

n+1
GLOW

ANNUAL REPORT
2022





*“Neither Social
Nor Enterprise”*

Some time in mid-2022, I was asked to give a talk about Solve’s work as a social enterprise. Intuitively, I wrote down the aforementioned title. We’ve wrestled with the label “social enterprise” for a long time, because as a management consultancy, our role is to provide services of strategic design and execution. This means that we are essentially a business, we just happen to dedicate more of our services to the social sector.

2022 was a peculiar year. We had a good start. We got our work—both corporate & social sector projects—set out for us and a great team to get the work started. Then, a series of unfortunate events took place: the economic meltdown led to a halt to all our strategic corporate projects, and the resurgence of Covid-19 and Heightened Alert sent our NGO partners scrambling to respond, subsequently placing our projects on hold.

We had no more paid work.

We never expected that we would lose 100% of our pipeline within weeks. I asked myself: What do I do? How does anyone navigate out of a situation like this? I thought I needed to close the business. I remembered a conversation with my team when I broke the news to them. I explained Solve’s financial position and that I was prepared to help them find other jobs before I close the business. My team had a unanimous reply: *“We’ll do what is necessary to make it work.”*

Shortly after, we received a request from a Ukrainian crisis centre: “Can you help us organise ourselves so that we can better serve our people’s needs?” A Cambodian monk also asked us to help his pre-school with pathfinding and fundraising work. Can we take on pro-bono projects in the middle of such a crisis? How foolish must we be? Foolish we were, and we did it anyway, one step at a time. As a team, we looked out for more paid work while setting aside time to serve other NGO partners.

Miraculously, we pulled together enough work on a monthly basis to make payroll. We also were able to serve our NGO partners well. We fundraised and found enough support for the Ukrainian crisis centre to survive the year end winter, enabling them to complete their NGO registration to work with grantmakers. The Cambodian preschool was supplemented with the resources they needed for service expansion. We marked the end of the year with much to be proud of: a few of our projects were featured on Channel News Asia (CNA), we got to speak on panel at a conference held by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), and our book *Beneath the Rug* sold 2000 copies within 12 months!

There’s so much to be grateful for: a mission worth fighting for, a team that is relentless, and partners who are always rooting for us. I’d never have imagined that this would be how our year would end. It has given me the courage to dream of the kind of impact we can make not only in Singapore but beyond. I hope that as you read through this Annual Report, you’ll celebrate our achievements and resilience with us.

I am also proud to announce that as of 2023, we have officially installed Josephine Goh as my co-founder. Jo has been with me for almost 2.5 years now. We broached the subject of co-foundership about a year ago and she has been intentionally spending time shadowing and learning with me the past year. I believe that a lot of Solve’s growth was also due to Jo’s leadership and competence. It may seem odd to install a co-founder now, but we are merely formalising her role and the value she’s been contributing to this endeavour. I’m glad that she has decided to make this role official.

The pursuit of every good endeavour must include those who believe, not just follow. I know I can’t ever do this work alone, and I’m grateful for those who are willing to carry a portion alongside me.

I hope you’ll look forward to seeing what this endeavour will bring in 2023.

**Serving with you,
Kenneth**



WILBUR LUA

Wilbur is a practising lawyer at Covenant Chambers LLC, where he specialises in dispute resolution work. Wilbur also has a passion for teaching, which he pursues by serving as a legal skill instructor at NUS and a legal clinic instructor at the NUS Centre for Pro Bono and Clinical Legal Education.

IVY TSE

Ivy is the Chief Executive Officer of Halogen Foundation Singapore and an Advisory Board member of My Working Title, NewYork.sg and Solve n+1. She is also a National Council for Social Service (NCSS) 40 under 40 young leader.



CHRIS SIRISEREEPAPH

Chris has been in the tech ecosystem for the last 9 years of his career, having been involved in policy making, venture capital and operational roles. Currently he is a partner at Saison Capital, heading teams based out of SEA and India.



Solve n+1 is a **community-based management consultancy**, providing consulting and implementation support to companies, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations.

Our suite of services—research, ideation, strategy, project management, & corporate governance—facilitate the building, pilot testing and implementation of innovative solutions and strategic multi-sector partnerships that empower organisations to achieve the impact they desire.

