

Skills-Based Volunteerism Toolkit

for Organisational Development



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FOREWORD

by Ms Tan Li San
Chief Executive Officer
National Council of Social Service



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In 2020, NCSS published the Volunteer Management Toolkit (VMT) 2.0 to guide Social Service Agencies (SSAs) to put in place good volunteer management practices to attract and retain volunteers who can augment their capacity and capability, to better serve their users. Since then, there has been increased interest in skills-based volunteerism to support organisational development, beyond direct service to users. Based on the NCSS Social Service Sector Survey 2021, 70% of 182 corporate respondents were keen to contribute, through pro bono services or employee skills, towards building SSAs' capabilities. NCSS is pleased to publish the Skills-Based Volunteerism Toolkit to complement the VMT 2.0, by sharing how volunteers may contribute their skills and expertise to help SSAs build up their organisational capability.

Findings from the Organisation Development Transformation (ODT) Journey Programme, in which 19 SSAs participated from FY19-FY22, showed that SSAs that worked on their organisational health experienced an overall average improvement of 12% in their overall score for service delivery. This prompted NCSS to launch the Organisational Health Framework for Social Services (OHFSS) in 2022 to provide a self-assessment diagnostic tool for SSAs to holistically assess their strengths and areas of improvement in business functions, so that they may identify capability areas to strengthen that would make the greatest impact on their effectiveness.



Volunteers with critical organisational skills, for example in strategic planning, human resource management, marketing, digitalisation, and many others, can play an important role in building up SSAs' organisational health. Such volunteering may take many forms, including one-off (e.g., facilitate a strategic planning workshop), project-based (e.g., work on a strategic plan as the SSA contemplates its future directions), and long-term (e.g., sit on the SSA's advisory panel for organisational development) volunteering.

The Skills-Based Volunteerism Toolkit will guide SSAs to tap on "skills-based volunteers" to strengthen their organisational capacity and capability. The Toolkit includes tips, specific templates, and case studies, to inspire and guide SSAs in strengthening their organisational functions, including but not limited to the seven domains of the NCSS OHFSS.

We hope that the Toolkit will be a useful resource, regardless of the form of volunteering opportunities an SSA offers or the maturity of its volunteer management, to inspire every SSA to explore the possibilities of skills-based volunteering to help make progress in its organisational development journey. By leveraging the skills and expertise of volunteers, every SSA can build stronger organisational capabilities and, ultimately, improve the quality of life for service users.

”

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This Skills-Based Volunteerism Toolkit introduces the framework and tools to enable Social Service Agencies (SSAs) to leverage skilled volunteers for capability building.

Skills-based volunteering is a subset of volunteering as a whole. Similar to service-based and events-based volunteering, skills-based volunteering enables SSAs to optimise volunteer resources to augment their manpower strength. Hence, this Toolkit is meant to be read in tandem with the **Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0** and the **Volunteer Role Redesign Guide**.

As the method of managing and implementing skills-based volunteering for capability building is quite different from that of service-based and events-based volunteering, this Toolkit aims to make implementation of skills-based volunteering easy and effective for SSAs. To do that, we have included tips, specific templates and case studies for your reference and adaptation.



Who is this Toolkit for

This Toolkit is intended for volunteer managers and any staff in SSAs, including senior management, who are involved or interested in working with skills-based volunteers and projects.

INTRODUCING THE SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERISM TOOLKIT FOR ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING

Skills-based volunteering is when volunteers use their specialised or professional skills to support a non-profit organisation, often to expand its organisational capability. Skills-based volunteering complements service-based and events-based volunteering to support the needs of SSAs holistically.

Skills-based volunteering spans a wide spectrum but broadly can be classified into two categories:

1) Directly benefiting service users

2) Directly benefiting organisation 

This Toolkit focuses on the second category, where volunteers use their specialised or professional skills to directly benefit the organisation. In particular, it focuses on supporting and strengthening the organisation's **internal functions**, such as the seven domains of the NCSS **Organisational Health Framework for Social Services (OHFSS)**.



Such skills-based volunteering to build the capabilities of SSAs can take on different forms and ranges from one-off support to short-term projects and even to recurrent, longer-term support.

Skills-based volunteering

Directly benefiting service users

Providing direct, hands-on service to service users

Examples include:

- Programmer teaching children from low-income families how to code
- HR professional helping job seekers strengthen their resumes

Directly benefiting organisation

Focus of this Toolkit

Providing direct support to build capability of SSA's corporate functions

Example of one-off support:

- Conduct training for SSA staff on how to use spreadsheets to create basic cash flow statement

Example of short-term project:

- Review and analyse SSA's financial projections and propose ways to increase financial sustainability

Example of recurrent, longer-term support:

- Regular bookkeeping for SSA

Providing advisory to and ensuring good governance of SSA

Examples include:

- Serving as Board Chair, Board members, Sub-committee chair, or Sub-committee members

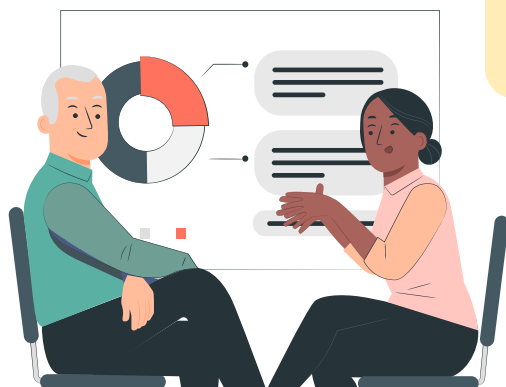
To manage volunteers who use their skills to provide services directly to service users and those who support corporate functions through one-off or recurrent roles, you may refer to the [Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0](#) and the [Volunteer Role Redesign Guide](#) to learn how to effectively manage them.

This Toolkit will focus on how you can bring in volunteers to work on scoped projects to address specific organisational challenges. The project management process is introduced in Chapter 4.

Board and Sub-committee members are volunteers too. They also need to be supported with capability building to help them perform their roles as stewards of the organisation who ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Here are some useful resources for Board capability development:

[References, Guides and Templates for Boards](#), [Centre for Non-Profit Leadership](#) and [Singapore Governance for Outstanding Organisation Directors \(S GOOD\) Programme for Non-Profits](#).



Designed by NCSS and MSF, the **Organisational Health Framework for Social Services (OHFSS)** is tailored to the social service sector, and comprises the seven domains you see in the image below.

The OHFSS comes with a Self-Assessment Tool that allows SSAs to diagnose the current state of their organisational health, and identify the areas of strengths and areas for development within the agency. SSAs are encouraged to take the Self-Assessment, as it will enable them to strategically plan their capability-building efforts by having a holistic understanding of their agencies' organisational health.

After identifying the areas for development, SSAs can refer to this Skills-Based Volunteerism Toolkit on how to tap on skills-based volunteers to strengthen their organisational health. This is especially beneficial for SSAs that may need additional resources and manpower support to develop their capabilities.



SSAs are encouraged to re-take the Self-Assessment every one to two years to monitor their organisational health. This provides SSAs with data points to track the outcomes of their capability-building efforts and reprioritise future interventions.

BENEFITS OF SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING

Here are some of the benefits of skills-based volunteering:

- Your SSA can **gain access to skills and expertise**, which it might otherwise not have, to strengthen its organisational capability. It can also **build up new skills and knowledge** which it can apply in the future.
- It enables your SSA to **improve the effectiveness** of its internal processes and operations, ultimately improving service delivery to service users (such as by getting external perspectives on user centric design).
- It **forms the foundation for a strategic, long-term partnership** with volunteers and companies, with the potential to engage them in other kinds of volunteering in future.



Skills-based volunteering requires investment by the SSA and volunteers in terms of time, effort, and skills, even though there is no payment required to volunteers. If skills-based volunteering is not managed effectively, it may affect whether volunteers wish to continue with the partnership in future. Thus, this Toolkit introduces some best practices for how to effectively manage projects to maximise the value for both volunteers and SSAs.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS TOOLKIT



This Toolkit brings you through the key steps of managing skills-based volunteering projects in your SSA.

1

Getting your organisation ready for skills-based volunteering

- How can management show support for skills-based volunteering?
- Who from your SSA should be on a skills-based volunteering team?

2

Conducting needs assessment

- How to identify and collate potential skills-based volunteering projects across your SSA?
- How to assess suitability of and prioritise projects?
- How to refine the scope of selected projects?

3

Recruiting and selecting skills-based volunteers

- What are some common profiles of skills-based volunteers?
- How to source for and reach out to potential skills-based volunteers?
- How to screen and select skills-based volunteers?

4

Project onboarding and management

- What are the stages of a skills-based volunteering project?
- What is project onboarding and how to do it?
- How to share relevant background/contextual information with volunteers to enable them to work on the project? (*note: this is called "project discovery"*)
- How long and how frequent should project sessions be?
- What should be done during and in between the sessions?
- How to address and mitigate risks?

5

Supporting and recognising skills-based volunteers

6

Evaluating your skills-based volunteer engagements

- What are the different ways to evaluate a skills-based volunteering project?

7

Scaling up skills-based volunteering in your organisation

CASE STUDY

A skills-based volunteering project which led to further collaboration



Filos Community Services (Filos) partnered with CrimsonLogic Pte Ltd to undergo a cybersecurity risk assessment in order to identify areas for improvement.

Over a period of 3 months, skills-based volunteers from CrimsonLogic assisted Filos with a security assessment of its digital footprints, identification of the risks and vulnerabilities, and enhancements to its cybersecurity. The skills-based volunteers also conducted a cybersecurity situational awareness training to better equip the 30 employees in Filos with cybersecurity and safe IT best practices.



Screenshots of the cybersecurity situational awareness training with Filos' employees

How the SSA benefitted: The volunteers' recommendations enabled Filos to be more targeted in where to focus its time and effort to close the gaps, and strengthened its cybersecurity practices.

Since then, this partnership blossomed further. CrimsonLogic explored more volunteering opportunities to engage with service users, such as celebrating National Day with music, and organising a Hydroponics Farm Tour with seniors in the Filos community. **Skills-based volunteering not only helped Filos address its cybersecurity needs, it also catalysed a further collaboration in service-based volunteering!**

TIP



Remember, embarking on your skills-based volunteering journey to address organisational challenges is a learning process. It may seem challenging at first but once you understand how to manage a skills-based volunteering project and try your hand at it, you will gain confidence. Being adaptable and flexible in trying out what works for your organisation will also be helpful.

GETTING YOUR ORGANISATION READY FOR SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING

Congratulations on starting your skills-based volunteering journey! The first step is for SSAs to understand your objectives of going into skills-based volunteering.

COMMON OBJECTIVES FOR SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING

Skills-based volunteering can be adopted by any SSA, as long as the organisation has the right understanding of what it entails, and is committed to the process. For example:

- Your SSA may want to leverage skills-based volunteering to set up internal structures or policies, especially if it is newly established or if you are starting a new programme.
- Your SSA may want to tap on skills-based volunteering to help improve existing functions in order to bring its organisational capability to the next level.



In **Chapter 2: Needs Assessment**, we will introduce a tool to help you identify potential skills-based volunteering projects and assess whether these projects are suitable for implementation.



CASE STUDY

Gaining access to a wider range of professional perspectives and experiences through skills-based volunteering



Halogen Foundation (Singapore) wanted to develop its next generation of leaders to enable them to lead the organisation effectively. Its primary objective was to learn from a breadth of external perspectives and experiences across industries, companies and job roles. It also wanted direct help in the implementation of learning points within the organisation.

Halogen Foundation decided that tapping on skills-based volunteers was the best approach to achieve these objectives with its available resources. Thus, it worked with talenTtrust, a non-profit that specialises in managing skills-based volunteering opportunities for other nonprofits, to recruit four volunteers who were senior leaders in the area of HR and people development.

The volunteers, with their vast experience working in various positions and sectors, provided perspectives and stories from their own journey in leadership development. They also conducted hands-on workshops to demonstrate how Halogen's leaders could implement strategies and techniques to shape the organisation's culture, such as in building psychological safety or encouraging innovation.

Beyond the formal scope of the project, the volunteers also mentored individual staff in scenarios across their personal and professional lives, such as how to give feedback and how to build a culture of innovation.

How the SSA benefitted: Halogen Foundation gained access to experiences and perspectives that helped strengthen its leadership team and build a more innovative and open culture.

I felt that the project with talenTtrust enabled us to learn from people with a wide range of skills and experience.

The mentors all have had their own unique career experiences and were happy to share them with us – things we could only have gotten from a group of people like these. The project also allowed us to lay the groundwork for future growth.

James Goh
Head of Transformation, Halogen Foundation



ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING

Having management and staff buy-in is critical to the success of skills-based volunteering projects. Managing skills-based volunteering is not just the job of the volunteer manager. Skills-based volunteering needs to be embraced at all levels throughout the organisation to build a volunteer-friendly culture that values skills-based volunteers.

If you are a manager or leader in your SSA, how can you support skills-based volunteering? Here are some ways:

- Share with staff about why skills-based volunteering is important and how it can strengthen the organisation
- Encourage staff to tap on skills-based volunteers to address organisational priorities
- Emphasise that tapping on skills-based volunteers does not mean that staff are unable to perform their jobs
- Allocate sufficient manpower to work on the projects
- Encourage sharing of information with volunteers so they can make relevant recommendations
- Be open to listen and adopt relevant suggestions or recommendations from volunteers
- Assure staff that it is better for the project and stakeholders to be properly managed than to rush through the process, as this will build positive relationships between the SSA and volunteers/corporate partners



SET UP YOUR TEAM TO MANAGE SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING

Once your organisation has decided to try out skills-based volunteering, you will need to set up an internal team to manage the process.

As a volunteer manager, you may be wondering why you need a team to manage skills-based volunteering projects instead of doing it yourself. This is because skills-based volunteering for capability building involves a specific organisational function or department, where subject matter expertise is required, which means that the staff who are in charge of the specific project area need to be involved.



Let's take a look at the various functions that are required in the team to make skills-based volunteering an effective and productive experience.

Volunteer-Related

Volunteer Manager

- Holds the internal project team and the volunteers together. Works closely with project owner cum manager to enhance SSA's volunteer-friendly culture
- Is responsible for looking after the volunteers' needs and ensuring that the process is meaningful for the volunteers. If there are any issues on the volunteer end such as unresponsiveness, will need to take action to manage the situation
- As with other types of volunteering projects, also takes on other roles such as recruiting and recognising volunteers

Subject Matter-Related

Project Owner cum Manager

- Typically from the functional department. Responsible for achieving the end output/outcomes of the project. This is most likely the person who initiated the project as it would be part of his/her core work
- Manages day-to-day work of the project, keeps track of key milestones and progress
- Co-curates the deliverables with the volunteers including refining the project scope, setting context and providing information to the volunteers
- Works closely with the volunteer manager to support and manage the volunteers throughout the project, and address any volunteer issues
- Ideally, is effective at working with diverse stakeholders, and is detailed and manages time well

TIP



Depending on the size of the project, a team of project members from the functional department may need to be formed. A well-resourced project team can work more effectively with volunteers.

