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How do you ask difficult questions? – shared challenges and practice amongst fundraisers and researchers

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Contents

In social research and in fundraising there is a general assumption that people are willing to talk to strangers about personal things. To be effective in their respective goals, both fundraisers and researchers often need information about an individual's personal, social and financial circumstances. But how can 'difficult questions' related to such personal areas best be asked?

This paper summarises the outcomes of a CGAP seminar that aimed to combine academic and practice insights into tackling and framing such questions. It was held as part of the ESRC's annual Festival of Social Science, which brings social researcher and non-academic professionals together to share experience and knowledge. Fundraisers and researchers explored the common challenges they face in their relationships with donors/interviewees, identifying and addressing the 'difficult questions' that charities and researchers have to pose when soliciting donations/information.

Shared dilemmas in talking to potential donors or respondents include, for example, being blunt or obscure, timely or choosing 'the wrong time' to ask, being 'professional' or being 'friendly' (fundraising or 'friendraising'?). How should personal areas such as values, cultures or the impact of economic downturn be addressed? Are researchers and fundraisers able to distinguish between, and tackle, 'the questions we ask and the questions we care about'.[1] If difficult but important areas are not addressed, what opportunities are missed?

Four themes were identified as leading to difficult questions' and addressed in the seminar:

- Recession
- Demographics
- Cross-cultural issues
- Ethical questions

This paper summarises the points made in the seminar. A full set of the questions posed during the seminar is attached Appendix A.

Recession

Attendees were asked to reflect on the impact the recession had had on charitable giving and how they had responded. What language had fundraisers and researchers used to refer to the financial climate? Had they chosen not to refer to it at all for fear that it would inhibit donation/cooperation? How did fundraisers approach 'lapsed donors' and how did they avoid implying criticism in this situation?

Impact of the recession on the charity sector

Those representing trusts and foundations were keenly aware of the recession's impact, as they had seen the values of their endowments affected. When talking to these organisations, researchers might avoid delving into the impact of the recession as it could imply criticism of their investment strategy.

Lower investment returns did not automatically lead trusts and foundations to cut their grant-giving. These were often long-established organisations that took a long-term view. Rather than reducing grant-giving, the impact of the recession had in fact been to reduce grant applications and to improve their quality. Recession had made applicants focus on more meaningful, community-based and targeted applications.

In the wider charity sector, the evidence suggested that the recession had slowed the growth of fundraising rather than reduced the total amount collected. There was a

danger of blaming the recession wholly for decreased donations, but other factors were also at play. In particular, donors might be reacting to the growing role of charities in the provision of public services.

Use of the term 'recession'

Participants identified conflicting evidence about the affect of the term 'recession' in donation requests. One charity had found that a mailshot using the word 'recession' had been less successful than a similar one that had made no mention of the downturn, but a similar exercise by another had demonstrated the reverse.

It was noted that the Charity Commission had chosen to use the softer term 'downturn', rather than 'recession', in its research. It was also noted, however, that the recession – and the greater need it had caused – could be used explicitly as a reason to ask for donations as it was a time of greater need.

Lapsed donors

The rate of lapsing had increased during the recession.[2] The seminar participants showed considerable interest in this issue and called for more research in the area. Practitioners would benefit from a large-scale quantitative study of lapsing to establish the peak time for lapsing, the optimal time for calling donors after cancellation, and the chances of re-engaging a donor once they had lapsed. These would be useful benchmarks for all charities.

It was felt that donors were unlikely to see themselves as 'lapsed'. They might just consider that they had not given for a while.

The need for new approaches and new triggers

The recession gave fresh impetus to charities to develop new approaches to fundraising. This impetus was made stronger still by changes in society and its attitudes. Charities needed to update their language and their techniques to keep pace with this change. Research would be useful in a number of areas:

- **Triggers** – to assess the effectiveness of different triggers and their impact. No donation was made without a trigger (letter, email, etc) and yet donors resented the intrusion of triggers, especially face-to-face fundraising.

- **Motivation** – to explore the different motivations for giving, for example the powerful motivation felt by those giving to a charity in an area that had affected a family member (tribute giving).

- **Types of donation** – what types of donations worked best? For example, donors responded well to shopping lists setting out specific things that would be bought with their donations. If the public were offered ever more control over how their donations were used, how would this affect unrestricted giving? Would donors only want to give to specific things?

