

**DIGITAL FOR GOOD:**

# A Global Study on Emerging Ways of Giving

—  
Singapore



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**IUPUI**  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
Lilly Family School of Philanthropy



## About the Global Study on Emerging Ways of Giving

The Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (school) conducted the *Digital for Good: A Global Study on Emerging Ways of Giving* to explore the emerging vehicles of philanthropy, such as crowdfunding, online giving, mobile giving, workplace giving, online volunteering, and social impact initiatives.

Eight countries with significantly diverse cultures participated in this global study: Brazil, China, India, Kenya, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. In the study, the school worked closely with partner organizations and experts in these countries, from identifying relevant ways of giving and determining approaches of data collection to co-developing the tools for data collection and finalizing country reports to disseminating research findings locally as well as globally.

Findings from this global study are shared in a series of reports, including eight country reports and one global report. Three reports in the series have been published, discussing the emerging ways of giving in Brazil, South Korea, and the United Kingdom, respectively.<sup>1</sup> The current report shares data and insights into the emerging ways of giving in Singapore.

With the *Digital for Good: A Global Study on Emerging Ways of Giving*, the school aims to promote the practice of philanthropy globally by enhancing the accessible information and public knowledge on the emerging forms of giving across the globe. These reports provide a deeper understanding of the concept and practice of new ways of philanthropic engagement in the eight participating countries and offer new insights and tools for civil society leaders, philanthropists, and the public to understand and shape the development of philanthropy in the years to come.

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<sup>1</sup>All reports published in this series can be downloaded at <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/additional-research/index.html>.

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## INTRODUCTION

Charities—organizations that are set up for charitable purposes in Singapore—must register with the Commissioner of Charities. As of December 31, 2020, there were 2,321 charities registered (Charities Unit, 2021). More than half of the registered charities are religious and social and welfare organizations whilst the rest are categorized as health, arts and heritage, community, sports, education, and others (such as animal welfare). The organizations fall under various sector administrators, for example organizations registered as social and welfare will be administered by the Ministry of Social and Family Development. There are 5 sector administrators and, together with the Commissioner of Charities and Charity Council, they promote good governance and best practices, ensure regulatory governance and compliance, and act as an advisor to ensure that the charity sector is well-governed and thrives with public support (Commissioner of Charities, 2022).

The sector's annual receipts, which include government grants, donations, and fees and charges, was SGD 20.8 billion in 2019 (equivalent to USD 15.7 billion in 2020, adjusted for inflation), with education accounting for more than half of that amount. Most of the sectors, except for religious charities, receive almost half or more than half of their income from government grants. The second largest stream of income is 'Others,' which includes fees and charges. Donations from corporations, individuals, and foundations provide the smallest stream of income.

Donations from corporations, individuals, and foundations accounted for about SGD 3.2 billion in 2019 (equivalent to USD 2.4 billion in 2020, adjusted for inflation), representing around 15 percent of total revenues received by charities. Prior to the pandemic, there had been a gradual increase year on year between 2015 and 2019, except for in 2017, where there was a slight dip due to an economic contraction in 2016. However, according to National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre's (NVPC) Individual Giving Study, the number of individual donors have been declining between 2012 and 2021, yet median amount donated increased (NVPC, 2021).

The sector has long been reliant on government grants and it has been especially crucial during the pandemic as many of the charities lost their income from fees (particularly for the arts and heritage sector), donations dipped, and charities had to step up their efforts as there were more service users and a need to reconfigure their usual operations (Commissioner of Charities, 2022). There were significantly fewer individuals who gave and volunteered during the COVID-19 pandemic as compared to years prior to 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic had led to the country's worst recession since its independence, which constituted an increase in resident unemployment rate and a drop in median income for the first time since 2014 (Seow et al., 2020). Lower income households reported worsening finances and trouble paying for household expenses during the 'Circuit Breaker' (Daly et al., 2021; Prime Minister's Office, 2020). This has led to SGD 100 billion (equivalent to USD 75.7 in 2020) worth of government support measures to help families, workers, and businesses weather the COVID-19 crisis (Ministry of Finance, 2021).



## KEY FINDINGS

As with the shift in the demand and provision of social services, the COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in shifts in the giving ecosystem in Singapore. The narrative of giving has expanded in Singapore. More than simply a resource transfer, giving is now seen as a holistic notion encompassing mindset, culture, norms, and finally, action for social change. The current report details the shifts based on the insights gathered through several national studies by NVPC:

1. Donation and volunteering rates both dropped among individuals between 2018 and 2021; however, median amount of donations has increased. This was the opposite for corporate donors, as there was an increase in businesses' participation in any forms of philanthropic investment between 2017 and 2021, but the median investment value declined.
2. Individuals and businesses are expanding their ways of giving. There has been a decline in the traditional ways of giving, specifically monetary donations, and volunteering. Many are giving in newer forms, such as through supporting the purchase of products and services from charities, donating in-kind, and advocating for causes.
3. There has been an increase in digital giving by individuals in Singapore due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, about 37.2 percent of individuals signed up for online volunteering, up from 8.0 percent in 2018. Around 42.7 percent of individuals made online donations in 2021, which increased from 5.8 percent in 2018.
4. In response to the pandemic, there have been structural shifts in individual giving behaviors—(i) increase in committed and consistent donations, (ii) willingness to donate to informal groups (i.e. non-registered charities, informal community groups, ground-up initiatives), and (iii) increased preference to support social service causes.
5. Despite the growth of online giving, accessibility and information remain as barriers to giving for both individuals and businesses in Singapore.

Based on the findings, we recommend that charities and intermediaries<sup>2</sup> in Singapore should allocate resources and efforts to boost digital giving and consider adapting donor and volunteering appeals online. Additionally, charities and intermediaries could also start developing plans to adopt hybrid giving methods—both online and offline—to accelerate the recovery of giving in Singapore.

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<sup>2</sup>Intermediaries include organizations which aim to build the capacity of the charity sector by helping charities. For example, they include grant makers and service providers to charities.

## REFRAMING OF THE GIVING NARRATIVE AND CONCEPT IN SINGAPORE

Among Singaporeans, there is a growing consensus that the narrative of 'giving' has expanded—how we traditionally define giving and givers is evolving. More than simply a resource transfer, giving is now seen as a holistic notion encompassing mindset, culture, norms, and finally, action for social change. Individuals who were traditionally seen as 'receivers' are now givers who start their own initiatives to help the community.

These evolving giving sentiments manifest themselves in the different ways that Singaporeans give today. Online giving and adoption of other ways of giving have seen a significant rise since the start of COVID-19. Businesses are now also shifting the ways they give by integrating and institutionalizing their giving with efforts to retain vulnerable employees (such as employees from low-income backgrounds, and employees with disabilities or mental health issues) and encouraging giving among all employees.

At the same time, the pandemic has resulted in a polarizing effect on giving preferences. There has been a growing popularity in giving to informal and community-led initiatives, not through formally registered charities, since the pandemic. People were also keener to give to social service causes, such as elderly and children-related causes. This resulted in potential risks to traditionally under-supported causes, such as the arts and heritage, and environment. During the pandemic, with no ticketing revenue, show cancellations, and venue closures, arts groups required support from donors and government as they faced pressing challenges such as having to still pay wages, sunk costs, solvency, and potentially shutting down (Fern, 2020; Fern, 2021). From NVPC's Individual Giving Study on a nationally representative sample of 2,004 respondents, only 2 percent and 7 percent donated or volunteered for the arts and heritage causes and for environment causes, respectively (NVPC, 2021).