Decision Maker

- Typically a senior-level executive who is able to represent the viewpoints of the key stakeholders, and also signs off on the project. Could be the Executive Director, or the head of the functional department that the project is carried out with
- Will not be involved in the day-to-day of the project, but the team should seek his/her endorsement or decision at key milestones

Post-Project Implementation Team (if needed)

- If the team that will implement the project is different from the team planning the project, it is useful to include a representative from the post-project implementation team to provide inputs on the feasibility of implementing the recommendations

TIP



Sometimes, a staff can also wear different hats and take on more than one role. For example, if the project is about how to better recruit volunteers, then the volunteer manager may also be the project owner cum manager.

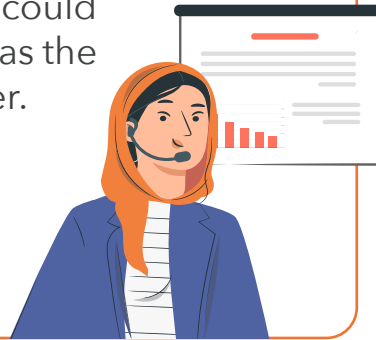
Here is an example. If the project involves designing and rolling out an employee survey to determine their training needs, the project team from the SSA would include:

The volunteer manager This person will recruit skills-based volunteers and work with the learning and development team to onboard and provide positive experiences to volunteers.



The learning and development team within the SSA

These are project owners who could also double up as the project manager.



The Head of HR

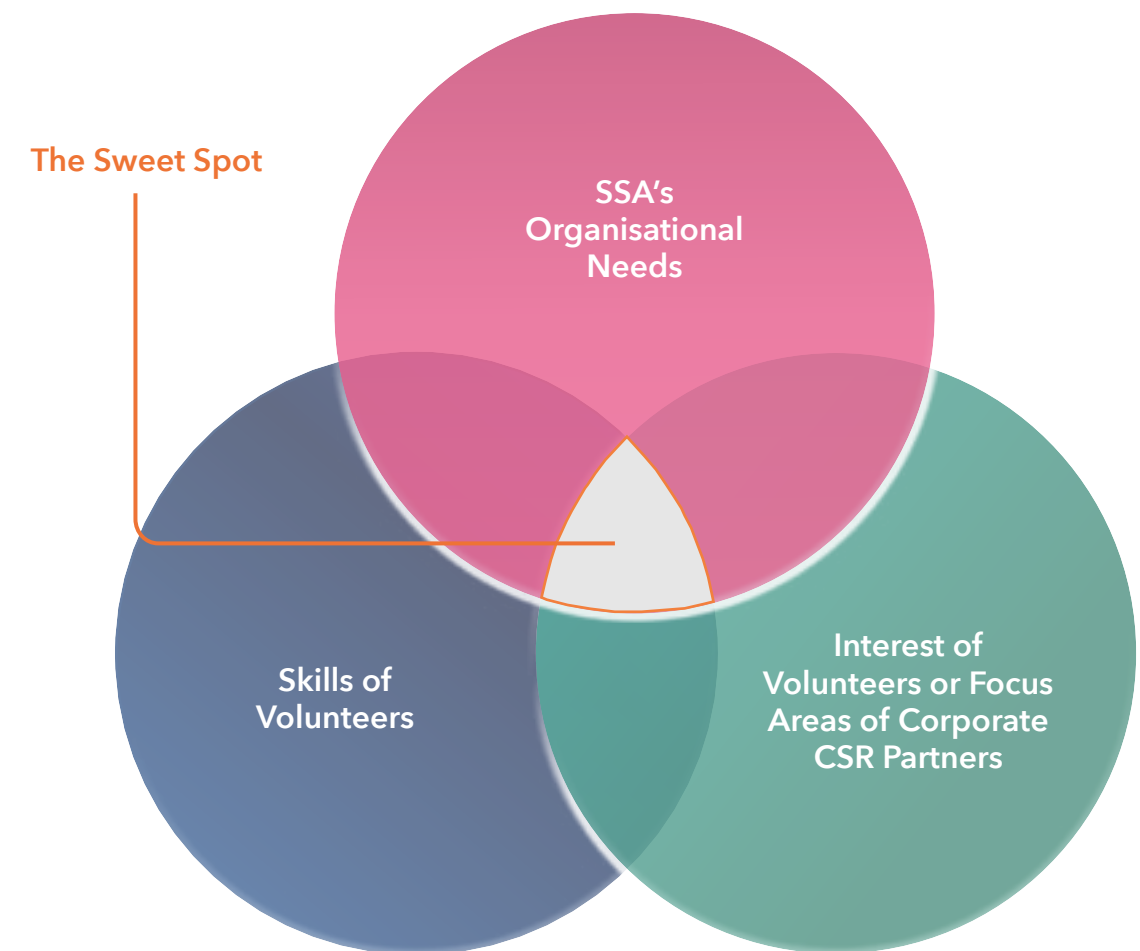
This is the decision maker. This person need not be involved on a day-to-day basis but needs to sign off on the project.



Assuming the project will be implemented by the learning and development team, there is no need for a separate representative to advise on implementation.



FINDING THE SWEET SPOT FOR SUCCESSFUL SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING



The **'Sweet Spot'** is the intersection between SSA's organisational needs, the relevance of the skills of the volunteers, and the alignment of the SSA's cause to the **interest of the volunteers** or **focus areas of corporate CSR partners**.

- If the volunteers are corporate volunteers, find out the corporate's focus areas (e.g. mental health, children and youth) under their corporate purpose framework or Environmental, Social and Governance strategy.
- If the volunteers are volunteering in their individual capacity, find out what their personal interests are.

For example, a volunteer might be an engineering team leader, who prefers to volunteer his leadership skills to conduct leadership training, rather than volunteer his engineering expertise.



CONDUCTING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Conducting needs assessment for skills-based volunteering is important to:

- Ensure that the project is a priority for the SSA
- Ensure that the project is suitable for volunteers to undertake
- Ensure that the scope is feasible and clear for skills-based volunteers



There are 3 main steps in the needs assessment process:



IDENTIFY SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING NEEDS

Your SSA can take the OHFSS Self Assessment to identify specific areas for skills-based volunteers to provide targeted support. You can also gather inputs from your internal stakeholders to identify skills-based volunteering needs in your SSA.

These needs will generally fall into two categories:

On the To-do lists of the various departments in the next 6 to 12 months.

TIP



Why 6 to 12 months and not sooner? Projects that are too urgent are not good candidates for skills-based volunteering projects due to the time required to set up the project and recruit the volunteers. You can read more on this [here](#).

Strategic priorities and longer-term goals of the organisation.

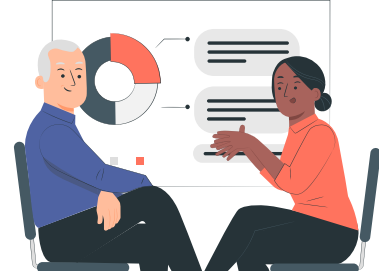
TIP



Skills-based volunteering is especially well-placed to address strategic priorities, given that volunteers come with a range of professional skills relevant to business needs.



Use this template to help you compile an initial list of potential skills-based volunteering projects:

Field	Explanation
Functional area	Which domain(s) of the NCSS Organisational Health Framework for Social Services (OHFSS) does the project fall within? (Select all that apply. This helps you identify the relevant functional department(s) to involve from your SSA, as well as identify volunteers with the relevant skill sets.) • Strategy & Leadership • Governance • People • Finances • Digitalisation • Communications & Partnerships • User-Centric Services 
Brief Project Description	The following information should be provided: • The problem to be solved • The desired output • The expected timeline for delivery 
Department	This is the functional department where the project need arises and where the project owner cum manager, and additional project members if required, will come from. 

Please refer to the Appendix for a non-exhaustive list of [projects that your SSA can embark on for capability building.](#)



CASE STUDY

Tapping on skills-based volunteers to provide advice on a research project



Ain Society runs support services for cancer patients and their caregivers. It wanted to adopt an evidence-based approach to better understand its clients' and caregivers' experiences with cancer and tailor its services to their needs, and aimed to publish research papers in order to disseminate the findings broadly and to educate the Malay-Muslim community.

However, the social workers running the project specialised in case management rather than research, and realised that they required advice in areas such as ethics considerations and how to adapt and seek consent to use validated scales for the client questionnaire. While there was an intensive training programme available for the team to attend, they could not do so due to limited manpower. Hence, Ain Society tapped on the NCSS Volunteer Research Consultant Matching Service to source for volunteer researchers to provide advice on the project.

NCSS introduced Ain Society to two groups of researchers to explore a possible partnership. After consideration, Ain Society decided to work with volunteer researchers from KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH), due to their familiarity with the healthcare context and terminologies.

The volunteer researchers visited Ain Society's Serenity Cancer Care Centre to understand Ain Society's services better and to discuss the project. Ain Society also visited KKH to get to know the volunteers better.

Through the scoping process, it was decided that Ain Society would collect the data, and the volunteers would analyse it. The volunteers also helped to vet Ain Society's research proposal, gave suggestions on the client questionnaire, and sourced for relevant journal articles as part of the literature review.

Ain Society shared that the KKH volunteers were very prompt and professional, even going beyond their formal scope to help in various aspects of the project. It found the KKH volunteers' contextual knowledge especially useful.

How the SSA benefitted: By tapping on skills-based volunteers to advise on its research study, Ain Society was able to access expertise that it did not have in-house. The volunteers' advice helped ensure its research studies were robustly designed, so that it could better understand the experiences of its clients and their caregivers and serve them better.

For SSAs looking to embark on research studies, NCSS provides the **Volunteer Research Consultant Matching Service** to match SSAs that need assistance with research projects, with volunteer research consultants from Institutes of Higher Learning and the public sector. SSAs can expect to receive advice or direct support in the following areas:

- Study design and methodology
- Crafting of questionnaires and/or discussion/interview guides
- Quantitative or qualitative data analysis.

All projects will begin with a default six-month commitment period.

To apply, please fill in the [Application for Volunteer Research Consultant Matching form](#).

Interested to make use of your research or evaluation skills and expertise for a good cause? Register as a volunteer research consultant [here](#).



ASSESS SUITABILITY OF SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS

Now that you have compiled the list of potential projects, you need to assess whether these projects are suitable to be skills-based volunteering projects.

A

The first test is a **basic screening or pass/fail test for suitability**. Basically, a project has to meet all three of the following criteria to be considered suitable for skills-based volunteering:



It needs to be a priority to the organisation.

Senior management need to be aware of and endorse the project. Ideally, it is either something that is already on the to-do list, or a strategic priority for the organisation.

TIP



While the project needs to be important to the organisation, it is not recommended to tap on skills-based volunteers to fulfil regulatory requirements or tasks which require certified professionals to sign off. This is because volunteers are ultimately doing the work in their personal capacity.



The project needs to have a comfortable timeline (i.e. not be too urgent).

Given the nature of skills-based volunteering, where volunteers are often busy professionals, it will be very challenging to deliver projects that have a specific and tight deadline.

A rule of thumb is that anything that **must** be done within 2-3 months is not suitable for skills-based volunteering.

A project timeline of about 6 months is generally comfortable and provides sufficient buffer for unexpected delays.



The project owner is ready to work with skills-based volunteers.

If the project owner has doubts about tapping on skills-based volunteers for the project or has not bought into the idea of skills-based volunteering, this may not be a good project to undertake.

TIP



Volunteer managers can share with the project owners about the benefits of skills-based volunteering and how volunteers can help them address challenges in their work. Also emphasise that having volunteers onboard is not a sign of weakness but that the organisation is open to learning from others and improving itself, and strategic in harnessing resources.

The project owner should also have the capacity to work with skills-based volunteers to co-curate the project and deliverables, as skills-based volunteering requires a combined effort between both parties.

CASE
STUDYCommitment of senior management
and project owner is critical to success

Engineering Good's staff strength had increased quite significantly over a short time. Hence it wanted to review and put in place more standardised HR processes. It hoped to introduce a performance review framework for its staff, review existing job descriptions and gain insights on best practices for using non-financial incentives to motivate staff. However, being a small organisation, it did not have a dedicated HR-trained staff on its team. Hence, it wanted to tap on skills-based volunteers to provide some guidance, review their documents, and point them in the right direction.

Engineering Good connected with PayPal and embarked on a skills-based volunteering project. There was strong management buy-in and involvement of Engineering Good's CEO, who gave his support and empowered the project owner cum manager (i.e. the person in charge of HR) to drive the project forward.

Having the HR project owner lead the project meant that she was in the best position to provide context, share her pain points and the relevant materials with the volunteers. In addition, she was very prompt in following up with the required documents and in responding to clarification questions asked by volunteers, which allowed volunteers sufficient time to prepare. She was also open about sharing her organisational challenges with the volunteers and was clear on the tangible deliverables required.

The volunteers were also effective in responding to the SSA's needs and came well-prepared for their work sessions. Because both parties were proactive and responsive, the process went smoothly.

How the SSA benefitted: Engineering Good gained access to best practices, frameworks and strategies for individual and team goal-setting and performance review. This helped to strengthen staff's clarity about their roles and alignment with the organisation's goals, which in turn strengthens staff's sense of engagement and purpose.



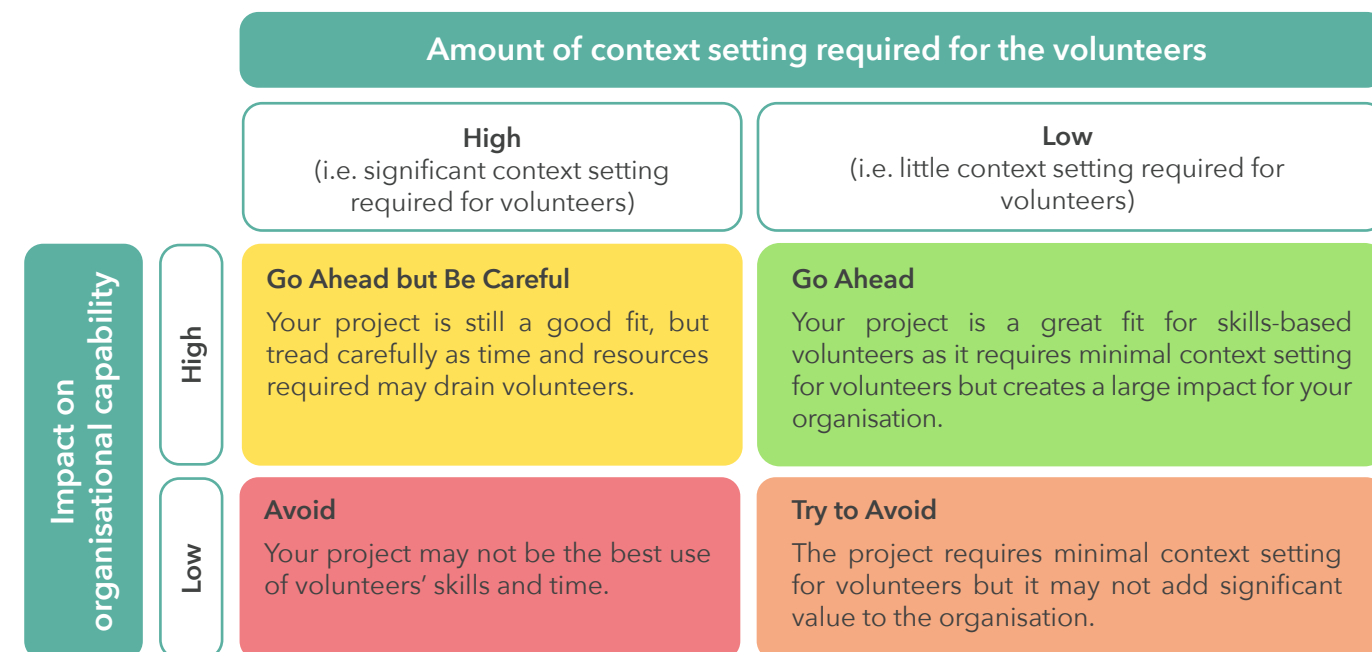
B

Once you have shortlisted suitable projects, you can **prioritise them** to determine which are more worthwhile to undertake.

