

## ANNEX A

### KEY MILESTONES IN SINGAPORE'S CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

#### **1925: Establishment of Singapore's first co-operative to provide financial help**

The birth of Singapore's early co-operatives was sparked in the 1920s with the establishment of the Singapore Government Staff Credit Co-operative Society Limited, the first co-operative organisation to be registered in Singapore on 7 October 1925. The co-operative offered safe banking services and affordable loans to employees of the civil service, statutory boards and government-owned companies. More credit co-operatives were formed shortly after to help people at a time of financial hardship. With no banks or finance companies to turn to for financial help, people had little choice but to turn to profiteering moneylenders. 90 years on, credit co-operatives continues to champion its social mission in today's society, helping members save for their future needs and providing hospitalisation benefits, educational awards, and incentive payments to members and their families.

#### **1969: Birth of the NTUC Co-operatives to meet different social needs**

In 1969, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) launched the Modernisation Seminar, which was proposed by the late Deputy Prime Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee. This resulted in the formation of NTUC Co-operatives to support different social needs, from raising the quality of life for the common man to moderating the rising cost of living by providing access to affordable essential products and services. The NTUC group of co-operatives includes Income (1970), FairPrice (1973), Childcare (currently known as First Campus) (1977), Healthcare (currently known as Health) (1992), Choice Homes (1995), Foodfare (1995), and ElderCare (1997), which provide a wide array of products and services ranging from childcare, housing, aged day care, food courts, supermarkets, insurance, pharmaceutical products, family clinics and dental services to members. The significant contributions made by NTUC Co-operatives continue to this day.

#### **1970s to 1980s: Providing financial assistance for education**

As Singaporeans became more aware of the importance of a good education, the need to provide financial help to students grew. Credit co-operatives were active, and still are, in providing schemes, scholarships and bursaries to members' children to help finance their education. The first campus co-operative, Ngee Ann Polytechnic Co-operative Society Limited, was also founded in 1971 to promote the economic interests of its members which comprised the polytechnic's staff and students. It also encourages thrift, co-operation, self-help and mutual assistance and nurtures entrepreneurial skills among its youth members who manage the Co-operative's various businesses providing campus retail products and services to students. The Co-operative also funds scholarships and bursaries to needy students.

#### **1980: Birth of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation**

The Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) was established on 18 September 1980 as the national body for Singapore's Co-operative Movement. Its role was to coordinate, unite and represent the interests of Singapore's various co-operative societies. It also promotes the formation and

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development of co-operatives as sustainable social enterprises to address social and economic needs so as to help foster a more resilient society.

### **1990s to 2000: Fighting unemployment and retrenchment**

Co-operatives have also been formed to promote employment during times of financial crises. Seacare Co-operative Limited was founded in May 1994 by NTUC and the Singapore Organisation of Seamen to help the growing number of Singapore seamen displaced from their jobs and their families by providing work opportunities. In June 2000, Wavelink Co-operative Limited was jointly founded by the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union and NTUC to create career opportunities and provide social benefits to its members from the maritime community. In 2005, the Co-operative of Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) Employees Limited was formed to create employment opportunities for retired SCDF officers while providing affordable fire and lift safety products and services to the public. In 2008, Community Kitchen was set up to train, mentor and create employment opportunities for long-term unemployed jobseekers and aid them in taking the first steps towards self-reliance.

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### **2000 and beyond: Helping an ageing population and integrating those with special needs**

As Singapore faces an ageing population, the Co-operative Movement saw the formation of co-operatives to meet the demands of a silver generation. In 2006, SASCO Limited set up a Senior Citizens' to provide dependable and affordable eldercare services. To increase the quality of life for the elderly, co-operatives such as Silver Horizon Travel Co-operative was formed in 2012 by a group of retired travel enthusiasts to promote active living through customised travel programmes for seniors. More recently, the Good Life Co-operative was established in 2014 to bring together a comprehensive network of patients, healthcare providers, insurance companies and the Government to create a quality and affordable healthcare system.

Co-operatives were also formed to promote a more inclusive society. In 2011, the Employment for Persons with Intellectual Disability Co-operative Limited (E4pid) was formed by a group of professionals who are also parents of young people with special needs such as autism, Down Syndrome, Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS), cerebral palsy, etc. Its social mission is to provide employment to people with special needs. Runninghour Co-operative Limited was formed in 2014 by a group of fitness enthusiasts to promote the integration of the visually and intellectually challenged through mainstream sports by providing them with a fun, active platform to interact with ordinary people.