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MEDIA RELEASE

Public confidence in charities has grown, volunteerism and philanthropy rates have risen

Survey findings

1 National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)'s Individual Giving Survey 2008 found that public confidence in charities has grown post-2006 (the year that saw controversies involving some charities). NVPC first studied public confidence in charities in its 2006 survey. The 2008 survey found that 40% of respondents had "above moderate to complete confidence" in charities, up from 28% in the 2006 survey.

2 Donation amounts grew overall; donations to non profit organisations (including Institutions of a Public Character¹ (IPCs) and non-IPCs) by individuals increased to S\$958 million in 2008, compared to S\$341 million in 2006. Donor participation increased to 91% in 2008 from 89% in 2006.

3 NVPC Board Member, Mr Peter Ong, said: "The good news is that the public is becoming more discerning and is able to look beyond individual non profit organisations (NPOs) or individuals within NPOs who are in the news for the wrong reasons, to the many other NPOs that continue to do good well. Overall, we see public confidence strengthened and regained by NPOs and charities that have brought on board governance best practices, like the new and improved NKF."

4 The survey also uncovered the top 2 reasons why Singapore residents volunteer and donate. They will do so if (i) they believe personally in the cause and (ii) when they have been approached by someone or know of someone involved with the cause.

5 Volunteerism in Singapore went above 16% for the first time, from 15.5% in 2006 to 16.9% in 2008. While the volunteer rate has risen, the total number of volunteer hours fell to 45 million hours in 2008 compared to 49 million hours in 2006.

6 "People who lead busy lives will still want to volunteer, especially if they believe personally in the cause and when they have been approached by someone or know of someone involved with the cause," says Mr Ong. "Fewer volunteerism hours across Singapore in 2008 is not a bad situation if this is due to greater efficiency on the part of the NPOs; and if the NPOs are willing to take on more 'ad hoc volunteers' based on the total amount of time that the latter are able to commit," said Mr Ong.

7 Overall, the number of hours served by 'ad hoc volunteers' - people who volunteer occasionally rather than monthly or weekly - has increased to over 20 hours per year in the 2008 survey compared to over 16 hours in the 2006 survey.

8 Just as NPOs have seen value in accepting donations of various amounts and not just large donations, NPOs should continue to attract and welcome ad hoc volunteers.

¹ Donations to IPCs in 2007 (including donations by institutions such as companies, not just by individuals): \$820 million.

9 “Ad hoc volunteering is here to stay as many people here in Singapore lead busy, stressful lives,” said Mr Ong. “When these ad hoc volunteers experience a meaningful short-term volunteering experience, they might take to volunteering regularly, especially when their time and situations allow. Even if they do not, they will end up being strong advocates of volunteerism and philanthropy.”

10 There is a very strong connection between volunteerism and philanthropy. NVPC’s 2008 survey show that 98% of volunteers donate, and that volunteers donate 4 times more than non-volunteers who donate. Translating to dollar terms, a volunteer-donor donates S\$657 per year compared to S\$162 per year for a non-volunteer.

11 “It is an overall desire in human beings to help their fellow human beings and the increased numbers in volunteerism and philanthropy in Singapore in 2008 amidst a difficult economy with high inflation reflects that. I am very happy to say, on behalf of NVPC, that social capital in Singapore ought to increase through the increase in these volunteerism and philanthropy numbers; and that Singapore is one step closer to being a kinder, happier and gracious society.”

12 The 2008 survey, conducted by Media Research Consultants Pte Ltd, covered individuals, aged 15 years and above, who are Singapore citizens, Permanent Residents (PR) and foreigners (or non residents), but excluded tourists, domestic maids and construction workers. A total of 1,894 interviews were completed from April to May 2008.

13 Respondents were interviewed face to face. Statistical weighting was applied to the sample data to arrive at national estimates.

14 In the survey, volunteering was defined to exclude compulsory community work such as the Community Involvement Programme in schools (except where it exceeded the compulsory hours).

About the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)

NVPC is the national body that promotes and develops volunteerism and philanthropy, functioning as a first-stop centre, catalyst and networking agency to foster the giving spirit in Singapore, whether of time, money or in kind.

We work with non-profit organisations, companies and public sector bodies to facilitate and strengthen Community Giving efforts through our promotional and networking platforms, public education programmes, training in volunteer management (including employee volunteering) and fund-raising, as well as grants, research and publications.

Visit our website at www.nvpc.org.sg