In the private sector, we work with companies towards achieving organisational clarity, distinct competitive advantage, and a sustainable growth model. In the public sector, we work in partnership with government agencies and non-governmental organisations on capacity building projects—piloting innovative and scalable solutions.

We are also recognised as a Business for Good and a Social Enterprise Member of raiSE.

OUR MISSION

Turning every challenge into an opportunity for innovation, growth and impact.

OUR CONSULTING ETHOS

The foundation of our consulting ethos is to strive for the best for our clients/stakeholders. As we co-create solutions with our clients, we strive to be candid with our insights and reliable in following through with execution support. We aim to create the most fitting and sensible value for our clients/stakeholders.

Expanding the reach of 'Beneath the Rug'

Solve n+1 sold out the first print run of *Beneath the Rug*, and the second edition has been picked up by Marshall Cavendish for publication and distribution in local bookstores.



Launch of Solve n+1's Podcast

Solve n+1 gathered partners across different sectors and launched a podcast to provide a platform for inspiration, through telling stories of meaningful innovation on the ground.

Partnerships

Solve n+1 forged new collaborative ties with various key stakeholders that will allow us to advance innovation in the social sector.





Open Home Network 2.0

The Open Home Network is a community initiative, developed by Solve n+1 and our partners, that seeks to empower the community to come together to host and support persons-in-crisis. Persons-in-crisis include rough sleepers, victims of family violence and abuse, displaced youth and mothers, etc.

The Open Home Network has been developed through a series of pilot projects that are positioned to produce a proof-of-concept and a model that can scale sustainably and successfully throughout the community.

Project Background

The first pilot was run in 2020, and focused on understanding and developing the processes, resources, and roles needed for a hosting arrangement to be well supported.

In 2022, Solve n+1 launched the second instalment of the Open Home Network series of pilots, Open Home Network 2.0 ("OHN 2.0"). OHN 2.0's direction was twofold:

- 01** To leverage on the learnings of the first pilot and sharpen the resources, infrastructure, and processes developed to support community hosts in the first model; and
- 02** To strengthen the community-based model of care for persons-in-crisis, through raising open homes within a particular community/location and rallying support within that community.

Notable Developments

OHN 2.0 will be continuing through to 2023, but some notable developments for 2022 include:

Community Engagement

Understanding and connecting with the community was one of our priorities in the development of this pilot. We devoted much of our team and volunteer's time towards personally being present in the community and getting to know members and partners in the community.

In-person volunteer walkabouts were conducted around the Jalan Kukoh and Jalan Minyak areas across several months, with scheduled revisits to extend warmth and friendship to friendly residents in the area.

We also looked at building relationships with partners in the neighbourhood, from social service agencies, to community groups, to even businesses that were invested in the community. Our efforts were met with much hospitality from the community, as they invited us into their space and allowed us to get to know them better. This helped us understand how, practically and contextually, a community-based model of care and support could be built around a host and a person-in-crisis.



Referrals and Persons-in-crisis

We have continued to receive referrals from social workers and community befrienders about persons-in-crisis in need of respite and a safe place to stay. Around 40 referrals were sent in to our case management team, of which, persons-in-crisis ranged from 13 to 80 years of age.

The kind of crises faced by people varied. Majority of people were facing family conflict or abuse that either caused them to be displaced from their homes or resulted in an unsafe home environment. We also had a number of people who had faced financial crises (e.g. unemployment, medical expenses) and were evicted from their homes as they were unable to pay rent. Our team worked hard to understand each complex referral and either attempted to facilitate a match or redirected social workers to access other forms of support.



Social Media & Community Building

In our community building efforts, our focus was not only on the relationships within Jalan Kukoh, but also on connecting OHN with the wider community in Singapore.

Through different modes of communication and content creation, we sought to bring awareness to OHN and create pathways for people in different stages of life to be able to keep updated and even participate. We launched the first OHN newsletter in October 2022 and have been following up with regular updates since.

We have also been exploring ways in which content and social media can bring greater awareness and reflection on homelessness and hospitality, community and self, and ultimately bring a nuanced voice to the different insights this project hopes to share.

We are also grateful for the CNA Insider feature that was published in December 2022 that told the stories of persons-in-crisis, community hosts, and the work of OHN and other partners in this space.

Insider

These Singaporeans opened their doors to a homeless person. Here's what happened

HELPING THE HOSTS

Stories of burnout among some community hosts were what inspired Tang's team to start the OHN and take concerted action to help hosts and persons in crisis navigate tensions and manage risks.

