



# Volunteer Management Network Learning Report

The recent Volunteer Management Network on "Empowering volunteer management practitioners in building organisational readiness and responsiveness to crisis", took place on the 17th, 21st and 24th July 2020. Conducted over 3 webinars, the July series drew in more than 350 participants from Social Service Agencies (SSAs), Corporates and Public sectors.

## Empowering volunteer management practitioners in building organisational readiness and responsiveness to crisis

### Webinar 1

#### Engaging Volunteers in Crisis Situations to Continue Supporting Service Users

Sharing by Peter Yang (Empact), Shawn Soh, (Filos Community Services Limited) and Niyati Pingali (Shell Singapore)

### Webinar 2

#### Reframing the Communication and Engagement with Volunteers during a Crisis

Sharing by Roy Tan (Facebook) and Ryan Ng (Society Staples)

### Webinar 3

#### Reflecting and Preparing for the "Next Normal" in Volunteer Management

Sharing by July de Leon (Singapore Red Cross), Karen Wee (Lion Befrienders) and Tan Li San (National Council of Social Service)

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the recordings and slides from the session

Our speakers shared the difficulties that arise from constraints brought on by Covid-19, solutions that worked for them and opportunities on how SSAs can better prepare for the future.

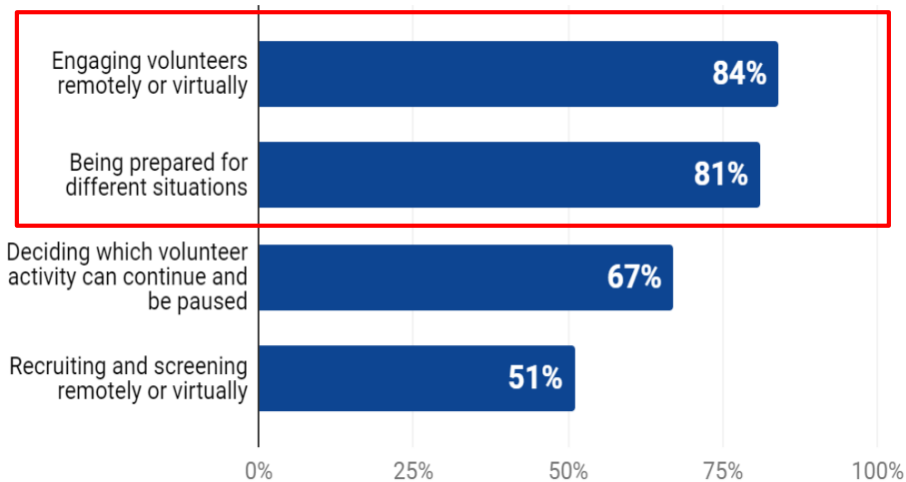
## Challenges faced during crisis

- Reduction in volunteer supply and increasing need for volunteers with specific skill sets
- Changing the form of volunteering from physical to virtual
- Adjustments in operations due to new regulations resulted from Covid-19
- Existing digital gap of service users and SSAs

## Opportunities to reinvent and prepare for the "Next Normal"

- Creative ways to engage volunteers and service users
- New partnerships
- Community building
- Digitalisation

## Top two challenges in volunteer management faced by participants:



More than **65%** of participants reported to observe an increasing importance of volunteer involvement in their organisation as a result of covid-19.

Below are some opportunities on how to prepare for the 'next normal' as mentioned by our speakers

## 1. Creative ways of engaging volunteers and service users

### Through Social Media

Facebook shared tips to help leverage social media for better engagement

- **Overall strategy for social media use:** Create a clear mission, Build an audience, Increase engagement, Measure results
- **Before crafting content, consider:** What is the objective? Who are you trying to reach? What is motivating your audience?



### Effective content should be

- Authentic** - simple, connect emotionally
- Interactive** - images/gifs, branding elements
- Timely** - updated with news on the ground
- Consistent** - branding



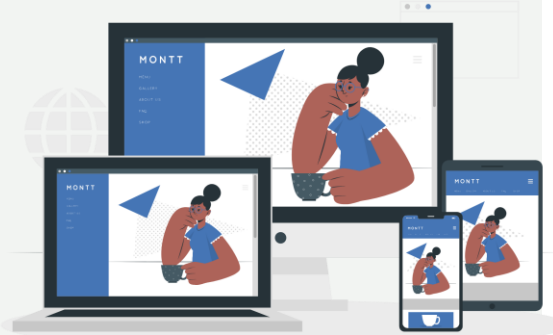
### Tap on different functions in Facebook

- FB Live:** for seniors as they will not need to read texts
- FB Stories:** interactive medium that allows for personalised messages
- FB Groups:** community where people learn and share

## Through Virtual Volunteering

Many organisations have converted or are turning their programmes virtual. Although it does not fully replace physical interactions, this is a good alternative to stay engaged with service users and volunteers.

