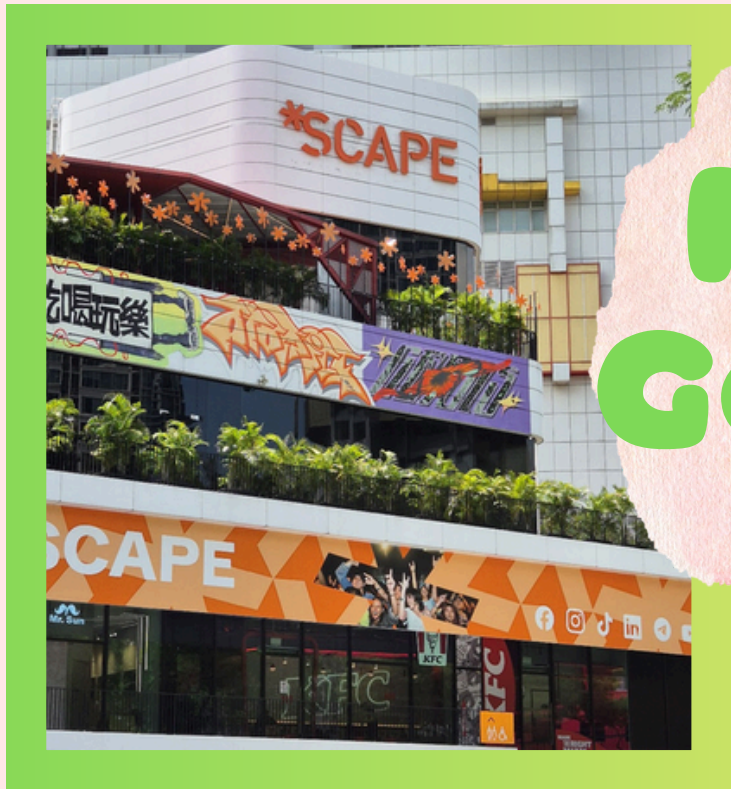
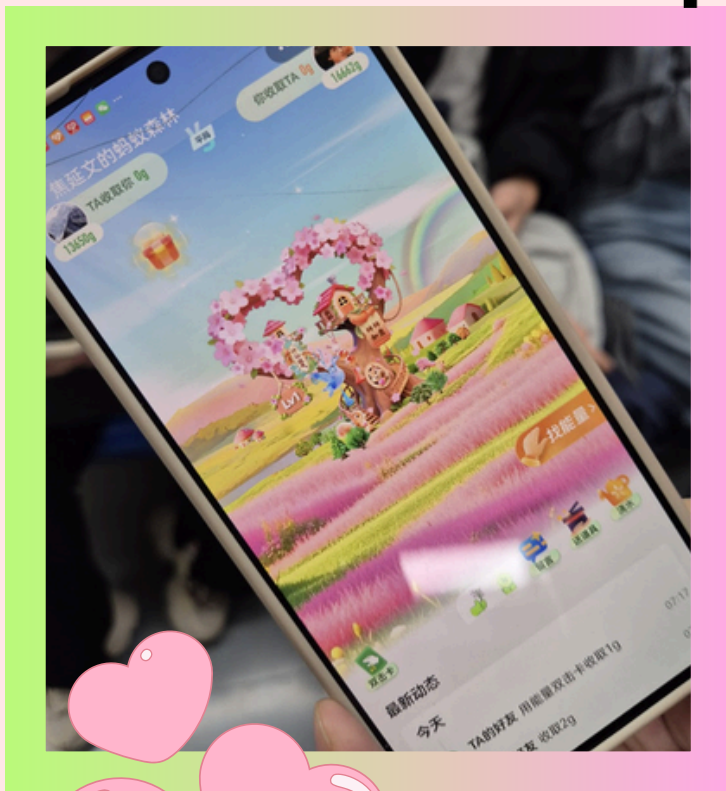




New Gen Generosity

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How Asian countries are creating healthier social contribution systems for and with young people



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INTRODUCTION

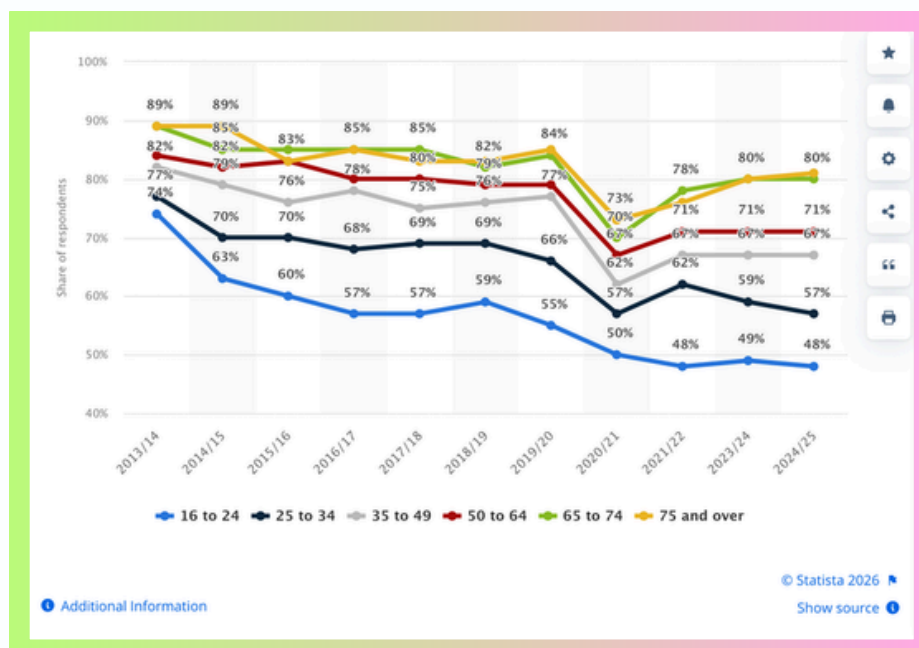
There are some things in the UK that we have come to assume will always be as they are. David Attenborough, the misery of a summertime commute on the Central line, the jam-first or cream-first debate and... a charitable society?

When you think about community participation in the UK, many people's minds go to village fairs raising funds, people growing victory gardens or Pudsey Bear and telethons. But try to come up with examples that feel recent, modern or fresh and you might find yourself struggling. And for good reason: In 2024, the UK fell to #22 on the list of the world's most charitable countries after "trending downward for the past decade."¹ Importantly, this is a UK-specific problem. In 2024, global generosity soared, with a record 4.3 billion people helping someone they didn't know, volunteering time or donating money to a good cause. This marked global generosity's "joint highest level, only previously matched during the pandemic."²

Amidst race-hate riots and violence against women being declared a national emergency, the UK needs generosity now. But with 49% of higher-rate taxpayers saying they are "not interested in charities,"³ at the same time when "86% of [UK] charities ... recorded increased demand for their services over the last 12 months,"⁴ how can we alter the UK's current collision course?

From Parasocial to Prosocial

If we are going to avoid a deepening of this crisis, we need current and future generations of donors. The UK has one of the most aged donor populations in the world. Meanwhile, the percentage of 16-24 year olds who donate money has dropped from 74% to 48% in the last decade, alongside a similar drop in the 25-34 age group.



But although their frequency is low, under 25s, when motivated to give, “donate twice as much as any other age group.”⁵ With the need for the UK’s public sector growing, it is too risky to assume that people who are young now will automatically take voluntary charitable actions later. We need a concerted effort to regrow the UK’s charitable habits with those who will be here long into the future.

I remember a friend telling me a story about the board of a British high street bank sitting around discussing ‘how to grow young audiences’ and discussing Millennials. This was despite the fact that the average age of a Millennial at the time was 37 years old. But if this complete disconnect from the lives of young people is bad at banks, it’s even worse in the charitable sector. I’ve spent the last four years working in one of the UK’s largest charities as one of its youngest senior leaders. While I might be an anomaly internally, I am part of a wider trend in the sector - one that has only deepened in the past decade, despite many HR strategies deployed otherwise.

“The voluntary sector has the oldest workforce compared to the public and private sectors, with one in four (26%) of staff being over 55.”⁶

“Both the voluntary sector (6%) and the public sector (6%) have half as many people under the age of 25 (13%) than the private sector.”⁷

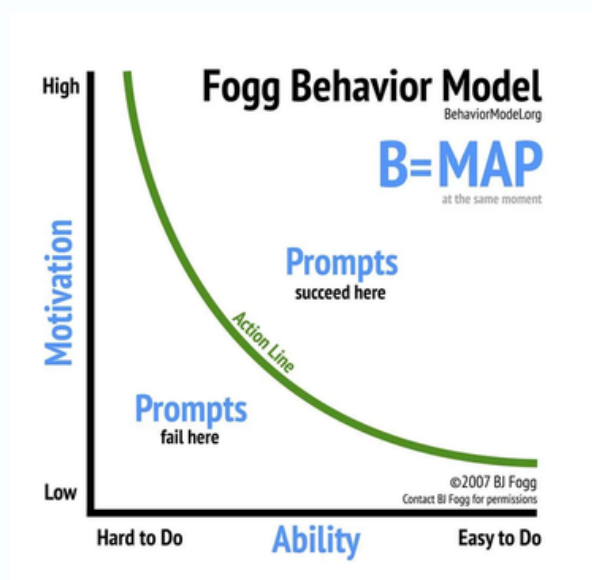
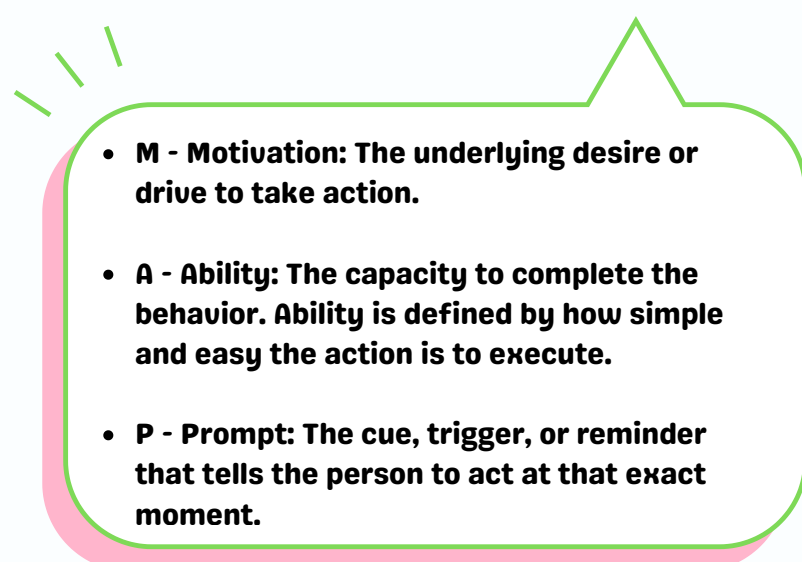


