

Making donations to charities, doing voluntary work or helping strangers are all examples of showing compassion to others, contribute to the functioning of society and/or supporting the disadvantaged. Income levels can to some extent explain observed differences between countries, but different traditions regarding the supportive role of the state, the community and the family are also important.

On average, people living in OECD countries are more likely to donate to charities than people across the Asia/Pacific region (Figure 6.12, Panel A). Among OECD countries people in Australia and New Zealand are twice as likely to donate to charity as people in Japan and Korea. People in Hong Kong (China), Indonesia and in particular Thailand are also more likely to make donations to charity than elsewhere across the Asia/Pacific region. By contrast, donating money to charity is less common in Armenia, China, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan. The likelihood that Cambodians and Indonesians give to charity has increased in recent years, while Nepal's and Singapore's number of donors is on a downward trend. However, on the whole **the incidence of donating to charities has been stable across the Asia/Pacific region between 2008 and 2011** (Figure 6.12, Panel B).

Alternative ways of showing solidarity can be through helping a stranger or offering time to an organisation or charity. In recent years, the **share of people who helped a stranger increased marginally on average across the Asia/Pacific region and OECD countries**, but there is some cross-national variation (Figure 6.13). Pakistan and Mongolia had the largest increase in altruistic behaviour towards strangers from 2007 to 2011, while Australians and New Zealanders appear to be the most likely to help a stranger in need; however, there was a slight decrease in Australia after the crisis. Cambodia, Singapore and Japan had the fewest share of people who helped a stranger in need, and only Cambodia showed a small increase since 2007.

The share of people who volunteered time has not changed much in the Asia/Pacific region (Figure 6.14). On average across 2010-12, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and the Philippines had the highest number of volunteers, and all showed an increase since 2006-08. By contrast, less than 10% of the population in China, Armenia, Viet Nam, Singapore and Cambodia volunteer.

Data and measurement

Data on “solidarity” are drawn from the Gallup World Poll. The Gallup World Poll is conducted in more than 150 countries around the world based on a common questionnaire, translated into the predominant languages of each country. With few exceptions, all samples are probability based and nationally representative of the resident population aged 15 years and over in the entire country, including rural areas. While this ensures a high degree of comparability across countries, results may be affected by sampling and non-sampling error, and variation in response rates. Hence, results should be interpreted with care. These probability surveys are valid within a statistical margin of error, also called a 95% confidence interval. This means that if the survey is conducted 100 times using the exact same procedures, the margin of error would include the “true value” in 95 out of 100 surveys. Sample sizes vary across countries from 1 000 to 4 000, and as the surveys use a clustered sample design the margin of error varies by question. The margin of error declines with increasing sample size: with a sample size of 1 000, the margin of error at a 95% confidence interval is $0.98/\sqrt{\text{sample size}}$ or 3%, with a sample size of 4 000, this is 1.5%. To minimize the effect of annual fluctuations in responses related to small sample sizes, results are averaged over a three-year period, or two-year period in case of missing data. If only one observation in a three-year period is available this finding is not reported.

The data underlying the solidarity indicators are based on binary questions created by Gallup: “Have you done any of the following in the past month? How about donating money to a charity? How about helped a stranger or someone you didn’t know who needed help? How about volunteering your time to an organisation?” There are no questions about the amount of money donated or number of hours volunteered.

Figure 6.12. The propensity to give to charity varies widely across countries in the Asia/Pacific region