What the OHN does is assign a community representative to each host, to help hosts think about their boundaries and expectations, said Tang, 25. The representatives also act as a mediator between host and guest.

If the person in crisis has no social worker, the OHN will facilitate getting one. Then there is the case manager, who helps to "track the progress" of things. The goal is for every party to "have their own advocate".



Emma Tang (right) is from community-based management consultancy Solve n+1, which manages the Open Home Network.

The OHN also assesses the suitability of both the person in crisis and the host. The community group does "reference checks" to make sure there is "nothing too risky" in their background. The two parties are then matched based on their needs, preferences and availability.

Research

We are privileged to have a team of volunteer researchers and research assistants devoted to developing a stronger theoretical basis for the Open Home Network. The team hopes that their work will contribute to the literature on homelessness and community building in Singapore.

»»» What's Next

The development of OHN 2.0 would not have been possible without our devoted core team and volunteers, supportive partners, and the participation of the community.

In 2023, we will be continuing our work in developing a community-based model of care for persons-in-crisis, and look forward to the impact we will be able to create together.



BGST

Biblical Graduate School of Theology ("BGST") is a theological college in Singapore that seeks to provide marketplace Christians with quality theological education that is flexible and relevant for their contexts.

Solve n+1 was engaged to conduct a strategic review that included an assessment of BGST's current market position and a review of service delivery. The insights and recommendations offered a basis for BGST's leadership to make decisions on how to better pursue their mission.

Project Background

In 2022, BGST announced their 3-year strategic goals (FY 2022-2024). To kick start their plans, they engaged Solve n+1 to conduct a study to gather information on the needs of marketplace Christians and their viewpoints on the application of theological education to their life, ministry, and work.

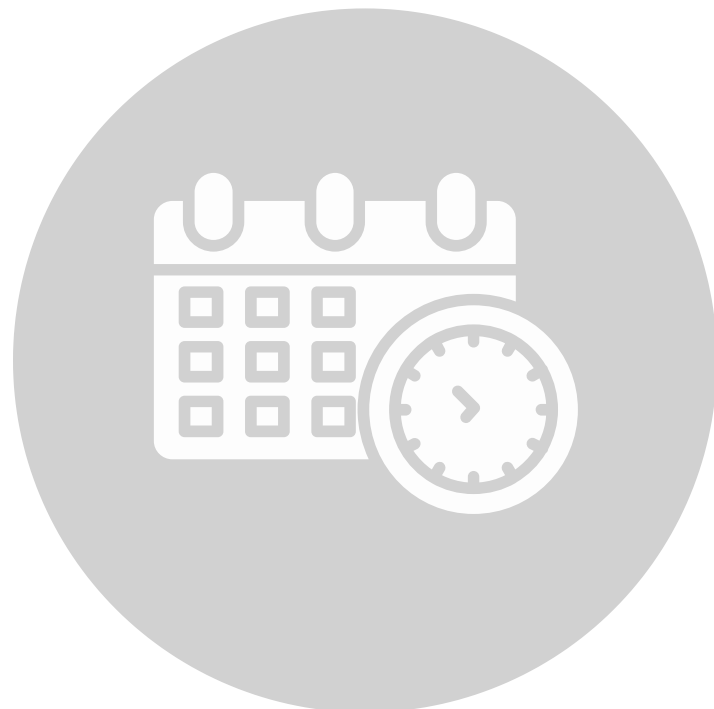
For the segments of research, we utilised secondary, qualitative and quantitative research methods, respectively, to gather the data required for the insights and recommendations

Value-Add

Our scope of research entailed gathering insights on:

- BGST's current market position and the segment of the serviceable market for theological education that is available and obtainable. This helped clarify and prioritise the opportunities that BGST could pursue to support their 3-year strategic plans.
- The quality of BGST's service provision and the relevance of product offerings. This helped to evaluate the strength of operations and potential gaps in service provision.
- Buyer profiles of BGST's students/potential students.

The insights and recommendations that we provided were evidence-based and provided clarity on BGST's existing value, potential value, operational gaps, and strategic opportunities.



»»» What's Next

The insights and recommendations that we provided established a basis for BGST's leadership to make decisions on their next stage of operations.