There are two criteria for prioritisation:

- (1) the level of impact that the project will make to the organisation, and
- (2) the degree of context setting that is required for the volunteers.

Putting these two criteria together, we get a 2x2 matrix. The diagram below shows how you can prioritise projects using this matrix, and the recommended actions you can take for each category.



An example of a project which requires a high amount of context setting is to review an SSA's existing volunteer management methods and propose recommendations to better engage its volunteers. Volunteers would need to understand the detailed processes for volunteer management in the organisation, the needs and profile of volunteers, the SSA's different types of volunteers, and the best practices for volunteer management. However, it is possible to break down this project into 2-3 smaller projects where less context setting is required per project.

An example of a suitable project is to review the social media statistics for an SSA and propose how to increase the engagement of social media posts.

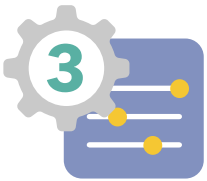


Select one to three projects based on your prioritisation, to continue to the next step. Eventually, depending on the experience and capacity of your organisation, you may select just one project to work on, or more. However, do consider if you have the bandwidth to manage multiple projects concurrently, especially if it is the first time your SSA is trying out such projects for capability development.

For organisations that undertake more than one project at a time, the volunteer manager is unlikely to be as involved in each project, possibly delegating some responsibilities to the project owner cum manager.

Please refer to [Chapter 4: Project Planning](#) for potential risks relating to skills-based volunteering projects and preventive strategies.





REFINE THE VOLUNTEERING SCOPE

The next step is to refine the scope of the project to make it suitable for volunteers to take on.

Scoping is the process of determining and defining the problem statement, deliverables and desired output/outcomes of a task or project. In step 1, you would have collated the brief project description. In this step, you would go deeper to identify the specific deliverables and outcomes expected of the project.



TIP

This section focuses on the initial scoping process. There will be further refinement of the scope with your volunteers later on when the volunteers come onboard, as the volunteers can advise on what is feasible within the timeline or may propose a different approach to perform the task.

Why is scoping important?

It helps to identify a **more focused** problem statement and intended goals, and **prevents scope creep** (i.e. a change in the project's direction over time).



It helps to **break the problem into smaller, more manageable parts** which can be undertaken in subsequent phases. This is especially useful for organisational challenges which are typically long-term and multi-faceted.



It **clarifies the roles, time commitment and deliverables**, enabling potential skills-based volunteers to determine if they can support the project.



It aims to ensure that the **project size is realistic** to be completed by skills-based volunteers.



Use the template below to scope your project:

Identify the functional area	Domain(s) or subdomain(s) under the OHFSS	Examples	Finance (Process Readiness) and Digitalisation (Corporate/Support Functions)
Name the project	Project title		Designing useful custom reports within accounting system
What is the challenge you are trying to solve?	Explain the problem faced by staff		We have adopted a new accounting system but do not know how to design useful custom reports to get a good picture of our financial health
What needs to be done to solve this challenge?	Explain the desired solution		Need to know how to design useful reports customised to our specific context (e.g. reporting period, departments), and equip/ train staff on how to set them up in the system
What deliverables/ output do I expect from the volunteers and by when?	Set out the specific deliverables expected from the project. Where possible, set quantifiable goals		Advise on how we can utilise our system to meet our SSA's customised needs. Help to set up 3 custom report templates. Train 5 staff in the finance department on how to set up new custom reports. Timeline: within 6 months of project start
What is the impact of this project to the organisation?	State how the project deliverables will improve the function of the organisation		If the reports can be customised to our SSA's context, it will save us time and also enable us to have relevant information to make better decisions

In the example above, you can see that the deliverables are scoped to specific, realistic and achievable tasks that are feasible for volunteers to take on. In contrast, the development and implementation of the accounting system itself would not be suitable for volunteers as it is too large a scope and may be better done by a paid vendor or employee.



CASE STUDY

Importance of scoping projects to ensure suitability for skills-based volunteering



AMKFSC Community Services (AMKFSC) worked with Procter & Gamble (P&G) on a marketing project with Bakery Hearts, the SSA's skills training programme.

Prior to this, AMKFSC had originally wanted to work on the marketing and communication strategy for the SG Cares Volunteer Centres (VC) they operate. Several needs were identified, such as developing a communications and outreach framework to increase awareness of the VC and attract more volunteers, and equipping staff with skills such as relationship building, PR and marketing, time management and leadership.

AMKFSC applied the needs assessment process and scoping template (on previous page), and carefully considered if their intended project was suitable for skills-based volunteering. It realised that this scope would require volunteers to commit for more than six months to achieve the expected deliverables. Bearing in mind the availability of the volunteers, AMKFSC decided to source for a more focused project scope that would be more feasible within the project timeframe.

Knowing P&G's strength in marketing, it prioritised its search for marketing and communication-related projects. One potential project surfaced from AMKFSC's skills training programme, Bakery Hearts, which aims to equip women from low-income families with the skills and opportunities to supplement their household income and find sustainable employment through baking.

The volunteer management team found out that Bakery Hearts' staff faced challenges in marketing their products and services. With low brand awareness, there were fewer volunteer bakers who could support, train, and guide the service users.

TIP



The project duration should be determined in the scoping stage, and reviewed with the volunteers during recruitment.

While it is ideal to look for volunteers who can commit to the full duration of your project, in reality, not all volunteers may be able to commit to an extended period of beyond 6 months. A project with a longer duration is also more likely to lose momentum.

By referencing the needs assessment and scoping tools, this project fit the criteria of being well-defined, potentially impactful to the organisation, and having clear deliverables that were feasible for volunteers to complete within the stipulated duration.



Bakery Hearts participants learning new recipes

Seeing the synergies of this project with skills-based volunteering, AMKFSC decided to work with P&G to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for Bakery Hearts.

This scope turned out to be an excellent fit for P&G's skills-based volunteering team. The work sessions were well-structured, with volunteers using P&G's marketing framework to clarify Bakery Hearts' target audience and brainstorm ideas to enhance outreach efforts as part of their marketing plan.

How the SSA benefitted: Bakery Hearts received valuable inputs on how to structure outreach materials to better engage their target audience. This would lead to higher sales and more opportunities for women from low-income families to supplement their income. The 'Call to Action' in these materials was also revised to increase volunteer sign-ups so that more women could be trained.

Thank you P&G for not only contributing your time but your skills to provide counsel to our Bakery Hearts skills training programme for low-income beneficiaries.

Wee Wah Meng

Senior Manager, AMKFSC Community Services



RECRUITING AND SELECTING SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERS

Once you have your scoped projects ready, you can start recruiting skills-based volunteers.



These volunteers usually fall into three categories:

Individual Volunteers

- Their profile spans a wide range, but they typically tend to be working adults, those taking a break from the workforce, or retirees.
- May be new volunteers, or existing volunteers within your SSA's database who may have previously signed up for other kinds of volunteering opportunities but now want to contribute their skills instead.

Corporate Volunteers

- Usually organised under the corporate's employee volunteering programme, through a corporate partnership. Hence, there is a need to align with the corporate's social impact focus.
- In some companies, individuals may initiate their own volunteering with the approval of the company and use their volunteering leave days to engage in the project.
- The skills they deploy towards the project are usually from their work rather than personal experience.

Students from professional schools/institutes of higher learning

- Students can be undergraduates or graduate students who may be undertaking volunteer work as part of their curriculum or training.
- May be closely supported by faculty in this process.

WHY DO VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATE IN SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING

Knowing what motivates skills-based volunteers will enable you to attract and recruit them more effectively.

Volunteers have many different reasons for taking part in skills-based volunteering. Some of these reasons are similar to participating in event or service-based volunteering, while others are more specific.

Here are some of the common reasons:

Similar to service-based or events-based volunteering

- Make a difference/give back to the community.
- Meet new people.

Specific to skills-based volunteering

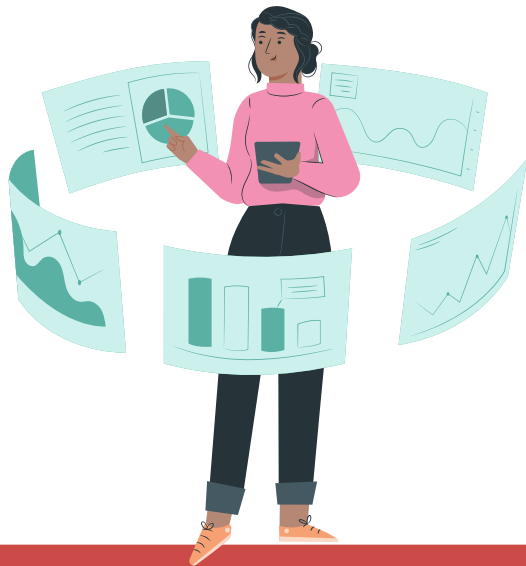
- Apply their skills in a different context.
- Learn more about the social service sector.
- Personal and professional development.

Please refer to the [Volunteer Experience Research Study](#) by the Lien Centre for Social Innovation in collaboration with the National Council of Social Service, and in support of SG Cares, if you are interested to learn more about how to enhance the volunteer experience.



REACH OUT TO POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

Your skills-based volunteering needs are typically more targeted and require a niche skillset, hence you may need to take a more targeted approach compared to sourcing for service-based or events-based volunteers. For example, you may want to focus on platforms that professionals use more frequently, such as professional networking sites.



The table below lists some potential channels you can use for recruitment, their advantages and disadvantages and some points to consider.

Channels	Tips for tapping on these channels
Approach your Board members and funders to help you reach out to potential volunteers	- Board members and funders would already be aligned to organisation’s goals. - As they tend to be relatively well-connected, it could be easier to get inroads into corporates through direct link ups, rather than making a cold approach. However, they may be busy and may need more time to make the link ups. - They may not know the details of the operational challenges facing the staff and what the specific needs are. Hence, it is important to brief them on your project needs first.
Reach out to existing partners and volunteers, donors and service users	- They are familiar with the organisation’s goals/needs. - They may be interested to enhance their existing relationship or build a long-term relationship with your organisation. - Skills-based volunteering is a great way to cultivate them and form strategic, long-term partnerships, as you are giving them exposure to the inner workings of your organisation and opening up the door for them to get further involved. TIP  Service users are connected to the mission of the agency and tapping them as volunteers may be a way of empowering them to contribute to the cause. Learn more about empowerment here.

Reach out to professional associations/bodies/ interest groups	You can approach them directly if your project is in a specific professional domain. Some examples are: Pro Bono SG (formerly Law Society Pro Bono Office) for legal work, Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA) Volunteer Programme for accounting work.
Engage an intermediary	- Intermediaries are organisations that link SSAs up with skills-based volunteers and curate skills-based volunteering projects. Some examples are Empact and talentTrust. - They are familiar with the skills-based volunteering space and process, and have a wide range of partners to tap on. If you are new to this space and want to get some guidance so that you can learn from the process, this could be a good way to start. - You can consider engaging them in partnership with a funder or grantmaker to cover any fees that may be involved.
Mass outreach	- Mass outreach has the potential to reach a large audience, but be prepared that it may take some time to recruit skills-based volunteers, because it is less targeted. - You can complement this strategy by asking your staff or volunteers to share the opportunities that are posted online, thus amplifying them within their networks.



Focus on the quality of outreach rather than volume. A targeted request made by an appropriate person, such as a direct connection who works in your organisation, may be much more effective and result in a more suitable match than a generic post on social media.

TIP 

How to interest corporates to contribute to your skills-based volunteering projects

- Well-scoped project (even preliminary scope) that falls in the CSR focus areas of the corporate
- Flexibility to work around their busy periods.
- Project duration should not be too long; a good starting point is about 10 hours commitment for each staff over about 3 months.
- Demonstrate that you have the commitment to train, support and engage skills-based volunteers.

CASE STUDY

Engaging existing service-based volunteers as skills-based volunteers



In its earlier days, Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) tapped on volunteers mainly to staff its 24-hour Hotline, and subsequently the SOS CareText. But as SOS started to grow its service offerings, its needs in developing organisational capability became more evident. Skills-based volunteering thus became an intentional strategy that SOS has adopted to strengthen areas such as IT and HR, and also to strengthen its programmes and services.

Skills-based volunteers in SOS are often recruited through word of mouth, through recommendations from other skills-based volunteers. Interestingly, another channel is through recruitment of volunteers from SOS service-based volunteering, e.g. the 24-hour Hotline and CareText.

As service-based volunteering plays a central role in the organisation, SOS realised that they could tap on their service-based volunteers' skills as well. Since potential service-based volunteers had to submit an application form, and go through an interview, SOS would be able to identify their other skills and ask if they would like to serve as skills-based volunteers too. For example, one of the Hotline volunteers, who is a HR professional, also advises SOS on HR.

How the SSA benefitted: Being able to tap on volunteers for both service-based and skills-based volunteering in SOS strengthens both the organisation's direct services as well as organisational capability, and also enables it to better cater to volunteers' preferences.



SCREEN POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

It is important to select skills-based volunteers carefully to ensure suitability and fit for the project.

Here are some recommended ways to screen potential volunteers which you can consider.

- Ask them to fill in an application form. Refer to the Appendix for a [sample](#).
- Request for their CV or LinkedIn profile. This is useful to give a sense of how relevant their professional experience and skills are to the volunteer opportunity and whether they have done similar projects before.
- Invite shortlisted volunteers to an informal chat.
 - This gives you a better way to assess their communication skills and ability to work in a team, and what they are looking out for in a skills-based volunteering opportunity.

TIP



This can also be a good way to build rapport with and learn more about the volunteers' interests, so that you can see if there is a good match with other volunteer opportunities within your SSA which you may direct them to after the project is completed.

For corporate or student volunteers, the selection is typically done by the corporate or school. You can provide your suggested selection criteria to ensure a good fit for the project.

