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## Article

# To survive in the COVID-19 pandemic: The financial aspects of NGOs

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# To Survive in the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Financial Aspects of NGOs

Halina Waniak-Michalak<sup>1</sup> , Sviesa Leitonienė<sup>2</sup> , and Ivana Perica<sup>3</sup> 

## ABSTRACT

On the one hand, during the COVID-19 pandemic, NGOs are under pressure to provide more support. On the other hand, these organisations are facing new challenges that limit their activities, for example, a lack of volunteers and the inability to continue programs, raise funds, and serve beneficiaries. Despite these challenges, some NGOs have been forced to close down, while others have successfully collected funds and developed their activity. Therefore, this article aims to research how NGOs changed their funding models to overcome fundraising problems during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study investigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various non-profits in Poland, Lithuania, Croatia, and the United Kingdom. The results of the content analysis showed that critical success factors were: additional projects, public funds, collaboration with the government, the use of grants, additional funding from the funder, virtual fundraising and campaigning, collaboration with other NGOs, combined resources, implementation of joint projects, and the cooperation with the funders. The logistic regression analysis results supported the hypothesis that the financial success of NGOs during the COVID-19 pandemic depended on a change in the funding model and on a shift in financing from the corporate funder. However, despite the better financial results of NGOs, non-financial results were worse in times of crisis.

**KEY WORDS:** nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, COVID-19 pandemic, mission models, fundraising.

**JEL Classification:** L31, L38, L39.

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## 1. Introduction

During the crisis, the role of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) is growing in ensuring that support reaches the most vulnerable regarding health, social and economic conditions (Santos & Laureano, 2022; Simo & Bies, 2007). The crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was no exception, during which some NGOs had to cope with the increased demand for their services related to health care, food, shelter, and other essentials (Johnson et al., 2021; Santos &

Laureano, 2022). While there is a wealth of research that analyses the activities and challenges of NGOs in times of crisis (Arik et al., 2016; Lin & Wang, 2016; Tzifakis et al., 2017; ), the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is different from, for example, the recent financial crisis (Olawoye-Mann, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic caused the worst global macro-economic shock since the Great Depression, causing long-term economic, social, and psychological consequences in the entire world (Zhang et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2022).

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Despite pressure on NGOs to provide more support, these organisations face new challenges, for example, the lack of volunteers due to health-related reasons or fear of contracting the coronavirus (Deitrick et al., 2020a). Meanwhile, according to Tzifakis et al. (2017), the number of volunteers reached a record high during the 2008 financial crisis, which helped the non-profit sector recover. Moreover, the inability to continue programs, raise funds, or serve beneficiaries or customers is due to governments' politics on movement restrictions (Deitrick et al., 2020b; Johnson et al., 2021). As a result, there was a need to introduce new technologies that enable NGOs to work remotely (Ihm & Kim, 2021). In addition, the sales revenues of these organisations have also decreased (Deitrick et al., 2020a; Johnson et al., 2021).

Under these unprecedented conditions, NGOs need the help of researchers to determine how the crisis is affecting their ability to continue operations and fulfil the going concern assumption. According to Santos and Laureano (2022), one could distinguish the following main directions of COVID-19-related studies of NGOs: application of technology, impact on citizens as beneficiaries, collaborative models, health-care access, and civil society participation. Although all of these studies contribute in some way to the investigation of NGOs' challenges during the pandemic period, there are still several unanswered questions regarding NGO fundraising, human resources, and technology (Bin-Nashwan et al., 2020; Brañas-Garza et al., 2020; Finchum-Mason et al., 2020).

This article aims to research how NGOs changed their funding models to overcome fundraising problems during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have decided that the success indicator for NGOs is the amount of funds raised to conduct activities, not the financial result or the level of costs (Rhoden, 2014). The pandemic caused great difficulties for NGOs to raise money through existing channels, such as public collections. Therefore, it was a success for NGOs to maintain revenues during the pandemic at the current level or higher than in previous years. Such a situation would ensure that they could continue their activities substantially unchanged.

We will use the concept of Osterwalder and Black (Osterwalder, 2016) in the paper and name the models of NGOs operating as mission models instead of

business models. We believe as Osterwalder and Black (Osterwalder, 2016) do, that NGOs do not orient activities towards making money, increasing the value of the company, but use resources and a budget to solve a particular problem and create value for a set of beneficiaries (customers, support organisations, warfighters, congress, the country, etc.). For such organisations, some canvas boxes need to be replaced by others, as they do not exist or are irrelevant in NGOs. Examples are customer segments (changed to beneficiaries), customer relationships (changed to buy-in/support labelled revenue streams), and distribution channel changes (changed to deployment).

