as a healthcare worker might mean:

- Isolating self from family and friends for fear of transmission
- Being on call for 24/7 – not being able to get proper rest
- Reducing water intake so that toilet trips could be minimised, which in turn saves the amount of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) used
- Some healthcare workers are foreigners – they leave their families and fellow citizens back home to stay and serve the people in Singapore

Closer to home, there are also sacrifices by family members and caretakers.

A Singaporean woman went to Johor Bahru (JB) to help take care of her son's newborn. After the lockdown, she received news that her husband in Singapore was unwell and missing her. Even though he told her not to come back to Singapore, she packed her stuff and returned home.

By now, Malaysia is already under the Movement Control Order (MCO), which means there are no transport options available. She had no choice but to walk across the causeway. It took her more than an hour to cross the causeway and a total of 4.5 hours from JB customs to Boon Lay.

**IMPACT:  
SACRIFICES MADE**

**WHO HAVE MADE  
SACRIFICES FOR US?**



**[Reflection & Sharing]**

**Who are the ones making sacrifices for us at home/ in school?**

- Most of us, if not all, are staying home more now. With Home-Based Learning (HBL), we are at home a lot more.
- Who is sacrificing themselves for us?
- Anyone whose parents/ relatives who have to take off/ leave to take care of you/ younger siblings at home?
- How about your foreign domestic workers who have to prepare more meals now, and might have their off days and their movement restricted?
- How about your teachers who have to rush and prepare online materials, and to provide supplementary classes for those who did not manage to understand/ catch up with the online materials?
- How about the school cleaners who have to clean surfaces every 2 hours? The security guards who have to monitor visitor movement in/ out of school?
- How can we show our appreciation to them?

**For those who have family members under Stay Home Notice (SHN) or Quarantine Orders (QO)**

- How has that affected your family?
- What kind of changes to routine and lifestyle is required?
- What does it take to be a caregiver under such circumstances?
- Caregiver burnout and emotional tension is real - Who is taking care of the caregiver?

**IMPACT:  
STIGMA**



**#3 Stigma**

For those who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, they faced stigmatisation.

*May want to explain the definition of stigma – a strong feeling of disapproval that is unfair e.g. infected patients are irresponsible people*

In February, Grace Assembly of God church was one significant COVID-19 cluster with as many as 23 cases connected to it.

What were the challenges and stigma they faced?

We'll watch a video interview by The Straits Times on their experience.



## **IMPACT: STIGMA**

### **WHY DO WE STIGMATISE VICTIMS?**

[Video] Interview with Senior Pastor of Grace Assembly of God church

#### **[Discussion]**

**Why do people stigmatise and ostracise the COVID-19 victims?**

- Could it be out of fear?
  - A 'play safe' coping mechanism – instead of having to find out who was in close contact with the infected cases, it is easier and more convenient to label the entire congregation as potential COVID-19 cases and shut them away
  - Is such generalization fair? It is important to 'play safe' to protect ourselves and our friends/families. How do we balance 'playing safe' and 'indiscriminate labelling/stigmatisation'?
- Could it be out of misunderstanding/ ignorance?
  - In February, as a population then we might still be grappling with understanding the new disease, how it works and how it is transmitted
- Could it be out of genuine concern for self and others?
  - For the doctors who shut out the church members – was that justified? Maybe they wanted to protect their own patients from exposure.
  - If it was a genuine concern for self and others, was there a way we could have communicated these concerns and protection better?
- What happens when we stigmatise victims? What is the effect on them?
  - Falling ill feels bad enough. Now they have to shoulder the guilt of passing to others
  - Lack of support from the community when they need support the most

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY COVID-19 – Part 3 (Solutions)

### 26 MARCH 2020 COVID-19 RESILIENCE BUDGET

Singapore

COVID-19 Resilience Budget:  
'Landmark' S\$48 billion package to  
tide Singapore through  
'unprecedented' crisis



### LOOKING OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER

Jun Yuan House Of Fish  
March 20 at 12:15 AM · 99

Meet Ah Guai.

He is a regular customer of ours.  
He is also one of those that had lost his job amidst this situation.  
Being old, uneducated with no skills, he can't find a job.  
But Ah Guai has a bicycle 🚲  
So he is very emp. with no income.

We decided to help him.

Together, we will be providing all our customers delivery service within 1km  
of our Old Airport Road Branch (This includes our customers working at  
Mountbatten Square).

Just additional \$1 order will be charged for each delivery.  
This \$1 per order goes directly to this uncle as he rides his bicycle to bring  
you your food while you #stayhome.

As we are not big organisation like the pink panda or the bluegreen  
kangaroo... This simple gesture is simply to help Ah Guai put some food on  
his table for his family.

Message Jun Yuan House of Fish (Old Airport Road) at 93219866 to make  
your order.  
Let us all help each other during this period.  
Kamuel

#StayHome #Quarantined #StayHome



### CONCEPTUALISING SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEM WITHIN OWN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

#### Government's Initiative

On 26 March 2020, Singapore government introduce a supplementary budget – a COVID-19 Resilience Budget to help citizens tide through this crisis, with measures to strengthen job security, supplement household income, reduce business costs and encourage upskilling in the meantime for better employability in the future. This is an extraordinary budget, as it came just slightly more than a month from the 2020 budget, and for its huge amount of S\$48 billion. In other words, in just a month after the budget was announced, the COVID-19 situation worsened to the point that the government had to find immediate ways to pump extra money to support citizens and businesses in these trying times, to at least alleviate livelihood woes.