Have young people become more selfish? Is it because they are all glued to TikTok? Are they choosing to spend all their money on avocado toast instead? While it’s true that predatory addictive technology does take up an amount of time, these would all be easier answers than the truth: Life is, in general, harder now for young people, and voluntary action (whether giving time or money) has become less easy to access and less relevant for UK-based causes. Young people are in a catch-22. “Quality of life in the UK is declining for young people due to soaring housing costs, job precarity, and a severe youth mental health crisis. The UK now ranks last in Europe for life satisfaction among 15-year-olds, driven by a broken social contract that leaves this generation facing worse prospects than their parents.”⁸ But unlike the 49% of higher-rate tax payers who are ‘not interested in charities,’ the lack of ‘generosity’ in young people should absolutely not be taken for apathy: “Global data from public-relations and research firm Edelman shows 70% of Gen Zers are involved in a social or political cause.”⁹ We know they care, but they are not choosing to give their time or money habitually to traditional UK-based charities.

Making Space for Participation

This paints a rather stark picture of the future for UK charities. But there are things we can do, though none of them are quick or easy fixes. After all, the Churchill Fellowship theme of this research is titled 'Resilient Economies and Communities.' Resilient communities are not built overnight or even in one lifetime, but the onus is on all of us to be good ancestors and ensure the future is better, even if we are not around to see it.

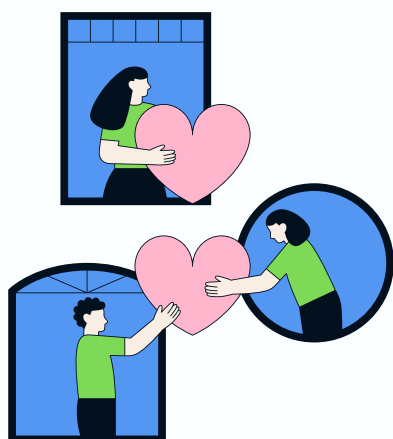
With such a lofty goal, how does one even get started with societal behaviour change? While I don't believe we can sit in a room and model our way out of our current predicament, there is a helpful model for long term behaviour change I have used to organise and frame some of my thinking. The Fogg Behavior Model is a framework stating that human behaviour occurs when three elements converge at the same moment: Motivation, Ability, and a Prompt.



In order for young people to be able to take more charitable action in the UK, we need to increase their motivation, make it easier to act and then give them a prompt. Simple, right? Well, it might be easier if our understanding of motivation and ability were more compatible with community resilience.



In the Global North, we often use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to rationalise human motivation. In this model, self-actualisation is the highest state. But what many people don't know is that Maslow actually spent time with the Blackfoot First Nations people in Canada, studying their society. He eventually adapted their societal model but completely changed the orientation from community to self. This change better fit the Western worldview, but with the world now facing the deepest wealth inequity ever recorded, the stark difference between this and the Blackfoot approach is painfully ironic. "For the Blackfoot, wealth was not measured by money and property but by generosity. The wealthiest man in their eyes is one who has almost nothing because he has given it all away."¹⁰



Although this research's purpose is not to diagnose why traditional generosity has declined amongst young people, it is difficult to discuss possible solutions without acknowledging existing systemic barriers. In Singapore, the government's Youth Plan, which will be explored later in this report, is built on the understanding that youths' other material needs like housing and food are already well-supported by the state. There is acknowledgement of interdependency, that youths need to have 'space and security' to volunteer - that to participate in community, the community first ensures you feel part of it.

My conviction that community is key to a resilient society led me to push beyond Western society when choosing which countries to research. I sought out examples from societies with different economic models and cultural orientations, especially focused on how collectivist societies are leveraging modern tools like digital and content to grow community involvement. There are tips and tricks included in the learnings I will share, but the more material prize is: What are the societal conditions that make it possible for young people to act generously? What can we learn from collectivist societies? Socialist economies? What do we need to change, at scale, to rebuild the socially-minded DNA of this country?

I don't have all the answers, and I don't have a perfect roadmap to utopia, nor do I believe any one country's approach is perfect. But I have spent time absorbing wisdom from other humans trying to do good in different ways around the world, and what I do have to share is some real and tangible examples of countries doing innovative things to set the next generation up for success.

A note on terms: I will variously use English translations of local words and phrases that mean similar things: Voluntary action; community participation; social contribution; giving time & money; charitable action; social innovation. Although they might be phrased differently, they are all driving at the same thing: A voluntary action taken to benefit someone or something other than oneself. This can come in the form of giving time, money, voice, ideas or other resources.

SECTION I: BEYOND PERFORMATIVE DIGITISATION IN CHINA

“A 2020 study from the UK Safer Internet Centre showed 34% of 8-to-17-year-olds say the internet has inspired them to take action about a cause and 43% say it makes them feel their voices matter.”¹¹ Most of the UK’s charities have by now recognised the need to be digitally present in more people’s lives, although for most this has been a defensive shift rather than being seen as a strategic opportunity for growth. What could charity in the digital era look like if it were designed for young people, rather than feeling like a begrudging add-on? Countries like China are leading the way, and rapidly.

The Innovation: Digital Philanthropy at Scale

The charity I work for in the UK is over 130 years old. By purely a time comparison, the modern ‘civil sector’ in China is a mere fledgling. In 2008, the Sichuan Earthquake happened in the same year as the Beijing Olympics. This fusion of events created a foundational moment for China - there was a huge surge in national pride and volunteering, resulting in what is considered ‘Year 0’ of the country’s civil sector. This concept of the charitable sector being ‘founded’ after the internet feels almost incomprehensible for those of us who might even today be slogging through the digitisation of supporter records or receiving donations via cheques in the post. But China’s success in digital philanthropy is proof of two things: giving today needs to be as integrated into daily life as all the digital tools we use; and digital tool owners, namely tech giants, must start to play their role in this.



“Digital fundraising accounts for slightly more than 2% of China’s total donation value, but it is growing rapidly, driven by younger people attracted to supporting specific projects with compelling stories.”¹² But we shouldn’t look down on this number from 2018 which showed the humble start of an approach that has since flourished. What’s behind it in real terms is a mobilisation of mass-giving far beyond anything the UK could ever imagine. One example is Tencent’s 99 Giving Day, which takes place in September every year (9/9 ‘nine-nine’ to be exact, which I learned after locals kept chuckling when I called it ‘ninety-nine giving day’). Started in 2015, the scale of 99 Giving Day is huge and only possible due to the organiser’s position as a tech giant.



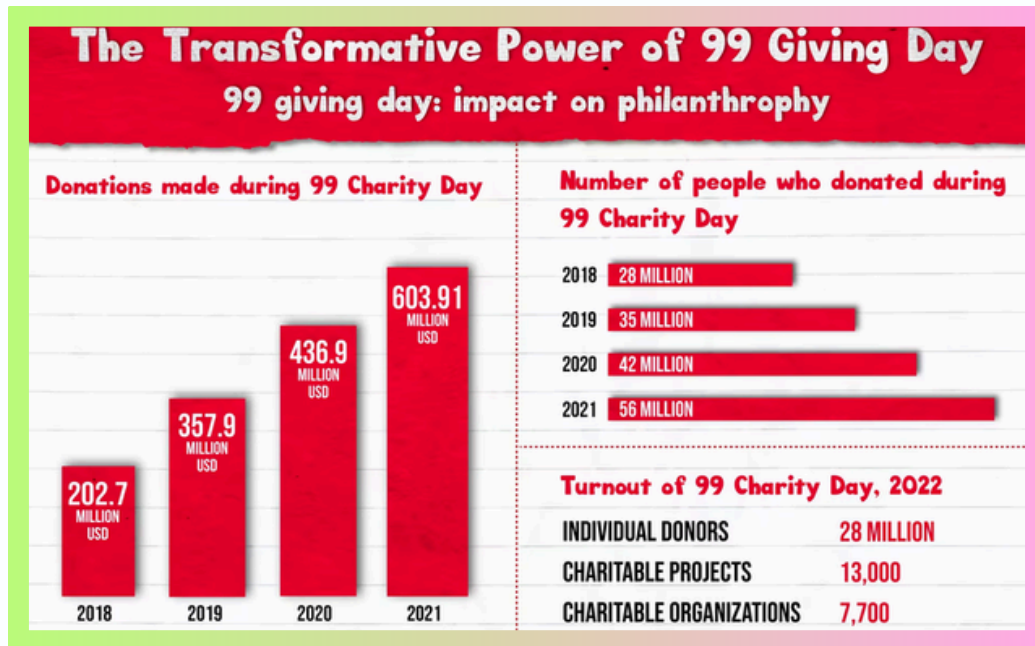
From small online experiment to nationwide impact:

What began as a three-day online fundraising drive has evolved into a long-term movement that shapes how people interact with charities. Giving has become part of daily life, making charity more accessible, transparent, and engaging for donors and NGOs through technology.

