

Philanthropy in Spain and Portugal

Knowledge, Social attitudes and Behaviours



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Overview

In this report we explore philanthropy in Spain and Portugal with a focus on the knowledge, social attitudes and philanthropic behaviours in both societies.

The first section of this report provides a panoramic perspective on the topic of philanthropy: what it is, who is involved, how has it changed over time, how does it relate to government and business, what is the distinctive role and contribution of philanthropy, and what are its weaknesses?

This section explains that philanthropy plays a unique role in meeting needs that are not – or not yet – met by the State or the Market, and that enable donors to share their spare resources for the common good, to improve society, and to make things better and express solidarity with fellow citizens.

Having noted that giving money, volunteering and helping strangers are all common activities across the world, but that there is a scarcity of robust and recent data on philanthropy in Spain and Portugal, the second section presents findings from a newly commissioned survey of the Spanish and Portuguese populations.

This data demonstrates that philanthropic behaviours are commonplace and viewed positively, with some interesting variations across the two countries, and across people of different age groups, genders and education levels.

The report ends with a discussion of the implications of this new knowledge for public understanding and five recommendations to advance the understanding and future development of philanthropy in Spain and Portugal.

SECTION 1

Knowledge about Philanthropy: the global context



1.1. What is philanthropy?

Quite simply the word philanthropy means ‘love of humankind’ (‘philo’ = love, and ‘anthropos’ = humankind). People in every country and across all time periods have shown love and care for fellow humans and have made voluntary efforts to improve their communities and environments. It is a very normal activity to help others, and yet the word ‘philanthropy’ is not commonly used anywhere in the world outside of the USA. In Spain and Portugal there is a preference for the words ‘charity’ and ‘solidarity’ and, as the research presented in this report shows, a significant proportion of the population in these countries report that they do not know what the word ‘philanthropy’ means. However, this linguistic barrier is not evident in practice, because the data shows that Spanish and Portuguese people regularly demonstrate love of others – whether it is called helping, charity, care, kindness, generosity or solidarity – as a daily reality.

Why focus on philanthropy in Spain and Portugal?

Whilst the US has the most established philanthropy sector in terms of the number of donors, amounts given, and reach of activity funded, many other countries are increasingly taking philanthropy more seriously.

For example, the government in Ireland recently published its first *National Policy on Philanthropy*. Like Spain and Portugal, Ireland is a welfare state in which the population believes government should be the primary provider that meets basic social needs. Nonetheless, a role for philanthropy is seen in helping to meet those needs and in building stronger communities. As the Minister who launched the report explained:

Philanthropy can support new, fast and innovative responses to social issues. It can provide early-stage funding, enabling Government to intervene later when data and an evidence base is available. If concepts are proven, Government can move to mainstream, scale or advance the innovation.¹

Likewise, the Australia government sees a positive role for philanthropy and has commissioned a report to better understand donor motivations and how to significantly increase philanthropic income. The first key point in the draft report states:

Philanthropy contributes to a better society by providing money, time, skills, assets or lending a voice to people and communities who would otherwise receive lower quality, or have less access to, goods and services.²

Therefore, even in countries that believe strongly in the role of the State and collective

1. From Foreword by Minister Joe O’Brien T.D. in the *National Philanthropy Policy 2024-2028*, Government of Ireland, December 2023, p.5 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/280970/9db88719-c3b3-49ba-ab4b-0a0683d32021.pdf#page=null>.

2. Australian Government Productivity Commission draft report: *Future Foundations for Giving*, November 2023, p.2 <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/philanthropy/draft/philanthropy-draft.pdf>.

tax-funded provision, philanthropy is increasingly being understood as a useful funding mechanism and a key pillar of society alongside government and the market. Private donors can support action to meet needs and enhance communal life and can support a diverse and independent civil society which is crucial for stronger communities and thriving, open democracies.

The everyday Impact of philanthropy is 'hidden in plain sight'

The impact of philanthropic activity is all around us. Every day we all benefit from decisions made by other people to voluntarily give away some of their own resources for the benefit of wider society. Those philanthropic acts may have occurred decades or even centuries ago, in our own town or country or by donors living far away who choose to help complete strangers, and they continue to be made by a large proportion of the population today. As these examples show:

- » Philanthropic gifts have helped to build the physical infrastructure of our communities such as churches, hospitals, schools, libraries, art galleries, sporting facilities and so on.
- » Philanthropic gifts also help to fund a very wide range of services that leave no physical footprint but have improved the lives of countless fellow citizens including helping the hungry, homeless and sick; funding the work behind significant scientific discoveries and medical advances such as the polio vaccine, insulin to treat diabetes and mapping the human genome; and providing the financial means to challenge injustice and make society more equal, for example, by funding the campaigns that ended the slave trade, improved conditions for working people, enfranchised and liberated women, reformed the criminal justice system, and advanced equal rights for people being treated unjustly because of their physical ability, sexuality, race, or other characteristics.

