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Private fundraising and funding for civic activities in the Belarusian diaspora in Poland

Analytical report

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About the study

This report is intended primarily for Belarusian civil society organisations (CSOs) and initiatives that already raise donations from the diaspora in Poland or are just getting started. The Civitta Institute team addresses the main questions that, in our assessment, anyone starting a fundraising campaign will face. What kind of projects are Belarusians[1] willing to donate to? How can they be motivated to give, and what barriers need to be removed? How can appeals be communicated more effectively to the intended audience? Our recommendations are based on data from a survey of Belarusians and in-depth interviews with major private donors and CSO representatives.

Belarusian organisations in exile rely largely on funding from international foundations. However, the freeze on US aid in 2025 demonstrated that grant support alone does not ensure sustainability. Developing additional funding sources is vital, and diaspora donations could be one option.

Diaspora fundraising holds considerable potential. More than 163,000 Belarusians live in Poland. Many left for political reasons and tend to earn above-average incomes. The culture of giving is also well established there. Many Belarusian CSOs are already successfully building private fundraising. The BYSOL Foundation, for example, raised over 1.25 million euros in 2025. Some organisations have found that the 1.5% income tax allocation has become a significant part of their budget[2]. Niche initiatives such as Maldzis and *Ministerstva Sepultury have successfully established private donor communities.*

However, despite this potential, many fundraising campaigns fail to achieve their goals. For example, a Belarusian cultural organisation in Poland[3] launched a series of campaigns over the past year, most of which failed to raise the desired amount. This is despite the fact that the cause is relevant, the audience is loyal, and the organisation is led by a well-respected public figure.

Why fundraisers fall short of their goals: A case study of a Belarusian cultural organisation in Poland

In recent years, the organisation launched four fundraising campaigns that failed to meet their stated goals. These were: a campaign to publish a book on cultural studies; a campaign to support political prisoners; a campaign for a festival; and a campaign for operating expenses[4]. These fundraising campaigns have strong potential because they address popular causes among Belarusian donors, such as promoting Belarusian culture and supporting political prisoners.

The campaigns are well organised to make donations easy. They are listed on several crowdfunding platforms, allowing donors to choose a convenient format, currency, and amount. Donors can allocate a portion of their Personal Income Tax (PIT) to the organisation, or donate directly.

Effective communication strategies have been employed. For instance, the organisation's director provided several lengthy interviews to Belarusian media outlets regarding the fundraiser for the cultural studies book.

1 For the purposes of this text, the term «Belarusians» refers to Belarusians living in Poland.

2 For instance, the Belarusian Solidarity Centre states that «this money has become the foundation of the BSC's annual budget».

3 We are deliberately not naming the organisation because the focus of this study is not on specific individuals or groups, but on the fundraising characteristics typical of many initiatives.

4 Appendix 2. Case study matrix.

Overall, however, the promotion of the fundraisers is poorly executed:

- The organisers do not pay enough attention to explaining the purpose of the fundraisers. Information about them is only available on crowdfunding platforms. As a result, the purpose of the money raised in fundraisers for political prisoners and for the organisation's operational activities is not entirely clear.
- The organisation's communications do not explicitly state why the fundraiser is important for Belarus or what should motivate donors. The organisation's efforts often stop at a call for help, and in the case of the book fundraiser, at mentioning that it contains unique material.
- The organisation posts few reminders about the fundraisers, and they appear at irregular intervals, less than once a week. The organisation doesn't pin fundraiser posts, and the information doesn't appear on the website or in Stories.
- Fundraiser posts tend to be visually uninspiring — the text is often accompanied by just one stock image, with no original content from the organisation showing what the money is needed for, how it is being spent, or how it relates to the fundraiser's topic.
- Reporting on spending is almost non-existent, except on Patreon. This makes it unclear to donors exactly where their money went. This, in turn, can erode trust in the organisation.

The above gaps are not unique to any one organisation. Many Belarusian fundraising campaigns have similar communication strategies.

This example shows how organisations often overlook simple things in their fundraising efforts. Achieving the goal cannot be guaranteed by these solutions alone. However, **to significantly increase the chances of success, it is crucial to structure the campaign effectively and implement it consistently. In the following sections of this report, we will provide several practical recommendations to help organisations do this.**

Until recently, no systematic analysis of private fundraising within the Belarusian diaspora had been conducted. Fundraising courses and expert talks are are starting to emerge, and in August 2026, the first study on engaging private philanthropists was published.[5] Our study is a contribution to this discussion.

Data collection methodology

Data were collected using a mixed-methods design that included desk research and case study analysis, an online survey (CAWI), and in-depth interviews conducted in July-August 2026.

Desk research and case study

During the desk research stage, we collected data on the Belarusian diaspora in Poland, as well as reports from foundations and crowdfunding platforms. We also gathered the results of surveys of civil society organisations (CSOs) and research publications on private fundraising.

[5] Jak realizavać patencyjal supracy hramadzianskaj supoĺnasci z pryvatnymi achviaradaŭcami [A guide to making the most of the power of cooperation between civil society and private donors]. Center for New Ideas, 2026.

We also analysed crowdfunding campaigns run by a Belarusian cultural organisation in Poland between 2024 and 2026. We used open-source information, and the results were anonymised.

Online survey (CAWI)

The survey covered 214 Belarusian men and women aged 18 to 59 living in Poland. Respondents were recruited through social media communities and advertising.

The questionnaire included 25 questions about donation experience, motivations, barriers, preferred causes and formats, as well as awareness of organisations, trust in them, and perceptions of their need for donations. The median length of interview (LOI) was 7 minutes. Of those who started the questionnaire, 68% completed it.

Methodological limitations of the survey:

- Belarusian authorities prosecute people for donating to independent civil society organisations, making the topic sensitive and likely contributing to the low response rate; our original target was 300 respondents. In addition, donors were probably more likely to respond to the call, while those who did not donate because of security concerns were less likely to complete the questionnaire for the same reasons.
- Online sample bias. The recruitment method biased the sample toward people who follow diaspora affairs and are interested in donations.

As a result, the sample is skewed toward donors. It does not describe the diaspora as a whole but only the specific segments discussed in this report: **Donors** (128 respondents) gave at least once in the past year, and **Non-donors** (86) did not give at all in the past year.

In-depth interviews

In August 2026, we conducted 6 semi-structured interviews:

- 3 in-depth **interviews with Major Donors**, business representatives who regularly provide financial support to Belarusian initiatives. This allowed us to study a group the questionnaire survey did not cover.
- 3 in-depth interviews with **CSO Representatives** who work systematically with private donors. Their experience provided additional insight into the current situation and informed the recommendations. We also discussed the preliminary survey results with them and drew on their perspective to interpret the data.

A separate guide was used for each group. The interviews were conducted online, lasted 45-60 minutes each, and were held in Russian or Belarusian.

What causes the diaspora is willing to support

Belarusian communities in Poland number over 163,000; many are politically engaged, and one in three earn more than the Polish average. Organisations believe the diaspora's fundraising potential is far from exhausted and worth developing. Diaspora members are most willing to donate to projects that support political prisoners, promote Belarusian culture, and protect the interests of Belarusian migrants.

There is high potential to raise donations for cultural and community initiatives among Belarusians in Poland: the diaspora is large, politically engaged and affluent

As of August 31, 2026, Poland had issued over 163,000 valid residence permits to citizens of Belarus.[6] The vast majority of Belarusians (84%) arrived after the 2020 events. The main reasons for leaving were political and fear of repression.[7]

A National Bank of Poland study shows that the diaspora's economic situation provides a solid basis for private philanthropy. Of those surveyed, nearly half (45%) are under 35 and 62% have a college degree. The employment rate is 87%, exceeding that of the Polish population as a whole. At the same time, 33% of Belarusians earn more than 7,000 zlotys per month, higher than the average Polish salary. Only 18% of people spend most of their earnings on daily necessities, meaning most have disposable income they can direct toward public causes, among other things.[8]

The Belarusians in Poland have developed a strong culture of giving. Even among those who aren't currently donating, 64% have donated at least once in their lifetime. When asked which causes they would support if given the opportunity, only 3% said "none". Our unpublished survey from 2024 showed that 63% of city residents in Belarus donated to charity at least once a year. The diaspora is likely more socially active, so the donor rate there may be higher. There have also been successful fundraising campaigns, such as the Solidarity Marathon[9] and the €1.25 million raised by BYSOL in 2025.[10]

Representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) also rate the potential for private philanthropy within the Belarusian diaspora highly and believe that the pool of potential donors is much larger than the sector currently reaches. Beyond those already actively involved in the diaspora, initiatives can also attract support from Belarusians who have never donated before. According to CSO representatives, the gap between potential and actual private donations mainly reflects the quality of

6 This figure does not include Belarusians in Poland with national or humanitarian visas who are awaiting a decision on international protection. In other words, the actual number of Belarusians residing in Poland is higher.

7 Beata Dudek, Paweł Strzelecki. Sytuacja życiowa i ekonomiczna imigrantów z Białorusi w Polsce w 2025 r. Raport z badania ankietowego. [Living and economic conditions of immigrants from Belarus in Poland in 2025. Survey report]. Narodowy Bank Polski, 2025.