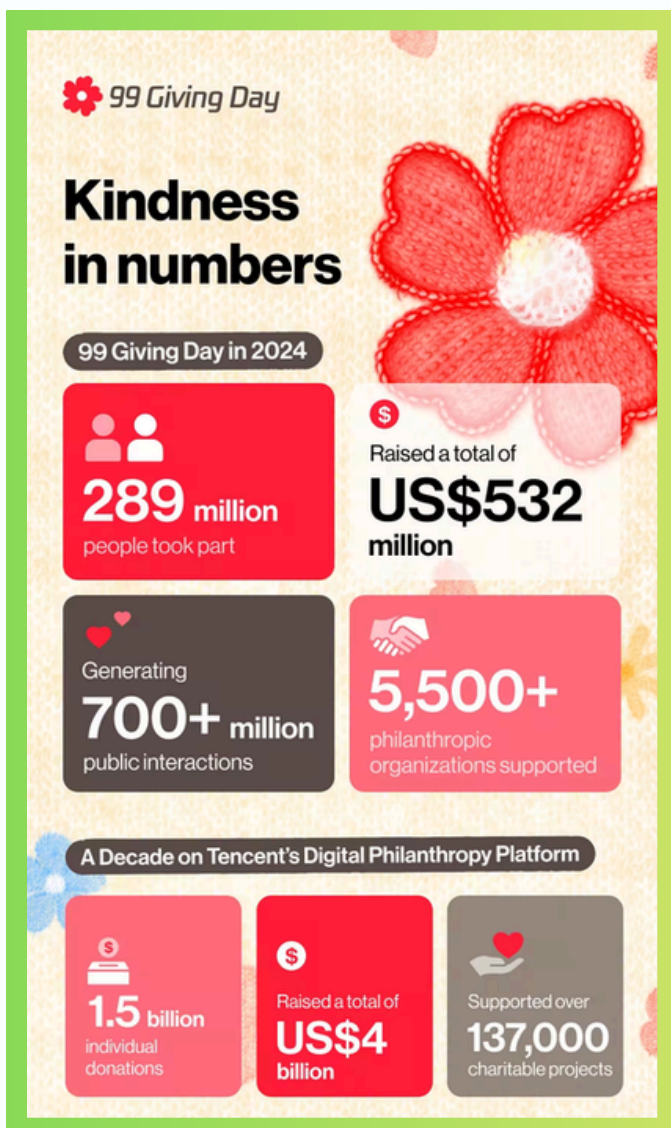
In 2024 alone, 289 million people took part, raising US\$532 million and generating over 700 million acts of kindness. That included 46 million individual donations that supported over 5,500 philanthropic organizations. Over the past decade, Tencent's digital philanthropy platform has facilitated 1.5 billion donations, channeling more than US\$4 billion to over 137,000 charitable projects.

The effectiveness and impact of 99 Giving Day are made possible by Tencent's integrated digital ecosystem. Across Weixin, QQ, and Tencent's games, video, music, cloud, and AI tools, giving has become as natural as any digital interaction. Users can donate while paying for groceries, gaming, or streaming – reducing friction and normalizing charity.¹³





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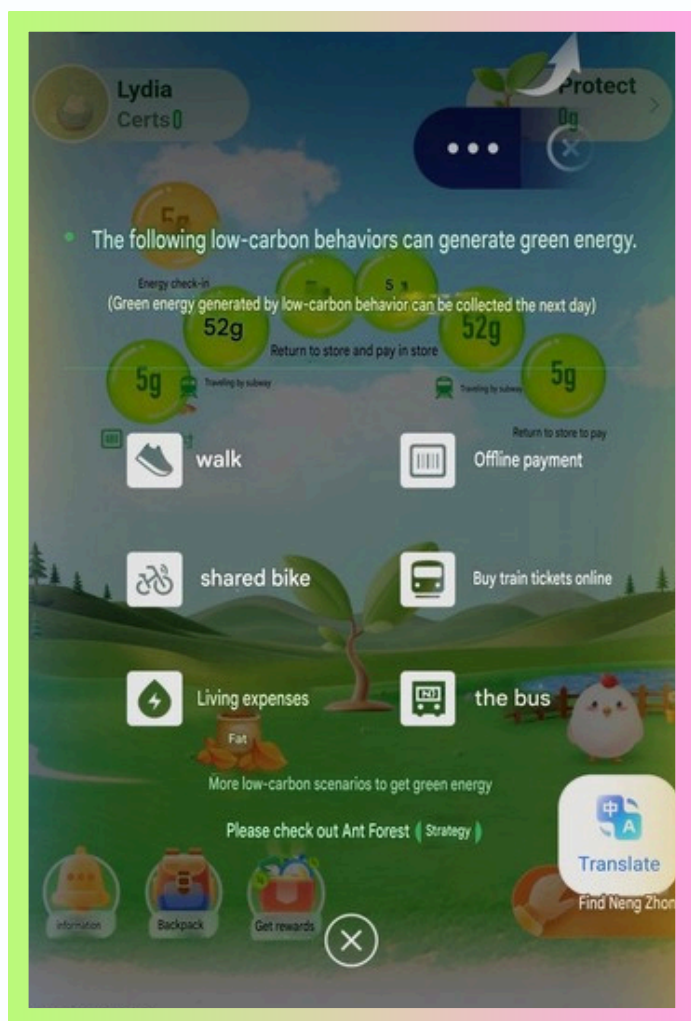
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But it's not just that the tech giants develop separate websites for charity - what is so unique about the Chinese philanthropy sector is what is called 'platformisation' of philanthropy, meaning giving is integrated into the platforms, apps and services people already use everyday, rather than relying on cash-strapped charities to develop their own apps and platforms. They make it easy for users to participate by eliminating barriers and improving availability (this is a good moment to recall 'Ability: how simple and easy the action is to execute' in the Fogg Behaviour Model).

There are two main types of digital giving that China leverages, and both meet people where they are:

- Behavioural Donation: This means donating while doing the things you enjoy, like gaming. A charity could partner with a game and offer a custom skin that users can buy with proceeds going to the charity.
- Scenario-driven Donation: This means looking at the points throughout daily life that could be turned into donation opportunities. Something like scanning an oyster card. Making a payment. Things we already have to do.

One of the more fun examples of this, which an excited local showed me within the app, is Ant Forest by Alipay. Ant Forest is a mini-game within the main Alipay app (one of the two most popular payment platforms in China) that encourages users to take carbon-friendly actions through gamification to create a virtual forest. The company then plants real trees to combat desertification in China based on the volume of actions. The local who showed me this explained that it's a daily habit for them to open the game and do check-ins, which they do on the subway (since, of course, all Chinese subway trains have internet access) but also that it's easy because it's all within a platform that already knows the steps, transport, and other carbon-friendly choices the user has made. The local said they were motivated to do it every day because it was a low-effort way for them to feel like the actions they were doing had some sort of positive impact.



"As of August 2025, more than 750 million users across China have joined Ant Forest. Together, they helped plant 619 million trees. The project also created jobs for local communities who help plant and care for the forests."¹⁶ I tried the game out myself, and it is quite fun. It's also hard to imagine a western equivalent creating and maintaining something similar. What would be the incentive, if it isn't about making money? I'll go into more on that later...

For now, the success of Ant Forest has allowed Alipay to expand the model to other businesses. "Ant Forest continues to evolve as an open platform, inviting partners to use "green energy points" to encourage green actions among their customers. One notable example is Nike's "Recycle-A-Shoe" mini program, launched in the Alipay app in 2022. The program enables Chinese consumers to send in worn-out Nike shoes for recycling.

The collected shoes are dismantled and repurposed into sustainable sports courts using Nike Grind technology. Participants also earn Ant Forest points, which they can use to support tree planting and ecological restoration. As of October 2025, Nike has recycled 430,000 pairs of shoes, helping to create 50 Nike Grind sports courts across China.”¹⁷

And now that digital philanthropy is so embedded, the major players are starting to expand their impact into offline involvement as well. The major example is “Alibaba’s 95 Philanthropic Week [which] has also mobilized 220 million people to participate in rural education, childcare, elderly care, and women’s employment in 2021, besides just online donations.”¹⁸ In 2022, Alibaba even started gamifying this public participation through programs like Three House for a Better World that encourages users to spend time taking actions that can be converted to donations. “Participants can join in various pan-charitable activities such as step donation, voice donation, and quiz answering to obtain a corresponding number of ‘lovely beans’. These beans can be donated to designated public welfare projects, providing operation and maintenance funds on playgrounds, football fields, and sports bags for rural children.”¹⁹

According to professors at the Institute for Philanthropy at Tsinghua University, the involvement of tech giants is the most important characteristic of modern Chinese philanthropy, and it’s easy to see why. But what isn’t so easy to see is: how can we replicate it here?

The Societal Conditions

Much of the above is information you can find out from afar through research. So when I headed off to China to learn more about its digital philanthropy sector, my main goal was to learn more about the societal conditions that made it all possible. I had already done plenty of research and was familiar with the charity platforms of Tencent and Alibaba, but what I couldn’t understand was why the companies participated because it felt so difficult to imagine our western tech giants doing the same. Legitimacy has helped the industry grow, and the numbers are impressive:



Driven by the digital boom, technological progress and enterprise innovation, and under the guarantee of policies and laws, China's internet-based charity undertaking is advancing in an innovative and higher-quality manner. This year marks the 8th anniversary of the enactment of the Charity Law in China, and the past eight years have witnessed the growth, formation and development of the internet-based charity cause in the country.

