

Redesigning Programme Delivery for Enhanced Service User Outcomes

Part C: Ideation to Practice



**Volunteer Management
Workshop Series**

A Guide to Rethinking Systems for Strategic Volunteer Engagement

Contents

Part C: Ideation to Practice	Chapter 6: Building, Testing, & Learning Fast	4
	Chapter 7: Pitching Your Idea	11
	Chapter 8: Resources & Support	14
	Acknowledgements	20
	Appendix	21



Peter and Vidya are now ready to move into experimentation and pitching. In Part B, they reimagined their future service model and explored ideas to better integrate volunteers and improve service outcomes.



This is **Part C: From Idea to Action**. For the full journey, pair this with:

- Part A: Uncovering Gaps & Opportunities – Diagnose your current model
- Part B: Reimagining Possibilities – Generate and shape new ideas

Chapter 6:

Building, Testing, & Learning Fast



Bringing ideas to life is the fastest way to see what works and what does not. Rapid prototyping allows you to **validate concepts early, make improvements, and avoid investing too much in ideas that may not succeed**. Almost anything can be prototyped: digital or physical products, spaces, processes, or services.

The question isn't if you can prototype but what to prototype first. Start by breaking your idea into manageable milestones and defining what each stage should deliver. Work backwards from the ideal outcome: what does success look like? You can reference your "Headline of the Future" to set this vision, but add concrete details tied to your specific idea. From there, identify one key task or deliverables that you want to prototype.

It's time to turn your idea into reality!



Action Planning

A systematic process of turning strategic goals into a detailed, step-by-step roadmap.

Gap/challenge we want to address:		Selected idea to address gap:			
Many volunteers leave after first engagement		Developing clear growth pathways for volunteers			
Timeline e.g. Q1, Q2,Q3,Q4 3mths, 6mths, 9mths	Ideal Outcome ←-----●-----●-----●-----●-----→ [12 months] [9 months] [6 months] [3 months] Now				
Desired Outcomes What must happen for our idea to succeed?	- Volunteers report feeling valued and invested in, retention rate increases - Programme teams rely more on experienced volunteers - More confident volunteers = better support for beneficiaries	- More volunteers trying new or expanded roles - Fewer drop-offs after the first few months	- Volunteers can explain how they might grow in one sentence - More volunteers are expressing interest to participate after first engagement	Staff are aware of different possible paths volunteers can grow in	
Key Tasks What do we need to do at this stage?	- Review uptake, progression rates, and volunteer feedback. - Refine pathways based on data and lived experience.	- Roll out growth pathways to all volunteers. - Launch peer-mentoring or buddy system for volunteers moving into advanced roles. - Introduce recognition mechanisms (e.g. badges, role titles, certificates).	- Pilot pathways with a few programmes or teams - Add light touch support (buddying, check-ins, short learning) - Share early stories of volunteers who've grown	- Identify 2-3 common ways volunteers currently grow (even informally) - Sketch simple pathways (e.g. Join → Contribute → Lead) - Test language and ideas with a small group of volunteers	

Sample of an action plan.

Action planning **turns strategies, goals, and ideas into a concrete, step-by-step roadmap.**

It bridges the gap between high-level vision and day-to-day actions, making it clear what needs to be done and by when. This process is essential for turning ideas into reality as it provides teams,



Clarity & Focus:

Converts abstract goals like “increase volunteer retention” into concrete tasks such as “identify 2-3 aspects that volunteers value.”



Resource Management:

Helps managers allocate time, money, and effort efficiently, preventing burnout and ensuring priorities are achievable.

With action planning, teams move from concept to execution with confidence, creating a clear path to test, learn, and iterate.

Start with your ideal outcome, then work backwards to break your idea into clear, manageable tasks.

Describe your chosen idea. It should address the challenge.

Gap/challenge we want to address:		Selected idea to address gap:			
Timeline e.g. Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, 3mths, 6mths, 9mths					
Desired Outcomes What must happen for our idea to succeed?					
Key Tasks What do we need to do at this stage?					

Define your duration & milestones.

Template can be found in the appendix.



TIPS

Assign responsibilities to your team so nothing falls through the cracks.

List down the desired outcomes at the end of each milestone.

Break your ideas down to the key tasks to complete at each stage.

