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2008

The Charity Ecosystem

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Citation

Cheng, Willie. The Charity Ecosystem. (2008). *Social Space*. 4-13.

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THE CHARITY ECOSYSTEM



The non-profit sector is slowly moving from an era of 'Just Doing Good' to one of 'Doing Good Well'. Willie Cheng argues that this new era requires the various components of an effective and self-sustaining charity ecosystem — regulator, capacity builders, charities, beneficiaries and the community (individuals, corporations, media and government) — to be in place and functioning properly.

Cultural and structural issues have led the charity world to be less effective than what we might be used to in the commercial world. But the winds of change are blowing.

Across the world, non-profit organisations are growing in number and variety. The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project¹, a pioneering study of the non-profit sector in over 40 countries, calls the phenomenon a “veritable global associational revolution”, where there is a “massive upsurge of organised private, voluntary activity in virtually every region of the world – in developed countries of North America, Western Europe and Asia; through Central and Eastern Europe; and in much of the developing world”.

A country's economy comprises three key pillars: the public sector, the private sector and the people sector (charity/civil society). However, the Johns Hopkins Project indicates that social and political discourse has been heavily dominated by a “two-sector model that acknowledges the existence mainly of only ... the market and the state”.

This is likely more so in Singapore where the charity sector is much smaller than the private and public sectors. It is therefore not surprising that in the aftermath of recent charity scandals, the call for measures has come mainly from the other two sectors. There is a strong drive to apply corporate standards and business practices to non-profits. Equally, there is a hard push to incorporate the rigours of public sector regulations to charities.

In a country very much driven by economic imperatives, and which has a very corporate-like government, it is no wonder that our views on charity are often shaped by corporate and business paradigms. But can we apply the same paradigms that work in the private sector and even the corporatised public sector to drive similar success in the charity sector?

Business Versus Charity Paradigms

Although there appear to be correlations, sometimes the application of business paradigms to the non-profit world can have dramatic and divergent results. Consider the two related areas of funding and governance: private enterprises are funded on an ongoing basis by their customers, while charities are largely funded by their donors. The crux of this simple but fundamental difference is that the amounts of money that charities attract do not always correlate with their needs or the value that they deliver.

For example, with the full onslaught of government support and media exposure, the Courage Fund for SARS victims raised S\$32 million in record time. This amount had less to do with the real needs of victims, which was unclear at that time, and more to do with the effectiveness of the campaign and sentiment generated. The fund had to subsequently deal with questions over whether the money was properly applied for SARS-related purposes.²

On the other hand, there are numerous charities which support good causes, and whose beneficiaries are no less deserving than SARS victims. Yet, they struggle to raise sufficient money to even survive. Humanity and Golden Kids, a cancer support charity, folded several years ago. Another charity for brain-damaged children, Amazing Kidz, served more than 200 beneficiaries before closing down due to a lack of funding.

Within the private sector, companies also come and go, but the basis for their growth and demise is different. They survive by delivering value in the eyes of the customers. If they fail to make money, they close down. If they make too much money, other players enter until there is equilibrium. Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' keeps the market in balance.

But this 'invisible hand' is absent in the non-profit world. This is because the role of the customer is divided into two – beneficiaries and donors. The value delivered is received by beneficiaries who typically do not pay much (if at all) for any of the services rendered. The services are paid for by donors who give based on generosity rather than value.

There is therefore no equivalent market mechanism to keep competing organisations in equilibrium. It would be naive to say that market forces would sort out which charities are worthwhile and which are not worth funding. It does not work that simply – we need to take into account how different motivations affect behaviour in the non-profit 'marketplace'.

To bridge this disconnect between money given and value delivered, the answer that some people have proposed is governance. Corporate governance, already the buzz word in the commercial world, is now much talked about in the non-profit sector.

The concept is straightforward: the board of directors is fully responsible and liable for the business. It accounts for the business to the owners or shareholders, and it is expected to comply with a set of good governance practices and regulations.

It is very tempting – and many people have, too literally, applied the concept of corporate governance to the charity world. The trouble is, in the non-profit world, the legal owners are often the same people as the board of directors – so it is easy to serve one's own interests.