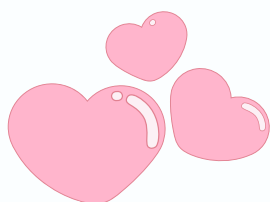
According to statistics from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, donations raised through internet platforms in China increased from 2.5 billion yuan (\$355.87 million) in 2017 to nearly 10 billion yuan in 2021, with more than 10 billion participations in internet charity in the past three years.²⁰



But strong and legitimised charity law is something we have in the UK, too, and for far longer. And yet, for example, the donation technology on Meta platforms is barely functional at best. So, what gives? I sat down with staff at the Institute of Philanthropy at Tsinghua University in Beijing to understand more.

There are two major incentives for companies in China to build and support charitable technology. The first of these is user stickiness. There are now 29 legally-recognised digital philanthropy platforms. The platforms are mostly built and supported by companies whose business model is based on platformisation and keeping users inside a platform that offers multiple integrated services, whether they started in payments, travel, delivery or some other business. Just like Tencent's WeChat with WeChat Pay, mini apps and more and Alibaba's AliPay, DiDi taxis and more, most of these platforms have various other integrated services. This means that the main competitive advantage for these giants is keeping users in their platform versus another, which they can do through both dwell time and growing users' emotional connection with their platform. To compete with each other, these tech giants can use different mechanisms based on other things available on their platforms to make participation more engaging. For example, if you donate through Tencent's platform, you can share an icon on your WeChat profile.

The second incentive is that companies are encouraged by the government to take more social responsibility through CSR (corporate social responsibility) and ESG (environmental, social and governance) activities. And many people I met assured me that the ethics of businesses are different in China in general, and social value is seen as a key to sustainability for a large corporation. At Tencent, for example, they seem to genuinely consider themselves a values-based organisation. Their company motto is 'Value for users, tech for good.' They call their approach CBS (Customers, Businesses, Society). They have a large Social Sustainability department internally that runs their NGO business unit. This includes product managers whose entire jobs are about creating user-facing engaging digital product functionality that delivers social value. They have 8 focus areas of aid (things like child poverty, elderly care, etc) and the social sustainability department is KPI-d on delivering benefit in these areas, not on income. They also have social innovation labs to identify the root causes of issues, not just try to solve them after the fact. So, they are not just using their platforms to mobilise mass audiences, they are also using their money and knowledge to solve social issues, which they often collaborate with the government on for social policy change. Is it perfect? No. Is every business in China acting with pure intentions and creating a harmonious utopia? Probably not. But are they doing more in this space than western tech giants, and has it had a measurable positive impact? Absolutely without a doubt.



Learning for the UK

I mentioned in the introduction for this work that the major prize is creating or adapting the societal conditions that make these innovations work in other countries. For that reason, I won't be recommending that charities go off separately and create their own versions of Ant Farm, or continue expensive and increasingly meaningless proprietary app development. That is something I could do tomorrow in my own role, and while it might be good for my charity, will that materially change generosity in the UK? No. The digital landscape is already so saturated, and young people are bombarded with it endlessly. That means your best shot is not in demanding more of their time and attention but in integrating with their existing digital world, increasing their ability to act.

Recommendation

Recommendation 1: Charities need to come together and use their collective power to get giving and social good back on the prioritisation lists of Google, Meta, Amazon and other tech giants (to make the context more understandable, it is fair to compare Tencent to Google and Meta in the UK and Alibaba to Amazon). I know from experience that the UK's larger charities do have conversations with our tech giants, but we have them separately and have never approached the conversation as a sector at risk (like we did with the aligned response to the Data Use and Access Act 2025 (DUAA)). While 'platformisation' does not exist to the same extent in the UK, our technology companies will still be concerned about user stickiness and dwell time. If nothing else, maybe we can provoke their sense of competitiveness: Why should we have to make do with less good technology services in the UK?

Recommendation 2: Charities and citizens should work with government to create incentivisation for corporations to provide social good. The landscape for government and business relationships is absolutely different in the UK than it is in China, and I am not advocating one way above the other. But even beyond differences in forms of government, the UK government has made things harder for itself by hampering what should be one of its own major incentivisation tools: corporation tax.

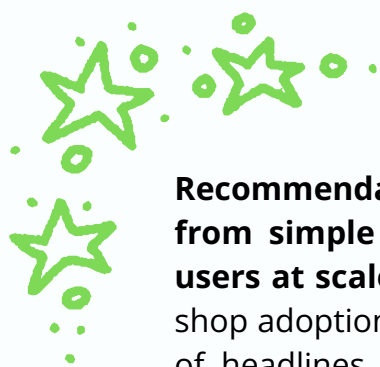


TaxWatch's analysis of seven large US-based technology groups estimates that they may have made almost £15bn of profit from selling to UK customers in 2021. However, their complex tax-driven structures appear to have enabled them to move these profits out of the UK so that they were only liable for UK taxes of around £753m. TaxWatch estimates that without these structures these seven companies would have paid around £2.8bn in UK tax and that by using them they may have avoided tax of roughly £2.0bn.²¹



I think you can probably guess some of the names on that list. The UK government needs to find ways to close corporate tax loopholes if it is going to have a tool for incentivising corporates to play a more sustainable part in society. I'm not recommending that charities lobby for tax reform. For most, it would likely put them on shaky legal footing regarding their charitable purpose. But what stood out to me on my travels again, and again, and again, was that each country I visited had stronger and more fool-proof methods to incentivise corporate societal participation. The difference was so stark that nearly every conversation ground to a dumbfounded halt when I asked for advice beyond tax incentivisation, citing the example that "Starbucks's UK retail business paid no corporation tax for last year as it dived to a £35m loss after paying £40m in royalty and licence fees to its parent company."²² It was simply incomprehensible to everyone I met, academics and business leaders alike. But this collectivism didn't result in some kind of fantasy-land where corporations act for social good on their own - it manifested as a system that codified participation in society. And that should be empowering for us. It means that we can make intentional changes that reflect the kind of society we want to be - one where citizens, governments and corporations all request more from each other.





Recommendation 3: Charities must shift our sector's thinking away from simple and siloed digitisation towards what creates ease for users at scale and helps all boats rise. An example of this is the charity shop adoption and parallel scorn of resale e-commerce. The internet is full of headlines like 'Is Vinted killing charity shops?' and in most of these articles, there is an implicit (and often explicit) amount of blame put on the younger users of these platforms. It's simple to just say that young people are getting greedier and don't want to donate, but is that true? Have charity shops really tried to address the needs and expectations of younger audiences? Online platforms have focused on making it easy for users to sell their items in a time when rapid urbanisation means more and more people do not have cars in which to haul bags full of donation items. And to compete with this, many larger high-street charity shops opened accounts on eBay and Vinted to sell their goods online. But they opened them as sellers in the same way individuals might, becoming yet another user of the platform and in turn competing with the people who they are at the same time trying to attract as customers. This is digitisation - they have just taken a physical shop and digitised it. A more sustainable approach would be to work with platforms like Vinted to build functionality for users to sell their items on behalf of a charity, especially on a percentage split basis where the user still sees some income from the sale (after all, we know from the earlier source that financial pressures are falling disproportionately on current young people compared to previous generations). Vinted still takes their fee, users still have the ease of the platform and feel like they've done some good and charities can benefit from income at scale and brand awareness through things like 'I'm raising funds for ____' profile badges on Vinted. Win, win, win - a sustainable outcome.



SECTION 2: FANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS IN SOUTH KOREA

We've talked about growing ease and ability in China, but what about 'Motivation'? If we want people to be able to act, we need both factors. China is doing plenty of fun things to motivate givers such as charities using live-streaming platforms the same way influencers use them to make money. But what could it look like if we really dove head-first into fun and joy and leveraged one of the most motivated modes of human: The Fan. To find out, I went to South Korea, the major global exporter of Fandom.

The Innovation: Digital Philanthropy at Scale

"A 2019 Hyundai Research Institute (HRI) report put BTS's annual contribution to South Korea's economy at over \$4.65 billion, equivalent to the output of nearly half a million average Korean workers, and comparable, in GDP terms, to Korean Air."²³ From BTS to Squid Game to K-Pop Demon Hunters, the Hallyu Wave isn't showing any sign of slowing down. We know from all of these examples that the Korean entertainment industry is strong, but what really makes it unique is its emphasis on fandom. The term 'fandom business model' has increasingly cropped up in business forums for the past decade. It is different from mere celebrity endorsements, creating an entire ecosystem of engagement, purchase behaviour, community belonging and loyalty behaviour around music groups and even actors. There are three really cool 'innovations' that have come out of this culture - charities partnering with entertainment companies, entertainment companies doing philanthropy through fandom on their own and fandoms self-organising for social causes.

With the entertainment industry being such a large contributor to the economic and cultural output, it's not surprising that charities would start partnering with entertainment companies as corporate partners. But with fandoms, charities have the opportunity to partner with a corporation in a way that goes beyond product lines and comically large checks at press moments. They have the opportunity to tap into the deep (let's be honest, at times obsessive) engagement of fans if they approach the partnership creatively and authentically. One such example of this is a creative cause-led partnership with the K-pop group Enhypen. Enhypen are a group under a subsidiary of HYBE, the largest entertainment company in South Korea, with a growing young fan base. Although like with any pop group, they do have teenage fans, they have a large base of young adults who are financially independent.



It is common for K-pop groups to have an overarching thematic narrative that dictates choices such as music, videos, styling, merchandise, album titles, fan base names and more. Since their debut as a group, Enhypen have been leveraging a 'vampire' theme that has even gone as far as development of a fantasy vampire webtoon series. So, it was both amusing and perfect when the Korean Red Cross announced a collaboration with Enhypen to increase blood donation among young audiences. As part of the partnership, the Seoul donation centres and mobile donation centres were decorated with themes from Enhypen's new album and fans were given limited edition merch after their donation of blood. They also cleverly aligned the mobile bus touring with Enhypen's own live event appearances to maximise exposure.





