

From traditional Charity to the Chain of Happiness: Propagating Prosocial Behavior Through Trust-Based Participatory Systems

Arya Kia
Saghar Sari
Amirreza Saeidinik

CONTACT INFORMATION
Aryakia97@gmail.com
Chainofhappiness.com



The Problem

Charity often remains linear, opaque, and non-propagating.

- One-way flow: **donor** → **organization** → **recipient**
- Weak feedback between donors and real outcomes
- Limited transparency; donors may not see where help goes
- Money can shrink through delays, overhead, fees, and inflation
- Psychological burden: receiving help may create shame or dependency
- Small donors may feel their contribution has little impact

Result: Many acts of generosity remain isolated instead of becoming self-reinforcing.

GOAL

Design a trust-based giving structure that turns one act of help into a continuing chain of mutual support.

- Preserve recipient dignity
- Increase transparency and visible continuation
- Enable low- and middle-income people to participate
- Reduce the psychological burden of receiving help
- Transform charity from a one-time transfer into a feedback-driven social process

Research question: How can a peer-to-peer giving system propagate prosocial behavior through trust, delayed contribution, and chain continuation?

The Idea

Chain-Based Helping

- Instead of ending after one donation, each recipient is invited to help another person later, when they are able.

Not immediate repayment:

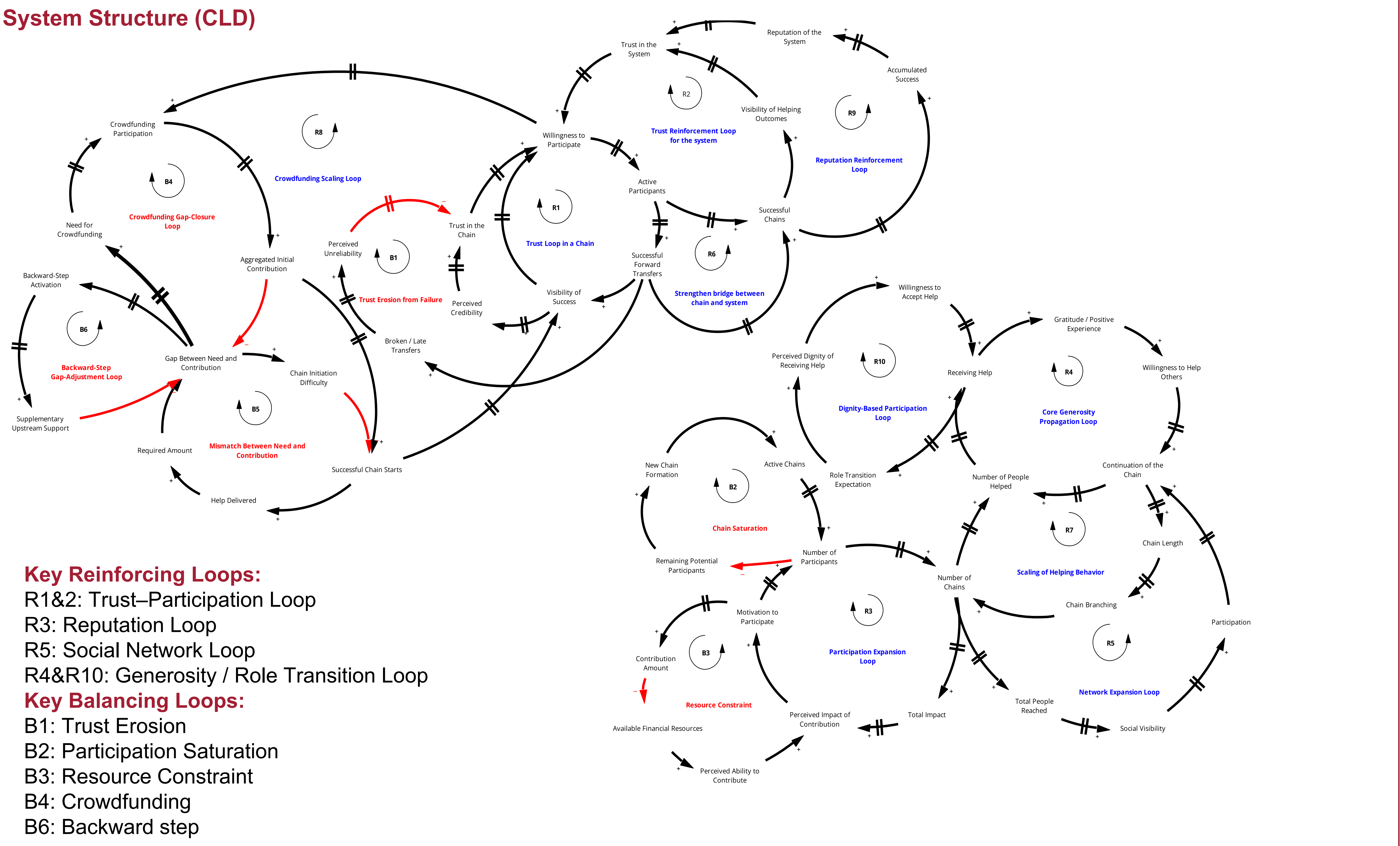
- Recipients are not required to give back instantly or give more than they received.