Charity is about the moral owners of the organisation – the community. Because of this moral ownership, there are two additional levels of governance beyond the board of directors that come into play in the charity sector much more strongly than in the corporate world. They are the regulators and the public. The public gives legitimacy to the existence of a charity organisation. So, even if a non-profit goes out of kilter and escapes the court of law, it must still contend with the court of public opinion just as the National Kidney Foundation (NKF)³ did.

The Charity Ecosystem

To understand the charity world, we must approach it with a different set of filters. While certain business concepts may be equally applicable, some adaptation is required.

One such paradigm is of a fully functioning ecosystem. The term 'ecosystem' originates from biology where it refers to a self-sustaining community of organisms. For our purpose, an ecosystem can be defined as a system whose members benefit from each other's participation via symbiotic relationships.

And just as systems can comprise of sub-systems, an ecosystem can comprise of sub-ecosystems which interact with and benefit each other. Thus, the country ecosystem comprises of three sub-ecosystems: the enterprise ecosystem (the private sector), the state ecosystem (the public sector) and the charity/civil society ecosystem (the people sector).

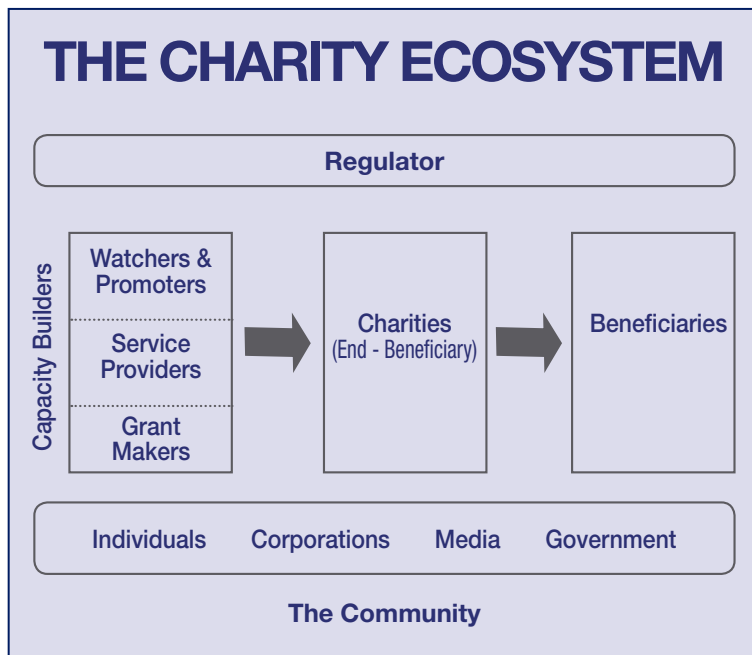
The beauty of the ecosystem paradigm is the way it applies systems thinking to a complex environment. Biological ecosystems comprise interdependent organisms that interact, sometimes in deadly competition, with each other and the environment to create a self-sustaining community. Non-biological ecosystems (such as the charity ecosystem) may not necessarily function well or self-adjust unless the relationships and interactions of the component parts are designed for, and they work towards, that end.

By taking an ecosystem approach to the charity sector, we can obtain a holistic and integrated perspective of how the different players can and



should interact with each other to create a more effective charity sector.

The following is a framework of what the charity ecosystem and its players could look like:



education, advancement of religion and 'other purposes beneficial to the community'.⁴ This last catch-all clause broadens the definition considerably to cover almost anything to do with the community good. Over the years, in Singapore,

this has been stretched to include sports, arts, the environment, heritage and even animals.

While there may be nothing wrong with this broadened definition in itself, there are two important implications.

First, with the same support mechanisms (tax breaks, community mobilisation, etc) being made available generally for the community good, we no longer have that preferential option for the poor.

Secondly, the level of accountability for charitable projects is different when it comes

This ecosystem has five main components: beneficiaries, charities, capacity builders, regulator and the community. Each has an important role to play in order to create and sustain the necessary balance within the system.

Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries are the most important component – they are the reason for the existence of charities and other stakeholders. We often lose sight of this vital group because they have the least voice.

The key question is: who should be beneficiaries? Integral to this question is the definition of a 'charity'. There is a surprising disconnect between what different people see as constituting a charity and its beneficiaries.

If you ask the man-on-the-street, the common response you will get is that charity is simply about helping the poor and the needy of society. Implicit in this answer is the notion that charity is about redressing the gap between the rich and poor.