8 Ibid.

9 Support for Political Prisoners — "We Care!" Marathon. The United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus.

10 We've raised more than a million! BYSOL's 2025 year. BYSOL, 2025.

fundraising campaigns and the limited resources available to CSOs, which often prevent them from professionally organising and promoting fundraising efforts.

> *We believe that this potential is very high but underutilised.*
>
> CSO Representative 3

> *When it comes to people, the potential is enormous, of course. … The same goes for money: the potential is good, but we need to understand how to work with it to get the most out of it.*
>
> CSO Representative 1

The potential for private philanthropy is seen as greatest among people with stable, high incomes who remain engaged with issues affecting Belarus. The groups considered most significant for fundraising purposes are employees of international corporations and IT companies,[11] as well as professionals who were able to rebuild their incomes and social standing after relocating.

> *I think the most prominent group is employees of international corporations who hold managerial positions.*
>
> CSO Representative 2

> *Talking about specific sectors, it's definitely IT and business: Belarusian businesses that operated abroad until 2020. … We need to wait a certain amount of time. Then, there will be people who have rebuilt their businesses from scratch abroad after relocation and who will want to contribute.*
>
> CSO Representative 3

Overall, given the potential for diaspora donations, Belarusian CSOs should treat this as a real funding source and engage in systematic private fundraising.

Belarusians are most willing to donate to support political prisoners, preserve Belarusian national culture, and defend their interests with the Polish authorities

Fundraising for political prisoners has the greatest potential. Most donors already consider this cause important, and they are more willing to support it financially than any other cause. For Non-donors, it is also one of the top priorities (Figure 1). This is why campaigns for political prisoners are the safest bet: they resonate with a wide audience and engage both current donors and newcomers.

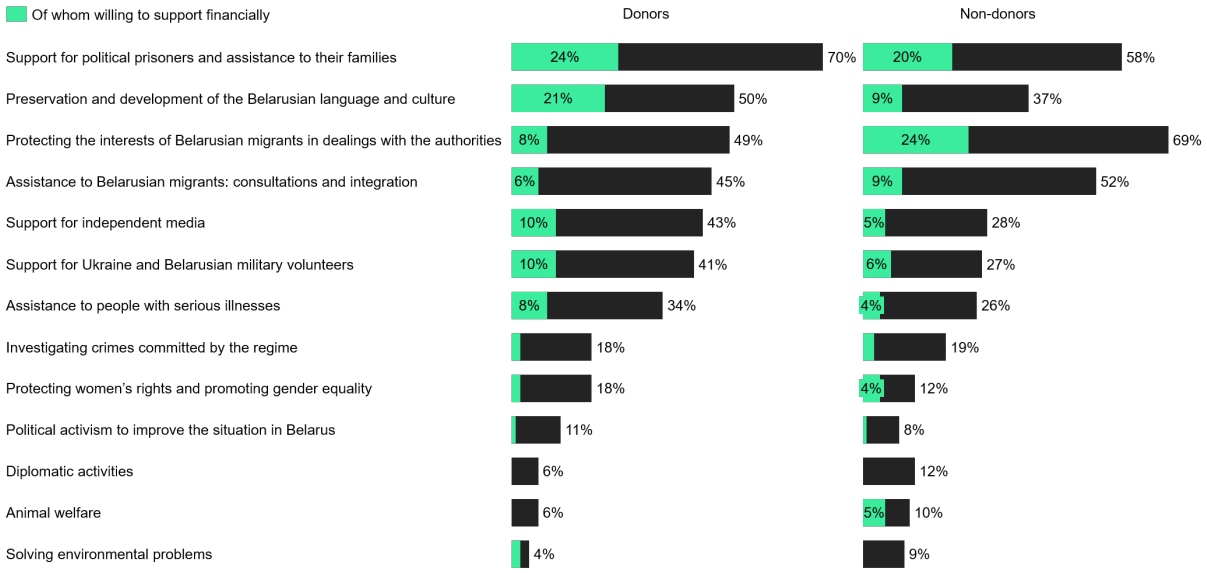
Those who do not currently donate can also be drawn in by campaigns to defend their own interests before the Polish authorities. The vast majority of Non-donors consider this area of CSO work to be important, with almost a quarter willing to support it financially (Figure 1). This is probably because Belarusians less inclined to donate are drawn to this area of activity for an additional, pragmatic reason: it solves problems they also face. At the same time, of the two migrant needs, direct assistance (legal

[11] According to the National Bank of Poland, 17% of Belarusians are employed in the IT sector.

advice, integration) and advocacy toward the authorities, Belarusians give more readily to protecting the community's collective interests than to helping individuals.

In contrast, those who already donate more often support culture and language. This cause attracts significantly fewer new donors (Figure 1). Presumably, supporting this cause requires additional ideological motivation that Non-donors, who are less involved in diaspora life, lack.

Figure 1. Belarusians are more likely to donate to support political prisoners, protect their own interests in dealings with the Polish authorities, and preserve Belarusian culture



Which areas of work of Belarusian CSOs and initiatives abroad do you consider the most important and urgent at present? Select up to five of the most important areas. Which of these areas would you prioritise for financial support, if you had the resources? If you chose only one area above, select it here if you are willing to support it. Base: n = 128 (Donors), n = 86 (Non-donors).

The other causes have significantly less potential. Belarusians are particularly reluctant to donate to political causes, gender equality initiatives, and environmental campaigns. Rather than targeting the entire diaspora, fundraising for these causes should focus on a narrow, interested audience. Alternatively, such campaigns could be combined with more popular causes to achieve a broader reach. Another option would be to collect private donations for other causes and apply for grants to fund these specific ones.

Business representatives noted the importance of cultural initiatives. Supporting theatre productions, concerts, and educational initiatives is seen as a way to foster unity and promote Belarusian identity abroad. Moreover, large businesses place more trust in the people behind cultural projects, viewing them as more responsible and predictable.

> *Culture [is a sector that inspires greater trust]. I would say some of the most responsible people are found there. The least responsible are politicians and the media.*
>
> Major Donor 3

Major Donors have an ambivalent attitude toward political causes. On the one hand, they acknowledge the importance of political objectives; on the other, they are disillusioned by internal disputes among political figures and negative collaboration experiences. In particular, agreements may not be honoured, and initial programmes and stated commitments are often changed during implementation. Such experiences force philanthropists to either exclude politics entirely in favour of other areas, or adopt strict control mechanisms.

> *I have experience collaborating with the first [political] sector, and it has been more negative than positive. I can point out its main drawbacks. Firstly, there is the issue of inaccurate forecasts by those seeking funding. Secondly, it is lack of responsibility. Thirdly, there is the issue of changing course at short notice and failing to honour agreements. Of course, there are still many more issues overall: for example, there's a huge gap between a person's public image and who they really are.*
>
> Major Donor 3

> *Political initiatives would probably be at the very bottom of my list of priorities. … All that political infighting in the Coordination Council — I just don't see the point.*
>
> Major Donor 2

As with politics, philanthropists have mixed feelings about fundraising for Belarusian military volunteers in Ukraine. Some donors support the volunteers, viewing aid to Ukraine as a way to contribute to Belarus's liberation. Others consider military-related causes unacceptable regardless of the goals or context.

In other words, **projects with a political focus have to offer Major Donors added assurance that they are reliable**: a shared set of values is not enough on its own. This could take the form of a pre-agreed plan with measurable indicators, assigned executives, and timelines; regular progress reports; and staged funding, with the next tranche released only after earlier commitments are met.

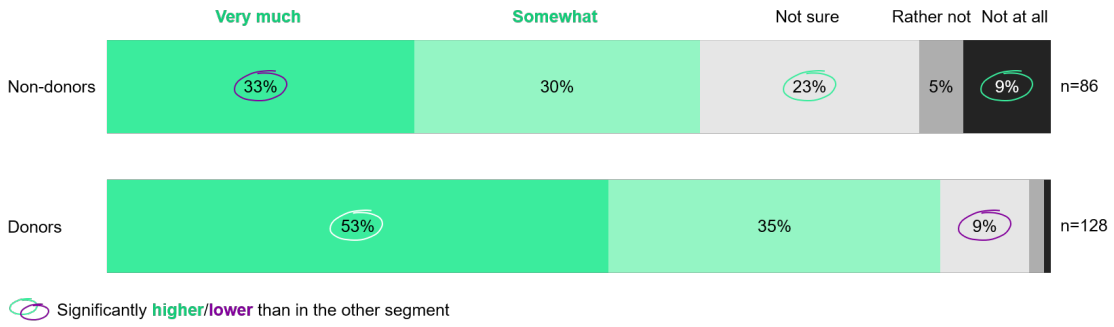
How to motivate Belarusians to give

People are most often motivated to donate by a sense of solidarity with those in need and a desire to contribute to the future of Belarus. Major Donors, on the other hand, are motivated by a sense of involvement in the outcome and access to a circle of like-minded individuals. Many Belarusians do not donate because they are unsure whether organisations need the money. Some believe grant providers will cover their financial needs. Trust is the next challenge: just 45% of Donors and 28% of Non-donors say they trust an average organisation.