Demographics

Participants were asked about their experiences of posing personal questions relating to age, children, etc, and of broaching the subject of legacies. They were also invited to consider the implications of demographic change.

Soliciting personal information

In general, practitioners had not experienced difficulty requesting personal information from donors. Charities had their own databases of information provided by donors. They used profiling techniques (offered by consultancies such as Occam) to analyse the data and screen against other sources of information to build up a picture of their donors. Techniques for profiling donors were growing more sophisticated, particularly in larger charities, which were increasingly segmenting donors according to their life aspirations rather than broader demographic categories. A literature review of what research existed in this area would be useful as a precursor to a benchmarking study to show which techniques were most effective.

In contrast, researchers faced more of an issue when soliciting personal information. They were asking individuals directly for personal details and information about their charitable giving. Research indicated that interviewees tended to over-report their giving by approximately 30 per cent[3] although work had been done to develop survey methods that counteracted this.[4] Certain interviewee groups also tended to give 'don't know' answers to mask their choice not to give.[5]

The practitioners faced different dilemmas about how to target new donors and whom to target. Was it better to swap databases with a charity in the same field, or to focus marketing effort on one's existing database? There was hesitancy amongst charities to share information because they were competing for the same pot of money. If one did approach another charity's database would one simply be robbing Peter to pay Paul?

The impact of changes in society

The groups questioned whether the way information was collected had kept pace with changes in society, particularly longer life expectancies and different patterns of work and retirement. Was it still relevant to use broad age groupings, such as '55 and over', which lumped all older people into a single category spanning several decades and took no account of employment or retirement?

For the first time in history soon five generations could be alive at the same time. What was the impact of longer life expectancy on giving within the family and outside? Would parents spend more of their children's inheritance to fund their longer retirement? Would parents and grandparents give more to successive generations, or would they skip their children in favour of grandchildren and great grandchildren?

There were also indications that young people were developing different, perhaps less altruistic, attitudes to charity. They viewed it as something that could give a return and that could be accomplished through consumer choices such as buying fair-trade products. Could this be a ticking time bomb for the fundraising sector? How should they respond?

Cross-cultural issues in giving

In the afternoon session the discussion groups were asked to consider how cultural differences might affect charitable giving and research into giving. Should research in this area explore the informal family-based giving that took place in certain cultures? Should it also taken account of remittances overseas? Was asking for money made easier by matching the cultural or ethnic background of the donor and the fundraiser?

The impact of cultural difference

The groups agreed that cultural difference could be significant with different fundraising approaches needed for different cultures. In the USA, for example, a direct approach was expected when asking for large individual donations, whereas in Asia a successful approach was likely to depend on the use of intermediaries. In Asia the naming of spaces was a considerable draw for large donors, but less so in Europe.

The groups felt that research into the giving habits of different communities would be useful as it could inform a more tailored and sophisticated approach. Any work in this area needed to take account, for example, of the way in which patterns of giving might change within immigrant communities as they became more integrated and dispersed.

As well as community to community, patterns of giving varied from country to country. UNICEF reported that, per capita, its most generous donor countries were Finland and Canada. Why? The USA was well known for its relatively high level of charitable giving, much of it channelled through churches and the United Way. By the same token, the destruction of church networks by communist regimes in the mid-20th century had affected traditions of giving in Eastern Europe. Different political traditions and regulatory frameworks also had a significant impact on the development of charitable organisations. In France, for example, charitable foundations had until recently been illegal.

Remittances

Remittances were felt to be a significant form of charitable giving by UK immigrants supporting their families in their home country. It was assumed that once remittances were no longer needed by an immigrant's family, the individual would continue to support other charitable causes in their home country and UK charities active there. This was borne out by the experience of the British Red Cross, which had found particular success fundraising in Notting Hill where it was felt that black communities had a particular appreciation of the charity's work in their countries of origin.

Cross-cultural and overseas giving

The groups detected that cross-cultural and inter-faith giving was on the increase as the UK became more multi-cultural. One example given was of a nursing home being built in Leeds to be shared by Christian, Muslim and Jewish residents. It would be the first of its kind in Europe.

The group also identified examples of charities looking to fundraise in communities based overseas. One organisation was planning to fundraise amongst English tourists in Spain during the summer. Similarly, a Polish charity was fundraising amongst Poles living in Britain to support its work in Poland.

