



## Cause Kit

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### **What do you need to know?**

Low-income families in Singapore struggle to meet their basic needs. There are 179,200 households that live on less than S\$1,500 per month. While this figure has fallen by 10% since 2005, the income gap between the bottom 10% and the top 10% has increased by 50% to S\$12,661 since 2007.

Single-parent households are especially vulnerable. 53% of single-parent households are either unemployed or hold part-time jobs.

In addition, single mothers face a unique set of gendered challenges. Current social trends show that women have less job, health and financial security compared to men. One of the leading causes of unemployment among the single parents is the inability to find childcare. Single mothers need both financial and caregiving support for themselves and their children. Presently, there are 86 out of 100 single-parent households are headed by a woman in Singapore.<sup>1</sup>

### **Why should you care?**

Children in low-income households start life at a disadvantage. If left unaddressed, they may grow up trapped in a cycle of poverty.

Parental presence is vital in any child's development and the lack of it – due to poor caregiving arrangements, for instance – can have a long-lasting negative impact. 1 out of 2 children with no parental support end up in a children's or young person's home such as Boys' Town and Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home.

Growing up in a low-income, vulnerable household can also affect the social mobility of children. In Singapore, the "social inclusion level" of household income is between S\$2500 and S\$3000 per month.<sup>2</sup> For a family of four, having an income below this benchmark means that they are likely to be excluded "from the mainstream economic, political, and

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<sup>1</sup> General Household Survey, Statistics Singapore (2015).

<sup>2</sup> The Straits Times (2010). [Widening Wage Gap, Does it Matter?](#)

civic and cultural activities that are embedded in the very notion of human welfare.”<sup>3</sup> For instance, they may not have access to good job opportunities.

The bottom 10% of Singapore resident employed households live on an average of S\$1,852 per month – far below the social inclusion level. This means that their children may find it hard to fully participate in society and uplift themselves.

Single parent households have it worse, living on a household income of below S\$1000 to S\$1,500 per month.

### **Where is help available?**

In Singapore, various government agencies provide support in education, employment, healthcare and home ownership to low income families. [ComCare](#) schemes provide financial support to low income and needy families. Early childhood education like [KidStart](#) is a multi-agency intervention at the early childhood stage aimed at narrowing the developmental gap for children from low income families.

Family strengthening is important. There are 47 Family Service Centres (FSCs) located in HDB towns around Singapore provide financial, social or relationship support to the low-income and vulnerable families in the community. FSCs are run by Non Profit Organisations (NPOs) like [Ang Mo Kio Family Services Centre](#), [Beyond Social Services](#), and [South Central Community Family Service Centre](#).

[New Life Stories](#) improves the lives of pre-school children through reading and prosocial skills. [Let's Go Play Outside](#) is a ground-up initiative that believes in engaging children from low income households through play and arts-based approaches.

While there are various initiatives and programmes to support low income families. There are still unmet social needs.

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<sup>3</sup> Udaya Wagle, [“Measuring Poverty in Singapore: Frameworks for Consideration.”](#)  
International Social Science Journal 54 no. 171 (2002), p. 160.

## **How can you help?**

### **Be a Donor**

Mainly I Love Kids (MILK) Fund offers scholarships and bursaries to empower children from low income households. Their Family Partnership Platform create opportunities that enable financial self-sufficiency, employment and livelihood opportunities among low income families. MILK Fund also runs a KeyStart Housing Stability Programme to extend assistance to low income families with young children on home-ownership and those at-risk of losing their homes. MILK-NEW LIFE Support Fund is a crisis assistance programme for needy families with children and youths to address the needs of families caused by financial difficulties. Show your support for [Mainly I Love Kids \(MILK\) Fund](#).

### **Be a Volunteer**

Kids need mentoring and support. There are many volunteering opportunities on giving.sg that cater to people with varying experiences and commitment level. You can start your experiment of giving now. Sign up on [giving.sg](#).

### **Be an Ambassador**

Help to spread awareness about how experimenting with giving can lead to a life of meaning and purpose. Host a screening with your friends and family and learn how you can be like Kelvin.

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