Be open about your needs and explain what grants do and do not cover, since this is not obvious to many Belarusians

Some Belarusians do not donate because they are unaware that organisations need their support. Among those who do not donate, more than a third either believe that organisations do not need donations, or are not sure about it (Figure 2). A direct correlation supports this: the less a person believes organisations are waiting for their donation, the less likely they are to donate in the future[12].

Figure 2. Non-donors are significantly less likely to believe organisations need their donations



How much would you say Belarusian CSOs and initiatives currently need financial support (donations) from ordinary people? Given the sample's composition, the true share of those who believe organisations need donations is likely lower.

Some people who don't donate believe grants from foundations are enough to cover funding needs. Some respondents think grants cover half of the needs or less; among this group, 78% acknowledge that organisations need donations. Others believe that grants cover more than half of the costs, or are unsure of their role. Only 45% of this group believe donations are necessary. (Figure 3) The same pattern applies to the intention to donate in future: the greater the proportion of needs that Non-donors believe are covered by grants, the less likely they are to donate in future[13].

[12] Rank correlation between perceived organisational need for donations and intention to donate in the future: Donors ($\rho = 0.20$; $p = 0.023$), Non-donors ($\rho = 0.39$; $p < 0.001$). Here and throughout, ρ is Spearman's rho.

[13] Correlation of the perceived share of needs covered by grants among Non-donors: with the assessment of organisations' need for donations ($\rho = -0.27$; $p = 0.02$), with the intention to donate in the future ($\rho = -0.32$; $p = 0.01$).

Figure 3. Non-donors are less likely to recognise an organisation's need for donations if they believe grants cover most of its needs

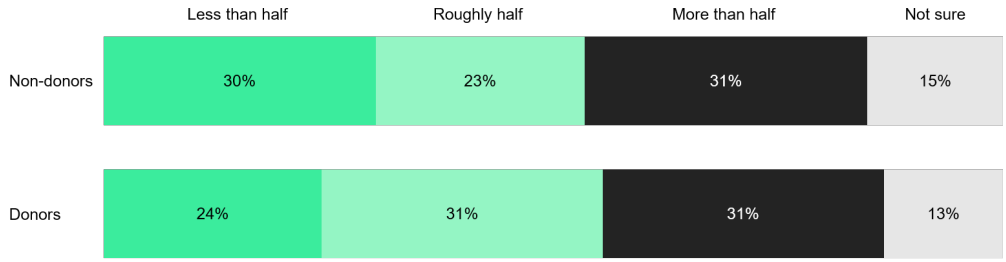


To what extent do you think that Belarusian civil society organisations and initiatives generally need financial support (in the form of donations) from ordinary people today? How well do you think grants from international foundations and programs meet the financial needs of Belarusian civil society organisations and initiatives at present? Distribution among Non-donors: n = 46 ("half or less"), n = 40 ("more than half" and "not sure").

This is precisely how the «crowding-out effect» works. Researchers have observed this phenomenon in other countries as well[14]. When private donors learn of significant external funding, they often reduce their contributions, deciding their input is no longer needed.

An analysis of Donors' perceptions shows that the «crowding-out effect» can be overcome. They evaluate the role of grants similarly to Non-donors (Figure 4) but act differently. Among Donors, perceptions of how much grants contribute are unrelated to perceived organisational need or to future giving intentions[15]. Even among those who are confident that grants cover most of the needs, 58% intend to continue donating.

Figure 4. Donors and Non-donors have roughly the same perception of how far grants from foundations cover organisations' needs



To what extent do you think grants from international foundations and programs meet the financial needs of Belarusian civil society organisations and initiatives at present?

Organisations may underestimate how unclear their need for donations appears to Belarusians. For example, in the case[16] we examined, the organisation did not explain what role donations play in its ope rating costs. A separate fundraising campaign stated that the organisation needed immediate donations to survive. However, the campaign remained open afterwards. It did not explain whether the money raised was sufficient, whether it had found other funding sources, or why people should keep donating. Yet until people become aware of a need, they will not even reach the question of whether to give[17].

[14] Bekkers R., Wiepking P. A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 2010.

[15] Correlation between perceptions of grants and, among Donors: perceived need for donations (ρ = 0.093; p = 0.333); intention to donate in the future (ρ = 0.167; p = 0.083).

[16] Appendix 2. Case study matrix.

[17] Bekkers R., Wiepking P. A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 2010.

This underscores the significance of **CSOs articulating their needs.** What matters, moreover, is to do this openly: to explain what share is covered by grants and why the need for donations remains. For example, by showing that a grant allows the organisation to remain sustainable, while donations go directly to project implementation or to assistance for end beneficiaries.

The way an organisation frames its needs is equally important. An urgent «help us survive» appeal may work once or twice at most, and organisations should not build their positioning on it. Experts say this is because, while such a tone may evoke sympathy, it does not encourage involvement[18]. **In the long term, it is better to emphasise a project's interesting aspects than its financial vulnerability.** Other researchers have reached a similar conclusion, recommending that organisations invite donors to be part of a specific outcome or support a community that is important to them, rather than simply asking for help[19].

Emphasise how your project helps people in difficult situations and contributes to the future of Belarus

The most common and socially acceptable motive for donating is solidarity with those in need. It is most often cited by both Donors and Non-donors (Figure 5). Furthermore, the desire to help is directly related to the intention to donate in the future. **Solidarity is the most effective motivator in fundraisers for political prisoners.** Among those willing to donate to this cause, 73% cite solidarity as their reason. It is also appropriate for emergency fundraisers, such as those for medical treatment or the rehabilitation of volunteers.

When fundraising for national culture, it's important to emphasise a sense of community among Belarusians and show how the project will benefit the country's future. These motives are the leading factors for those willing to donate to this cause: 68% and 63%, respectively. The case study[20] shows that CSOs working in this field may view national culture as inherently valuable — thereby neglecting to explain the value of their fundraising campaigns to their audience. For example, a fundraising campaign for a book on cultural studies claims it will be unique, yet it fails to explain its significant contribution to Belarusian culture.

Fundraising appeals should also **highlight the opportunity for donors to stay socially active and contribute to solving problems that they also face**. These motives are associated with donating less often, but they are linked to the intention to donate at the same level (Figure 5). These will be particularly relevant for fundraising campaigns that are not directly related to helping people in difficult situations or the future of Belarus. For example, it is harder to present a fundraiser advocating for Belarusian migrants' interests to the Polish government as an act of solidarity with people in need. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that the fundraiser addresses Belarusians' own problems.

A sense of contributing to positive change is a stronger motivator for Major Donors. Interviews with business representatives reveal that philanthropists primarily base their decisions as to which efforts

18 Zmitser Yahorau. Kamunikacyjnaja stratehija kraŭdfandynh-kampanii [Communication strategy for a crowdfunding campaign]. Sekktor, 2026.

19 Jak realizavać patencyjal supracy hramadzianskaj supoĺnasci z pryvatnymi achviaradaŭcami [A guide to making the most of the power of cooperation between civil society and private donors]. Center for New Ideas, 2026.

20 Appendix 2. Case study matrix.

Figure 5. Helping people in difficult situations is the most common strong motivation for donating



What do you think primarily motivates other Belarusians in Poland to donate money to Belarusian civil society organisations and initiatives today? (projective question) Prevalence of a motive: the average share of Donors and Non-donors who associate the motive with donating. Motive strength: linear regression coefficient showing the association between the motive and the intention to donate in the future. Base: n = 214.

to support on their own interests and professional backgrounds. Participants explained this desire to invest in areas where they can provide funding, assess the viability of ideas, share their expertise, and assist with networking. At the same time, **Major Donors typically view their role as helping a project get off the ground. Afterward, the initiative is expected to develop its own audience and generate its own revenue.** Research data from the Center for New Ideas also supports this expectation.[21]

> *My focus would clearly be on young entrepreneurship. Therefore, I'm more likely to support an initiative by a young startup or a group of students than an established political party.*
>
> Major Donor 2

> *You are the initial push: you carry it through the first three cycles, and after that it should sustain itself. People should want to join and want to support it.*
>
> Major Donor 3

CSO representatives confirm that people are more willing to donate to projects that have a strong foundation and a tangible product. At the same time, **vivid, emotionally charged messages and campaigns featuring well-known media personalities are most effective**. For example, BYSOL's emergency fundraisers for released political prisoners raised twice their target amount because they coincided

[21] Jak realizavać patencyjal supracy hramadzianskaj supoĺnasci z pryvatnymi achviaradaŭcami. [A guide to making the most of the power of cooperation between civil society and private donors]. Center for New Ideas, 2026.

with positive, memorable events. In December, when Maryia Kalesnikava, Viktar Babaryka, and Ales Bialiatski were released, the campaign raised roughly €260,000 against a goal of €123,000.

> *I guess celebrities are the easiest [to raise funds for] because they have their own audience. It becomes a media story that people pick up on right away, and then it takes off.*
>
> CSO Representative 1

The opportunity to connect with interesting people who share similar values attracts Major Donors. In this case, philanthropy serves a dual purpose: it's both a way to support an initiative and a gateway into an exclusive community. This fosters a sense of belonging to a select group and promotes long-term collaboration.