Green Umbrella

Green Umbrella (GU) is a non-profit educational organisation based in Pot Sar Commune, Cambodia with the goal of proliferating education and increasing accessibility to school education for children.

Solve n+1 was engaged to conduct a strategic review and provide advisory services to facilitate GU's pivot to Early Childhood Education (ECE). This was in response to the emerging community need for quality pre-school education.

Project Background

10 years after Green Umbrella (GU) was established, founder Venerable Sokrath Hour sought to embark on an organisational review.

As part of the review, GU evaluated its existing suite of programmes and sought to understand how the needs of the community have changed or shifted.

The team noted that after 10 years, there were fewer families in the community suffering from extreme poverty. More families could also afford to send their children to a local public primary school.

With these trends identified, the need for GU's Karuna Kamar School (KKS) to provide free-of-charge primary school education for children from the poorest families was reduced. Consequently, GU felt the need to better optimise its resources and keep to its mission of serving the most vulnerable.

The team at GU identified early childhood education (ECE) as a gap that had yet to be closed, with people in extremely poverty unable to afford fees. With research highlighting the correlation between ECE and literacy rate among primary school aged students, GU felt it could better contribute to the wider community by ceasing KKS and pivoting to focus on other educational needs, namely the holistic development of young children aged 3-6 years old.

Solve n+1 was also engaged to provide strategic support for GU's implementation plans in its bid to provide ECE for the community.

Value-Add

GU engaged Solve n+1 as part of their efforts to pivot their main programme to ECE. Our work with them has allowed for the following:

- A strategic review of GU's ECE plans, critical enablers and key assumptions for possible execution;
- A theory of change and logic model for GU to communicate its ECE programme, with a list of possible indicators and outcomes to be measured for impact evaluation;
- An updated fundraising deck to aid the organisation's fundraising efforts.

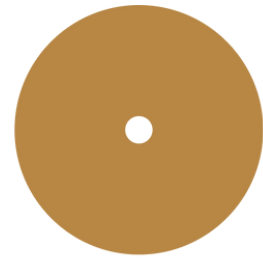
The engagement with GU has clarified and supported their efforts for their transition to ECE, which is still ongoing today.



»»» What's Next

We acknowledge the specific context GU Cambodia operates in, and that further work, such as investment in on-the-ground/implementation support, would be required in order for continuation of the meaningful work to be done.

As a pro-bono project, we understand our limitations in resources to see the project through its implementation phases long-term, but we are appreciative of the warm ties created through this project and we hope to continually support and collaborate in the future.



THE SOUL
Ukrainian Psychology Center

'The Soul'

Ukrainian Psychology Centre "The Soul" is a professional association of psychologists which aims to provide psychological help for Ukrainians with their recovery from the aftereffects of war trauma.

Solve n+1 was engaged to provide advisory on organisational development for The Soul as well as run a fundraising campaign which helped to support their team through a harsh winter season.

Project Background

"The Soul", a professional community-based association of psychologists, does specialist work with men, women and children; including teenagers, families, and couples, adapting the services according to the topical needs of wartime.