- » Today's philanthropists – big and small – continue to fund both immediate assistance and long-term systemic change to tackle inequalities, climate change, conflict, refugee/asylum seeker, natural and man-made disasters.

The very wide scale and different intensity of activities supported by philanthropy adds to the problem of understanding its role, remit and impact. For example, within the category of 'Health' it includes someone giving a neighbour a lift to a hospital appointment or donating a few Euros to a health fundraiser, as well as someone making a multi-million Euro donation to build a hospital. Most of us make gifts at the smaller and more informal end of this spectrum every day – "being philanthropic" is so commonplace that we barely stop to notice it.

One reason that philanthropy is 'hidden in plain sight' is because, outside of the US and especially in continental Europe since the mid 20th century, there has been a preference for the state to run services that are funded through progressive taxation as the dominant provider of basic welfare needs such as health and education. However, there remains an important role for philanthropically-funded efforts which can co-exist with, as well as complement and challenge state provision. As the name suggests: love of humanity (philanthropy) is a different financial mechanism and has different objectives to basic provision (state). Surviving and thriving are not in zero-sum opposition: we can increase the tax base and also encourage more private generosity.

If the state can be trusted to ensure a minimum standard of living for all, then philanthropy can fund the additional things that make life worth living such as access to music, theatre, sport, public parks and animal welfare. Where the state is not fulfilling its obligations to the population then philanthropically-funded efforts can complement and challenge as needed. Philanthropy therefore differs from, and exists

alongside, market and state forms of provision. It is not merely an alternative to government spending funded by taxes.

1.2. Definitions of philanthropy

Despite being omnipresent and necessary for full human flourishing, philanthropy is not only invisible and therefore overlooked, but also often contested and critiqued. ‘Love of humankind’ ought to be an uncontroversial good thing, but the idea and practice of philanthropy provoke strong feelings because it sits at the intersection of two highly contentious issues: money and morality. Yet philanthropy is not only about gifts of money: the definition of philanthropy currently favoured

by scholars is rather broad: ‘voluntary action for the public good’ which includes gifts of time, expertise, support and contacts as well as donations of money.³ All these gifts can help to achieve diverse goals in a range of cause areas as listed in figure 1.

Philanthropy occurs, in every part of the world, in every period of history, and is encouraged by every major world religion, as well as by secular humanitarianism. The activities that benefit from these gifts cover such an immense range – from the arts to zoology and every alphabetic cause in between – that it is no wonder many people struggle to fully understand what philanthropy is.

One way to grasp the nature and contribution of philanthropy is to think about the different roles it plays in society (figure 2).

3. Payton, R. and Moody, M. (2008) *Understanding Philanthropy: Its meaning and mission*. Bloomington and Indiana: Indianan University Press, p.28.

Figure 1: Types of philanthropic causes



Figure 2: Roles of philanthropy**1. Service role:**

Delivering services that the state and market can't or won't provide. *For example, providing food and housing for the poor.*

**2. Innovation role:**

Funding social innovation, research, experimentation and entrepreneurial interventions. *For example, developing scientific and medical breakthroughs.*

**3. Campaigning role:**

Advocating for reform, for particular interests, for particular populations or for particular views of the public good. *For example, campaigning to change the law so that same-sex people can marry.*

**4. Cultural role:**

Providing a vehicle for expressing and preserving values, traditions, identities and other aspects of culture. *For example, funding theatres and art galleries.*

**5. Civic role:**

Building community, generating 'social capital' and promoting and increasing civic engagement. *For example, funding community events, local media and promoting voter turnout.*

**6. Private role:**

Meeting the psychological and social needs of donors to have a positive impact on the world and leave a meaningful legacy. *For example, by getting a "warm glow" from being generous, enjoying meeting nonprofit staff and beneficiaries, and gaining a good reputation.*

The first five roles usefully highlight the great variety of activity and outcomes that philanthropy helps make happen.

The sixth role reminds us that philanthropists also benefit at the same time as they use their resources to try make the world a better place for other people.

In short, philanthropy is needed – and will be provided – however high tax rates are, and however much responsibility the state takes, because human needs are infinite, because things could always be better,

because emergencies happen and help is needed at short-notice, and because some people will want to respond to those needs (Payton and Moody 2008).⁴

4. Payton, R. and Moody, M. (2008) *Understanding Philanthropy: Its meaning and mission*. Bloomington and Indiana: Indianan University Press, pp.34-35.