We applied content analysis of NGOs' financial reports and statistical analysis of financial results of NGOs to answer the research question: how have NGOs changed their financing models to overcome the fundraising problems during the COVID-19 pandemic? We used logit regression to check the relation between the success or failure (increase or decrease of NGOs revenues) and the critical success factors identified in the qualitative analysis.

The study showed that several elements of the mission model canvas have changed, such as beneficiaries (focus on supporting people affected by COVID-19), value proposition (change in the form of aid delivery and types of aid), channels of communication (shift from face-to-face to the remote state of communication), funding streams (grants to realise activities focused on the fight against COVID-19 consequences and introduction of new fundraising methods).

Our study has found that most NGOs have improved their financial results during the pandemic, perhaps by reducing the activities of other organisations or by factors we did not consider. The most important finding in our study is that a pandemic or economic crisis can have a dual impact on the financial situation of NGOs. The empirical results confirm McCambridge and Dietz's (2020) earlier research that some non-profit organisations never fully recover, while others are in better shape after a crisis.

This study investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various non-profits. We selected three countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Croatia, Lithuania, and Poland) with different levels of development of the NGOs' sector (Waniak-Michalak et al., 2020). We also chose the United Kingdom, where

restrictions in the COVID-19 pandemic were introduced very late compared with other countries. The United Kingdom is also one of the countries with the highest level of NGO sector development (Waniak-Michalak et al., 2022). For comparison purposes, we chose the United Kingdom because of the available database of NGO reports and the high level of development of the NGO sector. Our goal was to determine whether the level of NGO sector development may have influenced the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on NGO business models. NGO reporting in the UK is highly developed and access to these reports is also high. We assumed that in looking for solutions to NGOs' coping with the consequences of the pandemic, the best source of information would be reports from British NGOs.

It is the second part of a larger project. In its first part, we surveyed NGO managers in Poland, Lithuania, and Croatia (Waniak-Michalak et al., 2022). Respondents admitted that the most significant changes were introduced in the communication field, which caused temporary problems with the ability to perform tasks. However, some organisations decided to "wait out" the difficult period by not making any changes, assuming that everything would soon return to "normality". The statistical survey conducted on the data provided in the financial statements of NGOs also confirmed the main conclusion of the study that the COVID-19 pandemic had a twofold impact on the financial situation of NGOs. Not all NGOs were forced to reduce their activities - many of them using new funding sources (grants for pandemic-related projects) achieved higher revenues in 2020 than in previous years.

We provide evidence and contribute to the literature by examining the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic crisis in the non-profit sector. Our study contributes to the current debate on the problem of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities of NGOs. Understanding the problem faced by non-profit organisations is essential not only to non-profit organisations but also to the government and other stakeholders. This study seeks to highlight the challenges that non-profits currently face and contributes to the scarce literature on the effects of COVID-19, especially when non-profit organisations are considered.

The paper is organised as follows. The article reviews charitable giving in social theory and then reviews previous studies on charitable giving in crisis. The next section explains the hypotheses and research methodology, followed by the analysis of the results. The final section consists of a discussion and conclusions.

## 2. Theoretical background

According to the perspective theory of social problems (Maris, 1988), problems in society require prior identification and definition to be recognised as problems. They may be behaviours, trends or social conditions perceived as a threat to society. Social problems can be defined by the government or NGOs, among others, to prepare actions to solve them. Problems that cannot be solved, and there are no resources to overcome them, are marginalised. To this end, NGOs or the government can manipulate people's emotions by influencing their behaviour, although this manipulation can also have negative consequences. (Huda, 2020; 2021). What is collectively recognised as a social problem and what should be done about it changes over time, depending on cultural, political and economic influences (Blumer, 1971). According to the social constructionist view of social problems, some problems do not have a chance to become critical social problems if citizens, policymakers, or other parties do not call attention to the condition or behaviour (Rubington & Weinberg, 2010). However, the global scope of the COVID-19 pandemic made the disease a significant issue facing governments worldwide. All decisions in economics, health care and social welfare were subordinated to the impact of the pandemic.