This helps me plan the rollout, but what exactly should I prototype?

Start small.
Pick one key task or
element you can make
tangible using
available resources.

Rapid Prototyping

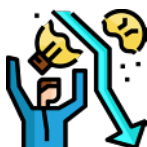
An iterative “fast-fail” approach where a simple, low-fidelity version of an idea (a “prototype”) is built.

Rapid prototyping is an iterative way to **create a “scrappy” version of an idea** such as an onboarding process map or a new volunteer role description to test, gather feedback, and refine.

Instead of waiting for a perfect launch, **start with a basic version (low to mid fidelity)** to quickly see what works and what doesn’t.



Why Prototype?



Fail fast, fail safe

Surface gaps early and reduce risk.



Improve through iteration

Refine your idea based on real feedback.



Test before scaling

Learn what works before committing more time and resources.

What Good Prototyping Looks Like



Use simple, inexpensive, and accessible materials.

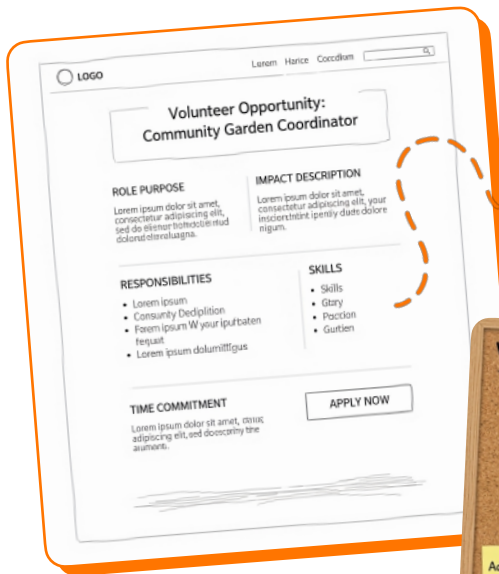


Run quick rounds of testing to allow multiple iterations.

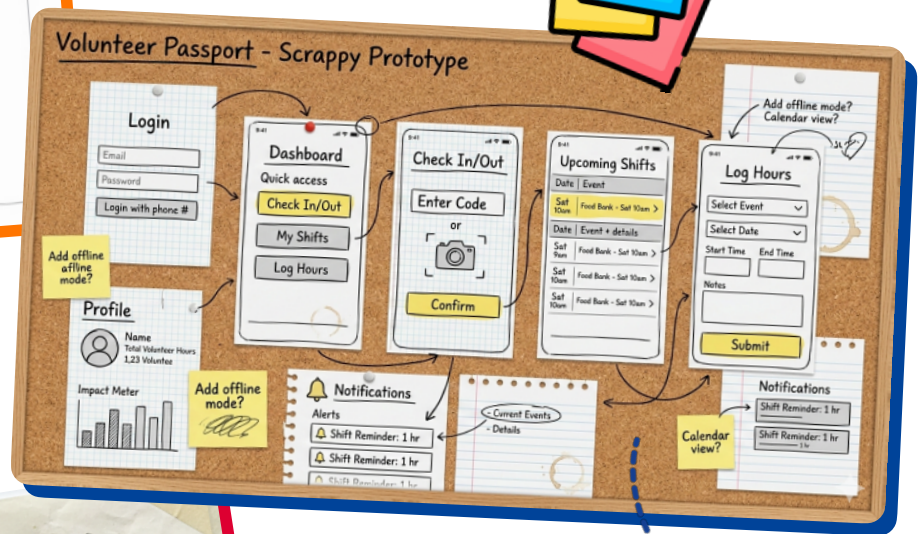


Keep barriers low so it's easy to experiment and adjust.