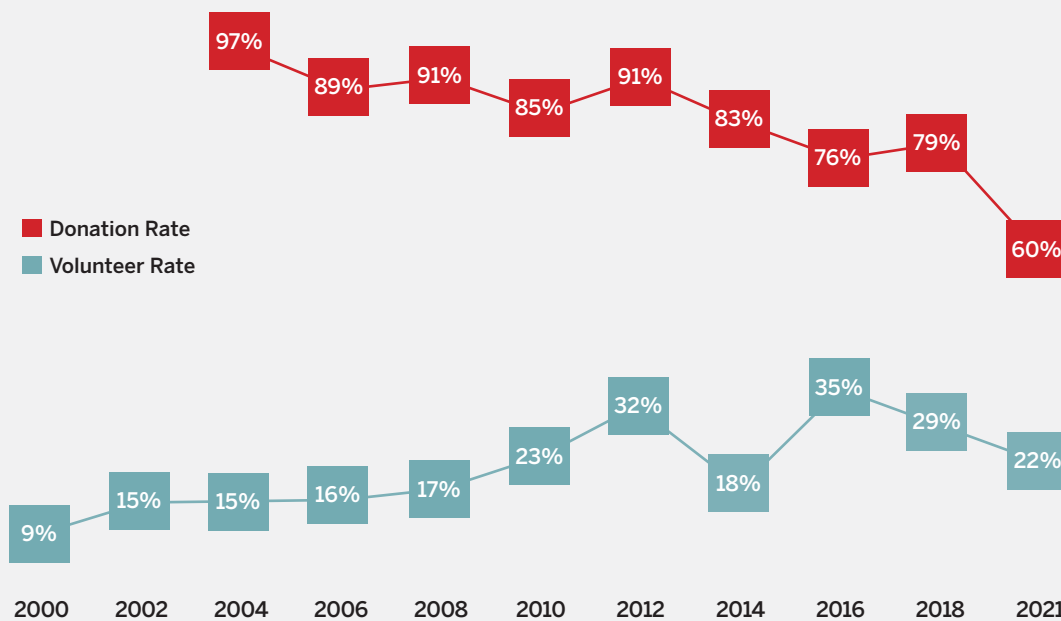
# CHANGES IN DONATING AND VOLUNTEERING IN SINGAPORE

This report shares the key findings from a series of national studies conducted by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) Singapore. Methodological details of these studies are summarized in the Methodologies and Appendix sections.

**Finding 1: Donation and volunteering rates both dropped among individuals from 2018 to 2021. However, businesses saw an increase in the participation in any forms of philanthropic investment from 2017 to 2021.**

To capture the changing trends in giving, information on individuals' and businesses' participation in donation and volunteering was collected. The results showed that there was a substantial decline in individual donation<sup>3</sup> and volunteering<sup>4</sup> rates by 19 and 7 percentage points, respectively, between 2018 and 2021 (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Overall reported donation and volunteering rates in Singapore between 2004 to 2021**



<sup>3</sup> Individual donation is "giving money or goods out of your own free will, without expecting financial payment, to help others outside of your household, family, relatives or friends".

<sup>4</sup> Volunteering includes "activities you do out of your own free will, without expecting financial payment, to help others outside of your household, family, relatives or friends".



While the median volunteering hours declined from 24 to 12 hours in 2021, there was an increase in median donation amounts from SGD 100 to SGD 200 (equivalent to USD 71 and USD 142 respectively in 2020, adjusted for inflation). Nearly half (48%) of the volunteers reported to have volunteered less since the start of COVID-19 when tightened safety measures and restrictions were introduced on February 7, 2020. Safe distancing measures and restrictions limited the number of volunteering activities as certain physical activities organized by charities had to stop. Twenty percent of former volunteers stated COVID-19 as a barrier to practice volunteering.

The overall trend remained consistent despite the pandemic. Figure 1 shows that, since 2004, there has been a decline in the number of individual donors to nonprofit causes. The largest decline was recorded between 2018 and 2021 with the onset of the pandemic. While the volunteering rate has increased since 2004, volunteering has remained below 50 percent of the population over the years.

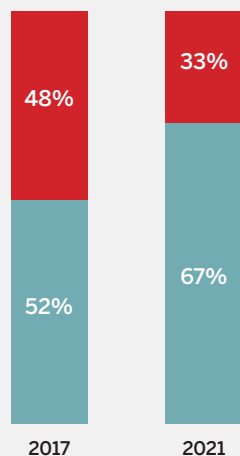
In addition, NVPC's Individual Giving Study 2021 also explored the change in individual giving in view of the pandemic's impact on people's lives. As expected, individuals who were affected financially due to the pandemic were significantly less likely to have donated in the past 12 months prior to April–September 2021. However, individuals who were only affected by workplace changes and in their personal well-being were significantly more likely to have donated and volunteered in the past 12 months, compared to those who were not affected. Data also indicate that those who can afford to give were giving more during the pandemic. Specifically, from the survey, individuals from households that were more affluent (60 to 100 decile) were significantly more likely to donate by 31 percentage points and, on average, at higher amounts compared to less affluent households. Looking ahead, over half of all respondents have indicated that they would like to donate (70%) and volunteer (56%) in the future.

Singapore businesses, on the other hand, had a 12 percentage point increase in any forms of philanthropic investment between 2017 and 2021, with 67 percent of businesses surveyed indicating that they had initiated an act of philanthropy, volunteering, or advocacy for a cause in the past 12 months prior to May–September 2021 (see Figure 2). While there was a greater involvement of businesses giving, the median investment value (total estimated value of philanthropy and volunteering initiatives) declined from SGD 3,000 to SGD 1,000 (equivalent to USD 2,369 and USD 708 respectively in 2020, adjusted for inflation).



**Figure 2. Overall percentage of businesses who reported having philanthropic investment in Singapore, 2017 and 2021 surveys**

■ Corporate Givers  
■ Non-givers



Ways of Corporate Philanthropic Investment	
<b>Philanthropy</b>	Donated cash
	Donated items in kind
	Allowed nonprofit organisations or charities to use assets and resources free of charge
	Sponsored events or programmes
	Organised fundraising initiatives
<b>Volunteering</b>	Provided general manual volunteering
	Provided general non-manual volunteering
	Provided skill-based pro-bono services
	Placed employees in boards of nonprofit organisations or charities
<b>Other forms</b>	Advocated for a cause
	Others (Based on discretion)

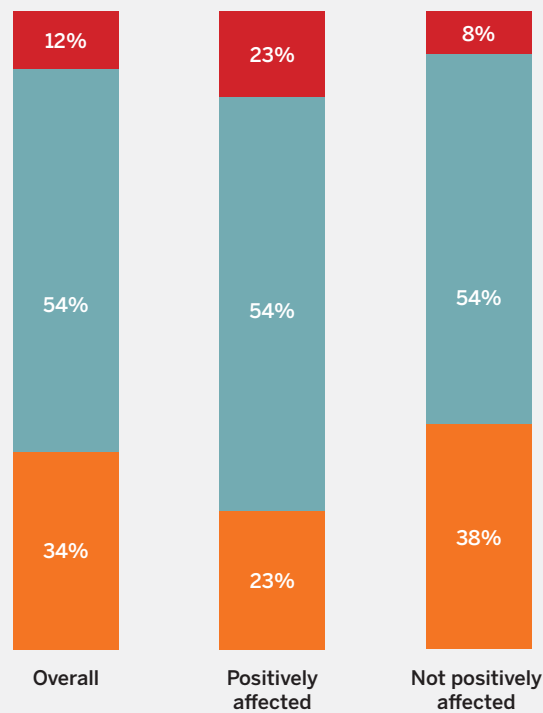
While the pandemic provided businesses with an economic challenge, businesses have stepped up their giving. Businesses in industries that were financially positively affected by COVID-19, such as the financial and insurance sector and the information and communication sector, were significantly more likely to have increased their level of philanthropic investment in the past 12 months (see Figure 3).

