



Does one size fit all?

Cultural differences in the evolution and development of global fundraising professions

Working paper v1.1

● The fundraising profession

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ROGARE
THE FUNDRAISING THINK TANK

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Foreword: ‘Best’ practice isn’t necessarily *universal* best practice



Alice Ferris
Partner, GoalBusters (Rogare Associate Member), and member of Rogare’s Council and Critical Fundraising Network

My early training as a fundraiser came entirely from an anglophone professional world. The textbooks, the certification programmes, the conference stages all reflected one cultural frame, presented as if it were simply how fundraising works. As an Asian American who grew up in predominantly white communities, I was good at following the rules, so for years, I didn't question that frame.

That began to change when I started consulting with the Hopi Education Endowment Fund (HEEF) in the early 2000s. Thanks to the strong cultural identity of the Hopi people, I needed to learn about this centuries-old community to provide a fundraising strategy. It became clear, quickly, that the standard fundraising playbook would not work.

Take planned giving. The HEEF wanted a programme, but in Hopi culture, specific practices govern a person's passing, meant to avoid impeding their journey to the next world. Had we pushed forward with a standard planned giving approach, treating this as an inconvenience to work around rather than a boundary to respect, we wouldn't just have failed to raise money, we would have damaged trust in the organization among tribal members.

So, after 18 months of listening and consultation with the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, HEEF staff found a way forward through No'a, a Hopi principle of caretaking. Under No'a, the matriarch names in advance who will take over as the next steward of the family land, so the land is never left untended. That

became the language for planned giving: Choosing the next caretaker.

Here is what I take from that experience, and from this paper: Calling something best practice doesn't make it universally best. A practice earns that label for some community because it reflects that community's values. The Hopi example worked because we didn't try to import the anglophone mechanics of planned giving as-is. We asked what value those mechanics were meant to serve - continuity of care for the future - and then found the community's own language for that value.

The fundraising profession keeps mistaking its own reflection for a universal law. What gets called best practice is often just the dominant culture's practice, treated as though it were neutral and beyond question. Left unexamined, that habit exports the assumption that one culture's way of fundraising is *the* way for communities who never agreed to that premise.

My hope for this project is that it builds humility in both directions. Humility from the anglosphere to ask why something became 'best practice' before assuming it belongs everywhere, and humility from local cultures to look honestly at the assumptions of their own fundraising practices. The real work isn't defending or throwing out any single standard. It's asking what value that standard was meant to serve, and then finding out how that value already lives, or could live, in a given community. I invite you to explore that question with us. 🌱



Executive summary

Much of the thinking about best practice, ethics and regulation in fundraising is originated and developed by people in English-speaking countries (the anglosphere). These ideas are then exported to professions around the world. However, since they have been developed inside a particular, English-speaking (anglophone) culture, are these ideas always best suited to other cultures and, even if they are well suited, do they crowd out local ideas and practices about fundraising and philanthropy that could be more effective? (s1).

This project aims to explore this question and identify a roadmap to professionalise fundraising that is grounded in local cultures rather than adopting and implementing ideas developed in the anglosphere (s2).

By 'professionalisation' we mean processes that move the collective endeavour of organised fundraising from lesser to greater degrees of effectiveness, efficiency and accountability (ss3 and 5), always bearing in mind that anglophone forms of organisational structure, such as codes of practice and professional institutes, might not necessarily be appropriate for other cultures.

The starting point is to consider differences in social culture. We are basing this project on the 6-Dimensions Model devised by Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede (s3). The 6D model posits that cultures differ according to the following dimensions:

- 1 Individualism vs Collectivism** – how the society values the autonomy of the individual and the collective welfare of the group. Individualism is the extent to which people feel independent, as opposed to being interdependent as members of larger wholes.
- 2 Power Distance** – different factors relating to how societies solve the basic problem of human inequality; and the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
- 3 Masculinity vs Femininity** – expected gender roles within society and the division (or allocation) of emotional roles to men and women.
- 4 Uncertainty Avoidance** – society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity and the degree of stress felt in a society when confronted by an uncertain future.
- 5 Long Term vs Short Term Orientation** – how societies deal with change: long-term cultures view the world as in flux, but short-term cultures see the world as fixed, with the past providing a moral compass for the future.
- 6 Indulgence vs Restraint** – whether the society values and promotes basic human desires or advocates controlling them.

Since social cultures differ, it is reasonable to infer that philanthropic cultures also differ. s4 looks at some of the ways that differences in social culture could lead to differences in philanthropic culture and thus inform different fundraising practices. For example, the donorcentric notion of making the donor a 'hero' and singling them out for exceptional praise might work well in individualist cultures, but be less suited to more collectivist cultures. We are planning a full review of relevant research for a later date (s4).

To identify the best routes to professionalisation, we suggest working groups in different countries follow these five steps (s6):

1. Read this position paper to familiarise themselves with the concept of different cultural values and the objectives of this project.
2. Identify the characteristics of the local social culture.
3. Identify and describe the local culture of philanthropy.
4. Using their understanding of points 1, 2 and 3, compare the anglophone best practices and standards against their cultural values and culture of philanthropy to determine which are appropriate and work within those cultures, and which are more problematic, and why (s6.1).
5. Consider the most appropriate forms of professionalisation that would facilitate organised fundraising becoming as effective, efficient and accountable as possible within the local culture of philanthropy (s6.2). To guide this there are a series of prompt questions under three headings:
 - How should fundraising be organised/ how should the interests of fundraising and fundraisers be represented?
 - How should fundraising be accountable to its stakeholders?
 - A fundraising career.

In matters of fundraising ethics, Rights-Balancing Fundraising Ethics has been designed to resolve cross cultural ethical dilemmas. Since this balances fundraisers' duties to both donors and beneficiaries, and since these duties may vary between cultures, this implies that a practice that is ethical in one culture could be unethical in a different culture and, as such, there can be no universal global standard of fundraising ethics. ⑥

1

Should paying commission be unethical in Ghana? Or Argentina?

In 2005 the International Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising was unveiled at the Third International Fundraising Summit in London. The statement had been proposed – by the Association of Fundraising Professionals – at the first summit two years previously in Toronto (Watt 2013, p225). More than 30 countries (ibid) contributed to the formulation of the statement's 22 ethical principles, grouped into five “universal principles”.

One of the ethical stipulations of the International Statement was that fundraisers should not accept payment by commission, where commission was defined as a percentage of the money secured by the fundraiser.

There was consensus among the 30 national organisations that the statement ought to set out appropriate practice so as to eliminate bad practice. But they divided into two camps over what the statement ought to say about commissioned-based pay. One camp was adamant that the statement ought to prohibit it outright. In the anglophone (English-speaking) fundraising world, it is taken as beyond question that commission is unethical, and is prohibited or highly-restricted in most anglophone codes of practice (although the restrictions have been loosened or lifted by FIA in Australia and the Fundraising Regulator in the UK – see MacQuillin, Hansen, Hill and Wishart 2026).

However, the second camp argued that a universal statement ought to support fundraisers in the cultural and national contexts in which they worked, and practices vary from country to country (Watt 2013, p225). And in some countries, payment by commission had been – or was considered to be – the only ethical means of fundraiser compensation (ibid).

However, as Andrew Watt – then president and ceo of the AFP – wrote in 2013, attitudes to commission-based pay were changing, albeit gradually, and something that had ambitions to be a universal statement should “support countries in the process of change rather than dictate it. Therefore, the statement should be resolute to the ideal, but should help set out the route map necessary to achieve it.” (Ibid).

This clearly sets out that the International Statement does not just codify and encapsulate what was then current ethical practice, but what ought to become ethical practice in the future, and that countries that don't currently adopt this ethical practice ought to move towards it, despite claims that it wasn't ‘dictating’ change.

The statement was ratified in 2006 at the fourth summit in the Netherlands (ibid, p224-225) when 24 countries¹ signed it, thus committing those countries to move towards ending payment by commission.

However, one question – that has perhaps been begged – is why it was deemed that *not* paying fundraisers by commission (the dominant idea in the anglosphere) was considered more ethical than paying them by commission, and why any countries and cultures that did pay by commission ought to adopt the anglophone practice?

Perhaps in some cultures, the idea that commission-based pay was ethical was not simply an erroneous belief held in ignorance of more sophisticated anglophone fundraising ethics, but actually *is* ethical within the internal rules and mores of that culture. If that were the case, then that would have provided a good reason not to adopt the universal principle asserted by the International Statement.



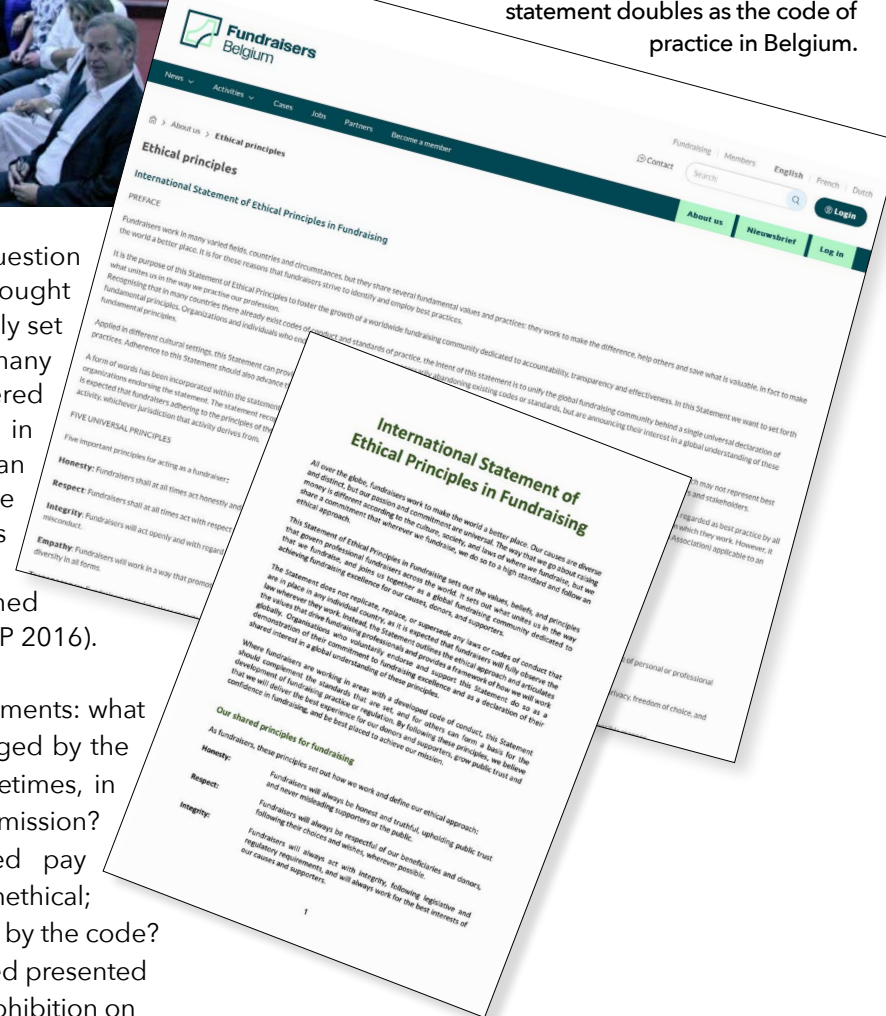
A revision to the International Statement of Ethical Principles of Fundraising was agreed at a meeting of professional institutes in 2018 (left). This new version removed the prohibition on commission-based pay. The statement doubles as the code of practice in Belgium.