- Organisations should keep in mind to plan for getting necessary resources to service users e.g. smartphones/ computers, and also to build their digital capability.
- Possible difficulties mentioned include less effective assessment of seniors' physical well-being, or hard to maintain attention of the youths.



In the webinar poll, many participants reported to have taken on or are exploring virtual volunteering alternatives

**65%** of participants reported to have implemented/planned for a new virtual programme to engage volunteers

**69%** of participants reported to have converted/planned to convert their existing programme or part of an existing programme into virtual volunteering

## Through Volunteer Role Redesign

Organisations can consider redesigning programmes and volunteer roles to meet the increasing volunteer demand by:

- Integrate volunteers in programme design and operations
- Transform the role of VM to enable and equip more volunteer leaders



## 2. New Partnerships

- **Move towards Skill-based Volunteering**  
This will allow for more diverse volunteering options to meet emerging needs
- **Increase collaboration** with other agencies:  
share information and resources



For SSAs who are currently working with corporate volunteers, planning the work in corporate volunteering, or corporates who want to support SSAs via volunteering, Shell offered these valuable perspectives to consider when designing volunteering initiatives:

- **Are we addressing the right needs, at the right time?** (Long term/immediate, actual needs at the time, tapping on service users' knowledge)
- **Are we addressing the needs of SSAs and service users?**
- **What are the risks for volunteers and service users?** (e.g. Physical, financial, legal, mental health )

## 3. Community Building

Fostering community conversations to build sense of belonging for volunteer and/or service users. To build a resilient community, we can look at:

- **Possibility** – looking to the future and into what the community could be
- **Ownership** - getting volunteers to behave as a community
- **Dissent** - listening to community when dissent is expressed
- **Commitment** - getting volunteers to commit without expectation of returns
- **Gift** - understanding the strengths that each volunteer brings to the table



## 4. Digitalisation

**Volunteer Management Systems** have proven to be beneficial to organisations like Red Cross and Lion Befrienders. The advantages of having a VMS include:

- Having a central database to hold the volunteer management process, engagement, and deployment
- Clearer communication with volunteers and stakeholders
- Improvements in workflow e.g. online approval system, centralised system where volunteer leaders and managers can access resources, personalisation opportunities are curated according to volunteers' interests
- Monitor service users to keep updated with users



## Case Study

### “Helping seniors not to be left out”

Lion Befrienders’ great solutions to engage isolated seniors, that proved to also be enriching for volunteers who can help others in difficult times. The model includes a combination of various activities.

#### Virtual Befriending

Seniors and volunteers could continue to share enriching connection with each other at the senior centres via digital platforms

#### Neighbours

Tap on neighbors for constant monitoring of seniors’ conditions

#### Telemedicine and teleconsultation

Collaborate with hospitals to deliver medical services and consultations to seniors via phone calls or teleconferencing, instead of in-person services

#### Smartphone Deployment

Through AIC and IMDA, deploy phones to seniors who are uncontactable or without phones. “They are a lifeline for seniors who are isolated, it helps us and volunteers in times that we cannot go down to seniors”

## Resource Directory

### Upcoming Webinars

**Enhancing the resilience and safety of volunteer involvement**  
24 Sep 2020, 10 am to 12 pm

**Managing and Collaborating with stakeholders for enhanced and sustainable volunteering experience**

- 2 Oct 2020, 10 am to 12 pm

**Empowering volunteers through volunteer role redesign**

- 9 Oct 2020, 10 am to 12 pm

### Articles

**Building a Sense of Volunteer Community During COVID-19**

- VolunteerPro, [Link](#)

**Volunteers are Important Right Now. Why? Two Words: Nonprofit Sustainability**

- VolunteerPro, [Link](#)

### Tools

#### Communication & Engagement:

- Social Media (*Facebook Group, Facebook Social Good, Instagram, TikTok*)
- Group Communication (*Slack, Telegram, Whatsapp*)
- Email Communication (*Mailchimp, HubSpot, Sender, MailerLite*)
- Engagement Survey ([NCSS Volunteer Engagement Tool](#))
- Volunteer Management System ([NCSS Volunteer Management System Selection and Implementation Roadmap](#))

#### Planning:

- [Volunteer Continuity Planning Guide](#)
- [Enhanced Volunteer Management Toolkit](#)

*Note: NCSS does not endorse the tools listed. SSAs are advised to exercise discretion and assess based on their own requirements if any.*