However, the legal definition of charity is much broader than that. It encompasses four charitable purposes: relief of poverty, advancement of

to non-charitable projects. Charity is very much about generosity and so, the process of cost-benefit analysis that should be performed for many community projects will likely not be as rigorous as that for government or commercially-funded projects.

Charities

The charity ecosystem has two main types of charitable organisations – end-beneficiary charities and capacity builders. End-beneficiary charities, or often simply known as charities, are what most people commonly understand charities to be: they serve beneficiaries. Capacity builders, on the other hand, support the (end-beneficiary) charities.

A charity is set up for a social cause. However, its real role often gets lost as corporate thinking and empire building take hold of those running it.

In business, the mantra is growth and more growth in profits and revenues. The moment growth declines, shareholders get worried and share prices tumble. This triggers an exploration of mergers and acquisitions to either inorganically grow the company or else find a way for it to be part of some other corporation's growth plans.



But this mentality should not be taken into the charity world. Charities exist not to make a profit, but to further social causes. So, the success of a charity must be judged by whether or not that cause has been fulfilled. And when it is, the organisation would no longer be needed. So the end game for charities must be extinction, rather than growth.

Yet, when the purpose for which a non-profit organisation is founded becomes less relevant, many do not naturally seek to scale down. Instead the organisation explores other ways to scale up – much like in the commercial world.

Take the example of tuberculosis, or TB. The Singapore Anti-Tuberculosis Association (SATA)⁵ was set up to combat the rising number of TB cases. TB was a killer in the 1960s, but today, it is very much under control. Over a period of 40 years, the TB incident rate was reduced from 310 to 39 cases per 100,000 residents. In recent years, the number of new TB cases dealt by SATA has ranged from 4 to 29 annually. This statistic has not stopped it from growing from strength to strength. SATA now has four clinics with a staff of 120, and its new mission is to go beyond TB to promote lung health and be a general health screening provider.

Related to the issue of fulfilling mission is the question of services versus advocacy. There are two ways to deal with a social issue: we can deal with the symptoms or we can deal with the root causes.

To illustrate, there are two approaches to dealing with the abuse of foreign workers in Singapore. The first is to help those who are abused. To this end, several organisations such as Humanitarian Organisation for Migrant Economics and the Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People have set up shelters and counselling services for the abused foreign workers.

The second is to nip the problem in the bud and avoid having to deal with abuse cases in the first place. This requires education of employers on the fair treatment of their employees and creation of the legal structures and framework that deters and punishes offenders. Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2)⁶ has taken the lead to champion this.

The measure of success for the charity sector in dealing with this issue must lie in the reduction of abuse cases and a decline in the need to build

any (more) shelters for abused workers. Thus, the advocacy role played by TWC2 is more critical in the long term.

But advocacy is less appealing to charities than providing a service. There are several reasons for this. First, the results are less tangible and visible. It is easier (even though it is still a challenge) to announce an increase in the number of abused worker cases treated, than it is to describe a campaign for worker rights and fair treatment.

What's more, the road can be long and winding. It involves changing mindsets, policies and rules which are not only challenging but it can often be controversial. William Wilberforce, the British politician, campaigned for 46 years against slavery before the Slavery Abolition Act was passed in England in 1833.⁷

Advocacy is therefore tough, especially in Singapore, when we have a government that leaves few gaps to start with and does not want to be seen to be influenced too much by interest groups.⁸

It is therefore not a surprise that, by and large, most charities are service providers that prefer dealing with symptoms rather than necessarily understanding and redressing the root causes.

Capacity Builders

Capacity builders, as the name suggests, are intermediaries that build the capacity of the charity sector by helping the charities.

The role and need for intermediaries is generally not very well appreciated in the charity sector. All ecosystems need intermediaries that facilitate the core activities and oil the wheels of the marketplace. A good parallel for intermediaries in the charity sector is the stock exchange.

In this analogy, charities are like public-listed companies. They need funds from their investors – the donors. But for donors to know who to invest their limited funds in, they require independent analysts to evaluate and rate the charities. Instead of donating directly, they could actually do so through grant makers, the equivalent of the fund managers in the public markets. And just as the commercial companies service each other, there are charities that service other charities.

