

NCSS to drive collective impact through partnerships

Innovative and deeper measures introduced to help voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) mobilise resources and build organisational capability

Singapore, 6 August 2015 – NCSS mapped out its direction for the year ahead at the NCSS Members Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM), its largest member engagement platform, today. Key themes identified to build effective social services, achieve better beneficiary outcomes and long term social impact include mobilising resources and building organisational capabilities through public-private-people (3P) partnerships.

For the first time in his capacity as Minister for Social and Family Development, Mr Tan Chuan-Jin graced the annual conference for social service organisations and addressed the conference participants. Close to 600 sector leaders, VWO representatives and partners were present. Dr Noeleen Heyzer, social scientist and former United Nations Under-Secretary-General, shared her insights on the importance of 3P partnerships for sustainable development at her keynote speech.

Partnering Public, Private and People Sectors to Build VWO Organisational Capability

- **Volunteer Resource Optimisation Programme**

Organisational capability of VWOs can be scaled up through job redesign and skills-based volunteerism. NCSS introduced the Volunteer Resource Optimisation (VRO) programme last year and a framework was subsequently developed. An in-depth study with six VWOs, conducted over a period of four months, showed positive outcomes after the VRO framework was adopted. Consultants were engaged to help VWOs redesign jobs which would lead to volunteers taking on more meaningful roles

within the programme to augment existing manpower and create capacity for VWO staff to focus on core activities that benefit their clients.

Care Corner - Teck Ghee Youth Centre is one of the VWOs that participated in the in-depth study and pilot test of the VRO programme. The centre has identified and developed two new youth befriender and outreach volunteer roles. These seek to complement the centre's manpower and further extend the impact of work with the centre's befrienders. NCSS aims to replicate the redesigned job roles to other VWOs running similar programmes.

To help VWOs manage their volunteers, NCSS has also developed and launched a volunteer management toolkit in partnership with National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre for volunteer managers and coordinators. The toolkit focuses on attracting, managing and developing volunteers, providing VWOs with helpful resources to form effective partnerships with their volunteers.

NCSS will continue to work with partners to match volunteers to the needs of the social service sector. The Council also encourages greater corporate engagement and involvement in the area of skills-based volunteerism to help supplement specific skills in areas such as accounting, corporate governance and fund-raising.

- **VWO 'Bite-sized' Projects**

NCSS has also piloted several projects to improve VWO organisational development and boost productivity. A total of 11 VWO 'bite-sized' projects were carried out between January and June 2015. The projects covered five categories which included client empowerment, community engagement, utilisation of space, service or process delivery and financial processes.

One such project is from Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH). The project involved the development of a peer support structure that empowered clients to be volunteers in SAMH. The clients were first identified, given training and subsequently matched with opportunities for them to assume different roles in SAMH - as a befriender, to run group activities or support education programmes. This has helped bridged the gap for clients to support other peers in recovery and brought

about an improvement in their confidence. Ongoing reviews and evaluations are being carried out with the intent to open these projects to more member VWOs by 2016.

Social Impact for Social Service Sector

As social problems have become multi-faceted and more complex with time, NCSS hopes to convene and engage the government, social service organisations and corporates to adopt a deeper and collective approach to achieve social goals and outcomes.

In view of this, NCSS introduced Social Impact at the Members Conference. The Social Impact is an ecosystem-based framework and an enhancement of the current outcome-based evaluation to measure the social impact of services run by VWOs based on shared goals of various stakeholders. With its overview of the social service landscape, partnerships with various stakeholders and the wealth of sector-related experience over the years, NCSS is well positioned to play the role of a nexus for Social Impact – connecting and bringing together stakeholders with various roles to work towards shared goals for the sector.

NCSS has convened three thought leadership sessions with key partners from the 3Ps this year to collectively decide and achieve a common understanding of the problems, align outcomes and decide on initiatives that can result in more meaningful and sustainable impact.

With these initiatives, NCSS would be able to bring the social service sector to the next level.

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National Council of Social Service

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450 member voluntary welfare organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in social services, to enhance the capabilities of social service organisations, and to promote strategic partnerships for social services.

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