Businesses have also used this time to align their corporate giving with their core values and purpose, with nearly half (54%) of businesses reported having aligned their giving objectives with their organizational values in 2021, a 10 percentage point increase from 2017. The pandemic has accelerated the increase in business giving and offered businesses the opportunity to reframe their role and purpose in society.

Overall, giving by individuals and businesses in Singapore has remained resilient during the pandemic. Businesses that were positively impacted by COVID-19 were significantly more likely to increase their philanthropic investment than those that were not.

**Figure 3. Overall reported business giving based on how businesses were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 survey**

■ Increased Giving During Pandemic   ■ No Change   ■ Decreased Giving During Pandemic



Note: Data in Figure 3 were based on two survey questions: “During the COVID-19 period (since January 2020), how did the amount of your corporate giving change?” and “How would you rate your company’s performance in terms of revenue during the COVID-19 period?”

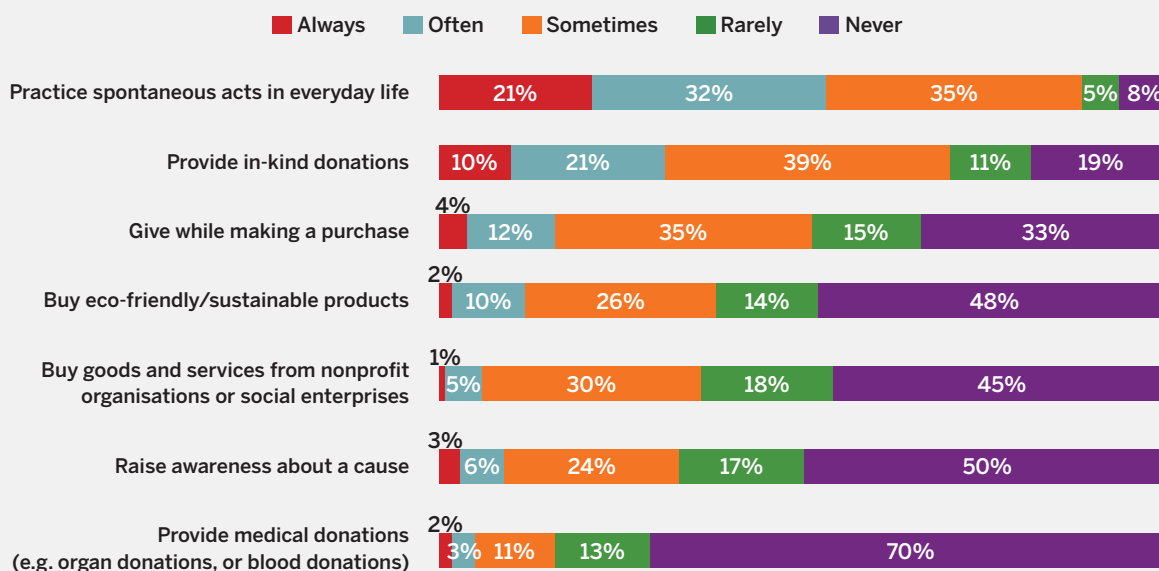


**Finding 2: Individuals and businesses are expanding their ways of giving.**

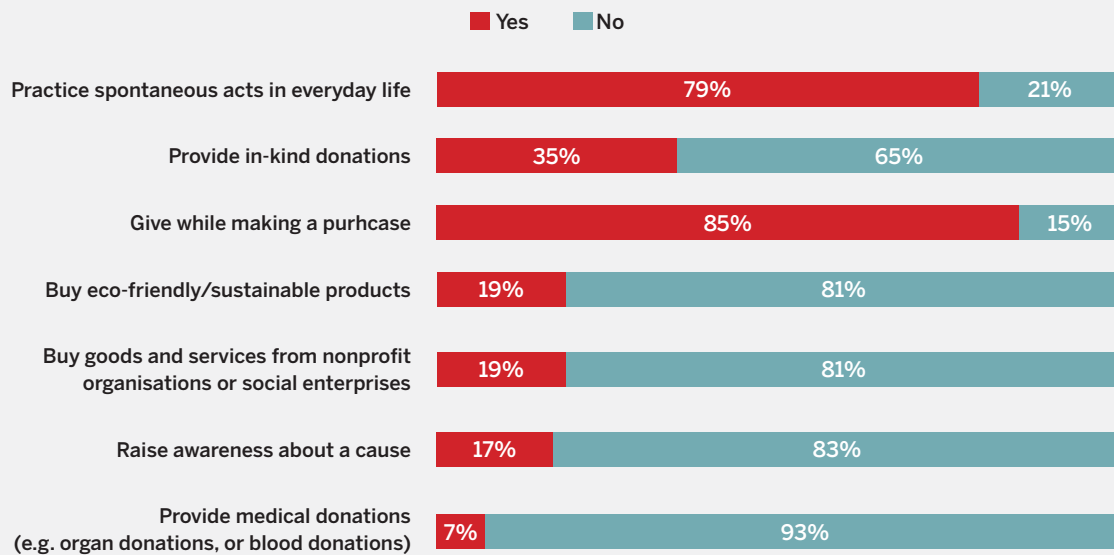
Donating in cash is no longer seen as the only way of giving. With the pandemic, both individuals and businesses have shifted from cash donations to explore other ways of giving. As Figure 4 shows, in Singapore, at least 70 percent of individuals had donated in-kind (e.g., daily necessities, clothing, food) at some capacity in the past 12 months prior to April-September 2021. Other ways of giving have seen a significant increase from 2018. In 2021, 36 percent of respondents had bought goods and services from nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and 38 percent had practiced mindful consumerism by purchasing eco-friendly and sustainable products at least once during the past 12 months. This is a notable increase from the 19 percent for both reported in 2018 (see Figure 5).

There are some possible reasons for this shift towards other ways of giving and a further study, Resilience of Giving Study, is currently being carried out to substantiate some of these reasons. Some of the possible reasons hypothesized could be that there was a nationwide call–SGUnited—for people to stand strong during the pandemic. However, there were limited volunteering opportunities and individuals may have been financially constrained. Therefore, there was a need to further explore the reasons for the increases in other ways of giving.