> *I know these cool people are on the jury and give to the startup competition, and I enjoy their company. Even if I don't know them personally, I'd like to work on shared projects with them and maintain the relationship. Philanthropy is a bit like joining a club, maybe.*
>
> Major Donor 2

CSOs use this motive to establish trusting relationships with Major Donors. Closed events, meetings, and visits to private collections, among other things, are arranged for them. What counts here is not so much the status of the events or the guests as the opportunity to mingle in an informal setting.

> *Events work best when everyone gets together in person. There's a certain warmth and family-like atmosphere. We have more of that family vibe at these events. We don't put on any special airs.*
>
> CSO Representative 3

CSO representatives note that these in-person meetings are particularly effective at maintaining interest in projects and philanthropy in general.

Talk more about your initiative to build trust. Potential donors often aren't aware of specific organisations' activities or doubt their reliability

Some Belarusians do not donate because they have no disposable income to spare. When asked directly why they don't donate, many cite a lack of disposable income and a focus on their personal well-being. (Figure 6) However, in many cases, this is likely a stock answer rather than a real obstacle. According to data from the National Bank of Poland, only 18% of the Belarusian diaspora spends all or most of their income on living expenses[22]. At the same time, a lack of money is a real structural barrier for some members of the diaspora — one that CSOs cannot influence.

[22] Beata Dudek, Paweł Strzelecki. Sytuacja życiowa i ekonomiczna imigrantów z Białorusi w Polsce w 2025 r. Raport z badania ankietowego. [Living and economic conditions of immigrants from Belarus in Poland in 2025. Survey report]. Narodowy Bank Polski, 2025.

Figure 6. Lack of trust in CSOs is the leading reason for not donating, after lack of funds

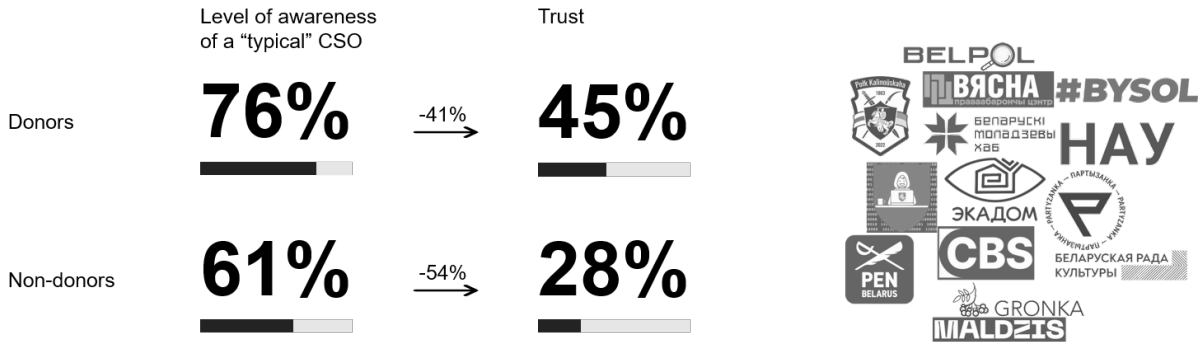


Why do you not plan to donate money to Belarusian civil society organisations or initiatives in the next few months? Base: n = 51 (do not currently donate and do not plan to donate in the future).

The primary obstacle that organisations must overcome is the lack of trust among potential donors. The top reasons for not donating are distrust of fundraising organisations and the belief that their work does not produce visible results. (Figure 6) Presumably, when people do not see results, they find no grounds for trust.

This lack of trust affects many organisations. Only a few, such as the Viasna Human Rights Center, are widely known and trusted by the public. The issue of trust is particularly noticeable among Non-donors. More than half of those familiar with the average organisation say they do not trust it. (Figure 7)

Figure 7. Fewer than half of Donors, and fewer than one-third of Non-donors, trust a «typical» Belarusian organisation abroad



Which of the following organisations and initiatives do you know? Select all that you have heard of and can roughly recall what they do. How much do you trust or distrust [CSO name] when it comes to collecting and spending donations? The survey measured awareness of and trust in 14 organisations that vary in size and focus area. The figure shows average values across all organisations to provide an overall picture. It does not focus on individual CSO indicators, which may be inaccurate due to sample bias. Base: n = 128 (Donors), n = 86 (Non-donors).

Moreover, the problem lies not only in trust, but also in awareness. Most Belarusians have never even heard of some organisations, such as Gronka. The organisation from our case study[23] is mainly known

[23] Appendix 2. Case study matrix.

to a small group of people involved in the cultural sphere. It has about 1,400 Instagram followers, 400 Telegram followers, and 161 donors at its largest fundraiser. This can hinder campaigns that require support from a broader audience.

Results show that the overall level of trust in CSOs within the diaspora is quite low. Hence, organisations should do more to build visibility.

Furthermore, **trust must be built across the sector, not just within individual organisations**. Many Belarusians do not trust anyone. For example, 20% of Non-donors do not trust any of the 14 organisations included in the study. This undermines the fundraising potential of the entire diaspora because the less trust a person has in organisations, the less likely they are to donate.[24]

One reason for this distrust may be how organisations communicate with their audience. In our case study, we examined several fundraising campaigns[25] in which a lack of ongoing communication may have led to a decline in trust. In one instance, an organisation initiated a fundraiser to cover operating expenses during the crisis but then ceased providing updates. In the second case, the organisation launched the same fundraiser several times on different platforms throughout the year. However, the organisation did not explain what happened to the first fundraiser. In both cases, the audience was unaware of how the funds were utilised. Any explanation, even one stating that the fundraiser had failed or that the goal had changed, would have been better than silence.

A lack of trust in an organisation or its leaders is also a major barrier for Major Donors. This distrust stems from negative past experiences and the public reputation of some CSO representatives. Some interviewees believe **personal financial interests sometimes drive civic engagement more than a project's public presentation**. To address this, Major Donors gather more information about the organisation, ask for recommendations, and consult with others who have interacted with the potential partner.

> *We gather information, gather references, gather impressions, pros, and cons. We didn't do this before, but now we do.*
>
> *Major Donor 3*

> *Sometimes it seems like a scam. ... I knew that, by all accounts, this is a money-making scheme disguised as volunteer work. We immediately and unequivocally refused to participate.*
>
> Major Donor 1

Security concerns also remain a barrier to donations. **Although CSOs acknowledge this risk and take it into account in their work, they do not consider it the primary reason for the lack of financial support for their projects**. In particular, for people living in Poland who use foreign bank accounts, such donations carry virtually no risk. This was confirmed by the 2023 Solidarity Marathon, in which Belarusians raised over 500,000 euros for political prisoners, even though the recipients of the funds

24 Correlation between average trust in organisations and intention to donate in the future ($\rho = 0.27$; $p = 0.02$).

25 Appendix 2. Case study matrix.

are considered an extremist organisation in Belarus.[26] In our survey, only 18% cited safety concerns, which is half the percentage of those who expressed distrust of organisations.

> *After six years of repression, I think people have a good understanding of how anything related to Belarus works. ...That's why I say, "You know everything yourselves. You read the news yourselves."*
>
> CSO Representative 2

At the same time, if a CSO works directly with Major Donors, complete confidentiality and anonymity are essential. This includes no mentions or photos without prior approval, encrypted documents, one-on-one communication, and the option for anonymous donations. At the same time, however, the interviewees note that it is impossible to guarantee 100% security.

One effective practice for building trust is to regularly and transparently share information about one's work, including setbacks

Trust in an organisation is largely built on the transparency of its work. Clearly and regularly communicating to the audience what the CSO does, what its initiatives are, and where the funds are going is important. This helps people understand the organisation's mission, results, and the team's competence.

> *I think transparency is always an issue, so we need to explain more clearly what's happening with the initiative and the artefacts.*
>
> CSO Representative 2

> *To build trust in our organisation, we are revamping our website. ... We will post information about all the projects we have supported, as long as we are allowed to talk about them. This will let people see where the money goes.*
>
> CSO Representative 1

Additionally, it's important to be open and honest with our audience, even when things go wrong. Charity fundraisers conducted by organisations can lead to requests that could jeopardise their reputation, including attempts to use the funds for personal gain. It is important to identify such cases during the screening phase. If a problem is discovered after the fundraiser launches, it should be addressed openly. If necessary, the campaign should be terminated. According to the interviewees, a public response shows donors that the organisation doesn't overlook violations and is prepared to address fraud independently.

> *We receive many requests that are clearly just people trying to make a quick buck. ... If we don't filter these out and address them, it will eventually appear as if we're turning a blind eye to everything, and people will lose trust in us. For this reason, I believe it is important to address these issues publicly whenever possible.*
>
> CSO Representative 1

[26] Na marafonie v Belarusi sobrali bolee 500,000 evro dla politzakluchennykh [A marathon in Belarus raised more than 500,000 euros to support political prisoners]. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, July 30, 2023.