What are some relevant selection criteria?

Skills - The skills should match the requirements of the volunteering opportunity. A poor match is not ideal for both parties, even if there is no payment required.

- You may need to be more detailed in matching the skills - for example, "HR" may be too broad and you may need to go down to the level of "performance management" or "employee engagement" instead.

Time commitment - The volunteer should be able to commit to the duration of the project and the meetings involved.

Responsiveness - If the volunteer is unresponsive even at the application stage, there is a high chance that this will continue into the project.

Willingness to engage and understand your needs - The volunteers should display an openness to understand the SSA context and needs, given that these could be very different from their past experience.

TIP



What if a volunteer is found unsuitable? You may thank the volunteer for showing interest in the opportunity, share that the opportunity may not be a good fit with their area of expertise, and redirect them to other volunteering opportunities that may be more suitable for their skills or interests.

SET YOUR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS UP FOR SUCCESS

Here are some tips to help you recruit and select suitable skills-based volunteers:

- 1

State the selection criteria in your recruitment material.

Recruiting for a skills-based volunteering project is very similar to recruiting for a job in your organisation. Stating the requirements clearly upfront will attract more suitable applications and reduce the time spent on evaluating unsuitable ones.

Your recruitment material should contain your project scope (see the previous [chapter](#)), including the required skills and expected time commitment.
- 2

Think out of the box regarding the skillsets required.

Sometimes, SSAs have a specific context that is not directly equivalent to the corporate context, and you may not be able to find someone with the exact same skillset that you are looking for. For example, if you are looking for someone to help with your fundraising strategy, you may need to expand your “search terms” to “sales and marketing” or “business development”. These individuals will possess relevant knowledge on how to convert potential donors into actual donors.
- 3

Get the project owner cum manager involved in the selection.

He/she will be better placed to identify the relevant skillsets required. In addition, he/she will be working intensively with the volunteers, so the selected volunteers should be someone he/she is comfortable with. In the event that there are many applications, the volunteer manager can help to shortlist some applications for the functional department to review by matching against the requirement provided by the project owner cum manager.



If you want to attract individual volunteers, include how your project will help to address the common volunteer motivations (stated earlier in this chapter) in your recruitment material. For example, if you are looking for skills-based volunteers to help you with your compensation and benefits review, state how the project enables volunteers to:

- Apply their professional HR skills in a nonprofit context
- Get new insights on how to retain staff, and
- Understand the manpower and salary trends in the social sector.

If you want to attract corporates, here are some benefits you can include in your pitch:

- Helps employees to hone their skills and develop empathy
- Creates an interconnected and strong workplace culture and improves employee satisfaction
- Builds a strong employer brand
- Multiplies their time investment as helping SSAs strengthen their organisational health can lead to enhancement in service delivery, thus creating greater impact.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Once you have selected the volunteers or organisation (e.g. corporates or schools) to work with, it is a good practice to have a Volunteer Agreement to ensure both sides are on the same page about the scope of work, responsibilities of each party, and timelines. The agreement can be a signed document, or an email agreement, depending on the comfort level of your SSA. The important thing is to ensure that both parties are aligned on the expectations.

Here is a sample of the fields that should be included in this Agreement:

Basic Information	• Name of SSA • Functional Department in charge • Organisation that is supplying the volunteers (if applicable) • Volunteer names (if individual volunteers)
Project Description	• Project title • Project scope • Duration of project • Project deliverables • Key contact points of each party
Project Management	• Roles and responsibilities of each party, including who should bear any costs (where applicable) • Code of Conduct for volunteers (refer to Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0 for sample) • Non-disclosure of confidential information and adherence to Personal Data Protection Act (if applicable)* • Ownership of intellectual property (if applicable) • Limitation on liability (if applicable)

* You might require these if sensitive information and/or personal data of service users or the SSAs’ volunteers need to be disclosed as part of the project.

Please refer to the Appendix for a sample [Volunteer Agreement Template](#).



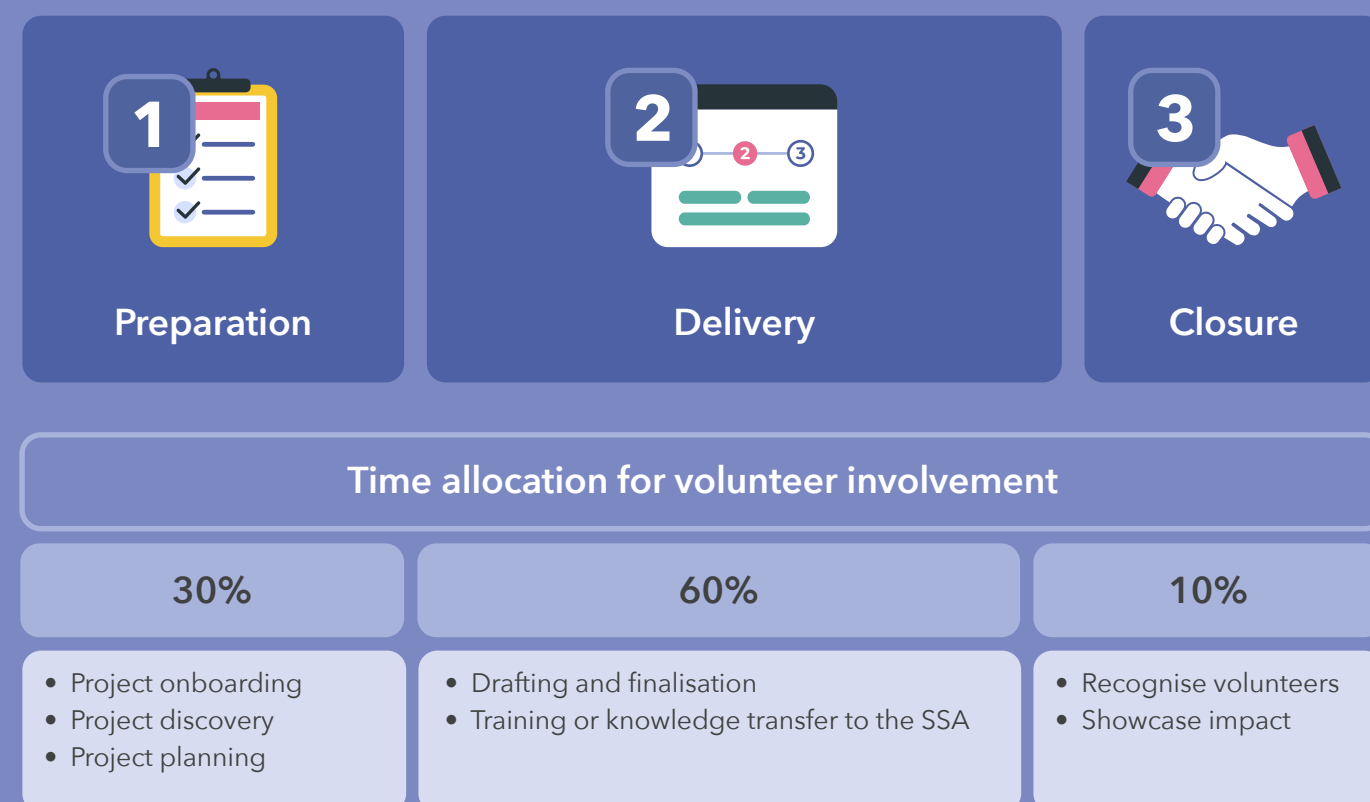
PROJECT ONBOARDING AND MANAGEMENT

Congratulations! You have successfully recruited your volunteers and are ready to embark on your project.

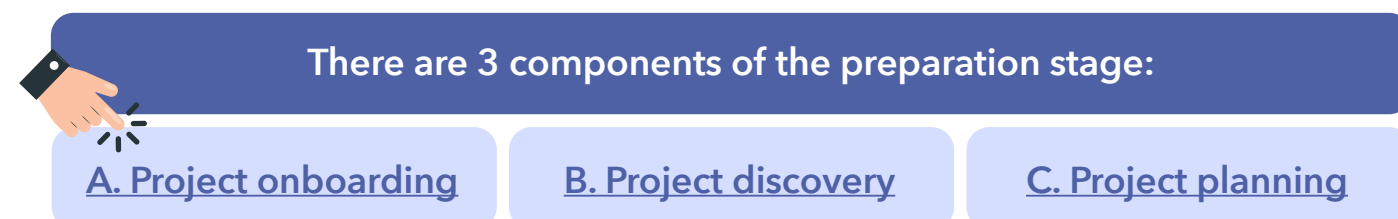


There are 3 main stages of a skills-based volunteer project: **Preparation**, **Delivery** and **Closure**. Preparation and delivery are covered in this chapter. Project closure is covered in the next chapter.

The diagram below shows the components of and the approximate proportion of time to be allocated to each stage.



PREPARATION



A Project Onboarding

Project onboarding is important to help you prepare volunteers to understand your SSA and the volunteer role. This helps to inspire, motivate and engage volunteers and build trust between the volunteers and organisation. It also helps to set volunteer expectations from the outset and helps ensure alignment.

A typical project onboarding session for skills-based volunteering lasts about 45-60 minutes. It can be done virtually, or in-person if the team has not met before.

Project onboarding is specific to the task at hand and aims to ensure that volunteers have the basic information before they start work and that their expectations are aligned with the SSA's.

TIP



If you have not met the volunteers during the recruitment stage, it is good to spend some time during the project onboarding to get to know them. This helps to build rapport and trust which will facilitate open communication.

Arranging site visits for the volunteers will also be meaningful for volunteers to understand the work done by the SSAs.

Where volunteers are from other countries, there could also be cultural differences. Spending some time helping them understand the cultural nuances can also help to smoothen communication later on.

What to cover during project onboarding

You may use the template below as a guide to structure your content.

1

About the organisation

Mission & Vision

Purpose

Organisational Structure

Staff roles and hierarchy, so that volunteers know the key internal stakeholders and who the project sponsor is.

2

The operating context for the project

Key activities

Key programmes/activities that the organisation carries out that are relevant to the project

Key leadership or Board decisions

Provide any key guidance or impetus from the Board or senior leadership that is relevant to this project, to give the volunteers an understanding of the general direction of the organisation

Funding/finances

(If relevant to your project) How the organisation is funded, and whether it has to adhere to any guidelines/restrictions due to its funding model

3

Key information about the project scope and requirements

The challenge that is faced

You may use relevant information from the scoping document to complete this section.

The impact of the challenge on the organisation/service users

Key dates/timelines for this project

Key dates that may drive the project timeline, if any (e.g. events, fiscal year, etc)

Software/hardware

Whether the project team needs any access to your IT systems during the project

TIP



Be aware and mindful of jargon

Be aware that jargon may have different meanings in the social service sector compared to the corporate sector, or even in everyday usage. For example, corporates may see "sustainability" as related to Environmental, Social and Governance strategy or Corporate Social Responsibility, but SSAs may see it as ensuring a reliable revenue stream to carry on its operations.

Even among SSAs, such terms may differ depending on their context. An example is "residents", which can mean seniors staying in nursing homes, or the people living in a particular estate, depending on your SSA's context. The term "internal stakeholders" may or may not include volunteers depending on the SSA. Thus, a good way to avoid miscommunication is to define such terms upfront and give examples of what you are trying to illustrate.

CASE STUDY

Aligning the understanding of key concepts between volunteers and SSA during onboarding



This is an example that illustrates how onboarding can sometimes go two ways: while the SSA needs to onboard volunteers, volunteers sometimes also need to onboard the SSA to ensure a common understanding of key concepts and terms used in the corporate sector.

At the start of the first work session between AMKFSC Community Services and Procter & Gamble (P&G) (see [page 28](#) for background), the lead volunteer conducted a 15-minute training on marketing concepts and jargon commonly used in P&G and the marketing industry. P&G explained the three key components in their approach to a marketing plan, namely the "Who", "What" and "How". The "Who" refers to the target audience and their characteristics, the "What" refers to the primary idea to be communicated, and the "How" refers to the marketing channels that would be used to reach the target audience.

Very enriching to see how skills we have developed over the years in P&G can truly help and impact social organisations.

Tripti Agarwal

Vice President, Analytics and Insights, P&G

With this framework in place, the volunteers communicated that the first working session would focus on the "Who" and "What", while the second and last working session would be dedicated to the "How". P&G also went on to summarise the considerations

that go into each component, such as the criteria for choosing one's target audience and the characteristics of a good marketing message.

This helped to place the SSA and the volunteers on the same page, allowing AMKFSC to better frame their ideas in terms of marketing concepts and understand jargon that was later used by volunteers. Both volunteers and the SSA were also aligned from the get-go on the meeting agenda and how the end solution and deliverable would look like.



Recall that in Chapter 2, we mentioned that one criterion for prioritising suitable skills-based volunteering projects using the 2x2 matrix is the amount of background information or context that your SSA needs to provide to the volunteers.

Project discovery ("discovery") is the process for volunteers to find out all the important and relevant information about the challenge that the SSA wishes to address. This is to:

- Ensure that the volunteers have an in-depth understanding of the SSA's needs; and
- Ensure that the volunteers can be very focused in their approach, and avoid abortive work later.

An effective discovery can also be highly motivating for volunteers as they learn more about the SSA's work.

Discovery usually starts off with a call or meeting between the volunteers and the project owner cum manager (from the functional department) of the SSA. The SSA should send over relevant documents prior to the session so that the volunteers can refer to them during the session or review them ahead of time if possible.



You may wish to refer to this checklist to structure your discovery session:



Understanding the project objectives

- What are the success measures for the project?
- What is the timeline that the project needs to be delivered by? Can this be broken up into phases?



Understand stakeholders

- Who is involved in the project team and what are their roles/stakes in the project?
- Who is not involved in the project team but has a stake in the project? Should they be involved?
- Who is the SSA's decision maker who will sign off on the project?
- Are there any internal dynamics that the volunteers should be aware of?



Understand the content/subject matter

- How is the current process done? What are the key documents relating to the current process?
- What has been done or tried before? Surface any past documents for the project team to refer to.
- What are the key challenges in this subject/project area that the SSA has previously experienced, if any?
- What are some key risks to the project?
- Have you come across any best practices or examples from other organisations that you would like the volunteers to refer to?
- Are there any relevant sectoral guidelines or documents (such as the NCSS sector salary guidelines for HR projects, or fundraising guidelines under the Charities Act)?



