

# Having clear volunteering focus helps firms trying to do good



Mr Nuhsyafiq Razak Effendi (third from left), a senior engineer with SP Group's electricity operations team, with fellow volunteers in front of the mobile grocery truck that serves seniors at their doorsteps. They also accompany seniors for grocery shopping. PHOTO: COURTESY OF NUHSYAFIQ RAZAK EFFENDI

## Study finds that when leaders buy into volunteer scheme, idea can turn into action

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For companies which want to do good for the community, identifying the right volunteer programme that taps the company's strengths is key.

"What we validated was (that) having a clear volunteering focus for the organisation helps to secure leadership buy-in and support, and this, in turn, can turn idea into action," said Ms Kathleen Chin, director of corporate responsibility (social impact and community investment) at professional services firm EY.

"When leaders come on board and say they are committed, they are able to secure resources from a manpower as well as budget standpoint."

She gave the example of how healthcare company Eu Yan Sang staff talked about traditional Chinese medicine with seniors at Fillos Community Services as part of their volunteer efforts.

Ms Chin was sharing preliminary findings from an EY study on a pilot project to encourage corpo-

rate volunteerism. She was speaking at the City of Good Summit, held at Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre on Feb 22. The full report will be out in the second quarter of 2024.

Started by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre, in collaboration with the National Council of Social Service and the SG Cares Office in the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Project V aims to make it easier for workers to volunteer and for companies to give back.

EY came on board to do the study pro bono.

Under Project V, which took place from June to December 2023, around 2,000 staff from 11 companies and three public service agencies volunteered at 17 social service agencies.

At UOB, staff volunteers help primary school children with their homework in an after-school care centre run by non-profit organisation FaithActs.

During the home-based learning period at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the bank donated laptops to students and its staff

taught them how to detect scams, create strong passwords and use tech devices responsibly, said Mr Leonard Tan, senior vice-president and head of group corporate social responsibility at UOB.

He added that UOB employees are entitled to three days of volunteer leave every year.

Ms Amelia Champion, head of communications at SP Group, which worked with social service agency Allkin Singapore, said its engineers ran science, technology, engineering and maths workshops for children, and other employees taught them to make Microsoft PowerPoint presentations.

The utilities firm has a committee of about 12 employees who liaise with social service agencies and coordinate volunteer activities, she added.

One of the committee members is Mr Nuhsyafiq Razak Effendi, a senior engineer with SP Group's electricity operations team.

He spearheads a programme

where volunteers from SP Group accompany seniors for grocery shopping or deploy a mobile grocery truck to their doorsteps.

He is also the key liaison with Youth Guidance Outreach Services, a social service agency serving at-risk youth. He organises sports engagement activities, as well as befriending activities with young people.

Mr Nuhsyafiq, 34, joined the SP committee in 2023.

"In this role, I can bring greater influence and more ideas in serving the needs of our community by steering activities and bringing my colleagues alongside... It deepens the sense of purpose, cohesion and unity in the company."

He said his company is supportive of employees taking time during work hours to do volunteer work, which helps him balance work and family commitments with volunteering.

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