Even within the anglosphere, the question of why payment by commission is (or ought to be) unethical is not comprehensively set out (MacQuillin et al 2026). There are many arguments why it should be considered unethical – for example, it results in reward without merit, donor trust can (but not necessarily will) become “unalterably damaged”, and it provides an incentive to put “self-dealing” over the best interest of the donor, as outlined in an AFP position statement (ibid; AFP 2016).

But these are all open to counter-arguments: what if donor trust is not unalterably damaged by the knowledge that fundraisers are (sometimes, in some circumstances) paid on commission? And moreover, is commission-based pay outlawed by the code because it is unethical; or is it unethical because it is outlawed by the code? Are the types of arguments just outlined presented as a priori reasons for including the prohibition on commission-based payment within the code; or are they a retrospective justification for their inclusion? (MacQuillin et al 2026.)

If the case against commission-based payment cannot be firmly settled in the anglosphere, there is even more of a case for wondering whether it is appropriate to export these ethics to other countries and cultures as a universal norm for how fundraising ought to be practised.²

The arguments against commission-based pay are all grounded in anglophone (which is also both Northern and Western) contexts and culture – for example, the expectations of donors in English-speaking countries

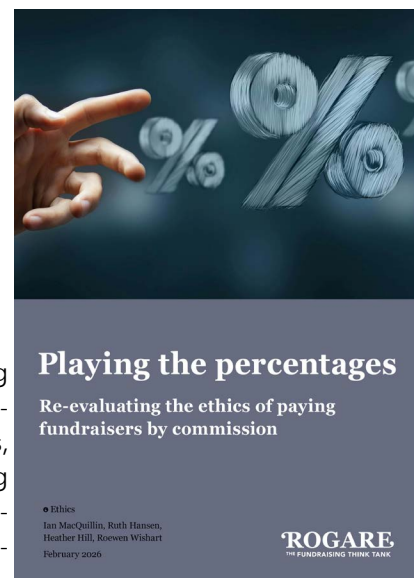


‘Perhaps in some cultures, the idea that commission-based pay is ethical is not simply an erroneous belief held in ignorance of more sophisticated anglophone fundraising ethics, but actually is ethical within the internal rules and mores of that culture.’

¹ <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/fundraising-associations-adopt-international-code/article/612037>

² The International Statement was revised in 2018, during which the universal prohibition on commission-based pay was removed. This does not therefore mean that it is now ‘ethical’ to pay by commission, only that it might not always be considered unethical.

Rogare's white paper from early in 2026 look at the ethics of paying fundraisers by commission. Do the arguments – both for and against – apply to fundraisers attending the Latin American Fundraising Congress as they do to those going to AFP I-Con?



in respect of being subjected to pressure by fundraisers, and whether being paid by commission would increase this pressure to an inappropriate level. However, the payment of commission in other countries may be 'regulated' by different social mores and rules that simply do not apply in Canada and the UK (notwithstanding its deregulation from the British code in November 2025).

Even if we accept that it is unethical to pay commission to Canadian and British fundraisers, maybe it is perfectly ethical (when viewed through more culturally-relevant ethical lens) for fundraisers in Ghana, Argentina and elsewhere to receive commission. Or then again, maybe it isn't. We simply do not know.

And, if this is the case with commission-based pay, are there any other things that are uncritically accepted as best practice and/or ethical in English-speaking professional fundraising cultures, but may be less appropriate in other cultures?

If so, this suggests that there can be no universal global code of fundraising standards or ethics, or that any such 'universal' code might be confined to a few general statements that really are universal;



and codes of practices/ethics will need to be tailored to the national cultures in which fundraising takes place. (But see Rights Balancing Fundraising ethics on p27.) This in turn raises the question about the appropriateness of what looks like the dominance of ethics and practices from the anglosphere in global fundraising, for example:

- Some of the 24 countries that have signed up to the international statement have used it to influence their codes, as have Poland³ and Ukraine (Breen 2016, p233), or adopted it lock stock and barrel, as has Belgium.⁴
- What might be called a plethora of native English-speaking presenters at fundraising conferences outside the anglosphere.
- Most research on nonprofit studies, philanthropy and fundraising comes out of the anglosphere (and if it's not from an English-speaking country, it's probably come from a west European nation) (Ma and Konrath 2018; Bhati and Hansen 2020).

This further raises the question of whether the model we are used to – a code of practice, and a national professional institute that sets and owns the code – is even the appropriate form for fundraising professions in other cultures. This is what this Rogare project aims to consider. 6

3 The Polish Fundraising Association is reviewing its self-regulatory system – work Rogare is assisting in – which will see it less dependent on the International Statement.

4 <https://www.fundraisersbelgium.be/en/ethical-principles2>

2

What we want to achieve – a roadmap for professionalisation

Wherever philanthropy exists, some form of fundraising – people asking other people to give money to/for a good cause – also comes to exist.

Over time, the role of fundraising gets better and becomes more organised. Ultimately, it may become a career, with other people following the same career, learning a verified body of knowledge, and making sure they all behave appropriately.

As fundraising progresses, evolves and develops as a collective enterprise, it moves from being less collectively effective, efficient and accountable, to being more collectively effective, efficient and accountable. We refer to this journey as the 'professionalisation' of fundraising (see s5).

What this Rogare project aims to explore is what are the most appropriate practices, ethics and structures for fundraising vis-à-vis those cultures of philanthropy.

The organisation and collective endeavour of fundraising may be quite different in different cultures, depending on:

- a. How fundraisers see their own role within those cultures, and
- b. The social mores and rules of those cultures (perhaps how asking and thanking is perceived in those cultures, or how peer pressure can regulate social behaviour).

Yet, rather than reflect the local culture of philanthropy, professions in many countries are based on or borrow structures (knowledge, practices, standards, ethics, learning, organisation and regulation) that have evolved and been developed in English-speaking countries. Sometimes they are adapted; sometimes they are adopted in their entirety.

Fundraising in the English-speaking world is extremely well advanced and developed and its structures, practices and ethics have much to recommend to professions in other countries.

Yet as can be seen from the example of commission-based pay (see s1), the English-speaking originators of these structures sometimes aim to export them to other parts of the world as exemplars of the way fundraising ought to be practised, and that if countries don't already practise fundraising in the approved anglophone manner, then they should adapt their practice to conform to it.

So, this project starts with the assumption that anglophone structures are not necessarily the appropriate starting places or building blocks for fundraising professions in non-English-speaking parts of the world, because there might already exist practices and ethics on which to build a local culture and profession of fundraising.

6 *'English-speaking originators of many great ideas about fundraising sometimes export them to other parts of the world as exemplars of the way fundraising ought to be practised, and that if countries don't already practise fundraising in the approved anglophone manner, then they should adapt their practice to conform to it.'*

However, there is a risk that these local components of local fundraising cultures could be drowned out by the noise created by anglophone practices, for two reasons:

1. Anglophone practices are so widespread (very possibly because they work so well).
2. These practices are often exported as desirable (and perhaps superior) by English-speaking thought leadership. For avoidance of doubt, we don't have a view on whether they are or are not better than local practices, only that the local practices are possibly not getting an opportunity to state their cases.

So, what we are calling for is a more critical evaluation of whether those anglophone-derived practices, ethics, regulation etc. – things that are not only often uncritically promoted as the epitome of global fundraising practice, but sometimes uncritically accepted as those things too – are most appropriate to different cultures. And if they are not, what local practices and ethics might be more appropriate? And, following from this, how might local practices and ethics be aggregated into a different professional structure.

The next section explains how we plan to do this through this project. ⑥

‘We are calling for more critical evaluation of whether anglophone-derived practices are most appropriate to different cultures. And if they are not, what local practices and ethics might be more appropriate?’

Our approach to this project

Rogare does not intend to make any judgements about what are appropriate standards of ethics for fundraising in different parts of the world, nor to proffer a view on whether anglophone structures are or are not appropriate. To do so would be inappropriate as most (but not all) of Rogare's core volunteer network come from the anglosphere.

Instead, we aim to provide a framework by which any fundraiser from any country can critically evaluate and assess their own structures, which we will do by describing an approach and methodology that anyone can use. This is described fully in s6. In essence, it involves taking some core tenets of anglophone fundraising practice and ethics, and considering how they relate to and operate within the local culture of philanthropy.

We will then aim to establish working groups within any country/culture that wishes to use this methodology to examine their local fundraising profession vis-à-vis anglophone practices. Having considered this, the working groups may choose to recommend alternatives or supplements to any anglophone practices that are not considered optimal; and to highlight local structures already in use that they believe are better than anglophone practices.

But what do we mean by 'culture'? For this we draw on Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede's established ideas, which are outlined in s3.

Working groups will have examined whether it is always appropriate to import anglophone fundraising structures, the reasons why it may not always be appropriate, and what local structures are already in place that might be better alternatives. The intention then is to bring all this together to construct a roadmap towards professionalisation that emerging fundraising countries can use on their journey to establishing professional fundraising structures – such as best practice standards, ethics and regulation – that will make fundraising in these countries/cultures more effective, efficient and accountable. ⑥

3 How cultures differ around the world

A key modus operandi of all Rogare projects is that we draw on existing theory and ideas from domains outside of fundraising and philanthropy, and then use these to synthesise new solutions to the challenges we face in fundraising. So, when it comes comparing fundraising practices of different cultures, we are of course going to draw on existing ideas, research, concepts and evidence, and not invent our own categories – although we are going to adapt them to reflect particular fundraising/philanthropy contexts.