The difference between philanthropy and charity

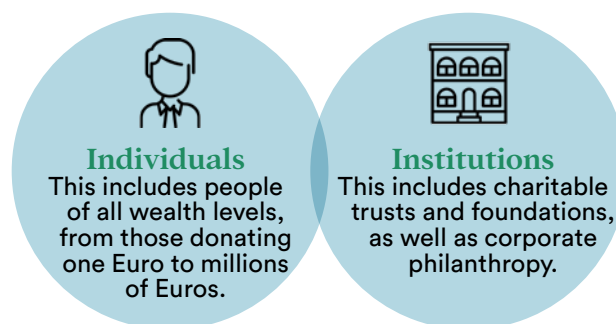
The task of defining philanthropy is made more difficult by the existence of similar terms and concepts such as ‘charity’, ‘solidarity’ and ‘benevolence’. Some people suggest that ‘philanthropy’ is the broad concept referring to all types of private action for the public good whilst ‘charity’ only refers to help given to the most needy. Others see ‘charity’ and ‘philanthropy’ as quite distinct, for example with philanthropy having a secular orientation in contrast to the religious inspiration and purpose of charity, alternatively charity is said to be aimed at individuals whilst philanthropy is an organized effort to improve the socio-economic conditions of a whole community.

A common point of differentiation between ‘charity’ and ‘philanthropy’ is that charity is said to alleviate suffering whilst philanthropy is preventative. In support of this position, two people widely considered to be ‘fathers of modern philanthropy’ are the Scottish-US industrialist Andrew Carnegie whose ‘Gospel of Wealth’ argues that philanthropy should “provide ladders for the aspiring to rise” (Carnegie, 1899) and John D. Rockefeller who wrote that, “if people can be educated to help themselves, we strike at the root of many evils of the world”. Therefore, both Carnegie and Rockefeller suggest that philanthropy is about preventing, rather than ameliorating the symptoms of, poverty. The work of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Portugal and la Caixa in Spain, both of which fund research, are further examples of this philanthropic approach.

The lack of a universally agreed definition of philanthropy is compounded by the arguably more serious lack of accurate data about philanthropy, to which we turn in the next section of this paper. But first we take a closer look at the types of philanthropy that exist, including what is known about philanthropic behaviours in Spain and Portugal.

1.3. Individual and Institutional philanthropy

There are two broad types of philanthropic donors:



Clearly the motivations for individual and institutional philanthropy differ. Whilst individuals make donations to support cause and issues they care about and have personal connections to, companies are motivated by the desire to build stronger relationships with staff which helps to recruit and retain talent, improve reputation amongst customers which may affect purchasing decisions, and positive relationships with stakeholders such as journalists and government officials.

1.3.1. INDIVIDUAL PHILANTHROPISTS

Individuals are by far the most important source of philanthropy. Data from the US and the UK show that as much as four-fifths of total donated income comes from individuals (mostly from living individuals and a smaller percentage from charitable bequests), around 15 per cent of annual total charitable giving comes from charitable foundations and just 5 per cent is from corporations.⁵

Unfortunately, there is limited accurate and up-to-date information on philanthropic giving around the world. The two main sources of data are the International Philanthropy Database and the World Giving Index:

5. Giving USA Foundation; NCVO 2024.

International Philanthropy Database

The International Philanthropy Database only includes countries where sufficient robust data is available, which excludes Spain and Portugal. This study does however confirm that philanthropy exists in all different types of country, from the highly capitalistic USA to former communist countries such as Russia, though the amounts donated vary depending on the historical, political, economic and cultural context, ranging from annual philanthropic donations as high as \$1,427 in the US to only \$12 in Russia.⁶

World Giving Index

This study of global philanthropy is simpler in design but has much broader coverage. The World Giving Index presents data from a survey of almost 150,000 people across 142 countries, who answer three simple questions:

1. Have you donated money to charity?
2. Have you helped a stranger or someone you didn't know who needed help?
3. Have you volunteered your time to an organisation?

