Why Philanthropy Matters

Welcome to the September 2025 newsletter

Hello Philanthropoids,

Well, somehow that was September. Not sure I really believe that it can be over already tbh, but my Google calendar seems pretty adamant about it so I guess I will have to go along with it. (For now, at least).

As ever, this has been a busy month for events of all kinds in the philanthropy world: some of which I have been involved in, others which I have only been able to look at longingly from afar, and one or two that I was probably fairly relieved not to have to go to…. (Although I am obviously far too discreet and professional to let on which ones *those* are). As a result, I have spent a fair proportion of my working time this month on transport of one form or another (indeed, I am on the train as I write this) - which luckily I find quite productive for working, although it has meant that I have drunk an obscene amount of coffee, even by my standards.

There have also been plenty of news stories flying about, reports being published and books being launched– which, as ever, I have done my best to collect and collate in this newsletter for those of you who don't have the luxury of spending quite as much time trawling the internet for philanthropy-relevant nuggets as I do.

So, without further ado, onward to the newsletter.

PHILANTHROPY IN THE NEWS

Love it or Nate it: Bargatze's divisive Emmys gambit

I definitely could have started this month's newsletter with yet another depressing story about the rise of right-wing populism and growing attacks on civil society, but I thought that for a change I would lead off with something slightly different and a bit lighter; though still thought-provoking. (And if you're worried, don't be – we'll get back to the depressing stuff *really* soon). The story in question concerns the recent Emmy Awards, where the host – comedian Nate Bargatze - sparked a heated debate about whether using the promise of charitable donations to incentivise good behaviour – and, crucially, the withdrawal of donations to punish *bad* behaviour – is acceptable.