The idea that there should be universal categories of culture emerged in the early 1950s (Hofstede 2011, pp3-4), and one the most widely-accepted academic approaches to doing so is Cultural Dimensions Theory, devised by Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede⁵ (2011), who defines culture as: “The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from

others.” (Ibid, p3.) See box on this page for a longer take on how Hofstede talks about culture.

Cultural Dimension Theory – which Hofstede first outlined in his 1980 book *Culture's Consequences* – proposes that there are dimensions across which human cultures can be mapped. The original four dimensions have now been increased to six dimensions – and are now referred to as the '6D Model of National Culture'. These are outlined on p12.

The point of this section is not to provide a literature review of all previous work on classifying global cultures – there are of course others, and we refer anyone wishing to delve further to Hofstede (2011) as a starting point – but to point out that this is a standard approach in social and organisational psychology that is supported by theory and evidence, although not without its critics (see p14). And thus this Rogare

What is culture?



“Culture is how you were raised. It developed while you grew up. With a computer metaphor, culture is the software of our minds. We need shared software in order to communicate. So culture is about what we share with those around us. In action in social life, culture constitutes the unwritten rules of the social game. These rules do not specify any details, but they specify the basic structure of the social landscape. They are about things such as independence, belonging, love, hate, respect, fear, and loyalty. They specify which contrasts matter in life: small versus big, clean versus dirty, man versus woman. Note that culture is about what we share with others. It is NOT something like personality, which is unique to an individual.”⁶

Geert Hofstede

5 About Geert Hofstede - <https://geerthofstede.com/geert-hofstede-biography/>

6 <https://geerthofstede.com/culture-geert-hofstede-gert-jan-hofstede/definition-culture/>

The six dimensions of Hofstede’s 6D Model of National Culture

- 1 Individualism vs Collectivism – how the society values the autonomy of the individual and the collective welfare of the group. Individualism is the extent to which people feel independent, as opposed to being interdependent as members of larger wholes.
- Individualistic societies: Emphasise autonomy, personal goals, and independent thought. Social ties are loose, and interactions are brief but frequent.

Collectivistic societies: Value group cohesion, social harmony, and collective goals. Relationships are more intimate, and extended family plays a significant role.
- 2 Power Distance – different factors relating to how societies solve the basic problem of human inequality; and the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
- High Power Distance: Accept hierarchical roles and unequal resource distribution as necessary for stability.

Low Power Distance: Promote equality, encourage upward mobility, and challenge power disparities.
- 3 Masculinity vs Femininity* – expected gender roles within society and the division (or allocation) of emotional roles to men and women.
- Masculine societies: Maintain traditional gender roles with limited female representation in leadership, and prioritise competition, performance, and direct communication.

Feminine societies: Encourage gender parity in decision making, education, and the workforce, and value modesty, cooperation, and indirect communication.
- 5 Uncertainty Avoidance – society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity and the degree of stress felt in a society when confronted by an uncertain future.
- Weak Uncertainty Avoidance: Embrace ambiguity, change, and informal agreements.

Strong Uncertainty Avoidance: Prefer predictability, strict rules, and formal structures.
- 5 Long Term vs Short Term Orientation – how societies deal with change: long-term cultures view the world as in flux; but short-term cultures see the world as fixed, with the past providing a moral compass for the future.
- Long-Term-Oriented societies: Focus on long-term goals and perseverance.

Short-Term-Oriented societies: Value immediate gratification and live in the present.
- 6 Indulgence vs Restraint – whether the society values and promotes basic human desires or advocates controlling them.
- Indulgent societies: Promote personal enjoyment and pleasure.

Restrained societies: Advocate for self-control and adherence to social norms.

Compiled from following sources:

- Hofstede (2011, 2016) and Culture Consulting Plus (2025).

* A similar classification to Hofstede’s devised by the Globe Project⁷ (which adapted Cultural Dimensions Theory) split the Masculine-Feminine dimensions into the separate dimensions of Gender Egalitarianism and Assertiveness. While this avoids what may now be problematic language in the use of the terms ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ – and any misunderstanding and controversy that might result – we’re sticking with Hofstede’s original classification for conceptual simplicity and consistency.

7 This is the GLOBE project’s website – <https://globeproject.com>. For an introduction to their dimensions, see – https://globeproject.com/study_2004_2007.html#:~:text=An%20overview%20of%20the%202004,elsewhere%20in%20this%20GLOBE%20website



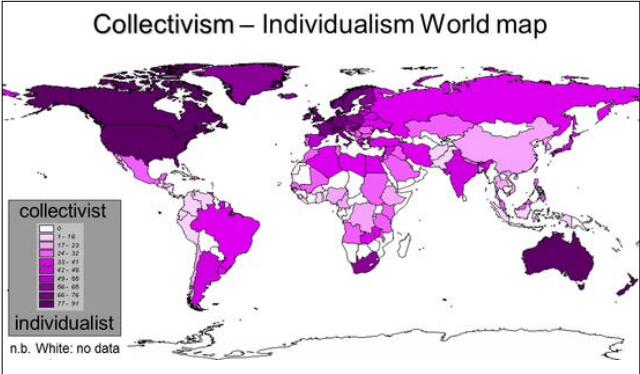
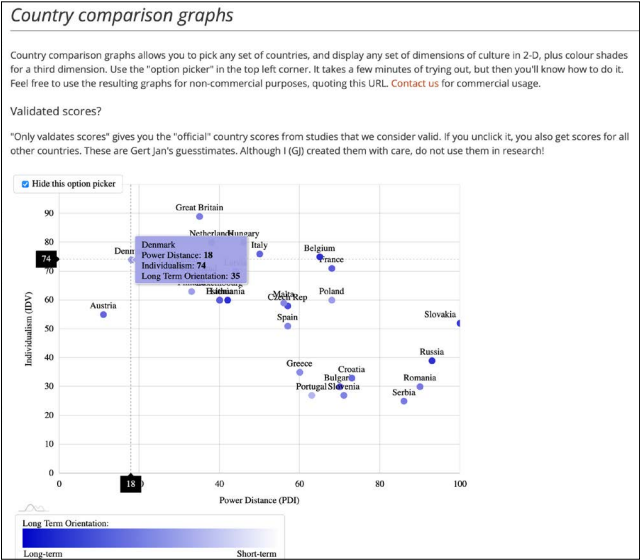
The tools on Geert Hofstede’s website allow you to compare different countries’ scores across the six cultural dimensions.

project can draw on established practice to ground our work on fundraising cultures, for which we are choosing to use Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory.

Hofstede’s website provides maps showing how countries score on the six dimensions,⁸ and allows country comparisons.⁹ This also means that Rogare can draw on existing research when aiming to relate fundraising culture to national cultures.

We won’t go into national cultural differences in detail (play around on the website yourself – it’s fascinating). But some examples will give a taster of the sorts of things the 6D model reveals, and they are probably what you expect.

- There is a clear distinction between individualist and collectivist countries. English-speaking countries are more individualist (good of the individual) than those in Asia and Africa, where a more collectivist (good of the group) culture prevails. But the anglosphere is also more individualist than western European countries, which in turn are more individualist than countries in eastern Europe.



- However, countries of the anglosphere have the lowest power distance – meaning they have more liberal ideas regarding equality – than many countries in east Europe and Asia, and some in Africa.
- When it comes to indulgence, the anglosphere, Latin America and parts of western Europe enjoy living it up, whereas Asia and eastern Europe are much more restrained.
- But when it comes to orientation to the future, it’s Asia, and east and central Europe that are oriented toward the long-term; while the US and Australia in the anglosphere, and Latin American and African countries are most short-term.

What the 6D model shows is that there are clear differences between the anglosphere – from where

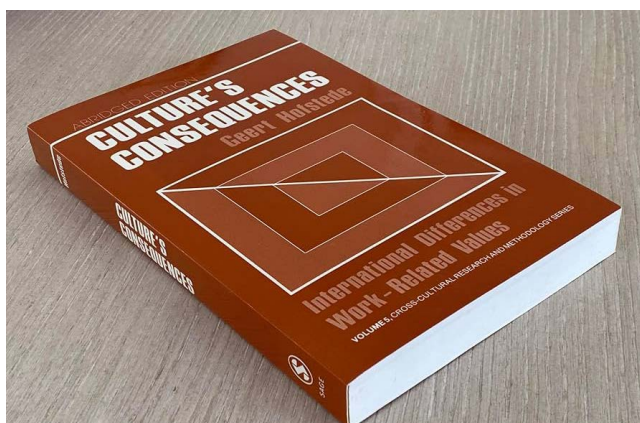
8 <https://geerthofstede.com/culture-geert-hofstede-gert-jan-hofstede/6d-model-of-national-culture/>

9 <https://geerthofstede.com/country-comparison-bar-charts/> ; <https://geerthofstede.com/country-comparison-graphs/>

the predominant ideas about fundraising practice and ethics originate – and the rest of the world.

But if criticisms of the 6D model exist (see this page), then why are we using it? There are five reasons.

1. The first response is that we are not using the 6D model to devise social or public policy but rather as the foundation for consistently identifying cultural differences. Scholars don't doubt that such differences exist; their criticism is that this model may not adequately describe those differences.
2. Despite the criticisms, Hofstede's model is widely accepted, and even critics note that his work is "seminal" and that it has been the "benchmark for cultural analysis" for three decades (Orr and Hauser 2008, p15).
3. Even though the 6D model may not describe all the nuances of cultural/national differences, it nonetheless captures something of cultural differences that feels true and intuitive: Western countries *are* more individualistic than those in Confucian Asia, which *are* more collectivist.
4. There is some research on how some of Hofstede's dimensions influence charitable behaviour, some of which we outline in s4.
5. Finally, using an accepted model that captures intuitive generalisations means that teams in different countries to use the same concepts and tools to compare anglophone fundraising practices and ethics against their local culture of philanthropy, which ensures consistency when cross-comparing between non-English-speaking cultures of philanthropy and fundraising. 📍



Criticisms of Hofstede's 6D model

Although widely accepted and used, Hofstede's model is not without criticism, to the extent that some argue that it does not deliver repeatable or viable predictions.