**Figure 4. Other ways of giving adopted by individuals in Singapore in the past 12 months, 2021 survey**



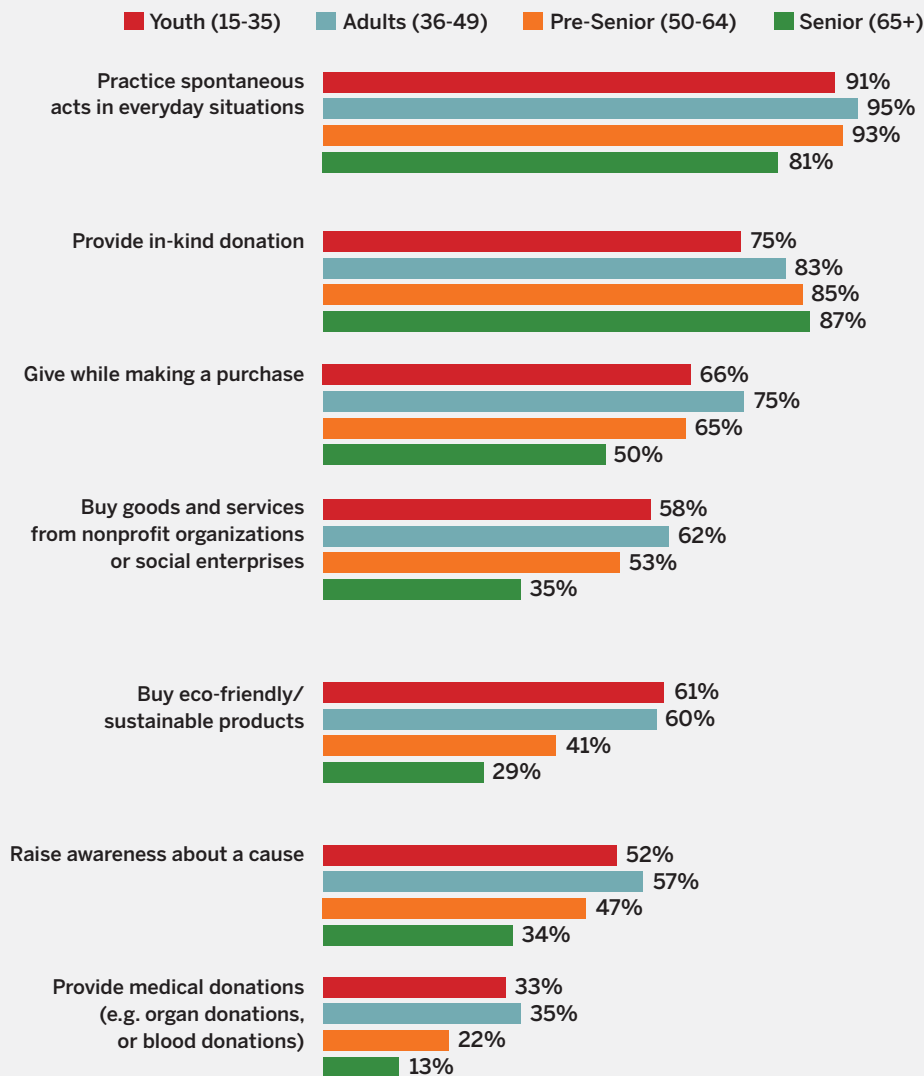
**Figure 5. Other ways of giving adopted by individuals in Singapore in the past 12 months, 2018 survey**



Over half of the respondents have also indicated their willingness to perform these ways of giving in the future. For example, 70 percent shared that they were willing to donate in-kind. More than half indicated that they were willing to start buying goods and services from NPOs or social enterprises (52%), or to buy eco-friendly/sustainable products (38%). These findings on the rising interest in supporting the public good through direct purchase echo international trends of the increasing interest of individuals, especially the next generation, in their preference to make intentional acts of giving in all aspects of their life (see Figure 4).

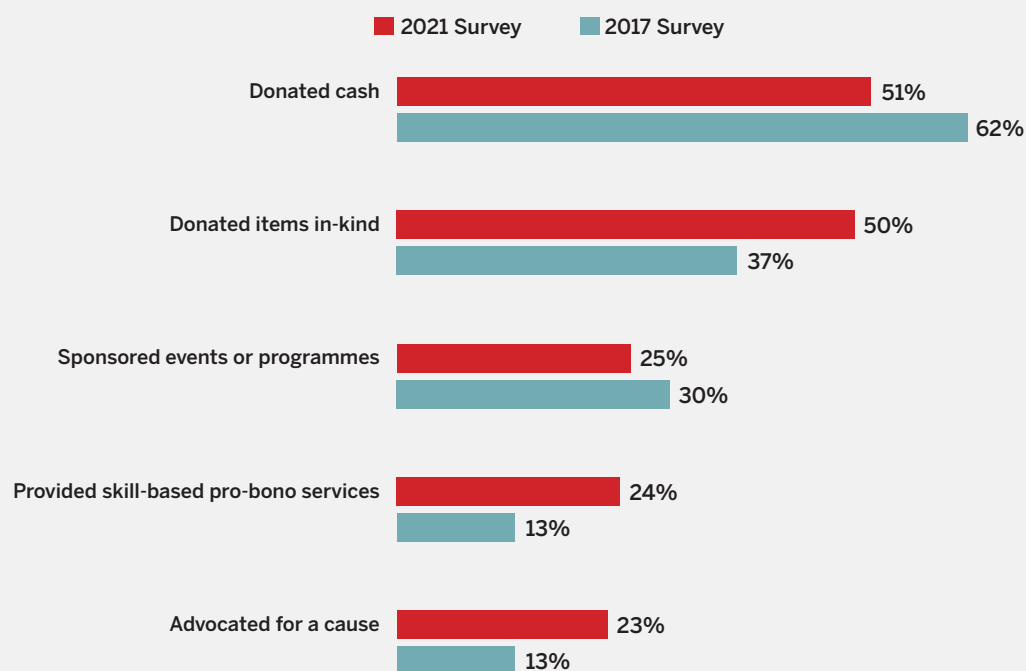


**Figure 6. Other ways of giving adopted by individuals in Singapore in the past 12 months by age group, 2021 survey**



Similarly, Singapore businesses have also expanded their philanthropic involvement between 2017 and 2021. Most notably, while Figure 7 shows a decrease in the number of businesses who indicated having made cash donations by 11 percentage points in the past 12 months prior to May-September 2021. In addition, there has been a significant increase in businesses who indicated having made in-kind donations by 13 percentage points as well as increases in involvement in pro-bono skills-based giving and cause advocacy in the past 12 months prior to May-September 2021.

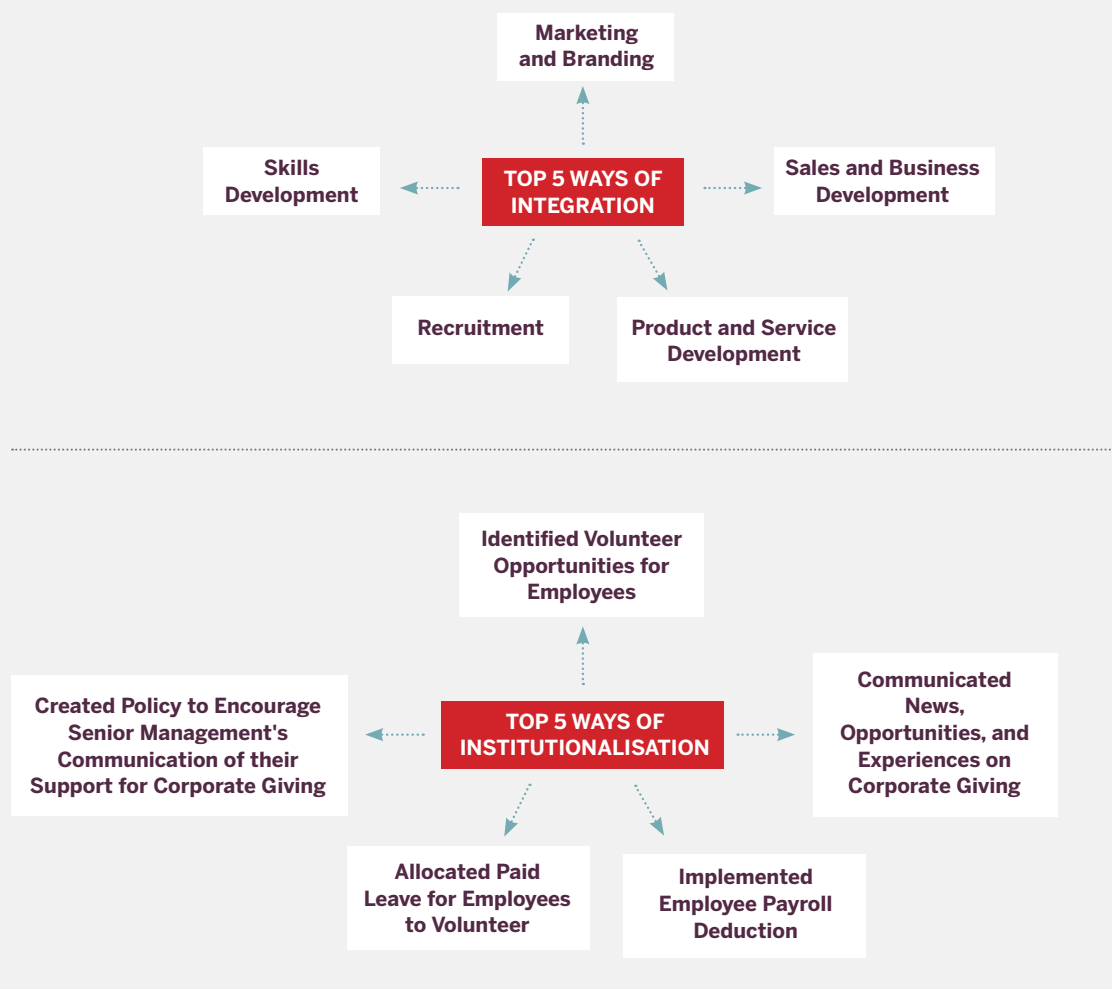
**Figure 7. Singapore businesses' top 5 ways of philanthropic engagement, 2017 and 2021 surveys**