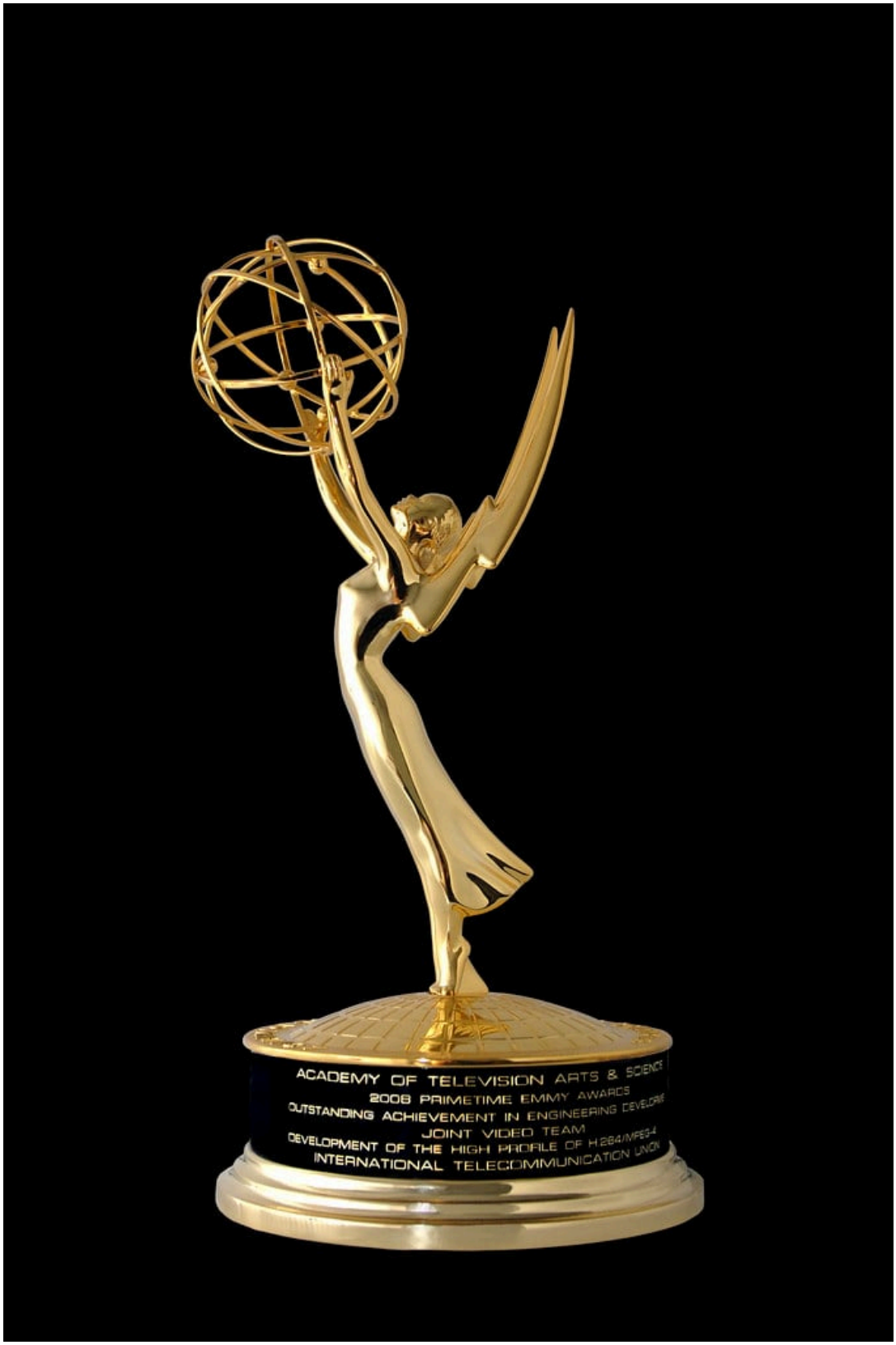

Image Credit: ITU Pictures, CC BY 2.0

During his opening monologue, Bargatze had a figure of $100K projected onto the screen behind him, representing a donation he planned to give at the end of the night to the Boys and Girls Club of America (the chosen partner charity for the awards ceremony). The twist

however, he announced, was that $1,000 would be deducted from that figure for every second a category winner went over their allotted 45 seconds when accepting their award. (And, conversely, $1,000 would be added for every second they came in under the 45 seconds).

This was obviously intended as a tongue-in-cheek way of trying to do something about the problem of overly long acceptance speeches. (This has admittedly been something of an issue in recent years, with speeches in general getting longer and longer, and there have been some particularly egregious examples - such as Adrian Brody snippily telling the orchestra who tried to play him off during his rambling Oscars acceptance speech to stop it because "this wasn't his first rodeo". Which, I think it is fair to say, made him look like a proper tool). Some attendees went along with Bargatze's bit - such as the *Last Week Tonight* host John Oliver, who kept his acceptance speech to only 19 seconds and later joked that his sole motivating factor was "to cost Nate Bargatze money personally" - but others clearly found it a bit awkward, as they struggled to get through all their necessary shout-outs and thank-yous with one eye on the clock. Similarly, whilst some commentators after the event applauded Bargatze's approach, others argued that it hadn't really worked, and had come over as mean-spirited; particularly in the case of first-time winners who were denied their moment in the sun.

Bargatze himself has since addressed the controversy on an episode of his *Nateland* podcast, acknowledging that not everybody liked his approach to hosting the event, but explaining that his hope had been that everyone would take it in good humour and that award winners would still feel free to give the speeches they wanted to give, with their studios or production companies then stepping in to cover the cost of any time they went over their allotted 45 seconds. Although as he admits, it might have helped to say all this explicitly when framing things at the start of the program, so that everyone understood what was going on.

At the end of the day, this story feels like a bit of a storm in a teacup – no real harm was done, and in fact the Boys and Girls Club of America ended up getting a hefty $350,000 donation, thanks to Bargatze honouring his original pledge to give $100K, plus a donation from CBS (the network that broadcast the awards). And to be honest, in the

context of recent news about charities and philanthropy, that basically makes this the greatest good news story the world has ever seen. It does however bring to mind a few interesting questions and issues.

One is the whole idea of using charitable donations as a form of punishment or reward. Now, there's no denying that punishment and reward play an important role in giving: economists, for instance, have long talked about the "warm glow" as a way of explaining how seemingly selfless altruistic behaviour is actually selfish. As the Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Samuelson rather wryly put it:

"Mesmerized by Homo economicus, who acts solely on egoism, economists shy away from altruism almost comically. Caught in a shameful act of heroism, they aver: "Shucks, it was only enlightened self-interest."

Likewise, many would argue (and many religions demand) that giving has some element of pain and sacrifice in it. As an old Yiddish proverb puts it: "If charity cost no money and benevolence caused no heartache, the world would be full of philanthropists". We have also seen interest in recent years in the phenomena of "rage giving" and "retributive philanthropy" - where donations are made as a response to the actions or pronouncements of a public figure, and are deliberately given to causes or organisations that the donor assumes that public figure would not like, as a vicarious form of punishment.

