

# NCSS to develop framework for volunteer organisations

*Systems for recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers will also be set up*

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**SINGAPORE** – The National Council of Social Service (NCSS) will be developing a volunteer management framework for the social sector, as part of plans to beef up volunteer resources and develop the expertise of social service professionals.

This could include a recognition system within voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) to attract and retain quality volunteers and creating more development and training programmes.

Called the Volunteer Resource Optimisation (VRO) programme, it will also redesign selected programmes and job processes within VWOs and put in place systems for recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers.

In the coming months, the NCSS will be engaging VWOs to determine the level of interest in the use of volunteers, the scope of work and the feasibility of a volunteer management plan, said the council's chief executive officer Sim Gim Guan, who announced the programme at the NCSS Members Conference yesterday.

While the programme is in the early stages of planning, VWOs that TODAY spoke to welcomed the idea. Executive director of Lions Befrienders Goh Boo Han said such a programme



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**Mr Goh Boo Han**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
LIONS BEFRIENDERS

might help attract more volunteers to its cause. Currently, the organisation has more than 1,000 volunteers, half of whom are in their 20s and 30s. "NCSS is able to reach out to a wider audience and through the exposure, more people may find that the work we do is suitable for them," said Mr Goh.

For bigger organisations such as the HCA Hospice Care, which already has its own volunteer management system that collects data on its volunteers' skills and service gaps that need to be filled by volunteers, the system can help in terms of improving volunteer retention, said its chief executive officer and medical director R Akhileswaran.

While some of the hospice's events can attract between 400 and 500 ad hoc volunteers, there are currently only 140 to 180 regular volunteers, he

said. The NCSS also plans to further develop talent and leadership in the sector, with the development of a new manpower unit.

The unit will come up with a new scheme to groom a core group of leaders and talents who possess knowledge and experience in the sector. The council hopes to have a pool of about 300 leaders over the next three to five years. This group will be guided by mentors, gain exposure in a wide range of social service issues, organisations and job scopes and will be given opportunities to learn from veterans in the sector.

Speaking at a conference attended by 550 participants, NCSS president Hsieh Fu Hua said that while the sector had always drawn on the many hands that have given their time and effort, a "heart of gold" was not enough. "We have to move into a mindset of capabilities, solutions and resources," he said.

Break fast: **7.18PM**