The success of NGOs depends on their ability to turn a condition or behaviour into a social problem or to convince the government to take some action - specifically spending and policy-making - to address the issue. In addition, NGOs depend on resources to achieve mission-related goals, and the survival and development of the organisation depend on their ability to maintain an overall good financial position (Lin & Wang, 2016). Researchers paid much attention to the importance of NGO financial activities, and some financial indicators

were suggested to help understand what determines NGOs' activities. However, research and practice show that it is important to assess other factors that contribute to an NGO's success, including the NGO's strategy or the ability of managers to act, especially in times of crisis (Lin & Wang, 2016; Tzifakis et al., 2017).

Times of crisis result in financial difficulties for many non-profit organisations because NGOs require various funding sources to survive, and their ability to obtain these resources is critical to their success. Grants and donations are vital funding sources for NGOs' operation and survival, but the proportion of such financing in total funding declines due to global events such as economic crises and natural disasters (Khieng, 2014). Existing socio-economic conditions in times of crisis limit NGOs' engagement and activity in the community because times of crisis are not merely an external force hindering the NGOs' activity but disturb all civil society's infrastructure (Simiti, 2017). In times of crisis, NGOs employ diverse solutions to support their organisational capacity and financial sustainability. The existing literature has pointed out some key factors that support an NGO's activities and contribute to an NGO's success in times of crisis. Differences in many factors: the quality of its management, the generosity of its supporters, the size of its capital, and its capacity to withstand revenue fluctuations put some non-profits in a favourable position to resist times of crisis, while others are vulnerable (Tuckman & Chang, 1991). Studies have documented that well-coordinated collaboration and partnership between public managers and local governments with non-profit organisations contribute to an NGO's success and effective disaster response (Kapucu, 2007; Brudney & Gazley, 2009). NGOs' constant innovation and adaptation strategies also lead them to cope with changes in tasks, proactively assess hostile influences, and quickly react to crises (Mano, 2010). In the context of NGOs' management, Lindqvist (2012) showed that stakeholder management in non-profit organisations becomes much more central to long-term financial management than preparations for an economic crisis. Even though an economic crisis certainly affects short-term

funding, he pointed out that long-term stakeholder management makes non-profit organisations less vulnerable in times of financial crisis.

The literature also highlighted the significance of multiple-location NGOs (Chikoto et al., 2013), the size and age of the NGO and the experience of its financial manager (Strydom & Stephen, 2014), social ties and networks (Hillig & Connell, 2018), as significant aspects of the absence of financial distress during a crisis.

Researchers have also examined various NGOs' employed financial management practices that affected non-profit organisations' ability to survive economic crises. Strydom and Stephen (2014) found that factors such as possession of sufficient reserves and a separate finance committee were significant aspects of the absence of financial distress during a crisis. Arik et al. (2016) analysed the strategic responses used by non-profit organisations during the economic crisis. Their results indicated that diversification of funding may not always be the right way to go. They suggested that non-profits must explore whether it is more valuable to focus on a few sources of revenue within the funding stream. For instance, some sources of revenue, such as grants from donor-advised funds, remain stable despite recession conditions (Heist and Vance-McMullen, 2019), while commercial revenue compromises non-profit financial health in disaster contexts (Chen, 2022). Irvin and Furneaux (2022) argued for a resilience strategy with substantive reserves as a stabilising force for the black swan event.

Although researchers have pointed out some key factors that support NGOs' activities and contribute to an NGO's success in times of crisis, the new context during the COVID-19 pandemic faced NGOs with new challenges. In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, most states had stay-at-home restrictions. Despite the organisations' lack of experience in dealing with a pandemic, the COVID-19 pandemic forced organisations to adapt quickly to new circumstances, explore real-time solutions, and adjust their goals, decisions, actions, and communications (Passetti et al., 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, NGOs had to survive and combat the different political, social, and economic

sides of the effects of pandemic COVID-19. Recent literature already showed significant consequences of COVID-19 for the functioning of NGOs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NGOs experienced numerous financial and programmatic challenges and barriers, such as loss of their revenues, transforming mission models, adjusting program delivery, and lack of technical capacity, which is crucial to adapting to delivering programs online (Loomis, 2020).