In the case we analysed[27], the organisation did not post updates or publicly close its fundraisers, so the audience did not know how they ended. To avoid this, every fundraising campaign should adhere to a three-step cycle. Here's an example of a campaign to aid political prisoners:

- **Launch.** The organisation specifies its goal and the amount needed. One example would be covering the housing and medical expenses of 50 people who have been released and deported from Belarus for the first six months.
- **Update.** The organisation reports how much has been raised so far and how many more donations are needed. For example, half of the necessary funds have been raised. This amount is enough to house 25 people. However, 200 more donations of 50 zlotys each are needed to reach the full amount.
- **Acknowledgements and results.** After the campaign ends, the organisation thanks the donors and shows them how the money was used. For example, it emphasises the improved living conditions of released political prisoners, made possible by donors.

This ensures that, by the time a new campaign launches, reports and acknowledgements for previous fundraisers are already published and easy to find. For donors, this provides concrete **proof that their money is used for its intended purpose. It also gives them a reason to trust the organisation, which is especially important for a new audience.**

To build trust with Major Donors, it is important to develop long-term relationships with them. Major Donors find it easier to support a cause if they already know the organisation's representatives or receive a recommendation from their inner circle. Without that connection, a face-to-face meeting becomes crucial, allowing the donor to form their own impression of the organisation's representatives and their work.

> *In this case, everything worked out quickly because I knew the team. I knew the people involved, so there was no doubt about the outcome.*
>
> Major Donor 3

> *Some journalist friends from Belsat called and asked me to help. And that was it.*
>
> Major Donor 1

Therefore, it is important for CSOs to develop personal relationships with potential Major Donors and use professional and personal connections to make initial contact. It also makes sense to communicate through public representatives, consistently raising their visibility and the trust placed in them, and, as a result, in the CSO as a whole.

[27] Appendix 2. Case study matrix.

What the ask should look like: Formats and amounts

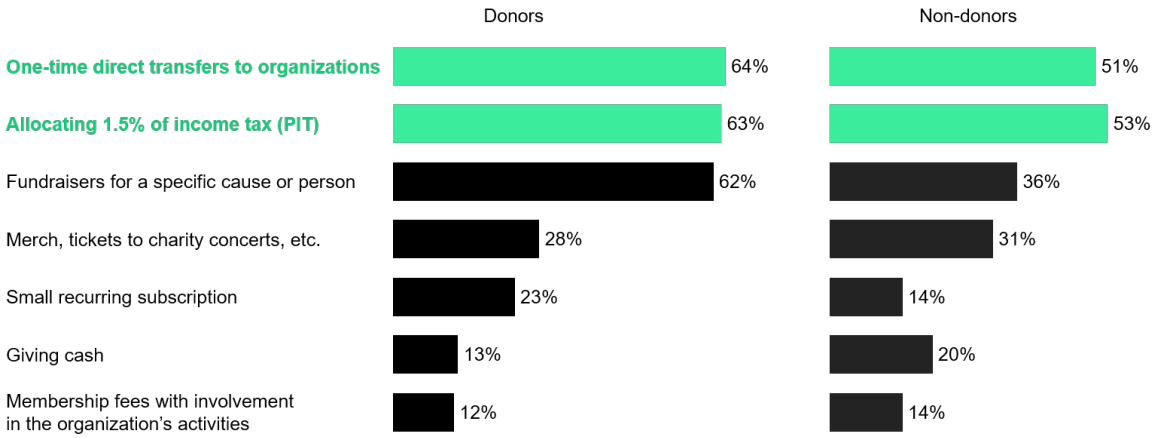
The wider audience most commonly favours one-time direct transfers and the 1.5% tax designation. Neither option imposes any obligations on the donor. The latter doesn't require any additional money, either. Subscriptions, which are a form of regular donation, primarily appeal to an engaged audience, while merchandise appeals to young people. Beyond the format, it makes sense to include a suggested donation amount in your appeal. 50 zlotys is a reasonable donation amount for Belarusians; hardly anyone considers it too small or too large. You can also suggest a range from 50 to 80 zlotys.

Offer one-time donations and the 1.5% PIT option to a broad audience. Offer subscriptions to a loyal audience and merchandise to young people

Most people, including both current Donors and Non-donors, prefer a one-time direct transfer to the organisation.[28] (Figure 8) This format is likely appealing because it allows people to choose a comfortable amount without making long-term commitments.

Almost as often, Belarusians cite the convenience of donating 1.5% of their income tax. The process may be complicated for some, but it doesn't require spending extra money. In any case, individuals already pay this 1.5% as part of their taxes, even if they don't specify a recipient. This is probably why the public finds this format appealing. Only organisations listed in the Polish register of public benefit organisations can formally accept such donations. Many CSOs are unaware that they can work through intermediaries

Figure 8. Belarusians prefer one-time donations to an organisation and the 1.5% income tax allocation



Which ways of donating money do you find most convenient and prefer personally? Base: n = 128 (Donors), n = 86 (Non-donors).

[28] This is the most popular format among Polish donors as well: Jak i dlaczego pomagam? [How and why do I help?] Pomagam.pl, 2025.

Although Major Donors are aware of the option to allocate 1.5% of their taxes to a nonprofit organisation, they do not always take advantage of it. Usually, accountants file the declaration for them, so even when planning to make a contribution, Major Donors may forget about it.

> *Yes, I knew about that [the tax allocation]. … It's just that I don't fill in my own return; the accountant does. I simply forgot to tell him.*
>
> Major Donor 2

CSOs should send advance and repeated reminders about this mechanism during the tax reporting period and provide simple, illustrated instructions. For example, on the first day of the filing period, Zerkalo publishes step-by-step instructions with screenshots and field numbers for all types of tax returns. It also provides the details of the intermediary through which it receives payments.[29] For CSOs, **collaborating with accountants** who work with Belarusian entrepreneurs in Poland could be a new area of focus. Once people are aware of this opportunity, donating could become part of their routine. As a result, Belarusian organisations will receive more donations.

Those who already donate are more likely to choose regular subscriptions. (Figure 8) For CSOs with a reliable donor base, it makes sense to **create a funnel and give active donors the option to switch to a subscription model.**

Some Major Donors are willing to donate regularly. Closed communities of philanthropists are effective in this regard. For example, a membership club with annual dues, where members vote on projects and meet at private events. Thanks to this approach, one of the interview participants' organisations raised more than 170,000 euros and supported 36 projects in just over two years. Another example is an informal community of patrons centred on a cultural initiative. There are no membership fees or other obligations here. When a specific request arises, the organisation turns to the community, which collectively raises the necessary funds.

> *We didn't realise that national identity and cultural, historical, and material heritage could be such important topics. … Perhaps even more importantly, this success has continued: we've been working on this for a year and a half, and there are always people [willing to take part].*
>
> CSO Representative 2

Young people under 29 significantly more often buy merchandise and tickets to charity concerts. 33% of young donors find this format convenient, compared to 22% of older donors. Among Non-donors, the figures are 38% and 18%, respectively. Visual identification with a group is likely more important to young people. For them, purchasing merchandise becomes a form of prosocial behaviour and a way to express their values[30] [31].

[29] Piat minut vashego vremeni — i polskaya nalogovaya sluzhba otpravit Zerkalu dengi. Rasskazyvaem o prostom i bezopasnom sposobe pomoch redaktsii. [All it takes is five minutes of your time, and the Polish tax authority will send money to Zerkalo. Here's a simple and secure way to support the editorial team]. Zerkalo, February 15, 2025.

[30] Wojciech Kozłowski. Buying Behaviour of Generation Z with Reference to Cause-Related Marketing, 2024.

[31] Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, M., et al. Understanding Social Cause-Related Purchase Intentions of Young Adults, 2022.

However, it's important to distinguish between charitable purchases and reward-based donations. Studies in other countries have shown that offering rewards can cast doubt on a donor's altruistic intentions and may reduce motivation[32].

In your appeal, suggest a specific donation amount: Ask for 50–80 zlotys in ordinary cases, and 80–160 zlotys for particularly meaningful fundraisers. The message «Every zloty helps» should be auxiliary

Including a specific amount in a donation appeal reduces donor uncertainty and makes it easier to donate. Studies in other countries have shown that such cues directly influence how much people are likely to donate.[33] Setting the amount too high reduces the number of donors, while setting it too low lowers the average donation amount. Therefore, it is important to choose a figure that the audience is willing to donate.

If your crowdfunding campaign is aimed at a broad audience, aim for round numbers between 35 and 160 zlotys. (Figure 9) More precise figures can be obtained through a survey of your audience, an analysis of the average donation during the initial period, or data from previous fundraising campaigns.

- 35 zlotys — Amounts lower than this are often considered "too small" rather than "meaningful" to be worth the effort. While most people may donate as little as 5 zlotys, there's no point in asking for less than 35 zlotys.
- 50 zlotys is the "zero rejection" amount. No one considers it too small or too large. This is also the median "comfortable amount": 43% chose it, while only 7% called it "significant." This is the standard "safe" ask amount for both Donors and Non-donors.
- At 80 zlotys, the balance tips: beyond this mark, more people need a compelling reason to give than give easily. Only ask for more when you're certain the fundraiser is meaningful to your audience.
- 160 zlotys is the cutoff point beyond which, even for important fundraisers, more people see the amount as too large rather than comfortable. The only significant difference is that the "ask ceiling" for Non-donors drops to 130 zlotys.