In addition, Singapore businesses expanded their scope of philanthropy by integrating and institutionalizing it in their day-to-day operations. Sixty-six percent reported having integrated at least one form of philanthropic engagement in their day-to-day operations and 59 percent institutionalizing philanthropic engagement in at least one form of company policy in 2021, a 10 and 2 percentage point increase compared to 2017, respectively (see Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Singapore businesses' most popular ways of integration and institutionalization of philanthropy**



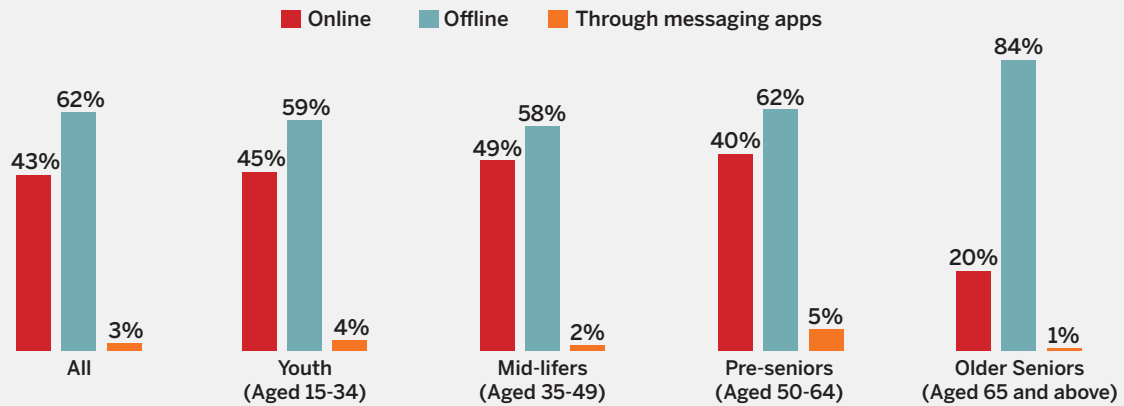
***Finding 3: There has been an acceleration of digital giving by individuals in Singapore due to the COVID-19 pandemic.***

While in-person donations and volunteering sign-ups remained the dominant modes of engagement, there was a significant increase of 29 percentage points for online volunteering sign-ups and 37 percentage points for participation in online donations in the past 12 months prior to April-September 2021. This is especially more salient among younger individuals aged below 50, who are comparatively more likely to utilize online giving websites and social media platforms to engage in philanthropy (see Figure 9).

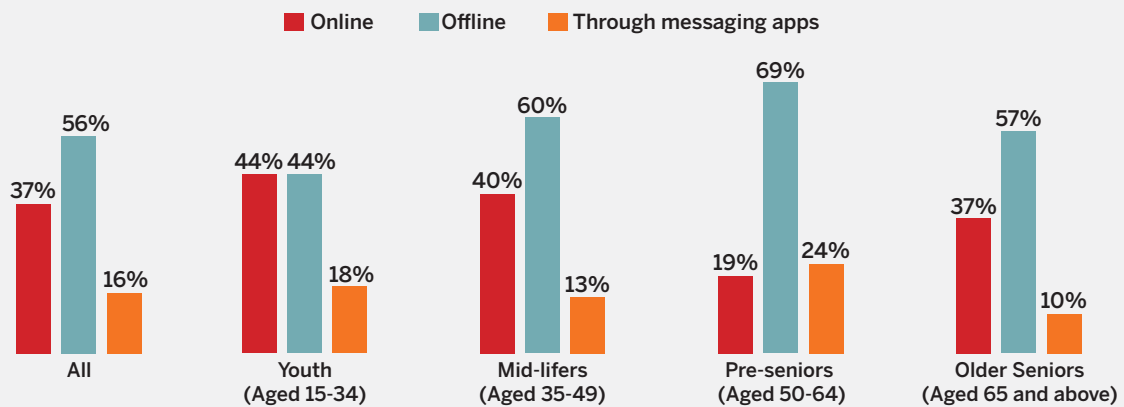


**Figure 9. Modes of donating and volunteering by individuals in Singapore, 2021 survey**

### DONATION METHOD

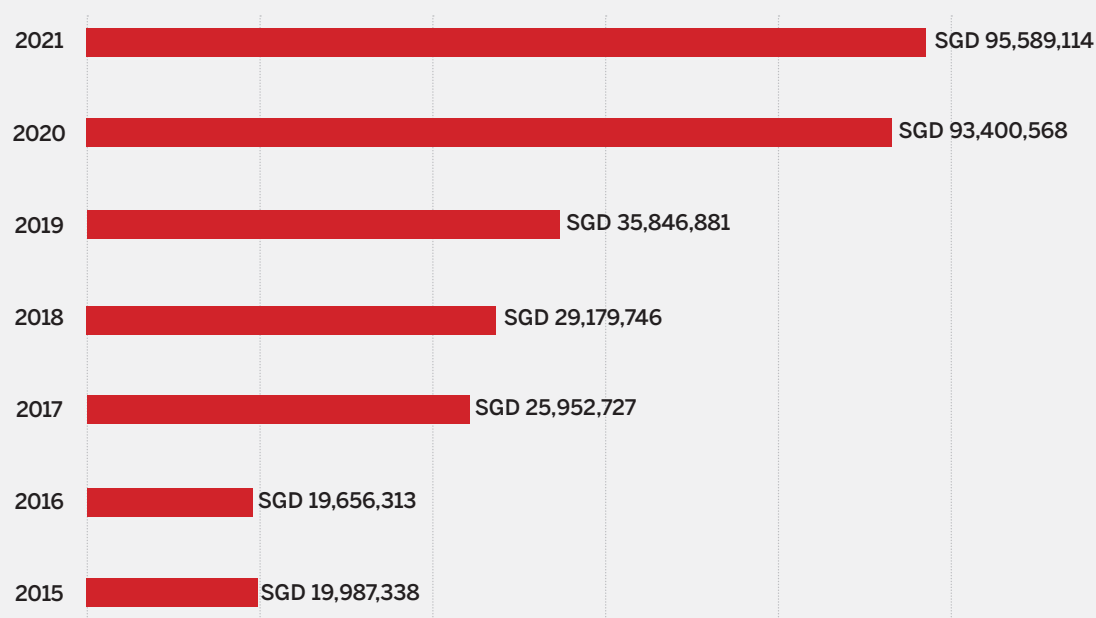


### VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP METHOD



On NVPC’s online giving platform, Giving.sg—one of the largest giving platform in Singapore—there was a 160 percent increase in the amount of total donations in 2020 from SGD 35.8 million in 2019 to SGD 93.4 million in 2020 (equivalent to USD 27.0 million and USD 70.7 million respectively in 2020, adjusted for inflation), a significant increase compared to the average year-on-year increment of 16 percent between 2015 and 2019. The amount of total donations on Giving.sg remained high in 2021, suggesting that individuals may have gotten used to the ease of donating online. Like trends seen internationally, the pandemic has accelerated technology adoption and, due to its ease and convenience, online giving is anticipated to continue to be adopted by more people.

