

## Abstract for review

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### The Price of Progress?

*The effect of professionalisation on the reputation and resilience of fundraising*

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#### Abstract:

Fundraised income is crucial to fund the work of increasing numbers of nonprofit organisations. Professionalisation of the methods used to generate voluntary income, especially direct marketing techniques aimed at acquiring new donors, is a common step in maturing fundraising regimes but can cause concern amongst the public and politicians. Recent disquiet about such techniques has resulted in extensive media-led challenges about the charity sector, especially but not solely in the UK, with impending legislative consequences.

This paper presents data on fundraising practices in 26 countries to explore the relationship between professionalisation and the reputation and resilience of fundraising across the globe. The methodology, an online survey of experts in the 26 countries, achieved a 100% response rate on this topical issue. The quantitative data enables us to assess the resilience in each of the 26 countries and relate this to the maturity of the type of fundraising regime in that country: Embryonic, Emerging, Evident, Established or Advanced. Qualitative data enables us to make sense

of the findings, for example taking account of local cultural and religious norms, as well as the impact of local media coverage.

We find that nonprofits operating in more established fundraising regimes typically experience a dip in support for their fundraising techniques and strategies. However, the experience of the US, which has the most advanced fundraising regime, indicates this may be temporary and alleviates as the public, politicians and media become better informed about the role and impact of nonprofit income-generation practices. We conclude with recommendations to increase resilience in this phase of the organizational life-cycle, including the need for clearer facts in the public domain about the vagaries of nonprofit income, strong professional practice guidance and a quantum shift in focus from donor acquisition to donor retention.

### **Most important references:**

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