There is a range of intermediary organisations in the charity sector and I have grouped them into three categories: grant makers, service providers, promoters and watchers.

Grant makers comprise foundations and funds. They take money from donors, big and small, and give them out as grants to the charities. They should do so through a rigorous process that ensures the money is given for the right use and is properly used to achieve the requisite result.

The role that grant makers play is crucial in that they are in the best position to bridge the disconnect between revenue and expenditure in the charity sector.⁹ They can ensure the alignment of funds received and the value delivered to the beneficiaries. By doing so, they make up for Adam Smith's missing 'invisible hand' with a more 'visible hand' of the donor.

Service providers provide services to charities. They cover areas such as strategic advice (e.g. Bridgespan), training (e.g. Social Service Training Institute), professional development (e.g. Compass Point), human capital matching (NVPC Boardmatch), brokering (e.g. Charity Choice Goodwill Gallery) and technical services (e.g. Hackers for Charity).

One issue with charity service providers is that there are very few of them, especially in the developing countries. This stems from the lack of maturity within our ecosystem in this region to develop this type of service, and a general lack of recognition that they are part of the infrastructural needs of any ecosystem.

Many people do not regard service providers as charities. This view has been further clouded by the many regular commercial service providers who provide their services to charities at discounted rates. The end result is that the charity service providers are not always differentiated.

There are also no regulatory support mechanism in Singapore for charity service providers. The law treats them in a similar way to commercial services providers.

The good news is that, increasingly, more foundations are willing to fund and even set up such charity service providers.

The third group within the capacity builders is the industry watchers and the promoters. They usually sprout up from within the sector to help govern and grow the sector.

Promoters seek to grow and develop the sector or a specific segment within the sector. They may be publicly or privately funded. In Singapore, most of these tend to be government sponsored, like the

Council for Third Age and National Family Council, while independent agencies such as the Lien Centre for Social Innovation are slowly emerging.

What the Singapore charity scene is missing are the watchers. Like Standards and Poor in the commercial world, we need rating agencies and analysts that monitor, evaluate and rate charities so that grant makers and donors have benchmarks by which they can make informed decisions. In the United States, there are several organisations that fill this gap. They include GuideStar, Charity Navigator, the BBB Wise Giving Alliance and the American Institute of Philanthropy's Charity Watch.

Regulator

At the very top of the charity ecosystem is the regulator. Regulations and rules are necessary to ensure that charities operate for the public benefit and not private advantage. The regulator ensures compliance by charities within a legal framework so that public trust and confidence in charities are achieved.

Regulators often come under pressure from charities to lighten up and allow them to focus on their mission with minimal administrative and other constraints. But when things go wrong, the regulator will likely be criticised by the public for any perceived lack of pre-emptive action.

Fundamentally, the regulator should be clear as to which approach it wishes to adopt in fulfilling its role:

- A black box approach, where the regulator vets charities to the Nth level, or
- A glass house approach, where the regulator supervises with a light touch and donors have to take a 'caveat emptor' approach to dealing with charities.

The main difference between the two approaches lies in the nature of the regulations, and the powers

To influence change in any ecosystem, one needs to understand the culture — the set of ideas, beliefs and customs that have evolved over time and that impact the nuances of the behaviours of the participants.



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and resources that need to be given to the regulator. A black box approach would be somewhat akin to the banking system where a lot of detailed rules exist, frequent inspections are undertaken and the regulator needs a significant level of resources to conduct its work. A glass house approach is more akin to a stock exchange where the regulations are primarily focused on disclosures to the public who invest at their own risk.

The Community

The community provides the underlying support for charities by supplying three things: money (donations), time (volunteers) and legitimacy. The third is seldom thought of, but some charities have learnt the hard way that relevance to the community is critical to their survival.

And within the community, there are several distinct groups: the public, corporations, media and government.

Historically, the role of the public has been to give money, give time to help out at the charities and provide general support. In recent years, donors and volunteers have been asked to do more. There has been a call for them to be more discerning, discriminating and even demanding of the charities – in other words, to be more informed in its giving.

