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# Crowdfunding and Non-Profit Charities: Crafting Legitimate Profiles

Ashley Krysik  
*Marquette University*

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CROWDFUNDING AND NON-PROFIT CHARTIES: CRAFTING LEGITIMATE  
PROFILES

by

Ashley Krysik, B.A.

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,  
Marquette University,  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Communications

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ABSTRACT  
CROWDFUNDING AND NON-PROFIT CHARITIES: CRAFTING LEGITIMATE  
PROFILES

Ashley Krysik, B.A.

Marquette University, 2018

Crowdfunding has revolutionized non-profit charity fundraising strategies. The development of web-based, crowdfunding platforms has increased direct communication and transparency between non-profit charities and potential donors. The non-profit fundraising marketplace is highly competitive; therefore, organizations must demonstrate their legitimacy in order to raise and maximize fundraising dollars. In order to determine how organizations build legitimacy on crowdfunding platforms, a rhetorical analysis was conducted on 18 donor request profiles from Globalgiving.com, the largest web-based crowdfunding platform for non-profit charities. Non-profit charities soliciting donors through crowdfunding platforms focus their rhetorical strategy on building three legitimacy claims: cause, organization and platform.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The global community faces a number of major, complex challenges with war, natural disasters, poverty, disease and climate change, to name only a few. In recent years, the Internet has been leveraged to alleviate these issues and create social good with crowdfunding technology. Crowdfunding is the web-based practice of soliciting money from Internet users across the globe to support or invest in a project (Ordanini, Miceli, Pizzetti, & Parasuraman, 2011).

Crowdfunding technology has exploded recently, with the market growing 167% in 2014 (Marketwired, 2015). In 2015 alone, global crowdfunding platforms raised \$34 billion, with \$25 billion in peer-to-peer funding, \$5.5 billion in reward and donation funding and \$2.5 billion in equity funding (Massolution, 2015). More than three and a half billion people around the world have Internet access and the ability to utilize this online technology (Kemp, 2017). As the number of Internet users continues to grow, expecting to reach four billion by 2020, crowdfunding technology will become a critical tool used to raise money for business investment and aid projects (Garrity, 2016).

As crowdfunding gained popularity as a fundraising tool, there was a proliferation of crowdfunding platforms designed to serve a variety of purposes and missions. Crowdfunding websites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo are popular and well known for supporting entrepreneurs and assisting start-up businesses acquire capital. However, crowdfunding technology is also used to facilitate large amounts of international aid money to impoverished areas worldwide, through websites like GlobalGiving and Kiva International.

Crowdfunding technology is revolutionizing the international aid system and is recognized as a tool resulting in the “democratization of philanthropy” (Sharma, 2014). International aid programs have typically been managed by sovereign country governments or large non-governmental organizations like the International Red Cross or Oxfam, but the model has rapidly changed with the advent of the Internet. The introduction of crowdfunding technology is driving the international aid system towards an individual-centric model, by eliminating intermediary parties and connecting donors directly with aid projects. This model allows individuals complete control over how their money is spent because they can choose specifically which country, cause and demographic to support. While countries will continue to play a major role in funding, organizing and executing international aid projects, individual citizens all over the world now have the ability to play a more direct role.

Charities choose to utilize crowdfunding as a fundraising tool because it empowers them and their community beneficiaries to become more financially and strategically independent (Desai & Kharas, 2010). When charities are funded by taxpayers, charities are more restricted through government laws and policies. However, private funding allows them more control over their operations and strategic visions. Crowdfunding technology connects charities directly to donors, instead of forcing them to find larger, well-funded non-profits or government agencies to support them, which can be a complicated and timely process that may compromise the charity’s and project’s goals. Furthermore, it allows charities to quickly and easily obtain funding for development projects in rural, impoverished communities that are unable to secure capital

from traditional financial lending institutions without implementing bureaucratic, government programs.

The proliferation of platforms connecting individual donors with global development and aid projects has dramatically expanded the number of giving opportunities (Desai & Kharas, 2010). Individuals can now choose from millions of specific online projects instead of the few, broad-based international aid organizations that exist. Crowdfunding vastly increases individual agency in the international aid model by unleashing opportunities to donate in a more targeted, intentional way. Individuals can browse donor requests online from individuals and groups all over the world who are looking to obtain capital and resources to solve local problems. Requests are made for very diverse purposes, from building schools and wells to opening stores and farming cooperatives.

However, with the enormous number of crowdfunding platforms and donor request profiles, charities constantly have to compete against each other for funding. A major strategy that charities utilize to maximize funding levels is to write donor requests that demonstrate their legitimacy, attempting to convince the reader that they are an organization worthy of their donation and capable of executing the charity's mission. In order to secure the most donations, they use persuasive rhetorical appeals to demonstrate they are a legitimate organization supporting a legitimate cause. The ability to craft masterful, persuasive arguments through text, photos and videos is critical to their success in securing donations.

The purpose of this research project is to analyze the rhetorical elements present in donor request narratives used to build legitimacy and generate donations. Rhetoric is a

valuable tool that organizations employ to establish legitimacy, therefore it is the ideal subject for this research. A rhetorical analysis will provide insight into the specific ways that persuasive appeals are created on crowdfunding platforms and identify trends used by charities to build legitimacy.

Crowdfunding platforms have been studied by scholars interested in entrepreneurship or for-profit businesses, but studies have not adequately analyzed charities' use of the platform. This study will provide an understanding of how charities are leveraging new communication technologies to better facilitate online donations. It will begin with a literature review on charitable fundraising rhetoric, crowdfunding and non-profit organizational legitimacy. After the relevant research has been presented, a discussion of the study's rhetorical analysis methodology is included to establish the study's parameters and review the research process. Subsequently, a discussion of the study's results will be presented and final conclusions will be drawn.



## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to fully analyze and understand legitimacy efforts in non-profit crowdfunding initiatives, a review on prior relevant research must be completed. There are three research areas that are most important to review: charitable fundraising rhetoric, crowdfunding and non-profit organizational legitimacy.

The purpose of this research study is to analyze charity's fundraising rhetoric; therefore, it is important to review past research on this topic and understand areas of focus and popular conclusions. The act of fundraising will be defined and common, successful rhetorical appeals and strategies used in primarily non-online fundraising campaigns will be highlighted. Understanding how charitable fundraising rhetoric has been studied in the past and conclusions about common themes allow for important comparisons regarding whether those non-online strategies are utilized in online crowdfunding campaigns. Since online crowdfunding is a new fundraising channel for charities, it is necessary for the audience to review existing research for background on what crowdfunding is, how it is used and components of successful campaigns. This study focuses on how charities build legitimacy on crowdfunding platforms, creating the need to understand the definition of non-profit organizational legitimacy and classic legitimization strategies. After reviewing these three research areas, the reader will have an adequate background knowledge to understand the study's purpose and interpret its conclusions.

## Charitable Fundraising Rhetoric

Fundraising is the practice of convincing people to donate money for a worthy cause (Goering, Connor, Nagelhout & Steinberg, 2011). Fundraising rhetoric is promotional in nature and can be used to advance a general cause, specific campaign, organizational image or particular objective (Bhatia, 1998). Fundraising discourse is distinctive from other types of discourse in two main ways. First, the rhetoric is rooted in voluntary, community participation; therefore, the cause or campaign is only successful if the community bands together and donates. Second, fundraising discourse exists in a frame of social consciousness where donating is considered a moral action and those who do so fulfill their social responsibility to assist disadvantaged society members.

The most common strategy charities employ to facilitate donations that has been studied is direct-mail letters. Direct-mail letters are a popular tool because it has traditionally allowed charities to reach large numbers of the public (Goering, Connor, Nagelhout & Steinberg, 2011). In the U.S, 7% of total mail consists of charity fundraising letters (Myers, 2007). Direct-mail letters are the most effective tool for recruiting new donors and most first-time donations are made through the mail (Goering, Connor, Nagelhout & Steinberg, 2011).

Fundraising letters typically follow a four-move discourse structure to persuade their audience (Bhatia, 1998). First, the organization establishes its credentials, using a variety of strategies, such as mission statements, endorsements and images of staff. Second, the cause is described and its value is discussed. This move also highlights the donor's value in supporting the cause and emphasizes the organization's track record of

success. Third, the letter solicits donor support through direct appeals, extended appeals or incentives. Direct appeals explicitly ask for donor support, such as “Please join the cause and donate.” Extended appeals refer to the donor’s relationship with the rest of the community as a reason for them to donate. The last appeal is incentives, where the donor is offered a gift or the promise of their donation being tax deductible. The fourth move in the discourse structure is expressing gratitude. The donor is thanked for their past support or in advance of their future support.

The most important rhetorical appeal used in charitable fundraising discourse is ethos. The donor must trust the organization to which they are donating, because they want their money to be used responsibly and effectively (Handy, 2000). Writers can craft a credible fundraising request by discussing the organization’s spending patterns, history, prominence in the industry or highlighting endorsements. Appeals to pathos are also widely used because they help evoke donors’ emotions, with the hope the donor will be driven by emotion to donate to a cause (Myers, 2007). Emotional appeals are most effective when they are embodied in an image, like a photograph or video, because it is easier for people to connect with an image, rather than an abstraction.

Successful direct-mail campaigns are created with two main variables in mind: factual/statistical information (logos) and narrative/experiential information (pathos) (Smith & Berger, 1996). However, a study conducted by Donald Ritzenhein highlights the importance of using a combination of logos, ethos and pathos (1998). Ritzenhein performed a content analysis on fundraising letters and found the main arguments typically employed: organization quality, importance of donor gift, organizational needs and donation requests. He found that 60% of arguments relied on pathos, while 40%

relied on logos. Emotional appeals were supported with further material 60% of the time, while 75% of logical appeals were supported with more evidence. The two most common forms of evidence were facts and statistics.