Matching donors and fundraisers

Evidence suggested that public face-to-face fundraisers ('chuggers') tended to approach people that mirrored themselves. As most face-to-face fundraisers were young, they tended to approach young people who were much more likely to cancel their direct debit. As a result some charities were now avoiding recruiting below the age of 20/25.

Ethics and giving

In the final discussion the groups were invited to explore the ethical dimension of fundraising and research into giving. This included issues relating to fundraising practice (the use of leverage and targeting the vulnerable), as well as donor-related issues (problematic motives and sources of money).

Tainted money

The participants agreed that all donations should be accepted irrespective of its provenance or the values of the donor organisations. Charity trustees had a duty to their beneficiaries and should therefore prioritise raising funds over upholding their personal values or ethics. The group did not support Breakthrough's 2004 decision to refuse a £1 million from Nestlé amid concerns over the company's motives and role in promoting baby milk.

One exception to this policy of accepting all donations might relate to accepting funds from a donor whose business was in direct conflict with the aims of the charity. An example would be a landmine manufacturer seeking to fund a mine-clearing charity.

Misleading donors/misleading fundraisers

There were examples of donors being misled, particularly where images of animals could lead donors to think that they were giving to an animal charity. Research by Guide Dogs for the Blind had concluded that many of its donors thought they were giving to an animal charity rather than supporting people with visual impairment. Inadvertent misleading of donors could therefore be an issue.

It was accepted that donors routinely misled fundraisers about their intentions. As previously mentioned, donors also had a tendency to over-report donations when questioned by researchers.[6]

Reflections on sharing research/fundraising knowledge

The wealth of practice information on fundraising within the charity sector needs to be further mapped, collected and shared, to form a platform for future research that would be useful for both academics and practitioners. CGAP is keen to have a role in this.

The perceived divide between applied and theoretical research is in many ways a false one. Dialogue at the seminar demonstrated the huge areas of common interest and concern that existed between the academic community and charity practitioners, and revealed a number of common areas for future research, including:

- the meaning of giving;
- whom to ask and when;

- the role of social networks;
- triggers and motivations for giving;
- the impact of changes in society;
- the context in which gifts are made;
- the costs of getting it wrong.

This represents an extensive shared agenda of work. It is critical that dialogue continues and that academic and industry-based research studies are informed by each other. As an outcome from the seminar, attendees were invited to form a reference group to discuss likely topics for research.

Summary of potential research questions arising during the day

- **Lapsing** – patterns of lapsing and how to re-engage lapsed donors.
- **Triggers** – which triggers are the most effective.
- **Motivation** – what motivates people to give? Which motivations are the strongest?
- **Types of donation** – what types of donations do donors respond to best?
- **Profiling techniques** – review of existing techniques/research into which techniques are most effective.
- **Demographic change** – the impact of demographic change, especially increased life expectancy, on giving.
- **Changing attitudes** – attitudes of younger people ('Generation Y') to charitable giving.
- **Cultural difference** – patterns of giving in different ethnic groups and the importance of remittances in immigrant communities.

Acknowledgements

A Note on the Methodology

After the opening briefing and introductions, informal roundtables were organised to explore the grouped questions, as shown in Appendix A, with participants free to move between tables.

Brief commentaries on each of the four areas were given to start discussion. While the roundtables were in session, CGAP colleagues observed externally on the 'goldfish bowl principle'; and gave their own summary commentaries.

Appendix A
Questions for exploration at the roundtables

Asking questions related to the effect of the economic environment

■ What is difficult about these types of questions? Is it language (is the word 'downturn' better than 'recession'?) Is even mentioning it difficult either because it's personal, sensitive or crosses a social taboo?

■ Are questions about the issues of 'how is (or has) the recession affecting your giving' acceptable and used by researchers and fundraisers?

■ What if this prompts thoughts about not donating? What if it causes unexpected upset? And who gets asked? (for example, is it 'older' people?)

■ Can the 'money taboo' break in and be replaced by possibly more kindly questions (eg asking people to volunteer *instead*)

■ A special feature of recession may be the lapsed donor, where all the questions can be difficult (for example, 'we'd like to explore why you've just cancelled your direct debit')

■ How might researchers avoid the implied critique (or even stigma) of the 'lapser'? How can it be seen as other than some kind of social failure, or a deep disappointment to the fundraiser?

■ Is there value is asking what were the lapser's first thoughts? How have these evolved? Are rich donors ever seen as lapsers or just consumers of new charities?

■ How valuable or insightful is the reverse question – ie 'what makes you stay loyal to us?'