The underlying notion is that the public represents the ultimate level of governance for charities. Except for extreme situations like the

NKF, this call is not very practical for the average giver. The reaction would likely be: “You mean if I am generous enough to give \$1,000 or a few hours a month to a charity, I now have to do all this additional due diligence work to figure out what, why and how the charity is doing before I give?” As noted above, the long-term solution to informed giving is to encourage donors to direct their donations to grant makers, who are organised professionally with the resources, rigour and clout to ensure accountability.

That is what many neo-philanthropists are now doing in what is being seen as a philanthropic revolution. They are setting up grant-making organisations with mega-bucks that are not just pushing accountability, but finding new and innovative ways to accomplish their ambitions to solve some of the world’s social problems. Their approaches have moved from the cheque-signing and ribbon-cutting exercises of the past to a more personal engagement with the charities using capitalistic approaches such as venture philanthropy.

The second group within the community is the corporations. While the role of corporations is similar to that of individuals, their motivation is different. Corporations face the perpetual question of whether or not they should be a corporate giver.

Because the constitution of a corporation drives it to generate profits and value for its shareholders,

the basis of its response to the giving question is really a very selfish one – does corporate social responsibility make business sense? This is why many concerned government agencies and non-profit watchdogs advocate mandatory corporate social responsibility especially in the area of environmental control, ethical conduct and corporate governance.

The third group is the media. Its role is similar to what it does in the commercial and public sector space – keeping the public informed and shaping public opinion for the benefit of the charity sector. That said, there is a question among many as to whether the media should or not be a watchdog, or even a bloodhound with regards to wrongdoings by charities.¹⁰

Government

The government is a unique player in the ecosystem. It has multiple roles: regulator (as we have already seen), funder, promoter and even provider.

How governments actually discharge these roles depends heavily on the history and attitudes of each government towards the non-profit organisations – domestic and overseas. The dilemma for governments is that the non-profit sector is really about filling up the social gaps left behind by governments and private enterprises. For private enterprises, it is understandable that, in their pursuit of profits, they may legitimately ignore the community interests and create unintended social inequalities.

Governments, however, are meant to look after the overall interests of their citizens and thus may be loath to admit that they have failed in some areas. The reality is that no government can cover every ground, so more enlightened governments seek out and support non-profit organisations which, with their smaller scale and close connections to the community, are able to more nimbly mobilise resources and solve social issues.

When it comes to supporting the non-profit sector, there is a spectrum of government responses. On one end are developed countries like the United Kingdom and US where, historically, there has been a focus on a smaller role of the state and a larger reliance on private charitable activities. On the other hand, there are the former communist states in Eastern and Central Europe which traditionally have relied on the state for the provision of social services and inherited a culture of low tolerance for dissent.

Notwithstanding the kind of support it gives the charity sector, it is not unusual for a government to want to steer it. Thus, even in liberal UK where government actively supports the sector, a 2007 survey of charity executives indicates that 54 percent felt that the government was exerting too much control over the sector.¹¹

One way in which governments seek to steer the sector is through funding. The Johns Hopkins project estimates that about 35 percent of non-profit organisation revenue in its surveyed countries comes from the government, either through grants, contracts or reimbursement payments of governmental agencies. Government funding tends to be highest in the social service and health care segments.

Governments can promote and support the growth of non-profits through their policies and initiatives. A common policy mechanism by which governments support charity is through tax benefits, e.g. double tax deductions for donors in Singapore or Gift Aid for charities in the UK.¹² ChangeUp¹³ is a good example of a wide-ranging initiative by an enlightened British government that seeks to proactively improve the sustainability, quality and reach of the infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector.

The last role – government as provider – is often debated in charity circles. The question is which services should be provided by the government and which by the charities? The boundaries are not always clear especially in the education and healthcare sectors. For example, should schools for children with disabilities be run by volunteer welfare organisations or by the government similar to that of the mainstream schools? And should pocket money for poor students come from the community (à la the ST School Pocket Money Fund) or from the government (à la The School Breakfast Programme)? In terms of healthcare, should the step-down and after care for illness such as kidney dialysis be provided by the community or by government?

