

Unmet Needs in Singapore - Impact Assessment

Unmet Social Needs in Singapore is one of the Lien Centre for Social Innovation's most widely read report, second only to the Contextualising CSR in Asia report. It was co-authored by Sharifah Mohamed (former LCSi staffer) and Braema Mathiapparanam, a former Nominated Member of Parliament who is President, South East Asia and Pacific Region, of the International Council of Social Welfare.

The report identifies six vulnerable groups in Singapore: the disabled, the mentally ill, low-income workers, single people such as divorced mothers who head poor households, foreign workers and new immigrants. It builds on other international work done on unmet needs, particularly by the UK's Young Foundation on [Sinking & Swimming: Understanding Britain's Unmet Needs](#), and Portugal's Tecnologia, Educação, Saúde e Engenharia (TESE), which contributed an [article](#) on for the 2013/2014 edition of Social Space.

Since the publication was launched in Oct 2011, it has been widely cited in various mainstream and non-mainstream media. Pivoting on this study, the Straits Times Saturday Special on 19 November carried an [8-page report](#) on four of the vulnerable groups. A related article, [Meeting Needs: Singapore's Shifting Sands](#), by the report's co-author, Braema Mathi, has been published in Social Space 2009.

The report has been highlighted by the [Association of Muslim Professionals](#), as a publication which "acknowledged how Singapore has progressed into a nation of acclaimed successes and global recognition, which came with unintended outcomes and concerns". It has also been referenced as a resource in AWARE's [Recommendations for the Singapore Budget 2013](#). These articles help improve the credibility of the Lien Centre in this field of work, which had not been done prior in the Singapore context.

There are been several outputs that emerged from this initial report. The Lien Centre presented at the 2nd Foundations Roundtable organised by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, on the topic of "Learning about unmet needs of the low-income and the disabled", on February 2012.

This was followed by a May 2012 workshop on the topic of "Social Protection in Singapore: Workshop: Finding Concrete Solutions for Vulnerable Groups in Singapore". This workshop was facilitated by co-author Braema Mathiapparanam on the Social Protection Floor Initiative, which was pioneered by the International Labour Organization. 27 participants from the social service and non-profit sector (including representatives from the National Council of Social Service) attended this two-day workshop. The discussion resulted in a document which identified areas of opportunity that Singapore needed to fill in order to have its own social protection floor. The 6 additional groups identified included low income youth-at-risk, foreign wives on long-term visit pass (LTVP) and with absent husbands, housing for the elderly, people with disabilities, former drug offenders, and low-income low-skilled families with children.

The initial print run of 1,000 copies (of which 750 copies were mailed out to non-profit leaders, government officers, selected corporations and funding bodies) was in such demand that a reprint of another 500 copies was made in Apr 2013. Two years after its initial release, it is still being sought after as a resource on the needs in the social sector in Singapore. A recent Google Analytics review showed that it received 1,232

unique views for a 1-year period from March 2014-February 2015. Since May 2013, it has also been downloaded 1,581 times from SMU's Institutional Knowledge Repository, [InK](#). Schools have made use of this research - Singapore Polytechnic used the report as part of their Social Innovation Project, a module that all 5000+ second-year students go through in their second year of their studies. A lecturer at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Humanities and Social Sciences uses it to teach students about the vulnerable communities in Singapore. And SIM's School of Human Development and Social Services have also used it as a text for its social work students.

The Unmet Social Needs in Singapore report also resulted in two follow-up pieces of research: [Measuring Poverty in Singapore: Frameworks for Consideration](#), published in Social Space 2013-2014, as well as the [Handbook on Inequality, Poverty and Unmet Social Needs in Singapore](#), which was published in March 2015.