The original research that led to Cultural Dimensions Theory was conducted to assess job satisfaction of executives at one global corporation – IBM – not to evaluate different cultural norms. As such, its sample size was limited to and dominated by a particular demographic (mostly men), who may not be representative of national cultures.

Other researchers have failed to replicate Hofstede's findings, and one study that attempted this concluded that Hofstede's factors "overlap significantly and do not share a common factor structure within or between cultures".

It is also argued that Hofstede's theories represent culture as static and fixed in time, whereas, it is argued, culture evolves and changes, so what may have been true when Cultural Dimensions Theory was originally developed may not be the case now, particularly since globalisation has resulted in cultural ideas, mores and norms expanding beyond their original cultural boundaries.

Even though Hofstede's work was originally done to assess the corporate cultures of multinational companies, it has been used in a multitude of public policy scenarios. While some critics accept that the 6D model offers a broad understanding of cultural differences, they argue that these broad differences don't capture nuanced individual differences. These oversimplified generalisations can thus dilute the effectiveness of policies based on them.

Critics will agree that the Hofstede model has played a pivotal role in cross-cultural analysis, but stress that the field is fast evolving, and that the 6D model needs to be supplemented and augmented with – and integrated into – new tools and ideas, such as Jonathan Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory.¹⁰

- This section is summarised from Orr and Hauser (2008), Bolzonella (2024) and Weil (2025).

¹⁰ <https://moralfoundations.org>

4 National/regional cultures of philanthropy

Since there are differences in global cultures (which were explored, albeit briefly and superficially, in s3) it would be reasonable to infer that there are also differences in global cultures of philanthropy – that different cultures hold different values about appropriate ways to give and appropriate types of giving, and that these philanthropic norms are influenced by cultural characteristics of the 6D model.

Both cultural differences in general, and cultural differences that specifically relate to philanthropy, would then influence the development of the content and operation of fundraising practices, processes, ethics, and regulation and control, as well as the structure and organisation of the profession within those cultures. We're collecting all these under the epithet of the 'professionalisation of fundraising' – the processes by which fundraising collectively becomes more effective, efficient and accountable (see s5).

And so, one of our main research questions is:

How do geographic cultures and cultures of philanthropy influence the professionalisation of fundraising within those cultures?

This conceptual working paper is not setting out to answer this question, as this is something our cultural/national teams will consider. But we can provide some indicative examples of how culture might influence fundraising, and raise potential questions.

For example, because they were formerly part of the Soviet bloc, charities in many East European countries have been crowded out by the state. Many are heavily regulated. And there has been (and still could be) a reliance on external funding from outside the

region. From 1949 until the 1980s, philanthropy was suppressed in China by the communist party, which viewed the need for philanthropy as an indicator of the failure of the state (United Nations 2015).

In considering Hofstede's ideas, individualism vs collectivism may be an important factor.

Anglophone cultures are considered to be individualist, with value and emphasis based on loose-knit social frameworks, and individuals expected to care for themselves. People think of themselves in terms of 'I', and individual autonomy is valued above group welfare.

In collectivist cultures, which include Confucian Asia,¹¹ the emphasis and value is placed on a tightly-knit framework in which members of these in-groups look after each other and expect loyalty in return. People think in terms of 'we' rather than 'I', and group goals take precedence over individual goals.

Best practices in fundraising might be different depending on whether one is fundraising in an individualist or collectivist culture.

For example, one type of standard donor-centred fundraising practice is the 'because of you...' type letter – a letter that begins: 'Because of you [something good happened that would not have otherwise happened].'

This is very individualistic, encouraging the donor to think about what they ('I') did, and accord them 'hero' status for having done so.

It might be plausible that such an appeal to individualism would not play so well to audiences

¹¹ China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, sometimes referred to as being part of the sinosphere – <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sinosphere#>

'Because of you'.
Screengrab from
the SOFI website
extolling a particular
(anglophone?) type
of donor-centred
copywriting.

But even if we can't tell much about a donor from the data, we could still give it more oomph.

<Every month, because of your regular gift, somebody affected by (whatever it is) will have somewhere to turn to; they won't have to face (situation) on their own. Thank you so much for your wonderful commitment to being there for people like (case study name).

And when we do know more about donors from the data, we should always express not just gratitude, but impact. If we know how much they gave, and how much the thing we asked for costs, we should be able to write variables like this:

<Your gift meant <x> young people could spend a night safe and warm with us, away from the dangers of the street. Because of you those <X> young people, who may have experienced terrible trauma and abuse, will have had a hot meal, a shower and a

in collectivist cultures, where what is important is encouraging duty and loyalty to people in need, rather than encouraging a donor's exceptionalism (hero status) in making something happen.

Similarly, anglophone best practice notions about thanking donors and expressing gratitude may not be so appropriate as a recommended best practice in collectivist cultures.

There has been some research on how differences in culture influence charitable behaviour. One study that reviewed three forms of prosocial behaviour (giving, volunteering and helping strangers) across 66 countries demonstrated that people in individualist countries and in countries with low power distance have higher rates of giving (but not volunteering or helping strangers) (Luria et al 2015).

However, other research has shown that, in the context of donating on crowdfunding platforms, collectivism better predicts giving levels (Zaborek et al 2025).

While many studies focus on the individualism-collectivism dimension, an initial trawl of the literature suggests that all of Hofstede's dimensions, with the exception of indulgence vs restraint, have been investigated for their impact on charitable behaviour, and that these dimensions often interact to reinforce or inhibit donating (Luria et al 2015).

To assist national project teams, we will compile an overview of the key takeaways from these studies, which we will incorporate into a later version of this paper.

One key learning from all these studies is that the fundraising message should be congruent with prevailing cultural values.

It should also be pointed out that while many studies

look at cultural differences on the national level (and are thus generalising across populations), other studies have considered how cultural differences vary within populations – within an individualist culture, different people will exhibit different degrees of individualist and collectivist tendencies and attitudes.

This is the same for all cultural dimensions, and one study has looked at how people's beliefs in power distance – whether they endorse equality or inequality – predicts their giving behaviour. It's not as simple as thinking that those who have a high power distance belief (i.e. endorse inequality) are less likely to give to charity. In fact, in some contexts, they are more likely (Han et al 2017). We'll provide more detail on this, and other studies, in a later version of this paper.

The research – and the examples we have used above (relationship to state, individualism-collectivism, and power distance belief) are descriptive in that they describe what is happening, and provide an explanation about why it might be happening. But they don't make any normative claims about differences in cultures of philanthropy by positing that fundraising *ought* to reflect local cultures of philanthropy.

However, in discussing this project with Rogare, Mide Akerewusi of AgentsC in Canada did say that fundraising professions *ought* to reflect local cultures of philanthropy. This is a normative claim, not merely a descriptive observation.

There are two ways to consider whether fundraising in any one culture 'ought' to align with the prevailing culture of philanthropy.

One is taking a consequentialist ethical perspective. Under consequentialism, the right (i.e. ethical) thing to do is whatever delivers the best outcome

6



'Mide Akerewusi of AgentsC in Canada said that fundraising professions ought to reflect local cultures of philanthropy. This is a normative claim, not merely a descriptive observation.'

of maximising good while minimising harm. The consequentialist argument would be that anglophone approaches have crowded out local fundraising practices that would have been more successful within the prevailing culture of philanthropy.

But by the same consequentialist logic, if anglophone-derived practice is more efficient/effective/successful than local practices, then it is those anglophone practices that ought to be adopted into local practice.

The other way to look at this is to take a deontological ethical perspective. Under deontology, the right (i.e. ethical) thing to do is that which conforms to a pre-existing moral principle, such as do not kill or do not lie. In this context, it might mean that local fundraising, as a point of principle, ought to reflect local cultures of philanthropy as, say, a way of decolonising fundraising/philanthropy from Northern and/or anglophone influence.

A first step for our project teams is to describe the local culture of philanthropy. But here we face a question of whether this a national culture, a regional culture (such as a Confucian Asian culture), or a cultural cluster based on shared characteristics that transcends geographical boundaries (such as anglophone culture).

Based on Hofstede's 6D model, the Globe Project (see footnote 7 on page 12) has adopted clusters for: Latin America, Anglo, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Confucian Asia, and Southern Asia; while other researchers also adapt Hofstede's 6D model into clusters. Our starting point is an adapted version of these Globe Project clusters (see p28 in s6).

Charities Aid Foundation's annual *World Giving Index* – which provides statistical information about the

generosity levels of different countries – uses regional groupings that don't necessarily align with cultural differences. For example, it has an 'Americas' group, comprising 'North', 'Central' and 'South' American countries.

But the 6D model shows that Canada and USA share cultural similarities with other English-speaking countries, whereas CAF groups the UK and Ireland in the Western Europe Group, and Australia and New Zealand in Oceania. The 6D model groups all English-speaking countries together within an 'anglo' cluster rather than assign them to their geographic regions.

We already think that the case of an anglo cluster in fundraising is well made (though we will, of course, listen to counter-arguments that there is no such cluster). Our challenge with this project is whether we need, or ought, to look for other clusters of philanthropy/fundraising, or whether we should instead focus on national cultures.

For example, should Japanese and Chinese fundraising be considered together as part of a Confucian Asian cluster? Should fundraising and philanthropy in Africa be considered as a phenomenon that spans national boundaries or should we think only in terms of national cultures.

A key example here is the philosophy of Ubuntu in Bantu-language cultures and countries (occasionally referred to as the Bantusphere). It would seem to make sense to consider fundraising in the transnational cultural context of Ubuntu, rather than in the isolated cases of fundraising in, say, Angola or Kenya or Uganda, but not relate these to their encompassing philanthropic context.

This is a challenge we will leave to respective working groups. 6

5 To professionalise or not to professionalise?

This project sits within Rogare's 'fundraising profession' workstream. Rogare is unashamedly of the view that fundraising everywhere needs to be as 'professional' as it can be, and that if it isn't sufficiently professional, then it needs to 'professionalise'. But what do we mean by 'profession', 'professional' and 'professionalise'/'professionalisation'?

Whether or not fundraising is a profession is fully explored in Rogare's 2017 green (discussion) paper *Less than my job's worth*.