The area gets greyer when the government sets up and sustains charities and capacity builders that might otherwise have been privately led. For example, the National Council of Social Service and the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre are government bodies. In the UK, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations is an independent umbrella body of the voluntary and community sector with more than 5,700 members. In the US, the Hands On Network, which is the largest volunteer organisation with 370

affiliates and more than 60 million volunteers, is community-led.¹⁴ Government-sponsored charities can even be set up for advocacy. For example, with the push for more babies in Singapore, the government initiated the setup of I Love Children which has the tagline 'Advocacy for a Singapore that is children-plenty and children-friendly'.¹⁵

Culture And Change In The Ecosystem

Understanding the players and their roles is only a first step towards influencing change in the ecosystem. A critical aspect of ecosystems is the dynamic interdependence of the elements of the system. A small change in one part can have a ripple effect throughout the system. Cause and effect are sometimes too complex to map out. Thus while the players influence each other, deliberately doing so to achieve specific outcomes is not easy.

To influence change in any ecosystem, one needs to understand the culture – the set of ideas, beliefs and customs that have evolved over time and that impact the nuances of the behaviours of the participants.

Perhaps the prevailing culture of the charity ecosystem is the notion of 'doing good'. The basic intent of charity is to do good for beneficiaries and to change the world for the better. Since the focus is on helping others and improving society, good feelings result for all the participants that are in this common mission together.

Contrast this with the commercial world where the culture is that of self-interest – every man for himself. The culture of deadly competition for survival of the fittest is a well-accepted one in this environment.

Competition for survival is actually an essential characteristic of any ecosystem. Yet, most people that I have met in the charity world would dismiss such a notion. After all, we are all here to do good and to work together for the common good.

The concept of collaboration among competitors for the larger interests is also part of the commercial landscape. Some companies have reached a stage where today's competitor can be

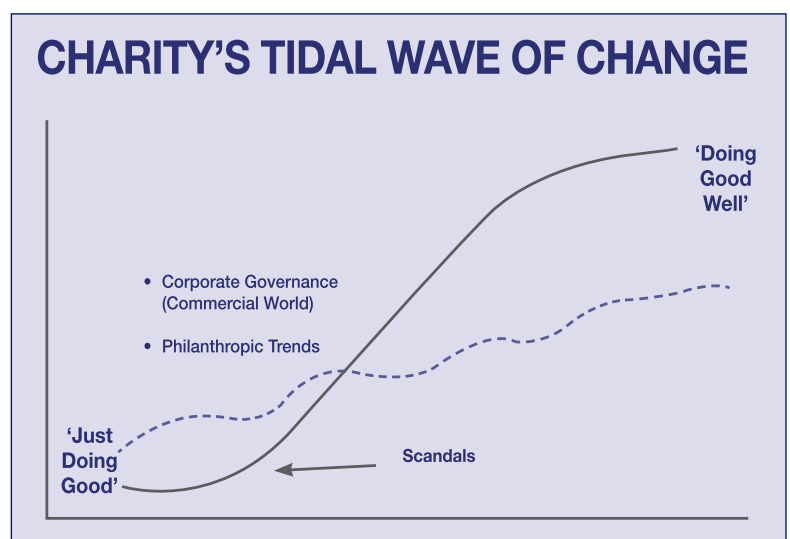
tomorrow's ally, and who they choose to partner with or compete against simply changes with time and circumstances.

The notion of competing and allying with peers should be present in the charity world because it is an integral part of any ecosystem. However it is understated, masked by the 'panadol' of doing good. Any notion of competition tends to skate below the surface even if the parties implicitly recognise its existence.¹⁶ Enclosed within the cocoon of doing good and feeling good, corporate practices of good governance and organisation effectiveness tend to be eschewed because they come from a world with a largely different culture.

In the study of ecosystems, it seems that change is inevitable. There will be change as the players interdependently interact with each other to reach a stage of equilibrium. Equally, disruptive factors can cause the whole ecosystem to shift towards a new level of equilibrium.

A New Era

In the study of change in organisations and systems, the S-curve model of change has sometimes been used. In the initial stage of the change, a few early adopters respond to the change factor (such as a new technology or a new idea). Usually due to some kick factor, there is an inflexion point where sufficient players take it up for the change to be noticed and the change becomes more prevalent. As critical mass is reached, massive take-up occurs. When most players in the system are onboard, the change is at a new equilibrium.



In my view, the charity ecosystem, especially in Singapore, is currently at the early stages of a new and massive S-curve of change that is redefining

the culture of the charity ecosystem. The current wave of change has slowly been making its way to our shores for several years now. It started with a rising tide of corporate governance fervour in the commercial world. Many donors, especially foundations and neo-philanthropists, are now applying concepts like governance, accountability and outcomes to the charity world.