The Nate Bargatze case feels a bit different to this, however, as what we're talking about here is using the promise or threat of gifts to charity (or their withholding) to incentivise good behaviour (and punish bad behaviour) which *has not yet happened* and *is not directly related to the cause area receiving (or not receiving) the donations.* For this to work, of course, the charity in question has to be universally agreed to be admirable and producing a public good, as otherwise there is no way of knowing whether a given person would consider a donation to it to be an incentive (or, perhaps more importantly, whether the lack of a donation to it would be seen as a disincentive). And finding a charity that fits this bill in an increasingly polarised day and age is not necessarily straightforward, but luckily The Boys and Girls Club of America would still seem to be one of them. (Indeed, one of the articles cited above referred to it as an "unimpeachable nonprofit"). The question to my

mind is whether the charity just become a cipher in this scenario – a convenient placeholder for something universally agreed as a Good Thing? Maybe I'm looking here for a problem that doesn't really exist, but I just know that in the past when donations to charity have been used as a blunt method of demonstrating contrition or taking Bad Money and putting it to Good Uses, it doesn't sit quite right. (A case in point would be the use of Libor fines on UK banks, which the government never seemed to quite know what to do with, so just doled out to a selection of fairly safe charities in the form of highly-publicised giveaways during various spending announcements. I'm glad that the money ended up in the charity sector, but the whole thing gave me the ick as a philanthropy policy wonk).

The other bit of the Emmys story which caught my eye was the fact that a bunch of kids from the Boys and Girls Clubs of America were apparently at the ceremony itself, and helping to act as ushers for those receiving awards. Now, the kids themselves probably had an amazing time, I'm sure they were very well looked after, and everyone loves a winsome child (alright, not everyone does, but *enough* people do). However, there's still something about this that just feels a bit off to me, perhaps because in the context of Bargatze's donation schtick it adds the dimension that "it's not just some unspecified kids who will miss out if you go on too long, but *these specific kids*". Which admittedly might actually make it more effective as an incentive, but does feel dangerously close to the way in which child waifs would sometimes be wheeled out in front of potential donors in the Victorian era. (That's probably way too harsh, but I've said it now).

The other thing I wondered about Bargatze's Bargain (as we should probably call it), is whether it would have worked better if framed solely in terms of a promise to donate i.e. "if you keep your speech below 45 seconds, I will give X". Because there are two key drawbacks with the negative framing about withholding donations as a punishment, from what I can see. One is that it relies on the assumption (as Bargatze himself has admitted) that the public's natural next thought on hearing this setup is that the studios and production companies behind winning shows should be expected to step up to cover the cost of lost donations, on the basis that they have loads of money and can obviously afford to

do so. But the problem here is that from the public's point of view, *so can Bargatze himself*, as he is a very successful comedian and TV personality. So if his offer to give away $100K was genuine, why doesn't he just do that? On the other hand, if his offer was never intended to be genuine, and was only ever designed to make his comedy bit work, then the whole thing starts to look quite crass and hypocritical. (And of course, as we know, Bargatze did end up honouring his original pledge, presumably because he came to a similar conclusion). The other issue with the negative framing is whether the punishment seems disproportionate and poorly targeted: disproportionate, because I suspect that for plenty of people a slightly overlong awards acceptance speech doesn't seem that big a deal, whilst withholding a potential $1000 donation to a charity does; and poorly targeted because it is basically the charity that is being punished for the misbehaviour of stars accepting awards, rather than the stars themselves.

All in all, probably not an approach we will see replicated at other awards ceremonies any time soon.

Ryders on the Storm?

There was another story this month which centred on the idea of making use of the halo effect of charity (or what Jon Dean calls "The Good Glow"); this time from the world of sports. The news in question concerned the announcement that, following heavy criticism, a number of golfers in the US team Ryder Cup are planning to give away to charity the $200K personal payments they are due to receive for appearing in the tournament.

