

Individual Charity in China

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Keywords: charity, governmental, homeless, organization, rational.

Abstract. Charity in China stems from the development of economy in both national and personal aspects. Celebrities' enthusiasm in charity evokes public participation. Considering the similarities and also the differences between China and some other countries which has relatively sophisticated charitable systems, China has the potential to take on its social responsibilities through learning from those forerunners in its own characteristic way. Individual charity finds its hotbed in this country because of public distrust for governmental organization and preference of personal contact with the recipients. Privately found organizations and self-donation now become the main stream of individual charity in China. The growth of Chinese individual charity may give its peers and following generations useful reference value and guidance to some extent.

Introduction

Charity aroused national awareness in the late 90s of last century with one black and white picture portraying a little countryside girl clinging to her school desk in the humble classroom with a short wooden pencil in the right hand. Her large, crystalline, innocent eyes grabbed everyone who had ever seen it. Since then, public reflection has been evoked on education and living in remote regions. It was the start of a new era for charity in China. Not until the 2008 earthquake in Wenchuan was the collective power of public participation in Charity truly recognized. More than 5 billion RMB donation within just 2 months since the catastrophe from commonalities alone rebuilt a modern city there in the next couple of years, which opened up a totally different path for charity on this eastern land.

Big movie stars, Jacky Chen and Jet Lee might be the most well-known celebrities in China advocating public participation of charitable activities. With increasing publicity of their acts along with those of other celebrities from mass media, it did spur a stronger pulse for this inevitable trend. As we see students celebrating traditional holidays with elderly in nursing homes, college graduates going to isolated areas in Tibet to teach young kids at Hope Project, entrepreneurs showering themselves in icy water to showcase their physical support, some of which earned warm thumbs, while some got cold rebukes from outside and even inside for its pretentious behavior aimed at unspeakable goals. However, charity has already set fire on this pasture, and it shall flame the whole.

Comparison

Situation in China and Overseas. College students are by far the most favored group of people in China to take part in charitable activities. The 2008 earthquake donation report says college students all over the country donated much more blood than actual need, a lot of which even had gone bad in hospitals. This report shows two main facts. Firstly, college students have the passion and will to take on their responsibilities as social beings to help their fellows and become leaders when needed. Secondly, China is still lack of education on proper charity, including what to do, how to do it in the best way and how to make it under rational control and management.

The demographic benefit and growing economy determined China has the basis to learn and accommodate the already sophisticated charitable systems in developed countries like America and England, and developing countries like South Africa and Brazil[1]. Also, China has the potential to

do it in its own characteristic way. The biggest difference between China and these countries is the public trust in governmental organizations. We heard about news of China Red Cross corruption which made the public doubt its credit. The latest news of a 13-year-old country boy who was starved to death in the local relief station hit the nerve of public again by showing the skeleton corpse of the little boy huddling up in the picture[2]. All of a sudden, negative news of relief stations flooded over the internet. Originally relief stations in China are founded by government to purposely provide free food and necessary rest shelters or other kinds of help for homeless people and those who have severe troubles both temporarily and permanently. Temporary troubles are the situations that could be solved after assistance of a short period of time or a fixed amount of money. For example, tourist Xie from Hong Kong who ran out of money in his impulsive visit in Dalian to meet a web friend got timely help in the local relief station and took a flight back home soon. Permanent troubles are the situations that need constant help of all kinds concerned. Like disabled people who lost ability to work, those who come to the urban city from countryside failed to find a job[3]. The obstacle of spreading the clout of relief station is many do not know the exact locations of these places, neither do these organizations have large scale of publicity in any media. Instead people who get into trouble would rather pick leftovers in trash tanks and sleep under bridges, in subways or around the street corners. For those who found their way to relief stations, the reality became complicated since relief stations take on insufficient responsibilities because of financial deficit[4].

Developed countries like America and England have a more open access by literally building shelters with large boards, mass media also gives a hand for the advocacy. Government provides more sophisticated management over official actions. Charity has been a legal procedure aims at training and educating people in need to work. They have passed the initial phase of irrational charity which did not help recipients to rise from their old rut but cultivate their reliability and inertia to reach out[5]. Oprah Winfrey, the called richest black woman in America created angle networks for public donation, used her own talk show to educate America to take care of its fellows by doing volunteering services. Developing countries like South Africa and Brazil encourage the poor to get work by strictly limiting the amplitude of charity and extend its coverage of different programs from children growth to family stabilization.

Differences. The built shelters in developed countries offer people places to reside and receive food for free by following legal registration which might lead partial consideration. Requirements actually goes higher than before so that charity could be controlled in rational management and thus forcing those who have the ability to work to supply their contribution to the society. This proves more efficient than relief stations in China even though new measures are being taken for trial without stop. On the other hand, people on the streets who beg for money and food receive more indifferent treatment in developed countries. Not sufficient receiving force them to get involved with illegal drugs and dangerous prostitution. In the contrast, beggars in China somehow get relatively more help from commonalities. News about them beg in day and sleep at expensive hotels at night come into public causes few negative influence, you still see many beg and many give. Individual charity has found the suitable hotbed to grow in this country based on this strange phenomenon.

