

Learning Report

NCSS Volunteer Management Network 2024 Session 1 themed ***Sustainable Volunteerism: Creating, Enhancing, and Measuring Volunteer Impact*** was held in conjunction with International Volunteer Managers Day to celebrate the vital role Volunteer Managers play in catalysing sustainable volunteerism. The session focused on strategic volunteer management for sustainable impact and growth. Participants gained insights on emerging trends and best practices in volunteer management, and the Volunteer Impact Measurement Kit was launched.

Opening Address



Mr Masagos Zulkifli
*Minister for Social and
Family Development and
Second Minister for
Health*

Minister Masagos Zulkifli opened the first **Volunteer Management Network 2024 Session: Sustainable Volunteerism - Creating, Enhancing, and Measuring Impact**, by celebrating the vital role of Volunteer Managers in fostering sustainable volunteerism and acknowledging their invaluable contributions to the social sector.

He highlighted the pivotal role of Volunteer Managers in role design, skill-building opportunities and effective volunteer matching that enabled meaningful and long-term engagement of volunteers. Minister Masagos further underscored key initiatives, such as the Sustainable Philanthropy Framework and launched the **Volunteer Impact Measurement Kit**, which supports the sector to continually strengthen partnerships, measure volunteer contributions, and support corporates in sustaining volunteer efforts.



Click [here](#) to download
Volunteer Impact
Measurement Kit

In closing, Minister Masagos reaffirmed the shared responsibility to uplift communities and commended Volunteer Managers as essential drivers of impactful and sustainable volunteerism.

Pre-VMN Poll

Has your organisation implemented a framework to assess the impact of your volunteers' efforts on the community?



A survey was conducted prior to the session to understand general sentiments on the ground regarding Organisations assessing volunteer impact. Most of the respondents indicated that **(i) lack of time/ resource**; and **(ii) lack of skills/ knowledge** were main reasons for not being able to explore impact measurement.

The Volunteer Impact Measurement Kit (VIMK) launched would be able to address these challenges as it supports Volunteer Managers by:

- Including a library of impact indicators that could be selected for measurement
- Providing step-by-step guidance in designing and implementing a volunteer impact assessment

Panel Speakers



Ms Sandra Leong

Chief Executive Officer,
EQUAL



Ms Allinda Chew

Assistant Manager, Volunteer
& Community Engagement,
Care Corner Singapore



Mr Leonard Tan

Senior Vice President,
UOB Group

Key Insights from Panel Speakers

1. Importance of Impact Measurement in Shaping Strategy in Volunteerism



For **Sandra**, the findings from impact measurement not only helped to shape EQUAL's volunteer involvement strategy, but also served as a foundation for increasing volunteer numbers and gaining a better understanding of beneficiaries. The Volunteer Impact Measurement Kit was a useful tool that is easy to "plug and play", where EQUAL leveraged upon the library of outcome indicators included in the Kit to design the impact assessment surveys. Lastly, involving volunteers in the impact measurement process is crucial, for better alignment between volunteer experience and impact assessment.



According to **Allinda**, in understanding the community and surfacing the needs on the ground through data, it has provided valuable insights into certain focus areas for further improvement within Care Corner. This helped guide the articulation and improvement of impact of volunteers in Care Corner. In addressing challenges to create buy-in with programme colleagues, clear processes in volunteer registration and orientation as foundations for a programme should be well established, before introducing impact measurement to programme colleagues. In doing so, it opened up opportunities for deeper conversations and smooth processes due to better internal stakeholder alignment.



For **Leonard**, data has been critical in shaping the 3P strategy (Philanthropy, Participation & Partnerships) in UOB. Quantitative metrics served as the basis for measuring impact, while qualitative insights ensured programmes remained relatable and relevant. By reporting quantitative data and leveraging storytelling to connect on an emotional level, data helped to motivate volunteers and informed programme development.