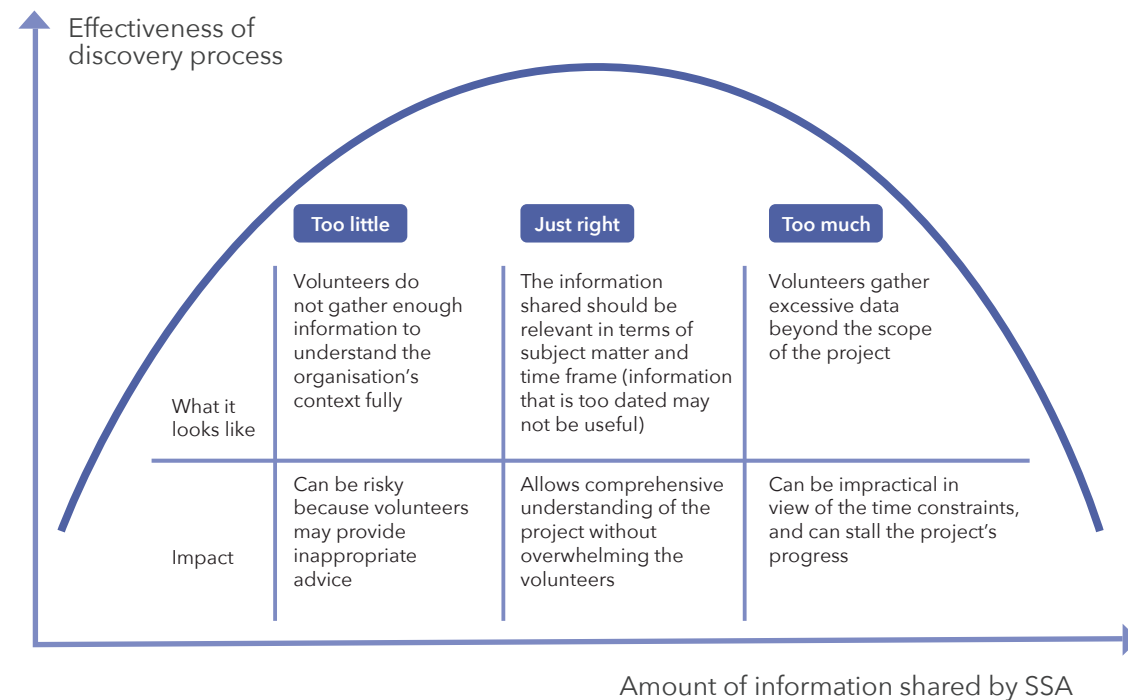
Understanding the resources

- How will the SSA implement the deliverables of the project? Does the SSA require assistance from the volunteers to implement the project (e.g. volunteers to train the staff to use the deliverables)?
- Are there any resources (e.g. manpower, budget etc) that need to be secured in order to implement the deliverable of the project?

How much discovery is needed?

A common question in this process is “How much discovery is needed? What is too much or too little?”

What is too little or too much discovery?



Too little: if organisation only provided this information



Just right: all this information is relevant and useful for the volunteers

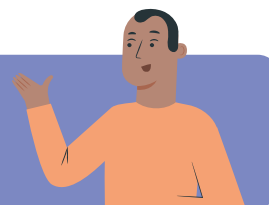
Too much

- Social media platforms used
- Brand identity and visuals
- Areas SSA wants to improve in

- The fact that their social media is managed by volunteers, who may not have professional graphic design skills
- Previous analysis of key target audience for social media
- Organisational guidelines regarding social media posts

- Detailed assessment of their mass media (e.g. TV, radio) campaign effectiveness
- Previous social media audit done 5 years ago

Here's an illustration of a project to develop a social media marketing plan for the SSA.



TIP



Depending on the nature of the project, sometimes more discovery is needed after the first session. For example, interviews may be needed to be carried out with internal stakeholders, volunteers or clients. Ensure sufficient time is allocated to this. It is better to extend the project timeline to have a robust discovery, than to do insufficient discovery and realise that the project recommendations at the end are unsuitable as a result.

After the initial discovery, the volunteers and SSA may use the opportunity to refine their deliverables, having had a clearer understanding of the work required. For example, if the volunteers realise after discovery that the key target audience profile is significantly different across the different social media platforms used, they may propose to develop a separate plan for each platform. The volunteers may also request for further documents to be sent over for their reading.

Best practice for discovery

1

An ideal length of the discovery session is usually about 1-1.5 hours.

2

Skills-based volunteers are usually more focused on understanding 'Why do you want to do this', 'What are you trying to achieve' and 'How does this fit into the larger picture for the SSA' through the discovery. This helps SSAs to clarify their intentions and refine their deliverables.

3

You can work with the volunteers to co-curate the discovery by discussing with volunteers whether what is provided is sufficient or what else they need to know. Often, if volunteers feel they need certain pieces of information or more context, they will also ask if it is available.

4

Some volunteers are more experienced in working on skills-based volunteering projects, while others are less so. As an SSA, you may need to be more proactive in providing information if the volunteers have not done skills-based volunteering before.



CASE STUDY

Providing sufficient contextual information to volunteers during project discovery



Blossom Seeds, which operates a SG Cares Volunteer Centre (VC), worked with Visa on a project to attract and retain younger volunteer leaders.

Blossom Seeds provided comprehensive information to the Visa volunteers during project discovery, including:

- Objectives of their project scope
- How this project fits into Blossom Seeds' strategic goals/priorities
- Current status of the project
- What is working well, and what the pain points are
- What has been done to address the challenges so far

This helped to provide sufficient background to the volunteers, as well as explain some local context that the volunteers required.

The volunteers helped Blossom Seeds to develop sample interview questions, email templates and introduced the SSA to tools such as LinkedIn that it could use to recruit younger volunteers. They also refined Blossom Seed's volunteer feedback form so that it could gather more useful feedback to understand gaps in the volunteer experience, in order to better retain volunteers.

How the SSA benefitted: The project helped the SSA to enhance its volunteer management practices and processes to better engage younger volunteers.

Skills-based volunteers give non-profit organisations access to a range of knowledge that might not be easily accessible within their own organisation, and in turn, skills-based volunteering gives volunteers the chance to put their professional and personal abilities to use in a new setting.

Pow Lay Kuan
Director, Blossom Seeds



C Project Planning

Good project planning is essential to ensure that the project keeps to its timeline. By doing the project planning after discovery, the volunteers will have a better sense of how much material they have to work with and how much time they need to spend on the project.

There are 3 key parts to project planning:

1. Setting milestones for delivery

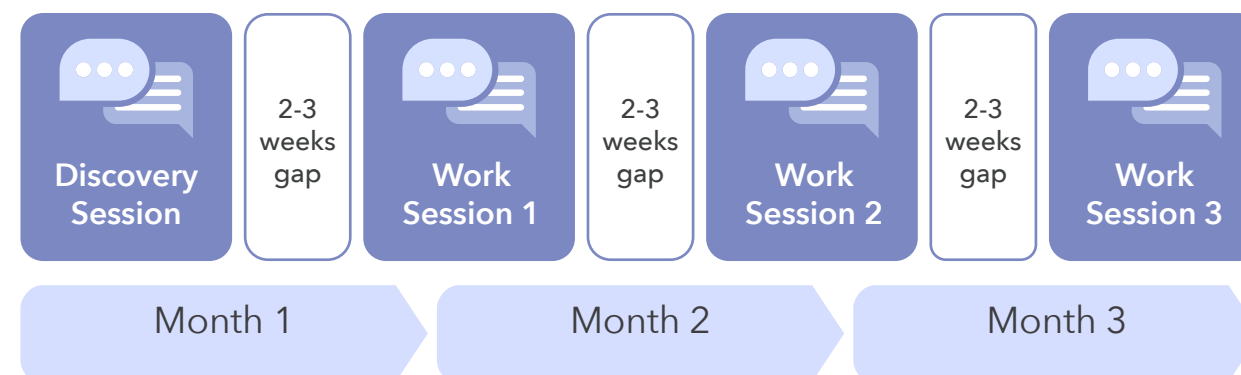
2. Aligning expectations

3. Addressing risks



1 Setting milestones for delivery

- Set out a plan for the number of work sessions over the course of the project.
 - Identify start and end dates.
 - Discuss with the volunteers how many work sessions they think they will need to complete the deliverables. Plan for each work session to be about 1.5-2 hours each, with about 2-3 weeks in between, to keep the momentum going and to give both the SSA and volunteers sufficient time to work on the tasks. If more time is needed, you may need to negotiate on the end date or on having more frequent sessions.
 - A Gantt chart can be a helpful tool to help plan your sessions.



2

Aligning expectations

The following areas should be covered:

Expectations of what to be covered in each milestone/ work session



Communication channels (form of communication and response times)



Division of roles and responsibilities between SSA and volunteers



What to do when things fall out of alignment



How confidentiality-related issues should be managed, with reference to the non-disclosure agreement that volunteers signed (if any)



TIP



When working with a team of volunteers, it is best for the team to identify a strong volunteer lead to coordinate among the volunteers and to drive the project from the volunteer end.

- An ideal profile for the lead is someone of mid-seniority, with good project management skills, and able to work with both junior and senior team members and the SSA.

When working with a corporate, the corporate should identify the lead volunteer; however if your team comprises volunteers from different organisations, then the SSA needs to facilitate the identification process.

CASE STUDY

Ensuring volunteers are aligned with the SSA on the scope of work and deliverables



An SSA faced cultural differences as the volunteers were from another country. Hence, the volunteers took a longer time to understand the SSA's needs, and managed to align on the deliverables after the second working session. One useful practice was that the volunteers sent the draft deliverables ahead of time, which gave time for clarifications and re-working between meetings.

The SSA volunteer manager was very patient with the volunteers and, over time, became more aware of the contextual terms she used and broke down the project needs in simpler, more straightforward ways to help them better understand the existing workflows.

Through this experience, both the SSA and volunteers realised the importance of onboarding and devoting more time to ensuring that volunteers fully understand the scope of work and organisation's context, before starting the delivery stage.



3

Addressing risks

The Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0 has a useful section on how to identify, assess and mitigate risks. The table below lists out some of the common risks specific to skills-based volunteering and suggests some preventive strategies. SSAs and volunteers are encouraged to be open about discussing the risks before the project begins and should put in place preventive mechanisms at the start.

Type of Risk	Prevention Strategy
Project risks - Project scope starts to change beyond intended objective - Project is delayed - Expectations of deliverables are not aligned - Volunteer turnover or volunteers drop out - Negative collaboration experience (For volunteers and SSA staff)	- Before project starts: → Refer to scoping document to clarify scope and expected deliverables → Agree on roles and responsibilities → Recap and agree on timeline and commitment period - Regular check-ins based on project milestones and conduct mid-point review with volunteers - Seek open feedback during check-ins
Confidentiality risks - Leakage of sensitive personal data or confidential information which can cause significant harm to an individual or organisation - Misuse of personal data during and post project - Data loss during and post project - Personal data is published without clearance or consent - Data is retained post project - Release of organisation's confidential information - Publicity of project without clearance Please refer to the Appendix for tips on managing personal data in your skills-based volunteering projects.	- Get volunteers to sign Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) - Remind all staff and volunteers involved of the personal data protection requirements under the law - Ensure that the skills-based volunteering project lead is familiar with the organisation's data protection and management policies - Mask personal data before sharing with relevant stakeholders (e.g. volunteers) - Ensure data is backed up and recovery policies are in place before the project commences - Remind volunteers that they should seek clearance and consent from the relevant parties for any public communications, including media consent from service users - Remind and observe that all relevant project members delete all personal data at the end of the project

Cost risks Out-of-pocket expenses	- Clearly indicate in Volunteer Agreement that incidentals are to be borne by each party that incurs it - Indicate cap in Volunteer Agreement on any claims for liabilities - Seek agreement from parties involved before incurring any costs
Intellectual Property (IP)* Risks - Ownership of background/ foreground IP - Continued use of IP post project * IP refers to "creations of the mind, such as inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce" (World Intellectual Property Organisation). Hence IP issues only arise in certain types of projects, such as where artwork or designs are created.	- Indicate in Volunteer Agreement: → What is considered background IPs (knowledge and assets shared by each party at start of project) → Who owns the foreground IP (knowledge or assets created through the project. This can be owned by either one party or by both) → How knowledge or assets created from the project can be used post-project (for non-commercial use only/free to adapt for any use but to credit creators/etc)
Conflict of Interest	- Get volunteers to sign a Code of Conduct which indicates that they should avoid any situations where there is a conflict of interest - In projects where products or solutions will be recommended and purchased, the role of volunteers in terms of recommending products and solutions should be made clear upfront and any conflict of interest should be declared. Where possible, SSAs should avoid selecting companies for the volunteer opportunity which are likely to end up as potential vendors for the project - A clear, objective decision matrix should be produced to justify any recommendations
For a more detailed guide on how to identify and manage risks, please refer to the Charity Council's Enterprise Risk Management Toolkit for Charities and Institutions of a Public Character (IPCs).	

CASE STUDY

Avoiding potential conflict of interest between SSA and skills-based volunteers



Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH) planned to develop a donor and volunteer management database to consolidate its donor and volunteer data, in order to enable analysis of its donor and volunteer profiles. One of its corporate volunteers introduced Thoughtworks, a technology consultancy, to help SAMH develop a roadmap for this new system. The Thoughtworks volunteers were familiar with the work of SSAs given their past experience designing IT systems for the social sector, and possessed relevant skills such as in design thinking and IT. Hence, SAMH felt that Thoughtworks would be a good match for this project.

Given that Thoughtworks is also in the IT industry and provides software solutions and systems to clients, SAMH was careful to avoid any potential conflict of interest. Thoughtworks and SAMH signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement, and proceeded to discuss the scope and deliverables of the project with skills-based volunteers from Thoughtworks. It was established in the scope of engagement that Thoughtworks would only be involved in guiding SAMH through the process of planning for the system, and not in the selection of the software or implementation of the system subsequently.



ThoughtWorks leads SAMH management in an engaging focus group discussion

Thoughtworks engaged SAMH management and staff through a series of focus group discussions to better understand the existing and "to-be" processes and policies for donor and volunteer management using the Agile methodology. They then proposed a plan of action for the system development to the management team, including recommending which areas to prioritise and which areas to undertake in a later phase.

This helped to ensure that SAMH management and staff were aligned internally and were able to make more informed decisions on the new system.

After the skills-based volunteers completed the project, SAMH independently assessed the available IT solutions on NCSS' Tech-and-GO! scheme and applied for funding to implement the donor and volunteer management system.

How the SSA benefitted: The project paved the way for SAMH to introduce an integrated donor and volunteer management system, which enabled it to take a data driven approach to engage and retain donors and volunteers more effectively.

For SSAs looking to adopt IT solutions, you may tap on Tech-and-GO! (TNG).

TNG is a one-stop technology hub funded by the Community Capability Trust to support SSAs along their digitalisation journey, develop seamless tech-enabled user experiences, and build a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

TNG provides several tech and consultancy grants to SSAs. SSAs may tap on the available TNG grants to improve the quality and efficiency of social services and support the sector's service plans. More information on TNG and the available grants are available [here](#).



2

DELIVERY

There are two key components of the delivery stage:

1

Drafting and finalisation

2

Training or knowledge transfer to the SSA

1

Drafting and finalisation

Drafting is typically an iterative process where volunteers produce a first draft of the deliverables, and then work with the SSA to get more information or clarify the context further, and make the necessary tweaks.

The following are some good practices to adopt during drafting:



Regular work sessions. Usually, there will need to be regular work sessions during this period between the volunteers and the project team in the SSA, to provide volunteers with any information they need and also to keep the project on track.



