



Engaging Young People in Philanthropy

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The objective of this article is to bring together and draw insights from existing research on the giving behaviour of younger generations. It explores how and why young people give time or money to non-profit organisations (NPOs) and what measures NPOs could take to attract them as donors and volunteers.

The authors conclude that NPOs can engage younger generations by connecting donations of time and/or money to a sense of belonging, the possibility for personal growth and/or active participation of the donor or volunteer.

[#NextGen](#) [#Generations](#) [#DonorMotivation](#) [#GenZ](#) [#GenAlpha](#)

Background & Context



- The article **examines nine research papers**, which all provide insight into the giving behaviour of younger generations. Younger generations in this context are defined as Millennials/Gen Y (1981-1996), Gen Z (1997-2012), and Gen Alpha (>2010). **The papers discussed show similar results or at least complimentary results** and form the basis of the argument. Notably however, only two of the nine papers provide insight into Gen Alpha, and each paper is conducted with different methods, contexts, and countries.
- The **difference in giving behaviours of younger generations is crucial for charities to consider**, as large amounts of wealth are increasingly transferred between generations with **Gen Alpha being predicted to be one the wealthiest generations yet**.
- There is a **key difference between discussing generations and age cohorts** – Generations grow up at a similar time, with its social and political contexts. For example, while many members of Gen Z are currently in their teens or twenties, they are looked at as generations in this paper and not compared to the age cohort of people who were in their teens and twenties ten years ago (which would be mostly Millennials). The authors acknowledge that the concept of generations has its limits, but here it is a **useful tool of categorization**.
- The authors suggest **more research is to be done** to learn more about the **role of technology** in young generations' giving behaviour. Furthermore, they recommend that **now is the time to include Gen Alpha** in research, as it will provide more insights to follow a generation and their giving behaviour throughout their life.

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Take aways & Learnings



- **Young people are partially motivated by different factors** than previous generations. The authors found evidence that **religious motivations are less pronounced**, while the fact that young people **focus a lot on the here and now** changes their interaction with NPOs, who could use more flexible fundraising strategies to encourage engagement.
- **Active participation and co-creation can meet several expectations young people have of charitable engagement:** it brings an opportunity for personal growth (possibly even career advancement), fosters transparency, can show the impact of donations directly and gives them a voice in the organisation. Co-creation can also provide a positive social environment, fostering a sense of belonging over shared values and build on the fact that younger generations prefer supporting organisations they know.
- Some giving motivations can be observed across generations: **Altruism** and the **‘warm glow effect’** of donating are **motivating for younger and older generations alike**.
- There is potential in **cooperations beyond the third sector** to foster prosocial behaviour, encouraging future engagement with NPOs. This could be done through active engagement at an early age, or later through community service learning or co-creation measures.

NPOs can engage new donors by creating		
Sense of Belonging	Personal Growth	Active Participation
<i>through</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fun social environments• Connecting to donors through values• Genuine engagement	<i>through</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning opportunities or career development• Cooperations with educational institutions	<i>through</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstration of impact• Innovative ways – use of technology!• Transparency and participation /co-creation

Figure 1: Ways for NPOs to engage younger donors.

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