

Learning Report

NCSS Volunteer Management Network 2025 Session 4 was themed ***‘Unleashing the Strategic Value of Volunteer Segmentation’***. The session explored how the segmentation of volunteers based on demographics, brings about opportunities to engage volunteers in targeted ways that reduce barriers and sustained participation.

Participants gained insights on incorporating volunteer role redesign and the use of technology to facilitate volunteer engagement and optimise their contributions to service delivery.

Pre-VMN Poll

Volunteer Segmentation in SSAs: Current Perspective and Practices



A pre-session survey was conducted to gain insights into the current perspective and practices organisations have towards segmenting volunteers by demographics groups.

About **1 in 2** participants cited that their organisations currently **segment their volunteers by demographic groups** to enable more **targeted outreach and engagement strategies**. This practice highlights a growing awareness among social service agencies (SSAs) on the **importance of tailored approaches** in volunteer management.

Volunteer Segmentation in SSAs: Key Potential Areas and Opportunities

Participants identified several **key areas where volunteer segmentation holds significant potential in optimising volunteer management** in their organisations:

1) Tailored Recruitment Strategies

By understanding the characteristics of different demographic groups, SSAs can design recruitment strategies that better appeals to the needs of specific audiences to improve success of recruitment efforts.

2) Role Redesign for Specific Demographics Needs

SSAs can redesign volunteer roles to better leverage on the capabilities, interests, and availability of different volunteer demographics – ensuring a more fulfilling volunteering experience.

3) Strategic Volunteer Impact Assessment

Volunteer segmentation can also enable SSAs to measure the impact of volunteer programmes more accurately, providing insights into how different demographics of volunteers contribute and how strategies can be refined.

Panel Speakers



Ms Shikin Ahmad

Manager, Volunteer Management,
Community Enablement,
Dementia Singapore



Ms Kelda Chua

Senior Executive, Community Partnership,
Care Community Services Society



Ms Stefanie Ang

Division Head, Team Nila (Sport Volunteerism Arm), ActiveSG Group, Sport Singapore

Key Insights from Panel Speakers

1. What Volunteer Segmentation Entails and Key Benefits



Shikin from *Dementia Singapore*, highlighted how her organisation optimised volunteer engagement for the 'Third Age' - early retirees and retirees. Her efforts involved understanding needs and recognising the challenges for volunteers of this demographics, as well as the use of and adapted version of the 'Jobs-to-be-done Framework'. Beyond demographics considerations, the framework **uncovers functional, emotional, and social needs** that volunteering fulfills for individuals. By understanding what "job" volunteers are trying to accomplish by volunteering, *Dementia Singapore* can **create customised volunteer roles to meet specific motivations and life stages**, leading to **enhanced volunteer engagement and improved retention**.



Kelda at *Care Community Social Services (CCSS)* **customised their volunteer management framework** for different volunteer demographics **to enhance volunteer engagement and retention**. This involved aligning volunteer roles with the strengths and interests of target demographic segments. For example, CCSS redesigned volunteer roles at their Active Ageing Centres (AACs) to better suit the physical abilities of their senior service users turned volunteers by identifying service users who were naturally stepping up to help staff during activities. This approach enabled senior volunteers to gain confidence in taking on volunteering tasks that they are able to accomplish and finds meaning in volunteering within limitations of their abilities.



Stefanie highlighted that at *Team Nila*, volunteer segmentation involves **designing of engagement activities matching the motivations and aspirations of different volunteer demographics**. This involved developing skill-building activities for youths, such as leadership training sessions, and providing flexible opportunities for seniors, such as shorter volunteer commitment periods to suit their availability in-between caregiving of their grandchildren. The key benefits of volunteer segmentation include the **better retention of volunteers and the ability to deploy large numbers of volunteers to support national initiatives**.

2. The Volunteer Segmentation & Engagement Journey

1

Internal Stakeholder Buy-In is Key

Gaining internal support, from management and programme teams, is a fundamental aspect of a successful volunteer segmentation journey. This is achieved through demonstrating value for the organisation. *Dementia Singapore* had **strong support from their management and board** on volunteer management and was able to allocate dedicated volunteer managers to lead volunteer engagement efforts for different volunteer segments. This also enabled more focused efforts to explore volunteer collaborations with different departments. Benefits of such volunteer collaborations were also properly catalogued for showcase to internal stakeholders to reinforce buy-in. *CCSS* values the importance of **working closely with their programme teams** to co-design volunteer roles, fostering a sense of shared ownership and enhancing buy-in.

2

Harnessing Technology to Facilitate Segmentation Efforts

The use of technology, especially **Volunteer Management Systems (VMS)**, allowed organisations like *CCSS* and *Team Nila* to manage and segment large volumes of volunteer data. This **facilitated robust data analysis and reporting**, providing **valuable insights into volunteer demographics, their behaviours and engagement outcomes**.

3

Developing Assets to Guide and Scale Volunteer Segmentation in the Sector

CCSS' **Senior Volunteerism Playbook** was highlighted as a useful resource developed in partnership with NCSS and Empact that documented their approach in volunteer segmentation for senior volunteers. This resource has been useful in supporting pilot implementation of redesigned volunteer roles within CCSS' AACs but also useful as a key reference document when sharing with their locale partners to benefit more SSAs. *Dementia Singapore's* use of the **Jobs-to-be-done Framework** also acted as a key asset, providing a structured approach to understand volunteer motivations of different volunteer demographics. This enabled the creation of more meaningful and tailored roles, such as the youth advocate role that was part of a new youth leadership initiative for the organisation.

