



## Faith-based Fundraising and Engagement in Post-Communist Czech Republic

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In the Czech Republic, religiosity is decreasing, and distrust in church institutions is on the rise. Despite this, volunteerism and revenue have consistently increased for Caritas Czech Republic's primary fundraising initiative.

This study explores religiosity and trust in the church in the context of fundraising and volunteerism for faith-based organizations in post-communist Czech Republic.

Caritas Czech Republic's door-to-door Three Kings Collection (TKC) fundraiser communicates a religious message yet has increased volunteerism and revenues annually. One reason for success may be that Czech society can distinguish between institutional church distrust and the social services Caritas provides. For Caritas, fundraising is part of a larger mission to connect society.

[#faith-based philanthropy](#) [#religiosity](#) [#civic engagement](#) [#volunteering](#)

### Background

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### Context



- Caritas Czech Republic is a Catholic humanitarian organization and the country's largest direct service provider. **During communism, non-profit organizations in the Czech Republic were virtually eliminated.**
- Membership in churches, especially the Catholic Church, increased dramatically after 1989. However, after the initial increase, **church membership has declined over three-fold since the fall of communism. Today, nearly 70% of Czechs express distrust in churches.**
- Research on faith-based fundraising highlights that **people more actively living their faith are more likely to donate.** Moreover, there is an **association between trust and giving.**
- According to the literature, an overtly religious message may negatively impact giving in an environment like the Czech Republic. Caritas Czech Republic's annual **TKC should have seen fewer donations and decreased volunteerism. Yet the results have been precisely the contrary,** with consistent increases in both over a 20-year timespan.
- Existing research highlights that **little is known about faith-based fundraising in post-communist countries.** Through quantitative analysis of revenues and volunteer hours, content analysis of TKC messaging, and semi-structured interviews, this article sets a baseline for further exploration of faith-based organizations in post-communist countries.

# ERNOP Research Note

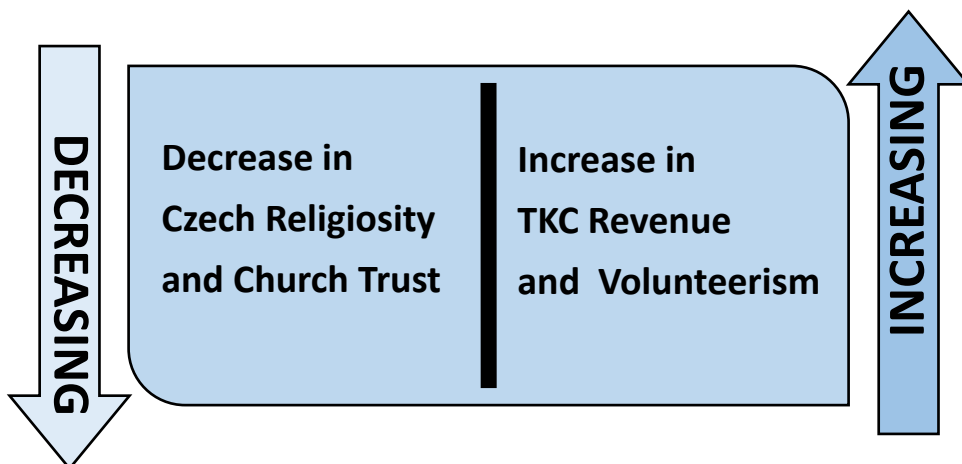
Academic articles on philanthropy through a practitioner lens

## Take aways & Learnings



- Content analysis showed that the TKC's messaging was overtly religious without negatively impacting donations or volunteerism.
- Analysis of Caritas annual reports showed a gradual increase in revenues and volunteerism despite fewer people who identify as religious and low public trust in churches.
- Results of fundraising and volunteerism may indicate that the public can distinguish between the institutional church and the services provided by church-established organizations. Most Czechs have either received or know someone who has received assistance through Caritas.
- Interviews highlighted that TKC fundraising is not the end goal; it serves as a tool to bridge the secular and religious, connecting people and society.
- The TKC's personal approach differentiates Caritas from other organizations. Faith-based organizations must incorporate modern fundraising methods while maintaining personal connection.
- TKC local coordinators consist of an aging volunteer force. Organizations with similar initiatives must develop future generations of volunteers or risk losing person-to-person fundraising initiatives.

## CARITAS CZECH REPUBLIC THREE KINGS COLLECTION TRENDS



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