

Donor inspiration in a peer-to-peer context

Laura Hesse - Universität Hamburg | Silke Boenigk – Universität Hamburg

The study examines how peer fundraisers influence the donation behaviour of donors within peer fundraising campaigns, drawing on the concept of inspiration. Insights from this study can help fundraising managers design fundraising campaigns and develop new peer donor recruitment strategies by considering donor motivations beyond their charity's cause.

The key question it answers is if inspiration and its sources, especially a peer fundraiser, can inspire donation behaviour.

The study shows that donation behaviour is impacted by both the inspiration source and its intensity. The highest mean donations are generated when donors are inspired by the cause and peer fundraiser. The lowest score for inspiration and donation size appears when donors are only inspired by the cause.

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Background

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Context



- The concept of inspiration is proposed in different disciplines as a key driver of behaviour. After carefully reviewing the nonprofit literature, only two studies were identified that studied inspiration to some extent.
- The authors define donor inspiration as a **two-step process**, adding to previous research in the field. **Donor inspiration is composed of the inspired-by and the inspired-to process.** In the former, someone like a fundraiser or organisation inspires a person to support something new, taking shape through the inspired-to process, such as a donation.
- There do not seem to be any studies on these questions conducted with observable data (data that is not created for a study as, for example, survey data would be), so this study is working to close that gap by using a large data set of the **peer-to-peer campaign of global fitness company LesMills and UNICEF.** The data has a record of 8697 donation transactions for the cause of "clean water in Africa".
- There is previous evidence that peer donors' motivation to donate relates more to the peer fundraisers than the campaign-related cause. One explanation for this is a phenomenon called 'relational altruism', where the **motivation for donation is not to support a cause but to help a friend** in their endeavour to fundraise/support a social cause.

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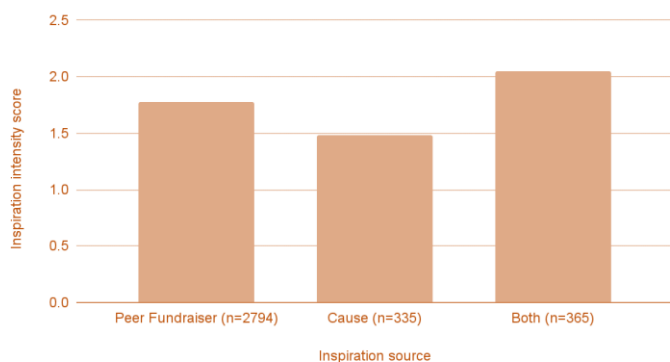
Academic articles on philanthropy through a practitioner lens

Take aways & Learnings

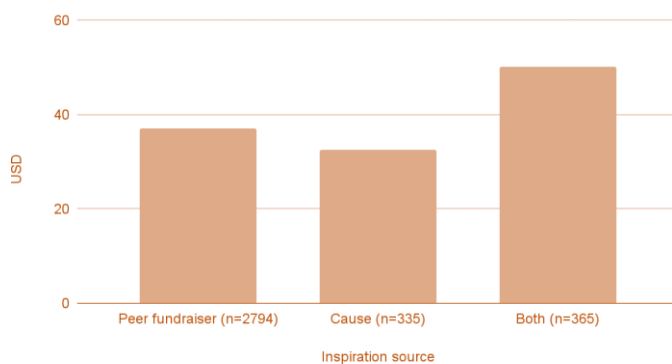


- **Peer fundraisers inspire higher donations than just connection to the cause** – By examining the comments left by donors on the donation platform (3494) alongside the corresponding donation amounts, results show that the mean donation of donors inspired by the fundraiser is \$37.04, whereas cause inspired donations are at \$32.54 (mean).
- **Inspiration from both peer fundraiser and cause leads to the highest donations** – 365 donors were identified as being inspired by both the cause and the peer fundraiser, leading to substantially higher donations at a mean of \$50.22.
- **Inspiration is the strongest predictor of donation behaviour** – the authors determined inspiration intensity by rating comments left on the shared fundraising platform from 1 (low) to 3 (high), with donations without a comment being rated 0. The study found that the influence of inspiration intensity was positive and significant.
- **The level of inspiration has direct and indirect effects on donation behaviour.** The source of inspiration affects its intensity, which in turn affects donation behaviour concretely. Peer fundraisers positively influence donation behaviour, and people inspired by the fundraiser, or both cause and fundraiser, donate \$1.11/\$1.22 more, respectively. This also indicates the presence of other factors yet to be studied, as casualties often manifest themselves through various influences.
- **Fundraisers can use these insights by focusing on inspiration in donor recruitment** – peer fundraisers with high reputations or status are likely role models that can inspire donors to donate. Leveraging their influence can enhance new campaigns. Furthermore, social media is a valuable tool for inspired donors to become sources of inspiration themselves. Highlighting peer fundraisers alongside the cause can increase donations and family- and friend-based events.

Inspiration Intensity



Mean donation amount



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