Prototype Examples



Enhanced Volunteer Job Description



Growth & Progression Map

Digital Volunteer Passport App Wireframes

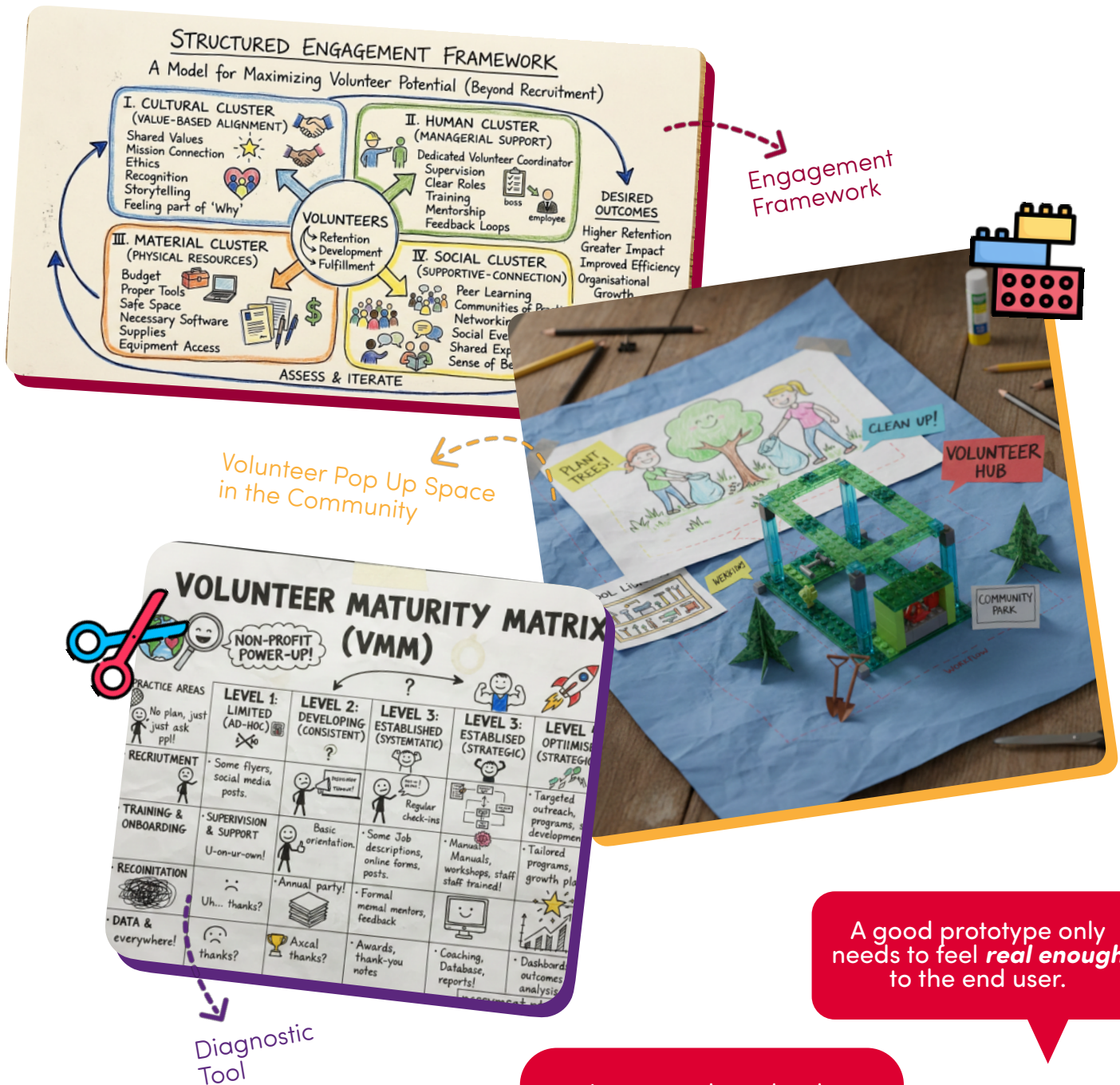


Volunteer Welcome & Onboarding Kit



The images on this page were generated with assistance from AI.

Prototype Examples



Engagement Framework

Volunteer Pop Up Space in the Community

VOLUNTEER MATURITY MATRIX (VMM)

PRACTICE AREAS	LEVEL 1: LIMITED (AD-HOC)	LEVEL 2: DEVELOPING (CONSISTENT)	LEVEL 3: ESTABLISHED (SYSTEMATIC)	LEVEL 4: ESTABLISHED (STRATEGIC)	LEVEL 5: OPTIMISED (STRATEGIC)
RECRUITMENT	No plan, just ask ppl!	Some flyers, social media posts.	Regular check-ins	Targeted outreach, programs, development	Targeted outreach, programs, development
TRAINING & ONBOARDING	Basic orientation	Some Job descriptions, online forms, posts.	Manuals, workshops, staff staff trained!	Tailored programs, growth plan	Tailored programs, growth plan
RECOGNITION	Uh... thanks?	Annual party!	Formal mentor mentors, feedback	Awards, thank-you notes	Coaching, Database, reports!
DATA & everywhere!	Uh... thanks?	Axcal thanks?	Awards, thank-you notes	Coaching, Database, reports!	Dashboard, outcomes, analysis

Diagnostic Tool

A good prototype only needs to feel **real enough** to the end user.