5.1a 'Profession'

One of Rogare's first papers was titled: *Less than my job's worth: Is fundraising a profession, and does it matter if it isn't?* (MacQuillin 2017). We suggest that this will be key reading for local project groups (see s6).¹²

Less than my job's worth notes that there are many different definitions of a 'profession'. One such definition we considered is:

"A disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as, possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others."

We are not suggesting that this is the definition of a profession that should be used for this project. But it does give a sense of the overarching way that scholars conceptualise professionhood. It's often generally accepted that to qualify as a profession, the way the "disciplined group of individuals" are organised should meet a set of criteria such as:

Systematic knowledge – members of the profession must acquire a body of knowledge (that laypeople do not possess) to be recognised as competent practitioners. There are thus entry routes into the profession that equip professionals with this knowledge.

Professional autonomy – members of the profession are free to use their specialist knowledge as they see fit to benefit their clients, but are not coerced or directed in how they use it by others.

The moral ideal of fundraising

Fundraising ensures that charities and other voluntary and nonprofit organisations have sufficient income to carry out their core charitable purpose to improve the lives of their beneficiaries.

Codes of standards and professional ethics – members are bound by codes and ethics that are specific to the activity undertaken by them.

Self-regulation – members of the profession set and enforce their own standards and ethics. The profession can also control entry to it by establishing barriers to entry, such as requiring the attainment of a level of competence.

The advantages to being in (and being perceived as a member of) a profession include: status and respect from stakeholders, job security, higher earnings, strong professional codes and ethics, and training and education.

It's worth noting that fundraising falls short of being considered a fully-fledged profession – even in English-speaking countries (even in the UK and USA) – and is often considered to be an "emerging profession", i.e. one that is working towards full professional status.¹² (on p18)

However, there is another way of looking at whether an occupation qualifies as a profession, devised by American scholar Michael Davis, who posits that...

A profession is a number of individuals in the same occupation voluntarily organised to earn a living by openly serving a moral ideal in a morally permissible way, beyond what law, market, morality and public opinion would otherwise require. (Davis 2010, p94.)

In our 2017 paper, we argue fundraising meets these criteria, and devised a moral ideal for fundraising:

Fundraising ensures that charities and other voluntary and nonprofit organisations have sufficient income to carry out their core charitable purpose to improve the lives of their beneficiaries. 6



Professor Michael Davis argues that being professional means 'opting into' a profession's 'special standards'. He also devised the concept of professions operating to a 'moral ideal'.

5.1b 'Professional' (and 'professionalism')

Professional simply means being a member of a profession and all that that entails. Put simply, a fundraising professional is a member of the fundraising profession.

Michael Davis argues that professions have "special standards", and that the mark of a professional is someone who opts into and agrees to abide by these special standards. This differs from other approaches that require professionals to demonstrate their competence and adherence to those standards. However, Davis's approach does not mean that professionals escape learning and professional development, as they still have to be competent, and if one of the professions' 'special standards' is a particular level of competence, then professionals must opt in to achieving it.

Acting 'professionally' therefore means adhering to a profession's special standards. But those special standards could differ between cultures. What is considered to be 'professional' is thus relative to different cultures, and something that is unprofessional in one culture might be perfectly professional in a different culture. For example, not thanking a donor in a timely manner might be considered very unprofessional in anglophone fundraising – because it does not align with anglophone fundraising's special standards – but not in some other cultures of philanthropy.

By extension, 'professionalism' describes the way professionals behave in adhering to their profession's special standards.

But the word 'professional' is also used in other ways: to do a good job, that someone is paid to perform a

¹² Much of the information in this section is drawn from our 2017 paper. If you want to get into more detail, and check or follow up the citations/references, please refer to that paper, which you can download from <https://www.rogare.net/professionalisation>.

role, or to behave in certain ways, ways that are not related to the profession's special standards, such as dress codes.

When we use the word 'professional' we are not referring to things such as dress codes or modes of speech, or how much (or little) reverence should be shown to senior colleagues, as these are matters of local custom/societal culture rather than specific to the local fundraising profession.

For example, in high power distance cultures, working in a fundraising office might well mandate how to behave and act within an office hierarchy. While certain behaviours might be required by the local culture, this is not what we mean when we talk about being 'professional' in the context of a member of the local fundraising profession.

Neither do we use this term to describe whether someone is paid, because, under Davis's approach, a volunteer could consider themselves a member of (i.e. has opted into) the fundraising profession, but a paid fundraiser (say, a telemarketer or direct dialogue/F2F fundraiser on a short-term contract) might not. ❸

5.1c 'Professionalisation'

Many scholars consider 'professionalisation' to refer to the processes whereby organised occupations become more like a profession by taking on the trappings of professionhood, such as introducing special standards (codes of practice, ethical principles) when none existed before, or improving those that exists, or developing self-regulatory processes if they didn't previously exist (Talliss-Foster 2025 pp9-10).

In all places where fundraising takes place, it will be organised – to a greater or lesser degree – so that it operates as effectively, efficiently and accountably as possible within its encompassing societal culture and culture of philanthropy. Irrespective of whether the local profession (or emerging profession) meets the criteria such as a body of knowledge or codes of standards/ethics, it will nonetheless almost certainly meet Michael Davis's overarching concept of a profession, and we are confident it would align with Rogare's moral ideal of fundraising (see p19).

'Professionalisation' thus means to move from a lesser to a greater degree of effective, efficient and accountable operation. ❹

5.2 What form of professionalisation is appropriate?

It might be thought that a question that should be asked prior to asking what form of professionalisation would be appropriate, is whether the organised undertaking of fundraising in any particular country needs to professionalise at all.

However, we take it as read that fundraising everywhere should increase its levels of professionalisation – i.e. it should always be striving to become more effective, efficient and accountable. But it should do so in ways that are appropriate to the local cultures of society (generally) and philanthropy (specifically) (and see comments on deprofessionalisation below).

The very idea of 'professions' does not meet with universal approval and has been criticised and resisted, even in English-speaking countries. Criticisms include:

- They have been viewed as monopolies that protect the privileged knowledge of an élite by restricting trade, and they don't really serve the public interest or public good (Koehn 1994, pp1-5).
- The practices and ethics of the profession is not as good and appropriate as professionals claim it to be and/or that professionals/experts can't be trusted (ibid).
- Professionals act paternalistically towards their clients (ibid).
- Professions perpetuate social hierarchies and inequalities (Ashley et al 2023). Having said that, professions have made certain types of work more egalitarian, by opening them up to anyone who demonstrates the necessary competence, rather than restricting it certain (upper) echelons of society, as has happened with law, medicine and the clergy.

There are global difference in how professions operate. For example, there are different Anglo-American (or 'Anglo-Saxon') and Continental European traditions. Professions in the UK and USA follow a "from within" approach that is based on the autonomy

❸ *'The very idea of 'professions' does not meet with universal approval, and has been criticised and resisted, even in English-speaking countries.'*

of members, particularly in terms of self-regulation. European models (particularly in Germany, France and Italy) adopt a "from above" approach, with the state much more prominent in regulating both the work of professionals and their education (Evetts, 2012; Mieg and Oevermann 2021, p8).

Regulatory codes also vary according to how a culture differs in the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance (which is how countries/cultures adapt to change), with those with weaker uncertainty avoidance having stricter rules and more formal structures. Countries with high uncertainty avoidance have codes that are more prescriptive than the codes found in countries that are more tolerant of change (Sing et al 2005).

Anglophone countries return mid-range scores for uncertainty avoidance. The Nordic countries are lower, but most (but not all) other countries score higher for uncertainty avoidance than those in the anglosphere. As stated in s1, many countries have adopted the International Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising. This is a fairly loose set of aspirational ethical principles rather than a regulatory code,¹³ and so may not be totally appropriate as the basis for a code of standards/ethics in countries that score more highly for uncertainty avoidance, and thus require more prescriptive regulatory standards.¹⁴

Attempts to introduce Anglo-Saxon style professionalisation have not always been welcomed in other cultures. For example, as reported in Rogare's paper on fundraising historiography, Italian fundraising pushed back hard against attempts by the Association of Fundraising Professionals to establish an Italian chapter in the late 1990s, which were seen as an "imperialist" attempt to impose bylaws and a code of ethics that weren't appropriate

(MacQuillin 2021, p18). It may or may not be relevant to this matter that Italy has a much higher score for uncertainty avoidance than the USA, as well as scoring differently to the USA in all other cultural dimensions except masculinity-femininity.

It's also been argued that the Anglo-American emphasis on law and medicine as the archetypes of professions to which others should aspire has been unhelpful, and that perhaps some occupational undertakings do not need to aspire to this type of professionhood (Evetts 2013, p789).

There is a reaction against anglophone style professions that goes by the name of 'deprofessionalisation' – removing barriers to knowledge, 'democratising' knowledge, allowing practitioners outside the profession to deliver services, etc. Many argue that deprofessionalisation is a good thing in that, well, it does all these things. Others argue it isn't such a good thing precisely because it does do these things, and weakens rather than strengths levels of effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

Sometimes deprofessionalisation happens as a response to market and social changes, and professions lose their autonomy and status because people start to use alternative practitioners (Kritzer 2015). Other times there is an active movement to remove or downgrade a profession's status and autonomy, and there is a body of opinion in some anglophone countries that fundraising ought to deprofessionalise. These arguments for deprofessionalisation in fundraising take three forms.

The first follows one of the standard arguments in favour of deprofessionalisation of any profession – that professionalised fundraising (in anglophone countries) should not be preserve of 'élite' professionals who

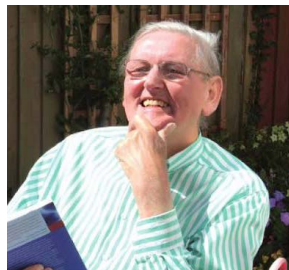
¹³ For an overview of different types of codes, and their similarities and differences, see pp10-11 of our review of global fundraising self-regulation (MacQuillin, Sargeant and Day 2019).

¹⁴ The slight irony here is that while the UK has one of the lowest global scores for uncertainty avoidance (and the lowest in the anglosphere), it has the most detailed and prescriptive code of fundraising practice, and so the UK code could well serves as basis for self-regulation in other countries. This is notwithstanding that the Fundraising Regulator moved to a 'principles-based' approach in 2025, which is consistent with a low uncertainty avoidance culture.