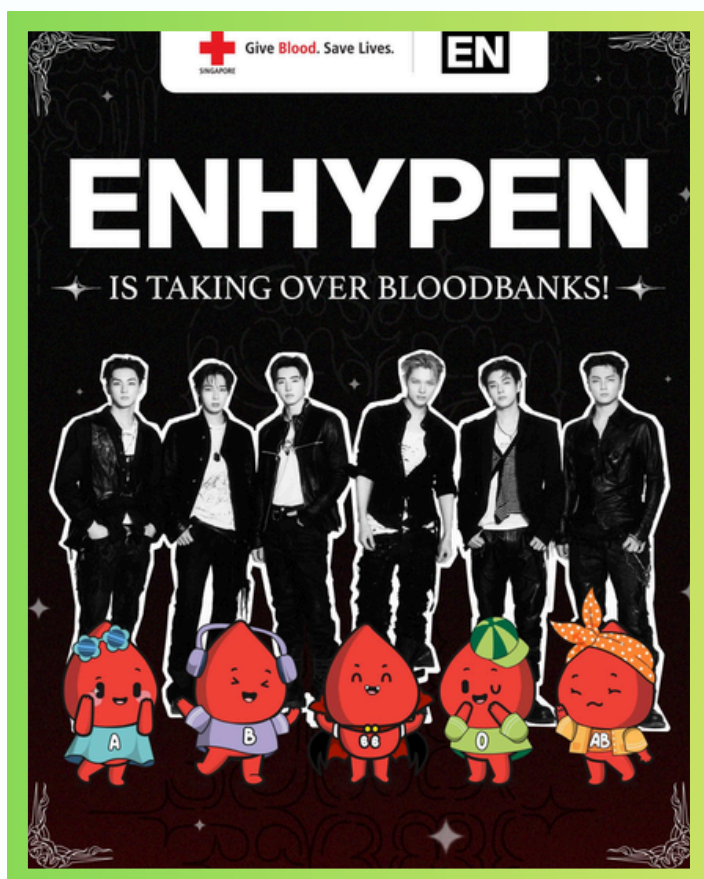
During the ten-day campaign, a total of 3,419 offline blood donors participated. On the first day of the campaign, the three Seoul blood donation centers recorded their highest-ever donation numbers. The online photocard giveaway event also drew 4,311 participants, proving its popularity.

This campaign successfully encouraged active blood donation participation among younger generations while expanding the pool of new donors. The number of first-time donors increased from 54 during the period immediately before the campaign (January 2–11) to 1,031 during the campaign, marking a nearly 19-fold rise. Among offline participants, teenagers and those in their 20s accounted for 70% at blood donation centers and 80% at mobile buses.

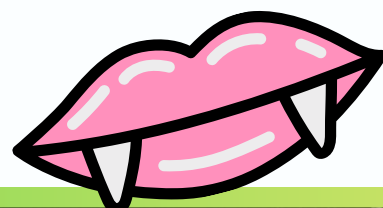
Director Kwon Soyoung of the Korean Red Cross Blood Management Headquarters expressed gratitude, stating, “Although blood reserves remained at critical levels due to the winter cold and school vacations overlapping, the active participation of ENHYPEN’s fandom ‘ENGINE’ greatly aided blood supply.”

She added, “This campaign is meaningful as it shifted the perception of blood donation from a difficult or rigid act to a part of fandom culture shared with artists. We will strive to ensure that first-time donors who joined through this campaign become regular donors.”²⁵





This creative and thematically-aligned initiative showed ENGENSEs (Enhypen's fan base) that the charity had made an effort to understand their interests. If the Korean Red Cross has invested in onward communication journeys for those donors, this initiative can hopefully have long-lasting positive effects for them. Since my travels, the Red Cross has expanded this approach to Singapore based on its success in Korea and Enhypen being the most requested collaboration through its YouthInspire volunteer club. "Rather than selecting an artist based solely on popularity, the campaign reflects a youth-led approach; meeting potential donors through communities they already trust and actively participate in."²⁶



I was also eager to learn from UNICEF Korea's partnership with SM Entertainment, another of the country's entertainment giants. Unlike the Enhypen example of a shorter curated initiative, SM Entertainment and UNICEF Korea have enjoyed a long partnership, celebrating 10 years in 2025. Over the decade, their partnership has covered multiple impactful programs, from music education programs for marginalised and underprivileged children in Asia through to the recent 'Pink Blood' (Pink is SM Entertainment's brand colour) campaign featuring limited edition created in partnership between UNICEF Korea and SM Entertainment bracelets received by regular donors registered through the 'UNICEF KOREA TEAM' campaign page. I learned from the team at The Beautiful Foundation, an organisation that works to promote a philanthropic society, that this is an example of another part of Korean charity culture called 'meaning out,' which is when everyday citizens show others their values through wearing items related to causes. I couldn't help but be reminded of Livestrong bracelets when I saw these. But it's an updated and more mature twist on the concept, and also one that uses fandom loyalty purchase behaviours for cause. Even if SM fans signed up as regular donors to get the limited edition merch, it gives the charity an opportunity to engage the audience further through strong donor communications and campaigns.



Photo: UNICEF Korea Committee

But it's not just charity partnerships that have cropped up in the entertainment industry in South Korea. Entertainment companies have started doing social contribution activities somewhat on their own. For JYP Entertainment, this manifests as a nonprofit program called 'Every Dream Matters'. Originally starting as donations to children's hospitals, JYP Entertainment has expanded the program rapidly to involve volunteering, merchandising and promotion of fan activity. JYPE understand that the strength of fandoms is what allows it to do social good: the company's CEO "highlighted the agency's goal to sustain a "virtuous cycle," guaranteeing the love received from fans is pivoted towards a direction that helps the next generation to safely dream of their futures."²⁸ And this does show up in their results and the way they plan and execute their programs. "A survey of 315 children backed by the program showcased that... their sense of selflessness and desire to give back to society grew roughly by 87%."²⁹ But how does JYPE actively include fans in that 'virtuous cycle' too?

In 2024, JYPE launched an annual nature project called Love Earth that calls on fans directly to participate.

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Love Earth is an eco-friendly project that creates the soil of dreams for children to grow up in a healthy environment. JYP celebrates International Coastal Cleanup Day every year and hosts the "LOVE EARTH CHALLENGE" campaign with JYP artists and fans. This year, under the theme of "Action for Zero," the 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) movement was implemented to reduce waste flowing into the sea for four weeks. DAY6 (Day6), Twice, Stray Kids, ITZY, Xdinary Heroes, and NMIXX (Nmix) participated and made synergy with fans by recording a total of 2,480 participations in about a month. JYP donated a total of 49.6 million won to marine purification activities with gratitude.³⁰

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Another way JYPE involves fans is by taking the charity activity directly to them and in a way that is relevant. In 2025, JYPE introduced specific charity booths at their large-scale events. And again, they tapped into fandom culture to incentivise participation. Fans who donated were given special limited-edition merchandise.

dominATE:celebrate

JYP EDM BOOTH 운영 시간 (Operation Hours)

DAY1 | 10.18. SAT. 13:00 - 17:30(KST)

DAY2 | 10.19. SUN. 12:00 - 16:30(KST)

JYP EDM BOOTH 운영 장소 (Location)

인천아시아드 주경기장 남측광장 (SOUTH SQUARE)

남측 광장 SOUTH SQUARE

1 JYP EDM BOOTH

2 슈퍼스타 JYPNATION SUPERSTAR JYPNATION

3 입장안내소 & 티켓소입 INFORMATION & TICKET BOOTH

4 셔틀버스 정류장 SHUTTLE BUS STOP

5 포토존 PHOTO ZONE

6 화장실 TOILET

jyp_edm • Follow

인천아시아드주경기장

Attention, STAY! 🔥

Join the EDM donation for sick children at the JYP EDM BOOTH during the Stray Kids concert and get a EDM Special Reward. 💖

■ How to Join

- ① At the JYP EDM Booth, receive one Donation Bean as instructed by the staff.
- ② Donate 1,000 KRW or more into the EDM Donation Box (NAVER ID, Account/Card issued in South Korea are required)
- ③ Show your donation page to our staff.
- ④ Receive the EDM Special Reward

■ Operation hours

DAY1. 2025.10.18 13:00 - 17:30 (KST)

DAY2. 2025.10.19 12:00 - 16:30 (KST)