Just enough to clearly communicate the value and invite meaningful feedback.

Beyond 'just real enough' is not an efficient use of resources.



TIPS

You can further improve on your prototype based on feedback.

The images on this page were generated with assistance from AI.



Ex 14: Develop Your Prototype

Use your action plan to identify one key task, element, or deliverable, and build your prototype around that.



Time-Box It

Set a strict timer (e.g., 15–30 minutes). Constraints create momentum and prevent overthinking. The goal is progress, not polish.



Keep It Simple

Use low-fidelity, easy-to-change materials like paper, sticky notes, cardboard, or a digital whiteboard. Rough is good. If it looks too finished, people hesitate to critique it.

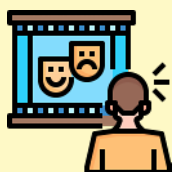


Choose a Suitable Format

Pick the simplest way to bring the idea to life:

- Sketch it (e.g., paper prototype for forms, onboarding flows, role descriptions)
- Map the journey (e.g., storyboard the volunteer experience step-by-step)
- Act it out (e.g., role-play a conversation or service moment)
- Build it (e.g., create a basic physical or visual model)

Match the format to what you are trying to test.



Build to Learn (Not to Impress)

- Make it tangible.
- Keep it rough. It's a conversation starter.
- Create multiple quick variations instead of one “perfect” version.



TIPS

Your prototype should be clear enough to test and simple enough to change.

Chapter 7:

Pitching Your Idea



You have done the hard work—researched the gaps, clarified the challenges, generated ideas, and developed prototypes. Now comes the moment that determines momentum: pitching your idea to stakeholders.

A strong pitch is not just about presenting information. It's about building a shared conviction in your ideas.

Successful pitches are grounded in **clarity and connection**. Stakeholders need to quickly understand the problem, see the value of your solution, and feel confident in your thinking.

Preparation therefore involves three things:



Knowing and understanding your audience.



Refining a clear and compelling message.



Sharpening delivery and call to action.

Pitch Preparation

How can we increase our chances of success in our pitch?



Know Your Audience

Be specific about who will be in the room:

- What is their role, function, and level of seniority?
- What do they care most about? (e.g. ROI, impact)
- What decisions can they actually make?
- How do they define success?
- Where might they hesitate or push back?



Frame Your Message

Speak their language

- What does your idea/prototype matter?
- What value does it bring to them?

Different stakeholders listen through different lenses:

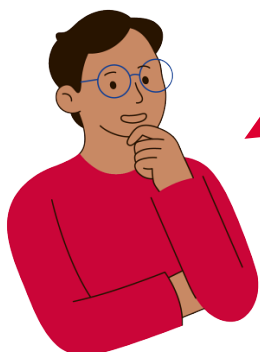
- Leaders may focus on impact and alignment.
- Managers may focus on efficiency and execution.
- Operations teams may focus on feasibility and risk.



Know who you are pitching to!

The goal isn't to impress. It's to align, inspire confidence, and move the idea forward.

A strong pitch is shaped around the people hearing it — not the person delivering it.



Clarify the Call to Action

What is the one action you want from them when you finish speaking?

Be precise. For example:

- Approve a budget
- Endorse a pilot
- Allocate more resources





Ex 15: Prepare for Pitch

Use the pitching template to plan your pitch.

Frame your message
around their version
of a win.

1. Know Your Audience	2. Frame Your Message	3. Call to Action
• Who are they? What is their role/function/seniority e.g. Leadership, funders, partners	• Why this matters? What impact will your idea create?	• What do you need from them? e.g. endorse, join, resource, align, etc.
• What do they care about most? What is their agenda?	• What's in it for them? What value does it bring to your audience? How will it address their concerns?	• What's the next step?
• What might they resist? What are their concerns, pushbacks?		