Image credit: Bryan Berlin, CC BY-SA 4.0

There are a few crucial bits of context here. The first is that these $200K personal payments are a new development: up until now US players have only received an indirect reward, in the form of a $200K donation to a charity of their choice (and even that was only introduced in 1999 – before that they received nothing at all). The second is that their counterparts on the European Ryder Cup team still don't receive any payment for taking part. Despite that, however, US players will this year receive both an increased $300K charity donation and a $200K personal

payment. And lots of people (including former US Ryder Cup players) are up in arms about the fact, because they think that being paid to play is against the spirit of the competition. (Also, since I am writing this at the end of the month I have the benefit of hindsight in knowing that the US ended up losing the Ryder Cup and that the tournament was marred by poor crowd behaviour, so the idea of US players getting handsomely paid probably seems even less palatable at this point...)

There were a couple of particular things that caught my eye about this story. One was that presumably the decision back in 1999 to give US players a $200K donation to a charity of their choice was a way of fudging the issue: clearly somebody recognised back then that a straightforward personal payment wouldn't wash, but that a charity donation might just about be palatable to critics whilst also appeasing US players who had been demanding some kind of recompense. If, however, the hope was that this fudge would help to pave the way for the introduction of direct payments in future, the response to the proposal to pay players this year has probably put paid to that idea. (Which suggests that whilst a charitable donation in someone's name can be seen as a form of reward, it is still a fundamentally different kind of reward to personal remuneration).

The other thing that caught my eye was the language and positioning of some of the US players who announced that they were planning to give the $200K away. Scottie Scheffler, for instance, told reporters that "he had plans for the money, but would not share the detail", and was quoted as saying "my wife and I like to do a lot of stuff in our local community and I've never been one to announce what we do," said the four-time major winner. "I don't like to give charitable dollars for some kind of recognition. We have something planned for the money that we'll be receiving." Which is maybe fair enough, although given the highly-scrutinised and slightly contentious context in which this money is being paid out, I can't quite see why you would just want to be as clear and transparent as possible about it.

(FYI that if you want more on the role that sportspeople play as philanthropists and activists, check out this WPM long read).

The New McCarthyism: political attacks on US nonprofits

At this point we should probably come to the obvious biggest story of the past month (and pretty much all of this year): namely the growing threat to philanthropic freedom in the US. The Trump administration has made clear since taking office its antipathy towards nonprofits that it considers to be ideological enemies, and the particular hatred it reserves for foundations that are perceived to be progressive or left-leaning (as detailed in previous editions of this newsletter). However, the murder of right-wing activist Charlie Kirk earlier this month has inflamed the political climate in the US, and significantly intensified the threat to the nonprofit and foundation sector.

Image created using Google Gemini

In the wake of Kirk's shooting, President Trump made it clear that he had no interest in seeking unity of any kind; and instead was doubling down on his rhetorical attacks on those he considers to be his enemies. Progressive nonprofits and foundations have borne the brunt of many of his attacks -accused of supporting or excusing 'domestic terrorism"; and the administration has renewed its threats to strip organisation of their tax exempt status or even – in some cases - to undertake criminal proceedings against them. It won't come as much of a surprise to anyone with even a passing acquaintance with the right wing populist authoritarian playbook used elsewhere around the world by the likes of Hungary's Viktor Orban that one of the first targets in President Trump's sights is George Soros's Open Society Foundations. Soros has long been a convenient bogeyman for the political right, as well the subject of numerous conspiracy theories (many of them unpleasantly antisemitic), and Trump made clear this month his intention to push various US attorneys offices to investigate OSF. He has also suggested that other liberal philanthropic funders, including the LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman, could come in for similar treatment.

Dozens of progressive nonprofits have come out to condemn Trump's politically motivated attacks on George Soros and OSF, and more than 100 foundations signed an open letter earlier this month defending

wider principles of philanthropic freedom and their right to free speech, but in the febrile political atmosphere of the US right now it seems unlikely that Trump's attacks on nonprofits are going to subside anytime soon. Some experts have pointed out (as they did when Trump and Vance first started talking about removing the tax status of nonprofits) that it will be far harder in practice for Trump and his acolytes to prove any wrongdoing by progressive nonprofits and foundations than all their angry rhetoric about "domestic terrorism" suggests. Which is undoubtedly true: largely because — and I'm willing to go out on a limb here – none of these organisations have actually done anything wrong, and the administrations attacks on them are just an insane McCarthy-esque political witch hunt. The only problem is that in order to find reassurance in this fact, you have to believe that Trump will continue to respect existing norms and institutions and obey the rule of law. And it isn't clear that this is an assumption anyone can continue to make for much longer, so the threat to nonprofits and foundations remains very real and very acute.