43.4K 148

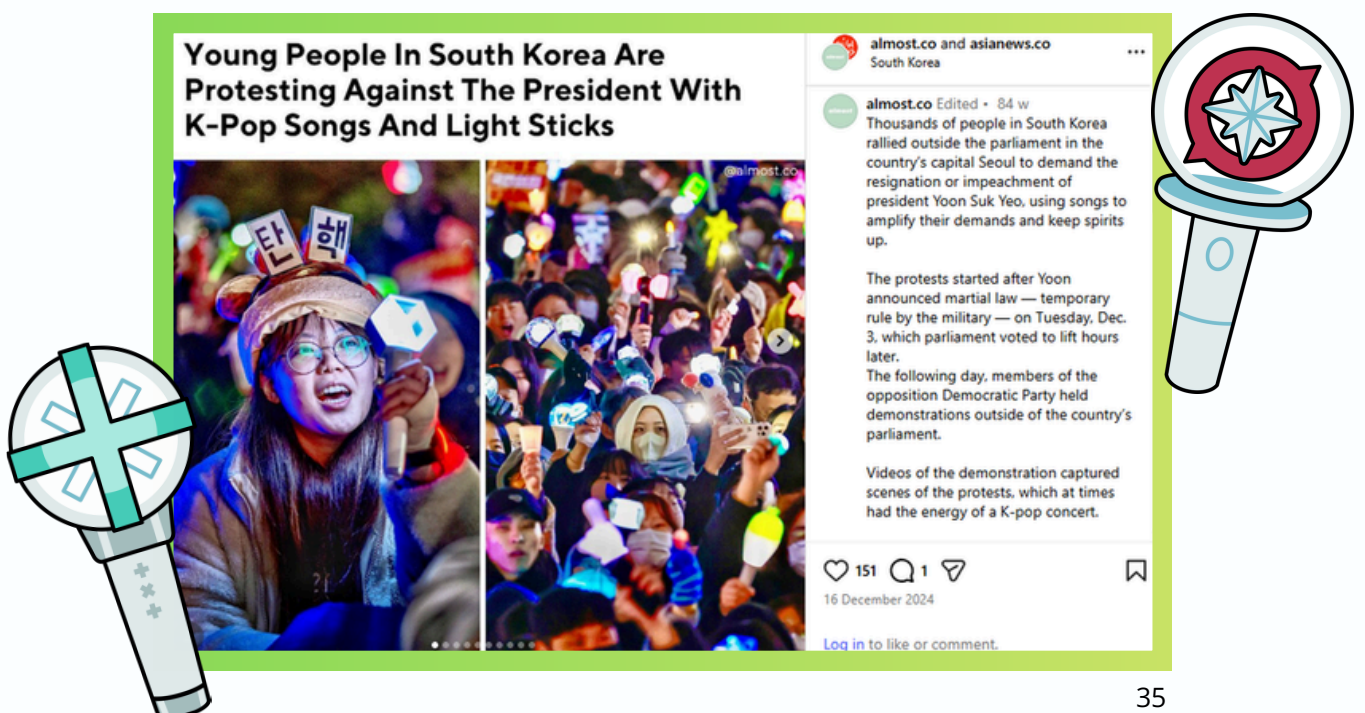
14 October 2025

Log in to like or comment.

32

Clearly there is a lot to say about fandom and social contribution in South Korea. But even though there is a lot for the UK to learn from the entertainment industry, what I find most compelling is the way fandom culture has evolved into fandoms acting autonomously on behalf of causes and shared values. Due to the competitive nature of the K-pop industry, fans are accustomed to coming together to achieve sales and streaming goals through collective action. So it's not too surprising that some of those collective action muscles might turn their attention towards other shared goals beyond K-pop. I will give you three fun examples:

1	In 2020, BTS announced a \$1m donation to Black Lives Matter. ARMY (the name of BTS's fan base) immediately started to trend the hashtag #MatchAMillion on Twitter, raising \$817,000 within the first 24 hours and ultimately easily matching their idols' donation. But ARMY's self-organised activism doesn't stop at raising funds: "BTS's social media following is known for its devotion and activism and had already organised online protests in support of Black Lives Matter. Last week, K-pop fans took over the hashtag #whitelivesmatter, posting en masse to drown out white-supremacist or racist posts using the hashtag."³³
2	The Beautiful Foundation, in addition to being a research organisation, also runs multiple cause-supporting funds. One of these is a fund that supports youth leaving social care. In 2020, one of South Korea's most popular actors, Kim Seon-ho, played a beloved character in the drama <i>Start Up</i>. A major part of his character's background was aging out of the orphanage where he lived at the age of 17 and being sent out into the wide world with about £1,500 to his name. In the years after the drama, Kim Seon-ho's fans have reached out to The Beautiful Foundation to donate to their fund in Kim Seon-ho's name in honour of the character he played.
3	Lastly is my personal favourite: K-pop fan activism in South Korea's recent protests against martial law. Not only did young protesters show up with K-pop light sticks, they also sang songs like "Into the New World" by Girls' Generation, which talks about a hopeful future during uncertain times. This gave rise to a new phenomenon called 'light stick protests' which has since spread to Gen Z protesters in Japan and Taiwan. In all three countries, fans used rapid social media coordination (similar to the earlier example of BTS's ARMY fanbase fundraising) to create a movement, and in Korea, fans even lent light sticks free of charge and organised online to pre-pay for protesters' coffees and snacks at restaurants nearby.³⁴



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The Societal Conditions

What was so fascinating to me about the Korean Red Cross and UNICEF Korea examples is that these are both charities we have in the UK. That means these kinds of activities are not something we can dismiss as being specific to the charity itself, but there are instead local conditions that make these things happen.

What incentivises companies to take part? Once again, taxes play a major role. South Korea has strictly enforced corporation tax with comparatively few loopholes to the extent where even Starbucks does not operate directly in the country and instead licenses its brand to a Korean company. This tax landscape means that large companies are incentivised through tax breaks to participate in corporate social responsibility. To make this more visible, most of the major entertainment companies have started specific arms of their business. For SM, this is 'SMile' and for JYPE this is JYP EDM or 'Every Dream Matters'. These external-facing CSR sub-brands allow them to do activities across different artists, causes, charities and countries all under a recognisable banner.

Interest from corporations also makes it easier for giving-based social innovations to find a market. One of the companies I loved in South Korea is CHERRY, a technology company that leverages and combines multiple technologies to make donating easier. Their blockchain technology grows trust in donations while their physical digitised kiosks (similar to food ordering kiosks) bring donation opportunities into unexpected places. CHERRY Photo taps into Korea's love for photo booths (seriously, they are everywhere) with portable photo booths that donate a portion of sales to charity. CHERRY Walk allows you to turn your steps into donations if you have their app downloaded. Existing infrastructures like this make it easier for companies like JYP Entertainment to have branded CHERRY donation booths or photobooths at their concerts.

There is also a strong culture of community and gathering in Korea that potentially goes beyond definitional collectivism. In one of my interviews, I heard, "Koreans love community so they create communities wherever they can." There is also a local perception that women tend to be more generous. K-pop fandoms do have a gendered skew, but baseball was also shared with me as an example. There is a female-led fan culture emerging around baseball, so charities are seeing more activity from baseball teams and fans. Obviously achieving a generous society does not happen if only one gender is involved, but understanding differences in how certain groups approach social contribution is important to unlocking change at scale.



Learning for the UK



Recommendation

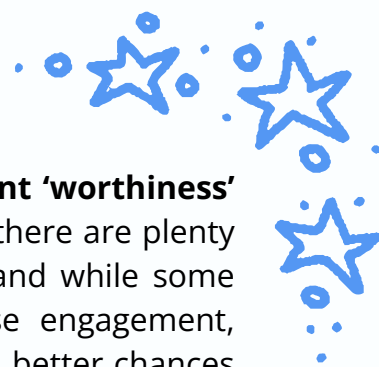
Recommendation 1: Charities need to leverage global fandom, including being more fun and imaginative with partnerships. For example, Jennie from Blackpink, the biggest girl group right now, is obsessed with capybaras to the point where capybara keyrings went viral due to her. How could organisations like Chester Zoo, who have an 'Adopt a Capybara' regular giving product, be leveraging this interest to get Jennie's fans engaging in their work? One existing example in the UK of such thinking is the V&A, both through their Taylor Swift item trail that brought an unprecedented number of new visitors to less-accessed V&A galleries and their hiring of Swifties and Pokemon advisors on fan culture and memorabilia. Both programs earned them a large volume of press attention and reach with new audiences. For UNICEF Korea, it's not just a one-off but an important part of their strategy:

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Celebrity- and fandom-driven campaigns definitely play an important role in introducing UNICEF Korea to new audiences. Fans are not just passive consumers of content; they often connect deeply with the values and messages promoted by the artists they support. As a result, a positive image naturally forms around “artists and fandoms creating good influence together,” and these experiences often spread organically within fan communities. From the perspective of the corporate partnerships team, this virtuous cycle is extremely important. Positive fan engagement and participation become strong motivation for artists and entertainment companies to continue their social contribution efforts, often leading to long-term partnerships and additional support over time.

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- UNICEF Korea

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Recommendation 2: Charities must let go of the upfront ‘worthiness’ at every supporter interaction point. The reality is that there are plenty of ways someone might become involved with a cause, and while some may not have historically led to deeper levels of cause engagement, today’s customer journey technology means charities have better chances than ever at converting new audiences into regular supporters, but they have to first provide an experience that is memorable and consistent with understanding their needs and interests. Looking at the example of CHERRY donation kiosks at concerts, could we be partnering with Live Nation or AXS to do something similar at major events in the UK? It is a casual entry point, of course, but just because someone gave blood to get the Enhypen photocards doesn’t mean they don’t now better understand the value of giving blood. Just because someone gave money at a concert doesn’t make their money any less meaningful than someone who came directly to a charity’s website. It just means they currently have a different relationship with the cause, and charities need to work to nurture that relationship. I hear this worry about superficial involvement from charities often, including ones in other countries. It’s not a hill worth dying a virtuous death on, and honestly that is what will happen if we don’t collectively get over it and get out of our own way. If that sounds strong, that’s because it’s important. The whole impetus for this Fellowship is a persistent decline in national generosity that could spell the collapse of the entire third sector if we don’t acknowledge we cannot continue with the same methods and audiences.



Recommendation 3: Charities should use fandom business models to build fandoms for their own cause. In a more urban and digital world, fandom is often how people find and build community. Previous generations might have taken charitable action through their local church or village hall, which would have been relevant to them based on geography and lifestyle. Today, relevance and community can be built more easily through shared interests due to the way algorithms and AI connect us with information. Charities need to learn how to navigate this ‘fandom funnel’ in the same way for-profit organisations do.

“Fan communities do not consume brands the way general audiences do. They champion brands that earn their trust — and they do so vocally, collectively, and across every platform simultaneously.”³⁶

But you need to meet potential fans where they are, through their interests and on their platforms. To do this, you can work with other fandoms to build identity for your cause’s own fandom, much like BBC Earth has done with its move into the South Korean retail market. BBC used YouTube viewership data to identify a potential market in Korea. They then partnered with a local distributor to open bricks and mortar stores in Seoul with gorpcore (hiking-inspired streetwear) fashion modelled and merchandised by K-pop artists. “A K-Pop brand partnership that achieves genuine community acceptance is not generating awareness among millions of individuals. It is generating advocacy among millions of organized participants.”³⁷ This isn’t just a creative partnership - it was an intentional move from online relevance to offline impact that has raised the profile of their nature cause.

