



ETHOS

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Being Human in a Crisis: What It Means to Us

By Anastasia Goh, Wong Hefen and Daphne Yuan

Also featuring:

Shirley Loo

Growing From Clusters to Ecosystems

Tan Chia Han

The Role of Government in E-Commerce Development

Eddie Choo

Inviting Possibilities



Editorial

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In this digital edition of ETHOS, we bring you fresh views and perspectives on Singapore's economy, society and prospects for the future, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's far-reaching impact and its related challenges.

Featuring: Anastasia Goh, Wong Hefen, Daphne Yuan, Shirley Loo, Tan Chia Han, and Eddie Choo.

For Singapore, as for most of the world, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to inform every aspect of national life and public policy. While it is heartening that Singapore has fully vaccinated over 83% of our population, the new Delta variant of the virus, and possible other variants of concern, means that we have to remain vigilant to the potential impacts of the pandemic, and continue to learn to do what it takes to become resilient in the face of dynamic and evolving challenges.

Not all of these impacts have to do directly with clinical illness. Our collective tussle with the pandemic has gone on for more

than a year; in big and small ways, we have all experienced the toll of the precautions we've taken to stave off the virus's worst harms. Nationally, mental wellbeing has suffered. Families have experienced tragedies and deprivations; those on the frontline of care have had more than their share of fatigue; anxiety has risen and tempers are short.

For a group of young Singaporean public officers who served in the trenches during the early days of the fight against COVID, our experiences of the crisis are salient reminders to allow room for uncertainty, vulnerability and human limitations. It is

in becoming aware of these realities that we can embrace our interdependence and look past the hubris that may otherwise blind us to the need to listen, learn, adapt, and take appropriate care at a time of bewildering change.

We have already seen the pandemic reconfiguring the way we live, work and play, accelerating prior trends towards [digitalisation](#) and new [economic ecosystems](#) and forms of collaboration. Insights into these big picture shifts help us begin to come to terms with the future into which we are being thrust at a faster rate than ever before. This is also what resilience means: getting to grips with disruptive change; [mastering the necessary arts of difficult conversation and working across boundaries](#); beginning to learn, unlearn and relearn what is needed to

survive and thrive in the uncharted waters we have entered.

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I would especially like to thank the young officers who have offered their views for this edition of ETHOS—their passion for public service and thoughtful ideas for a better Singapore are cause for optimism and hope.

ETHOS is a platform for anyone with thoughtful perspectives that may benefit Singapore and the broad work of public policy and governance. Please do get in touch if you have fresh insights or viewpoints to share with our readership of public sector practitioners and thought leaders in Singapore and beyond.

I wish you a stimulating read, wherever you might be. Take care and stay safe.