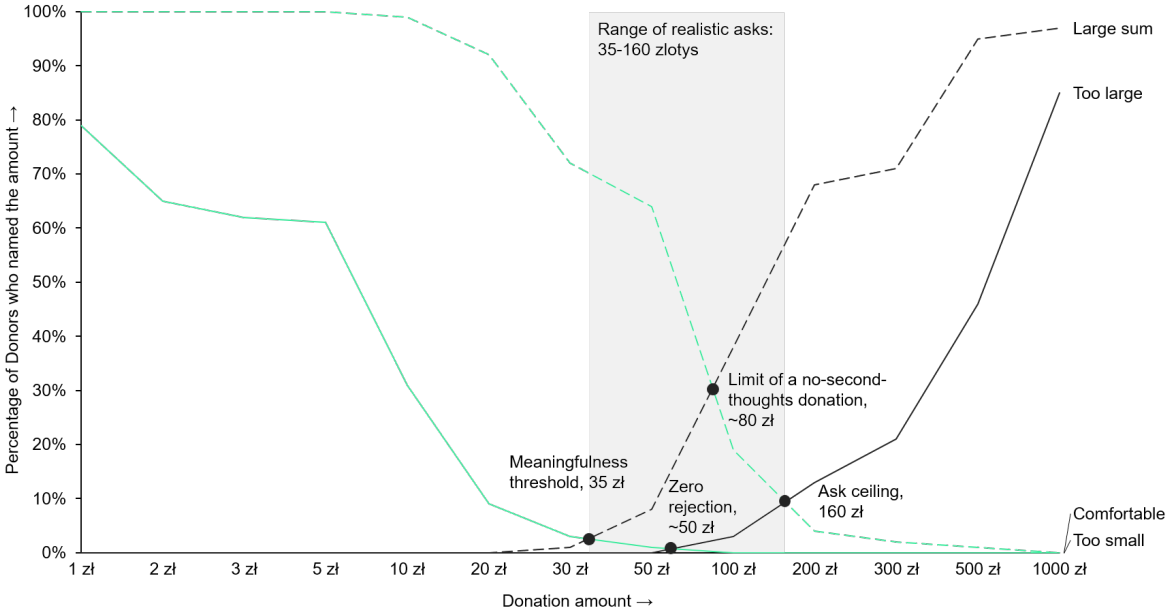
Instead of a specific amount, organisations can specify a range. For a regular fundraiser, ask 50–80 zlotys[34]; for a fundraiser with a goal known to be particularly important to the audience, 80–160 zlotys.

32 George E. Newman, Y. Jeremy Shen. The Counterintuitive Effects of Thank-You Gifts on Charitable Giving, 2012.

33 Maja Adena, Steffen Huck, Imran Rasul. Charitable Giving and Nonbinding Contribution-Level Suggestions. WZB, 2013.

34 This coincides with the average donation amount on the Gronka platform, which was 15–20 euros in 2025.

Figure 9. A realistic one-time donation ask for Donors ranges from 35 to 160 zlotys



Imagine that you decided to make a one-time donation to an organisation or initiative that you are passionate about. A sum so small that it's not worth donating to anyone. A comfortable amount that's easy to donate. A noticeable sum, but one you could donate for a very important cause. A sum that is too large, which you would definitely not donate. The horizontal axis is logarithmic. 21% named 0 zlotys a "too small" sum, and another 15% named 1,000 zlotys a "too large" sum. Base, n = 117 (Donors who answered the question).

Although it's important to emphasise that "every zloty helps," this shouldn't replace a request for a specific donation amount. Such phrasing legitimises even very small donations and increases the number of donors. Some people feel awkward about not responding to the appeal. For others, however, not responding is a way to avoid the awkwardness of not being able to donate a "good enough" amount. At the same time, this type of communication tends to lower the average donation amount. Therefore, the total amount raised may not necessarily increase[35]. For example, legitimising partial contributions encourages people who could donate more to give less. Therefore, the appeal should focus on a specific and realistic amount. Such a phrase should only be used as a supplement.

Donation amounts should be suggested not only through buttons where donors enter the amount, but also through calls to donate. These calls can appear in social media posts, during media appearances, and in partner collaborations. Each message should require the least possible action from the donor. Donors should immediately learn the fundraiser's details, see a clear call to action, and find the amount and a link to transfer money easily.

It's important to **set a realistic goal for the fundraiser** instead of an ideal one. Setting the amount too high risks getting stuck at 20–30%. Those who might have donated more could lose faith in the campaign's success and decide not to support it[36]. A range of 35–160 zlotys can be used as a starting point for calculating goals by organisations without their own audience data.

35 San Bolkan and Stephen A. Rain. The Legitimisation of Paltry Contributions as a Compliance-Gaining Technique: A Meta-Analysis Testing Three Explanations. Communication Research, 2017.

36 Zmitser Yahorau. Kamunikacyjnaja stratehija kraŭdfandynh-kampanii [Communication strategy for a crowdfunding campaign]. Sekktor, 2026.

Effective communication channels

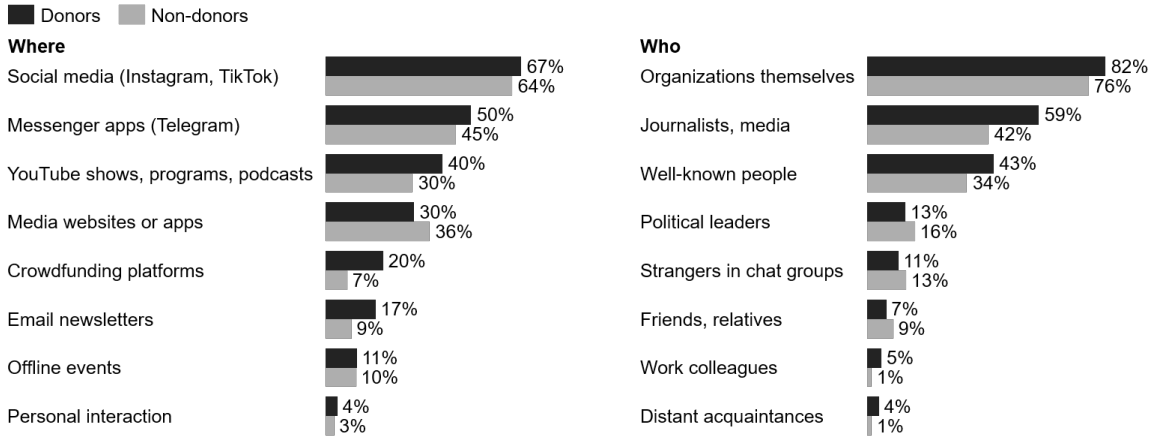
Belarusians primarily learn about fundraising campaigns on social media and messaging apps from the organisations themselves. At the same time, the more often people see donation appeals, the more often they give. Therefore, it's important to remind people about the fundraiser repeatedly, and collaborating with media partners is a good way to do so. This helps reach even the most active donors. They are more likely than others to learn about fundraisers from journalists.

Share more detailed fundraiser information on social media and messaging apps. Engage the media and well-known figures. These are the most effective ways to reach a broad audience, but not all organisations use them

Run the campaign on social media and messaging apps if it is aimed at a broad audience. That's where people most often learn about fundraising campaigns (Figure 10). Describing the details on a crowdfunding platform is not enough. You need to provide a detailed account of the fundraiser on platforms where people will actually read it. Sometimes, organisations limit themselves to a brief call to support the fundraiser on social media, as seen in the case study[37]. Consequently, information about the fundraiser is hard to come by.

Work with journalists and the media to spread the word about your campaigns, and you will reach the most active donors. 72% of donors who give once every two months or more frequently cite this source, compared to 49% of occasional donors. Experts advise maintaining interest in a fundraising campaign by introducing new news hooks and collaborating with partners midway through[38].

Figure 10. Most often, Belarusians learn about fundraising campaigns on social media and messaging apps from organisations, journalists, and well-known figures



Over the past six months, where have you most often encountered calls to donate to Belarusian organisations and initiatives? Over the past six months, who was the main source of information about calls to donate to Belarusian organisations and initiatives? Base: n = 122 (Donors who saw appeals in the past year), n = 67 (Non-donors).

[37] Appendix 2. Case study matrix

[38] Zmitser Yahorau. Kamunikacyjnaja stratehija kraŭdfandynh-kampanii [Communication strategy for a crowdfunding campaign]. Sekktor, 2026.

Use «branded» accounts to send messages to diaspora chat groups on behalf of the organisation. Appeals from strangers inspire less trust and are less likely to motivate the audience to donate. Among those who encounter such appeals, 38% do not plan to donate, compared with 9% among those who do not encounter them.

Different donors use different channels and sources. Take this into account when trying to reach different audiences.

- Women are almost three times more likely than men to find fundraising campaigns on crowd-funding platforms (29% versus 11%).
- Men hear appeals from political leaders more often than women do (20% vs 5%).
- Donors with a college degree are more likely to learn about fundraising campaigns from journalists and the media (63% vs 35%) and through YouTube (44% vs 18%).
- Donors without a college degree are more likely to encounter appeals at in-person events (29% versus 8%), and nearly all cite the organisations themselves as the source.