In addition, there are a few language strategies that writers should employ in developing campaign material. The language should be personal and engage the potential donor by using the word “you” (Goering, Connor, Nagelhout & Steinberg, 2011). It should also engage the reader by using familiar and colloquial language. If a letter contains technical language, sophisticated words or metaphors, the donor might be alienated and reject the donation request.

Grammar and sentence structure can also play an important role in persuading a person to donate. In a study of door-to-door fundraising solicitations, Joanne Cantor identified four ways to request a donation: polite imperative, agreement question, information question and statement (1979). A polite imperative directly asks the donor to make a contribution: “Please donate to our fund.” An agreement question uses grammar to imply a positive response to the question: “Won’t you donate to our cause?” The third form is similar, an information question directly asks for a donation: “Would you like to donate?” Finally, the statement form does not require a response: “We are asking you to donate to our cause.” While the grammatical differences between these forms are very nuanced, there is a significant impact on the level of donations each solicits. Cantor found the most effective form at acquiring donations is the polite imperative.

Charitable crowdfunding rhetoric is scarcely studied. However, a Canadian medical crowdfunding study found campaign rhetoric justifies donations for potential donors by building personal connections, describing the depth of need and impact, and a

call to give back (Snyder, Crooks, Mathers & Chow-White, 2017). Similarly, a study on for-profit crowdfunding rhetoric yielded a 12-part classification system for logos, pathos and ethos claims in Kickstarter.com start-up business campaigns. Tirdatov (2014) found that crowdfunding campaigns, unlike most rhetorical discourse situations, regularly use all three rhetorical appeals. The most successful campaigns include the following content: examples of expertise, project background information, project details, unique project factors, “practical” and “emotional” rewards for donors, testimonials, financial terms of support, and donation spending transparency. While crowdfunding rhetoric has been scarcely studied by academics, the study of crowdfunding platforms, their actors and case studies on successful campaigns has been conducted.

### Online Crowdfunding Technology

Crowdfunding is the web-based practice of acquiring money in small to medium amounts from several people who are interested in supporting or investing in a cause. The Internet has been a popular way to leverage crowdfunding strategies because of the vast number of people worldwide with Internet access (Ordanini, Miceli, Pizzetti, & Parasuraman, 2011; Wentzlaff, Gumpelmaier & Einfeld-Reschke, 2012). Crowdfunding platforms allow applicants to pitch their ideas to individuals all over the globe, acquire donations through the website’s infrastructure and communicate directly with donors. The only real cost of crowdfunding is the platform’s fee, which is usually a percentage of the funds raised (Massolution, 2015).

There are three primary actors in the crowdfunding industry: intermediaries, fundraisers and investors (Tomczak & Brem, 2013). Intermediaries are the platforms used to connect fundraisers with donors, and facilitate the financial exchange (Ordanini et al., 2011). Crowdfunding intermediaries typically possess a standardized pitch format, project funding details, payment systems, and tools to promote communication between fundraisers and investors (Agrawal, Catalini & Goldfarb, 2011). The second primary actor are fundraisers, who are individuals or groups seeking financial support and investment (Ordanini et al., 2011). Finally, the third primary actor is investors, or the “crowd” who pledge financial support.

There are four types of crowdfunding: reward, peer-to-peer, donation and equity (Freedman & Nutting, 2015). Rewards-based crowdfunding offers incentives to donors by giving them an award if they donate a certain amount. The reward could be material, such as a product, or immaterial, like the satisfaction of helping an entrepreneur. Peer-to-peer crowdfunding allows individuals to borrow from the “crowd” and pay back the principal with interest. This type occurs when the borrower is unable to acquire a loan from an established financial institution. Donation crowdfunding offers donors a social or immaterial reward for their contribution, like recognition or the internal satisfaction of solving “real world problems” (Freedman & Nutting, 2015; Leimester & Zogaj, 2013; Wiggins & Crowston, 2011). Finally, equity crowdfunding allows borrowers to sell company shares to accredited investors online (Freedman & Nutting, 2015; Mollick, 2014). This model is frequently used by entrepreneurs to gain initial funding and has been the most studied by academic researchers.

There is no conclusive equation for a campaign's success, but there are many contributing factors. One is distance: local donors are more likely to donate early in the campaign cycle (Agrawal et al., 2011). The second is the timing of a potential donor's interaction with the campaign. Investment is more likely if the campaign already received public attention and donors were impacted by other donors and their behavior.

Campaigns that illustrate their social identity and social proof that outsiders "like" it are influencers of overall success (Mitra & Gilbert, 2014). Reading other donors' names, donation amounts, and comments about the project also facilitated more donations, especially at the beginning of a campaign (Kuppuswamy & Bayus, 2013; Choy & Schlagwein, 2016; Solomon, Ma & Wash, 2015). Kuppuswamy and Bayus (2013) found that project funding often operates in a "bathtub" pattern, where there are many initial donations, then a lull, followed by a spur of donations towards the deadline. Third is monetary amount. Meer (2014) found that charitable donation amounts also played a role in the amount of donors choosing to participate in the campaign. Donors are sensitive to price and the higher the donation amount, the fewer donations given. In addition, higher amounts of competition between similar projects led to fewer donations in that project category due to perceived redundancy. Fourth is donor trust. There is a higher likelihood of donation when there is donor trust in the platform, campaign organizer and project (Li, et al., 2016). Finally, campaign profiles with multimedia photos and videos, frequent updates, and formal language with minimal spelling errors were more found to be more successful (Mollick, 2014; Mollick & Nanda, 2014). Crowdfunding campaigns that featured high-quality materials like professional photos and videos demonstrated trustworthiness and credibility about their projects.

Effectively designed web platforms also play a role in allowing potential donors to easily understand how its campaigns and platform operate and support transactions. Platforms feature ways to easily share campaigns through social media links, which increase Internet exposure and awareness of the platform (Choy & Schlagwein, 2016; Gerber & Hui, 2013). Donors like crowdfunding platforms because it allows them to learn about a cause and immediately take action that is “easy” and “convenient” because of the platform. Platform donation narratives include a mixture of text, photos and videos in order to illustrate a complex project and make it digestible and more understandable for uninformed readers (Choy & Schlagwein, 2016)

Understanding the motivations behind the creation of and donation to crowdfunding campaigns is a key point of research. For crowdfunding campaign creators, the main motivations are to: build awareness, build legitimacy, build relationships, receive validation, fundraise and replicate successful experiences (Gerber, Hui & Kuo, 2012; Gerber & Hui, 2013; Ordanini, Miceli, Pizzetti, & Parasuraman, 2011). In contrast, charitable donors seek spiritual rewards like self-satisfaction and are motivated by “sympathy and empathy towards the cause, feeling guilty for not giving, and strengthening identity and social status,” (Bons, et al., 2010; Schwienbacher & Larralde, 2010). Charitable donors also are typically driven by their social responsibility to invest in their communities and are associated with their religious beliefs and personal philosophies (Boris, 1987).

Current research also includes crowdfunding donor typologies. One typology of donor motivations include: individual-intrinsic (personal connection with the project drives donation), individual-extrinsic (donation is driven by personal rewards), social-



intrinsic (donor feels connected to a community and feels driven to donate), and social-extrinsic (social rewards like attention or recognition drive donation) (Choy & Schlagwin, 2016). In a study of Kiva International, a crowdfunding microfinance web platform, 10 donor motivations were identified: general altruism, group-specific altruism, empathy, reciprocity, belief in equality and a social safety net, social responsibility and social norms, effective development tool, personal satisfaction, religious duty, or external reasons (Liu et al., 2012). In order to appeal to these donors and attract donations, non-profits intentionally use a variety of strategies to illustrate their legitimacy as organizations who are worthy of financial gifts.

### Non-Profit Organizational Legitimacy

Mark Suchman, a well-known scholar of organizational legitimacy, defines it as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed systems of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions,” (1995, p. 574). Audiences seek to interact with legitimate organizations because they are perceived to be meaningful, predictable and trustworthy. For organizations who seek active support from their audience, such as offering financial resources, the legitimacy threshold is significantly higher.

There are six types of organizational legitimacy typically discussed in research: regulatory (legal compliance), pragmatic (extent to which an organization benefits its audience), cognitive (match between the NGO’s skills/expertise and societal needs), moral (adherence to society’s standards), input (decision-making transparency), and

output (result of their activities match objectives) (Suchman, 1995; Ossewaarde, Nijhof & Heyse, 2008; Johansson, 2012). To maximize their legitimacy for a variety of audiences, organizations need to establish a balance of several types.

Non-profit organization legitimacy stems primarily from moral legitimacy, or from an organization's ability to demonstrate that its actions adhere to socially accepted standards of positively serving communities by enhancing social goods (Aksartova, 2003). In addition, legitimacy is established when a non-profit performs its mission, and its ability to work with other organizations, manage financials and demonstrate results is tested (Gill & Wells, 2014).

Legitimacy is created and maintained through a rhetorical framework that "privileges" donors and volunteers by using language that mirrors their beliefs and values (Gill & Wells, 2014). Rhetoric designed to build legitimacy creates social capital with their intended audience and aids in the solicitation of financial support. Building legitimacy in a globalized environment is particularly complex because an organization needs to utilize different legitimization strategies for audiences of varying demographics and world views.

Non-profits build legitimacy through four main components in the crowdfunding "ecosystem": fundraiser, organization, project and crowdfunding platform (Tanaka & Volda, 2016). To establish fundraiser legitimacy, fundraisers attempt to build personal connections with donors, interact directly with donors, engage in donation reciprocity and provide project progress updates. Organizational legitimacy is built through descriptions of fund allocation, organizational structure and mission. Project legitimacy is built by distributing social proof of other donors' actions (e.g. donation amounts and number of

donors), information quality and project mission. Finally, platform legitimacy is built through name recognition, social media connections, and multiple donation mediums. These strategies boost platform visibility and donor confidence.

