

NCSS Volunteer Management Network 2023

Learning Report

The Volunteer Management Network 2023 Session #1 was held on 20 September 2023 on the topic **Enhancing Volunteer Experience for Stronger Retention**. 187 Volunteer Management Practitioners (VMPs) from various organisations attended the online event to learn about the 5 **key features of volunteer experience: Flexibility, Impact, Exposure, Enjoyment, and Connectedness**. Participants were able to learn about how different organisations were able to incorporate these features to elevate the experience of their volunteers.

Transforming the Volunteer Experience

To have a better understanding of what volunteers value in their volunteering experience, NCSS in partnership with SMU Lien Centre for Social Innovation conducted a Volunteer Experience Research Study (VERS) and identified five key features of a quality volunteering experience.

FLEXIBILITY

The volunteering activities fit with the volunteer's everyday life, and they are able to balance volunteering with work and family life.

IMPACT

Volunteers are motivated by a desire to improve things and help people, feel that they are making a difference, and feel appreciated.

Scan the QR codes below to access VERS:

Brochure



Full Report



Quality Volunteering Experience

EXPOSURE

Volunteers experience a broadening of life experiences through their activities and come into contact with people from different backgrounds and cultures.

CONNECTEDNESS

Volunteers feel a sense of connection to the cause, the organisation itself, and what it stands for.

ENJOYMENT

Volunteers enjoy what they are doing.

“Good volunteer management can have an enormous impact on the work we do, enabling us to scale programmes, sustain efforts, and serve many more beneficiaries. But we need to make sure we match volunteers and their skills to their needs to harness their energy effectively.”

- Mr. Masagos Zulkifli

(Minister for Social & Family Development and Second Minister for Health)

Event Poll

What participants think their organisations do well in

Top 3 responses:



Impact



Enjoyment



Connectedness



What participants think their organisations need to improve on

Top 3 responses:



Connectedness



Impact



Exposure



Key insights from the Panel Speakers:



LYNNETTE KANG
Assistant Director
National Library Board



SHIKIN AHMAD
Volunteer Manager
Dementia Singapore



NATALIE CRAIG
Managing Director
C&W Services

Mapping out the end-to-end volunteer journey will help identify touchpoints and improvement areas to elevate volunteer experience.



Lynnette: NLB recognises that the journey of a volunteer is a complex process that encompasses multiple touchpoints. NLB has mapped this journey across 4 distinct stages, pinpointing areas of strengths and potential improvements. As a result, NLB has been able to enhance each interaction point, thereby elevating the overall volunteer experience.



Shikin: Dementia Singapore's approach is to segment volunteers into individual, youth, and corporate groups, each managed by a dedicated Volunteer Management Practitioner (VMP) who co-creates their volunteer journey and provides group-specific support. This VMP will be able to tailor the volunteer experiences based on the unique needs of each group and build stronger, more reliable partnerships with volunteers.



Natalie: C&W Services' Workplace Experience team continuously improves the overall volunteer experience of employees through constant dialogue with (1) SSAs to align expectations for what volunteer activities can be done and (2) Employees to get feedback on their volunteering experience.

In partnership with:



KORN FERRY

Recognising and acknowledging the efforts of volunteers is crucial in making their volunteer experience much more memorable and impactful.



Lynnette: Aside from formal appreciation sessions, NLB incorporates volunteer recognition into their everyday work and space. NLB taps onto volunteers to serve as talents for some of their social media and marketing initiatives. They also place visuals around the library to honour the contributions of volunteers and created dedicated rest spaces for both volunteers and staff. This makes their volunteers feel that they are an integral part of NLB's operations.

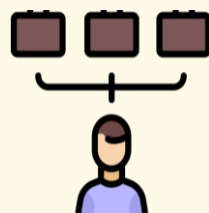


Shikin: Dementia Singapore ensures that their senior leaders are involved in thanking, acknowledging, and reaffirming their volunteers, showing that the volunteers' impact is felt throughout the organisation. In communicating with volunteers, Dementia Singapore also emphasises how volunteer work advances their cause of transforming Singapore into a dementia-inclusive society.



Natalie: C&W Services incentivises and celebrates volunteer contributions by gamifying their volunteer programme. Frequent volunteers are acknowledged in company-wide communications and given perks (e.g. cash vouchers), which increases the chances of repeat participation. Other merchandise (e.g., volunteer T-shirts) also help foster a sense of unity and collaboration within the team.

Aligning volunteers' aspirations in curating roles and equipping them with skills and training gives them a sense of empowerment and enhances their experience.



Lynnette: NLB acknowledges the significance of diversity in volunteer roles, while also ensuring alignment with organisational needs. As new libraries are established, NLB is deliberate in creating bespoke roles that align with the services offered at these locations. This approach allows volunteers to engage in a variety of tasks that cater to their interests. To enable them, NLB provides comprehensive training for volunteers to excel in their chosen roles.



Shikin: Dementia Singapore provides standardised training to all volunteers, regardless of role, to equip them with fundamental knowledge about caring for people with dementia. Role-specific training is also provided to ensure that volunteers are well-prepared for their respective responsibilities. Volunteers are encouraged to try multiple roles to have a holistic volunteering experience for Dementia Singapore.



Natalie: Corporate organisations like C&W Services work closely with SSAs to identify volunteer programmes that build and/or hone skillsets and competencies that are useful for corporate careers, e.g. communication & interaction, negotiation, planning, etc. This approach helps organisations to integrate volunteering into overall learning and development plans for their staff and allows staff to see additional value in volunteering.