■ What problems does the use of the concept of 'loyalty' in questions pose for researchers and fundraisers?

Asking about demographics and related matters

■ Researchers and fundraisers share the problem of finding out about age, and whatever wording is used may have drawbacks (for example, 'how old are you'? 'please state your age', 'will you tell us your age'? or 'tick a box', which includes a specific option for 55 and older)

■ Should questions about 'retired/ pensioner/taxpayer' categories be asked at all?

■ Should the role of interviewer (fundraiser) and interviewee (potential donor) be matched for age or other? Does telephone interviewing avoid such problems?

■ How do issues of age play into legacy questions? How do researchers and fundraisers handle problems of potentially evoking sadness where asking 'legacy questions'?

■ Would it be valuable to ask questions that ask the would-be donor to explore *their* idea of what a legacy is – a cash gift, form of immortality, a statement of values,

nostalgia or other meanings including a more cross-cultural approach such as what a legacy 'represents'?

■ Discovering if the respondent has 'young children' (do you ask, how far probe, and what does this imply – how young is young?); how are implications for giving then handled?

■ Do you find the idea of genderosity in giving (that 'women give more/more often than men') credible? How do you use it in questions?

■ How can researchers and fundraisers deal with married couples or other shared household decisionmakers? How do you ask who in the household is the primary decisionmaker on charity? If couples have differing views on philanthropy; how are these conflicts resolved? Is it helpful to identify the person who cedes the decision to the other?

■ Can the question of bargaining on what, where, how and why to give, in households be helpful? Can discussion of bargaining imply household disharmony?

■ When and where is it legitimate to ask young children directly if 'they give'? (If so, how? Questions using events, drama, interventions, drawings . . .)

Asking questions concerning cross-cultural issues in giving

■ In a number of cultures, charitable giving is informally done and between family members – how and where is this relevant in the context of UK fundraising and giving behaviour?

■ What happens if questions seek to discover whether respondents 'have ever given money to their children, and if so, for what . . .?'

■ Are such givers technically 'non-donors'? Do overseas remittances 'count' in any research on the charitable dispositions of communities and people?

■ Are difficult questions made easier if the 'asker' and the 'asked' share an ethnic or cultural biography?

■ When/can you ask respondents if they will ask 'family and friends to donate as well' (ie a 'giving conduit')?

■ Where does the whole question on non-donor behaviour belong: a temporary or permanent behavioural issue?

■ How do we even start to phrase questions about 'not giving'? (If we can find the non-donors in the first place.)

Asking questions regarding ethics and giving

■ When donors are led to give more to a campaign because of the donation levels of others through the techniques of leverage, can you ask directly about whether donors have seen what others (for example, in their institution, sector, university class) are giving?

■ What if donors mislead about their giving intentions?

■ How can questions that uncover – or ask directly about – the more problematic motives for giving be phrased (for example guilt, atonement, repentance)? In what circumstances, if any, might such questions broached?

- Does/should the question 'where does the money for this donation come from?' get asked? When and how should it be asked?

- How do researchers and fundraisers handle questions of 'tainted money' (for example, from an inappropriate source or disgraced donor)? Who should be asked?

- Does asking from those who 'cannot afford it' exacerbate vulnerability? Is there a danger of underestimating vulnerability (for example, asking money from those who you think can 'afford it' but cannot)?

Appendix B
Further selected reading: journal paper summaries

Roger Bennett (2009) 'Regret and satisfaction as determinants of lapsed donor recommencement decisions', *Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing* 21;4, 2009, pp347–66.

Although a large amount of research has been undertaken into donor acquisition, relationship development and the reasons why certain donors terminate their support for fundraising charities, few studies have examined the factors that encourage lapsed donors to resume giving to the organizations they have deserted. This empirical investigation sought to contribute to contemporary knowledge concerning this important matter via a survey of 310 lapsed donors (some of whom had resumed giving) to a hospice charity in the south-east of England. The variables hypothesized to influence donor revival decisions comprised a person's satisfaction with the charity's work, past communications received from the organization, communications associated with the charity's revival efforts, the individual's donation history and reason for initial lapse, and the ex-donor's degree of involvement with charity giving. A person's feelings of regret were posited to represent a critical mediating variable between several of the abovementioned factors and a lapsed donor's decision to resume or not to resume giving. The results suggest that regret did indeed play a major role in lapsed donors' revival processes and that an individual's satisfaction with the quality of a charity's communications requesting the recommencement of the individual's support was a crucial determinant of restart decisions.