### Literature Gap

There has been significant research in the three most relevant research areas for this study: charitable fundraising rhetoric, crowdfunding technology and non-profit organizational legitimacy. However, there are still major research gaps that remain and require additional attention. This research study will contribute to the existing body of academic literature in a number of ways.

First, it will advance fundraising discourse research. A majority of research is centered on unsolicited, direct-mail donation requests. However, this study will look at online donor requests that are intentionally visited and highlight the increased agency of modern donors. Therefore, these findings may demonstrate a difference between the effectiveness of appeals in solicited versus unsolicited donation requests. In addition, it will highlight whether new rhetorical strategies for soliciting donations have emerged with developments in communication technology.

Second, this study will extend the slim body of research on crowdfunding literature. Crowdfunding is a relatively new technology and popularized in the past decade, thus more research needs to be conducted on the topic to understand how organizations are leveraging it rhetorically to advance their missions. Furthermore, donation-based crowdfunding behavior has been largely understudied in comparison to

peer-to-peer and should be analyzed in deeper depth because donor motivations and behavior are significantly different.

Third, research on charity-based crowdfunding platforms and non-profit organizational legitimacy has not been conducted in the communications discipline. As crowdfunding technology continues to rapidly expand and become a popular fundraising tool, potential donors will compare and scrutinize causes and organizations more closely, making non-profit legitimation strategies a more salient research topic. In addition, non-profit legitimacy research deserves a refresh with the advent of new communication technologies to determine whether legitimation strategies have evolved since the direct mail dominated fundraising era.

With these research gaps in mind, this study will ask the following question:

1. How do non-profit charities build legitimacy through online crowdfunding platforms?

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In order to address this research question, a rhetorical analysis was performed on the website GlobalGiving.com to determine how non-profit charities build legitimacy on crowdfunding platforms. Non-profit charities are defined as not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations whose mission is to raise funds or provide services for a group of people in need. This research project employs rhetorical theory as a framework of looking at rhetorical appeals in donor requests because it is the most useful theory for identifying major claims and arguments that organizations employ to create messages. Rhetoric is the “strategic use of symbols to generate meaning” and “the product of message creation” (Hoffman & Ford, 2010). Organizations use rhetoric to “influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of audiences,” and spend a significant amount of time and resources crafting effective messages. Rhetoric is also a key tool in building organizational legitimacy. Carmelo Mazza (1999) describes organizational legitimacy as being “affirmed and displayed by words” through their organizational communication like press interviews and advertising (p.1).

Since rhetoric is a significant tool that organizations use to build legitimacy, analyzing an organization’s messages through a rhetorical analysis is a valuable way to identify legitimacy claims. Crowdfunding narratives are the primary source that donors consider when choosing to invest in a project, making them a critical medium to establish legitimacy and secure donations (Allison et al., 2013). The purpose of these narratives is to persuade people to donate, therefore a rhetorical analysis is prudent because it

examines a piece of text to determine common arguments used to make a persuasive claim (Herrick, 1997).

These arguments are further evaluated to identify the rhetorical appeals used to make the claim. Aristotle, one of the main contributors to rhetorical theory, believed crafting rhetorical arguments was an art. He taught three artistic rhetorical proofs: logos, pathos and ethos. These proofs offer the rhetor different types of persuasive techniques. It is the responsibility of the rhetor to determine which proofs should be utilized in an argument. The logos proof is an appeal to logic and rational decision-making. This proof analyzes argument construction and the message's individual words to determine if they are based in the type of reason employed in the decision-making process. A pathos proof is an appeal to emotion, and utilized with the intention of using the audience's emotion as a persuasive tool. Emotion isn't considered irrational, but it is a rational response to particular arguments. Therefore, appeals to pathos are not irrelevant, but their use should be examined as a strategic addition to an argument. Finally, the third artistic proof is ethos. Ethos refers to the speaker's character or credibility as a form of persuasion. In order for a rhetor to be considered credible, they must demonstrate intelligence, virtue and goodwill. Furthermore, the rhetor must understand what the audience's standards of credibility are in order to be effective (Herrick, 1997).

For this rhetorical analysis, GlobalGiving.com is chosen as the sample because it is the first international crowdfunding platform for non-profit charities to solicit donations from individuals around the world and is currently the largest (GlobalGiving, 2016). Furthermore, GlobalGiving is chosen because it strictly asks for donations, instead of other websites, like Kiva International, that are loan-based. Since this study is focused

on non-profit donation fundraising, it is necessary to conduct the study without eliminating variables like donors' evaluation of a project's business viability or potential return on investment. In addition, GlobalGiving is the chosen platform because each donor request page is standardized with four main text blocks, photos, videos, reports and donation options. A standardized layout will make it simpler to identify, compare, and contrast rhetorical appeals on donor request profiles because the same topics will be addressed.

In this study, I performed a rhetorical analysis on donor request profiles in order to thoroughly analyze the appeals non-profit charities use to build legitimacy. Eighteen donor request profiles were collected from GlobalGiving.com and chosen based on whether they were "Projects" added to the website within the last three months and funded between 51-75%. "Projects" instead of "micro-projects" were chosen because "Project" profiles possessed more information to analyze. Projects that acquired 51-75% of their funding were identified because the charity demonstrated adequate levels of legitimacy by acquiring a significant amount of funding. The donor request profiles varied in cause, non-profit charity and country of origin. A list of the analyzed profiles is located in Appendix A. These criteria were established in order to reduce the thousands of donor request profiles to a manageable number to analyze. In addition, the established criteria ensure a random population sample, and protects against confirmation bias by eliminating the opportunity to self-select certain narratives to unethically influence results that would promote a particular agenda.

The material collection process included the download of all text, videos and photos from the 18 donor request profiles, the profiles of the accompanying non-profits,

and sections of GlobalGiving's website that discuss its vetting process and financial tools. After the materials were collected, a rhetorical analysis on all text was performed. The text was examined for appeals that build non-profit legitimacy. Rhetorical appeals were identified and analyzed based on how they contributed to the development of logos, pathos and ethos. Once the appeals were collected, they were categorized according to the type of claim and strategy illustrated. The three categories identified are: project legitimacy, organizational legitimacy and platform legitimacy.



## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to build a crowdfunding profile that reflects a comprehensive definition of legitimacy on GlobalGiving.com, charities focus on crafting three specific legitimacy claims: cause, organization and platform. This research utilizes Tanaka and Volda's (2016) crowdfunding legitimacy typology and broadens "Project Legitimacy" to "Cause Legitimacy" to highlight the importance of a project's context instead of focusing on the legitimacy of an isolated project. It also expands on platform legitimacy by more closely examining a platform's charity vetting capabilities and financial transaction infrastructure.

In addition, this research confirms the popularity of particular rhetorical legitimization strategies laid out in research on fundraising, crowdfunding and organizational legitimacy. The use of facts, multimedia and testimonials are heavily used by charities on GlobalGiving.com. This study analyzes the rhetoric of charity campaigns and confirms that charity fundraising campaigns rely on a mixture of rhetorical appeals to secure donations, but heavily rely on ethos, followed by logos, then pathos to build a comprehensive argument for legitimacy.

### **Cause Legitimacy**

Cause legitimacy is established when the reader is convinced that the charity's promoted cause is a necessary project in order to positively benefit a community in need. Charities build legitimacy for their cause by weaving together appeals to ethos, logos and

pathos on their project profiles. Charities focus their strategies on highlighting experience, multimedia, facts and emotional storytelling about survival and opportunity.

Over half of the charities' missions directly support youth initiatives, like education or medical services (Ex. Shadhika Project Inc., Guitars in the Classroom, Transicion a la Vida and Project 1808), with two more specifically serving families (Aldea Maya Assistance for Mayan Families Society and BridgIT Water Foundation). Since 14 of the 18 charities serve a similar demographic, charities that serve children and families may be perceived as one of the most legitimate causes to support.

## ETHOS APPEALS

### *Strategy 1: Experience and Expertise*

In their claim for cause legitimacy, the main appeal to ethos that charities make is their project experience or subject matter expertise. This is one of the most common strategies that charities make in fundraising and crowdfunding campaigns. Charities focus on highlighting their expertise and experience with a specific cause because it persuades the potential donor that they have intimate experience on the ground with the situation, understand the problem, and know first-hand that help is required.

On the cause donation request page, charities can post "Reports", which are progress updates on the project to demonstrate how donor money is being utilized. However, only two profiles publish reports (International Medical Corps and Asociacion de Ayuda al Nino Quemado), illustrating that charities do not consider it important to

update donors on the project's progress to prove experience or expertise, instead focusing on reviewing a long history of past experience.

Instead of the "Reports" section, charities build more ethos in the "Resources" section. All 18 charities post their website URL to empower GlobalGiving visitors to learn more about the cause on their own and demonstrate the depth of understanding for the cause. Six charities also post PDF files that include extra information about the cause or organization to demonstrate subject matter knowledge. In addition, charities post third party resources as evidence that other groups or individuals believe in the cause's legitimacy. Charities include links to outside news articles/journals, videos, and NGO reports/charters. The provision of additional resources beyond the GlobalGiving website provides more quality information about the cause to demonstrate it is worth supporting. It is important for charities to deliver high-quality information because it imbues the cause with higher levels of legitimacy (Tanaka and Volda, 2016). By linking to cause-related resources created by highly reputable organizations, like the United Nations and World Health Organization, the charity's cause is deemed more legitimate.

Charities also include several social media tools, since charities that have higher amounts of followers and name recognition are assumed to be more successful (Mitra & Gilbert, 2016). Six charities also post links to their social media accounts to encourage donors to follow previous or current projects, join their social network, and promote them online. In addition, every page features buttons to share the cause page in the "Share" section for Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus and Pinterest. Special URL and HTML links, API keys and widgets are already created and posted on the page, in hopes of

empowering viewers to share it on their preferred social network to create social proof that it is a cause others should care about.

