# How can Charities embrace technology to assist in your outreach and fund-raising efforts

*Written by Mrs Mildred Tan, Chairman of National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre; Member of the Charity Council in 18 September 2019*

Singapore, A Smart Nation: With the disruptive nature of technological change, it is critical to see this change as an opportunity. Charities should not be afraid of technology and instead learn to embrace and harness digital tools; rethink and reinvent yourselves to connect with your stakeholders and expand your donor network through digital platforms.

At the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC), we have observed that our online giving platform, Giving.sg's donor base has grown significantly over the years.

Between 2016 and 2018, the absolute number of micro donors increased by 96%, while the number of micro donations increased by 74%. This data not only shows that our society is increasingly moving towards contactless payment and donations, it further emphasises that it is an opportune time for charities to leverage on technology to reach out and stay connected with the community.

In June 2019, Giving.sg hit its new milestone of $150million in charitable donations in 18 months. This one-stop portal for donating, volunteering and fundraising currently supports more than 500 registered charities. It made news recently in June 2019 for hitting the $150 million mark in charitable donations since its beginnings in 2010.

Giving.sg, as of July 2019, supports:
- 190,460 registered users, up from 129,332 in 2017
- 529 charities, up from 491 in 2017
- 3,701 fundraising campaigns, up from 1,720 in 2017

The increase in Giving.sg donations coincides with a series of improvements to the platform since October 2017 to make Giving an intuitive and seamless experience. Improvements include letting individuals set up automated monthly donations, view personalised dashboards of their donation amount and volunteer hours, and providing charities with data analytics to efficiently track donor behaviour and online

fundraising efforts. This allows the Giver a personalised view of his/her Giving (be it time or money) and create his/her personal portfolio.

Giving.sg is also making available its Application Programming Interface (API) which would allow partners to integrate the platform's services and features right into their own apps and websites. To that end we welcome all ideas of innovative Giving to partner and work with us.

In order to fund raise effectively, charities need to know who their audiences are and connect with information that speaks to them. It is important to have in place a robust governance framework to ensure confidence and effective management. Some tips:

- Set a realistic fund-raising goal according to your needs and size
- Communicate your story truthfully and use visuals to amplify it. Share your story via your website, social media accounts eg. Facebook and Instagram.
- Mobilise your network of support to create campaigns on Giving.sg and share on their own social media accounts.
- Track progress and follow up on the donation. Build relationship with your donors.

Giving.sg is also one of the four online crowdfunding platforms that subscribes to the Commissioner of Charities' Code of Practice for Charitable Online Fund-raising Appeals. As a subscriber, Giving.sg is required to adhere to the Code which is a set of best practices to ensure the legitimacy; accountability, and transparency of charitable fundraising appeals hosted on its platform.

Another technological application that charities should embrace is the Singapore Cares (SG Cares) app. The SG Cares app is able to match aspiring volunteers to social causes, making it easy and convenient for people to find volunteering opportunities. The app also publishes stories from the givers and receivers which hopes to inspire more people to come forward to contribute to the community. The app is continuously being improved to lower barriers of entry and finding ways to make volunteering easier.

Come join us in your Giving efforts and be part of our City of Good!