

ABSTRACT

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International Philanthropy for the Arts

Fundraising Strategies to attract Foreign Benefactors

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Abstract:

Philanthropy has diversified in recent years. Alongside new forms of philanthropy also the geographical origin of philanthropic gifts has diversified. Arts organizations, which amongst others rely on philanthropic contributions for their funding, raise gifts from benefactors abroad. Newspapers write about arts organizations that establish friends circles abroad and occasionally exceptionally large cross-border gifts are reported in the media, for example the €350 million gift of artworks from a US couple to Musée d'Orsay.

This paper first explores the phenomenon of international philanthropy and focusses on gifts by individuals to arts organizations. Are these cross-border donations driven by donors? Or is it because of the effort of arts organizations that they attract gifts from abroad? Second, a closer look is taken at how arts organizations try to attract foreign benefactors. Who do they target and what do they do to attract these donors abroad? The main research question is: What strategies do arts organizations use to raise funds abroad?

Explorative research is conducted to answer this question. In qualitative case studies of 36 arts organizations the initiators of cross-border donations are identified and the strategies the arts organizations use to attract foreign benefactors are mapped. The arts organizations included are located in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. 44 interviews were conducted with fundraisers of these

organizations. Furthermore, media coverage, annual reports and the official websites of the arts organizations were analysed.

The research shows that the majority of professional arts organizations receive gifts from abroad. A part of these gifts are merely spontaneous gifts, driven by internationally oriented donors. The majority of organizations has the desire to raise funds abroad, but currently does not actively pursue it. For the arts organizations that do raise funds abroad, different strategies can be outlined which they use to attract foreign benefactors: A) Embracing grass roots initiatives by foreign donors; B) Arts organizations that focus on one or few foreign countries and set up friends circles in these countries; C) Arts organizations that have a friends circle at their home location specially dedicated to international supporters from all over the world; D) Efforts of collaborating arts organizations who jointly raise funds abroad.

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