Altaf Merchant and John Ford (2007) 'Nostalgia and giving to charity: a conceptual framework for discussion and research', *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 13;1, 2007, pp13–30.

Academic work involving nostalgia has shown it to evoke a basket of emotions. This paper proposes a conceptual model that links nostalgia to charitable giving. We argue that the nostalgia evoked by certain NPOs (not-for-profit organizations) is likely to have a bearing on both emotional and familial utility derived by the donor. This in turn is likely to drive the donor commitment to the NPO. Thus, by evoking nostalgia, certain NPOs are likely to emotionally engage their current and potential donors, which could facilitate the creation of long-term intimate relationships between them and their donors. However, the extent to which the NPO can evoke nostalgia is likely to depend upon the nostalgia-proneness of the donor, the emotional importance of the past experiences evoked by the NPO, and the characteristics of the NPO, such as the extent to which it can alleviate the feelings of alienation, discontinuity, and the need for authenticity

experienced by the donor. The paper provides a series of research propositions and proposes a research agenda.

Roger Bennett and Rita Kottasz (2000) 'Emergency fund-raising for disaster relief', *Disaster Relief and Management* 9;5, 2000, pp352–60.

Two hundred members of the public were interviewed in high street and railway station locations in central London to ascertain the considerations that encourage them to donate generously to a disaster relief fundraising appeal. It emerged that the major fundraising triggers involved media representations of the indigency of aid recipients, portrayals of people helping themselves, and highly emotive advertising imagery. Although they were potentially patronising and demeaning to disaster victims, such depictions seemingly exerted powerful influences on donation decisions. Factors discouraging donations included media reports of unfair aid distributions, warfare or internal insurrection, and inefficiency in the relief operation. Combined fundraising efforts covering several organisations were viewed more favourably than individual charity initiatives. State endorsements of particular campaigns exerted little influence. Some, but not all, of the variables known to determine levels of donations to charity in general also explained the incidence of donations to disaster relief appeals. However, people with young children gave to disaster appeals more frequently than the rest of the sample, contradicting previous findings in the general (non-disaster) charity fundraising area.

James Andreoni, Eleanor Brown and Isaac Rischall (2003), 'Charitable Giving by Married Couples – Who Decides and Why Does it Matter?' *Journal of Human Resources* 38;1, 2003, pp111–33.

This examines how charitable giving is influenced by who in the household is primarily responsible for giving decisions. Looking first at single-person households, we find men and women to have significantly different tastes for giving, setting up a potential conflict for married couples. It is found that with respect to total giving, married households tend to resolve these conflicts largely in favour of the husband's preferences. Bargaining over charitable giving, rather than letting one spouse take charge, is estimated to reduce giving by at least 6 per cent. When the woman is the decisionmaker, she will still make a significantly different allocation of those charity dollars, preferring to give to more charities and give less to each. The results give new insights into both the demographics of charitable giving and the costliness of household bargaining.

Lynda M Wastyn (2009) 'Why alumni don't give: A qualitative study of what motivates non-donors to higher education', *International Journal of Educational Advancement* 9;2, 2009, pp96–108.

This project explores why non-donors do not give to their alma mater by interviewing 12 non-donors for an in-depth examination of their decisionmaking processes. The Van Slyke and Brooks (2005) model of alumni giving provides the conceptual framework. This study concludes that where donors and non-donors differ is in the ways in which they socially construct their college experiences to create their own realities. The stories they tell themselves and others about their college experiences, and the values they attach to those stories, create a reality in which giving does not fit. They tell themselves that the college is too expensive for them or their children today, that other charities need their money more, and that the education they received was a product

for which they already paid. This reality becomes the narrative lens through which non-donors interpret and evaluate requests for donations to the college. Variables such as their reasons for attending college, how they fit college into their life and whether they viewed college as a commodity emerged as important themes in these non-donors' narratives. Other process variables – who makes the giving decisions and how they prioritize giving – come into play for these non-donors as well. This study shows the need to include non-donors in research that explores factors that motivate alumni to give to their alma mater and confirms that examining the impact of demographic characteristics and experiences on alumni giving relies on oversimplified pictures of donors' and non-donors' decisionmaking processes.

Jonathan Long and Sharon Wray (2003) 'It Depends Who You Are: On asking difficult questions in leisure research', *Society and Leisure* 26;1, 2003, pp169–82.

