

Teaching philanthropic citizenship



Alison Body

What's the idea?

Philanthropic citizenship is a dimension of citizenship behaviour associated with intentions and actions that produce public benefit. Philanthropic citizenship education moves beyond ideas of 'charity', instead embracing a 'social justice mentality', where children are encouraged to critically explore and engage with the wider issues which sit behind charity.

What does it mean?

Schools often go to great lengths to encourage charitable giving in children of all ages. This is important as it helps create a strong enthusiasm for giving and supporting others. However, less common is a deeper, more critical engagement in the reasons for this activity (Body et al., 2020). This surface-level giving, led by adults, is often viewed as fun, but

rarely acts as a space in which children could explore their own ideas and values. Instead, these spaces remain more transactional; a sense of giving for a reward, and defined by an idea of service.

This is a missed opportunity to nurture critically engaged, socially orientated citizens. Philanthropic citizenship is about equipping children with the skills to explore and research charitable causes, and letting them decide how they wish to give, be it through giving their time, talent or treasure. This posits charitable giving in schools as a child-led, adult-facilitated activity, which requires children's critical engagement, ensuring that all children can contribute their ideas, regardless of their economic circumstances.

What are the implications for teachers?

Encourage research: Encourage children to explore which charitable causes matter to them and why. Facilitate children to consider how they can support these causes.

Explore local causes: Together, find out about local and community charities

Reflect on choices given: Reflect on how much choice children have about supporting charity – for example, are they asked whether they want to support Red Nose Day for Comic Relief or is that just something that your school always does?

Check for understanding: Make sure that the children understand what they are doing and why. For example, do they understand who Pudsey Bear is and why they can buy a cupcake with his face on?

TO LEARN MORE, READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT [IMPACT.CHARTERED.COLLEGE](https://www.impactcharteredcollege.org/)

REFERENCES

- » Body A, Lau E and Josephidou J (2019) Engaging children in meaningful charity: Opening up the spaces within which children learn to give. *Children & Society* 34(3): 189–203.
- » Body A, Lau E and Josephidou J (2019) Our Charitable Children: Engaging Children in Charities and Charitable Giving. University of Kent; Canterbury Christ Church University. Available at: <https://oro.open.ac.uk/70083/1/our-charitable-children-research-report-April-2019.pdf> (accessed 15 September 2020).
- » Body A, Lau E and Josephidou J (2020) The importance of teaching philanthropy: Educating children for social good. *Impact Special Issue 2020*, pp. 21–24. Available at: <https://impact.chartered.college/article/the-importance-of-teaching-philanthropy-educating-children-social-good/> (accessed 20 December 2020).