

Original question source: O Level 2023 [1184/01]

Format: Formal Email

Answering Pointers

- The challenge in this question is probably stating or explaining how various people in the community can benefit. For this example, I have used the repair shops. You can explain in this scenario that **low-income households** and **small businesses** both benefit in their own way:
- **Low-income households:** Products can be very expensive to replace when damaged. Having the repair centres **lessens financial burden** to directly replace products; can continue using their products which they paid for by repairing them OR participate in the exchange.
- **Small businesses:** Benefit from the added publicity and even goodwill from conducting these community events.
 - In public relations (affairs relating to a company's public image), this is known as "corporate social responsibility" – where companies/prominent figures take part in community initiatives such as by making donations to charity, sponsoring public events, etc.

Model Essay

To: Mr Eric Khoo [eric.khoo@principals.edu.sg]

From: John Lim [john.lim.10@students.edu.sg]

Subject: Choice of Community Project for School Funding

Dear Mr Khoo,

I am John Lim from Class 3H. I am writing in today about the choice of community projects that the school has recently shortlisted as potential **beneficiaries**. First of all, I am greatly heartened by the school's participation in community efforts. These programmes not only benefit society **by and large**, but also serve to **inculcate** in us the value of giving back to the community and **uplifting** the less advantaged among us. Of the three projects the school has listed on the school website, I especially feel the money raised should go to the pop-up repair and share centre.

There are a range of reasons driving this decision. First, I believe many Singaporeans have a "throw-away" culture when it comes to products. When a **defect** arises, rather than attempting to repair the item, we instead begin searching for a replacement product. This is

highly wasteful from an environmental standpoint, and often a costly practice as well. Yet, years of adopting such a culture of “convenience” have also stripped us of the skills to repair items. The workshops conducted at these **roving** events, which cover knowledge on repairing basic faults, would thus be a **step in the right direction** for **reversing this trend**.

These repair workshops bring about significant benefits to multiple stakeholders as well – lower-income households, as well as independent, home-grown repair businesses. Households benefit from learning how to make simple repairs through the workshops or demonstrations. They can even obtain essential electronics at the shop and swap event, instead of paying **exorbitant** costs each time for a brand-new product. Meanwhile, the repair businesses, through their participation, can expand their customer base. They can even **incorporate** this as part of a **corporate social responsibility** plan, leading to greater **prominence**, goodwill, and therefore growth.

In the long term, I believe the pop-up repair and share centre will bring about growth to neighbourhoods as well. These initiatives provide avenues for residents in the neighbourhood to interact. Small businesses in the neighbourhood will also **thrive**, providing not just services but social connections too, blending in with the community as a fellow neighbour.

From the **forementioned** reasons, I therefore believe the funds raised by the school should be directed towards the pop-up repair and share centre initiative. I look forward to hearing the final decision on this matter, and sincerely thank you for your time and attention.

Yours sincerely,

John Lim

(393 words; excludes format sections i.e. email, subject, salutation)

Vocabulary List

Word/Phrase	Meaning
Beneficiaries	Someone [a person/organisation] who benefits from a charitable contribution/donation
By and large	“in general”
Inculcate	To nurture/teach positive values
Uplifting	Raising/supporting
defect	A fault or issue; e.g. a broken item
Roving	Travelling (moving from place to place)
step in the right direction	Idiom referring to something progressing in a good/desire manner

Reversing [a trend]	To counter/change the current state of affairs
Exorbitant	Extremely expensive/costly
Corporate social responsibility	A concept defined by companies/prominent figures participating in community initiatives that benefit society. Often shortened to “CSR” in business circles.
Prominence	The state of being well-known
Thrive	To flourish; grow well
Aforementioned	“mentioned/stated previously”

Note about corporate social responsibility [CSR]

Some examples of CSR activities include:

- Dedicating a percentage of annual profits as donations for charity
- Sponsoring educations of students from low-income households
- Organised company visits/volunteering at elderly homes.
- ~~Me making the materials here free for students instead of gating them behind a paywall~~

These activities rarely help the company to make revenue directly. Instead, these activities are meant to help associate the company with these acts of goodwill through media reporting and/or social media discussions.

However, this does not mean every CSR effort should be viewed as **transactional** (done for the sole purpose of some benefit). Companies and individuals may truly believe in the cause(s) they are supporting and would have done so anyway, even without the “incentive” of added publicity or some kind of incentive. As the old adage goes, “actions speak louder than words”.