**Figure 10. Total donations received on NVPC’s Giving.sg website, 2015–2021, in SGD**



To further understand Singapore individuals’ experience and opinion on digital giving, NVPC conducted a poll on a Quarterly Good Pulse Survey through Toluna.<sup>5</sup> A total of 167 respondents completed the poll. Table 1 presents the donation platforms that individuals used when donating online. It shows that 56 percent of the respondents donated directly to the NPO’s own website rather than through third-party websites.

<sup>5</sup> The Toluna Group provides on-demand consumer insights through their online panel services. For more information see: <https://tolunacorporate.com/about/>

**Table 1. Platforms used for making a charitable contribution by individuals who had donated online in the past three months prior to July–August 2021**

	Percentage of Respondents
Nonprofit organization's own website	56%
Social media website (e.g. Facebook, TikTok)	26%
Crowdfunding platform (e.g. Giving.sg, GIVE.asia, GoFundMe)	25%
Other online websites	5%
Other platforms (e.g. messaging apps)	15%

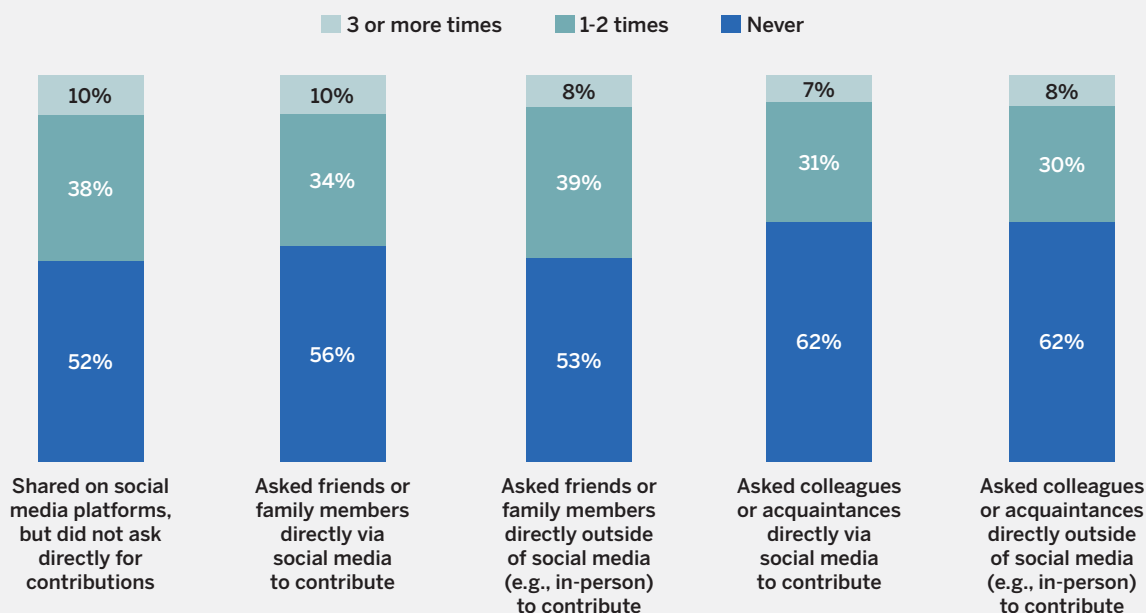
Note: A total of 167 respondents completed this question. Respondents can select more than one option to this survey question.

Moreover, the results of the poll showed that social media played a significant role in sharing charity-related information in the donors' network. Forty-eight percent of the 167 respondents shared charity information on social media (see Figure 11). Moreover, roughly two-fifths of the respondents asked friends/family members (44%) or colleagues/acquaintances (38%) via social media to make donations. These suggest that social media serves as a good channel for donors to reach out to share charity information. Additionally, nearly half (47%) asked friends/family members outside of social media (such as in-person) to donate, and 38% asked colleagues/acquaintances outside of social media. Despite the small sample of the poll, the findings suggest that the online and in-person interactions are both important, which presents a similar pattern observed in the United Kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>For findings from the United Kingdom, see the United Kingdom report published in this series at <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/additional-research/united-kingdom.html>



**Figure 11. Frequency of sharing something about charities with others in the past 3 months prior to July–August 2021**



Note: A total of 167 respondents completed this question.

In line with people going digital, COVID-19 has also accelerated the pace of NPOs adopting technology. We see more NPOs coming forward to use Giving.sg, particularly from 2019 to 2020 (see Table 2). This can be attributed to necessity and efforts by national bodies (i.e. government-related entities and intermediaries aiding government-related agenda), such as the National Council of Social Service and NVPC, to get NPOs to go digital and for donors to donate online. The restrictions to physical fundraising and events in Singapore due to the COVID-19 pandemic have also led to an increase in online fundraising events and virtual charity dinners (Tan & Menon, 2021).

**Table 2. Number of NPOs using Giving.sg between 2015 and 2021**

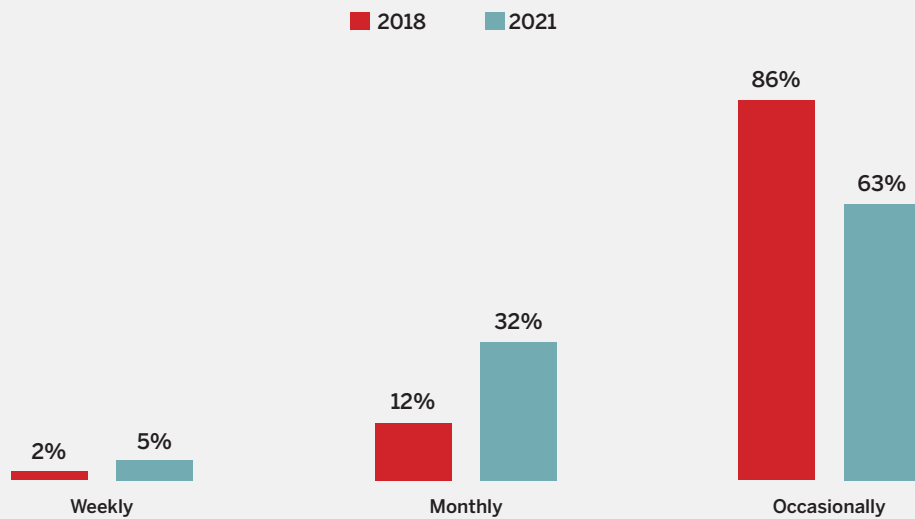
Year	Cumulative Number of all NPOs	Number of New NPOs
2015	342	342
2016	434	92
2017	468	34
2018	504	36
2019	533	29
2020	591	58
2021	625	34

***Finding 4: In response to the pandemic, there have been structural shifts in individual giving behaviors—(i) increase in committed and consistent donations, (ii) willingness to donate to informal groups (non-registered charities, informal community groups, ground-up initiatives), and (iii) increased preference to support social service causes.***

Compared to 2018, there was a significant increase in the frequency of donating in 2021, with 32 percent of respondents donating on a monthly basis, compared to 12 percent in 2018 (see Figure 12). In 2021, individuals who donated more frequently also tended to donate more than those who donated less frequently. Similarly, five percent of respondents noted that they donated weekly in 2021, up from two percent in 2018.

