

**SPEECH BY MS ANITA FAM  
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE  
AT THE WELCOME SESSION FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGERS UNDER  
THE ENHANCED VOLUNTEER MANAGER FUNDING SCHEME  
ON WEDNESDAY, 24 MARCH 2021, 3.50PM VIA ZOOM**

Good afternoon Speaker Tan, sector leaders, volunteer managers, community partners, and friends.

**SOCIAL SERVICE TRANSFORMATION TO SSA 3.0**

1 At the launch of the Second Tranche of The Invictus Fund in September last year, Minister Masagos challenged our social service agencies (SSAs) to transform themselves from SSA 1.0 to SSA 3.0. As he had shared, we envisaged our SSAs to be driven by committed social service professionals, augmented by volunteers, and enabled by technology, to serve the needs of our service users.

2 As our circumstances change (with greater economic uncertainty and progress on the medical front), our needs will evolve, and new challenges will emerge. This leap to SSA 3.0 is therefore necessary to make our sector more effective and better able to cope with future demands.

3 While talent and digitalisation are key enablers to the transformation of our SSAs, being able to harness volunteer skills and time is very much central to helping us achieve this vision of SSA 3.0.

4 Indeed, volunteers play a key role in our SSAs and as such, your role in supporting the work that they do is of equal significance.

**EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTEERS STEPPING UP**

5 This was particularly clearly demonstrated during COVID-19 when volunteers stepped up to meet urgent needs.

6 An example is HealthServe. Despite a sharp decline in the number of volunteer professional healthcare workers at its clinics due to practice site restrictions, HealthServe was able to continue serving the migrant community by starting a hybrid teleconsultation service where workers went to the clinic and were assisted by student volunteers before speaking to a doctor by way of teleconferencing.

7 Another example is RSVP Singapore, who collaborated with the Smart Nation and Digital Government Office to train 1,000 of its senior volunteers to be Smart Nation

Ambassadors over two years. These volunteers would go on to coach other seniors on how to use smartphones and mobile apps in their everyday lives.

8 These are but a couple of the many examples that we have come across, that demonstrate how volunteerism not only helps to meet our SSAs' missions, but also highlight their potential of playing a larger role in future service models.

## **THE ENHANCED VOLUNTEER MANAGER FUNDING SCHEME**

9 We therefore see volunteer managers playing a critical and strategic role in our social service ecosystem – by working with a management team to prioritise and dedicate time and resources to develop an effective volunteer management strategy, which optimises the potential of one's volunteers and to build community partnerships which are sustainable. By doing so, volunteers can augment an SSA's manpower strength in an effective and sustainable way.

10 We recognise that manpower constraints are a key challenge faced by many of our SSAs, and about half of the SSAs surveyed in our 2018 Sector Survey have indicated that they did not have dedicated headcount for volunteer management. This was further validated by findings from various focus group discussions initiated by the Beyond COVID-19 Taskforce, which have highlighted not only our SSAs' desire to leverage volunteers to augment their workforce but also the challenges which they have faced due to the lack of volunteer management capabilities, as well as insufficient manpower to manage volunteers.

11. To address this, NCSS launched the Volunteer Manager Funding Scheme in 2016. Following a successful two-year pilot, we enhanced the scheme to provide funding for 50 dedicated volunteer managers for the next two years, to strengthen our SSAs' long-term volunteer management capabilities.

## **WELCOME VOLUNTEER MANAGERS**

11 I am very pleased to be here to welcome all of you, our volunteer managers, as you embark on this new and exciting journey to contribute your skills and talent to encourage, support and build up volunteerism in Singapore. Your efforts will enable our SSAs, and the sector, to achieve greater impact in the coming years.

12 We in NCSS will continue to support you in your volunteer management journey. Moving forward, we have plans for a Volunteer Management Learning & Development Roadmap to provide volunteer management practitioners with clear skills and career progression pathways. In the pipeline too, is our Volunteer Management Champions initiative, which will empower our volunteer managers to catalyse changes in volunteerism in Singapore.

13 As you proceed on your journey with much anticipation, I do hope that you will continue to build up this community. Remember to harness your collective strengths and wisdom, support one another and find opportunities to collaborate on this journey.

14 Each of you – whether new or experienced - has so much to give, and I'm sure that this will be made even more apparent from the dialogue session which will take place shortly.

15 May I please take this opportunity to thank you and to also wish you the very best. I look forward to your meaningful and impactful contributions to building a more caring and collaborative social service eco-system for our Singapore!