Despite social media being a very popular and easy way to distribute information, only one of 18 profiles was shared once. The wide assortment of tools presented to promote social network sharing demonstrates that charities intended to use it as a tool to build social proof of its cause's legitimacy. Charities hope that the more times their cause is shared, the more legitimate and worthwhile it will seem because the several members of the public promoted it. However, it was not a successful strategy for these charitable crowdfunding campaigns.

### LOGOS APPEALS

*Strategy: Situation Facts and Statistics*

Charities rely heavily on appeals to logos through facts and statistics to build cause legitimacy. In GlobalGiving campaigns, charities use facts and statistics to 1) demonstrate that there is a true need in a community for their services, and 2) the charity's proposed project will fulfill the community's needs. Facts and statistics are weaved primarily throughout the cause page in the "Story" section (which has four parts: "Summary", "Challenge", "Solution" and "Long Term Impact"), and in attached multimedia.

In order to demonstrate that a community need exists, charities use statistics and facts as evidence that a crisis exists (Smith & Berger, 1996; Ritzenhein, 1998). An

existing crisis builds the foundation for cause legitimacy, because demonstrating a crises' existence provides justification for a charity to meet those needs. For example, Shadhika Project states "47% of girls are married before the age of 18" to demonstrate its services to prevent child marriage is necessary because the issue is pervasive. Similarly, Project 1808 claims "The Koinadugu District of Sierra Leone is one of the most geographically isolated districts in the country." This statement justifies the charity's fundraising program for a university to expand educational opportunities. Natural disasters are also easily described through statistics, like the International Medical Corps' explanation of Hurricane Matthew as a Category Four hurricane with 145 mile winds and 15-25 inches of rain, which validates the need for relief programs. These weather statistics demonstrate the severity of the storm and the high probability of massive, widespread damage.

Some charities present evidence that illustrates a comprehensive view of the origin's crisis. For example, Asociacion de Ayuda al Nino Quemado states the logic behind Peru's high burn accident rate. It claims that burn accidents are more likely when "persons live in precarious housings in a single room, in overcrowded areas lacking basic services and are unaware of preventative measures leaving pots and hot liquids at children's reach." Furthermore, the non-profit states that 90% of accidents happen at home, with 70% of those accidents with hot liquids and 20% are with fire. These facts and statistics are pivotal in illustrating the gravity of a community problem and are instrumental in providing evidence of the cause's legitimacy.

Facts and statistics are especially used by charities supporting health initiatives. Alive Medical Services describes the growing HIV+ public health epidemic in Uganda, stating that 380 new infections occur daily, and that in 2014 Uganda had the third highest

country increase in infections. Similarly, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation describes that in Vietnam, 35 people (11 of those being children) die every day from drowning. Transicion a la Vida also uses statistics stating: “adolescence pregnancy has increased 5% in 2016 and for girls from orphanages there is a 50% rate of getting pregnant within 2 years living outside of orphanage.” The heavy use of statistics in health-related causes suggests that health crises are the easiest to quantify.

Charities also rely on statistics from outside organizations like the United Nations (UN) and World Health Organization (WHO). Using third party statistics provide evidence that other reputable organizations are calling a situation a crisis, and not just the charity. International Medical Corps includes UN statistics stating 750,000 Haitians require assistance and 214,000 residents live in high wind impact areas. It also reports cholera rates from local hospitals and cites the Dominican Republic’s Center for Emergency Operations. The WHO is cited by Golden West Humanitarian Foundation and Asociacion de Ayuda al Nino Quemado to prove the charity’s programs are addressing a public health issue. For example, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation states the “WHO estimates over 372,000 deaths by drowning. Over 90% of these deaths occur in low to middle income countries. Although these deaths amount to two-thirds for malnutrition and one half for malaria, little is being done to address this public health epidemic.” These statements provide vital proof that the charity’s projects are very necessary to solve major public health issues that the WHO and UN recognize, further bolstering cause legitimacy.

In order to demonstrate that the correct project was developed to aid the crisis, facts and statistics focus on project scope and project outcomes. Focusing on these two

items builds cause legitimacy by proving the project is reaching the right community members and the charity's actions will alleviate the crisis it is aimed towards. This is an important strategy that charities utilize to build donor trust. Facts and statistics help build donor trust in a project by providing evidence that a cause was seriously studied, a solution was identified, and potential impacts were analyzed.

Project scope refers to the quantity of community members the project will impact. Demonstrating the scope of a project signals that a charity has already identified specific community members to target, providing evidence the crisis exists. Many charities include specific statistics on reach, such as Guitars in the Classroom, who state "50 teachers will reach 1000 students with hands on musical learning every day" as a result of their program. Similarly, Commit and Act E.V. clearly state the scope of their program, where a new shelter will "serve up to 340 girls per year, which is 140 more than we currently assist." Stating the specific community that a project will help is important because it allows the donor to evaluate whether the presented solution is a good match for the crisis. Charities draw direct connections between crises and intended beneficiaries by identifying project scope to demonstrate that the project is a legitimate solution for the crisis.

In addition, charities discuss how their programs will directly impact communities. Charities often provide very specific numbers on program outcomes, demonstrating they have adequately researched its potential and reach. For example, based on previous work, Transicion a la Vida claims their program will "lower 50% adolescence pregnancy rate to 6% and also increase educational rate from 3% to 60%." In addition, ASAP Foundation cites its extensive outcomes: "With 5 beehives a woman can

get yearly close to 100 US dollars income ....The long term effects of equipping 20 women with 5 beehives will be – better education for 80 children – better health care for 20 families.” Identifying program outcomes is very important in building cause legitimacy because it provides evidence that the project is the correct project to alleviate a crisis. Without identifying specific impacts, the donor is left questioning whether the project will truly help the community and in what ways.

## PATHOS APPEALS

### *Strategy: Storytelling*

Charities use many appeals to pathos to build cause legitimacy through strong, emotional storytelling in the “Story” section and accompanying multimedia. Appeals to pathos are widely used by charities to capitalize on donors, who are motivated by their desire of internal satisfaction for solving “real world problems” (Freedman & Nutting, 2015; Leimester & Zogaj, 2013); Wiggins & Crowston, 2011). In addition, multimedia are heavily used in fundraising and crowdfunding campaigns because they remove the cause as an abstraction by grounding it with an image, and making the cause more relatable (Myers, 2007). Photos and videos often evoke sympathy, driving a viewer to donate because they feel “guilty for not giving” after seeing others suffer (Bons et. al, 2010; Schwienbacher & Larralde, 2010). Emotional language and multimedia help build cause legitimacy by illustrating a community’s crisis and putting a “face” to the cause, therefore, demonstrating the cause and project to be necessary for crisis alleviation.



The pathos appeals primarily fall into two themes: survival and opportunity. Appeals to survival suggest that without the charity and donations, the community will remain destitute and suffering will continue. On the other hand, appeals to opportunity suggest that with the charity and donations, the community will thrive and grow. While some charities only utilize one of these appeals, others mix these appeals.

### Survival

Pathos appeals to survival imply that without donor help, a community will suffer with a problem that it is unable to independently solve. Situations are painted as crises that focus on physical injury and public health to evoke sympathy among potential donors. Survival appeals build cause legitimacy by implying that without the programs, these communities will not survive. The projects are positioned as the antidote to the community problem and the only option to alleviate suffering. These appeals are located in the cause page's "Story" section, photos and videos.

Physical injury is a common appeal because it evokes sympathy in donors who are uncomfortable ignoring suffering that they can easily help resolve. For example, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, dedicated to promoting water safety in Vietnam, directly asks donors: "Help us safeguard the lives of 700 children, by teaching them to swim in our internationally recognized 18-class survival swimming course." Golden West Humanitarian Foundation illustrates the situation as life or death for Vietnamese children who do not know how to swim in a country where drowning is a common cause of death. This appeal is effective because it pulls at the heartstrings of donors who find it

emotionally straining to imagine 700 children potentially drowning because they did not donate.

Similarly, International Medical Corps, focused on Hurricane Matthew disaster relief in Haiti, paints a picture of desperation on the island stating: “tens of thousands of people staying in temporary shelters and hundreds seeking aid at the few functioning hospitals.” Photos are also included of wreckage on the island, and adults and children wandering through it to evoke sympathy for the widespread devastation. It is accompanied with text descriptions that further evoke sympathy for the high levels of human suffering, including “Over 61,000 people are in evacuation shelters” and “Some 350,000 people are in need of assistance.” By photographing suffering people or dilapidated infrastructure, the severity of the cause is painted for the donor and his or her sympathy is evoked. In conjunction with descriptions, these photos build cause legitimacy by offering proof of a serious problem that must be resolved.

Video case studies also help highlight the depth of the issue and human suffering. For example, Commit and Act E.V.’s video centered on a young girl named Kumba who was violently abused. Donors who are able to see Kumba’s face are able to feel overwhelming emotions knowing this young girl had to endure horrific abuse. These videos pull at donor heartstrings by painting pictures of human suffering to illustrate evidence of a problem requiring a solution.

Public health crises are also commonly used in survival appeals, with combatting disease among the most popular. For example, the HIV epidemic is addressed by Alive Medical Services stating: “Donations enable us to continue providing life-saving care and enables our clients to live a quality life.” In addition, malnutrition is highlighted as a

threat, with Aldea Maya Assistance for Mayan Families Society's nutritional program able to address malnutrition's numerous health risks, by being able to "combat stunting, under-nutrition, over-nutrition and related conditions like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and infant mortality." Both of these public health issues are highly preventable, yet major life-threatening conditions. By presenting a solution that will reduce suffering to these very solvable issues, the charity is positioning the project as a legitimate solution to the crisis.

