



## **National volunteerism rate and individual donations reach all-time high**

**Over 23% volunteer and total donations exceed \$1 billion**

**Singapore, 11 November 2010** - National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre's latest study of individual giving behaviour, Individual Giving Survey 2010, has found that the national volunteerism rate has risen to 23.3%, compared to the previous high of 16.9% in the 2008 survey. This is the first time since such research began in 2000 that the figure has exceeded 20%.

The number of hours volunteered have also risen, to 89 million hours. This is almost double the 45 million hours reported in the 2008 survey.

The survey was carried out against the backdrop of economic recession. For the whole of 2009, the Singapore economy contracted by 2%, following a global financial meltdown<sup>1</sup>.

"During hard times, people are more aware of the needs around them; they relook their priorities and serve these needs through volunteerism and philanthropy." said Laurence Lien, Chief Executive Officer of NVPC. "We are grateful that when times were tough, people in Singapore stepped up to the challenge."

There was a rise in the volunteerism rate across most age groups, in particular, those aged between 15 to 24.

### **Occasional volunteering remains key**

As in past surveys, there is a preference for occasional volunteering, with 55% of the volunteers doing so in the 2010 survey. The average hours served by occasional volunteers is about 45 hours in the past 12 months. This works out to over five working days per occasional volunteer – and occasional volunteers form the majority. However, many charities are reluctant to engage such volunteers and thus miss out on their value.

As people who wish to volunteer often cite their busy schedules as a reason for not being able to do so, NVPC set up SG Cares ([www.sgcares.org](http://www.sgcares.org)) for volunteers to serve for a few hours in a variety of activities in different sectors

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<sup>1</sup> Monetary Authority of Singapore. Macroeconomic Review April 2010. Retrieved 22 Oct 2010 from [http://www.mas.gov.sg/resource/publications/macro\\_review/2010/MRApr10.pdf](http://www.mas.gov.sg/resource/publications/macro_review/2010/MRApr10.pdf)

and for different causes. Besides individuals, SG Cares also works with companies to structure meaningful volunteer engagements for their employees.

Said Mr Lien: “Occasional volunteers can be committed volunteers, and occasional volunteering is here to stay. We encourage more charities to tap this larger pool of volunteers through SG Cares, as there is a potential to engage them on a longer-term basis as volunteers or even donors.”

### **More generous giving**

Turning to philanthropy, the data showed more generous giving. Total amount donated, including non-tax deductible donations<sup>2</sup>, grew from \$0.96 billion in 2008 survey to \$1.07 billion in 2010.

This is the first time since NVPC’s philanthropy research began in 2004 that total amount donated has exceeded \$1 billion.

It was noted that the proportion of people who donate fell from 91% in 2008 survey to 85% in 2010.

Average donation amounts have grown, from \$300 in 2008 survey to an all-time high of \$331 in 2010.

For the first time, NVPC also asked about donating online. Among all respondents, 15% would consider donating online in the next 12 months. This proportion is 33% or higher among those with personal monthly income of \$4,000 and above.

Said NVPC director Kevin Lee, “Building on this interest, we encourage charities to provide more information about themselves online, for example through donation portal SG Gives ([www.sggives.org](http://www.sggives.org)). This will help donors become more informed in their giving.”

There are currently over 200 charities on SG Gives, and between February to October 2010, donors have used it to donate nearly \$2 million.

### **Looking forward**

To continue to encourage a culture of volunteering and giving, NVPC will be stepping up efforts in Singapore.

This includes the upcoming 21st International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) World Volunteer Conference - in Singapore from 24 to 27 January 2011. This major conference will see some 2,000 delegates, of which half will hail from around the world. The conference sees various global experts and

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<sup>2</sup> Commissioner of Charities Annual Report 2009 states that tax-deductible donations by individuals grew from \$211 million in 2008 to \$240 million in 2009. Total tax deductible donations, including those by individuals, companies and grantmaking foundations, were \$687 million.

big names from organisations such as the United Nations and International Red Cross as well as celebrity volunteers such as Michelle Yeoh and Jet Li, and is set to put Singapore on the global volunteer stage.

### **Background to IGS 2010**

Individual Giving Survey 2010, 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 tourists, domestic maids and construction workers. A total of 1,815 interviews were completed from April to August 2010.

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.

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

The 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 nonprofit organisations, companies and public sector bodies to facilitate and strengthen Community Giving efforts through our promotional and networking platforms, public education programmes as well as grants, research and publications.

### **About SG Cares ([www.sgcares.org](http://www.sgcares.org))**

Volunteering is easy with SG Cares, an online portal that provides flexible volunteer opportunities for the community. SG Cares structures episodic volunteer projects that volunteers can sign up online for. It enables caring but busy people to volunteer as and when they can.

### **About SG Gives ([www.sggives.org](http://www.sggives.org))**

Giving is as easy as search, select and donate with SG Gives, an online donation portal for Singapore-registered charities. Whether you are a donor or a fundraising charity, [www.sggives.org](http://www.sggives.org) is a tool available for your use 24 hours a day.

### **About IAVE - International Association for Volunteer Effort**

The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) was founded in 1970 by a group of volunteers from around the world who saw in volunteering, a means of making connections across countries and cultures. It has grown into a global network of volunteers, volunteer organisations, national representatives and volunteer centres, with members in over 70 countries, and in all world regions.

IAVE seeks to promote, strengthen and celebrate the development of volunteerism worldwide. Best known for its biennial World Volunteer Conferences and affiliated Youth Volunteer Conferences, these major events attract distinguished speakers and skilled presenters to provide inspiration and share best practices in the world of volunteerism to a global audience. 2011 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN International Year of Volunteers and IAVE's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The United Nations General Assembly launched the UN International Year of Volunteers in 2001 to highlight the achievements of volunteers worldwide and encourage more people globally to volunteer.

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