People want to do good, driven by desire for positive impact on society

This is the last of a series of 12 primers on current affairs and issues in the news, and what they mean for Singapore.

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Dr Tan, a self-described altruist, was instrumental in the launch of the Volunteers with Tri-Generational Homecare (TriGen) programme which aims to bring together three generations – youth, young adults and seniors. Founded in 2014, the programme provides students from tertiary institutions with the opportunity to care for seniors at the TriGen residences. In early 2016, the programme was expanded to include elderly volunteers from the community. 

“People are very busy, yet they sacrifice their time to come here. This is what should happen in every society. It’s a noble cause and something good,” he said.

The rate of volunteering among those aged 15 to 24 in the 2018 Individual Giving Survey was 40 per cent, higher than the national average of 29 per cent.

“IT EVOLVED?

It is often said that the idea of altruism is universal, the concept of "effective altruism" has been seen in how people are contributing to societal change and voluntary work. This trend is likely to persist due to the increasing high cost of living and the growing interest in positively changing society, sociology, and psychology.

Wealthy and middle-aged people are more likely to think about others than the young. However, research has shown that people in their 20s are more likely to volunteer than those aged 60 or older. The surge in volunteering among those aged 15 to 24 in the 2018 Individual Giving Survey was 40 per cent, higher than the national average of 29 per cent.

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Dr Wan, who also noted that the programme has contributed to the formation of a sense of ownership in the younger generation, said that the programme has helped to foster a sense of accountability among the younger generation. This feeling of ownership and accountability has a significant impact on the younger generation, as they are more likely to contribute to societal change and voluntary work. This trend is likely to persist due to the increasing high cost of living and the growing interest in positively changing society, sociology, and psychology.

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