Charities also stress their vital role in promoting public health by highlighting their status as the only organization doing their type of work in the area. Therefore, if they do not receive funding, the communities they are serving will literally have no access to help. Commit and Act E.V. positions its project as "the only help available for abused girls in the Bo district" and provides "the only access to physical respite, legal counsel, and psychosocial treatment." The charity highlights the dire need for funding stating "Due to space limitations at our shelter, we have had to turn away desperate girls, sometimes pregnant or with young children, forcing them back into the abusive structures from which they are fleeing" and "We are receiving heavily increased demands for relief services and desperately need a larger shelter." Commit and Act E.V. also includes a photo of a woman's bruised arm with the accompanying text: "A mother arrives with bruises. We document what we see to assist police and legal counsel in bringing justice to victims of gender-based violence." Images of abuse evoke sadness and sympathy for women who are suffering, and the text states how the project is positively impacting communities. These statements and photos highlight the desperation and life or death scenario that women coming to the shelter are facing and how current facilities are unable

to meet their needs and must turn abused women away. The text implies that without donor support, women will not be able to access safe havens free from abuse.

### Opportunity

Appeals to pathos that center on opportunity describe the hope a community will gain through project completion. Opportunity is often described in terms of an improvement in education access, job prospects, and healthcare. These appeals are based in hope and facilitate cause legitimacy by implying the project is necessary because it provides a solution that offers hope for a better life to a struggling community. Appeals to opportunity occur in the “Story” section, photos and videos.

Education is a very popular opportunity appeal with many projects claiming they will facilitate educational opportunities for children. For example, Guitars in the Classroom, focusing on providing music education to special needs students, claim that students in their program will “experience the benefits of music to improve learning” and “score higher on tests and help boost their schools’ performance.” Outreach Uganda suggests that building a new school building will “drastically improve the overall level of education and should improve the students’ learning and test scores.” These appeals are effective because they highlight the importance of the charity’s project, implying that without these programs, children will not have the opportunity to succeed.

Video storytelling is also an effective tool where charity beneficiaries are interviewed about how the charity’s project expanded their opportunities. Watching a beneficiary express their happiness and gratitude instills donor faith that the project is

addressing a real need in the community. These video interviews give a “human face” to the crisis, which is influential in evoking donor empathy and promoting donations. In Guitars in the Classroom’s video, a child says: “Music is very important to me because like music helps my brain work with like spelling, with fun stuff, with writing, with reading.” His testimony validates the charity’s program to bring more music education to special needs classrooms. Similarly, NPO Mirai no Mori’s video features several orphaned or abused children in the program describe what they like about the nature camp program, such as its emotional impact: “Everyone was telling us ‘You can do it’ and it made all of our hearts heal. It inspired me to take up leadership.”

Videos that allow charity beneficiaries to speak about their own experiences are influential in building cause legitimacy because it sheds light on their reasons for believing this is a legitimate cause. These interviews justify the necessity of the program and use the beneficiaries’ own words to demonstrate its impact. They offer direct evidence that the charity is solving an issue in their community by allowing beneficiaries the chance to share their story and evoke sympathy from potential donors regarding their newfound hope. In addition, the videos facilitate a connection with the viewer, and inspires a desire to help communities like the ones they see in these videos.

Charities focused on providing educational opportunities often include photos and videos of happy children smiling in classrooms or working with equipment, such as Outreach Uganda, NPO Mirai no Mori and Jitegeme. These photos of happy children illustrate hope and joy that a donor can bring simply by making a donation.

Accompanying descriptions highlight opportunity as well, such as Transicion a la Vida’s photo of students in a classroom and describes students in “trainings about how to choose

a career, recognizing my skills and opportunities, decision making process and building a long term personal and professional plan and goals.” These photos and descriptions provide evidence that the charity’s project is working to alleviate suffering and also creating positive experiences for struggling communities.

Education is often presented as the foundation for several other opportunity types, such as economic prospects and health. For example, Project 1808, aiming to build a university in a poor part of Sierra Leone, asserts “Education provides the key to job security, community growth and individual wellness” and suggests the “University of Koinadugu will become a hub of knowledge exchange, partnership, and innovation allowing the community to grow and thrive in a multitude of ways.” Similarly, Jitegemee, dedicated to providing educational and vocational opportunities to Kenyan street children, states that education will impact poverty levels and “by helping these children learn a trade, they not only support themselves but others too, and thus ending the vicious cycle of poverty.” By illustrating education as the source of a community’s comprehensive growth, cause legitimacy is bolstered because the project is demonstrating that it has widespread advantages that go beyond alleviating a single crisis.

Opportunities to improve mental and physical health are also an appeal frequently used. Asociacion de Ayuda al Nino Quemado offers health services for youth burn victims in Peru and states their programs “will give them the chance to rehabilitate physically and regain strength. Thus preventing the loss of motricity after the burn accidents that caused physical as well as mental scars.” Further pathos appeals are included with numerous photos of children in the clinic receiving treatment. These photos evoke sympathy for the young burn victim in pain, but also hope since many of the

children look happy to be there and receiving help. A combination of pathos appeals through language and images is very effective because charities are able to state how their project will create opportunity and illustrate the happiness and hope that communities experience due to expanded opportunities.

### Mixed

While some charities choose to employ either survival or opportunity appeals, there are others that weave pathos appeals to both survival and opportunity. This strategy is effective because it balances the sadness of a community's current situation with hope for a better future. It also suggests that the donor is absolutely pivotal in creating opportunity and underlies the argument with a feeling of guilt that a community will suffer if a donation is not made. For example, Shadhika Project claims the charity "will provide full funding to young women to attend college so they can escape the threat of child marriage and have the opportunity to live an independent, self-sustaining life." The situation is positioned as dire and that young women facing the threat of child marriage may not survive, but it also provides hope that the charity, with donor help, has the opportunity to fundamentally change their lives in a positive way.

BridgIT Water Foundation offers a similar argument in its "Story" section and photo text descriptions regarding a clean water project. In Birta, Nepal, women and girls face the "dangerous", "arduous" and "time consuming" labor of climbing a mountain several times a day to gather clean water. Photos of women carrying water in mountainous terrain are accompanied with detailed descriptions, including: "Grandma

collecting water. This older woman and her grandkids collecting water at the mountain source. She'll have to walk down the steep trail carrying 70 pounds.” The photos and text descriptions work together to illustrate their struggle with survival, especially the elderly. However, a picture of hope is painted by asserting the water project will offer more time, energy, “greater opportunities to work, form entrepreneurial business, advance their educations, and build community and family bonds” and an improvement on health and quality of life. This combination of appeals is effective because it evokes donor sympathy with images of suffering, struggling Nepalese women with emotional language about the project’s benefits and the hope it will give to the community.

### **Organizational Legitimacy**

Another tool charities employ to build legitimacy is to demonstrate their organizational legitimacy on their charity profile page. Organizational legitimacy is established when charities convince the audience that the organization executing the promoted project is a reputable entity, as well as effective and accountable (Gills & Wells, 2014). Every charity profile starts with its mission and is followed by organizational details and past history with GlobalGiving. A majority of profiles also include a section on current and past programs. Charities build legitimacy for their organization and mission primarily through appeals to ethos and logos, by including claims about past project experience, financial transparency, multimedia, facts and statistics and third party endorsements.



## ETHOS APPEALS

### *Strategy 1: Experience and Expertise*

Several charities link to past projects on their charity profile page's "Projects" tab that were executed through GlobalGiving. Citing past projects demonstrates organizational competence and experience running charitable projects. It also signals to potential donors that several people have already donated to the organization in the past, increasing organizational legitimacy by providing proof of others' support (Kuppuswamy & Bayus, 2013; Choy & Schlagwein, 2016; Solomon, Ma & Wash, 2015).

Photos are an important way that charities build ethos on the organizational profile. The number of photos included varies by each charity, but they all share at least one. Charities feature photos from various past projects and make an appeal to ethos by illustrating their expertise and providing visual evidence of their work and proof they were executing their mission. Photo quality is also high, demonstrating a high level of organizational professionalism required to acquire the photos, as well as the possession of expensive, sophisticated photo technology (Mollick, 2014; Mollick & Nanda, 2014). Furthermore, some charities pair the photos with descriptions that identify specific employees. For example, Commit and Act E.V. identifies the "Director of shelter for abused children" and Golden West Humanitarian Foundation acknowledges "Teacher Doe is a PE teacher at Dong Phu." Calling out specific staff members seek to build donor trust by demonstrating that the organization really has people on the ground.

Similarly, videos are used as evidence that the organization is working in the community that it claims. The video production quality was on an amateur level for all the videos, with choppy editing and simple text/image animations. Guitars in the Classroom had especially weak production quality with poor audio due to interviews being outside with high winds, resulting in large amounts of static noise. Despite low production quality across the board for videos, charities still provide ample proof that they are benefiting communities by highlighting individual experiences, without compromising organizational legitimacy.

Several charities also include past project reports on their charity profile page. The quantity of reports list varies from charity to charity, with International Medical Corps among the highest posting 281 reports, and several charities, like Project 1808, posting none. The large discrepancy between report quantities imply that charities do not use this tool as a significant way to build legitimacy because donors do not perceive their existence as a deal breaker in their decision to donate.