For many players, the trigger point has been the emergence of the recent charity scandals. Without a doubt, the NKF saga³ was the inflexion point of this change curve in Singapore.

The net impact of these scandals and the subsequent responses by all the players (regulators, donors, media, the public) has been a sea change in the thinking and mindset of all within and outside the charity sector. We appear to be moving from an era where charity is simply about 'Just Doing Good' to one where there are new demands for it to perform and prove that it is 'Doing Good Well'.

In this brave new world, the greatest onus falls perhaps on the charities. Management and boards of charities will now have to take their jobs much more seriously than before. They need to demonstrate good governance. They are expected to be more professional in their work and be driven to deliver outcomes relative to their mission. In their communications and reporting, there will be a demand for greater transparency and accountability.

It is not only the charities themselves, but the entire chain of players within the ecosystem that is impacted by this wave of change.

The regulator is required to be more alert and forthcoming. Certainly, depending upon the black box or glass house model that is adopted, more fortified disclosure and other rules, and investigative resources and powers will need to be rustled up.

The shortcomings of capacity builders need to be urgently addressed. There is currently a significant shortage of capacity builders of all kinds. Both government and grant makers can help fill up the gaps by creating, sponsoring and supporting analysts, watchers and providers.

The community has been much sensitised and engaged with the unravelling of the scandals. The role of the media and community leaders is to moderate the public's response to avoid overreaction and view matters from a balanced

perspective. The active support of the community has never been more needed because after all it is its money, time and confidence that enables the sector to continue to function.

The mission of a charity is to change the world for the better. In this new era, the charity sector has to change for the better itself at the same time as it goes about its mission of changing the rest of the world. □

¹ Lester M. Salamon et al, *Global Civil Society, Dimensions of the NonProfit Sector* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies, 1999); Lester M. Salamon et al, *Global Civil Society, An Overview* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies, 2003)

² Lee Hui Chieh, "Courage Fund Misused?", *The Straits Times*, 10 March 2006

³ The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) is Singapore's largest charity. A scandal erupted in July 2005 over the CEO's pay and other revelations in a court case.

⁴ The Charity Council, Singapore Charity Portal <www.charities.gov.sg/charity/index.do>

⁵ SATA official website <www.sata.com.sg>

⁶ Transient Workers Count Too website <www.twc2.org.sg>; The book *Dignity Overdue* by John Gee and Elaine Ho (Singapore: Select Publishing, 2006) records the story of TWC2's experiences in seeking to change attitudes and practices.

⁷ Wilberforce Central <www.wilberforcecentral.org/wfc>

⁸ Goh Chin Lian, "Singapore's quiet lobbyists: Civil groups tell Goh Chin Lian that making their views heard in Singapore requires working patiently behind closed doors", *The Straits Times*, 28 October 2006

⁹ As described in the section on "Business versus Charity Paradigms"

¹⁰ A forum "The NKF Story – News Reporting or Advocacy?" organised by the INSEAD Alumni Association in the aftermath of the NKF saga, held on 20 August 2005 drew divided responses on whether the media should get into or sustain advocacy work.

¹¹ Chris Greenwood, "The State of the Third Sector 2007", nfpSynergy, 2008 <www.nfpsynergy.net>

¹² In Singapore, donations to Institution of Public Characters receive double tax deductions from their income in the donor's tax returns. Gift aid is tax relief on money donated to UK charities. See HM Revenue and Customs <www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities/gift-aid.htm>

¹³ Capacity Builders, UK <www.capacitybuilders.org.uk>

¹⁴ National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre <www.nvpc.org.sg>; Points of Light and Hands on Network <www.handsonnetwork.org>

¹⁵ I Love Children, Singapore <www.ilovechildren.org.sg>

¹⁶ In the UK survey on "The State of the Third Sector 2007" by nfpSynergy <www.nfpsynergy.net>, big charities were perceived by executives of small charities to have an overall negative effect on the charity sector.



Willie Cheng is a board member of the Lien Centre for Social Innovation. He is involved with a number of charities and non-profit organisations. He writes regularly on charity issues and is author of a new book, *Doing Good Well*.