Work in between sessions. Work by both parties in the 2-3 weeks in between sessions ensures that time during the work session can be spent more effectively.

- In between work sessions, it is also useful for SSAs to reflect on the discussions and advice from volunteers during the previous work session, and SSAs may even use this time to trial possible solutions.



Initial draft. To avoid abortive work, it is good practice for the volunteers to present the first draft to the SSA early in the process, usually during the first or second work session. The SSA should deliver feedback in a timely manner. It is good practice to show the decision maker the draft at this point, so that his or her comments can be incorporated.

CASE STUDY

Giving timely feedback to smoothen the delivery stage



An SSA was matched with a team of corporate volunteers to co-design a roadmap for development of an engagement platform for volunteers. The SSA was expecting the roadmap to include best practices on structuring a volunteer-driven community platform as well as features that would enable volunteers to engage with one another and to encourage active volunteering. However, during the first work session, the team of volunteers started proposing software solutions instead. The SSA realised there was a misalignment of understanding as they felt that the solutions proposed by the volunteers did not meet the SSA's requirements.

The SSA representatives promptly surfaced this misalignment to Empact, an intermediary which curates skills-based volunteering projects between SSAs and volunteers, immediately after the first work session. Empact then stepped in to address the misalignment with the corporate volunteers in a tactful manner by:

1. Appreciating their efforts
2. Seeking to understand the volunteers' thought process and intention for the proposed solutions
3. Explaining why the proposed solutions might not work well due to the constraints/limitations of the SSA
4. Proposing an alternative workaround and seek consensus from both sides

The outcome of the project was positive as the volunteers were able to provide tangible advice to meet the SSA's needs. The working relationship ended on a good note and both parties looked forward to continued partnerships in the near future.





Unforeseen changes. It is important to understand that volunteers may have last minute work commitments. Hence, it is important to remind volunteers on the date of the meeting as well as the pre-work required, and be flexible about changing the dates if required.



Finalisation process. When the deliverables are complete, agree on the final version and the decision maker should sign off on them.

TIP



Managing Volunteers Challenges

What can you do if the volunteers are unresponsive, or constantly reschedule meetings?

- First have an open conversation with them to understand their constraints and see if you can address them together. For example, perhaps they prefer to have meetings nearer the end of the week as they are less busy then, rather than at the start.
- Seek alignment and commitment to the scope of work and delivery timelines. Reiterate the importance of this project to the SSA and help them understand how their behaviour affects the SSA.
- If this recurs, or if you cannot reach the volunteers at all, get in touch with their point of contact that you liaised with during the recruitment stage (if they are corporate or organisational volunteers). Document all your attempts to contact the volunteers.
- As a last resort, you may wish to end the volunteer relationship (if they are individual volunteers) or ask for a replacement of volunteers (if they are organisational volunteers).

As a volunteer manager, you may sometimes also have to resolve conflicts between the volunteers and/or staff on the project. Refer to the Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0 for a Quick Guide to Managing Conflicts.



2



Training or knowledge transfer to the SSA

- The project does not end after the volunteers have submitted their deliverables or recommendations. The SSA staff have to take over to ensure that the deliverables are sustainable and can continue to be used within the SSA even after the volunteers have left. Otherwise, the deliverables may not end up being adopted after the project ends.
- For example, if volunteers came up with a fundraising strategy, then it should be presented to the fundraising team together with the next steps. If volunteers came up with a HR policy, they can go one step further to advise the HR department on how to communicate the policy to the rest of the staff.
- It is critical to get the volunteers to train the staff to use their deliverables or to integrate it into their everyday work. Training should be scheduled for key staff and Board members who will be using the deliverables. Whether the volunteers should be involved in conducting the training should be discussed and agreed upon with them.



CASE STUDY

Follow-through support by volunteers to ensure successful implementation



Catholic Welfare Services (CWS) collaborated on a skills-based volunteering project with Visa. The project involved designing a survey to be administered to CWS staff to understand their manpower gaps and needs on the ground.

At the final working session, the team discussed the plan for rolling out the survey and the next steps. Through this, they realised that CWS required some assistance to analyse their survey results. This tied in well with the volunteers' skill sets and experience as they had recently concluded their own employee survey and worked on its analysis. Both parties agreed on a possible follow-up project in the area of data analysis after the closure of the original project.

How the SSA benefitted: The employee survey would enable CWS to better understand its existing manpower gaps and how staff roles can be redesigned to enable volunteers to support them in delivering services.

We have come to the end of this chapter.
We will cover project closure in the next chapter.



SUPPORTING AND RECOGNISING SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERS

5

Skills-based volunteers need to be actively supported to ensure their experience is a fruitful one for both the SSA and the volunteers.



SUPPORT DURING THE VOLUNTEERING PROCESS

Before we dive into project closure, let us look into supporting your volunteers during the project. Given the complexity of skills-based volunteering, project-related support is critical. Here are some additional ways you can actively support them during the project implementation:

- Respect volunteers' time. Given that volunteers may be using their working hours to volunteer, you need to be mindful of their work schedules. Adhere to agreed timelines, including the end date of the volunteer engagement. If the timeline needs to be extended, do communicate with the volunteers and mutually agree on a revised timeline.
- Come prepared for work sessions and ensure prompt follow up on agreed tasks at the end of each session.
- Avoid constant changing of work session dates, as this may send a signal that the project is deprioritised.
- Respond promptly to requests from the volunteers based on the agreed mode of communication and response time.

For more tips on supporting volunteer engagement and development, please refer to the [Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0](#).



POST-VOLUNTEERING APPRECIATION AND SHOWCASING IMPACT

This section covers project closure, the third part of the project management process outlined in the previous chapter. Project closure comprises 2 parts: appreciating your volunteers, and evaluating your project. Project evaluation will be covered in the next chapter.

Volunteer appreciation is important to thank the volunteers for their commitment to strengthen your organisation. There are many ways to do so (please refer to the Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0 for more examples) but here are some ways that may be especially appreciated by skills-based volunteers:

- A letter of appreciation from the SSA's CEO or Executive Director to the volunteers' organisation or company. This may encourage the company to continue their partnership with the SSA or explore further collaboration.
- Give out volunteer awards or certificates of recognition that they can list on their CV.
- Have a celebratory event to share project highlights and impact.
- Post the partnership on your SSA's social media (LinkedIn), website or in its annual reports. Posting on social media and tagging the volunteers might attract other skills-based volunteers to step forth.
- Provide positive feedback and testimonials to the volunteers' company or organisation, naming specific volunteers and their contributions
- Keep them posted on the implementation progress/ outcomes so that they can see the impact they have made. For example, if the volunteers helped to develop a social media calendar for the SSA, you can send them a report of the social media posts and related statistics, to see how the volunteers' feedback helped improve reach or engagement.



It is important to note that the relationship does not end when the volunteer opportunity is over. Skills-based volunteers can become powerful advocates or even long-term partners for your organisation. Corporate volunteers, for example, may be able to influence their companies to volunteer in other areas, including in service-based opportunities. Here are some ways you can consider to maintain the relationship with your volunteers:

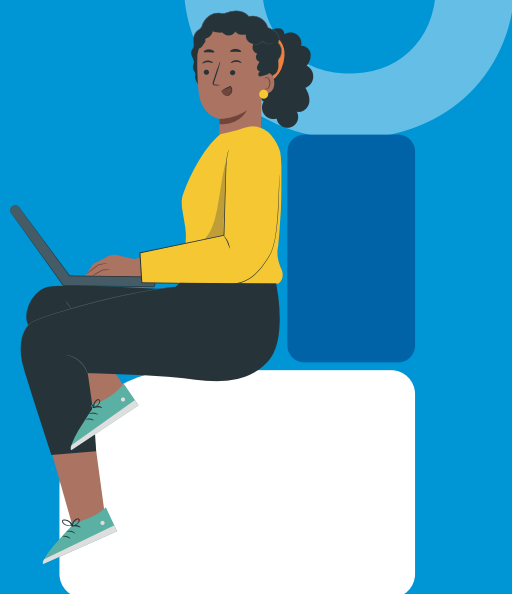
Here are some ways you can consider to maintain the relationship with your volunteers:

- Create a customised mailing list for skills-based volunteers with curated opportunities that are more relevant to them
- Invite them to follow your SSA on social media
- Invite them to volunteer networking events or other events by your SSA
- Invite them to other volunteering opportunities



EVALUATING YOUR SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Evaluating your skills-based volunteering engagement will help you to identify strengths and areas for improvement in future projects. It also enables SSAs and volunteers to measure and showcase the impact of the project or engagement. For SSAs, this will help you get buy-in from management to continue tapping on skills-based volunteering as a way to build organisational capability. For volunteers, it helps them see the impact of their work and motivates them to continue volunteering in future.



There are three levels of evaluation with different levels of complexity. In determining the extent of evaluation to carry out, you should consider the scale of your project and what you are trying to learn from the evaluation.

Type of metrics	Input	Output	Outcome
What you want to learn from the evaluation	Quantify the resources invested into the project	Understand the SSA and volunteers' satisfaction with the project, and whether the deliverables were achieved	Understand whether the deliverables were able to make an impact on the SSA's organisational capability
When to evaluate	At the end of the engagement	At the end of the engagement	6-12 months after the engagement ends

For example, if the scope of the project is small or your SSA is new to skills-based volunteering, you may just want to understand whether the project has met its immediate deliverables and whether both the volunteers and SSA staff were satisfied with the experience. For larger projects scopes or SSAs looking to scale up skills-based volunteering in your organisation, you may want to spend more time designing a way to measure their impact on organisational capability.

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS FOR EACH TYPE OF EVALUATION

Here are some examples of indicators for each type of evaluation. This list is non-exhaustive, and the specific indicators will depend on your project.

Input metrics

To quantify the resources put into the project. These are quantitative measures.

- Number of SSA employees engaged through the project
- Number of skills-based volunteers engaged through the project
- Number of skilled volunteer hours contributed (including hours for preparation and discussion)

Output metrics

To understand whether deliverables were achieved.

- **Value of the skills-based volunteers' service.** There are several ways to calculate this:
 - Use a standard figure for the value of skills-based volunteering - \$X per hour (determined by your SSA)
 - Use the approximate hourly wage of an SSA employee of the same job level
 - Estimate the cost if your SSA had to engage a professional to complete the project instead
- **Satisfaction**
 - Were both volunteers and SSA satisfied with the experience?
 - Did the volunteers feel that the process ran smoothly? Were the volunteers sufficiently engaged throughout the process?
 - Was the project completed on time?
 - Was the SSA satisfied with their learnings from the project?
 - Were the volunteers satisfied with their learning from participating in the project?
 - Did the volunteers feel that they made an impact on the organisation?
- **Deliverables**
 - Were the deliverables of the project achieved?
 - Did the SSA feel that the deliverables met their intended objectives?

Outcome metrics

To understand the impact of the project on the organisation’s capability.
The table below contains some examples for each domain of the NCSS Organisational Health Framework for Social Services (OHFSS). The specific indicators used would depend on the project:

Domain	Examples of indicators
Strategy & Leadership	- Did the project lead to a clearer vision/strategy for the SSA? - Is the leadership team more aligned on the organisation’s strategy?
Governance	- Did the project reduce the SSA’s compliance risks? - Is the Board more actively involved in overseeing all compliance areas of the SSA? - Did governance of the SSA improve?
People	- Did employee/volunteer engagement improve? - Did employee retention rates improve?
Finances	- Did the project contribute to financial sustainability for the SSA? - Did the project lead to cost savings? - Did the project improve the SSA’s cash flow?
Digitalisation	- Did the project improve productivity for the SSA? - Did the project lead to more services being digitalised? - Did the project lead to better use of data for decision making?
Communications & Partnerships	- Did the SSA’s reach on social media increase? - Did the project lead to an increase in donations? - Did the project lead to greater public awareness of the SSA?
User-Centric Services	- Did the project give the organisation a better understanding of its users? - Did the project lead to increased user satisfaction?

- What are some tools you can use to gather feedback to evaluate your skills-based volunteering project?
- Feedback form on the process/experience from individual volunteers, and at organisation (e.g. corporate) level
 - After action review on the project
 - Interviews or focus group discussions with volunteers, SSA staff in the functional department, and senior leadership of the SSA
 - Time sheet tracker and dollar-value calculator (to calculate the output metrics)

CASE STUDY

Evaluating a skills-based volunteering project through qualitative and quantitative methods



The SINDA Book Wizards Programme is a community-based reading programme for children aged 4 to 7, aimed at improving the cognitive literacy of pre-school children and build an interest in reading from a young age. The programme is conceptualised and designed by SINDA volunteers who are trained early childhood development and curriculum development professionals. They ensured that the programme was user-centric and age appropriate.

During the 16-week programme, skills-based volunteers designed two evaluations to assess the progress made by the children in their reading abilities. The first evaluation is conducted at the mid-point of the programme, in week 8. During this evaluation, the service-based volunteers paired with the child check on his or her progress using a series of quantitative and qualitative questions developed by the skills-based volunteers. The skills-based volunteers then review the results with SINDA's volunteer management team. This is to identify the child’s weak areas so that they can be focused on for the remainder of the programme, and also to ensure that the programme objectives are met.

The second evaluation is at the end of the programme, where an individual performance assessment is conducted for each child that measures the improvement of the literacy skills of the child and the progress he or she has made during the programme.

How the SSA benefitted: The skills-based volunteers ensured that the design of the reading programme was appropriate for the children and would be effective in improving their reading ability. They also helped to design a robust evaluation plan for the programme such that each child's weak areas could be identified and focused on, and to improve the programme to better serve the children.

To evaluate the skills-based volunteers' experience, SINDA conducts both qualitative and quantitative assessments. **Qualitative assessments** are done through focus group discussions, volunteer mentoring, and micro engagements. Some of the questions are:

1. How was your experience during the orientation/training session?
2. Do you feel that you have a clear understanding of your role and responsibilities as a volunteer?
3. Have you had any difficulties or challenges while volunteering? If so, what were they?
4. Did you feel supported by the organisation/project throughout your volunteer experience?
5. Do you feel that your contributions made a positive impact on the organisation/project?