There was one potential small glimmer of hope this month (if you were willing to squint hard enough), in that the CEO of the deeply right-leaning DAF provider DonorsTrust, Lawson Bader, came out with a warning to the Trump administration not to continue its attacks on Liberal nonprofits. In part this was justified as a simple matter of pragmatic self-interest, with Bader pointing out that any campaign of revenge that the right pursues now against progressive nonprofits may well "come back to haunt us" if the political winds change direction, and future left-leaning leaders decide to take similar steps against conservative organisation. But he also made a more fundamental case for the importance of philanthropic pluralism and freedom as a principle, and the need to defend it. Which may give progressive funders and nonprofits some hope that we have reached the point where those with shared interest in the ongoing health of philanthropy and civil society – whatever their political stripe - are willing to put aside partisan differences in order to defend that common ideal. Here's hoping, anyway.

Far right threats to UK charities

If anyone in the UK needed a salutary reminder that the charity sector here is facing its own challenges with right-wing populism (even if we're not quite at the stage the US find itself at yet), it came in the form of a report this month that more than 150 lawyers, human rights, refugee and environmental organisations signed a letter said they are being "pressured into silence" by threats of violence from far-right groups.

Image credit: Tim Sheerman-Chase, CC BY 2.0

Charities and NGOs who signed the letter reported individual members of staff having their personal details shared online and receiving death and rape threats. Some organisations that work with refugees and migrants have already taken additional security measures, including relocating their offices or installing safe rooms. And it may not be just the organisations working on the frontline that need to worry for much longer: there are already some voices who are starting to push Trumpian lines about "left wing funders", and identifying trusts and foundations that support refugee and migrant organisations. For now, these narratives are confined to right wing blogs and social media, but I suspect it will not be long before they make there way into mainstream media. (And tbh, given the way news and media consumption habits are changing, it might be naïve to talk about distinctions between "mainstream" and "non-mainstream media" anyway).

Over-Generous and Over Here: US philanthropists in the UK

There was an interesting article in the *Financial Times* this month, about the increasingly prominent role that US philanthropists are playing in the UK. The piece highlights recent mega-donations from the likes of Michael Moritz (Welsh-born, but a longtime US citizen) and Stephen Schwarzman and suggests that this might be part of a wider trend, which reflects the growing number of wealthy US nationals coming over to the UK (and bringing at least some of their giving with them).

Image credit: Benhard Cranach, CC BY-SA 4.0

For now, a lot of the big gifts from US donors (unsurprisingly) seem to be going to universities and cultural institutions; however it is worth noting that these are just the gifts we know about so there may be lots of smaller donations flying under the radar as well. It is interesting to speculate what effect this might have on the culture of philanthropy in the UK longer-term: if more US donors make their homes here will they become a key part of the philanthropy landscape (and if so, how will UK charities need to adapt)? Will the generous giving of these US donors result in any kind of change in norms among British philanthropists? (Whether in terms of how much they give, or how they talk about their giving). And will the impact of these US donors be felt beyond London (where, presumably, the vast majority of them will choose to base themselves)?

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

This is the section where I indulge myself to give a brief update on what WPM has been up to this month.

Philanthropisms Podcast:

The podcast returned this month after a summer break, and I thought I would launch myself right back into it by making the first episode a deep dive into the impact of the rise of political populism on philanthropy. Later in the month, we then had a great conversation with Oli French and Sally Vivyan about why and how foundations choose to spend down.

Listen to the episode on populism

Listen to the episode with Oli French and Sally Vivyan

Chinese Edition of my book:

I was very excited this month to receive a copy of the new Chinese translation of my 2023 book *What is Philanthropy For?* I clearly can't actually read it, but it looks great, and I'm delighted at the thought that there might now be some Chinese philanthropoids out there enjoying my musings on philanthropy!

Events etc.

September was a fairly busy old month for events. I had a flying visit to Geneva at the start of the month to do a day's teaching about the value of historical perspective to practitioners as part of the University of Geneva's Masters course in philanthropy, and then another flying (or, more accurately, Eurostarring) visit to Brussels to speak to participants on Philea's China-Europe Philanthropic Leadership Platform. Later in the month, I then managed to fit into a single morning both a breakfast event hosted by UNHCR and a session talking to a group of family foundation ACF members about my new book.

