



# Generosity in Times of Crisis

Global Helping Behaviors During the  
COVID-19 Pandemic  
*Project Overview*

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# Project Overview

COVID-19 is a global health crisis unlike anything most of us have experienced in our lifetimes. Despite the devastation, there are some positive outcomes of this pandemic. Since the start of the pandemic, people have helped one another, donated money, given their time, and worked shoulder-to-shoulder to address some of the most pressing issues that our societies face. Understanding how philanthropic behavior manifests during times of crisis is of practical concern for governments, societies and nonprofits. This study contributes to an increased understanding of philanthropy, especially in times of crisis, by studying the conditions under which such behaviors may be threatened or promoted across different countries and cultures.

Although a great deal is known about particular forms of philanthropic behavior, such as charitable giving (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011) or volunteering (Clary and Snyder 1995), there is not yet a broader understanding of how philanthropy manifests in different cultures (Wiepking 2021), especially in times of crisis.

At the start of the COVID-19 crisis, we brought together philanthropy scholars from across the world, to study people's individual philanthropic response to COVID-19 in different countries. The pandemic presented a unique opportunity to study how people living across different countries and contexts, with various welfare and health systems, and different public and private responses to manage COVID-19, manifested generosity behaviors.

Between June and December of 2020, teams of researchers surveyed over 20,000 people in eleven countries (Australia, Austria, Iceland, Israel, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Russia, South Korea and the United States). We analyzed data to consider the prevalence of different generosity behaviors across countries, including informal helping (including participating in local and virtual mutual aid groups; donating to food banks; helping neighbors or strangers), formal volunteering, and charitable giving, and how these have been affected by the crisis. In a series of eleven reports, teams of researchers from the participating countries report on generosity behaviors displayed in their country during the first year of the pandemic, and indicate changes compared to pre-pandemic times. In addition, they provide implications for governments and nonprofit organizations on how to best support generosity behavior in times of crisis.

With *Global Generosity in Times of Crisis*, we aim to contribute to the theoretical and empirical understanding of generosity behavior across countries and cultures, especially in times of crisis. In addition, we will continue to work closely with representatives of governments and civil society organizations to communicate results and identify and implement policy implications.

## References

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