The **quantitative assessments** include questions such as:

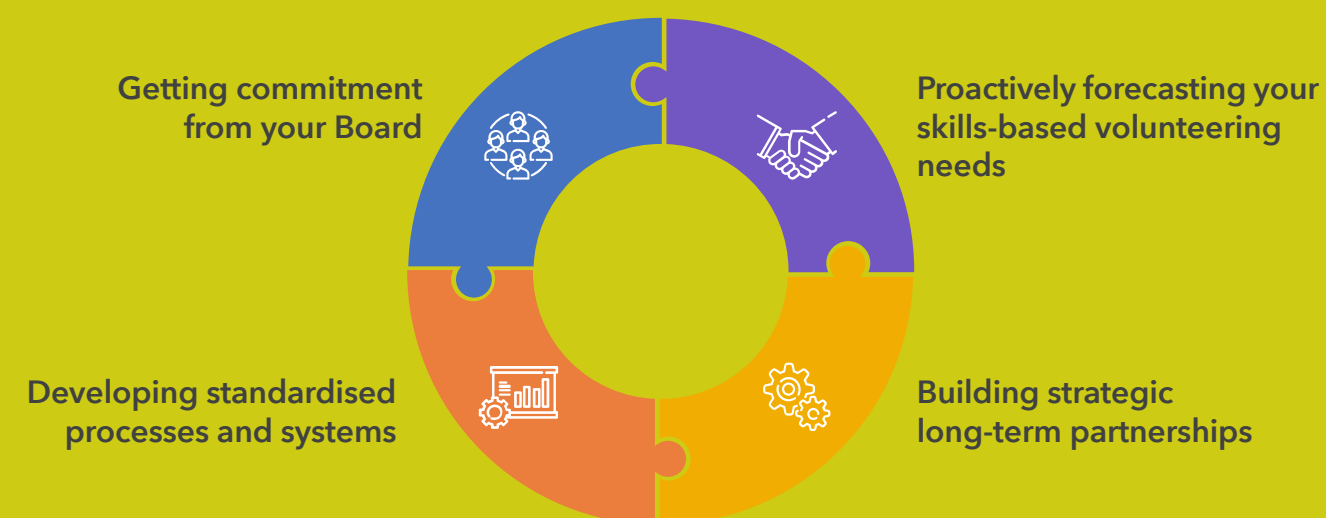
1. How many hours did you volunteer in total?
2. How many people did you interact with while volunteering?
3. How many times did you encounter any issues or difficulties while volunteering?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your overall volunteer experience?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied were you with the support and guidance provided by the organisation/project?
6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to volunteer for this organisation/project again in the future?

The results of the volunteer evaluations help SINDA to scope the volunteer roles, provide the necessary training and resources for volunteers and to improve its volunteer management processes.



SCALING UP SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING IN YOUR ORGANISATION

Once you have learnt how to run a successful skills-based volunteering project, chances are that you will not look back. Though it takes some time and practice to learn how to manage skills-based volunteering at first, it is much easier to run it a second, and third time. By scaling up skills-based volunteering in your organisation, you ensure that skills-based volunteering becomes a sustained part of your efforts to improve your organisational capability as your organisation grows.



There are 4 key strategies to scaling up skills-based volunteering in your organisation's volunteer involvement strategy:

Getting commitment from your Board

Proactively forecasting your skills-based volunteering needs

Developing standardised processes and systems

Building strategic long-term partnerships

GETTING COMMITMENT FROM YOUR BOARD

Your Board can become the strongest advocates for skills-based volunteering within your SSA if they believe in its value. They can help attract new volunteers to participate in skills-based volunteering, thus enabling scaling up within the organisation. Conversely, if there is no support for skills-based volunteering at the Board level, they may not approve the recommendations from projects. Even if you manage to get projects completed, the longer-term implementation and delivery will be hard to push through.

How can you engage the Board, and get them to buy into the value of skills-based volunteering? Here are some ideas:

- Pilot a few skills-based volunteering projects, measure their outcomes, and showcase their impact to the Board.
- Tap on the Board to help make connections to a wider network of potential skills-based volunteers or corporates.
- Involve the Board in the project(s). Involve them in identifying and scoping strategic projects. Consult them as stakeholders in the discovery stage, where relevant. Give them opportunities to observe the volunteers in project meetings.
- Where appropriate, invite the volunteers to co-present their deliverables to the Board and address any questions management may have.
- Calculate and showcase the economic value of skills-based volunteering to your organisation (refer to “Evaluate your skills-based volunteer engagements” for methods to carry this out)



PROACTIVELY FORECASTING YOUR SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING NEEDS

Gather your organisation's skills-based volunteering needs about 6 to 12 months ahead of time, to enable you to plan for the year ahead and secure volunteer commitment early. It also enables your SSA to leverage skills-based volunteers as a regular resource to augment your manpower.

You can do this through two ways:

- Check in with departments to find out what is on their workplan and identify suitable projects from there
- Check in with departments for their wishlist. In this case, it is things they may have wanted to do but did not have time to or did not know how to go about doing

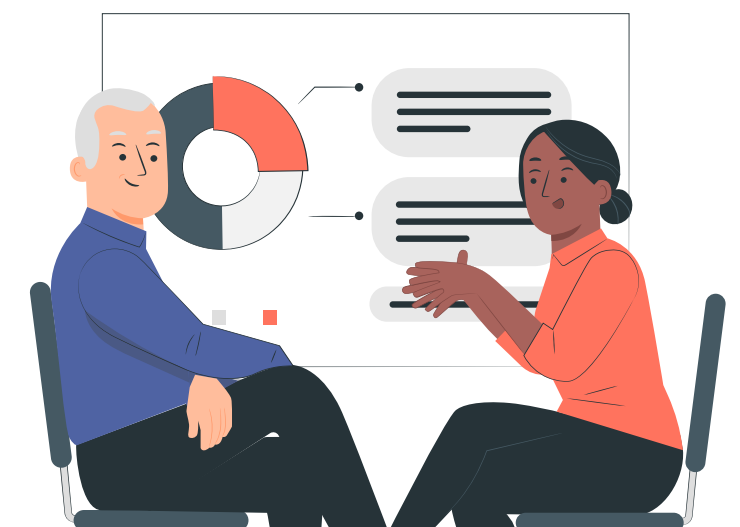
You will then follow the steps in Chapter 2: Conducting Needs Assessment (i.e. identifying, assessing suitability and refining scope of projects) to narrow down your options.

In planning for outreach to potential skills-based volunteers, especially from corporates, it is useful to consider their work cycles and avoid busy times of the year. The year-end period is also when many volunteers are on holiday, so do plan for more time to get the project completed.

TIP



SSAs can also learn more from existing skills-based volunteers about new ways of working that can enhance your productivity, such as omni-channel marketing or artificial intelligence tools, and how such tools can be applied to the organisation. This will help you identify new needs that you may not have known you had.



DEVELOPING STANDARDISED PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

Having a standardised process and system can be very helpful to scale skills-based volunteering quickly in your organisation by reducing the inertia to start new projects. It also provides consistency in project management even when different staff are involved. The templates and steps provided in this guide can be a good starting point, and you can tweak them to suit your needs.

It may be useful to develop processes for the following areas of skills-based volunteer management:

- Gathering needs across departments
- Needs assessment (including selection of projects and scoping)
- Recruitment of volunteers (including templates for communications to potential volunteers, potential channels to tap on, application forms)
- Selection of volunteers (including interview templates, criteria for selection)
- Project onboarding
- Project planning and management
- Recognising and celebrating of volunteers
- Evaluation of projects (including feedback form templates, outcome indicators at whole of organisation level, documentation of learning points)
- Knowledge transfer to staff (including knowledge management of learning points from the project, post-project sharing sessions)

BUILDING STRATEGIC LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

Lastly, you may want to build strategic, long-term partnerships with organisations (e.g. corporates or schools). Some examples of multi-year collaborations include different projects with multiple departments in the SSA, or partnerships with a mix of service-based, events-based and skills-based volunteering.

The benefits of such partnerships are:

They provide an assured source of skills-based volunteers, which saves you time engaging multiple organisations to fill different projects.

With a longer-term partner, you can invest more time at the onset to share with them about the SSA so that they have a more in-depth understanding of your programmes and challenges. The organisation will then be more familiar with your SSA and will be able to help you identify the most relevant volunteers.

It enables larger projects to be undertaken by breaking them down and conducted in phases by different groups of volunteers.

With more projects under the partnership, you can do a more in-depth evaluation of the impact of skills-based volunteering over a longer period of collaboration.

As such partnerships are more strategic in nature, your Board or senior management would ideally be involved in the identification of and engagement with potential partners. You can formalise the partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

If you are able to effectively manage skills-based volunteering to improve organisational capability as part of your overall strategy, it becomes more likely that your skills-based volunteers will want to contribute repeatedly, eventually even converting to long-term volunteers to serve on a more sustained basis, or even volunteering to serve on your Board or Committees. Such progression of skills-based volunteers is remarkable and a recognition of the SSA's maturity in managing skills-based volunteers.

CASE STUDY

Success factors for scaling up skills-based volunteering



CampusImpact has deployed skills-based volunteering widely across the organisation, in areas such as HR, IT, fundraising, legal support, and marketing. Initially, CampusImpact tapped on skills-based volunteering to augment its limited manpower, but has since turned it into a strategic way to strengthen the organisation's capability. There are several factors that led to the successful scaling up of skills-based volunteering throughout the organisation.

The key success factor is support from the management team and Board of Directors, who recognise the value and varied talents of skills-based volunteers and are open-minded in accepting suggestions brought to the table. The second is getting staff buy-in on how skills-based volunteers are able to complement their work and help to improve their programmes, thus multiplying the impact of their work.

CampusImpact recognises that it can sometimes be challenging to forecast skills-based volunteering needs accurately due to the fluid needs on the ground. Nonetheless, where possible, the volunteer manager will forecast its upcoming key milestones or events, such as an upcoming fundraising Children's Day Dinner, and the relevant skills-based volunteering opportunities that may arise. As an SG Cares Volunteer Centre, it also collates and monitors the needs from other agencies so that it can help recruit the appropriate volunteers.

Over the years, CampusImpact has entered into strategic, long-term partnerships with corporates such as The Learning Lab. The Learning Lab has supported CampusImpact for more than 2 years in co-planning the curriculum for values-led activities, and delivering some of these planned activities to the children that CampusImpact serves. Such long-term partnerships provide greater sustainability and certainty of volunteer commitment, enabling CampusImpact to better plan for its services.

These factors - 1) support of the management and Board, 2) staff buy-in, 3) proactively forecasting skills-based volunteering needs, and 4) building strategic long-term partnerships - have enabled CampusImpact to harness skills-based volunteering widely to strengthen the organisation.



Lower primary classroom set up and materials prepared by The Learning Lab volunteers

CONCLUSION

Skills-based volunteering is a powerful way to harness the resources of individuals and organisations to build capabilities for and improve the organisational health of SSAs. This Toolkit serves as a compilation of resources for SSAs interested in embarking on skills-based volunteering.

Nonetheless, volunteer management, whether skills-based, service-based or events-based, is an applied practice that cannot be boiled down just to templates and standard operating procedures. Along the way, you may develop your own best practices or adapt the materials to suit your SSA's needs or your volunteers' needs better. We encourage you to share these learnings within your SSA, with other SSAs, and with us at Volunteer_Resource@ncss.gov.sg, so that we can collectively tap on the power of skills-based volunteering to help us serve our communities better.



APPENDICES

Please [click here](#) for editable versions of the templates



POSSIBLE SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS FOR CAPABILITY BUILDING

This is a list of possible areas, mapped onto each domain and sub-domain in the NCSS OHFSS. The list is not exhaustive but is meant to give an idea of the practical help that skills-based volunteers can provide.

Domain	Sub-domain	Project areas
Strategy & Leadership	Mission & Vision	- Developing a vision - Re-visioning - Aligning agency strategies with mission and vision
	Strategy Development	- Strategic planning - Goal setting
	Strategy Implementation	Action Planning
	Organisation Structure	Corporate Structure Re-organisation
	Organisation Culture	- Organisational development - Change management - Influence and motivation
Governance	Board Compliance & Composition	- Adherence to Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs - Structuring of Board committees
	Role of Board	Defining Board roles and responsibilities
	Risk Management	- Risk identification - Risk management/mitigation - Advice on Intellectual Property - Contract review - Personal data protection
People	People & Succession Planning	- HR data analysis - HR policy review - Succession planning
	Recruitment	- Talent attraction - Job redesign - Employee health and well-being
	Learning & Development	Learning and development plan
	Performance management and recognition	- Review performance management system - Compensation and Benefits
	Volunteer management	- Volunteering partnerships outreach strategy - Volunteer role redesign
	Process readiness	HR processes and procedures

Finances	Funding Sustainability	- Diversification of funding sources - Revenue generation plan - Fundraising strategy - Fundraising campaign plan - Donor management - Grant proposal budget - In-kind donation sourcing
	Financial Management	- Financial planning and analysis - Cash flow planning - Cost reduction analysis - Procurement - Reserves management - Bookkeeping - Budget preparation - Donation tracking - Financial control design - Financial control review - Grant budgeting and reporting
	Process Readiness	- Accounting system device - Budgeting process design - Financial process improvement - Donation tracking system
Digitalisation	Vision & Alignment	- Digitalisation strategy - Innovation and transformation strategy
	End-to-end Stakeholder Journeys	Stakeholder journey design
	Service Delivery	Digital tools and technology review
	Corporate/Support Functions	- IT strategy - Network setup - IT security - Database admin - IT infrastructure review
	Skills & People	Digital skillsets development plan
Communications & Partnerships	Data Strategy	- Data strategy - Data analysis - PDPA compliance - Data security and cybersecurity
	External Communication & Branding	- Communications plan - Positioning and key messages - Brand identity and guidelines - Public relations plan - Market research - Basic website design & development - Programme marketing plan - Digital marketing plan - Social media campaign - Collateral design - Media relations
	Partnership & Alliances	- Partnership strategy - Stakeholder management
	Community Involvement	- Community engagement - Government relations - Event planning and production

User-Centric Services	User Service Design	• Service renew • User needs identification • Ideation and design of new programmes • Idea validation and piloting • Operations process design • Client feedback collection
	Service Effectiveness Measurement	• Programme monitoring • Programme evaluation
	Knowledge Management	• Data management • Research strategy • Research project

SG CARES COMMUNITY NETWORK

SG Cares is a national movement dedicated to guide and support the goodwill of all who live in Singapore to better help those in need. From daily acts of kindness to volunteering together with friends, colleagues, neighbours, and others – every action matters. Together, we can all play a part, big and small, to make Singapore a more caring and inclusive home for all.

As a national movement, SG Cares provides a wide-reaching platform, known as the SG Cares Community Network, to recognise and amplify the good work and impact by like-minded individuals and organisations. The SG Cares Community Network comprises partners across different sectors such as the SG Cares Volunteer Centres (SG Cares VCs), SG Cares National Intermediaries (NIs), corporates, educational institutions, grassroots, ground-up groups, government agencies, healthcare institutions, religious organisations, social enterprises and Social Service Agencies. Partners within this network collaborate to collectively harness and optimise resources to enhance the giving ecosystem and meet the communities’ needs in a coordinated and efficient manner.

A central and key partner in the SG Cares Community Network is the SG Cares Volunteer Centre (VC), a community-based organisation appointed by MCCY to coordinate resources and volunteerism efforts at the town-level.



The SG Cares VC is a synergising node in the SG Cares Community Network, facilitating greater coordination among the partners and bridging the gap between community’s needs and available resources. There are a total of 24 SG Cares VCs appointed, with one SG Cares VC in every town in Singapore.