Subdivisions of Individual Charity

Organizations. Because of distrust in governmental organizations and the statistically growing population of homeless people in China, volunteers who are willing to contribute themselves in charity figure out their own way to do it. In 2008 and 2010 earthquakes in Wenchuan and Yushu, volunteers from different regions came to the disastrous area to offer their help. The unexpected warmth from the public touched the whole nation. But their lack of any management and coordination put on unnecessary burden on the spot where huge saving machines were standing by and police were going around all the time. Traffic jams, insufficient supply of water and food, lack of professional training quickly underscored its impractical meaning of their services. Announcements of exhortation for their kindness were sent out then through mass media. After that, people began to review the balance between their original intention and actual outcome. More and more people tried to search for help to found organizations or join the official institutions to get professional training. They recruit

volunteering, collaborate with local enterprises and governmental organizations. According to the Charity of Tencent, privately found organizations are now becoming an assignable force in China to help transferring individual donation to the needy areas, such as Daliangshan, Hhuizhou, Babu and so on. There are organizations aim at collecting second hand clothes for people who had been in sever catastrophe, organizations aim at collecting money for low income families who had been in serious troubles, like illness, parent loss, and organizations aim at recruiting related professionals and enterprises to help people in special needs, such as medical service and school tutoring.

Those organizations exert their clout rapidly and efficiently. Water Droplets, a privately found organization presently locates in Guangdong province, has been providing public services like offering help to street sweepers, low income families and young children whose parents are working outside their cities since two years ago. Participants all over the world donate their help in money or practical items through its corroborated channels. Water Droplets along with other similar organizations make individual charity possible and accessible. They also pay visits to the recipients every now and then to check out their current situations, first to show their sincerity and tenacity in helping them, second to figure out things like whether the donation is sufficient or not, whether the recipients feel being taken care of by the society, what they are still lack of and what they are not lack of any longer[6].

Self-donation. Self-donation is another way to take part in individual charity. Especially in China, this would go further and longer based on the following facts. The young boy named Liu Ting who took his sick mother to school everyday received two hundred thousand RMB donation in very short time to have successfully helped his mother with a kidney transplant surgery. The girl who was burnt to nearly death received three hundred thousand RMB donation in just two days from 530 donors. News on Charity of Tencent gives more examples of these. As the development of Chinese economy, commonalities now have more to spend and deposit than ever before. Some find their own way to help others by simply sending food supplies to necessary neighbors, some joined at least one privately found organization to provide services.

Charity in China has already a much talked subject in mass media, however, there are still people do not know how to take part in charitable activities and how to judge the real from the false. The easiest way is start from nearby. We see volunteers gathered together on the street to recruit donation of clothes, books or money for homeless people or countryside students. We see an old man who has retired bought a trailer to help homeless people whenever he sees one. There are many kinds of things we can do, but what to do and how to do it appropriately are the first concerns.

Lessons

Individual charity is not an empty conception but a real deal that needs as much devotion and commitment as anything, any goal anyone hopes to fulfill. Here are some lessons for people who are willing to join this flow.

1. Do charity as a routine, not a three-day rush. The most significant part is to know why you start to do it in the first place. Charity needs personal awareness and understanding of social responsibilities as well as one's self-value. When that binding comes to your heart, it will change your perception of living, and become the constant motivation and inexhaustible energy resource to keep your practice rolling out for as long as possible. The fling treatment damages your theory of handling relationship with the world, what's worse, might abolish your sense of self-value.

2. Set up a goal before you act. Just like anything else we do in our lives, with a clear view of the future you hope to walk into, things go on the right track. We should know our limitations because of financial situations or working hours table. Once you make up your mind, the next step is to find out the answer of how to achieve the goal with present situations in your hands.

3. Streamline the process through learning[7]. If you want to help homeless people living on streets, basic supplies, continuous concern for them would be the their most demands, food, clean water, quilts in winter is also required when sleeping outside. If you want to help young kids in outback villages, you might need to collect stationary of all kinds, pencils, pens, erasers, school bags, books even toys, gloves and socks. If you want to help low income families, you might consider

delivering living goods like rice, oil, home electronics or blankets. Things change as time changes, one policy can not stick around forever. It is your conscientiousness towards your charitable activities with a heart willing to learn brings out the best plans and countermeasures leading to the most efficient outcomes.

4. Be rational, not emotional. Ration is what keeps you from doing charity without thoughtful consideration. There are families on records who had been donated money from commonalities spent the donation on things they should not have, some families members cheated the donors for money so that to move abroad. Things happen, rational charity goes longer distance.

5. Recognize the time to call for help. If you find your personal life meets problems with planning and rolling out the job, it is time to call for help from people or related organizations who have been doing the same thing with more sophisticate experience.

6. Go visiting the recipients from time to time. Make a record to check the real time situation of the people you helped, and respond timely.

Summary

There is an old saying in China that constant water droplets pierces hard rocks. Doing rational charity within one's capacity is quite advocated. For it is the commonalities who could turn over or flow a master ship in the right direction. Government is not a parent to us anymore as it was used to be in general perception, it is now becoming our real partner. We create our society hand-in-hand, and this is the only way to make real differences to the country and the rest of the world. A lot of people might think that participation in charity is beyond imagination, which is so far away from their lives. Though demonstrations aforementioned and what we know from those forerunners that individual charity is possible and is now heading to the pool that more and more people are willing to diving in.

There is not one text book teaches us how to do individual charity, but we can learn from practice. We can work out solutions from former experience and suggestions from those who have already set their foot in the field when problem comes. As the globalization deepening, we can also collaborate with skilled systems and institutions all over the world. Charity can develop fast with individual participation and cooperation with others from inside and outside.

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