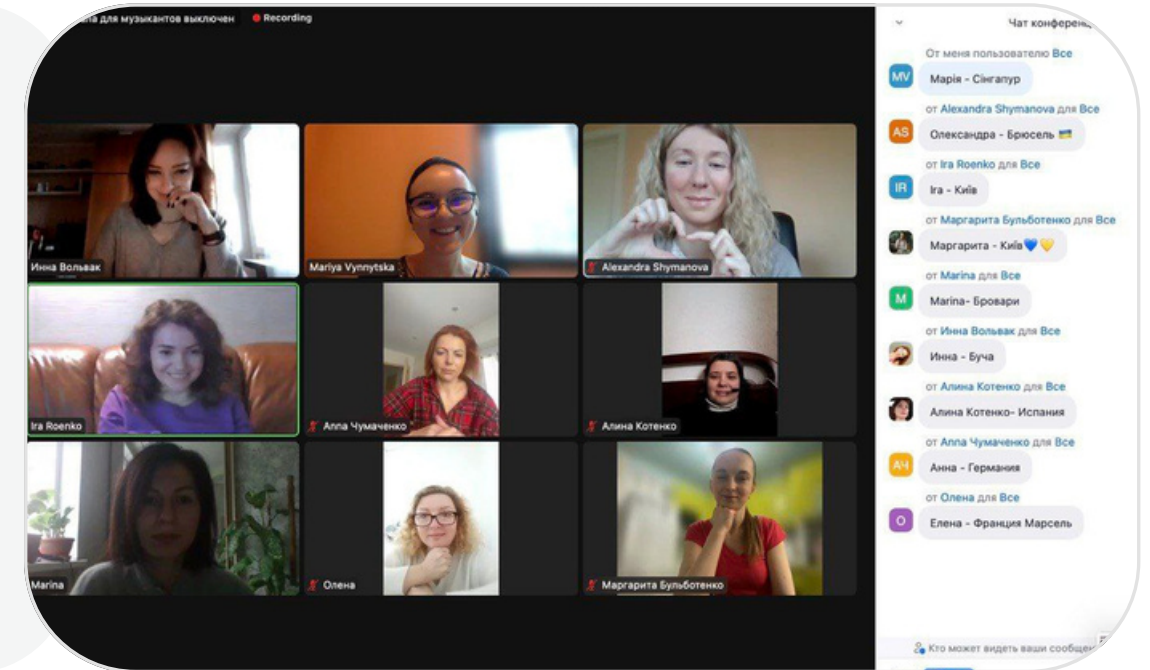
In the midst of last year's challenging times in Ukraine, The Soul found themselves facing many operational and capacity issues as their team struggled with burnout and very limited resources. Solve n+1 was thus engaged to provide advisory to ascertain the sustainability of The Soul's organisational model. Part of the process required us to look into The Soul's organisational model and service offerings before identifying the urgent gaps that needed to be bridged. This consisted of:

- 01 Organising a local fundraising campaign for The Soul and providing advice on their utilisation of funds
- 02 Providing coaching on financial models and cashflow to assist in their application of grants
- 03 Providing advisory for The Soul's long-term communication strategy

Value-Add

Over the past year, our work with The Soul has significantly helped to alleviate burnout within the team; giving them the support they needed to carry on their good work in the midst of Ukraine's harsh winter season. With our support, The Soul has managed to:

- Revive the work of their Crises Center, providing more than 30 individual consultations to people affected by the war in a single month
- Find new partners and expand The Soul's team of psychologists
- Increase their number of new service offerings (group sessions)
- Maintain and increase engagement on their social media platforms



»»» What's Next

Solve n+1 will be continuing our work with The Soul in applying for an official NGO status within Ukraine. This will allow them to be recognised legitimately, and enable them to receive funding through grants to continue and expand their operations strategically.



SDoH Workshop

Together with NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, Solve n+1 was engaged to conceptualise, curate and execute the 'Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) Workshop' for their Year 2 students. It was designed to equip participants with understanding how social determinants of health would impact health outcomes for vulnerable people groups, as well as the role that participants can play in creating value for those communities and beyond.

Project Background

NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS YLLSOM), Asia's leading medical school, aims to provide a holistic learning experience that exposes students to multiple facets of healthcare. As part of that focus, NUS YLLSOM engaged Solve to conceptualise, curate and execute the 'Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) Workshop' for their Year 2 students.

The SDoH Workshop was a 2-day programme with the broad objectives of:

- 01** Establishing knowledge—enabling students to consider who the vulnerable are, and how SDoH impacts their health outcomes.
- 02** Establishing needs—inviting students to consider their duty as future medical professionals along with facilitated discussions on the healthcare needs & journey of disadvantaged persons within the community.
- 03** Establishing capabilities—empowering students to create value with the backdrop of what they have learnt; answering the question of "how can we care?" by exploring the barriers to health & how equity can be achieved.

Value-Add

In the experience of the workshop, the students felt they had gained a better appreciation of their role for vulnerable communities as a prospective medical practitioner.

Students were challenged to interact beyond the usual lecture setting, with a blended approach of segments dedicated for them to: (a) discuss knowledge and case studies presented (b) hypothesise a user's journey (c) discover the landscape of migrant worker rights on a learning journey with Migrant x Me (migrant worker advocacy group) (d) ideate on how they can create value.



"(I learned that) We shouldn't go into projects with the expectation to 'solve' people's problems, to 'save' them from their plight. But rather, co-create and explore possibilities with the stakeholders and reach a solution together. The solution does not have to be perfect either, but rather tailored to the users' specific needs and situations. It's a 'work in progress' that can be constantly refined, modified to suit changing demands and social conditions. Hence we need realistic expectations about the values we bring and keep an open-minded/flexible mindset towards the interventions we do."