In their research, Kim and Mason (2020) also showed that most non-profit organisations experienced an immediate impact on their programs and financing. They found that non-profit organisations such as arts and culture organisations were more severely affected than human service organisations. Their results confirmed the benefits of operating reserves for NGOs; those NGOs with more reserves were less likely to reduce operating hours, lose staff, or experience difficulty acquiring supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides organisational capacity, a philanthropic organisation's capacity to act in a pandemic crisis and respond to the community's needs depends on the stock of community capital (Paarlberg et al., 2020).

McMullin and Raggo (2020) point out that non-profit organisations could not have prepared for all the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and discuss the preparedness of governance through the stages of the COVID-19 crisis. They suggest that organisations with governance configurations that are more suited to predictable environments will generally experience shifts in management and leadership activities as they move through the stages of the COVID-19 crisis. In their study, Deitrick et al. (2020a) found that in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, NGOs are responding to COVID-19 challenges by shifting programs online, working remotely, and collaborating in a new way while demand for NGO services is increasing. They reported that 71% of non-profits are experiencing service disruption, over 60% of all non-profits report declining individual donations, and there had been a significant hollowing out of the non-profit workforce in times of pandemic, layoffs, reduced hours, and reduced pay, stress,

and anxiety of staff and clients. The COVID-19 pandemic impacts NGOs' workforce and could jeopardise their commitment to the sector because it potentially alters how they think of their work and career intentions (Kuenzi et al., 2021).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the studies mentioned above, which analyze the activities of NGOs during crises, point out that the crisis basically affected all NGOs' activity spheres. However, little evidence exists on the actual distinctiveness of non-profit organisations in dealing with the pandemic and how non-profit organisations used changes in the funding models to survive. Our study adds to the literature by researching how NGOs' mission models have changed to maintain or improve NGOs' finances during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, it was possible to understand that other social problems and diseases do not exist. Many laboratories and institutions researching diseases unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic were closed. Research charities struggled to find funding, which has since changed purpose and availability (Sohrabi et al., 2021). Many companies and NGOs allocated most of their resources to fight the pandemic, i.e. sewing masks for medical staff and rehabilitating the recovered. Previous research conducted by the authors of the article (survey research) indicates that some organisations gained from the pandemic (mainly those operating in health and social care) and organisations pursuing objectives related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our study aims to detail the results of the survey research and to determine the correspondence of data obtained from the reports of NGOs with the answers of the survey research respondents. Based on qualitative (content analysis) and quantitative (statistical analysis of data from NGOs' reports), we want to determine how NGOs' mission models have changed. We want to answer whether focusing on eliminating specific problems helped to maintain or improve their financial situation determined by their income level.

### 3. Methodology

Our study consists of two main phases: qualitative and quantitative. In the qualitative part

of the research, we plan to answer the research question: how did NGOs change their financing models to overcome the fundraising problems during the COVID-19 pandemic?

In this part, we will analyse NGOs' financial reports to gather information on what they had to do to keep their revenues on the required level and fulfil their mission goals.

In the quantitative part of the research, we will verify the hypothesis constructed based on our conclusions from the qualitative analysis.

We use logit regression to test the relationship between NGOs' financial success or failure during the pandemic and the critical success factors identified in the qualitative analysis. We decided that financial success during the pandemic was achieved by NGOs that raised more funds during the study period or maintained revenues at their current level. The funds received by NGOs determine the level of their statutory costs and, thus, the size of their activities. As NGOs do not aim for an excess of revenues over costs, it can be assumed that as revenues increase, costs will increase too. A positive difference between revenues and costs can be due to various reasons and does not necessarily prove NGOs' good financial situation and management (Zdanovskis & Pilvere, 2019). Hence, we decided to focus on the level of NGO revenues as a measure of their financial success and omit the change in costs.

The study includes 240 randomly selected NGOs in Poland, Croatia, Lithuania and Great Britain (with 6% error and 95% confidence level, 60 NGOs from every country, the population was a total number of NGOs in four countries). We used national registers of NGOs in every country to choose the charities for the research. We decided not to use a proportional share of NGOs from each country because of the significant differences in the number of active NGOs in Croatia and Lithuania and the other two countries. Then the number of Lithuanian and Croatian NGOs in the sample would have to be very low. The first three countries are the authors' countries of origin. The analysis of the reports in a particular country requires knowledge of the national language. For comparison purposes, we chose the United

Kingdom (an English-speaking country) because of the available database of NGO reports and the high level of development of the NGO sector. Our goal was to determine whether the level of NGO sector development may have influenced the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on NGO business models.