OTHER GOOD STUFF

This is the bit where I share other philanthropy-related things I have come across that might not quite count as news but are definitely worth checking out. And as ever, there are plenty of them!

Philanthropy and identity politics:

There was a really interesting back-and-forth in the pages of *Inside Philanthropy* this month (behind a paywall, it must be said). Editor-in-Chief David Callahan, who is always worth reading or listening to on philanthropy IMHO, wrote an op-ed arguing that the focus on identity among progressive funders has made it easier for those on the right;

both because it means that the progressive side is more fractured and less cohesive (and therefore not as clearly working towards a shared goal), and also because framing issues in terms of identity reinforces many of the dividing lines that the populist right would want to draw anyway (and therefore makes it easier for their narratives to gain momentum).

This is a really interesting point, which brought to mind for me some of Kristin Goss's work on the history of philanthropy in funding the women's movements of the 1970s and the challenges of "hyperpluralism", and also Sally Covington's work back in the late 1990s on the successes of conservative philanthropy (which looks incredibly prescient today). However, not everyone agreed with Callahan by any means, and *IP* published an interesting rebuttal from Tynesha McHarris in which she argues that retreating on identity is not the way to solve the problems we are now facing. (And for more thoughts on this, do check out the recent episode of the Philanthropisms podcast on philanthropy and political populism).

Read David Callahan's piece ($)

Read Tynesha McHarris's response ($)

Bank of America Study of Philanthropy:

The end of the month saw the launch of the latest edition of the Bank of America study of philanthropy – a really interesting snapshot of trends in giving by wealthy US households that has been going (in one format or another) since 2006.

The headline from this year's report is that levels of participation in giving among affluent Americans are going down, but those who do give are giving more (a pattern that regular readers will know is also being seen in other places, including the UK). In terms of which causes get the most money, religion continues to dominate. But it is also interesting to note that volunteering among affluent households is up significantly, which may reflect a great desire for engagement and participation.

Definitely worth digging into the detail if you're interested in giving trends.

Read an article about the report

Read the report

Redefining ESG?

This was a really interesting article in the *Financial Times this month* suggesting that a growing number of fund managers are revising their interpretation of ESG to allow investment in defence manufacturing, on the grounds that this is now a clear public good in the current geopolitical climate. Obviously, one has to acknowledge that the context has changed radically in the last few years - as has public opinion about the need for defence spending - but it's pretty hard not to conclude that this makes the entire concept of ESG investing essentially meaningless.

Read the article

New book on Effective Altruism:

A really interesting-looking new book came out this month, offering an account of the philosophical origins of Effective Altruism and an assessment of the movement today. The book, "Death in a Shallow Pond" is by the British philosopher David Edmonds, who has written many books about philosophy for a general audience, including "Wittgenstein's Poker" (a fascinating account of the single meeting between Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Popper, which became the stuff of legend). Regular readers will know that I am absolute sucker for anything which explores philanthropy from a philosophical perspective and will be unsurprised to hear that I have already bought my copy of "Death in a Shallow Pond". I shall return with a book report in due course.

Read a review of the book in the TLS

Buy the book

5 Growth Models driving philanthropy in Asia:

I spotted an interesting article in *European Business Magazine* this month, reporting on early insights from the Commission on Asian Philanthropy. They have identified 5 growth models for philanthropy across Asia: corporate-led, community-led, state-led, faith-based and HNWI-led. Interestingly, they suggest that the lasty of these currently has "a comparatively limited presence in Asia" – which perhaps reflects the fact that even where there are wealthy people giving (as there increasingly are), this takes forms that are better understood in other ways (e.g. corporate-led or faith-led)? I haven't yet seen the full report, but will be very interested to, as the continued rise of Asia as a global philanthropy hotspot is absolutely fascinating!

Read the article

New research partnership between Institute of Philanthropy and LSE:

In further evidence of the growing influence of Asian Philanthropy (if that was needed), it was also announced this month that the Institute of Philanthropy (the major new Hong Kong-based research institute launched in 2023, and one of the 13 members of the aforementioned Commission on Asian Philanthropy) hasagreed a new partnership with the Marshall Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) to "explore how global financial hubs can unlock greater philanthropic capital and drive social innovation".

