

Center for Philanthropic Studies

The Center for Philanthropic Studies at the Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam is the leading center of expertise on philanthropy in the Netherlands since 1995. By initiating and developing the longitudinal survey on Giving in the Netherlands, it has established itself as the primary source of information on giving by households, corporations, foundations and charity lotteries in the Netherlands.



“leading center of expertise on philanthropy in the Netherlands and Europe”

In 2008, it was one of the founders of the European Research Network On Philanthropy (ERNOP). Since then has become one of the leading research centers studying philanthropy in Europe.

The Center produces high quality research and courses, contributing to the professionalization of philanthropy. In its work, the Center exemplifies the movement towards *Science in Society* and *Responsible Research and Innovation*, combining academic and policy research, teaching, and valorization activities targeted at practitioners and the public at large.



The Center endorses the principles of open science. As Philanthropic Studies are multidisciplinary by nature, both teaching and research at the Center are fed by multiple disciplines, including the social and behavioral sciences (economics, psychology, sociology, public administration, organizational sciences) and law.

“endorses principles of open science”

The Center is highly visible in the national media and has expanded this position into Europe by its involvement in large and multiyear research projects. In the coming years, the Center focuses on international research projects and will be a key enabler of a Giving in Europe study.



Research at the Center for Philanthropic Studies quantifies the origin, destination and effects of philanthropy at the micro, meso and macro level in the form of charitable giving, volunteering, and bequest giving. All sources of contributions are studied, including households, foundations, charities, corporations and lotteries. In addition, the Center studies the behavior of nonprofit organizations, charities and foundations, as well as regulators and governments. As new forms of financing and collaboration enter the stage, the landscape of philanthropy changes. The Center is currently investigating crowdfunding, social enterprises, venture philanthropy and social impact investments.

“studies and develops concepts of new forms of philanthropy”

The Center for Philanthropic Studies has been funded primarily by contract research, advisory services and teaching activities, including post-graduate courses. Main

current funders include the Dutch government and the European Commission. To expand further into Europe, the Center seeks funding from the European Commission and private funders. Interested parties that seek collaboration with the Center are cordially invited to contact us.

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What we study

	EXPLAIN	DESCRIBE	PREDICT
	ORIGIN Causes	DESTINATION Nature and size	Effects Consequences
MACRO LEVEL Culture and country	Inequality, cohesion and diversity, fiscal regulation	A caring, generous society	Social cohesion, democracy, inequality
MESO LEVEL Organizations	Fundraising and transparency, campaigns	Charities, foundations and non-profits	Professionalization and cooperation
MICRO LEVEL People	Religion, socio-economic status, the eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving	Giving and volunteering by the different philanthropic actors involved	Happiness, increased trust and health benefits

Examples of descriptive questions:

What is the size and scope of philanthropy? What does a philanthropic society look like? How does the size and scope of philanthropy differ between countries? Which organizations are the recipients of philanthropic donations? What is the amount involved that is spent by endowed foundations? Who volunteers? Who donates? What percentage of the population is involved in crowdfunding? How does philanthropy develop over time?

Examples of explanatory questions:

Why do people engage in philanthropic behavior? Why are some societies more philanthropic than others? For what reason are some philanthropic organizations more effective in fundraising than others? What are the motives of wealthy individuals to establish a foundation? Why do corporations choose to engage in corporate social responsibility and venture philanthropy? What explanations can we give for the difference in philanthropic giving to culture compared to international aid? What is the role of transparency within philanthropic organizations?

Examples of questions that predict:

What are the effects of philanthropic behavior? Are volunteers happier, healthier and do they live longer because of their voluntary work? Can we predict the effect of philanthropy as source of income on the management of a non-profit organization? What will be the implications of a shift towards entrepreneurial philanthropy by fundraising foundations? To what extent does philanthropy contribute to a more democratic society?

“The Center for Philanthropic Studies investigates origins, destination and effects of philanthropy at the micro, meso and macro-level”