The new professionalism

"To be 'professional' is to have acquired a set of skills through competency-based training which enables one to deliver efficiently, according to contract, a consumer-led service in compliance with accountability procedures collaboratively implemented and managerially assured."

Bristol University's Eric Hoyle's idea of the 'new professionalism' locates the qualities of being 'professional' in how good a practitioner is, rather than the attributes of being part of a professional structure.



have secured appropriate qualifications/credentials (requirement to learn a codified body of knowledge attracts particular criticism) and who are members of a formal structure; and that fundraising's knowledge should be 'democratised' to a wider body of practitioners.

A second argument posits that 'professionalism' results in 'slick' marketing techniques that undermine public trust and are generally more suited to commercial marketing 'science' than the 'art' of fundraising (MacQuillin 2020, pp29-30/p60, and s8).¹⁵ This is more an argument in for a kind of well-meaning amateurism, also known as 'Corinthianism' (MacQuillin 2022a).

The final type of argument for deprofessionalisation is that professionalism in fundraising is intimately related to the dominant capitalist/anglophone/Eurocentric societal ideology, and is thus toxic to fundraisers who cannot - or will not - meet the standards of behaviour this ideology requires (see, for example, Phipps 2021). As we have described above, this is not the concept of 'professionalism' or 'professionalisation' we mean in this project, and one of our key objectives is how to professionalise in a non-anglophone way.

A term that has gained currency over the past couple of decades is 'new professionalism' - a shift away from a focus on the status of the profession as a thing-in-

itself, toward how skilfully and competently individual professionals deliver services (Hoyle 2001 - see box this page for a definition). This means we can decouple the terms 'professionalism' and 'professionalisation' from the term 'profession': rather than referring to the attributes and behaviours of being part of a profession, 'professionalisation' and 'professionalism' both relate to becoming more effective, efficient, and accountable as an organised group and a collective endeavour, howsoever they are structured and organised. And therefore both professionalism and professionalisation will have different meanings and contexts, and take different directions, in different cultures.

So, when we talk about the need to professionalise fundraising, we categorically do not mean to become more like a traditional anglophone profession (although this might be the route some choose to take), but to improve the collective effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of organised fundraising in a country vis-à-vis the local culture of philanthropy.

As noted in s51a, there is little consensus about how to define a profession, or how to demarcate professions from other types of occupations, such as trades. Some scholars believe it is now a waste of time even trying to do so; what is important is to consider which occupational activities share similar types of forms and common characteristics (Evetts 2013, p780).

However, we maintain at Rogare that individual professionals need to be supported in doing this by some kind of infrastructure and organisation that enables and facilitates them to act to the highest level of professionalism. This may or may not be an anglophone-style 'profession'. But however it is done, we believe it should embody the principles of 'new professionalism'. ●

¹⁵ This report (MacQuillin 2020) looks at how fundraisers acquire their knowledge and gain competence. Section 8 of this report describes the art vs science debate, drawing heavily from Beth Breeze's ideas in her 2017 book *The New Fundraisers*.

6

Mapping professionalisation routes in different cultures

Our premise for starting this project and writing this position paper is that:

- Global fundraising is arguably dominated by ideas about practice, infrastructure, ethics and regulation that originate in anglophone professions
- These ideas might not always be appropriate to fundraising in local cultures of philanthropy, which will have been informed by differences in national/local/regional culture
- Anglophone ideas might therefore be crowding out local ideas and practices that would work better within the local cultures of philanthropy
- Further, the way that fundraising is organised through its professional infrastructure (such as codes of practice) may not, if imported from the anglosphere, best suit the needs of fundraising in the local societal culture.

We are also starting from the premise that wherever organised fundraising takes place, it should be 'professional' by being as effective, efficient and accountable as possible, and for individual fundraisers to achieve these levels of competence, they need to be supported by a professional infrastructure, which may or may not need to be modelled on anglophone ideas of professionhood and professionalism.

If fundraising is not carried out as effectively, efficiently and accountably as it can and/or should be, then steps need to be taken so that it is. This is what we mean by professionalisation.

One of the reasons why local fundraising is not done as effectively, efficiently and accountably as possible could (only could) be because of a preponderance of anglophone ideas that are not best suited to the local societal culture and local culture of philanthropy.

With this project, we aim to provide fundraisers around the world with a roadmap to professionalisation, assuming that they feel they need to. These are the steps we suggest local teams could follow.

1. Read this position paper to familiarise themselves with the concept of different cultural values and the objectives of this project.
2. Locate where your country falls on Hofstede's 6D model and/or the Globe project's cultural clusters (see p28). To assist with this, we will produce short summaries of these clusters' cultural characteristics that ensure the Globe Project's dimensions align with Hofstede's.
3. Identify and describe the local culture of philanthropy. To do this teams will need to research any relevant literature. We have provided a guide to some sources on pp30-31. And we recommend including any insights from research that has examined charitable behaviour through the lenses of cultural differences. As we said in s4, we will produce a topline summary of relevant research to guide project teams.
4. Using their understanding of points 1, 2 and 3, compare the anglophone best practices and standards that are in use and/or promoted locally, as well as those suggested by Rogare (see s6.1) against local cultural values and the local culture of philanthropy to determine which are appropriate and work within those cultures, and which are more problematic, and why - see s6.1.
5. Consider the most appropriate forms of professionalisation that would facilitate organised fundraising become as effective, efficient and accountable as possible within the local culture of philanthropy - see s6.2. ●

6.1 Comparing anglo fundraising practices and ideas to local cultures

As most fundraising practice, standards, regulation and ethics is developed in the anglosphere, we need a way to systematically compare elements of these practices and standards to different cultures to assess if they are appropriate.

This is how we propose to do this. We have selected several practices and ideas that are found in anglophone practices. While this is a work in progress and we will almost certainly refine this list, you can find some examples below. We will then ask national project teams to consider these anglophone ideas – alongside those anglophone ideas/practice that have already been borrowed/co-opted locally – in the context of their own codes of practice.

Teams will then assess whether these anglophone ideas/practices are appropriate to the local culture, whether they are contested ideas, or whether they might not be appropriate to the local culture, and if so, what ideas would sit better in their place; and identify and describe any local practices that are not analogues of anglophone ideas, particularly those that might have been obscured by anglophone practice.

‘Contested’ means that an idea is not universally accepted and might be challenged in some quarters or by some bodies of opinion. For example, the idea that fundraising should bring meaning to donors’ philanthropy is a contested concept in anglophone fundraising.

For other cultures – particularly in collectivist countries – the idea of the role of fundraising brining meaning to donors’ philanthropy could be a categorical ‘No’.

Going through this exercise is not just a tick box exercise to assess whether anglophone standards are used or applied. For example, if a country has signed up to the International Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising, then the point of this is not to say yes to those standards they have signed up to, but to critically reflect on whether those standards are genuinely appropriate.

The ultimate objective of this exercise will be to shine a light on anglophone practices that might be unsuited to the local culture of philanthropy, and bring to the fore local practices that might be better suited. ❶

Anglophone idea	Type	Source
Do not bring profession into disrepute	Code of standards	AFP Code of standards 1
<i>Do not engage in activities that harm other organisations or clients</i>	<i>Code of standards</i>	<i>AFP Code of standards 1</i>
Disclose conflicts of interests	Code of standards	AFP Code of standards 2
<i>Ensure donations used according to donors’ wishes</i>	<i>Code of standards</i>	<i>AFP Code of standards 14</i>
Do not accept commission- based payment	Code of standards	AFP Code of standards 21
<i>Bring meaning to donors’ philanthropy</i>	<i>Ethics</i>	<i>Rogare work on ethics</i>
Always put the donor first in what to ask for, when to ask or how to ask	Ethics	Rogare work on ethics
<i>Comply with all federal and civil laws</i>	<i>Code of standards</i>	<i>AFP Code of standards 5</i>
Always thank donors	Best practice	Burk (2003)/ Burnett (2024) etc.
<i>Unreasonable intrusion into privacy not permitted (implies reasonable intrusion is permissible)</i>	<i>Code of standards</i>	<i>F-Reg Code of Practice s1.1.2</i>
Unreasonable persistence in asking not permitted (implies reasonable persistence is permissible)	Code of standards	Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice s1.1.2
<i>Pressure that is ‘undue’ not permitted (implies pressure that is not ‘undue’ is permissible)</i>	<i>Code of standards</i>	<i>Fundraising Regulator Code of Practice s1.1.1</i>
Disclose to donors that fundraiser is paid, etc.	Code of standards	Fundraising Regulator Code s6.4

6.2 Professionalising fundraising within local cultures of philanthropy

Professionalising fundraising is no small task – in fact it is an absolutely massive one – and it is not this project’s objectives to set in motion, let alone complete, any attempts to professionalise fundraising in any country. Instead we wish to begin a process whereby local organised fundraising can consider how, if at all, they can become more effective, efficient and accountable, by asking a series of questions, the answers to which will help project teams identify a route to professionalisation.

How should fundraising be organised/interests of fundraising/ers be represented?

- Does fundraising need to be represented by single body, such as an institute or membership association?
- What roles should such a body perform?
- Should it have some form of control over how fundraising is carried out, regulated and held accountable?
- Should it be responsible for setting best practice and ethical standards? If not, who does this?
- How should such a body be accountable to fundraisers?

How should fundraising be accountable to its stakeholders?

- Who are the main stakeholders to the fundraising profession? Which of the stakeholders has the most power and which is the most legitimate? What, if any, conflicts of interest does this cause? (See s6.3.)
- What types of regulation are appropriate to/found in the local culture? What role does the state play in regulating industry sectors? What type of self-regulation is practised?
- What is the appropriate way for fundraisers to be held accountable to their stakeholders?
- Are codes of practice, conduct or ethics appropriate? If not, why not? How detailed and descriptive should codes be?
- What are appropriate ethics for the local fundraising profession and local culture of philanthropy? How much freedom/leeway should fundraisers be permitted in interpreting their best practice and ethics? See s6.4.
- Who sets and controls fundraising’s best practice standards?