This paper uses research on the 'potentially very sensitive subjects of identity and racism to reflect on the significance of the researcher's own cultural biography with that of the participant'. The paper addresses challenges within the research process, from initial engagement to data gathering. It offers some indicators of how awareness of the complexities of working in sensitively charged areas can suggest a way forward. It argues that, perhaps because of the sensitivity of the subject areas of this research, such issues are easier to recognise here but that they apply to social research more generally.

David Van Slyke, Shena Ashley and Janet L Johnson (2007) 'Fundraising effectiveness and strategies for engaging African-Americans in Philanthropy', *American Review of Public Administration*, 37;3, 2007, pp278–305.

During the past two decades, the field of philanthropy has grown in its knowledge base, knowledge sharing and sophistication in reaching out to and cultivating donors and volunteers. The growing literature focusing on African-American philanthropy has contributed to that knowledge base. Throughout much of the research conducted, African-Americans are found to be an untapped philanthropic resource who have yet to be leveraged. Yet previous studies provide mixed results on giving and volunteering profiles and the impact of certain solicitation strategies. In this study, the authors use survey data from the Atlanta metro region to do what no other study on African-American philanthropy has done. Using multivariate analysis, the authors match fundraising strategies to sociodemographic characteristics to create a development taxonomy to assist non-profits in effectively engaging this group of potential donors. Non-profit organizations can use these development taxonomies and empirical findings to enhance their fundraising operations and improve non-profit performance.

P K Bag and S Roy (2008) 'Repeated charitable contributions under incomplete information', *The Economic Journal* 118;525, 2008.

Incomplete information about independent (private) valuations of charities by potential donors provides an important strategic rationale for announcements of donations during fundraising drives; and explains why donors may add to their initial contributions, after learning about contributions made by others.

Susan A Ostrander (2007) 'The Growth of Donor Control: Revisiting the Social Relations of Philanthropy', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 36;2, 2007, pp356–72.

Building on an earlier social relations conceptualization of philanthropy as a two-way, mutual, interactive relationship between donors and recipient groups, this article explores the current growth of donor control. Arguing that philanthropy has moved in the opposite direction from what a social relations theory posited, the article identifies and examines organizational forms that provide donors today with opportunities for increased control by creating new relationships of (a) donor exclusivity (donor networks, giving circles), (b) donor intermediaries between donors and philanthropic advisors and providers of other services including donor-advised funds, and (c) donor oversight between 'social investors' and their non-profit 'partners' in high-engagement philanthropy. These categories emerged from a critical review of recent literature. The article concludes with an explanation for increased donor control that is then applied to suggest how to elevate the influence of recipient groups over charitable gifts and bring greater balance into the social relationship between donor and recipient groups.

Elizabeth Goering, Ulla M Connor, Ed Nagelhout and Richard Steinberg (2009) 'Persuasion in Fundraising Letters: An Interdisciplinary Study', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, July 2009, OnlineFirst.

In this article, we report experimental evidence on the effectiveness of several techniques of persuasion commonly utilized in direct-mail solicitation. The study is built on theory-based, descriptive models of fundraising discourse and on comparisons of recommended and actual practices related to three dimensions of persuasion: rhetorical, visual and linguistic. The specific rhetorical variable included is persuasive appeal (rational, credibility or affective). The visual variable selected for the study is the presence or absence of bulleted lists, and the linguistic variable included is readability or the complexity of exposition. Participants were presented with pairs of fictive direct-mail appeals from imaginary universities that differ in these dimensions and asked to allocate a hypothetical US$100 across each pair. Results suggest that letters utilizing credibility appeals and letters written at a high level of readability produce the highest donations.

Donald Morris (2008 'Tainted Money and Charity: Do 501(c)(3)s Have a Right to Refuse a Gift?', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 37;4, 2008, pp743–55.

This examines the right of registered US charities (501(c)(3) organisations) to refuse an unrestricted cash donation, concluding that such right is generally illusory. If a charity disagrees with the donor on a moral issue, it may see nothing improper in turning away a would-be benefactor. It is argued that the organisation's exempt purpose requires looking beyond the conscience of the individuals making the decision. Fiduciary responsibility with its stakeholders is emphasised; these including donors, potential recipients of the organisation's goods or services, taxpayers and the government. Viewed from this perspective, turning down a gift, it is argued, is comparable to mismanagement in squandering scarce resources.