Template can be found in the appendix.

Anticipate reactions, doubts,
and uncertainties, and
prepare for them in advance.

If the ask is unclear,
the outcome will
be unclear.



TIPS

Pressure-test your pitch in advance:

Preparation builds confidence. When you understand your audience's motivations and concerns, you can address them proactively rather than react defensively.

Chapter 8:

Resources & Support



Keep the momentum going by setting aside protected time and scheduling regular check-ins. **Use the action planning template to stay aligned, clarify responsibilities, and track progress.**

Implementation requires sustained effort, coordination, and iteration. Continue refining your idea, test it in small ways, gather feedback, and improve it progressively until you are ready to pilot.

Leverage NCSS online resources for guidance and tools. For added inspiration and peer learning, explore the Volunteer Management Network sessions.

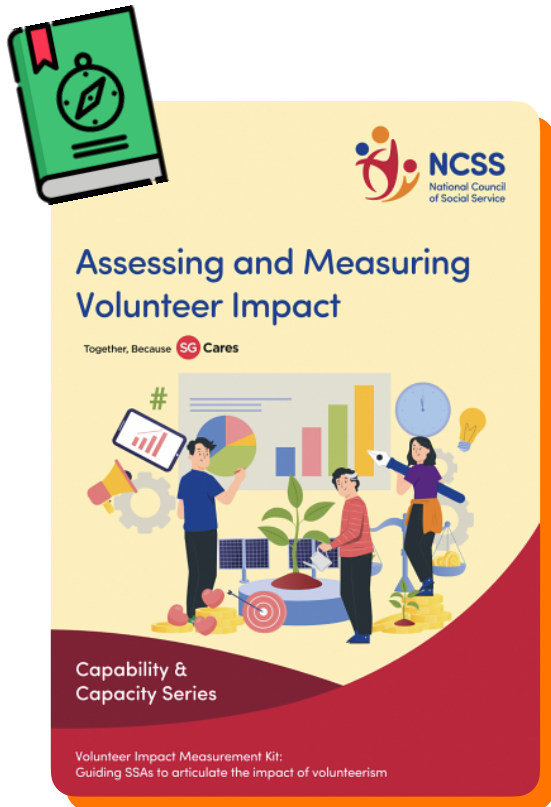
NCSS has useful resources online—let me show you a few to get us started.



<https://go.gov.sg/ncssvimk>

Volunteer Impact (VI) Measurement Kit

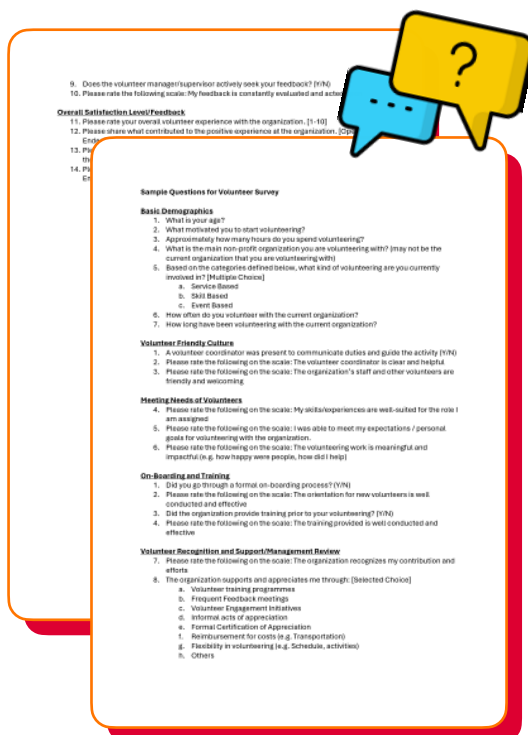
A practical guide that helps organisations move beyond tracking volunteer outputs to clearly measuring and demonstrating the real impact volunteers create for service users, agencies, partners, and the volunteers themselves, strengthening accountability and the case for continued investment.



<https://go.gov.sg/ncss-sample-volunteer-survey-questions>

Sample Questions for Volunteer Survey

A comprehensive survey designed to evaluate volunteer experience, engagement, and support across the lifecycle, helping organisations identify gaps, improve retention, and strengthen the overall impact of volunteer management.