With rare exceptions, **Major Donors rarely initiate contact with CSOs on their own or follow developments in the civil society sector.** Therefore, organisations need to reach out to potential donors through mutual acquaintances to draw attention to a project.

Remind people about the fundraiser repeatedly — the more they see the appeals, the more likely they are to donate

The more people encounter appeals to donate, the more likely they are to donate[39]. An appeal is a direct trigger, and people rarely donate without one. Studies from other countries show that up to 85% of donations are made in response to a request[40]. Additionally, 25% of Polish donors say they would support organisations more if they were asked more often[41].

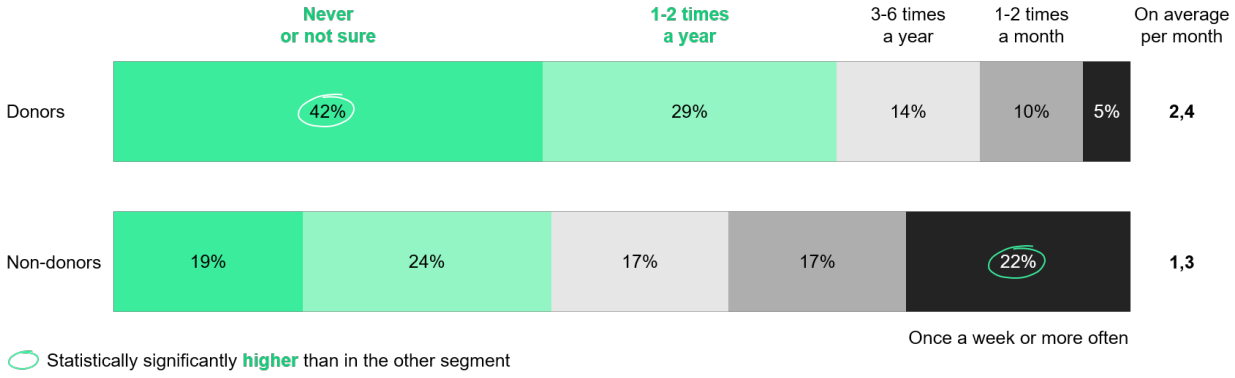
Some members of the Belarusian diaspora likely do not donate simply because they do not receive these appeals. One in five Non-donors either did not encounter such appeals even once in the past year or could not recall seeing them. In contrast, the majority of Donors encounter such appeals at least once a month. (Figure 11)

39 Correlation of the number of appeals seen with the number of donations per year: Donors ($\rho = 0.19$; $p = 0.032$).

40 René Bekkers, Pamala Wiepking. A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy, 2010.

41 Jak I dlaczego pomagam? Portret darczyńców w Polsce [How and why do I help? Donor profile in Poland]. Pomagam.pl, 2025.

Figure 11. Donors see calls to donate nearly twice as often as Non-donors



How often over the past year did you come across appeals to donate to Belarusian CSOs or initiatives? Base: n = 128 (Donors), n = 86 (Non-donors).

That's why it's important to regularly remind people about your fundraising efforts by reaching out to your audience repeatedly. Good reasons for a reminder include reaching a milestone amount, collaborating with a notable person, sharing a donor story, or promoting your product. Every message should end with a direct call to donate.

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the study's findings, we offer the following recommendations to Belarusian organisations that are raising or planning to raise private donations.

Potential and areas for fundraising

There is significant potential for private donations from the diaspora. The employment rate among the Belarusian diaspora is 87%, and one in three earns more than the average Polish salary. Fundraising for political prisoners, national culture, and protecting Belarusians' interests in Poland has shown great potential. These causes resonate most strongly with the diaspora. Major Donors tend to support causes that align with their professional background and personal interests. They trust cultural projects the most and are cautious about political ones.

We recommend:

- Show how the project connects to causes the audience responds to. It's easier to raise funds for initiatives that help political prisoners, support Belarusian culture, or protect the interests of Belarusians in the diaspora.
- When reaching out to Major Donors, offer projects that align with their professional experience and interests. Before approaching a potential philanthropist, study their work, experience, and hobbies to choose the right project and form of participation. Philanthropists are more willing to invest where they can help not only with money but also with expertise and connections.

Trust and transparency

The biggest barrier to donations is a lack of trust in the organisation. Fewer than half of Donors and approximately one-third of Non-donors trust a typical Belarusian organisation operating abroad. This issue is widespread: 20% of Non-donors do not trust any of the 14 organisations included in the study.

For Major Donors, trust is a key requirement. They research the organisation's reputation, the people behind it, and its track record. They often rely on recommendations from acquaintances.

Trust is lost not only because of doubts about the organisation itself, but also because of unclear communication about fundraising progress and how funds are used.

We recommend:

- Transparency builds trust with the audience, so share information about the organisation's work regularly and openly. Demonstrate exactly what the CSO does, the initiatives it implements, and its specific results. Open communication about challenges and changes in the organisation's work is important.
- Provide detailed updates on the fundraiser's progress and results. You can share photos of the outcomes and stories from donors and beneficiaries. You can also enlist support from well-known individuals with strong reputations. If an organisation raises money again for the same

need or continues a previous fundraiser, it must explain what happened with the original campaign and what the funds are needed for now.

- Build personal relationships with Major Donors. This applies to both first contact and long-term relationships.
- Build data protection into the organisation's everyday work, and communicate about it. Conduct regular audits, update security protocols regularly, and limit access to donor data to the smallest possible circle of people.

Communicating needs and framing campaigns

Some Belarusians believe CSOs don't need their donations because they assume grants cover their financial needs. Of those who do not currently donate, 37% are unsure if organisations actually need their contributions. Once people become aware of an ask, the leading motives to donate are helping people in difficult circumstances and investing in Belarus's future.

We recommend:

- Explain which expenses are covered by grants and which are not. Clarify why your activities require private funding.
- Depending on the cause, frame the campaign as a chance for donors to help people in difficult circumstances, invest in Belarus's future, stay engaged, and tackle issues that directly affect Belarusian migrants.
- Avoid the "Help Us Survive" message. It may help secure a one-time donation, but it doesn't support long-term positioning.
- Instead of simply providing financial support, invite people to become part of the project's or community's mission. For Major Donors, it's especially important to feel involved in a strong project and to see exactly how their support will make a difference.
- Prepare your pitch to a Major Donor as you would a presentation to investors. Begin by establishing measurable outcomes and criteria for success and failure. Highlight the team's relevant experience and expertise. Conversely, an emphasis on the budget may raise concerns.

Forms of support

Most Donors prefer one-time donations directly to organisations (64%) or donating 1.5% of their personal income tax (63%). The former is likely valued for its independence in choosing amounts and lack of long-term commitments, while the latter appeals because it avoids immediate out-of-pocket expenses. Young people under 29 significantly more often buy merchandise and tickets to charity concerts.

We recommend:

- Run a separate campaign for the 1.5% personal income tax (PIT) during the reporting period. Provide a clear, step-by-step guide for a broad audience. Outreach to accountants as a separate target audience is a good idea, since they often file tax returns for Major Donors. If the organisa-

tion lacks the necessary status, consider collecting the 1.5% PIT through intermediaries.

- In crowdfunding campaigns, **suggest a specific donation amount. For a typical fundraiser, suggest 50–80 zlotys.** For a cause that clearly resonates with the audience, suggest 80–160 zlotys. This can include buttons displaying a suggested amount as well as mentions during media appearances and social media posts.
- Leverage a loyal following by **creating a funnel with donation appeals and subscription offers for active donors.** CSOs have found that regular newsletters are an effective way to generate donations.
- **Develop communities of Major Donors.** Based on CSOs' experience, private informal gatherings where donors can talk with one another and with the team are the most effective way to keep them interested in projects and in philanthropy.
- Instead of direct donations, **encourage young people to make charitable purchases.** Young people are significantly more likely to choose indirect forms of support, such as buying merchandise and participating in events, because these approaches let them express their sense of belonging to a group and its shared values.

Communication channels

Belarusians primarily learn about campaigns through social media and messaging apps directly from the organisations themselves. The most active donors are more likely than others to hear about fundraising efforts from journalists and the media. 72% of donors who give at least once every two months cite this as a source, compared to 49% of occasional donors. Furthermore, regardless of the channel, repeated appeals increase the likelihood of a donation. Donors see appeals nearly twice as often as Non-donors do. In fact, one in five Non-donors did not encounter a single appeal over the year.

We recommend:

- **Cover your fundraisers in detail on your own social media**: explaining the request once on the crowdfunding platform is not enough.
- **Use journalists and the media as a separate channel.** Prepare materials about the fundraiser for media teams to increase the likelihood that the topic will make it into the news and become the subject of news programs and interviews.
- **Keep generating newsworthy moments and reminders for the full duration of the campaign.** Hooks can be funding milestones, donor stories, or collaborations with public figures, journalists, and media outlets, especially mid-campaign. End every post with a call to give.

Appendix 1. Survey sample structure

The sample is divided into two groups: respondents who donated at least once in the past year to Belarusian CSOs or initiatives abroad (Donors), and those who did not (Non-donors).