For large Korean charities operating in a more mature fandom economy, the potential is obvious:

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We are gaining insights from the K-pop industry, including SM Entertainment, on how passionate communities can change the world. We are shifting our focus beyond simply recruiting donors; we are now deeply interested in the process of creating 'fans' of UNICEF Korea.

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- UNICEF Korea

When audiences have limited resources and more things than ever demanding their attention constantly, it is not enough for charities to market their cause or their products. The aims of charities are the same as the inherent outcomes of fandoms: building loyalty, inspiring participation and driving collective action. It’s not about shaming young people for choosing to spend their energy on entertainment instead of causes - it’s about charities learning to give them a reason to do so.

SECTION 3: NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US IN SINGAPORE

Civic participation is the cornerstone of a functioning democracy. I won't include a scholarly source for that because I hope we're all in agreement. In the 2024 World Giving Index, which kicked off the start of my research, Singapore moved up a staggering 19 places. This was driven by improvements across multiple categories, but what really caught my eye was their growth in volunteering among young people. After doing some reading and joining the Youth Corps Singapore Telegram channel, I knew I had to visit.

The Innovation: Authentic Participation & Involvement

When I visited, the Singapore government was just getting ready to launch the SG Youth Plan, a 5-year national roadmap to help youths become 'Confident, Connected, and Contributing citizens' (these are the three pillars of the plan). Not just a bill or a performative government document, the plan was co-created over the course of a year with over 60,000 youths.

I was lucky enough to be able to sit down with some of the senior civil servants leading the change to hear all about it. Although I went in with most interest in the 'Contribution' pillar, they were very clear that the three pillars exist together to recognise the interdependency of issues. For example, many of the societal challenges addressed in the 'Confidence' pillar such as job security, mental health and adult life skills are all necessary for young people to have the space and security to volunteer. Data shows people are less likely to volunteer alone, so similarly, youths who are more 'Connected' through wider social circles and community spaces are also more able to participate in society. The cohesion of the plan is fundamental to its success. While it is dependent on the other two, the 'Contribution' pillar speaks to one of the Prime Minister's main priorities, the philosophy of "WE first vs ME first," which absolutely resonated. For those involved, it is about putting community over self to counter fault lines across age, race, religion and socioeconomic background. For the government, it is also a top-down message they use with businesses as well to encourage growth in Corporate Social Responsibility. Explicitly extending this social contribution model to the business sector is a strong parallel with the approaches in China and South Korea.



To promote youth volunteering, the government realised they needed to tackle a few major barriers. The data showed there was more lifetime 'stickiness' if habits were built early, so they work with the Ministry of Education to ensure every school-age teen has an opportunity to volunteer. However, the 'bathtub effect' on volunteering is also a challenge. It is the phrase to describe the trend that young adults stop volunteering after school and do not begin again until later in life when demands on their resources have reduced. Through their consultation, they realised time was the most critically limited resource for Singaporean youth. They introduced bite-size volunteering by focusing on three things:

- 
- **Geography: Micro-volunteering opportunities in your immediate area**
 - **Workplace: Creating volunteering opportunities within the workplace such as business mentoring.**
 - **Discoverability: Launched Discover Civic Action, a digital portal that makes it easy to filter and find volunteering opportunities.**

They also diversified the opportunities to volunteer, which required opening up the understanding of 'contribution' to go beyond traditional volunteering. This included culture change within their own departments to being open to different reasons why people volunteer - for example, it's okay if it's for a CV. They are also increasingly encouraging thinking more about social impact as ground-up actions such as hackathons and social entrepreneurship. By accepting and encouraging more ways for people to contribute their time, talent and ideas to society, they make it easier and more enjoyable for youths to get started. Their major goal is to ensure that every citizen can say they were given an opportunity to be involved.

There are two specific initiatives in Singapore that had my jaw on the floor: *SCAPE and Youth Corps Singapore. Both are part of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth's investment in Singaporean youth and can be found in Somerset Belt near Orchard Road, one of the most expensive parts of the city. It is an area that the government has designated a 'youth precinct' to give youth their own community space, and in a desirable location.



Towering over the road is *SCAPE, “A unique blend of retail and community space, [that] quickly became a vibrant hub where youth gathered to create, connect, and grow.”³⁸ Launched in 2010, the whole building has just undergone a massive regeneration in consultation with the youth who do seem to genuinely feel a sense of ownership over the space. “Today, *SCAPE continues to evolve with the needs of youth — offering programmes, communities, and spaces that support their interests, ideas, and aspirations.”³⁹ I visited the building with the National Youth Council team who shared info behind the approach to the building. Each floor has a different purpose, ranging from leisure and hobbies to mental health and career services. But it’s flexible for what youths need, with things like exam periods becoming major events for *SCAPE to turn into a study hall and deploy its mental health advisors to help with stress.





The *SCAPE building may contain retail units, but it is not itself a profit-making endeavour. The team are very discerning about tenants; businesses must be able to demonstrate some kind of social benefit they bring to the space, and leases are relatively short so that the youth representatives can choose whether to keep or change a space. Keeping the decision-making with the youth representatives is a critical part of how they keep the space relevant and vibrant since its November 2025 refresh.

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Gone are the days of top-down planning and – as invariably follows – scrambling for answers when the response does not pan out as expected. ‘That was the old *SCAPE,’ he [*SCAPE’s acting executive director Ethen Ong] says. ‘In the new *SCAPE, you tell me what you want. Which programmes are able to draw a crowd? Which programmes can form communities? Let me know and I will provide you with spaces, with funding.’

In short, the new management’s approach is ‘no longer deterministic.’ Even the infrastructure of the space – from the profusion of mirrors to the power sockets tucked behind benches – is shaped by requests from young people.⁴⁰

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I actually went to *SCAPE by myself twice just to soak up the atmosphere. I stood on the pavement laughing when I saw an SM Entertainment K-pop store and dance studios through the window, the clear connection of fandom and youth voice made real in Singapore. At first, I felt a little bit conspicuous while walking around. Not because I wasn’t from Singapore, but because I felt a bit like an overaged voyeur. When you’re doing something like a Fellowship or you’re representing an organisation as a senior leader, you can sometimes forget that you are just a person who is also a youth (by Singapore’s standards, at least.). Hearing the National Youth Council team remind me that this space was also for me did something in my brain. I felt more confident and even started to feel a sense of belonging. I wanted to get involved. It’s that feeling we need to capture, and the power of confirming to young people, “This is for you. How would you like to shape it?” The government of Singapore asked, and the young people of Singapore stood up and answered.



Right across from *SCAPE in the Somerset Belt is an equally striking building called The Red Box. It is home to Youth Corps Singapore, an organisation launched by MCCY in 2014 to champion youth volunteerism and build active citizenry.

They are intentionally right across from *SCAPE, making the next level of community involvement as easy as crossing the street. And how can youths not be drawn in?

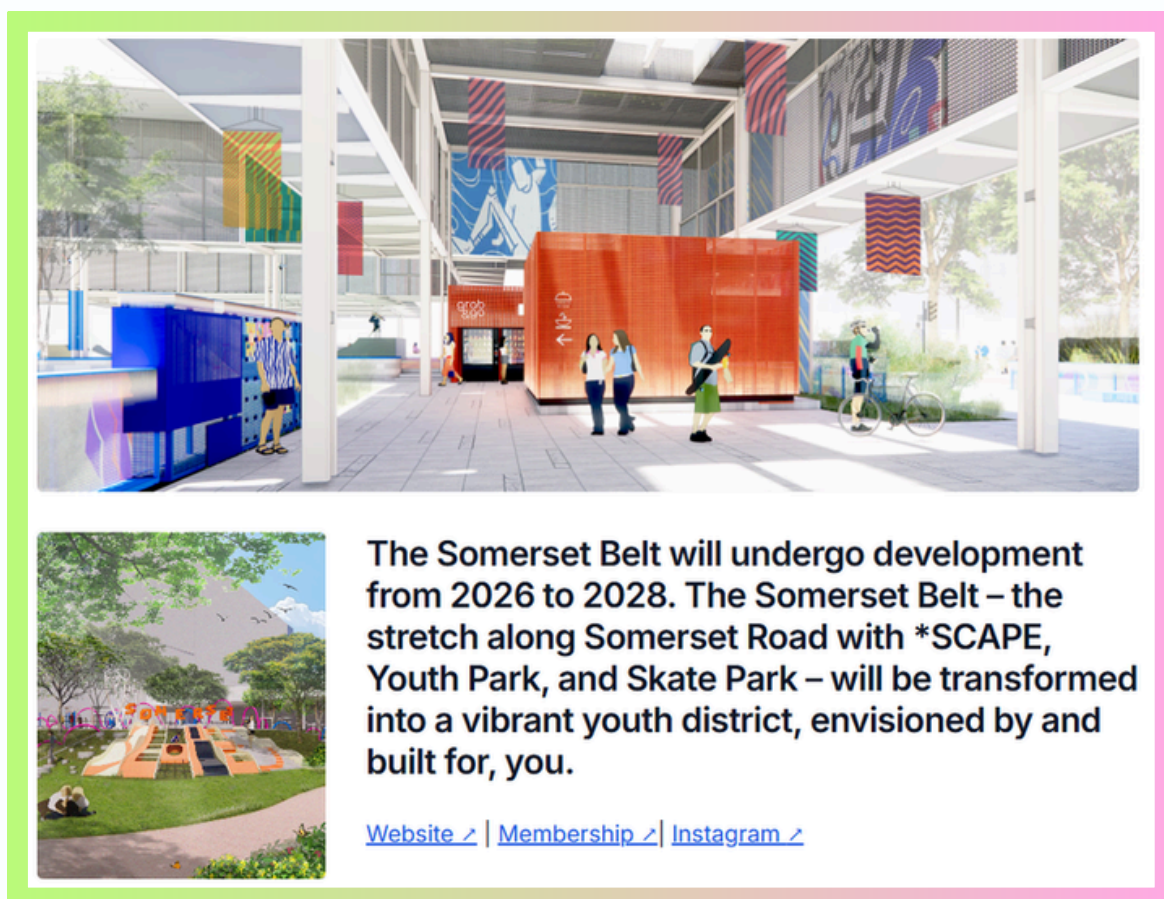


There are free t-shirts for volunteering, blind boxes to open, youth-led events and overseas opportunities. They organise bite-size volunteering (3 to 4 hours) across seven different causes and recurring programmes across senior and children's causes. They aim for socially mixed volunteering so that activities also promote social cohesion. Youth volunteers can find and sign up to activities via a simple and engaging website, while deeper engagement is available for those who want to become volunteer leaders or undertake paid community internships with local non-profits. Youths can also participate in Mission X, a 3-4 day event to inspire them to come up with an idea that solves a social challenge, with funding available after to spend time developing their ideas.