We collected the data on NGOs' revenues (total, grants and donations) for two periods. The first included the pandemic and lockdown (2020), and the second -time before the pandemic (2019). For NGOs whose reporting period ended in March, we considered revenues from the pandemic time as reported on 31 March 2021, and revenues before the pandemic - as reported on 31 March 2020. We divided the sample into two subsamples- NGOs that received higher or the same revenues in the pandemic and NGOs that received smaller financing. Then, we conducted the content analysis of NGO reports searching for information on the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on NGOs' actions, revenues and fundraising methods. We concluded by forming hypotheses. We performed a regression analysis of the relation between the positive or negative change of NGOs' revenues (dichotomous variable) in the COVID-19 pandemic and the defined in the content analysis critical success factors.

#### 4. Content Analysis Results

Our research has shown that during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during lockdowns, NGOs faced many challenges in fundraising, field-work, and communicating with beneficiaries. Lockdowns significantly restricted the abilities of NGOs to communicate their work, and this aspect of fundraising development inevitably paused. Financing financial reserves from previous years rescued organisations that could not run fundraising activities virtually during the lockdown period. However, some organisations achieved higher revenues in 2020 than in 2019, which creates the question of what success factors determined that some NGOs succeeded in the COVID-19 pandemic and others had to suspend or significantly reduce their activities due to lower financial resources.

Detailed analysis showed that NGOs that report-



ed higher revenues compared to the pre-pandemic period tried to adapt their operating models to the changing reality. Some organisations also achieved higher profitability due to reduced operation costs (reduced costs of maintaining infrastructure and personal contacts due to the lockdown). An example is an organization that helps adults with liver disease and liver cancer in the UK. The decrease in costs was planned, but at the same time forced by the change in the form of its activity, from face-to-face, to virtual (British Liver Trust, 2021).

The majority (87% of succeeded charities) undertook additional projects aimed at reducing the negative impact of the pandemic and financed from public funds, such as: supporting families with financial problems caused by the pandemic, organising online educational activities for children, and supporting people excluded from access to health care because of the pandemic. For example, the UK charity working solely to improve the lives of children and young people with disabilities in Africa started a project with partners in Rwanda and Tanzania to train parents in home-based schooling and set up Covid-safe, low-cost community learning hubs (Able Child Africa, 2021). Collaboration with the government and using grants to remove the harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have also been extremely helpful for NGOs. NGOs funded by corporations often received additional funding from the funder. A similar situation was observed in other countries. For example, a study by Olawoye-Mann (2021) shows that NGOs have survived this pandemic by applying for Canada's public and private COVID-19-related funds. Moreover, Finchum-Mason et al. (2021) confirmed the fact in their study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on non-profits in Washington State, USA.

Some organisations were more active and implemented more projects during the COVID-19 pandemic than before, like the organisation supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. These people experienced many additional problems during the pandemic that the foundation had to address. Because of isolation, they couldn't access shower blocks and toilets for families in caravans. Another example is the problematic situation of

self-employed and low-educated travellers whose work dried up and who struggled to access financial support and food.

Despite all these problems, some organisations increased their activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It appeared that the pandemic caused additional problems to solve by NGOs and increased the meaning of certain activities, services, and areas of life. For example, the lockdown encouraged many people to take up courses, training, and activities in the arts and music, as The Young Lives Foundation (YLF) wrote in the report (2021):

During the first 12 months of the pandemic, YLF experienced more than a 40% increase in demand for support, particularly from schools and families. Much of this demand related to the emotional impact the pandemic had on young people and difficulties in adjusting from the isolation to a return to school and pre-pandemic ways of life. (p.6)

Moving most activities to the virtual world was the key to success for NGOs operating during the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual fundraising and campaigning proved easier and less costly than traditional activities. As one foundation demonstrated, despite a drop in donations from public collections during community events, it achieved a 34 % increase in revenue from online fundraising. The number of people following Facebook increased by 17%. Some organisations have even openly acknowledged the benefits of virtual operations and intend to make it a permanent part of their business model. For example, British Liver Trust wrote in the report (2021):

In March 2020, as the UK entered lockdown, we began trialling virtual support groups. These proved hugely successful in providing liver patients and their relatives with a way to stay connected, and we are now widening their use to benefit more patients and reach more people, including many who might normally have been unable to attend a face-to-face group because they live in a remote location or are too ill to travel. (p.9)

Olawoye-Mann (2021), who studied the actions of Canadian NGOs during the pandemic to ensure adaptability and survival, found similar key short-term reactive strategies of NGOs. These strategies have included the virtualisation of many NGO ser-



vices and organisational systems, including fund-raising events, stakeholder meetings, volunteering, administrative activities, and virtual advertising (Lachance, 2020). The importance of NGOs moving online has also been singled out in a study by Mikołajczak et al. (2022).