These reports offer two types of project experience proof. The first type is project execution and success. Project reports detail the charity's specific actions and the project's direct outcomes to highlight its productivity and impact on the community. Execution reports build organizational legitimacy because charities demonstrate transparency that they are using donations in a useful way and achieving good outcomes. The second type of proof is project progress. These reports discuss milestones in projects and offers donors or potential donors insight into their current work. Charities write these reports to encourage previous donors to donate again by illustrating the impact of their donation and also encourages potential donors to donate by demonstrating they are

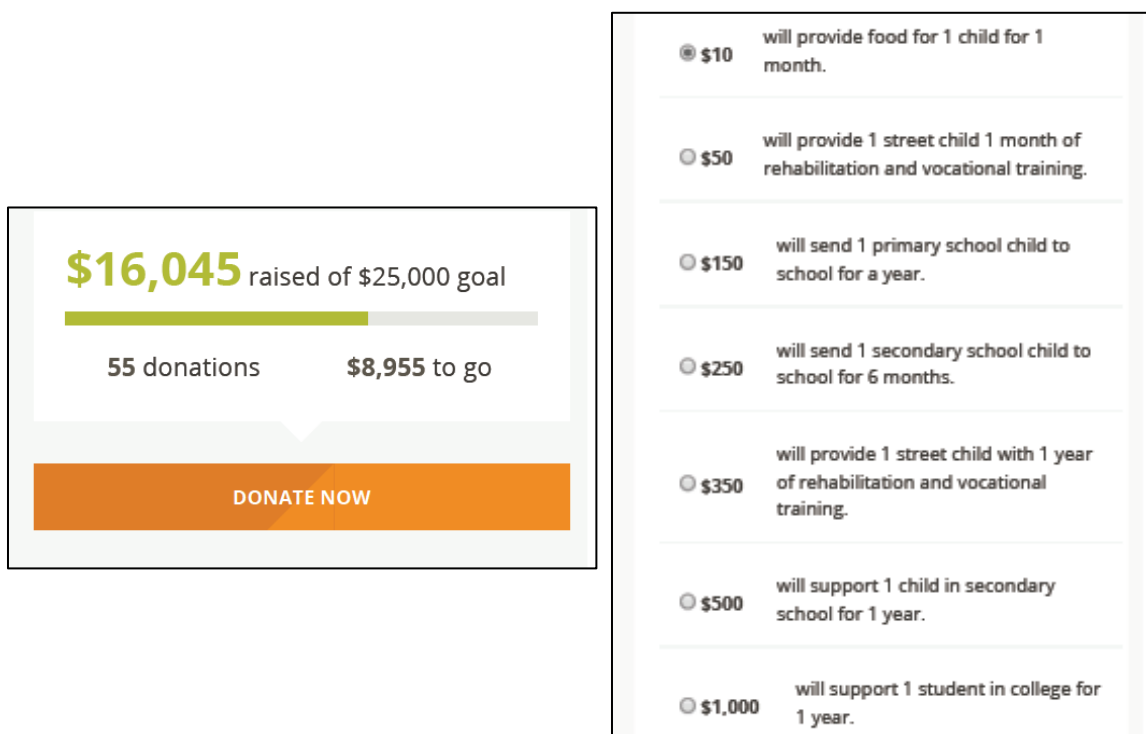
already on the ground working and need their help to finish the project. As a result of the information transparency, donor trust is strengthened, which is instrumental in bolstering the charity's organizational legitimacy (Gills & Wells, 2014)

### *Strategy 2: Financial Transparency*

Charities also build ethos by exhibiting financial transparency. On charity and project profiles, organizations demonstrate financial transparency by stating exactly how a donor's donation will be spent, the amount already raised, and how many donors have already given to the campaign. This data signals to future donors how many people have already found the cause and organization to be legitimate and worthy of funding. A two-step donation process is evident: 1) viewer finds the cause legitimate, and 2) viewer finds the organization legitimate. Both steps must be achieved in order to secure a donation. If a potential donor believes in the legitimacy of a cause, but not the organization, they will not donate out of fear their money will not be well used. Therefore, full financial transparency and the reveal of previous donor behavior facilitates donor trust (Kuppuswamy & Bayus, 2013; Choy & Schlagwein, 2016; Solomon, Ma & Wash, 2015).

Figure 1 illustrates the high level of financial transparency that charities divulge. For example, Jitegemee states that \$16,045 has already been raised by 55 donors with a total fundraising goal of \$25,000. In addition, spending transparency is included by stating a \$10 donation "will provide food for 1 child for 1 month" while a \$500 donation "will support 1 child in secondary school for 1 year." This data provides a clear snapshot

of how others have perceived the cause/organization as worthy of donation and how the project's donation dollars will be utilized.



*Figure 1: Profile 8 Charity Page - Donation Boxes*

A vast majority of the language used to describe donation spending is specific, straightforward and logical. For example, a \$25 donation “will provide rice and beans for a client and their family for one month” (Alive Medical Services), a \$75 donation “will translate each poster into another European language for broader impact” (Children of Prisoners Europe), and a \$1,200 donation “pays one year education for one girl” (Transicion a la Vida). Only one organization listed every monetary donation as “will

support hurricane relief efforts” (International Medical Corps) and was not more specific with associated donation activities. However, a few profiles use flowery language filled with pathos to describe how money is being spent. For example, BridgIT Water Foundation describes a \$500 donation with the text: “You can be an absolute hero in Nepal, and sleep soundly at night with a tax-deductible contribution at this level.” Similarly, NPO Mirai no Mori describes a \$300 donation with the text: “magical ‘Back to Nature’ day for two participants.”

Regardless of the type of language used for its financial transparency claims, the donation spending descriptions were always relevant to the project and reasonably priced. Rhetoric highlighting financial transparency builds organizational legitimacy because it provides accountability for how donations are spent and signals that the charity will execute its mission efficiently (Gills & Wells, 2014). Furthermore, it signals that the organization engaged in financial planning efforts and identified specific program costs. Program cost transparency is a strong appeal to ethos that almost every charity utilizes to demonstrate their organizational legitimacy.

### *Strategy 3: Third Party Verification and Endorsements*

Another feature of the charity profile page that supports organizational legitimacy is third party endorsements. All of the charities state their BRIDGE number. BRIDGE is the Basic Registry of Identified Global Entities, a database of global non-profits run by four non-profits, including GlobalGiving. Searching a non-profit’s BRIDGE number in the database will render information about the non-profit, including its listings on other

reputable charity websites, like GuideStar and The Foundation Center (BRIDGE, 2017). Since all of the charities listed their BRIDGE numbers, the donor can be confident that the charity is a real, active organization recognized by other charities, therefore, bolstering their organizational legitimacy. In addition, half of the charities link to GreatNonprofits.com, a platform for charity employees, donors and volunteers to post about their experiences (GreatNonprofits, 2017). This platform allows potential donors to review what others claim about the charity and serve as a tool for donors to independently evaluate the organization's legitimacy. Providing these third party links increases donor trust in a very significant way by demonstrating they are recognized as legal, legitimate entities and not Internet scams.

There is also an opportunity on the charity's profile page for GlobalGiving users to post reviews about the charity for other potential donors to read. However, charities do not post the actual reviews on their profiles. While GreatNonprofits states that 85% of donors say reading reviews was an influential part of their donation decision, it was clearly not a factor in GlobalGiving donors' donation behavior (GreatNonprofits, 2017). GlobalGiving charities focused more on highlighting third party endorsements from other organizations and platforms, instead of individual reviews. In this instance, GlobalGiving is leaning on the credibility of BRIDGE and GreatNonprofits to build legitimacy, instead of a few individuals.

Despite heavily leaning on the credibility of verified charity organizations, there is one case in which charities rely on third party endorsements. Ten of the charities have the sentence "An anonymous donor is matching new monthly recurring donations!" on their page to encourage potential donors. While the statement is vague, it states other

donors endorse the cause and are willing to donate several more times to it. Highlighting previous donor investment is an effective legitimacy strategy because it implies that the organization has already been vetted by the crowd, thus increasing donor trust.

#### *Strategy 4: English Proficiency*

Charities also demonstrate ethos through their masterful use of the English language. Roughly half of the charities are not headquartered in a primarily English-speaking country, like the United States and Australia. Despite many opportunities for grammar and punctuation mistakes during the translation process, there are very few errors. Only two charities have errors on their charity profiles, four in photo descriptions, one in video text, and three on project cause profiles. Since a majority of these charities are not headquartered in a predominantly English-speaking country, the lack of impact on donations may suggest that donors excused the couple errors and did not find them disqualifying. Written English proficiency implies a high level of organizational professionalism with a competent, educated staff (Goering, Connor, Nagelhout & Steinberg, 2011). This gives donors the confidence that their money will be spent wisely, efficiently and effectively.

## LOGOS APPEALS

### *Strategy: Facts and Statistics*

Logos appeals through facts and statistics strengthen organizational legitimacy by establishing organizational and mission validity. Charities list several key organizational facts to build organizational validity. An address, phone number and website are listed in the “Info” tab of the page. Donors can visit the charity’s website and check the validity of the phone number and address to ensure it is a valid organization. By listing these facts, potential donors are empowered to research the organization on their own and draw conclusions about its validity. If the charity is evaluated and considered a valid organization, organizational legitimacy is strengthened because its existence as a credible organization is proven.

Charities also list the year they are founded as a key organizational fact, which builds organizational legitimacy by asserting their experience and expertise. Most have at least five years of experience, with several having been founded in the 1990s. This seems to suggest that donors find older charities as more valid and legitimate organizations, likely because they have had more time to demonstrate their abilities and build expertise.

In addition, all 18 charity profiles list the names of personnel who are working on the project and key organizational leaders, such as the president or members on its board of directors. Noting key project personnel provides direct accountability for a project’s success or failure, instead of perceiving the organization as an abstraction. Furthermore, it demonstrates organizational validity through its transparency and allows potential



donors to research personnel and draw conclusions about their experience or competence before choosing to donate.

