CultureCase

The best way to attract donations is by making it easy to do and easy to justify

This research was conducted by **Caroline Moraes**, **Athanasia Daskalopoulou** and **Isabelle Szmigin** at the **University of Birmingham** and the **University of Liverpool**

Summary

This paper used in-depth interviews to reveal the reasons, emotions, and habits that underpin why people make voluntary donations to arts organisations. Perhaps more important were the factors that determined why people chose not to donate. At the core of the research are three components: giving people the knowhow about how to talk and think about their donating, making the donation process easy and intuitive for people, and ensuring there is an emotional resonance between the causes that people care about and the outcomes that arts organisations achieve.

22 individuals were interviewed as part of the research

The researchers ‘sought out individuals who had, in the past year, given to charitable causes or the arts at least once, gone to a museum, art gallery and/or other art or cultural venues, and shown diverse levels of affinity with the arts and crafts’. Consequently, most participants were middle-class.

Donating should be easy and routine

Regional arts organisations in Britain must provide ‘clearer mechanisms for, and instructions on, how giving can be performed’ and set in place mechanisms that will start ‘normalising and routinising small donations’ as well as making it far easier to give ‘through direct debit or on a one-off basis’.

The arts must do a better job of communicating their impact and how voluntary donations help

They must debunk the impression that they are already well funded by the government or Lottery, or that they only serve elites. It is vital to be clear about ‘where public funding goes versus where voluntary giving is invested’. The research showed that ‘arts organisations willing to communicate their social engagement projects are likely to attract voluntary funding, appealing to a broader group of givers and their cause-driven affinities’.

Keywords

interview **UK** **donor motivation**

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Author email	**c.moraes@bham.ac.uk**

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