A fundraising career

- Is fundraising a respected career choice that confers status on people? Does it need to have such status? What would raise the status of fundraising so that more people wanted to become fundraisers?
- How do people become fundraisers? Are there defined entry routes that lead to a career in fundraising that people can intentionally follow? Or do people become fundraisers by more ad hoc and informal routes, such as through nepotism, having contacts or the right background, or ‘by accident’ (‘by accident’ is how most people become fundraisers in the anglosphere).
- What amount and level of knowledge do people require to practise fundraising in the local culture? What is the most appropriate way for fundraisers to acquire the knowledge they need? ❷

6.3 Who are fundraising's stakeholders?

All fundraising professions everywhere in the world will have a range of stakeholders. According to stakeholder theory, a stakeholder to an organisation is:

"Any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation's objectives."

Stakeholders possess various degrees of both legitimacy and power.

- **Power** means having the power to affect the organisation.
- **Legitimacy** means it is accepted that the stakeholder has a valid interest in how the organisation acts toward them, and has a moral standing based on claims of fairness and reciprocity.

There is one very obvious stakeholder to the fundraising profession – donors. It is the interests of donors in anglophone practice (such as through donorcentred fundraising), anglophone ethics (see MacQuillin 2022), and anglophone regulation (see MacQuillin, Sargeant and Day 2020) that have generally taken priority and precedence.

Beneficiaries are also stakeholders to fundraising, stakeholders who have often been overlooked in anglophone ethics and regulation (MacQuillin 2022).

Donors and beneficiaries are both legitimate stakeholders to fundraising. It is arguable that beneficiaries have greater moral legitimacy. However, when it comes to power, donors are undoubtedly the more powerful of the two.

Stakeholder theory argues that as the interests of different stakeholders often conflict, these interests need to be balanced. Rights-Balancing Fundraising Ethics is designed to resolve ethical dilemmas in fundraising in which the rights of donors and beneficiaries require careful balancing (see p27).

There are other stakeholders to fundraising, including the non-donating public, media, regulators and legislators, charity staff, volunteers and trustees, professional bodies and institutes/representative umbrella organisations, media. Some of these will be 'derivative' stakeholders who have an indirect claim based on a relationship to a legitimate stakeholder. For example, a regulatory body is an indirect stakeholder because its claims are based on ensuring fairness for a legitimate stakeholder – donors (though rarely – in fact, never – beneficiaries).

We recommend that project teams identify who the stakeholders to fundraising are in their countries/cultures, who of these have the greatest power and legitimacy, and how their interests should be factored into the professionalisation of fundraising.

American academic and former fundraiser Ruth Hansen (2022) has grounded fundraising ethics in stakeholder theory, and we recommend this paper to project teams considering this matter. ❶

- *The source for information on stakeholder theory is a summary in Shaw (2012). Rogare has original sources on stakeholder theory in our library for use by project teams, should they need to refer to them.*

American academic and former fundraiser (and member of the Rogare Critical Fundraising Network) Ruth Hansen has grounded fundraising ethics in stakeholder theory, and we recommend her paper to project teams considering this matter.



6.4 Rights-Balancing Fundraising Ethics – designed for cross-cultural ethical dilemmas

Rights-Balancing Fundraising Ethics (RBFE) is the lens of normative fundraising ethics developed at Rogare. Whereas most other formulations of professional fundraising ethics consider the right actions to be those that meet donors needs or maintain and protect public trust in fundraising, RBFE posits that fundraising ethics is a matter of balancing duties to both donors and beneficiaries (and sometimes other stakeholders).

RBFE was originally presented in a Rogare white paper published in 2016, before being outlined in detail in a paper in the *Journal of Business Ethics* in 2019. Full details about RBFE – along with many other lenses of fundraising ethics – can be found in MacQuillin (2022b, s3.4), which we recommend to project teams if ethics is to a major part of their deliberations.

Rights-Balancing Fundraising Ethics states:

Fundraising is ethical when it balances the duty of fundraisers to ask for support (on behalf of their beneficiaries), with the relevant rights of donors, such that a mutually beneficial outcome is achieved and neither stakeholder is significantly harmed.

This lens of ethics is designed to be relative to the context in which it is used. This means something that might be considered unethical in one fundraising cultural context – such as paying by commission, or when the degree of pressure used during a solicitation becomes 'undue' – might be considered ethical in a different fundraising culture. This will be because fundraisers' duties to their stakeholders will be different in different cultures, or they will be the same duties, but accorded different weights, and where the appropriate balance lies will vary between cultures.

This further means that, because what is ethical in fundraising is contingent on cultural context, there can be no single, universal standard of fundraising ethics that is applicable to fundraising everywhere. ❷

Globe Project cultural clusters

NB – please note that these are cultural – NOT geographic – clusters

Anglo: Australia, Canada, England (yes, England, rather than UK), Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa (white), USA.

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/anglo%3Fmenu=list.html>

Confucian Asia: China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan.

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/confucian-asia%3Fmenu=list.html>

Eastern Europe: Albania, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia, Slovenia.

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/eastern-europe%3Fmenu=list.html>

Germanic Europe: Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland (German).

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/germanic-europe%3Fmenu=list.html>

Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela.

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/latin-america%3Fmenu=list.html>

Latin Europe: France, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland (French).

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/latin-europe%3Fmenu=list.html>

Middle East (Arab): Egypt, Morocco, Kuwait, Qatar, Türkiye.

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/middle-east%3Fmenu=list.html>

Nordic Europe: Denmark, Finland, Sweden.

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/nordic-europe%3Fmenu=list.html>

Southern Asia: India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand.

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/southern-asia%3Fmenu=list.html>

Sub-Saharan Africa: Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa (Black), Zambia, Zimbabwe.

- <https://globeproject.com/results/clusters/sub-saharan-africa%3Fmenu=list.html>

If a country is missing, this is not an oversight, it is because it has not been included in the Globe clusters. From a fundraising perspective, Belgium, Czechia, Slovakia and Norway are notable absentees.

The clusters we have identified from a fundraising perspective are:

- Africa (sub-Saharan)
- Anglo
- China
- East/central Europe
- First Nation (Canada)
- Japan
- Latin America
- Māori
- Middle East
- Native American
- SE Asia
- Western Europe

These differ from the Globe Project's clusters for the following reasons:

Japan and China – even though both are part of the Globe Project's Confucian Asia cluster, we have listed them separately because they both have fundraising associations and so it will be easier to do this through those associations rather than asking them to collaborate.

Māori, Native American and First Nation – these are indigenous cultures that sit within an overarching anglophone culture, and so the prevailing fundraising standards and practices used in their host countries might not be appropriate to their cultures of philanthropy. Also, we already have 'ins' to representatives of these cultures so it might be possible to get work off the ground here.

Western Europe – our cluster encompasses Globe's Germanic, Latin and Nordic European clusters. We have made an assumption that there will be more similarities between the fundraising professions of these countries than differences. However, it could well be that philanthropic cultures in Latin, Germanic and Nordic countries differ significantly enough that we will need to divide this cluster.

- You can find a list of national fundraising association in the Appendix on p32.

Summary, conclusions, and next steps

Fundraising around the world is dominated by ideas and practices that have originated in English-speaking countries (the anglosphere), principally USA and UK. We are not making any value judgement about this. We're not saying this is a bad thing, nor are we saying it's a good thing (though there are certainly plenty of brilliant ideas that have emanated from the anglosphere).

However, it is plausible, and possible, that some of these have crowded out local ideas and practices that are much better suited to the local culture of philanthropy, while some just might not be suited to the local culture of philanthropy at all, and their adoption there is not appropriate (or both).

This Rogare project – of which this working paper is the first step – aims to provide a replicable template to critically reflect on and challenge (where appropriate) predominant anglophone ideas.

We've based this in Hofstede's 6-Dimensions model of global cultures, and set out a series of prompt questions to guide people on how to explore the need to professionalise locally, by comparing any ideas imported, borrowed or adopted from anglophone fundraising to the local culture.

Notwithstanding that 'professionalism' and 'professionalisation' are contested concepts (which, to a large degree, depends on which interpretation of these terms one chooses to contest), we are unashamedly calling for all professions everywhere to adopt processes that will allow them to professionalise, by which we mean move towards increased sectoral, organisational and individual effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

We now aim to facilitate working groups in some of the global fundraising clusters we identified on p28. We have already been speaking to fundraisers in some of these countries and cultures about participating in this work. If you would like to work with us in your own country/region/culture, please email us at cultures@rogare.net.¹⁶

We are genuinely excited to see what new ideas and approaches these exercises might reveal – not to you of course, because you knew about them all along, but to the rest of us who have English as our first language. 🗨️

¹⁶ Of course, you could just do it yourself – you don't need Rogare. However, we do have a network and resources you could tap into.

What sources are available?

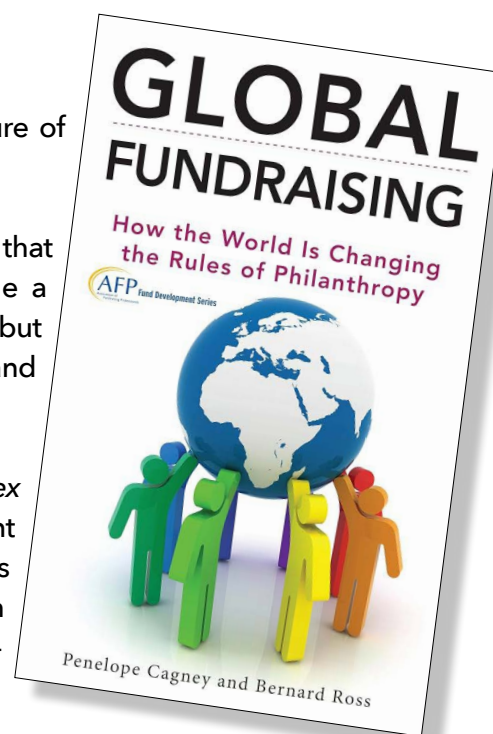
We'll be asking our local working groups to describe their local culture of philanthropy and to assess this against Hofstede's 6-D Model.

So those groups will need to draw on literature and source material that will help them do this. This short section doesn't attempt to provide a comprehensive review of everything that could help them do this, but instead give a sense of the sorts of papers, reports, blogs, books and podcasts that might be helpful.

The aforementioned Charities Aid Foundation's annual *World Giving Index* provides statistical information about the generosity levels of different countries (see s3). But it doesn't explore possible reasons for differences in national levels of generosity beyond a few topline explanations – such as considering new tax incentives or the effect of a disaster/emergency – much less attempt to attribute these to cultural differences.