Paul Dunn (2010) 'Strategic Responses by a Nonprofit When a Donor Becomes Tainted', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 39;1, 2010, pp102–23.

What should a not-for-profit do when a benefactor whom the not-for-profit has voluntarily and publicly honored becomes tainted as a result of a scandal? This article outlines a typology of donors and donations and using stakeholder theory and resource dependency identifies three external pressures (value incongruence, coalescence and visibility) and two internal constraints (economic need and organizational commitment) that would entice a not-for-profit to adopt any one of three strategies: return the money and remove the public acknowledgment, keep the money but remove the acknowledgment, or keep the money and continue to honour the donor.

Juliet Corbin and Janice M Morse (2003) 'The Unstructured Interactive Interview: Issues of Reciprocity and Risks when Dealing with Sensitive Topics', *Qualitative Inquiry* 9;3, 2003, pp335–54.

Qualitative research using unstructured interviews is frequently reviewed by institutional review boards using criteria developed for biomedical research. Unlike biomedical studies, unstructured interactive interviews provide participants considerable control over the interview process, thereby creating a different risk profile. This article examines the interview process and literature for evidence of benefit and harm. Although there is evidence that qualitative interviews may cause some emotional distress, there is no indication that this distress is any greater than in everyday life or that it requires follow-up counselling, although the authors acknowledge distress is always a possibility. Essential to preventing participant distress is the researcher's interviewing skills and a code of ethics. When research is conducted with sensitivity and guided by ethics, it becomes a process with benefits to both participants and researchers. The authors conclude that qualitative research using unstructured interviews poses no greater risk than everyday life and expedited reviews are sufficient.

Sally Hibbert, Andrew Smith, Andrea Davies and Fiona Ireland (2007) 'Guilt appeals: Persuasion knowledge and charitable giving', *Psychology and Marketing* 24;8, 2007, pp723–42.

This paper applies the persuasion knowledge model to explain consumers' responses to charity guilt appeals. With data obtained through a stimuli-driven survey, the research examines the relationships between knowledge of persuasion tactics and charities, and the level of felt guilt experienced in response to an advertisement and subsequent donation intentions. The findings show that guilt arousal is positively related to donation intention, and that persuasion and agent knowledge impact the extent of guilt aroused. The research confirms that consumers are active rather than passive processors of marketing communications by revealing the role of persuasion and agent knowledge as methods of coping with and informing responses to guilt appeals. Specifically, the research finds that manipulative intent and the respondents' skepticism toward advertising tactics in general are negatively related to guilt arousal but that their affective evaluation and beliefs about a charity are positively related to feelings of guilt. However, it also shows that there is a positive direct relationship between perceived manipulative intent and the intention to donate.

Appendix C
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[1] See for example, in the context of entrepreneurship research, Saras D Sarasvathy (2004) 'The questions we ask and the questions we care about: reformulating some problems in entrepreneurship research', *Journal of Business Venturing*, 19.5, 2004, 7070–717.

[2] The Public Fundraising Regulatory Association Attrition Survey 2009 showed that the proportion of direct debits cancelled six months after the initial sign-up increased from 50 per cent to 56 per cent in the first months of the recession. See Fleming M and Tappin R (2009) 'Face-to-face donor cancellation rates (attrition): establishing a benchmark', *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* vol 14 issue 4, pp341–52.

[3] Rene Bekkers & Pamala Wiepking (2010) 'Accuracy of Self-reports on Donations to Charitable Organisations', forthcoming in *Quality and Quantity*.

[4] Pamala Wiepking (2006) 'To Give or Not to Give, That is the Question: How Methodology is Destiny in Dutch Giving Data', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 35;3, 2006, pp533–40.

[5] Arthur Brooks (2004) 'What do "don't know" responses really mean in giving surveys?', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 33;3, pp423–34.

[6] Rene Bekkers & Pamala Wiepking (2010) ibid.

About the authors

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About CGAP

The ESRC Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy (CGAP) is the first academic centre in the UK dedicated to research on charitable giving and philanthropy. Three main research strands focus on individual and business giving, social redistribution and charitable activity, and the institutions of giving. CGAP is a consortium comprising Cass Business School, University of Edinburgh Business School, University of Kent, University of Southampton, University of Strathclyde Business School and NCVO. CGAP's coordinating 'hub' is based at Cass Business School. CGAP is funded by the ESRC, the Office for Civil Society, the Scottish Government and Carnegie UK Trust.

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