Delayed, ability-based continuation:

- Participants may continue the chain later through money, goods, services, mentorship, or other practical help.

Core mechanism:

- Receiving help → dignity and trust → willingness to help forward → continued chain → resulting in more help



Implementation Evidence Since 2017

- 19 chains initiated
- 341 completed helps to date
- 18.8 average completed helps per chain
- 10 branches created
- 0 recorded complete chain breaks

Type of Support	Number of Cases	Percentage (%)	Type of Support	Number of Cases
Smartphones	98	28.7%	Smartphones	98
Debt Repayment	75	22.0%	Debt Repayment	75
Other / Not Specified	57	16.7%	Other / Not Specified	57
University Tuition	48	14.1%	University Tuition	48
Rent	41	12.0%	Rent	41
Laptops	13	3.8%	Laptops	13
Health-Related Expenses	9	2.6%	Health-Related Expenses	9
Total	341	100%	Total	341

Manual tracking → transitioned to web platform

Results and Insights

Observed insights from implementation

- Recipients can become future contributors when time and dignity are preserved
- Visible continuation increases trust in the system
- Small contributions become meaningful when aggregated
- Branching allows one act of help to reach multiple future recipients
- Psychological resistance to receiving help is reduced when receiving is linked to future participation

Key finding: Structure changes behavior: help becomes more likely to continue when people can see, trust, and later join the chain.

Platform Integration

ChainofHappiness.com operationalizes the model by enabling:

- Chain creation and participant invitation
- Delayed, ability-based pass-forward commitments
- Chain progress tracking and visible continuation
- Branching chains and crowdfunding support
- Backward-step support when one participant cannot continue alone
- Privacy-preserving transparency and two-sided confirmation
- Empirical data collection for future system dynamics modeling

Purpose: move from informal trust-based chains to a scalable platform for documenting, sustaining, and studying prosocial behavior.

Conclusions

Chain of Happiness reframes charity as a feedback-driven participatory system rather than a one-time transfer. The model suggests that generosity can become self-reinforcing when three conditions are present:

- Trust:** participants can see that help continues
- Dignity:** recipients are treated as future contributors, not passive beneficiaries
- Affordability:** crowdfunding, backward-step support, and delayed contribution reduce the burden on any single person

We developed ChainofHappiness.com as a platform for chain tracking, branching, privacy-preserving transparency, and empirical data collection.

Core message: Charity does not have to remain centralized, isolated, or one-directional. It can become distributed, continuous, and self-reinforcing.

Future Research

Next research steps:

- Build a quantitative system dynamics model
- Model analysis under inflation and financial stress
- Analyze branching and network diffusion of generosity
- Test trust, dignity, and participation mechanisms empirically
- Enhance safeguards against false reporting and misuse
- Compare monetary, material, educational, and mentorship-based chains
- Evaluate scalability across Iranian and diaspora communities

Long-term aim: Advance Chain of Happiness as a research-backed platform for distributed, dignity-preserving mutual aid and a foundation for a trust-based decentralized help marketplace.