<https://go.gov.sg/ccss-vi-templates>

Volunteer Impact (VI) Data Collection Tools

A practical reference to design context-specific and meaningful evaluation tools that agencies can adapt to assess the impact of Volunteers, Service Users, Agencies, and Partners.



Volunteer Management Network Sessions



Understanding the Sector Volunteerism Landscape and Resources

<https://youtu.be/3vgNRuKerpc?si=ixTMM5c0jBYZDIOq>



Creating Meaningful Volunteer Opportunities

https://youtu.be/eaazwP_cDYk?si=ywkzzOMUC0PIW_wq



Data-Driven Volunteer Partnership Sustainability

https://youtu.be/2nSVb_WAuGo?si=af8pCZTbwBNtEEcl

Moving Forward

Strengthening volunteer management is not about adding more programmes, forms, or initiatives. It is about **designing better systems, clearer roles, stronger alignment, and more meaningful experiences.**

Across this journey, you have:



Reviewed your current service model and clarified your desired future state



Surfaced challenges and operational gaps and reframed them as opportunities



Expanded possibilities through ideation



Translated ideas into action plans



Tested assumptions through rapid prototyping



Practised engaging stakeholders with clarity and confidence

The tools in this playbook are not meant to be used once and set aside. They are working methods to help you think more strategically, act more deliberately, and learn faster.

Progress matters more than perfection. Small pilots lead to better systems. Better systems lead to stronger volunteer ecosystems. And stronger ecosystems create deeper, more sustainable impact for the communities you serve.

Keep the momentum going. Protect the time. Stay curious. Iterate often. The future state you envisioned is built one thoughtful step at a time and you already have what you need to begin.

Peter and Vidya have completed the exercises in Part C, wrapping up after testing a few prototypes and pitches.



Thank you for journeying through Parts A, B, and C. We hope this playbook stays with you as a working companion as you redesign how volunteers and communities strengthen your services.



We would like to thank the following organisations for contributing to this Playbook.

Care Community Services Society (CCSS)

Children-At-Risk Empowerment Association (CARE Singapore)

Lakeside Family Services

Malay Youth Literary Association (4PM)

REACH Community Services Ltd.

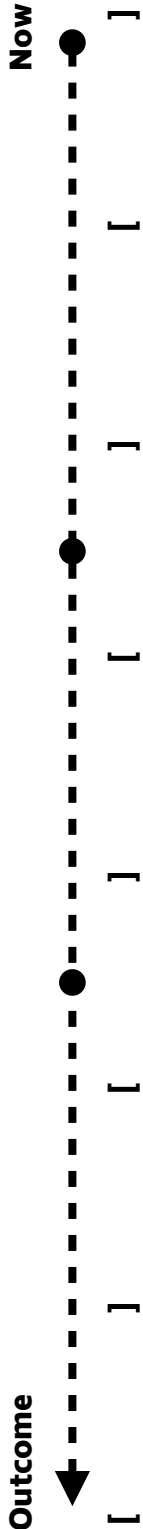
Singapore Children's Society

Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA)

Trybe Limited

Youth Guidance Outreach Services (YGOS)

This Playbook was developed through the Volunteer Management Network (VMN) Sessions and Volunteer Management Workshops (VMW) Series with Chemistry Team Pte. Ltd.

Gap/challenge we want to address:		Selected idea to address gap:			
Timeline e.g. Q1, Q2,Q3,Q4 3mths, 6mths, 9mths	Ideal Outcome [] ←				
Desired Outcomes What must happen for our idea to succeed?					
Key Tasks What do we need to do at this stage?					

1. Know Your Audience	2. Frame Your Message	3. Call to Action
• Who are they? What is their role/function/ seniority e.g. Leadership, funders, partners • What do they care about most? What is their agenda? • What might they resist? What are their concerns, pushbacks?	• Why this matters? What impact will your idea create? • What's in it for them? What value does it bring to your audience? How will it address their concerns?	• What do you need from them? e.g. endorse, join, resource, align, etc. • What's the next step?

Copyright © 2026 by National Council of Social Service
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage system and retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright owners.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE



ncss.gov.sg