3. Effective Strategies to Engage Volunteers & Their Considerations

In the engagement journey based on different volunteer segments, **all 3 speakers** shared their strategies along with the enablers, challenges and mitigation efforts. **3 themes** were highlighted that increased effective engagement:

1 Volunteer Role Redesign for Meaningful Engagement
While aligning volunteer roles to organisational needs, all speakers highlighted the need to cater to the needs of different volunteer segments, such as their interests and potential limitations. For instance, volun-teaming at **CCSS** enabled youth volunteers to commit for shorter periods as they work in teams (vs individuals), while **Team Nila** Silver Champion initiative optimised their engagement opportunities to active seniors by designing such opportunities for group volunteering. Creating pathways for progression such as the development pathway options for seniors at **CCSS** served to retain senior volunteers.

2 Tailored Training and Development Approaches
To better meet the needs and aspirations of different volunteer segments, all speakers shares how customised training and development were critical to optimise support to volunteers and enhance volunteer retention. **Shikin** shared how empathy programmes for youth volunteers at **Dementia Singapore** better prepared them before engagement with service users, while **Stefanie** shared about **Team Nila's** tiered skills-based training, such as leadership and conflict management training for volunteer leaders. This equipped them with the necessary skills before taking on key leadership roles in volunteering programmes. **Kelda** shared her use of the Service Learning Framework to facilitate reflections among her youth volunteers to deepen learning outcomes and enhance their volunteer experience.

3 Curated Recognition and Appreciation Initiatives
Across volunteer segments, recognition remains key. Speakers shared about formal ways to acknowledge contributions based on hours or impact, such as **Team Nila's** yearly awards with tiered recognition. This is done alongside informal, regular appreciation events that foster a sense of community and belonging. Providing incentives and benefits also offered differentiated recognition of volunteers. **CCSS** leveraged on a digital platform to gamify the experience for volunteers by offering digital badges. **Dementia Singapore** shared that they drafted personalised testimonials for their youth volunteers and this were effective in enhancing the volunteering experience.

4. Assessing & Communicating Impact Of Engagement Strategies

To support participants in kick starting their volunteer segmentation and engagement journey, speakers shared how they assessed and communicated the impact of their efforts. 3 key themes were identified:

Measuring both quantitative participation and qualitative outcomes

 Speakers shared success indicators in the form of common volunteer participation metrics like volunteer numbers and hours (**Team Nila**; **Dementia Singapore**), and volunteers' stories and quotes of engagement outcomes. Other indicators included outcome indicators showing stronger volunteers connection and alignment with the organisation's mission (**Dementia Singapore**) and volunteers empowerment in areas such as leadership and transferable skills (**CCSS**).

Consistently over-communicating the impact to all stakeholders

 **Shikin** emphasised the importance of regularly informing volunteers about how their contributions connect to the organisation's mission. Simultaneously, sharing the value and impact of volunteer work with internal stakeholders and senior management helps secure continued support and resources.

Utilising data and personalised storytelling for effective communication

 Both **Kelda** and **Stefanie** cited the value of leveraging volunteer management systems as a data-driven approach to demonstrate the effectiveness of tailored engagement of different volunteer segments. Alongside this, they shared about complementing these efforts with the sharing of individual volunteer stories and testimonials across various social media platforms to create a personal connection and vividly illustrate the impact of their efforts.

Key Quotes by Panellists



Shikin emphasises the critical need for empathy and a tailored approach when engaging diverse volunteer groups like youth and seniors, recognising their unique motivations, needs, and capacities. Deep conversations with volunteers are essential for organisations to understand and better align volunteer roles and experiences with their underlying aspirations. This contrasts sharply with simply imposing organisational expectations that may not resonate with volunteers, potentially leading to disengagement and lower retention. Ultimately, this volunteer-centric philosophy fosters more meaningful and sustainable engagement, enabling organisations to better leverage the strategic value of their segmented volunteer pool by respecting and valuing individual motivations.

"Meet them (volunteers) where they are at, instead of pushing our (organisation's) agenda onto them."



Kelda explicitly outlines the chain reaction that occurs when volunteers are strategically segmented. By tailoring roles to specific volunteer groups (*such as seniors and youth*) and recognising their unique needs and motivations, organisations experience better volunteer engagement and increased volunteering satisfaction. This satisfaction then directly leads to greater commitment and retention, ensuring that the organisation's efforts in volunteer management yield more sustainable and impactful results.

"Segmenting volunteers and looking at roles tagged to each segmentation allows for better volunteer engagement, which also increases volunteering satisfaction which in turn increases commitment to the volunteering role that organisations put in much effort to achieve."



Stefanie emphasises that segmentation is not merely a categorisation exercise but a proactive approach to identifying and leveraging the diverse skills, motivations, and aspirations of different volunteer groups. By understanding these nuances, organisations can create targeted opportunities and engagement strategies that unlock the full potential of their volunteers, leading to a more dynamic, impactful, and fulfilling volunteering experience and ultimately benefiting the organisation's goals.

"It is not just about segmenting people, but also about unlocking their potential."

