

Call for Papers for a Special Issue

Charitable Giving and the Disintermediation of the Non-Profit and Voluntary Sectors

Co-Editors of this Special Issue:

Rita Kottasz, Kingston University, London, United Kingdom

Walter Wymer, University of Lethbridge, Canada

Meredith Niles, Plan International, United Kingdom

Abstract Submissions due: 1st January 2022

First Manuscripts Due: 1st April 2022

For decades, non-profit and voluntary sector organisations have acted as the intermediaries between donors who want to contribute money to help a cause and the beneficiaries of a cause. The non-profits would be responsible for marketing, fundraising, choosing the appropriate beneficiaries to help, monitoring the giving, and often delivering the service to beneficiaries. Recently, however, there has been a rise in individuals taking matters of altruism and fundraising into their own hands, thereby increasing the risk that the charity sector could become the next victim of disintermediation, i.e. the process of removing the intermediary from future transactions.

Some individuals prefer to support 'direct causes' because these can offer a greater sense of ownership and proximity to the cause. Nowadays, if people want to give directly, they can do so via numerous crowdfunding sites where lots of small donors give money to a project, a venture or directly to the individual via platforms such as Fundly.com, Kiva.com, JustGiving.com or GoFundMe.com, thereby easily bypassing the usual intermediaries (charitable organisations) altogether. The growth of crowdfunding campaigns aimed directly at individuals, as opposed to charities, have seen huge growth since they were launched. Some suspect that it is the *reduction in social distance* combined with offering beneficiaries a *greater sense of agency* that makes direct donations so powerful. These platforms tap into the same donor motivation to see a tangible impact of their giving and to connect personally with the beneficiary that child sponsorship programmes like those run by Action Aid, World Vision and Plan International have offered for decades; in these programmes, individuals are encouraged to "adopt" a specific child and, in return for a donation, the donors receive a photo and a handwritten note from a child. These new platforms put power into the hands of the beneficiary to determine what they most need and ask for this directly.

Although direct giving establishes a positive platform to causes that need extra funding, these initiatives raise potential concerns for those running the crowdfunding campaigns, such as inexperience in charity money management, charity service provision and delivery. There is also the danger that this new disintermediated approach introduces a greater risk of fraudulent activity and/or may not be as effective and efficient in getting the money to beneficiaries. The non-profit and voluntary sectors have been the traditional third parties navigating donor decision-making. Established charities have the required experience and know-how, the distribution intensity, the necessary networks to support the dissemination of funds, highly specialised support, quality assurance mechanisms, protection from fraud and a 'reporting back on impact' culture. Ironically, however, what may make disintermediation attractive to donors are weaknesses in the 'traditional charity fundraising model', perceived lack of transparency, perception of high overheads, lack of trust in competent management, and media narratives about 'fat cat salaries', so on and so forth.

A different disintermediation threat facing charities is the trend for commercial brands to move into "cause"

territory directly. Some businesses are turning away from the traditional cause-related marketing and corporate social responsibility initiatives, cutting charities out of the picture, and trading directly on their own contributions to social change. During the Covid-19 pandemic for instance, cafes have started offering free hot drinks to health (NHS) workers, supermarkets have advertised special shopping times for NHS workers and vulnerable customers, and Deliveroo have given people a platform to donate money to buy meals for NHS workers, delivering the meals directly to hospitals, all without any input from the charitable sector.

Disintermediation takes many forms; the above merely provide some context and insight into the papers that we are seeking with this Call for Papers.

The *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing* is sponsoring a special issue containing cutting edge research around the opportunities and threats of disintermediation within the non-profit and voluntary sectors.

This Call for Papers encourages a broad spectrum of submissions.

Important questions and topics may include:

- what role does reducing social distance and/or increasing beneficiaries' sense of agency play in the success of crowdfunding campaigns?
 - what are the differences between donors who give to single-issue crowdfunded campaigns, and those donors who give to traditional charities?
 - what is the overlap between people giving to crowd funders and people who give to traditional charities?
 - are there donors who are deliberately circumventing the charity sector due to issues of trust and scepticism?
 - are disintermediated fundraising campaigns organised by friends and family guilt-tripping individuals into giving?
 - can crowdfunding initiatives be held accountable to their sponsors in the same way as charities?
 - what are the differences between the crowdfunding business models and the more established charity organisations in terms of organisational capabilities, alliance/network and critical marketing and management skills?
 - how are traditional charities competing with new disintermediated fundraising approaches?
 - what makes disintermediation effective and how can it be harnessed by traditional charities to do good?
 - what is the donor experience like for people who give via crowd funders compared to traditional charities?
- Is there anything generalisable about second gift rates/retention rates for disintermediated giving vs traditional charity giving?
- an investigation into donor portfolio creation and portfolio management of direct-funding organisations and traditional charities
 - identifying the *need states* that traditional charities answer against direct-giving organisations
 - empirical analyses of the alleged disintermediation of the charity sector in different national and cultural contexts

All articles in the Special Issue will be peer-reviewed. The Co-Editors will be responsible for selecting papers for the Special Issue after the peer review process is concluded.

Thank you to the JPM Shadow Board of Practitioners for their input.

Submission Instructions:

Abstract Submission Deadline: 1st January 2022

Abstracts and Covering letters should be submitted, by email, for consideration by the Co-Editors:

Walter Wymer

Meredith Niles

walter.wymer@uleth.ca

Deadline for Submission of First Manuscript: 1st April 2022

Author should refer to the [Author Guidelines](#) before submitting

New Submissions should be made via the Research Exchange submission portal:

<https://submission.wiley.com/journal/nvsm>

Please do not submit to the Special issue unless invited by the Co-Editors

Special Issue Authors should indicate the special issue title when prompted.

For further help with submissions, please contact: JPHILMAR@wiley.com