Another important way that organizations build organizational legitimacy is by establishing mission validity through several facts and statistics in the “Mission” and “Programs” sections on the charity profile page. Every charity includes information about its mission, while most include information on its programs. These sections vary greatly in length depending on the charity. Some organizations have one sentence for their mission (Ex. International Medical Corps and NPO Mirai no Mori), while others include several paragraphs (Ex. Shadhika Project and Children of Prisoners Europe). The high variance in information quantity suggests that donors do not make major judgments about a charity’s organizational legitimacy based on the section length.

Regardless of length, charities rely on statistics to build their claim for mission validity in these sections. By using statistics, charities imply they have conducted research and collected evidence to prove that their missions and programs are integral in solving an existing community problem. Many facts and statistics relate to organizational mission relevance or project impact. For example, Outreach Uganda states: “a majority of our women were living on less than \$1 per day prior to joining our programs.” This statistic highlights the charity’s necessity in working with women and youth communities. Context for mission legitimacy is also offered by describing a crisis causing event, such as by Jitegemee: “When Kenya introduced free and compulsory education for children under 14 in 2003, many drop-in centers for street children closed, leaving no place for children over 14 to eat lunch and spend their days.” Jitegemee suggests their organizational mission to help street children is valid because of public

policy changes. Offering logical facts that justify an organization's mission is an effective strategy because they offer a clear, straightforward reason for why a community is in crisis and needs help.

Third party resources are another way that charities build mission validity. Charities use outside reports as evidence to support their existence by proving their organizational mission is valid. They are effective because the cited organizations are considered credible sources of information. The resources offered most often are by government agencies. For example, House of the Temple Historic Preservation Foundation uses the USA National Register of Historical Places to claim mission legitimacy by asserting the Freemason House of the Temple is recognized by the government as a significant historical place and should therefore be preserved. Two profiles also cite UN reports to bolster their credibility and highlight mission legitimacy. Children of Prisoners Europe invokes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and European Convention on Human Rights to validate their mission:

“Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) is a pan-European network which encourages innovative perspectives and practice to ensure that the rights of these children (as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights) are fully respected and that action is taken to secure their well-being and healthy development.”

By demonstrating that other reputable organizations validate the charity's mission, the charity's organizational legitimacy is strengthened because donors will more easily believe that the charity is well positioned to meet the needs of a community in crisis.

Charities also use facts and statistics to demonstrate mission scope and fulfillment. Discussing outcomes is a popular way to demonstrate expertise because

charities are able to offer hard evidence that their programs are successful. For example, Our Restorative Justice highlights the scope and impact of its work through statistics:

“OurRJ has diverted approximately 80 young people out of the juvenile justice system, trained over 1,100 police officers on how to refer juveniles to the program, and in partnership with United Teen Equality Center (UTEC), trained youth in restorative justice practices and conflict resolution.”

Project outcome statistics are an important tool that charities utilize to establish organizational legitimacy because they demonstrate the charity is actually fulfilling its mission (Gills & Wells, 2014).

### **Platform Legitimacy**

Another source of legitimacy that charities both build and rely upon is the GlobalGiving platform. GlobalGiving does not only serve as an information sharing organization, but a technological platform to facilitate charitable donations. Platform legitimacy is achieved when donors trust the platform as an information and donation tool. Charities build platform legitimacy with three distinct appeals to ethos: earning a “Vetted” GlobalGiving checkmark, publishing its status as a “Global Giving Accelerator” and stating the safety of GlobalGiving’s donation transaction tool.

## **ETHOS APPEALS**

### *Strategy 1: Vetted Symbol*

Charities can apply to GlobalGiving to receive a “Vetted” checkmark next to their name. Eight of the charity donation profiles list their organization as “Vetted” by

GlobalGiving. The “Vetted” checkmark symbol is located at the top of the page and an easy way for potential donors to see that the charity is approved as a legitimate organization by the platform. The “Vetted” checkmark serves as a meaningful endorsement of the charity by GlobalGiving. This endorsement is only meaningful because of GlobalGiving’s reputation, which brands itself as a “top-rated charity” and posts logos from reputable business and charity watchdogs, including Better Business Bureau, Charity Navigator and GuideStar.

GlobalGiving lists its vetting process on its website in a clear, straightforward and logical manner. The vetting process includes the collection and review of a charity’s quarterly project reports, financials, government registrations, anti-terrorism compliance, and also looks at their transparency and accountability processes. They are reviewed every two years and a GlobalGiving representative visits the organization on-site to ensure “thorough due diligence.” This comprehensive vetting process offers GlobalGiving users confidence that the charity has been properly screened and is deserving of funding. It also builds GlobalGiving’s ethos as a competent watchdog organization that has the capability to adequately vet charities.

After the vetting process is complete, GlobalGiving ranks the charities based on “engagement with the community and their demonstrated commitment to effectiveness.” Furthermore, “organizations ranked near the top will be more visible on GlobalGiving’s platform and are more often recommended by GlobalGiving to donors and corporate partners.” Charities benefit highly from being vetted and ranked because it increases the likelihood of their charity being featured on the website or recommended as a partner. In a highly competitive marketplace for donations, a more visible placement on the platform

would be advantageous in promoting fundraising efforts and driving cause and organizational awareness. While the benefits of being vetted are clear, only half of the studied charities have completed the process. This may suggest that donors do not place a high priority on platform endorsements or believe it a requirement for donation.

### *Strategy 2: Accelerator Status*

While eight organizations are marked with the “Vetted” checkmark, the other 10 organizations were undergoing the vetting process. One of the vetting process criteria is to undergo an “Open Challenge” or “Accelerator” program, which requires a charity to fundraise \$5,000 from 40 donors in a certain amount of time. This step tests the interest of the crowd in the charity and its ability to solicit funding from several sources, which demonstrates viability and the crowd’s perception of its legitimacy. GlobalGiving states: “most organizations in the GlobalGiving community have succeeded in our Open Challenge or our Accelerator.” They assert most charities choose to take advantage of the opportunity to become a “Vetted” and ranking member and most are successful. By stating that most charities are successful, GlobalGiving implies that a large majority of the charities on the platform are legitimate, and website visitors should have confidence that the charity they choose to support has been scrutinized to some degree.

All 18 of the studied charities either successfully advanced through the vetting process or were undergoing the vetting process. This demonstrates that charities highly value the “Vetted” symbol and seek to achieve the status. Furthermore, it plays a dual role in illustrating legitimacy. First, it demonstrates to GlobalGiving that it is a

transparent, accountable, legal entity capable of successfully soliciting donations from the crowd. In turn, GlobalGiving rewards the legitimate organization by promoting it on the website, and to donors and corporations. Second, it signals to potential donors that they are a legitimate organization, as rigorously scrutinized by the reputable GlobalGiving website, and deserving of monetary support.

### *Strategy 3: Financial Transaction Tools*

Another important way that charities bolster platform legitimacy is through the platform's donation transaction tools. In order to secure a donation, donors need to trust that the platform's tools are safe and secure. On each donation request page, there is an option to choose a donation amount and payment type. There are several payment options available, including: credit card, PayPal, Apple Pay, check, wire transfer, stock donations and will. By offering a variety of options, GlobalGiving is highlighting its relationship with major payment medium firms; therefore, demonstrating its financial literacy and status as a recognized, reputable organization. Through GlobalGiving, charities are able to accept donations through any major medium, expanding their ability to receive donations from a variety of donors with differing payment preferences. Charities from remote parts of the world are now able to easily receive donations through the platform, due to donors believing in the legitimacy of GlobalGiving as a financial transaction platform.

To further demonstrate its legitimacy, a statement focused on the website's security is placed below the payment options: "Donating through GlobalGiving is safe,

secure, and easy with many payment options available.” GlobalGiving is building confidence around its competence by stating the platform is “safe” and “secure” for users. This is important to donors in an era where cyber security and identity theft are major threats. Website technology that protects funds and donor privacy gives potential donors higher levels of platform trust, making it easier for them to decide to enter their personal information on the website.

GlobalGiving also offers a “Satisfaction Guarantee” to donors who are unhappy with their charity donation or website experience. It states: “Any donor who makes an online contribution at GlobalGiving.org and is not satisfied with their giving experience may get a refund of their donation in the form of a GlobalGiving gift certificate equal to the value of the original donation, up to \$10,000 per donor per year.” This guarantee strengthens platform legitimacy because it suggests that GlobalGiving is fully confident in its platform’s charities by being willing to back them financially, and that GlobalGiving is financially solvent enough to offer its donors this sort of “return policy.”

Charities rely on the legitimacy of GlobalGiving’s platform to convince donors that their donation will safely transfer to charities and that their private information will be safeguarded. Small charities in remote areas of the world especially rely on this tool because it allows them to receive donations in a variety of mediums that they may not be able to utilize independently. For example, a potential donor may not feel comfortable sending a check through the mail to a charity in a rural South American country for fear that it may not arrive, but GlobalGiving’s extensive financial infrastructure allows donors to have full confidence that the donation will be received.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

### **Summary**

This study found that charities build legitimacy on crowdfunding websites through the development of three distinct claims: cause legitimacy, organizational legitimacy and platform legitimacy. In order to develop these claims, charities weave together appeals to logos, ethos and pathos. A combination of all three of these appeals were necessary to develop legitimacy claims that donors believed were strong enough to warrant donations. Ethos is the most popular appeal used by charities, with the highest number of strategies identified. Logos is the second most popular appeal, followed by pathos, which had a small number of strategies identified.

Each legitimacy claim is clearly defined and followed by a discussion of the rhetorical strategies used to build that claim. For cause legitimacy, the most common tools were facts and statistics, multimedia, and emotional storytelling themes of survival and opportunity. Similarly, organizational legitimacy was built through facts and statistics, highlighting expertise, third party endorsements, financial transparency and English proficiency. Finally, platform legitimacy was achieved through the GlobalGiving “Vetted” symbol, GlobalGiving “Accelerator” status and financial transaction tools.