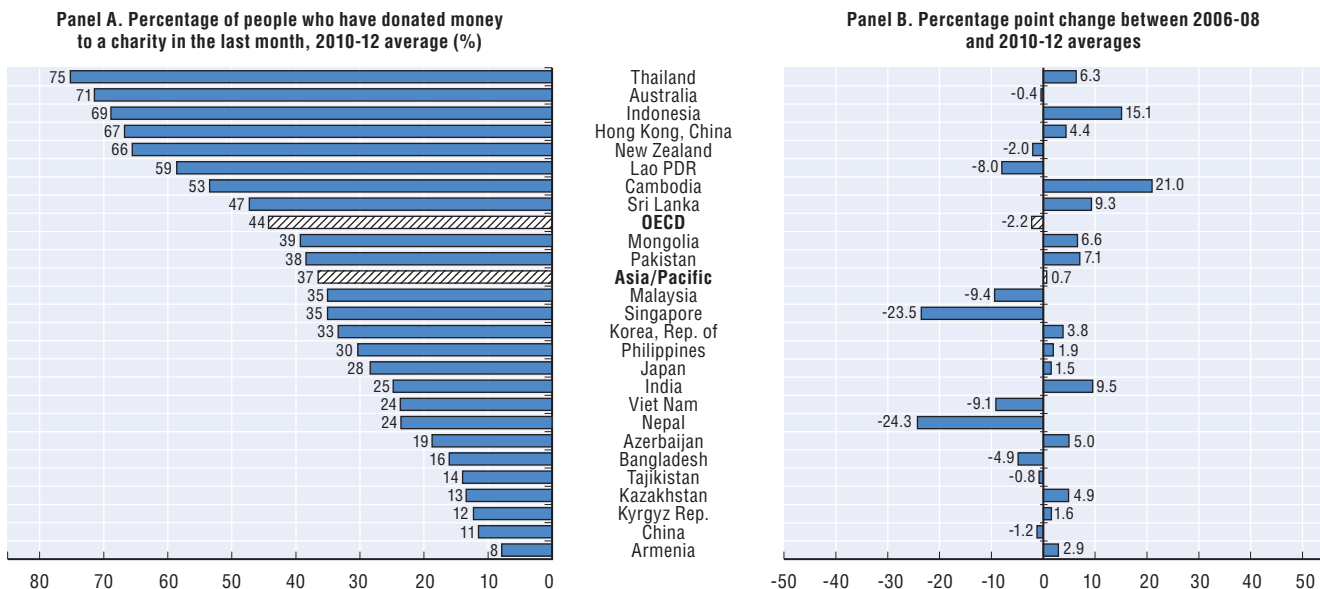


Figure 6.13. The share of people who helped a stranger increased slightly in OECD and Asia/Pacific economies
Share of people who helped a stranger between 2006-08 and 2010-12 averages (%)

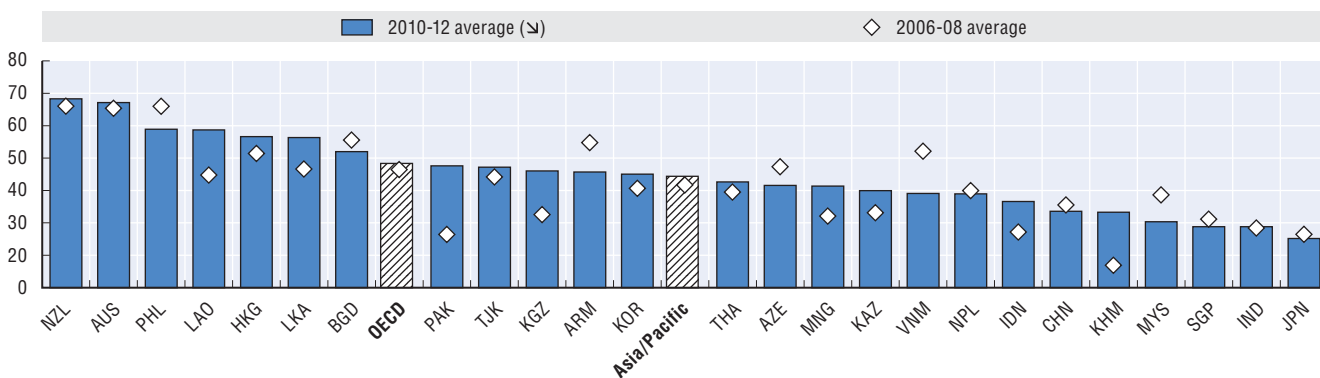
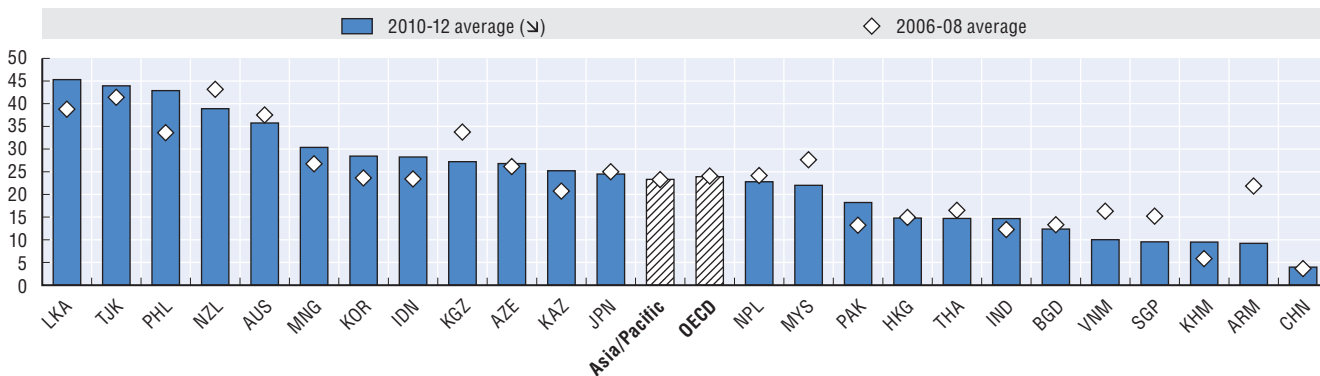
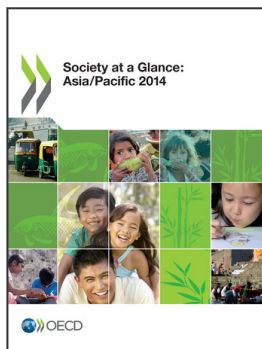


Figure 6.14. The share of people who volunteer their time differs considerably across countries
Share of people who reported having volunteered time to an organisation between 2006-08 and 2010-12 averages (%)



Source: Gallup World Poll (www.gallup.com/).

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