Our analysis of the information in the NGOs' reports shows that a critical success factor was the ability to run paid activity. As we can read in the report of Polish foundation, Fundacja S.O.S. Dla Zwierząt (2020):

2020 was a very difficult year for the foundation. Due to the pandemic, we were unable to run hippo-therapy and dog therapy courses. For the first time since 2010, we did not run classes in educational institutions..... (p.1)

Also, for some organisations, the way to achieve better results than in 2019 was to collaborate with other NGOs (i.e. Able Child Africa) combine resources, and implement joint projects where each organisation's core competencies drove success. An example can be Bupa Foundation, that in coop-

eration with three other charities run project "My 2020" supporting young people's mental health (National Literacy Trust, 2021).

The cooperation and understanding of the situation by the funders also turned out to be crucial. As one of the Greggs Foundation pointed out in 2020 report:

We are extremely grateful to the support of our partners and funders whose contributions have meant that we were able to support more children and families than we would otherwise have been able to reach alone. To extend the scheme's reach at this important time the Greggs Foundation trustees backed the hardship fund with an additional £1 million from their investment reserves. (p.6).

Analysing the reports of NGOs that achieved higher revenues during the COVID-19 pandemic than in the previous year, we noticed that despite better financial results, non-financial results were worse. NGOs indicate that many and sometimes most of their activities had to be suspended. In-patient assistance could not be provided, which

**Table 1**  
*Independent Variables Included in the Regression Model*

Variable	Definition	Expected relation's sign	Source
G- the change of grants' share in total revenues in 2020	Binary variable: 1, if the change was positive or there was no change and 0 if the change was negative).	+	Content analysis; Khieng, (2014); Heist and Vance-Mc-Mullen (2019); Olawoye-Mann (2021); Finchum-Mason et al. (2021)
CF- corporate foundation	Binary variable: 1, if the NGO is a corporate foundation and 0 otherwise.	+	Content analysis; Olawoye-Mann (2021)
CFD- the change of donations' value from the corporate founder	Binary variable: 1, if the change was positive or there was no change and 0 if the change was negative.	+	Content analysis; Olawoye-Mann (2021); Finchum-Mason et al. (2021)
PA- the change of paid activity in total revenues in 2020	Binary variable: 1, if the change was positive or there was no change and 0 if the change was negative.	+	Content analysis; Chen (2022)

Source: results of own research conducted in 2022

was an insurmountable obstacle for the sick and disabled. Many organisations moved their activities to the online space. Still, as some of the organisations pointed out, telephone counselling through social media, email, and educational or informational activities did not fully ensure the fulfilment of the NGOs' objectives. In conclusion, we find that despite the half-hearted financial success of some NGOs, most of them failed during the COVID-19 pandemic. An example can be words of the Ocean Conservation Trust Limited (2020):

With the impact of COVID-19 the Aquarium had to close on Friday 20 March. The main income for the charity comes from admission tickets and then retail and catering income, so the charity will effectively have no income during this time of closure. (p.10)

To summarize our findings from the analysis of NGO reports, the ways to raise funds during the Covid-19 pandemic were: use of savings on operating costs, using public funds, receiving additional support from a funder, online fundraising, starting paid activity, funding projects jointly with other NGOs.

Based on our conclusions from the content analysis, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H1. The financial success of NGOs during the pandemic COVID-19 depended on a change in the funding model

H2. The financial success of NGOs during the pandemic COVID-19 depended on a change in financing from the corporate founder

We use logit regression to confirm or reject formulated hypotheses as the dependent variable (Success=1 and Failure=0) is on a dichotomous scale (it takes values between 0-1). We develop two equations of regression (1 and 2):

$$S(1/G, CF, PA) = \frac{e^{a_0 + b_1 \cdot G + b_2 \cdot CF + b_3 \cdot PA}}{1 + e^{a_0 + b_1 \cdot G + b_2 \cdot CF + b_3 \cdot PA}} \quad (1)$$

$$S(1/G, CFD, PA) = \frac{e^{a_0 + b_1 \cdot G + b_2 \cdot CFD + b_3 \cdot PA}}{1 + e^{a_0 + b_1 \cdot G + b_2 \cdot CFD + b_3 \cdot PA}} \quad (2)$$

Variables included in the regression model are presented in the Table 1.