This study supports previous research conclusions regarding popular and effective strategies used in crowdfunding campaigns and fundraising rhetoric. It also confirms research stating that all three rhetorical appeals are regularly utilized during fundraising and crowdfunding campaigns, with ethos being the most common. Charities use



crowdfunding strategies the same way that entrepreneurs do and utilize the same rhetorical strategies in fundraising rhetoric research, with the delivery platform, via the Internet, as the only difference.

In addition, this study builds on legitimacy typologies and concepts. This study expands upon the legitimacy typology established by Tanaka and Volda (2016). The “Project Legitimacy” category was expanded to “Cause Legitimacy” in order to offer a more comprehensive view of the situation and more context for the charity’s mission. This expansion increases researchers’ ability to adopt a broader definition of legitimacy, which will allow them to better examine the rhetorical situation in which the narrative is written.

In addition, the study expands on “Platform Legitimacy” by offering new legitimization themes, such as platform vetting and financial transaction tools. Research on platform legitimacy expands legitimacy theory to include the study of new digital communication tools and offers researchers a fresh framework to examine crowdfunding platforms’ relationship with organizations and whether they are defined as third party endorsers. The concept of platform legitimacy expands the definition of organizational legitimacy by stating a third party’s legitimacy will directly influence an organization’s legitimacy and impact their ability to raise funds. This framework can be applied beyond non-profit legitimacy to any organization that is using a crowdfunding platform as a communication tool.

Charities can use this research by building a rhetorical strategy around three legitimization appeals: cause, organization and platform. Charities will be successful if they are able to secure donor trust, which is likely after they trust the project, campaign

organizer and platform (Li, et al., 2016). The rhetorical strategies and tactics should be employed during the creation of the cause and organizational profiles, including the use of facts, statistics, multimedia, third party endorsements and financial transparency. While some of these strategies may be hard to implement on a tight budget, such as professional animation and videography, charities should develop creative ways to integrate the appeals, like cell phone photography. Regardless of whether the charity uses GlobalGiving or not, it can implement these strategies across any platform or can use these strategies as criteria for choosing which platform to utilize. When developing a comprehensive strategy for building legitimacy on crowdfunding platforms, charities can follow a three step process: 1) Choose legitimate platform, 2) Differentiate cause legitimacy, and 3) Build organizational legitimacy.

First, organizations should choose a platform that is considered legitimate by the public. During the platform evaluation phase, charities should incorporate the study's organizational legitimacy strategies and examine its reputation, charity vetting procedures, privacy and security features, and financial transaction tools. The platform must look like a legitimate, respected and valid website, otherwise donors may think the website is a scam and not feel comfortable entering their personal information and donating money. If platform legitimacy is not achieved first, then potential donors will not continue in the donation process or have a chance to evaluate the charity's cause and organizational legitimacy.

Second, charities should focus on building cause legitimacy and differentiating their cause from others. Since donors are using these platforms to support specific projects, charities should focus on cause legitimacy before organizational legitimacy.

Crowdfunding platforms host thousands of charity donation requests, and charities must illustrate why their cause is legitimate and different from similar causes. A charity should use the strategies detailed in the cause section to demonstrate legitimacy, including emotional storytelling and multimedia, facts and third party verification. In a competitive donation landscape, donation profiles in the same category and seem similar receive less funding (Meer, 2014). Therefore, it is imperative for charities to highlight why their cause and solution is different.

Lastly, charities must focus on maximizing organizational legitimacy to help secure the donor's support. If the donor believes the platform and cause are legitimate, but are not confident the organization is legitimate, it is unlikely that they will donate. Donors want their money to go to a reputable charity that will use it appropriately and efficiently, instead of a corrupt scam. Charities can strengthen their organizational legitimacy claim by incorporating strategies listed in the study's organizational legitimacy section, which include highlighting project expertise, donation transparency and third party endorsements.

In spite of its benefits, this study also has two main limitations. The first limitation is that a vast majority of the sample charities' missions is to serve youth and families. Therefore, the study's conclusions may be limited to legitimization strategies for that particular mission. In addition, the missions in this study's samples were not controversial, but focused on hunger, abuse and injuries. The appeals used to craft legitimacy for these causes may be very different from other controversial initiatives like climate change, LGBTQ rights or family planning. Despite the wide variety of charity causes that exist, the study's sample represents a very small, limited portion. As a result,

the charity sample limits the study's findings to charities with non-controversial, youth and family missions.

The study's second limitation is that a majority of the charities are based in the United States or western nations like the United Kingdom, Australia and the Netherlands. Gills and Wells (2014) warn that legitimacy rhetoric "privileges" donors by mirroring their beliefs and values. On GlobalGiving.com, also headquartered in the United States, charities may be crafting appeals for a western audience on a western-based platform in English since half are based in western nations and are writing legitimization rhetoric from a western perspective. The study's sample limits the study's findings to western legitimization strategies because charities are attempting to solicit funding from affluent, western societies, and may not best represent how non-western international charities craft appeals. In addition, the study seems to suggest that donors find charities that exhibit English proficiency as more legitimate, which may be a problematic criteria because it adds additional communication barriers to non-western charities seeking funds and may result in lower donation rates. Therefore, the study's conclusions on legitimization strategies may be limited to narratives in English without spelling or grammar errors.

These limitations reflect future opportunities for study. Academic research on charity crowdfunding rhetoric and legitimacy is highly underdeveloped and must be continued in order to better understand how charities are leveraging these new technologies and strategies to maximize donations. Three key areas for future research include: cause legitimacy, multichannel legitimacy rhetoric and multicultural legitimacy rhetoric.

Research on cause legitimacy should be expanded because there are several different types of cause categories that exist, from education and healthcare, to war and famine. In addition, there are some causes that are highly controversial, like religion. It is important to analyze these various causes to determine if there are underlying themes in their legitimation strategies or if they are radically different depending on type or level of controversy. Similarities or differences will highlight whether there are standard legitimation strategies that charities use across the board regardless of mission, or if charities use a specific set of strategies based on their distinct mission.

Second, additional research should be conducted on whether legitimation strategies are consistent across communication channels. In a multichannel communication world, charities are communicating to donors and potential donors across a variety of channels. Different communication channels serve various purposes and target different audience members, which beg the question of whether charities are consistent in their legitimation strategies across mediums. Research on this topic will increase a holistic understanding on non-profit legitimacy strategies in a modern communications world. Individual research projects on website, direct mail, social media and crowdfunding do not paint a full picture of how charities built legitimacy. Therefore, more research must be conducted to better understand how charities create a multichannel legitimation strategy.

The third area of research that should be expanded is multicultural crowdfunding legitimacy rhetoric. Different cultures have different values, belief systems and customs, but academia has not researched whether those values are reflected in crowdfunding legitimacy rhetoric. Since web-based crowdfunding is utilized on a global scale and has

an international audience reach, it is important to understand how multicultural nuances affect legitimation strategies. This research would assist international charities identify strategies to appeal to a global audience with radically different cultures.

Web-based crowdfunding is still a very new technology that society will learn to navigate for several more years. As the Internet continues to become a widespread, global communication tool, crowdfunding will become an increasingly important fundraising tool for charities. It is the quickest, easiest and cheapest way for charities to directly reach their intended audience and empower that audience to donate and help spread awareness. Although, like many other organizations, they will face the major challenge of cutting through the “digital noise” of constant advertisements and click bait in order to build a meaningful connection with their audience. Competition between platforms, charities and causes will grow as their numbers continue to proliferate. Charities will continue to secure donor trust and maximize monetary gifts by building legitimacy around their brand. Legitimacy thresholds for organizations requesting active, monetary support are much higher, therefore it is imperative that non-profits learn how to craft legitimate profiles in order to successfully gain donations and be successful.

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## APPENDIX A

Profile 1: “Emergency Response to Hurricane Mathew” – International Medical Corps, Haiti, Disaster Recovery

Profile 2: “End Child Marriage Through Education” – Shadhika Project Inc, India, Women & Girls

Profile 3: “Special Learners Deserve Music, Too!” – Guitars in the Classroom, United States, Animals

Profile 4: “Build Two School Classrooms for Youngest Students” – Outreach Uganda, Uganda, Education

Profile 5: “Enable Holistic HIV Care to over 13,000 Ugandans” – Alive Medical Services, Uganda, Health

Profile 6: “Help women increase their income with beekeeping” – ASAP Foundation, Burkina Faso, Economic Development

Profile 7: “Help 2.1m Children of Prisoners in Europe to Cope” – Children of Prisoners Europe, France, Children

Profile 8: “Jitegemee - Helping Street Children in Kenya” – Jitegemee, Kenya, Children

Profile 9: “Help prevent 700 children from drowning in Vietnam” – Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, Vietnam, Children

Profile 10: “Empower Youth Transition from Orphanage to Society” – Transicion a la Vida, Panama, Education

Profile 11: “Keep Massachusetts Youth Out of Court & In School” – Our Restorative Justice, United States, Children

Profile 12: “One Year Physiotherapy for 30 Burned Peruvian Kids” – Asociacion de Ayuda al Nino Quemado, Peru, Children

Profile 13: “Fight Malnutrition in Rural Guatemala” – Aldea Maya Assistance For Mayan Families Society, Guatemala, Health

Profile 14: “Weekend "Back to Nature program" – NPO Mirai no Mori, Japan, Children

Profile 15: “Enhance Access to Historical D.C Landmark” – House of the Temple Historic Preservation Foundation, Inc, United States, Arts & Culture

Profile 16: “Create a University in Koinadugu, Sierra Leone” – Project 1808, Inc, Sierra Leone, Education

Profile 17: “Give 110 Nepalese Families the Gift of Clean Water” – BridgIT Water Foundation, Nepal, Health

Profile 18: “Build 20-bed Shelter, Abused Girls, Sierra Leone” – Commit and Act E.V., Sierra Leone, Women & Girls