"It's a very meaningful workshop that changes your outlook on things, don't come here expecting things that improve your grades, but it'll help strengthen your awareness of the intangible."

— Year 2 Medical Student



»»» What's Next

It was our privilege to be able to co-create this experience together with the students, and were heartened to learn from vast perspectives on the ground. We look forward to continuing such partnerships with further Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) as we share insights to develop compassionate and visionary leaders of tomorrow.



PEERS Network Induction

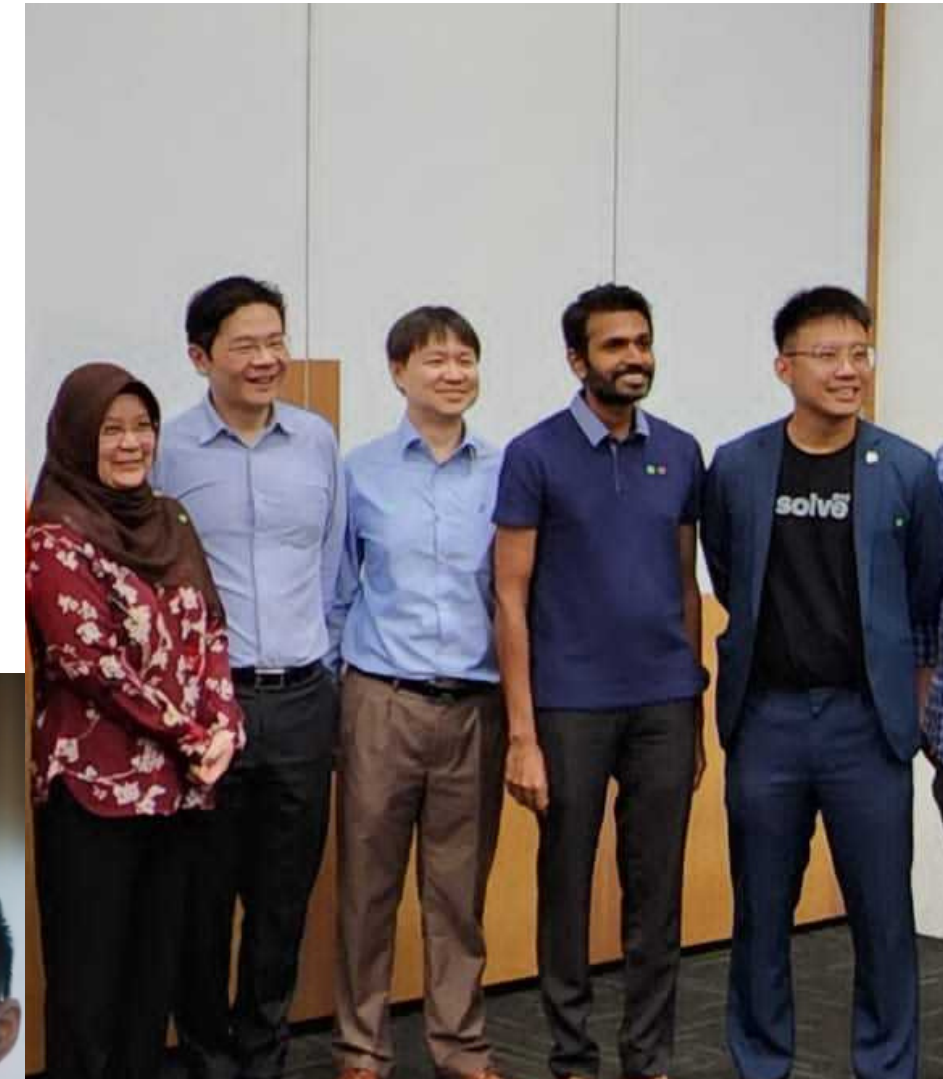
*Ministry of Social and Family
Development*

Solve n+1 was inducted as a member of the MSF Partners Engaging and Empowering Rough Sleepers (PEERS) Network.

Alliance for Action: Lower Wage Workers

Ministry of Manpower

Solve n+1 participated as a member of the Alliance for Action for Lower Wage Workers (AfA for LWWs), prototyping ideas for rest areas at a workshop with DPM Lawrence Wong and SMS Zaqy Mohamad.