2. Key Success Factors in Measuring Volunteer Impact

All three panellists highlighted the following common success factors, based on their experiences:

- 1 The role of a good volunteer manager in ensuring volunteer well-being.**
The organisation's appreciation for volunteers is evident through the highlighted examples of simple but meaningful gestures seen practiced at EQUAL. These acts of thoughtfulness play a crucial role in fostering continued volunteer engagement and dedication, which leads to willingness to provide feedback and support in measuring impact. Creating a volunteer-friendly environment where staff are trained to engage volunteers effectively, further ensures a smooth process once a strong organisational culture is established, as practiced in Care Corner as well.
- 2 Setting clear expectations and leverage upon recurring volunteers that contribute consistently**
Setting clear expectations about volunteers' experience is important in linking experience to volunteer impact. This also encourages repeated participation, therefore creating sustained involvement among volunteers. Recurring volunteers have deep knowledge of beneficiaries and their needs are hence valuable data points to measure impact.
- 3 Leverage upon volunteer leaders to regularly engage volunteers**
With seasoned volunteer leaders, they have established rapport with volunteers on the ground. They are able to better communicate project goals and maintain regular check-ins with other volunteers, thereby increasing awareness of volunteer contributions to the programme and organisation.
- 4 Using data to guide decision-making and ensure programme relevance**
Keeping the principle of "Everyone is a volunteer" in mind, data helps to assess programme alignment with volunteer needs and preferences regularly, as seen practiced at UOB.

3. Collaboration Between Corporates and SSAs for Successful Volunteer Partnerships



In **Sandra's** engagements with corporates, quantifying outcomes helps to answer corporate clients' key questions about capacity and engagement. Micro-fundraising combined with direct involvement in programmes results in repeated participation. To support SSAs, the content and tips within the Volunteer Impact Measurement Kit has been useful in guiding organisations such as EQUAL to better prepare meaningful conversations with corporate clients, furthermore sustaining partnerships through consistent measurement and shared outcomes.



Allinda urged SSAs to develop programmes that prioritise client needs whilst simultaneously aligning with both their organisational aims and corporate objectives. In addition, she emphasised crafting mutually beneficial partnerships. This involves carefully balancing the programme's volunteer requirements with the actual time and resources corporate volunteers can realistically commit. As an example, Care Corner's Mindful Steps project was highlighted to show how successful corporate volunteerism was established as a result of bringing in corporate volunteers to run the actual event, without requiring them to do additional time-consuming roles (e.g. back-end planning). This enabled corporate volunteers to achieve their goals efficiently while enjoying the experience.



Leonard highlighted 10 crucial actions Organisations could take to form great partnerships with corporate partners. These 10 actions are:

1. To have a clear mission. Even if it is multi-layered, develop a structured and succinct approach to what is to be achieved.
2. To develop a story, to make a point of differentiation.
3. To understand your target (prospective donor/partners), there needs to be questions asked - What is their mission, what were their previous successes and challenges, when is their planning and budgeting cycle, how many layers of approvals they have, when do they need reports, etc.
4. To understand CSR goals, the "job to be done", to note if there are any Functional, Emotional and/ or Social requirements.
5. To highlight numbers and trends during pitching and impact reporting, as this demonstrates credibility of market knowledge, growth areas, impact, etc.
6. To develop a clear plan, in terms of what an Organisation want from the Corporates, and yet to allow for flexibility.
7. To help generate positive news for your Corporates.
8. To Listen, learn and be realistic.
9. To Engage regularly.
10. It is also OK to walk away if corporate goals are not aligned to Organisational goals and programme. Opposed to failure, this should be considered as potential for future opportunities.



Key Quotes by Panellists



Sandra reflected upon the shift and emphasis in impact measurement that have enabled EQUAL to focus on aligning volunteer experiences with their intrinsic motivations, which lead to sustainable and impactful engagement.

"Our vision in EQUAL is to move from volunteer management to volunteer movement. Through all the impact measurement efforts, we are now able to better understand volunteers' motivations. This empowers us to create more meaningful programmes for our volunteers."



Allinda emphasised the importance of creating a strong positive volunteering experience through cultivating a sense of fulfillment that encourages volunteers to return. This enables the fostering of loyalty and long-term engagement with volunteers long-term.

"At Care Corner, we seek to always improve our volunteers' experience with us through constant feedback and impact assessment. [In articulating impact].. it shows our partners that their staff will have a good time with us when volunteering and in extension see the impact that they are making on the ground too. This leads to opportunities for longer-term investments into sustained partnerships with corporates or other organisations for a stronger ecosystem for volunteer engagement and impact altogether."



Leonard shared his view of impact measurement as more than just a reporting tool—it is a means of storytelling. He encouraged all to pitch impact measurement data in a compelling narrative, to increase interest and show alignment of corporate vision to volunteer goals.

"As corporates, we cannot do the work alone. We need our partners to help ignite the passion and inspire our staff to participate. At UOB, we bring the compelling pitches of our partners and their ideas to our staff through storytelling - transforming the numbers and impact data into emotional stories to engage our staff to volunteer."

From this, we see that data derived from impact measurement is key to help build mutually partnerships between SSAs and Corporates."