Read the article

Solidarity Philanthropy:

Coming at philanthropy from a pretty different perspective, an interesting report was published this month by Grassroots International on the idea of "solidarity philanthropy" and how philanthropic donors and funders can (and should) redefine their relationship to social movements. As you might expect, there's lots in there on the need to provide core support, moving away from top-down forms of impact measurement, and putting philanthropic wealth in the wider context of how it has been made and invested; and plenty of practical tips for funders who want to make the shift to a solidarity-based approach.

Read the report

Robert Redford:

Acclaimed actor and film-maker Robert Redford died this month at the age of 89, and among the many obituaries and tributes was a nice piece on *CNN* highlighting examples of the philanthropy and activism he was deeply committed to throughout his life. Redford's two great interests were art and nature, and he combined this with his love of film and acting to shape his philanthropy: the nonprofit Sundance Institute was founded in 1981 to support and encourage independent film-makers, and later – in 2005 – he launched the the Redford Center (with his son James Redford, who died in 2020) with the specific aim of supporting film-making and storytelling with an environmental purpose.

Redford's commitment to philanthropy seems to have been deep and genuine and he will no doubt be missed, but his place in the pantheon of Most Outrageously Handsome Philanthropists of All Time seems pretty secure. (Alongside his great friend Paul Newman, obviously).

Image Credit: Ken Dare, Los Angeles Times, CC BY 4.0

Read the article

Band Nerd or Jock- who should you turn to for help?

According to a new study I saw this month, if you're in a crisis (and ideally also in a John Hughes-esque stereotype of a US high school) you should turn to the band nerd and not the jock for help.

The study, from the Rutgers School of Social Work, looked at the relationship between extracurricular activities whilst at school and altruism throughout your life and found that people who did extracurricular activities of any kind were more likely to display altruistic behaviour. But it also found that there were also significant variances depending on what *kind* of activities they did, with volunteer service being the top predictor of altruistic behaviour (which seems... well, quite obvious really), and sports coming bottom.

So next time you find yourself in need of help and are deciding who to turn to, remember to try and find a subtle way of determining what any potential helper's school experience was like. (E.g. "Could you possibly help me, and just to check: have you ever played the euphonium?" Or similar).

Image created using Google Gemini. And fair play, it did a pretty amazing job on this one.

Read more about the paper

Read the paper

AND FINALLY...

Two items for you in the "And Finally" section this month.

Firstly, a lovely little piece from The University of Sydney about some of the more unusual philanthropic gifts they have received over the years, including a painting by Pablo Picasso that turned out to be worth over $20million, and a bequest of over 200 violins and violas. I particularly enjoyed this bit of detail about the latter example:

"Sometimes, try as they might, the University is unable to locate any additional information about a donor. As is the case with Oliver William Bedford's bequest of around 200 violins and violas to the Sydney

Conservatorium of Music. The search for information about his background or connection to the University yielded nothing.

"I wish we had more information on Mr Bedford," says the University's Associate Professor Ole Bøhn – violinist and former concertmaster of the Norwegian Opera. "His passion must have been to collect, but why?""

I do, of course, appreciate that due diligence can be very difficult. But at the same time, I still can't help feeling that if someone left me 200 string instruments in their will, I would *really* want to know where they came from…

The second (and final) story in this month's "And Finally" segment is about the actor Kevin Bacon. As a lifelong fan of the movie *Tremors,* I was delighted to learn that Bacon is a fairly committed philanthropist. My favourite detail in this story is that Bacon turned his irritation at the Game "6 Degrees of Kevin Bacon" (which he felt ruined his career for a while, but which I have to admit being an avid player of in my teens) into philanthropic agency by setting up a nonprofit called SixDegrees.org, which connects community groups to funding and support.

Fun fact: I can actually claim a single degree of separation from Kevin Bacon, as I once somehow attended the London premiere of *Frost/Nixon*, and at one point had to ask Kevin Bacon if I could get past him to go to the toilet. Now *that's* showbiz.

Image credit: American Foundation for Equal Rights, CC BY 3.0

Read the Sydney University article

Read the Kevin Bacon article

Right, that's actually the end now. Plenty of words there, I think we can all agree; hopefully some of them are good ones. I will be back with

another update (ideally much shorter than this!) at the end of September.

Best,

Rhodri

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