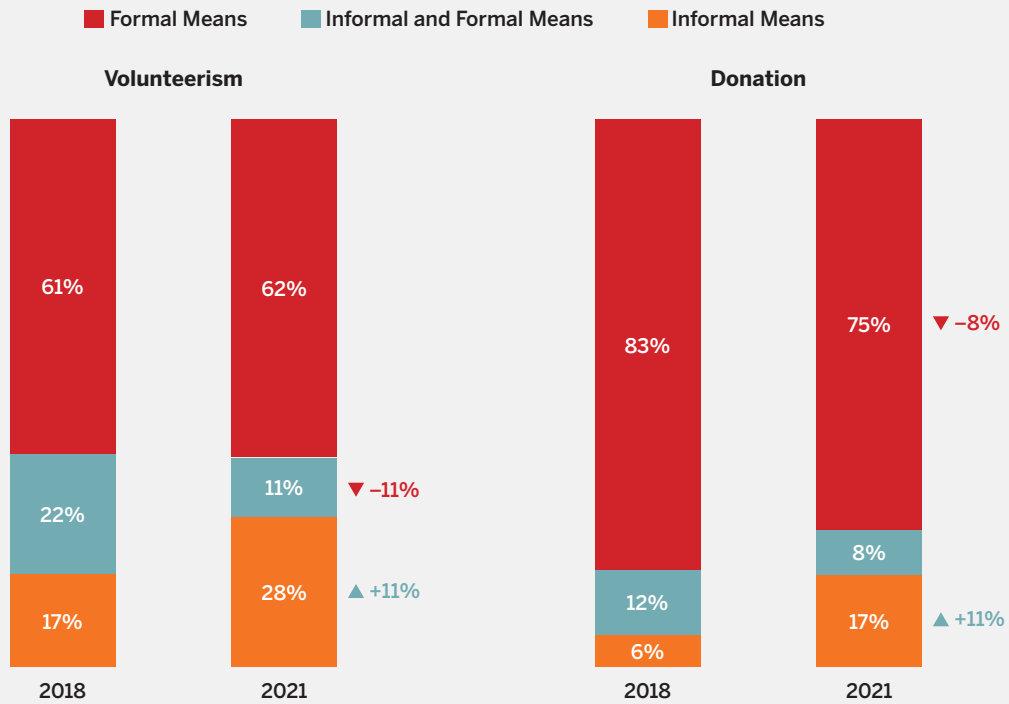


**Figure 12. Frequency of donating among individuals in Singapore, 2018 and 2021 surveys**



There has also been a change in individual giving and volunteering preferences in Singapore. Overall, individual charitable giving to only informal groups has seen an increase of 11 percentage points from 2018. Percentage of individuals who volunteered informally (i.e. not through a registered charity, or through informal community groups or ground-up initiatives) also went up by 11 percentage points in 2021.

**Figure 13. Preferences of donating and volunteering among individuals in Singapore, 2018 and 2021 surveys**



Furthermore, among all charitable sectors, only social service saw an increase in the number of donors and volunteers in the past 12 months prior to April-September 2021. All other sectors, such as arts, culture and heritage, and environment, either stagnated or decreased.

The increase in support for social service was more pronounced during the pandemic as informal groups are often seen to be able to respond more quickly in crisis situations (Brugh et al., 2019), and people tend to divert their support towards basic needs within the social service sector.



**Finding 5: Despite the growth of online giving, accessibility and information remain as barriers to giving for both individuals and businesses in Singapore.**

With the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, non-donors have highlighted financial constraints, not being approached to donate, and fear of donation scams as the key barriers to donating (see Figure 14). Time constraints remained the top barrier for non-volunteers, followed by COVID-19 and not being approached to volunteer. Similarly, businesses expressed resource constraints and lack of information as the key barriers preventing them from giving (see Figure 15).

**Figure 14. Key barriers faced by non-donors (individuals) when deciding to donate or volunteer, 2021 survey**





**Figure 15. Key barriers faced by non-givers (businesses) when deciding to donate or volunteer in 2021**



## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has a multitude of effects towards the giving ecosystem in Singapore. A series of studies offers an understanding of the pandemic's impact towards charitable giving in Singapore.

Most significant is the acceleration of digital giving. As seen in other sectors, the pandemic has been a tipping point for technology adoption. Giving online, be it monetary donations, volunteering, or even in-kind donations, has increased particularly during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 as safe distancing measurements and restrictions were put in place that may have prevented offline giving.

However, while we do note the increase in online giving, giving in general has declined. While the findings revealed that the participation rates of individual donations and volunteering have declined in Singapore, it is also encouraging to see that those who can afford to give and not financially affected by COVID-19 have given higher amounts. The commitment to give has also increased with more people giving on a weekly and monthly basis. Businesses in Singapore have also stepped up in charitable giving during the pandemic.

More notably, individuals and businesses in Singapore are exploring charitable giving in ways other than the traditional donations in cash and volunteering. On average, half of the respondents from both the Individual and Corporate Giving Studies have incorporated charitable giving into their day-to-day life. Individuals are donating in-kind, giving while making purchases, and engaging in mindful consumerism by purchasing from NPOs or sustainable sources. Similarly, businesses are now more inclined to provide in-kind donations, integrating and institutionalizing giving in their operations. Now more than ever, the concept of giving by individuals and businesses in Singapore is no longer restricted to resource transfers. Rather, they recognize that acts of social good can be incorporated into routines and done daily.

This evolving social compact has seen the rise in the number of individual and community-led initiatives to respond immediately to their community needs, while businesses are playing more upstream roles to prevent social and environmental ills.

The various studies also highlighted the different impact of the pandemic on NPOs. Both individuals and businesses supported welfare and social services more during the pandemic. Other causes, such as environment and arts and heritage, saw a decline in support. Although the reason may be that the funding was to bolster the increased needs in welfare and social services, the other causes may find it difficult to retain and attract givers post-pandemic.

The findings shared in the report provided insights to the current shifts in the giving landscape by individuals and businesses. However, it did not include the shifts in large funders and philanthropists, which may have further implications on the future of giving. Furthermore, as charitable giving is seen as a normal good, some of these trends may reverse as society and economy recovers (Almunia et al., 2020).

## Implications

The insights from this report could be applied by NPOs and intermediaries who facilitate giving. The findings suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated the adoption of digital giving in Singapore. NPOs and intermediaries in Singapore should allocate resources and efforts to boost digital giving and consider adapting donor and volunteering appeals online. The shift towards digital giving has allowed for greater accessibility for donors, especially for younger donors. NPOs should also continue to adopt online fundraising and volunteering strategies, such as incorporating social media for donor and volunteering appeals and engagements.

At the same time, digital giving has also brought about a different set of challenges for the nonprofit sector. Online scams have risen in Singapore. These scams include fake fund appeals by bogus charities leading to public fears to donate online as highlighted in the report. All stakeholders need to continue to take concerted efforts to raise awareness and encourage basic due diligence prior to giving online.