In 2024, Youth Corps Singapore launched a youth-led development of its new strategy, which is not just about more volunteers but instead focuses on building the next generation of volunteer leaders. Much like the new 10-year strategy at my UK-based organisation, their focus is on creating a movement that becomes a self-sustaining system. To achieve this, they are beginning to shift from staff-led to participant-led responsibilities in small but meaningful ways. Youth volunteers identified and formed 10 groups of 30-70 members each based on their passions and interests. Through these clusters, which can be cause-based, skills-based or programme-based, Youth Corps Singapore aims to sustain volunteerism by increasing active participation and agency, slowly devolving power to the groups where possible.

If you are sensing a theme between the two organisations, it's intentional. The National Youth Council was made an autonomous organisation under MCCY in 2015, and its evolution is an example of a maturing societal change that is in its growing and changing phase as it moves from manual effort to momentum-based movement. It's a challenging stage that many less brave organisations and countries might abandon, but Singapore can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and it's leaning in.



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The Societal Conditions

I won't lie, Singapore blew my mind. I think it is the closest I've ever seen to a solarpunk city, which was hugely inspirational as someone working for a nature conservation charity. In addition to my time in the Somerset Belt area with youth organisations, I also visited the Urban Redevelopment Authority and the Housing & Development Board. I spoke with people who remembered a childhood when the British finally left Singapore. They told me that under colonial rule, many of the residents were living in slums, which is hard to imagine after walking around modern day Singapore with its futurising high-rises. How did they make such a drastic change in such a relatively short period of time? After listening to many different people and seeing the country from as many different angles as I could in my albeit short time there, what stood out is Singapore's commitment to two principles: cohesion and adaptation.

Whether the topic is housing developments or volunteering groups, the Singaporean government puts a clear focus on ethnic mixing to foster community cohesion. In a diverse and population-dense country, it's seen as paramount for a healthy society. I think many Westerners would find the concept of forced ethnic quotas in housing developments very jarring at first, but the everyday people I spoke to didn't see it that way. I'm not naive enough to think it's popular with every single citizen, but it's a (now) proven approach that I'm not sure has been seriously considered elsewhere.

EMBRACING SOCIAL DIVERSITY



Our society is becoming more diverse. As a global hub, Singapore embraces an exciting and interesting blend of peoples, nationalities and ideas.

Heartland life as we know it today will evolve as it reflects this rich diversity. In designing community-centric towns that foster a strong community spirit and identity, we aspire for residents to share common spaces. We will continue to explore:

- New housing typologies with a mix of flat types to facilitate social integration among neighbours
- Design of common spaces and facilities that generate spontaneous community interactions



Collaborative place-making programmes that enhance the vibrancy of public spaces and serve as community catalysts





When it comes to adaptation, challenge breeds creativity. Singapore is small, measuring about 0.3% of the land area of the United Kingdom. This means they've needed to learn to build up instead of out. Previous housing developments from the 1980s are being replaced with newer, taller and more sustainable housing. Meanwhile, the country is also at high-risk of negative impacts from climate change and becoming increasingly innovative with urban greenery solutions such as vertical greening, roof gardens and floating wetlands to create a cooler, more liveable environment. They have even designated one of the neighbourhoods, Punggol, as a 'Living Laboratory' to test-bed new sustainable initiatives in urban planning, design and green-building solutions. So, it's not surprising that the country is willing to try new things to engage young people.

Recommendation

Recommendation 1: We must push for more government focus on youth in society. We cannot expect the next generation to participate in society when society has not invested in them. I'm heartened to see that the UK has launched a ten-year national youth strategy called Youth Matters, and there are a lot of parallels between the two countries' approaches. I have spent an amount of time comparing the two models, and while there are many great initiatives in the UK's approach, it has some major vulnerabilities in delivery and funding. It is highly reliant on charities and local authorities for both delivery and funding, two sectors that are famously under stress right now.

Singapore's approach integrates youth policy directly into the state economy, housing pipelines, and career transitions, and puts much more emphasis on addressing systemic challenges facing young people like diminishing affordable housing and stagnating salaries. The UK should continue its focus on young people but learn from Singapore's honesty about addressing challenges and its apolitical consistency with youth support.



Recommendation 2: We must hand over more decision-making power to young people. Sustainability for movements only comes through involvement and agency. In order to create a more generous society, we must have a more active and involved society. What I witnessed in Singapore is a consistent approach of consultation, participation and attempts to share power for better results. Local groups are involved in co-design of neighbourhoods. This is in stark comparison to a topic I've been following in my local community where the greater city's mayor has used newly given mayoral powers to overturn the local council's community-backed decision on a housing development in a heritage space. What could that process have looked like if the mayor's office had worked with the local community to decide the best use future of the space instead of having a for-profit developer submit a planning application? If we repeatedly block people from involvement, we cannot be surprised at their eventual apathy. We need to build the structures, at every level, for citizens to be active in their societies. Again, I am pleased to see initiatives emerging like the Power of Youth Charter which "will give young people the opportunity to shape how government programmes are designed and measured from the start," but this needs to be part of a wider cultural shift to centre community voices in decision making processes that impact them directly.



To trust our youth means you need to be able to empower them for them to learn. It also means that our risk appetite must increase.



- Ethen Ong, *SCAPE's acting executive director



Recommendation 3: Community needs to be a governmental priority.

And not just listed on a document, but with a clear investment and involvement pathway that includes wider circulation of this message. The UK government has begun to recognise this through its Pride in Place Strategy. There is so much synergy between this plan and what I've been talking about in Singapore, and I am cheering it along to be fully realised. But again this approach is heavily reliant on third party funding from groups like National Lottery Heritage Fund and grant programmes that could change with governmental changes. Compare this to the UK's approach to defence spending, which are strict, legally binding state commitments that are rising over the next decade. I question whether the UK government is taking community and youth investments as seriously as it might be. Given the race riots I mentioned at the start of this report, I would like to see the government give community cohesion the same level of seriousness as defence. This doesn't have to mean a simple shifting of budget from one line to the other.

Singapore spends significantly more on defence on a per-capita basis than the UK, but this is because the approach it takes to defence is entirely different. Singapore does not view social spending through a passive welfare lens. Its "Total Defense" framework merges military defence with psychological, social, and economic readiness, much of which comes through investment in citizens. Singapore is of course a much smaller country, which comes with both opportunities and challenges, but it demonstrates multiple novel approaches that we could learn from in the UK. Even if it's not a like-for-like adoption, these approaches from other nations remind us that we do not have to accept things the way they are. There are always new methods and new ideas to try.



CONCLUSION: THE KIDS ARE GONNA BE ALRIGHT (IF WE LET THEM)

Like many Churchill Fellows before me, I thought I had a clear focus going into this research. But what I've learned has surprised and challenged me to think both more expansively and more specifically.

I wish this report was forty pages of implementable, short term ideas to get an entire generation active in society and generosity. But it isn't, because any one of the examples, or even a combination of a few of them, in this report are not going to materially change the UK's generosity problem. Resilient economies and societies are not built overnight, and we can reasonably expect the level of change needed to take up to fifty years. But what I do hope I've demonstrated is something of a hodge-podge blueprint for behavioural change among young people. We've increased ease in China with technology and in Singapore with participative systems and increased motivation and provided prompts to act in South Korea by harnessing the power of interests.

To summarise:

- We need to make taking charitable action as **easy** as possible for young people. Systemic barriers to act (socio-economic, geographic, time) must be genuinely addressed and alleviated.
- We need to make causes relevant, interesting or fun for them (bonus if all three!) so that young people feel understood and **motivated** to act.
- We need to share ownership of our causes so that young people feel a sense of involvement and belonging in order to continue to act now and long into the future.

Although this report has been focused on young people, the changes and recommendations are not exclusive to young people and benefit wider society as well. This change requires collaboration on a grand scale - charities, government and large private companies. It is daunting, but the benefit of a global community means we have plenty of inspiration for different models and approaches. The UK should seek to continuously learn from others without ego.

Finally, we should be emboldened to demand, create and foster a positive and generous society rather than accepting a degrading one. We can be heartened by the fact that others are doing so in countries all around us. It will not be quick nor easy, but a healthy and equitable society is worth our time and effort.



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香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



CHINA
DEVELOPMENT
BRIEF



About the Author

Lydia Hunter is Head of Innovation & Ventures at the National Trust, Europe's largest conservation charity.

With a background in the music industry and nearly a decade of experience in e-commerce and marketing, Lydia specialises in bringing a unique understanding of fans and internet culture to the charitable sector.

After a career of always being the youngest leader in the room, Lydia cares deeply about the role young people can and should play in shaping the future.

Lydia's Fellowship knits together all three of the above life experiences. Meaningful change is long and difficult, but she hopes to always embody "greater ideals, greater hopes, and patience to realise both." (Octavia Hill, National Trust co-founder)

Opinions expressed are solely Lydia's own and do not express the views or opinions of the National Trust.



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