A source that could provide project teams with oven-ready information is Penelope Cagney's and Bernard Ross's 2013 book *Global Fundraising*. Incidentally, the geographic regions used in this book closely align with the Globe Project's cultural clusters.

Below and on p31 is a selection of the literature that could help guide working groups in describing their local cultures of philanthropy. This is by no means exhaustive, and we have assembled many more published outputs in the project library that our working groups will have access to.

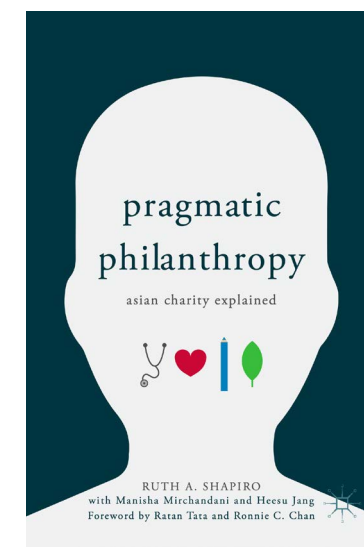


Africa

AgentsC's *The Duality of Giving*, from 2023, is one of the most in-depth and accessible explorations of philanthropy in Africa. It considers African philanthropy's roots in British and American models of giving as the foundation for examining philanthropy from an African cultural perspective, rooted in the philosophy and practice of Ubuntu. The report finds that African donors "operate a careful balance of Ubuntu that involves caring for their local community through informal donations to friends, family, religious organizations, and other groups, while also making formalized philanthropic donations to NGOs." <https://www.agentsc.ca/the-duality-of-giving>.

Europe

- In 2022, the *Philanthropisms* podcast explored East European perspectives on philanthropy. <https://www.philanthropisms.com/1862997/episodes/10121167>

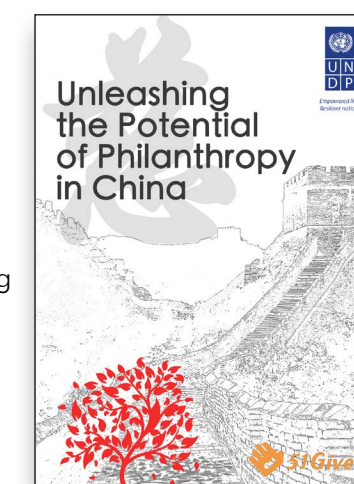
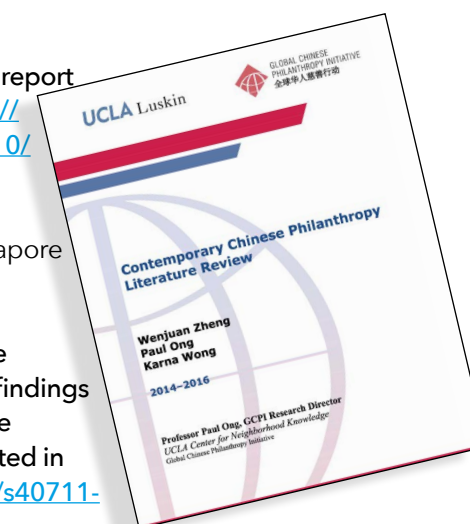


Asia

- Commonalities and differences in philanthropy throughout Asia are explored in depth in the 2018 book *Pragmatic Philanthropy – Asian Charity Explained*, by Ruth Shapiro, co-founder of the Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society. The book contains a chapter on the histories of giving in 11 Asian countries. The scope of this book encompasses the Globe Project's Confucian Asia and Southern Asia cultural clusters. The book is open access – <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-981-10-7119-5.pdf>
- A short report from the Labaun International Business and Finance Centre, Malaysia and Singapore Management University provides an accessible and informative insight into religious and cultural drivers of giving in Asia – <https://ccla.smu.edu.sg/sites/cebcla.smu.edu.sg/files/Cebcla/Philanthropic%20Structuring%20>

China and the sinosphere

- A detailed overview of global Chinese philanthropy can be found in a report from UCLA's Center for Neighbourhood Knowledge in the USA. <https://cpb-us-e2.wpmucdn.com/faculty.sites.uci.edu/dist/5/694/files/2017/10/Contemporary-Chinese-Philanthropy-Literature-Review.pdf>
- There are several insights into philanthropy in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan in Ruth Shapiro's *Pragmatic Philanthropy* (see under Asia).
- A paper in the *Journal of Chinese Society* outlines a "theory of Chinese charitable donation" based on the foundation of the family unit: "The findings reflect the 'family-oriented' culture of Chinese society and highlight the necessity and urgency of developing a charitable donation theory rooted in Chinese experiences." <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s40711-020-00139-2.pdf>
- The role of the family is also highlighted in a report from the Chinese Philanthropy Initiative (at UCLA in the USA), which also outlines the role of religion in shaping benevolent practices, and provides many other insights. <https://cpb-us-e2.wpmucdn.com/faculty.sites.uci.edu/dist/5/694/files/2017/10/Contemporary-Chinese-Philanthropy-Literature-Review.pdf>
- Chinese Philanthropy is described as 'voluntary collectivisation' in a paper about the new cadre of elite Chinese philanthropists, published in *Public Anthropologist*. https://brill.com/view/journals/puan/4/2/article-p184_003.pdf
- The UN report cited previously in this paper (on p15) – *Unleashing the potential of philanthropy in China* – also provides many insights, including pointing to the dominance of corporate philanthropy over individual giving, but also noting the increasing use of crowdfunding platforms. <https://www.undp.org/china/publications/unleashing-potential-philanthropy-china>



Appendix – National fundraising organisations

Africa

- Kenya – Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals
- South Africa – South African Fundraising Institute
- Namibia – none
- Uganda – none
- Zambia – none
- Zimbabwe – none

Anglo

- Australia – Fundraising Institute of Australia
- Canada – Association of Fundraising Professionals (USA)
- Ireland – Charities Institute Ireland
- New Zealand – Fundraising Institute of Australia
- United Kingdom – Chartered Institute of Fundraising
- United States of America – Association of Fundraising Professionals

Asia (Confucian)

- China – China Association of Fundraising Professionals
- Hong Kong – Hong Kong Fundraising Professionals
- Japan – Japan Fundraising Association
- Singapore – none
- South Korea – none

Asia (south east)

- India – none

Europe (east/central)

- Bulgaria – The Fundraising Club Bulgaria
- Croatia – Zaklada Žuta Točka (Yellow Dot Foundation)
- Czech Republic – České centrum fundraisingu
- Estonia – Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations
- Hungary – none
- Greece – none
- Latvia – none

- Lithuania – Baltic Fundraising Hub
- Poland – Polskie Stowarzyszenie Fundraisingu
- Romania – none
- Slovakia – Slovak Fundraising Centre
- Slovenia – Združenje za promocijo prostovoljstva (Association for the Promotion of Volunteering)
- Ukraine – National Network of Local Philanthropy Development

Europe (western)

- Austria – Fundraising Verband Austria
- Belgium – Fundraisers Belgium/Fundraisers Forum
- Denmark – ISOBRO
- Finland – Vastuullinen Lahjoittaminen (Association for Responsible Donations)
- France – Association Française de Fundraisers
- Germany – Deutsche Fundraising Verband
- Italy – Associazione Italiana Fundraiser
- Netherlands – Goede Doelen Nederland
- Norway – Fundraising Norge
- Portugal – none
- Spain – Asociación Española de Fundraising
- Sweden – Giva Sverige
- Switzerland – Swissfundraising

Latin America

- Argentina – Asociación de Ejecutivos en Desarrollo de Recursos para Organizaciones Sociale
- Brazil – Brazilian Association of Fundraisers (ABCR)
- Chile – Asociación Chilena de Fundraising
- Columbia – none
- Mexico – Association of Fundraising Professionals (USA)

Middle East

- Türkiye – none

This is a work in progress. We will add more organisations as we encounter them.

Glossary

Anglophone

Related to speaking English – e.g. ideas developed in written about in the English language.

Anglosphere

A group of English-speaking countries sharing common cultural, historical, and legal roots, primarily consisting of the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and sometimes Ireland.

Collectivism

Cultural attitudes that value and prioritise group cohesion, social harmony, and collective goals.

Culture

“The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.” (Hofstede 2011)

Individualism

Cultural attitudes that value and prioritise autonomy, personal goals, and independent thought.

Moral ideal of fundraising

“Fundraising ensures that charities and other voluntary and nonprofit organisations have sufficient income to carry out their core charitable purpose to improve the lives of their beneficiaries.” (MacQuillin 2017)

New professionalism

See Professionalism (new).

Power distance

Different factors relating to how societies solve the basic problem of human inequality, and the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.

Profession

A profession is a number of individuals in the same occupation voluntarily organised to earn a living by openly serving a moral ideal in a morally permissible way, beyond what law, market, morality and public opinion would otherwise require. (Davis 2010)

Professional (noun)

A member of a profession.

Professional (adjective)

Formally – work that meets the profession’s special standards.
Colloquially and informally – a job well done.

Professionally (adverb – to act professionally)

Adhering to the profession’s special standards.

Professionalisation

For a profession to move from a lesser to a greater degree of effective, efficient and accountable operation.

Professionalism

The way professionals meet their profession’s special standards.

Professionalism (new)

“To be ‘professional’ is to have acquired a set of skills through competency-based training which enables one to deliver efficiently, according to contract, a consumer-led service in compliance with accountability procedures collaboratively implemented and managerially assured.” (Hoyle 2001)

Rights-Balancing Fundraising Ethics

The lens of normative fundraising ethics under which ethical practice is that which appropriately balances fundraisers’ duties to donors with their duties to beneficiaries, so that a mutually-beneficially outcome is obtained and neither stakeholder is significantly harmed.

Uncertainty avoidance

Society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity and the degree of stress felt in a society when confronted by an uncertain future. 🌐

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Get in touch

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Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank CIC is a community interest company registered in the UK, registration number 11807930.

Rogare brand identity created by Rebecca Woodall of Bluefrog Fundraising.

All Rogare's reports, research and other outputs are available free of charge to the fundraising profession. We think it is important that people should be able to access all the ideas coming out of Rogare, and we are able to give you this access through the ongoing generous support of our Associate Members. Details of all our projects can be found on the Rogare website - www.rogare.net

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<https://www.askdirect.ie>



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Fundraising consultancy (UK)
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