## 5. Results of Quantitative Research

The primary analysis supported our findings from the content analysis. The structure analysis (ANOVA

test) showed no significant differences in the change in financial models of NGOs at the time of the pandemic in different countries (Table 2). However, there are noticeable differences between NGOs that achieved an increase in revenues and those whose incomes in 2020 were lower than before the pandemic.

The analysis also showed that the share of grants in funding NGOs' activities during the pandemic increased significantly in organisations that failed to generate higher revenues in 2020. However, this was due to a decrease in other funding sources, not an increase in grants. The analysis of the grants' change revealed that successful NGOs managed to receive higher grants in 2020 than other NGOs.

The logit regression allowed us to confirm the existence of the relationship between the financial success of NGOs during the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes in their financing models (Table 3).

The study found that model 4 is the most fitted. The f & Snell R Square and Nagelkerke R Square values indicate that between 24,5% and 32,7% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by this set of independent variables. Therefore, we can state that the major factors influencing whether an NGO reaches success in the pandemic are: the increase/decrease of public grants, change of paid activity and a change of donation from the corporate founder. The most significant factor influencing the success of NGOs during a pandemic is the change of donation done by a corporate funder (Exp [B]=8.09). This result confirms the findings of the qualitative study. In the reports, foundations highlighted the importance of founder support.

In some cases, the corporate founder donations increase by several hundred per cent. The second success factor is the increase in public grants (Exp [B]=3.45). During the COVID-19 pandemic, public financing was most often received by NGOs whose projects included eliminating the harmful effects of the epidemic and lockdown. The least important factor was the increased share of paid activities in funding NGOs' projects. One of the reasons may have been the limited possibility of carrying out paid activities during the lockdown. The statistical analysis results support our conclusions drawn from the content analysis of the NGOs' reports. Thus, we accept hypotheses H1 and H2.

Table 2

Changes of founding	Country	N	Mean	Std. De- viation	95% Con- fidence Interval for Mean	Minimum	Maximum	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Change in total rev- enues	Poland	60	10.66%	56.75%	-5.47%	26.79%	-76.4%	213.4%
	Croatia	60	6.25%	41.21%	-4.30%	16.80%	-56.5%	97.10%
	Lithuania	60	22.37%	64.47%	-1.27%	46.02%	-0.56%	2.22%
	UK	60	-0.81%	43.21%	-12.60%	10.99%	-95.9%	91.5%
	Total	240	7.98%	50.36%	0.89%	15.07%	-95.9%	213.40%
Grant share in total revenues	Poland	60	31.26%	36.65%	21.79%	40.72%	0	96.69%
	Croatia	60	36.30%	39.49%	26.19%	46.41%	0	100.00%
	Lithuania	60	30.18%	31.66%	11.49%	28.12%	0	98.68%
	UK	60	19.81%	30.46%	18.57%	41.79%	0	99.50%
	Total	240	29.58%	35.62%	24.69%	34.48%	0	100.00%
Change in total rev- enues	Failure**	119	-26.17%	22.55%	-30.76%	-21.57%	-93.87%	-0.002%
	Success*	121	40.10%	48.13%	30.60%	49.60%	0.76%	222.06%
Grant share in total revenues in 2020	Failure	119	28.78%	37.86%	21.39%	36.18%	0.00%	100.00%
	Success	121	30.38%	33.40%	23.86%	36.91%	0.00%	99.50%
Grant share in total revenues in 2019	Failure	119	24.77%	37.02%	17.53%	32.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	Success	121	27.37%	32.77%	20.96%	33.77%	0.00%	99.55%
Change of grants in 2020	Failure	119	59.60%	352.71%	-9.33%	128.54%	-100.00%	2778.60%
	Success	121	67.45%	239.19%	20.70%	114.20%	-148.81%	2030.62%

\* Success- the positive change of revenues in 2020 or the same amount as in 2019