NPOs and intermediaries must also recognize that offline physical giving will likely to resume in time as Singapore is moving towards an endemic state. NPOs and intermediaries could start developing plans to adopt hybrid giving methods—both online and offline—to accelerate the recovery of giving in Singapore. This would be especially effective as the findings suggested that engagement in philanthropy could be improved for individuals and businesses with wider outreach from NPOs—many potential donors did not give as they were not approached in the past 12 months to do so.



Similarly, NPOs and intermediaries should be cognizant of the shifts in the giving landscape and preferences of individuals and businesses highlighted in the report. By understanding that givers are interested in ways other than traditional cash donations, NPOs and intermediaries could consider developing appeals to cater to these new ways of giving. For individuals, appeals can be made for in-kind donations or partnering with businesses to encourage giving while making purchases. This is particularly true for pre-seniors (aged 50-64) and seniors (aged 65 and above) who were more inclined to donate in-kind. Running appeals or providing platforms for these seniors to donate items may be more effective than seeking an outright cash donation from them. For younger people, NPOs in Singapore could organize fundraising campaigns on Instagram and YouTube (Hashmeta, 2019). For businesses, there would be opportunities to leverage on existing assets of businesses that they may be willing to provide, and to integrate and institutionalize giving in their day-to-day operations. These opportunities offer possibilities for NPOs to engage individuals and businesses in different ways to cover for any shortfall in donations and volunteers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, businesses should also be made aware of the greater emphasis placed by their consumers on corporate sustainability and to recognize these demands early. From the report, individuals were either practicing or keen on mindful consumerism by purchasing eco-friendly or sustainable products. Singapore is seeing a rise in 'green consumerism', where consumers demand products and services that are eco-friendly (Conserve Energy Future, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have accelerated consumer consciousness on sustainability as well. A new study by Accenture and the World Wide Fund for Nature found that four out of five consumers in Singapore care about the environment, while a third of consumers would make most purchasing decisions based on product sustainability and its environmental impact (WWF Asia, 2021).

It is not just consumers who are driving companies to be more environmentally friendly. Eighty percent of Singapore investors believe that sustainable, environmental, and ethical issues are central to managing their investments (Choy, 2021). The green investing 'mega trend', as Smith (2020) refers to it, is here to stay, as seen in the increase in the number of green bonds, sustainability exchange-traded funds (ETFs), and cleaner energy initiatives. Investors are also allocating more towards companies that are sustainable.

NPOs and intermediaries could play key roles in assisting businesses to reorient their businesses to be more appealing to future consumers. This can include helping companies shape and drive their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments. This is especially important for the next generation who would be more inclined to make intentional acts of social good in their everyday living.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has stressed the importance in forging a resilient social compact to address societal needs and concerns. Individual and community-led initiatives were critical in responding quickly to the needs in the communities. Businesses were challenged to rethink their roles and purpose during the pandemic and stepped up their giving initiatives too. As we move towards an endemic state in Singapore, this report highlights the positive and negative shifts in the giving ecosystem, and the potential opportunities and challenges spurred by the new and emerging giving trends in Singapore.

## **METHODOLOGIES**

This report shares the key findings from a series of national studies conducted by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) Singapore, namely the Individual Giving Study 2021, Corporate Giving Study 2021, Futures of Giving Study 2020-2025, and NVPC's Quarterly Good Pulse Survey. Please refer to Appendix for study details. Findings were also supplemented with data from Giving.sg (an online donation and volunteering platform managed by NVPC) where relevant. Datasets from each study were weighted to be nationally representative to ensure comparability.



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# APPENDIX

## Details of the Studies Referenced in the Report

Research Project/ Initiative	Description of the Study	Sampling Frame	Data Collection Method and Period
<b>Corporate Giving Study (CGS)</b>	The CGS aims to: 1) understand the state of corporate giving in Singapore, including the level of giving, motivations, strategies, and practices; 2) identify strategies for how NPOs and community initiatives can better engage and work with businesses; 3) identify strategies to improve future opportunities and involvement in corporate giving.	The 2021 survey included 1,014 corporations, and the 2017 survey included 707 corporations. The CGS is based on a nationally representative sample (ACRA - Registry of Businesses in Singapore). The CGS 2021 sampling frame included 20,500 businesses' email listings from a database provider. They were split equally by industry based on Singapore Standard Industry Classification.	Online survey.  The data collection commenced on May 24, 2021 and ended on September 3, 2021.
<b>Futures of Giving Study</b>	Focusing on macro-giving trends in Singapore, this study seeks insights from experts, including politicians, givers, professionals, and workshop participants on the current and future giving landscape that Singapore would like to achieve collectively.	Expert Panel (37 persons) based on their expertise field, including: (i) 19 foresight interviews with key stakeholders in the giving ecosystem, (ii) 13 foresight interviews with domain experts, and (iii) 5 interviews with service users. Individual Givers (38 persons)	Qualitative Interviews.  The data collection commenced from November 2020 to January 2021.
<b>Giving.sg Platform</b>	Giving.sg is an online donation platform that NVPC runs since 2015. It included data on successful transactions and self-reported demographic characteristics.	Individuals who have registered and donated through this online platform from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2021.  In 2021, Giving.sg received a total of \$95.5 million, with 625 registered charities supported on the platform. A total of 4,880 fundraising campaigns were created on the platform in 2021.	It is a real-time database that includes transaction data from the platform.



Research Project/ Initiative	Description of the Study	Sampling Frame	Data Collection Method and Period
<p><b>Individual Giving Study (IGS)</b></p>	<p>Started in 2000, the IGS is a cross-sectional study that has been conducted every two years to measure individual giving in terms of volunteerism and donation. IGS has guided nonprofit organizations, government, community partners, and the wider society to better understand the state of individual giving in Singapore.</p>	<p>2,004 participants in the 2021 survey.</p> <p>Since the 2004 survey, IGS has been using the representative sample of dwellings as a sample strategy. A stratified random sampling of household addresses was purchased from the National Database on Dwellings in Singapore, Department of Statistics. The sample size of the surveys varies, ranging from 386 (IGS 2016), 2,100 (IGS 2018) to 2,004 (IGS 2021). The target respondents of the IGS have included Singapore residents (i.e. Singapore citizens and permanent residents) and non-residents (including employment/dependent/student pass-holders, but excluding tourists, construction workers and foreign domestic maids) aged 15 years and above.</p> <p>Sampling weights have been used for all the IGS surveys to achieve representative results at the population level.</p>	<p>The IGS surveys were mainly conducted via face-to-face interviews.</p> <p>Due to the pandemic, the 2021 survey had 87 cases interviewed over Zoom and 177 cases through an online questionnaire out of 2004 respondents.</p>
<p><b>Quarterly Good Pulse Survey</b></p>	<p>Quarterly online survey to understand giving behavior in Singapore. Questions were given from IUPUI.</p>	<p>Toluna internet panel.</p> <p>167 participants.</p>	<p>The data collection commenced on July 9, 2021 and ended on August 3, 2021.</p>



## **Researched by National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) Singapore**

National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) Singapore is a non-profit organization that facilitates “partnerships with non-profits, organizations, public sector bodies, and individuals to enliven the giving ecosystem within Singapore” (City of Good, 2020). It also runs one of the largest online donation platforms, Giving.sg, in Singapore, which officially launched in 2015. NVPC also conducts national surveys and qualitative studies to examine the trends and changes of giving from individuals as well as corporates.



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## **A project led by Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy**

The Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy is dedicated to improving philanthropy to improve the world by training and empowering students and professionals to be innovators and leaders who create positive and lasting change. The school offers a comprehensive approach to philanthropy through its academic, research and international programs, and through The Fund Raising School, Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, Mays Family Institute on Diverse Philanthropy, and Women's Philanthropy Institute.



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