Since then, there are various grants and support schemes by various agencies and NTUC to support different groups of Singaporeans.

#### Community Initiative

We also saw how the community rallied together to look out for and support one another.

This is a Facebook post by a Fish Soup stall in Old Airport Road. One of their regular customer lost his job. Being uneducated, unskilled and old, it was very challenging for him to find new jobs, especially in current climate. The owner decided to help by providing him an opportunity to earn some extra cash – by making food delivery on his bicycle – S\$1 per order

It is not much for sure, but it gave him an opportunity to earn some income to tide over this season. What was equally amazing was what came after – the newspapers picked up on it, this story went viral and the stall saw people tipping extra for the deliveries, donating through the stall to support Ah Guai and buying him meals. Small gestures of support can lead up to significant levels of support if we come as a community.



## SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES



## SHOWING APPRECIATION & SUPPORT



### Business Initiative

The initiative “ChopeAndSave” was started to help local small businesses to survive over this period. When businesses come to a halt, income stops. If they can’t resume business soon enough, they might have to close their business.

Hence, some business have started to accept credits – i.e. you pay first, and claim the item/ meal in the future. ChopeAndSave tallies several local businesses and create gift cards based on the same idea. Pay first, use the giftcards in the future. It helps businesses to survive, and that in turn safeguards jobs and incomes for families!

### Priceless Initiatives

Not all of us have the means to support one another and local businesses financially. Another way to voice your support is literally free - it is to let others know that they are appreciated and supported!

When most flights are grounded, SIA arranged for a last flight from New Zealand back to Singapore to ferry our Singaporean students home after New Zealand announced a lockdown. The entire plane only has the 6 students and the air crew. To express their gratitude, the students, all from the New Zealand School of Dance, put up a Maori dance for the aircrew. These students showed us that expressing gratitude doesn’t not need a lot from us, it can come from our strengths and our hearts.

On 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020, some of us might have noticed wild applause and cheers around our neighbourhood at 8pm. There was a movement “Clap for #SGUnited”, whereby people clapped from their homes for the frontline workers as a display of support and appreciation for keeping us safe and having our essentials well-stocked during this period of time.

This movements showed us that appreciation can be as simple as stepping up to express it, if not by ourselves, then by joining many others as part of a larger movement. This movement is not just in Singapore, many countries and cities have done the same for their own frontline workers, including Italy, France UK, US, Thailand, India etc.

## SHOWING APPRECIATION & SUPPORT

Dear fellow Singaporeans,  
We thank you for your well-wishes. It is unfortunate that my dad has succumbed to COVID-19 after his 30 days of battle in SGH. Our 70 year old dad had put on a good and ferocious fight, in his combat against this deadly virus. Daddy Chung has led a good life. He is always our benevolent father, who has always loved and protected his family with his very best. In spirit, he will always be connected to us, in this generation and the next.  
We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to those Fellow Singaporeans, including PM Lee Hsien Loong who extended their condolences to the Chung family. We also wish to thank the medical team in SGH for tirelessly looking after my dad.  
May I also take this opportunity to remind all Singaporeans to be socially responsible. Our dad did not travel to affected countries or clusters. How he was infected, is still a mystery to my family. Let us remember Daddy Chung by being socially responsible. Another loss due to socially irresponsible behaviour can be avoided! Let us do our part!  
Stay safe. Stay united.

## WHO IS IN MY COMMUNITY WHOM I CAN LOOK OUT FOR?

### WHAT CAN I DO FOR THEM?

On 29 March, Singapore registered our 3<sup>rd</sup> COVID-19 death – a 70 year old man who had fought COVID-19 for 27 days in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

(2 Apr – 4<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 death

3 Apr – 5<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 death

4 Apr – 6<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 death)

His daughter put up a Facebook post thanking the medical team who have helped her father as much as they could, and thanked Singaporeans in general for their well-wishes. Till now, she does not know how her father got infected – he did not travel, nor was he part of any cluster. Despite that uncertainty and how seemingly unfair this entire situation is to her, her father and the family, there was no blame nor lament in her post. She had all the rights to be upset if she wanted to, and people would probably understand, but her message was simple – expressing her gratitude for those who have stood by her father and her family, and channeling a positive call-to-action for all of us to be socially responsible so as to reduce infections in the community. She showed us that despite being dealt a bad hand, we could still find things to be grateful about and to support the communities pulling all of us through this crisis.

In addition to exercising personal responsibility in terms of our personal hygiene and social distancing measures – **How can we take responsibility to look out for and care for the people around us in this trying period of time?**

*Educators may get students to share in groups a community they can support and how they can support.*

**Who is in my community whom I can look out for?**

**Don't forget those who need support**

- E.g. Friends, Neighbours, even own family members, the elderly in the neighbourhood/ where I volunteer, tuition friends
- E.g. Teaching and non-teaching staff in school, Canteen operators

**What can I do for them?**

**#4: Be entrepreneurial (in terms of finding innovative ideas and opportunities to create value and make things better for others)**

- Strike a conversation along the corridor/ at the lifts? Check in on how their families are doing and whether they have enough essentials
- Doing a grocery run? Will your neighbours need help getting anything?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Friends and family under SHN/ QO? How can we help them feel supported and cared for without physically being with them?</li><li>- Spot your grandparents or the elderly in your neighbourhood struggling to navigate messaging/ video-conferencing technology? Do you have 5 minutes to help them out so that they can chat with their friends and family?</li><li>- Friends on LOA missing out on lessons and latest news in the class? How do we feel them in so that they don't feel too isolated/forgotten?</li></ul>
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