\*\* Failure- the negative change of revenues in 2020 in comparison with 2019,

Source: results of own research conducted in 2022

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The recent COVID -19 pandemic distressed the whole world in many ways. Along with its diverse harmful impacts on the business of different profit organisations, COVID-19 also influenced the activities of non-profit organisations. Non-profit organisations are exposed to various fundraising problems on which their existence depends. In this regard, we were motivated by the distinctiveness of non-profit organisations to deal with the pandemic using a change in the fund-

ing model to survive. This study aimed to research how NGOs changed their funding models to overcome fundraising problems during the COVID-19 pandemic . The study first focused on the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on NGOs’ actions, revenues, and fundraising methods using content analysis. The content analysis showed that despite the sudden coronavirus epidemic that inevitably stopped fundraising development among non-profit organisations, some non-profit organisations still generated higher revenues in 2020

**Table 3***Logit Regression Statistics for the Dependent Variable- The Success of NGOs in the Pandemic*

	B	S.E.	p	B	S.E.	p	B	S.E.	p	B	S.E.	p
G <sup>a</sup>							1.438***	0.302	<.001	1.625***	0.314	<.001
Gsig <sup>b</sup>	0.444	0.281	.114	0.647	0.289	.025						
				*								
PA <sup>c</sup>	1.113***	0.339	.001	1.224	0.351	<.001	1.190***	0.355	<.001	1.345 ***	0.374	<.001
				***								
CP <sup>d</sup>	0.370	0.389	.342				.698	0.404	.084			
CFD <sup>e</sup>				1.883	0.464	<.001				2.158 ***	0.483	<.001
				***								
Constant	-0.464	0.215	.597		0.224	.675	-.906***	0.222	<.001	-1.197***	0.237	<.001
				-0.762								
Cox & Snell R Square	.055			.128			.138			.214		
Nagelkerke R Square	.073			.170			.185			.285		

Note. N = 240 (n = 60 for each country)

a 1 = positive change or no change, 0 = negative change. b1-positive or no change; 0-negative change. c1-positive or no change; 0-negative change. d1=yes, 0-not. e1-positive or no change; 0-negative change

\*\*p &lt; .05. \*\*\*p &lt; .01.

Source: results of own research conducted in 2022

than in 2019 because they tried to adapt their mission models to the new situation. Detailed analysis showed that critical success factors were: additional projects, public funds, collaboration with the government, the use of grants, additional funding from the funder, virtual fundraising and campaigning, collaboration with other NGOs, combined resources, implement joint projects, and the cooperation with the funders.

Continuing on the results shown by the content analysis, in this study, we also examined the impact of a change in the funding model adopted by non-profit organisations to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic on financial success. By applying the logistic regression analysis, results supported our hypotheses that the financial success of NGOs during the COVID-19 pandemic depended on a change in the funding model and on a shift in financing from the corporate founder.

The analysis has identified the funding models influencing an NGOs success in a pandemic. The most significant funding model that affected the success of NGOs during a pandemic is the donation done by a corporate funder, followed by the increase in public grants. Paid activities were the least essential funding model in funding NGOs' projects.

Based on these findings, we have performed some important implications for the theory and contribution to practice. This study gives insights into how non-profit organisations finance in uncertain times and which funding models help them fulfil their mission. Our study implies that variables such as donations from a corporate funder and increased public grants help overcome the fundraising problem in times of crisis. This study contributes to the literature of non-profit organisations during the COVID-19 crisis

by proposing a change in the funding model for survivability in times of crisis.

Further, the results of our study also show that despite better financial results, non-financial results were worse in times of crisis. NGOs indicated that many activities had to be suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, generally, the results of this study query for funding models for non-profit organisations to prevent failures and suspended activities of non-profit organisations for the coming crises. This study emphasises the need to consider funding models according to which non-profit organisations would create new conditions to protect their activities. This fact also supports the theoretical assumptions indicating that the attention of governments focused on the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the activity models of NGOs. The objectives of the projects have changed. The relevance of other problems has been marginalised, which may lead to their accumulation in the future. Further changes in the mission models of NGOs can be expected in the coming years due to the war in Ukraine.

Finally, we are aware of the limitations of this study since we used only four countries to analyse the funding models adopted by non-profit organisations to cope with COVID-19. This issue should encourage future researchers to investigate and compare the results obtained in this study with other countries.

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