What defines a strong community?

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." by Coretta Scott King. How far do you agree with this statement? Is it really true that a community's strength is based and measured by the generosity of its members? The greatness of a community varies greatly, some would say it is the actions and efforts of its members or through the might of a strong and capable leader. But frankly, it really just boils down to the philosophy of how one would view the strength of a community.

So, what really makes a community strong if we don't perceive it from our own individual perspective? Every action and deed we make, both in our own community and the global community, has a consequence that both breaks or builds the foundation of a community. During times of crisis, the decisions and actions we as an individual, group or leader make, is crucial to sustaining a community's standing. From the smallest of acts like organising charities to help the less fortunate in your own community, to major acts like contributing to voluntary aid overseas, assisting people suffering from famine or war torn societies. These are minute and large factors that help to ensure a nation's community gain standing or, to ensure the global community strength is maintained or strengthened through the kind and heartfelt actions of the more fortunate towards the struggling group of people. For example, take a look at what is happening around the world at the moment, we as a global community are facing an unprecedented threat taking the shape of a virus, COVID-19. People within many countries have donated basic commodities to those within their communities who are facing a financial crisis. And on an international scale, in a number of nations in the western hemisphere, medical faculty from neighbouring countries have flown to other countries to help with the lack of manpower in medical infrastructures. The example of the effort healthcare from different parts of the world lending a helping hand to their neighbouring countries, has helped to strengthen the social cohesion among nations and the global community as a result.

However, are actions strong enough to justify the strength of a community? How about the diversity among everyone in a community? The variety of race and religion? As Kofi Annan once said, "We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we belong to one human race." In the world, with hundred over nations, and the varse difference in race, religion and languages. If we do not accept one another, politically, the global community can never truly be strong unity. With tolerance and inclusiveness, getting to know the strengths and weaknesses between countries would be easier, allowing each country to find ways to accommodate and assist each other. In times of crisis, with strong alliance among countries, everyone would respond immediately to help one another. -But how about within a country? The community diversity among a nation's citizens? Well, if citizens of a country were to practice prejudice against one another, it would result in social cohesion and tension. A fractured community from societal tensions would hinder a community's ability to rally during a crisis. Putting aside the difference among everyone can help to build a community as acceptance of one another opens windows for everyone to understand each other. With strong understanding and tolerance of one another, opportunities to improve the community,as a whole, becomes possible. Take for example, Singapore; with a diverse population, differing races, religions and languages, policies of accepting one another, citizen or foreigner. Has given us a chance to forge cohesive relationships with each other, and we did. Our differences made

us, as a community stronger as we understand the boundaries between each race, cultural background and religion. -But if it is not actions of individuals or forging of friendly cohesiveness that makes a community strong? Then what would make a community great?

A community can have strong ties with another community or have individuals or groups of individuals committing good deeds, but without a good leader to spearhead the community, the capability and greatness would fall apart eventually. The leader of a community helps to plan and create goals for or with the members of the community, but it is ultimately the leader who instigates many of the community's deeds. Leaders are often considered the face of a community, their own individual actions reflect greatly on their community's standing and pride, and could either allow a community to prosper or suffer a downturn.

In conclusion, the greatness of a community is not just measured only by the deeds of its members but many other factors like understanding and building bridges through individual differences, the leader's standing and portrayal of themselves, etcetera. But with many different factors making a community strong, a single misstep could also lead to the community spiraling down a road of redundancy from greatness.

Ang Jun Kai Ryan
Class 4N2