Forward Singapore Dialogue

Forward SG Team

Solve n+1 participated in one of Forward Singapore's dialogue sessions to better understand how to strengthen support and assurance for Singaporeans, especially for lower-income groups, seniors and young families.



DPM Lawrence Wong and SMS Zaqy Mohamad exchanged views with community partners on how to **strengthen support for lower-wage workers.**

Conference Features

Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) & Singapore Totalisator Board (Tote Board)

In a conference themed "Solutions that Help Us Help One Another" organised by IPS, Solve n+1 was invited to share about our project "Inclusive Neighbourhood Groups", a project that aims to foster inclusion in communities.



Podcast Features

Common Ground & EPIC Nation

Solve n+1 was invited as a guest to speak in different podcast series, as we explore topics surrounding community-building and change-making with our partners.




CNA Insider
These Singaporeans opened their doors to a homeless person. Here's what happened

HELPING THE HOSTS

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Emma Tang (right) is from community-based management consultancy Solve n+1, which manages the Open Home Network.

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Media Features

Channel News Asia Insider, on 'The Open Home Network'

CNA Insider featured the Open Home Network 2.0, alongside other people and organisations who support the homeless and persons-in-crisis. We are grateful for the opportunity to share about our work in strengthening community support and supporting the vulnerable.

Business Model

Solve n+1 is structured as a management consultancy that provides our services to both the public and private sector. In 2022, we continued to expand our work in the private sector to strengthen our business model. This allowed us to diversify our revenue streams, which created capacity for us to continue to serve our partners in the social sector. Experience in the private sector also allowed us to bring insights in corporate strategy and innovation into social impact work.

Specific to public sector projects, we have committed to seeing projects to the end and waiving off any budget shortfalls, for select projects, in the circumstances where monies raised are shy of the actual valuation of the project.

Utilisation of Funds

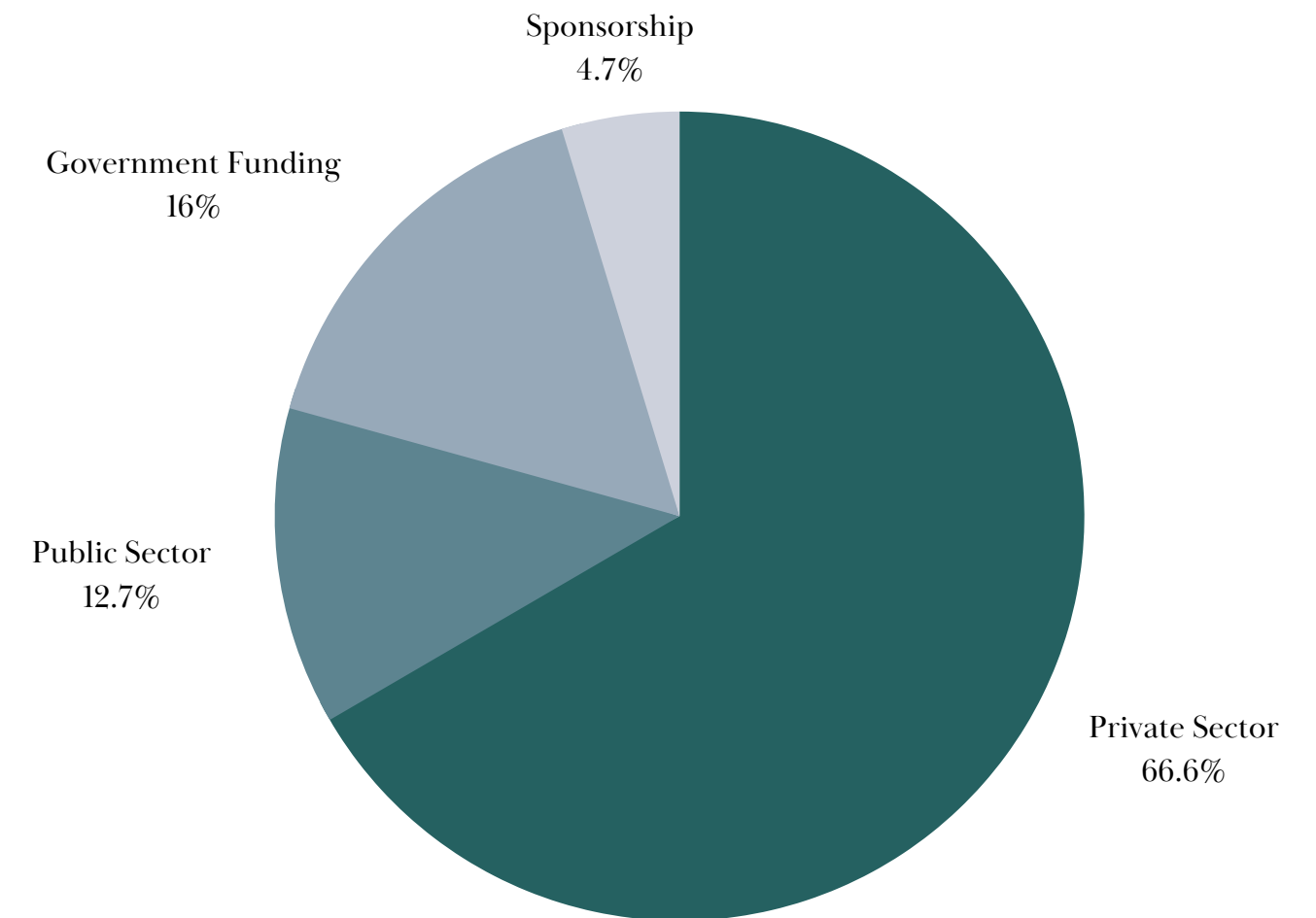
General funds are utilised by us to:

- Maintain our working capital
- Make room for flexibility to respond to opportunities and challenges
- Fund strategic plans not within our normal operations
- Provide a cushion against seasonal variations in income and expenditure

Source of Funds for the Year

Solve n+1's total revenue for the year can mainly be segregated into four categories:

- Private Sector Projects
- Public Sector Projects
- Government Fundings
- Sponsorship



Our Committed Projects: 2023

Co-ownership of Cleaning Businesses

This project looks to utilise co-ownership as a model to create more income opportunities for lower wage workers (cleaning, security, retail, etc.). The model will include a way for LWWs to organise themselves as an entity; and outsource technical skills that are outside of their areas of expertise.

In collaboration with IPS, this project aims to test the hypothesis that co-ownership could be a meaningful model to increase income opportunities for low-wage workers. It is an endeavour to show that there is a percentage of LWWs in Singapore who have the potential to organise amongst themselves and can, with the right support, successfully own an enterprise together.

We Are Caring

We Are Caring is an ethical recruitment agency for migrant workers in Singapore that has successfully operated a debt-free hiring model for domestic workers since 2016. In 2022, Solve n+1 was engaged as part of their efforts to expand their services beyond the domestic work industry into the construction, marine and process industries as well.

We completed a market research component in 2022, and our engagement with We Are Caring will continue in 2023 to develop and refine a deployable service that advances ethical practices of migrant labour procurement across industries in Singapore.

Open Home Network

The Open Home Network is a community initiative that seeks to empower the community to come together to host and support persons-in-crisis. In 2022, Solve n+1 launched the second instalment of the Open Home Network series of pilots, Open Home Network 2.0 ("OHN 2.0") and our work will follow into 2023. OHN 2.0's direction in 2023 will continue to focus on:

1. Leveraging on the learnings of the first pilot and sharpening the resources, infrastructure, and processes developed in the first model to support community hosts; and
2. Strengthening the community-based model of care for persons-in-crisis, through raising open homes within a particular community/location and rallying support within that community.



LEWIN LOW
Project Consultant

JOSEPHINE GOH
Co-Founder

KENNETH HENG
Founder & Director

VIKKI LIM
Community Manager

EMMA TANG
Project Consultant

New Staff Member

As of Oct 2022, we have welcomed a new member to our staff team, Yuan Ling.

Yuan Ling began her time with us as a Research Assistant for the Open Home Network, and has since transitioned to a full time Project Consultant role.

Having explored media, international relations and social services through her professional experiences and personal interests, Yuan Ling recognises it as a privilege that she has access to knowledge and relationships in these different spaces.

Through the work that she does, she wants to help push the needle on what it takes for others in different communities to have a seat at the table, with their own voices heard.

"We're better, together."



TAO YUAN LING
Project Consultant