		Donors	Non-donors
Gender	Male	52%	60%
	Female	48%	40%
Age	18-19	2%	0%
	20-39	67%	78%
	40-59	30%	22%
Voivodeship	Masovian (Mazowieckie)	49%	53%
	Lesser Poland (Małopolskie)	13%	7%
	Greater Poland (Wielkopolskie)	9%	5%
	Łódź (Łódzkie)	8%	15%
	Lower Silesia (Dolnośląskie)	7%	6%
	Podlaskie	7%	1%
	Warmian–Masurian (Warmińsko-Mazurskie)	2%	1%
	Kuyavian-Pomeranian (Kujawsko-Pomorskie)	2%	0%
	Pomeranian (Pomorskie)	2%	5%
	West Pomeranian (Zachodniopomorskie)	1%	6%
	Lublin (Lubelskie)	1%	1%
	Świętokrzyskie	1%	0%
Settlement	Voivodeship capital	89%	88%
	Other settlement	11%	12%
Education background	Basic, general secondary (school)	9%	8%
	Vocational technical or vocational secondary training	6%	6%
	Higher education or academic degree (university, academy)	85%	86%
Employment status	Employed	54%	45%
	On maternity leave	1%	0%
	Entrepreneur, business owner	16%	16%
	Self-employed, artisans, freelancers	17%	16%
	Retired	0%	0%
	Students	6%	7%
	Unemployed	5%	10%
	Other	2%	5%
Net income	Up to 3,000 zlotys	7%	21%
	From 3,001 to 4,000 zlotys	8%	6%

	Donors	Non-donors
From 4,001 to 5,000 zlotys	9%	9%
5,001 to 6,000 zlotys	13%	9%
6,001 to 7,000 zlotys	8%	5%
7,001 to 8,000 zlotys	5%	3%
8,001 to 9,000 zlotys	7%	5%
From 9,001 to 10,000 zlotys	7%	10%
More than 10,000 zlotys	24%	20%
Prefer not to say	13%	12%

– significantly higher than in the other segments.

Appendix 2. Case study matrix: Campaigns by a Belarusian cultural organisation in Poland

All fundraising data was obtained from open sources in late August 2026 and may therefore be inaccurate. Some publications may have been omitted or removed, and new ones may have appeared. However, the data is representative enough to assess the case.

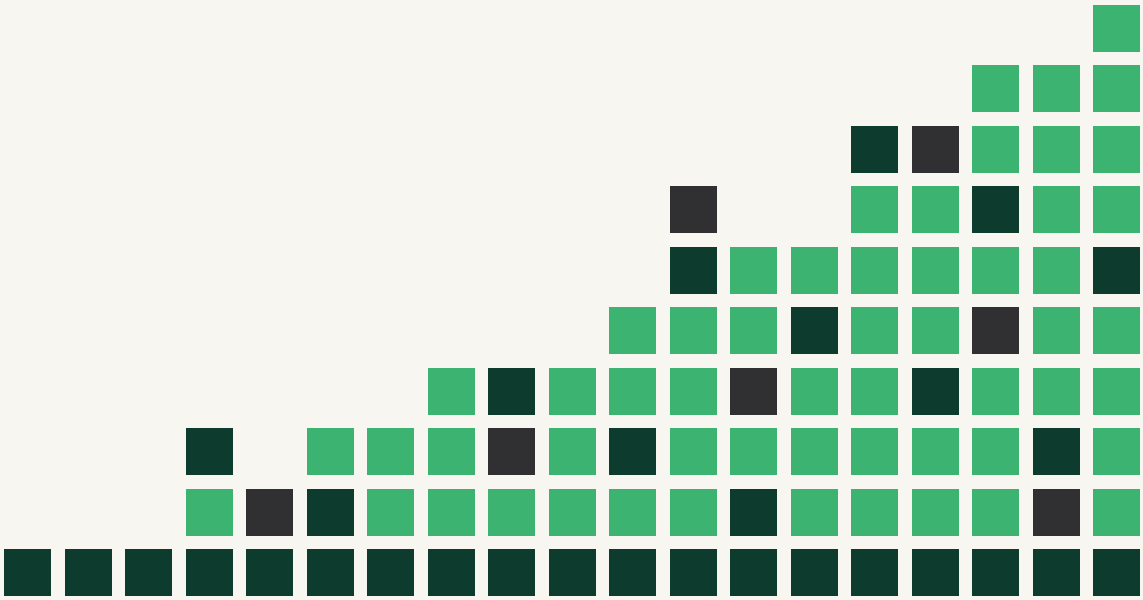
	For a book on cultural studies	To support political prisoners	For the CSO's operating expenses	For a festival
Basic information				
Status	Active (June 2025 – September 2026)	Active (since December 2025)	Active (since May 2025)	Inactive (October 2024 – December 2024)
Type	One-time	Mixed (both one-time and ongoing fundraisers)	Ongoing	One-time
Funds raised	Gronka: €510 out of €5,500 (9%); Zrzutka: 6,667 PLN out of 19,000 PLN (35%).	Zrzutka: 4,653 PLN out of 10,000 PLN (47%); Patreon: 1,373 PLN per month.	Zrzutka: 7,598 PLN out of 9,000 PLN (84%); Stripe: does not show amounts.	Gronka: €215 out of €4,500 (5%).
Topics	Preservation and promotion of the Belarusian language, culture, and national traditions (Top 3)	Support for political prisoners and assistance to their families (Top 3)	Preservation and promotion of the Belarusian language, culture, and national traditions (Top 3)	Preservation and promotion of the Belarusian language, culture, and national traditions (Top 3)
Motivation and building trust				
Motivation and value proposition of the fundraiser	Donors' motivation is not articulated; the only explicit incentive is a reward for donating on the crowdfunding platform. The value of the fundraiser to the Belarusian community is not described.	The "help people in need" motivation is used on Patreon and crowdfunding platforms but not on social media. The fundraiser does not explain its value and treats the topic as intrinsically worthwhile.	Donor motivation is spelt out only as a request for help. The posts do not make clear what value the organisation represents for Belarusian culture.	Donor motivation is not spelt out. The value is also not described: why this Belarusian festival is needed in Poland.
Description of the fundraising goal and how the money will be used	Available on two crowdfunding platforms, as well as in a joint post by the CSO and the platform announcing the fundraiser's launch.	Available on the crowdfunding platform and on Patreon. Other channels only provide general information.	There is no description of the expenses or the amount needed, only a request for help.	Only available on the crowdfunding platform and in media publications. Other channels provide general information.

	For a book on cultural studies	To support political prisoners	For the CSO's operating expenses	For a festival
Description of tangible impact and results	Reporting is lacking, especially given the campaign's length: what happened to the money from the first fundraiser, and why a second one was opened.	Detailed reporting is available on Patreon, but not on social media or on the website.	There is no reporting on the fundraiser either on social media or on the website.	The fundraiser was never closed, and the CSO's channels carried no information about its results or what happened to the money afterwards.
Visual representation of the fundraiser's goals and reporting	The author posts about the book on social media, and one crowdfunding platform includes a video. The social media posts are uninformative: they show only the cover of the future book.	The social media posts use stock images; they include no photos or videos. Photo and video reports are available only on the crowdfunding platforms.	The posts do not show what was bought and paid for, and are illustrated with stock images.	The same stock image is used across all social media; additional photos appear only in media articles.
Communication regarding safety	Safety is not mentioned at all.	Safety is not mentioned at all.	Safety is not mentioned at all.	Safety is not mentioned at all.
Communication activity				
Reminders, pinned posts, links in profile headers	There are no regular reminders, but the author's account has posts on the fund-raiser's topic. The posts are not pinned, and the link to the crowdfunding plat-form appears only in the author's profile header. Reminders over 1 year 2 months: Facebook – 3, Instagram – 3, Telegram – 1	No regular reminders; posts are not pinned; a link appears in the profile header. Reminders over 8 months: Facebook – 5, Instagram – 5, Telegram – 5	No regular reminders; posts are not pinned; the website has a dedicated section. Reminders over 1 year 3 months: Facebook – 8, Instagram – 8, Telegram – 8	There were no regular reminders. Reminders over 2 months: Facebook – 3, Instagram – 0, Telegram – 2

	For a book on cultural studies	To support political prisoners	For the CSO's operating expenses	For a festival
Additional channels	3 media articles, 1 video by a vlogger.	Posts in Belarusian Facebook groups (possibly in Telegram chats too; no technical way to verify).	No.	2 media articles.
Advertising on Meta	No.	No.	No.	No.
Donation options				
Various options to transfer money	Two platforms offer different payment methods, including BLIK. Both fixed and custom amounts are available.	The platform offers different payment methods, including BLIK; Patreon offers regular subscription-based donations. Both fixed and custom amounts are available.	The platform offers different payment methods, including BLIK. Both fixed and custom amounts are available.	The platform offers different payment methods, including BLIK. Both fixed and custom amounts are available.
1.5% PIT	No.	The tax allocation is mentioned as one of the ways to support the project.	The tax allocation is mentioned as one of the ways to support the project.	No.

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