



Doing Good Well: What Does (and Does Not) Make Sense in the Nonprofit World

By Willie Cheng

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Why does a deserving charity struggle to make ends meet while another which squanders money, thrive? *Because there is a structural disconnect between revenue and expenses in the nonprofit world.*

Is continuous growth the hallmark of a successful charity? *No, it's just the opposite – the ultimate aim of a charity is to be extinct.*

Would you use volunteers if it actually cost more than hiring paid skilled staff? *Yes, if engagement with the community is crucial.*

Call these examples, ironies, paradoxes or simply insights into why the charity sector is what it is. *Doing Good Well* is a thinking man's guide to the nonprofit world. It is replete with nonprofit paradigms. It provides a different twist to what one might regard as straightforward notions such as mission, staff compensation, governance and corporate social responsibility. And it surprises and challenges even as it seeks to explain charity-specific issues such as charitableness, bridging the rich/poor divide, informed giving and social entrepreneurship.

And as he deconstructs existing paradigms, Willie Cheng creates new ones.

Through an easy writing style, hearty anecdotes and thought-provoking perspectives, Cheng engages the readers with a strategic review of not just the status quo but also the enormous potential in the nonprofit world. The theme of the book is change. Inasmuch as charities are about changing society for the better, this book seeks to set the stage for interesting introspection.

Whether you are a volunteer, business executive, nonprofit worker, governor or regulator, it's time to start asking the questions that would help the charity sector itself change for the better. In Cheng's words, charity is no longer simply about "Just Doing Good" but "Doing Good Well."

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Editorial Review

Review

Many in the local non-profit scene have lamented about the lack of published resources dealing with the conceptual and strategic issues that plague the non-profit world. Certainly, none has dealt specifically with the non-profit scene here in Singapore –until now. (*SALT*, 26 Sep-Dec 2008)

Doing Good Well: What Does (and Does Not) Make Sense in the Nonprofit World is a bold, exhaustive and analytical book on what makes the nonprofit sector tick -- or not. It is author Willie Cheng's offering to a well-intentioned charity sector (including the public) in Singapore that, until recently, has seemed at a loss about effective governance. (*Knowledge@SMU*, 4/10/2008)

Five years after the eruption of the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) scandal, Mr Willie Cheng, who blew the whistle on its reserves, breaks his silence. With a book, no less. (*The Straits Times*, 8/10/2008)

A new book, Doing Good Well, was launched last Wednesday by local author Willie Cheng. The former managing partner of management consultancy Accenture is now a volunteer, board director and keen observer of the charity scene. (*The Sunday Times*, 12/10/2008)

It's no secret that Mr Willie Cheng - the man who blew the lid on the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) four years ago - has strong opinions when it comes to running a charity. Take, for example, his view that "the ultimate aim of a charity is to be extinct." (*My Paper*, 21/10/2008)

China's charities, philanthropists and non-governmental agencies still have a long way to go to develop a fully trusting relationship with a slightly suspicious government. Yet the will to give is to be applauded. The next step will be working out how to move from deciding to do good to "doing good well", as Cheng's book urges, and making sure that all these new donations make a real difference. (*Ethical Corporation Magazine*, Nov '08)

In a provocative suggestion, Willie Cheng, author of a new book on not for profit management suggests "Ultimate success occurs when the nonprofit's mission is achieved and its existence in no longer needed". In the book, Doing Good Well Cheng proposes how nonprofit organisations can benefit from a corporate approach to thinking and practices while keeping their compassion. In fact he suggests that a not for profit cannot succeed with a purely corporate mindset. (*Volunteer Bureau of Montreal*, Nov '08)

Is continuous growth the hallmark of a successful charity? No, it's just the opposite - the ultimate aim of a charity is to be extinct. Or would you use volunteers if it actually cost more than hiring paid skilled staff? Yes, if engagement with the community is crucial. Call the above examples, ironies, paradoxes or simply insights into why the charity sector is what it is. (*Malaysian Business*, 1/11/2008)

It is one of India's many contradictions: Despite its vibrant civil society and impressive line-up of celebrity activists, the country's not-for-profit sector finds itself in the middle of a severe credibility crisis. It is burdened by stereotypes that have been built over the years, and not all of them are without substance. (*Business World*, 3/11/2008)

Few books look closely and comprehensively at the local non-profit sector, and here's one that not only examines the state of things, but also presents theories for why things are the way they are. As the former

chairman of the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre, and now chairman of the Lien Centre for Social Innovation, Mr Willie Cheng is well placed to provide a guide to the non-profit world. (*TODAY*, 3/11/2008)

Willie Cheng's bluntness and radical ideas may leave many taken aback, but his unique style of humour makes this an interesting read at the same time. He provides a comprehensive analysis of what makes non-profit organizations work - or not. (*Human Capital*, Dec-08)