Role of SG Cares Volunteer Centres

The SG Cares VCs fulfil three main roles, as follows:



1

Building Volunteer Capacity

Through outreach and engagement efforts with community partners including Social Service Agencies (SSAs), SG Cares VCs have a clear understanding and oversight of the town's volunteering needs and available volunteer resources. With this knowledge, SG Cares VCs can match volunteers to areas of need, providing swift and targeted volunteer support for community partners who require volunteers for service delivery. To develop and sustain volunteers on a long-term basis, the SG Cares VCs also strive to strengthen the volunteers' capabilities and enhance their volunteering journeys.



SG Cares VC @ Kreta Ayer, operated by New Hope Community Services, worked with volunteers from the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) to engage senior beneficiaries from a senior activity centre in Kreta Ayer town.



SG Cares VC @ Sengkang, operated by AMKFSC Community Services, organised a Volunteer Leaders' Get-Together-Session to engage Volunteer Leaders residing in Sengkang and discuss potential initiatives for the town.

2

Foster Community Partnerships to Meet the Community's Needs

SG Cares VCs play the role of central nodes within the community by brokering and facilitating sustained collaborations with community partners. This allows SG Cares VCs to harness resources and allocate them in an optimised manner to meet the community needs.



For example, SG Cares VC @ Clementi collaborated with the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) to organise the "Kids' Wishlist" involving 25 BCA staff. They befriended and engaged 25 children beneficiaries through games and activities, and presented each beneficiary with a gift of their choice.



SG Cares VC @ Sembawang brought together 47 partners for "Ready, Set, GOLD 2022", a community charity walk for the town. More than 400 volunteers were deployed to encourage Healthy Active Ageing among 1,200 seniors and residents.

3

Develop Community Partners' Volunteer Management Capabilities

The enhancement of the town's volunteering ecosystem requires the commitment of all community partners to be involved in the development of their capabilities. SG Cares VCs take the lead in facilitating the sharing of resources and best practices among community partners to build the volunteer management capabilities of community partners.

For example, the SG Cares VCs organise regular networking sessions with community partners operating within their town. These sessions serve as platforms for community partners to understand more about one another's services and resources, share best practices and explore potential areas of collaboration to meet the communities' identified needs.



SG Cares VC @ Bedok organised the East Zone Cluster Meeting for community partners in Bedok town to discuss their hopes and vision for Bedok, potential plans and possible areas of collaboration. 52 participants from 27 community partners participated in this session.

SG Cares VCs also enhance the volunteer management capabilities of community partners by providing them with training and guidance. These efforts equip community partners with skills to engage, train and retain their volunteers to support service delivery.



SG Cares VC @ Bedok conducted a Volunteer Management training session for SSAs and other SG Cares VCs.

SG Cares National Intermediaries

SG Cares National Intermediaries are partners who contribute their specialised skillsets and sector-based networks to the SG Cares Movement by promoting collaboration and partnership. They work closely with SG Cares VCs and non-profit organisations (NPOs) to develop capabilities in specialised areas, encourage their members to volunteer with NPOs using their professional skills, and offer resources at affordable rates to NPOs. These national intermediaries include professional bodies such as Pro Bono SG, Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants, Chartered Secretaries Institute of Singapore, Singapore Medical Association, Singapore Nurses Association and Professional Engineers Board as well as sector champions such as Heartware Network, RSVP Singapore, and Singapore University of Social Sciences.



Pro Bono SG and SG Cares Office co-organised a hybrid seminar for SG Cares VCs and NPOs on Risk Management for volunteer managers. The session touched on legal liabilities that Volunteer Management Practitioners (VMPs) should consider through case studies and scenarios to guide VMPs through specific legal concerns.

You may visit <https://go.gov.sg/sgcaresmovement> for more information on SG Cares and the SG Cares VCs.



SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEER APPLICATION SAMPLE TEMPLATE

Basic Demographic Details

First Name: Last Name:

Last 4 characters of NRIC:

Email:

Mobile:

Your Skills

Please check any of the following areas in which you have had previous experience, expertise, or training:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Finance and accounting | ☐ Leadership |
| ☐ Human resource | ☐ Governance and management |
| ☐ Legal | ☐ User design and experience |
| ☐ Marketing and Communications | ☐ Project management |
| ☐ Technology and digitalisation | ☐ Organisational development |
| ☐ Strategy | ☐ Others: <input type="text"/> |

Please elaborate on your specific experience and/or skills in the above checked areas (e.g. under Marketing and Communications - PR, branding, social media, etc). You may also provide us your LinkedIn profile or CV instead.

Your interest

Please let us know in what way you would like to volunteer your skills with us (check all that apply):

- ☐ Support organisation’s internal/backend functions
- ☐ Provide advice and/or recommendations to organisation
- ☐ Conduct training for staff
- ☐ Mentor staff
- ☐ Others:

Availability

Please check the times when you are available to have meetings or to work on volunteer projects:

- ☐ During office hours
- ☐ After office hours
- ☐ Weekdays
- ☐ Weekends

Please state your available period: (month) to (month)

Personal Declaration

Do you have any record of criminal convictions? Yes / No *
If yes, please state: _____

Have you ever been declared bankrupt, or insolvent? Yes / No *
* *Please delete as appropriate*

Acknowledgement

I declare the information that I have provided on this form is true and correct for my voluntary experience with (SSA name). In exchange for my voluntary experience with (SSA name) I agree to the following:

- By providing my details, I understand that (SSA name) may use my details for record and reference purposes.
- If there is no suitable match to a volunteer opportunity, I consent to (SSA name) storing my application for a future opportunity, and to contact me when a relevant opportunity arises.
- I shall release and not hold or any of (SSA name) employees, servants or agents liable in any way whatsoever for any loss, bodily injury, mishap, accident and/or loss of life or property arising directly or indirectly as a result of or in connection with my voluntary participation.
- To indemnify and defend against all claims, causes of actions, damages, judgements, costs and expenses including legal expenses which may arise from my presence in the activities.

Name / Signature of Volunteer

Date:

***NOTE:** The acknowledgement clauses are merely some examples of typical clauses and are not intended as recommendations. Please use only where applicable to your agency. Do check with the relevant legal personnel in your agency if you have any questions.

SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT SAMPLE TEMPLATE

This agreement is written between _____ (SSA/Department-in-charge), _____ (volunteer’s organisation, if applicable) and _____ (volunteer’s full name) on _____ (date).

You will be assisting with the following project:

Project title and scope

Your agreed term of service is from _____ (start date) to _____ (end date). This can be extended upon mutual agreement between you and _____ (SSA).

Overview of your commitment

- As a volunteer, you agree to:**
- Discuss with your Volunteer Manager and Project Manager on the scope and deliverables of your service, along with the time required to complete any deliverables beforehand.
 - Make yourself available by setting aside times for meetings and calls when needed.
 - Inform the Volunteer Manager or Project Manager if you are unable to commit during the agreed day and time, and give us as early a notice as possible.
 - Abide by our policies, procedures and Code of Conduct [to be appended]. In the event of a conflict, you shall resolve any issues by raising it with your Volunteer Manager or lead volunteer on your project team.
 - Maintain confidentiality of all data and information which you may come across through your work with us, in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act.
 - Be responsible for any costs you incur while providing services; likewise, (SSA name) shall be responsible for any costs incurred by its staff.
- You agree that:**
- (SSA name) has the option to use any materials and products delivered by your service for marketing and promotional uses.
 - With our approval, you have the option to publicise such materials and products through, for example, press releases and social media.
 - You shall not be liable to (SSA name) or its employees, directors, service users or volunteers for any damages caused by your service, except when such damages are due to negligence or willful misconduct on your part.
 - Likewise, (SSA name) agrees to indemnify you from any damages resulting from (i) claims by the SSA or a third party on your conduct and (ii) any claim by a third party on the use of deliverables created under your service.

Declaration
I have read and understood the requirements and commitments written in this agreement. I agree to abide by them and accept them fully.

Volunteer’s Signature / Date

SSA/Department-in-Charge / Date

***NOTE:** The liability and confidentiality clauses are merely examples of typical clauses and are not intended as recommendations. Please use only where applicable to your agency. Do check with the relevant legal personnel in your agency if you have any questions.

PDPA TIPS FOR PLANNING AND DELIVERING A SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING PROJECT

What is the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA)?

- It is a law which governs the **(a) collection, (b) use** and **(c) disclosure** of personal data by organisations in a manner that recognises both the right of individuals to protect their personal data and the need of organisations to collect, use or disclose the data for reasonable purposes.
- Recent amendments **further strengthen consumer autonomy** and support businesses to use and harness data confidently.

How is the PDPA relevant to my Skills-Based Volunteering Project?

- Robust and useful analysis and recommendations are built from comprehensive, clean, and accurate data.
- Your skills-based volunteering projects are scoped to benefit the service users or SSA which you are working with and in the course of your projects, you may encounter personal data of users, employees, donors and others.
- As you plan and deliver these projects, be mindful of the data lifecycle (Collection of Personal Data, Care of Personal Data, Autonomy over Personal Data) and your roles and responsibilities in safeguarding the personal data within the project.
- You may refer to the PDPA tips in the following slides as guiding principles in your projects.

Tip #1: Collection of Data

Notification

Notify individuals of the purposes for collecting, using and disclosing their personal data.

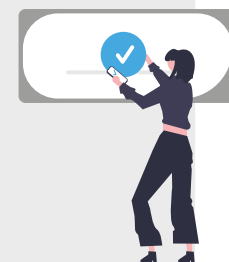
- Be mindful of your target audience and their demographics (e.g. language, literacy etc.) and curate your written or verbal consent clearly by stating the objectives and usage of their personal data (e.g. through a written form or agreement or articulated at the start of an interview or focus group).



Consent

Collect, use or disclose personal data for purposes which individuals have given consent to. Also allow them to withdraw their consent with reasonable notice.

- Be clear and precise with the circumstances in which the individual's data is being used, how long it will be retained and who to go to if they wish to withdraw their consent. If the purpose and/or usage changes (e.g. earlier consent was sought to improve the SSA's fundraising strategy but subsequently the SSA wants to use the data for their volunteer events), the individual's consent should be sought again.



Purpose Limitation

Collect, use or disclose personal data for purposes that a reasonable person would consider appropriate under given circumstances, and for which the individual has given consent to.

- If your target audience is unable to legally give consent (e.g. children or persons with special needs), please ensure that notification and consent is sought from the person with legal authority to act on behalf of the individual.

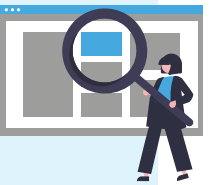


Tip #2: Care of Personal Data

Accuracy

Ensure that the personal data collected is accurate and complete, especially if it is likely to be used to make a decision that affects the individual or to be disclosed to another organisation.

- If the personal data is self-reported (e.g. self-filled survey), ensure that the individual verifies the accuracy of the data provided. If the personal data is provided through the SSA (e.g. admin or system data), ensure that the necessary data cleaning and verification is done with the relevant SSA employees.



Protection

Make reasonable security arrangements to protect the personal data in your possession to prevent unauthorised access, collection, use, disclosure or similar risks.

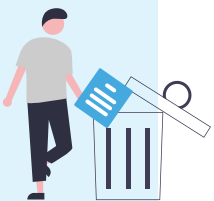
- Check your SSA's data protection policies and safeguard the personal data in accordance with the policies (e.g. password protection, access control, data hosting). The SBV project lead should be well-versed in the data protection policies and educate the relevant project members.



Retention Limitation

Stop keeping personal data or dispose of it properly when it is no longer needed for any business or legal purpose.

- After your project ends, check with your SSA's data management policies and dispose of the data accordingly. After disposal or handover, ensure that the data no longer resides in the device used for the project (e.g. laptops, thumb drives etc.)



Transfer Limitation

Transfer personal data overseas according to the requirements prescribed under the regulations, to ensure that the standard of protection is comparable to the protection under the PDPA.

- If your project scope includes the SSA's overseas operations, check with the prevailing data protection policies and work with your SSA to ensure that data transferred overseas is of a comparable standard.

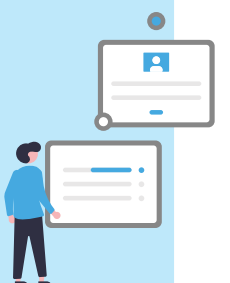


Tip #3: Individual's Autonomy over Personal Data

Access and Correction

Upon request, provide individuals with access to their personal data and information on how it was used or disclosed within a year, and correct any error or omission where required.

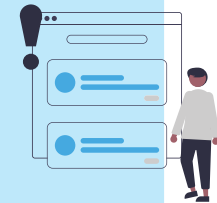
- The skills-based volunteering project lead should work with the SSA to ensure that the individual requesting access to the earlier disclosed data is reasonably provided, within the year. If there are corrections to the data, make amendments as soon as practical and send the corrected data to relevant parties using the data to make decisions (e.g. qualifying criteria).



Data Breach Notification

If there is a data breach and likely results in significant harm to individuals, and/or are of significant scale, notify the Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC) and affected individuals as soon as practicable.

- Check with your SSA's data incident management policies to evaluate the extent of individual harm and scale. Work with your SSA to notify the relevant authorities (e.g. PDPC and the other relevant Government agencies) as soon as practicable.



Data Portability

Upon request, transmit the individual's data in your possession or under your control to another organisation in a commonly used machine-readable format.

- If assessed and deemed relevant as part of your project scope, work with your SSA's data protection officer (DPO) to identify the appropriate formats and platforms (e.g. Excel/CSV; encrypted thumb drive) to transfer the requested personal data. Check against your SSA's prevailing data management policies and the earlier consent and use of the personal data and respond accordingly if there are changes.



SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK FORM SAMPLE

On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 being 'Strongly Agree', to what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please check one box per row.

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neither Agree nor Disagree)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
The skills-based volunteering process was well organised.					
I felt engaged throughout the process.					
The project contributed to my personal and professional development.					
I learnt something new about social issues and community needs.					
I felt that the project objectives were achieved.					
I felt that my skills made an impact on the organisation.					

What was your biggest takeaway from the project?

What could have been done differently?

Would you be keen to volunteer your skills again with our organisation? Yes / No *

Would you recommend volunteering for skills-based projects to your colleagues? Yes / No *

* Please delete as appropriate

PROJECT AFTER-ACTION REVIEW SAMPLE TEMPLATE

The Good

Think back on the process of carrying out your skills-based volunteering project. Identify instances where things were done well and reflect on the cause(s) behind them and the best practices that can be carried forward to the next project. It is recommended that you use one row per instance and add additional rows if necessary.

Observation What were some of the things that were done well?	Causes What were the reasons behind them?	Recommendations What are some best practices to ensure that things are done well or improved upon?

The Not-as-Good

Identify instances that did not go as well as expected. Reflect on the cause(s) behind them and the actions that can be applied to the next project to avoid the same pitfalls or minimise drawbacks. It is recommended that you use one row per instance and add additional rows if necessary.

Observation What were some of the things that did not go as well as expected?	Causes What were the reasons behind them?	Recommendations What can be done in the future to avoid the same pitfalls or to minimise the drawbacks?

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- Loving Heart Multi-Service Centre
- National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre
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- Sage Counselling Centre
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