

GIVING BACK

Skills-based volunteerism to address challenges in social services sector

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OCBC staff volunteer Pamela Peh working with Food from the Heart's senior manager of IT and facilities Timothy Lai to analyse data for community shops. PHOTO: OCBC

WHILE more has to be done to support vulnerable groups within the community amid the pandemic and beyond, social service agencies continue to grapple with gaps in capabilities, including in areas such as digitalisation and resource management.

Skills-based volunteering is therefore expected to play a key role in filling these capability gaps within the sector. Such a form of volunteerism allows volunteers to contribute to the community through their professional skills and expertise.

To be sure, donations remain important to financially support charities and non-profits. But many within the social services sector are beginning to tap the skills and knowledge of corporates such as OCBC to improve their capabilities and to better serve their communities.



OCBC announced on Monday (Aug 1) that the bank will increase the number of skills-based volunteer projects its employees undertake by 30 per cent year on year across its regional markets. This is done by matching the skills of staff volunteers to meet specific needs of different charity organisations and beneficiary groups.

Skills-based volunteerism requires more work than issuing handouts given the planning and development work required to roll out customised tools and systems across different beneficiaries, said Koh Ching Ching, OCBC's head of group brand and communications.

That said, this form of volunteerism is a lot more impactful and will truly help the less advantaged segments of the community, Koh noted.