Interview with National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre's former Chairman Willie Cheng. He speaks about his book "Doing Good Well" which focuses on the non-profit sector. He also shares his input about the effects of the economic downturn to charity works and the definition of a successful charity organisation. He shares his insights about what motivates a person to get into philanthropy. He also speaks about the challenges he faced while writing his book and social philanthropy. (938 *LIVE*, 16/01/09)

For people first coming into contact with the nonprofit world, especially those accustomed to the ways of the business sector, nonprofit organizations can seem strange, with unfamiliar customs and methods. Willie Cheng is such a person. A former partner in Accenture, a global management consulting company, he has spent his retirement working with and for nonprofit organizations, on boards and as a volunteer. (*About.com*, February 09)

The public and regulators are calling for greater accountability of charities in the face of recent scandals, making this book a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the world of philanthropy. Neo-philanthropists are employing business thinking while non-profit organisations are taking on social innovations, causing the line between business and charity increasingly hazy. (*Singapore Accountant*, Jan - Feb 09)

However, one crucial difference - money - separates the two, according to Willie Cheng, chairman of the Lien Centre for Social Innovation and a former chairman of the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre in Singapore. "Successful business entrepreneurs roll in it. Social entrepreneurs often have to make do without it," he writes in his recent book, *Doing Good Well*, explaining that most social entrepreneurs deal with issues "where getting an adequate economic return is a real challenge". (*The Business Times*, 02/03/09)

A new book about charity models provides a refreshing new take on the charity scene. It effectively reconciles the many apparent contradictions of the charity world. Written by Willie Cheng, a former managing partner of Accenture Singapore, it provides a business perspective to the nonprofit sector. (*The Star*, 28/03/09)

In this, his first book, Willie Cheng draws on his experience, both as a partner and managing director of the Singapore branch of the global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing firm Accenture and as the Chair of the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Center in Singapore, to explain and provide new perspectives on the principles and thinking behind the working of the non-profit sector. (*Alliance*, 01/03/09)

From the Inside Flap

Why does a deserving charity struggle to make ends meet while another which squanders money, thrive? Because there is a structural disconnect between revenue and expenses in the nonprofit world.

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All royalties from the sale of this book will go to charity.

From the Back Cover

A strategic, conceptual and highly readable book... Willie has done a masterful job keeping the content fresh and intriguing and even infuses the book with his unique of humor. His ideas are thought provoking and accessible.

–William D. Green

Chairman & CEO, Accenture

Willie's provocative perspective on the donor, donor motivations, regulation, compensation, the rich/poor divide and social enterprises to name just a few, is enlightening and refreshing. He reminds the reader of the philosophy of Andrew Carnegie and combines this ageless wisdom with his own thoughts and experiences. At the same time, he peppers his book with interesting research from toilet NGOs to quirky quotes from his penchant for comics. You will enjoy this book immensely!

–Paulette V. Maehara

President and CEO, Association of Fundraising Professionals

A must-read for anybody who wants to understand philanthropy and nonprofits in Asia and beyond.

–Dr. Maximilian Martin

Global Head, Philanthropy Services, UBS AG

Willie's book may be viewed as "Charity 101." It inspires charities to do better. However, on another and more important level, it challenges the reader with uncommon thinking on nonprofit paradigms. Whether or not you agree with some of his radical thinking, we should take our hats off to Willie for living his values and not following the herd with "easy" answers. This book will change the way charities think, work and live.

–Fang Ai Lian

Chairman, Charity Council

Willie's writings have stirred, provoked and moved the charity scene in Singapore. He has a way of putting things within a framework, connecting seemingly unrelated dots in his attempt to make sense of all that is going on in and around the sector here and elsewhere. That is what the nonprofit sector critically needs at this juncture more than ever—critical thinking around critical issues beyond the doing.

—Tan Chee Koon

Former CEO, National Volunteer & Philanthropy Center

An amazing amount of research and ideas fused together. In a sense, this is the *The Undercover Economist* of the charity world. It provides the most complete and insightful account I have seen of what happened at the National Kidney Foundation. This should be a textbook for anyone who wants to better understand why charities work—or don't.

—Gerard Ee

Chairman, The New NKF (National Kidney Foundation)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Frances Lawler:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important action, like looking for your favorite publication and reading a publication. Beside you can solve your condition; you can add your knowledge by the book entitled *Doing Good Well: What Does (and Does Not) Make Sense in the Nonprofit World*. Try to make the book *Doing Good Well: What Does (and Does Not) Make Sense in the Nonprofit World* as your friend. It means that it can for being your friend when you sense alone and beside that of course make you smarter than previously. Yeah, it is very fortunate to suit your needs. The book makes you considerably more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So, let's make new experience and knowledge with this book.

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this period of time, many ways to get whatever we really wish for. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore this Doing Good Well: What Does (and Does Not) Make Sense in the Nonprofit World can make you really feel more interested to read.

Wilma Tovar:

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