



## **Volunteerism rate reaches record high**

### **1 in 3 volunteering, with most doing so occasionally**

**Singapore, 31 January 2013** - National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre's (NVPC) 2012 study of individual giving behaviour has found that 1 in 3 persons, or 32.3%, volunteered. This is the highest rate since such research began in 2000; compared to the previous high of 23.3% in the 2010 survey. Volunteering grew across most demographics such as age, education and income levels.

2 Said Laurence Lien, Chief Executive Officer of NVPC, "The rise in the number of people volunteering is heartening. It shows that Singapore is becoming a more compassionate society. We are also encouraged that volunteerism grew especially among seniors as well as those aged 25 to 44. That most are volunteering occasionally also signals that more can be done to increase their involvement."

3 Among those who volunteered, 7 in 10 volunteered occasionally, rather than weekly or monthly. The total number of hours volunteered in the past 12 months was 91 million, compared to 89 million in 2010. Average volunteer hours fell to 72 hours per volunteer compared to 104 hours in 2010.

4 A major reason for the increase in the volunteerism rate was informal volunteering, with 36% volunteering informally only in 2012 compared to 13% in 2010. "We are glad that many more people are aware of needs around them and actively meeting those needs, for example, by helping their neighbours. This augurs well for the building of social capital in our communities," added Mr Lien.

### **More needs to be done to deepen volunteer engagement**

5 The increase in the number of volunteers, combined with the fall in average hours served, means greater demand for good volunteer management practices. Said Mr Lien, "As volunteers put in fewer hours on average, volunteer host organisations must do two things to improve volunteer management. One, engage volunteers more productively. This includes having greater clarity about the work volunteers can do and constantly upgrading the value of their contributions. Two, given this trend of occasional volunteering, charities need to deepen their relationships with volunteers and increase efforts to convert these occasional

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volunteers to regular volunteers. While occasional volunteers do much valuable work, there is some work which is better done by regular volunteers.”

6 “There is competition for time, be it from work, family or even leisure,” said Kevin Lee, a director at NVPC. Even if people choose to volunteer with a particular cause, they have different charities to choose from. Organisations which enable volunteers to serve meaningfully, yet flexibly, will have an advantage in recruiting and retaining volunteers.”

7 Teaching volunteers specialised skills, appreciating volunteers more, reviewing their feedback and assessing the impact of volunteer programmes are some ways organisations may improve volunteer management. NVPC has published a guide to Engaging Ad Hoc Volunteers, which is available free online at <http://tinyurl.com/NVPCguideadhoc>

### **Donations remain steady with trend in lower income donating more**

8 Total donations by individuals have remained steady at \$1.10 billion in 2012 compared to about \$1.07 billion in 2010. Donor participation grew across most demographics such as age, income and education levels, with 9 in 10 people donating. This signals that people in Singapore are still actively giving to causes they care about.

9 The survey also revealed a trend in the lower income giving more as a percentage of their income. The highest proportion of income donated was from the lowest income band: 1.8%, from those earning below \$1,000 in personal monthly income. Those<sup>1</sup> earning \$5,000 to \$5,999 donated the lowest proportion, 0.5%.

10 Said Mr Lien, “People, particularly the high income, have a capacity to donate much more. We hope that higher income earners would do better than the lower income earners and give at least 1% or more of their income. There are many needs in society, and many ways to give, such as directly to charities, online through SG Gives, through the Community Chest, or the Community Foundation of Singapore for more structured giving.”

11 Mirroring the trend in occasional volunteering, the survey also found that most people (3 in 5) donated occasionally instead of weekly or monthly. On average, regular donors gave 2 to 3 times more money than occasional donors. Added Mr Lien, “There are many options for people to give regularly – such as through GIRO, credit card or payroll donations. We encourage occasional donors to find out more about charitable causes and charities, and support their choice regularly.”

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<sup>1</sup> Data for personal monthly income band of \$6,000 and above excluded (small sample sizes).

### **Strong link between volunteering and donating**

12 As in past surveys, there is a strong link between volunteering and donating. Among those who volunteered in the past 12 months (“current volunteers”), 95% were donors, compared to non-volunteers (86%). Current volunteers who donated gave on average \$412, which is nearly twice the \$253 donated by non-volunteers.

13 “Clearly, investing in volunteer management is worthwhile,” says Mr Lee. “Not only do volunteers give their time, they also give money. It is worthwhile for organisations to give more attention and budget to volunteer management.”

### **Background to Individual Giving Survey 2012**

14 Individual Giving Survey 2012, conducted by The Nielsen Company on behalf of NVPC, sought to gain insights on volunteerism and philanthropy in Singapore in a bid to encourage a caring and engaged community for all. It covered individuals aged 15 years old and above who are Singapore residents (Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents) and non-residents but excluded e.g. tourists. A total of 1,512 interviews were completed from July to September 2012.

15 Respondents were interviewed face to face about their giving behaviour in the last 12 months. Statistical weighting was applied to the sample data to arrive at national estimates. 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). The survey has been carried out once every two years since 2000.

### **About the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre**

Transform. Catalyse. Connect.

These words shape what we do, which is to help people and organisations give well to causes they care about, so as to build a sustainable future for all in Singapore.

We do this by working with other non-profits, companies, and public sector bodies to facilitate and strengthen giving in Singapore, whether of time, money or in-kind.

NVPC is an independent, not-for-profit organisation. Visit us at [www.nvpc.org.sg](http://www.nvpc.org.sg).

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