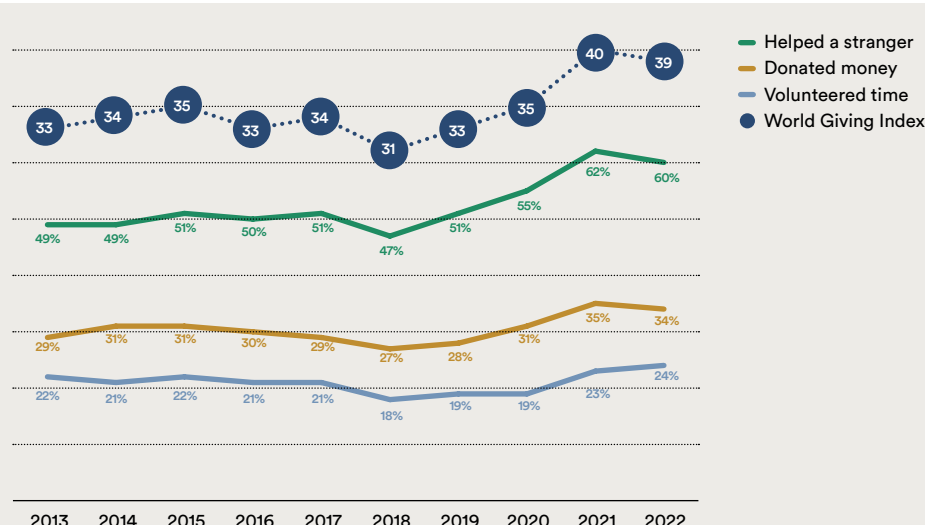
These are Yes/No questions in which no information is provided about, for example, how

much money was donated to charity or how many hours were volunteered. Nonetheless, valuable insights are provided into total philanthropy across the world and differences between countries. Key findings include:

- » 72% of the world's population gave money, time or helped a stranger in 2022 (the last year the data was collected).
- » On all three measures, the world has become more giving over the past decade, as shown in figure 3. The percentage of people who report having helped a stranger has increased by the largest amount, from 49% to 60% (a 20% increase), whilst donating money increased from 29% to 34% (a 17% increase) and volunteering increased from 22% to 24% (a 9% increase).
- » By combining the response to all three questions, an overall 'world giving index' score is created for each country. Despite the much higher amounts of money donated in the USA (as noted above) when participation in giving activity is measured instead of the amounts given, the USA only achieves the 5th highest score, ranked below Indonesia, Ukraine, Kenya and Liberia.

**Figure 3:
World Giving
Index scores
2013-2022**

Source: CAF (2023)
World Giving Index.
London: Charities Aid
Foundation.



6. Created by Dutch scholar Pamala Wiepking. [http://www.wiepking.com/papers/Documentation_IIPD_\(2016_version1\).pdf](http://www.wiepking.com/papers/Documentation_IIPD_(2016_version1).pdf).

When the 3 questions are viewed separately, there is a lot of variety in which country is

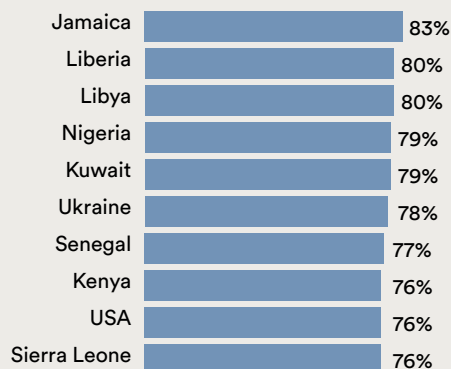
at the top and the bottom of the rankings, as shown in figure 4:

Figure 4: Country variations in giving behaviours

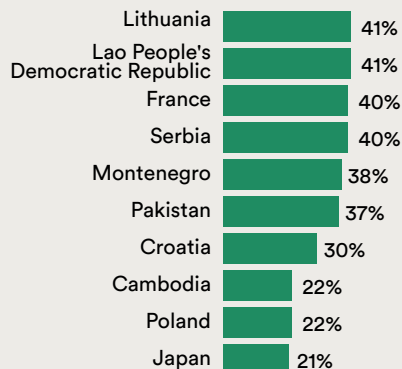
Helped a stranger



TOP 10



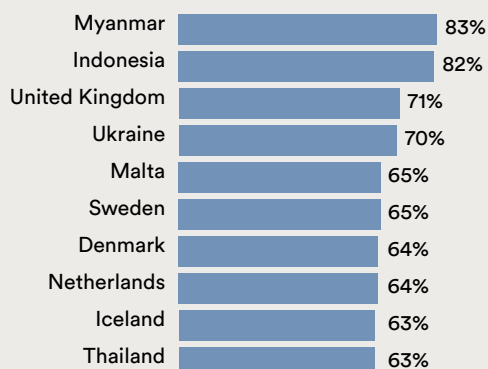
BOTTOM 10



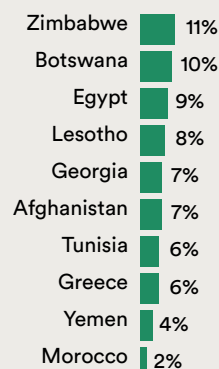
Donated money



TOP 10



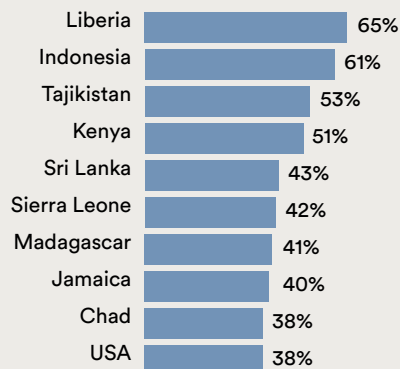
BOTTOM 10



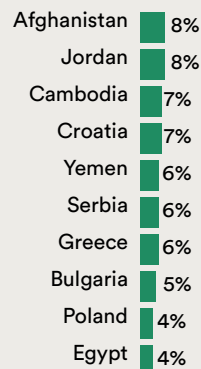
Volunteered time



TOP 10



BOTTOM 10



Source: CAF (2023) World Giving Index. London: Charities Aid Foundation.

**Figure 5:
Giving
behaviours
in Spain and
Portugal**

Source: CAF (2023)
World Giving Index.
London: Charities Aid
Foundation.

SPAIN

86 Overall World Giving Index
rank out of 142 countries

55% HELPED A
STRANGER

39% DONATED
MONEY

17% VOLUNTEERED

PORTUGAL

115 Overall World Giving Index
rank out of 142 countries

53% HELPED A
STRANGER

24% DONATED
MONEY

15% VOLUNTEERED

Interestingly, Spain and Portugal are not in either the top or the bottom ten for any of the three measures. So, what is the story of philanthropy in these two countries?

Data from the World Giving Index shows both countries appear in the middle of the league tables, as shown in figure 5.

1.3.2. INSTITUTIONAL PHILANTHROPISTS

Charitable trusts and foundations have been established for many centuries. There are an estimated 186,000 foundations in Europe which collectively hold €647.5 billion in assets, and distribute around €54.5 billion each year. Some examples of long-established European philanthropic foundations include the [Fugger foundation](#) in Germany (established 1521), the ["la Caixa" Foundation](#) in Spain (established 1904), the [Wellcome Trust](#) in UK (established 1936) and the [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation](#) in Portugal (established 1956).⁷

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the umbrella term used to refer to the many ways in which businesses fulfil their ethical and philanthropic obligations to society. This includes socially purposeful engagement with employees, the communities in which firms operate and wider society, to have a more positive social and environmental impact. Within the broader umbrella of CSR sits Corporate Philanthropy (CP), which is typically defined as the voluntary private contribution of resources in the form of money, time and/or expertise by corporations to benefit the public good (Gautier and Pache, 2015).⁸

Examples of CP include giving employees paid time off to volunteer, matching donations made by employees, and making donations from profits to support charities chosen by the firm's leadership and/or employees and customers. Data from over 200 of the world's largest companies finds the median value of total community investments was \$36.8m in 2022, representing, on average, 0.96% of pre-tax profits.⁹

7. Philea (Philanthropy Europe Association) *Data on the Sector* <https://philea.eu/how-we-can-help/knowledge/data-on-the-sector/#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20there,estimated%2054.5%20billion%20euros%20annually>.

8. Gautier, A. and Pache, A-C. (2015): "Research on Corporate Philanthropy: A Review and Assessment", *Journal of Business Ethics* 126(3):343-369. [<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1969-7>].

9. CECP (2023): *Giving in Numbers*. Chief Executives for Common Purpose, p.7

1.4. The Evolution of Philanthropy

Philanthropy is not new, evidence of private giving for public good is found in the earliest civilisations for as long as human societies have existed. The first known mention of the word ‘philanthropy’ appears in the 5th century BCE Greek tragedy ‘Prometheus Bound’ in which Prometheus gives the gifts of fire and optimism to humans. In Classical Antiquity, being philanthropic referred to people with generous dispositions as well as giving concrete gifts. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all encourage philanthropic gifts – often with a prescriptive size such as a tithe or zakat.

Notable examples of philanthropic impact in the pre-modern world include building and running orphanages, housing for the elderly, and construction of churches, cathedrals, mosques, synagogues, and temples. By the 18th century philanthropy was moving from religious-focused to secular needs notably education and hospitals, as well as reforming efforts to improve conditions in prisons, to beautify cities with parks as well as art galleries, concert halls and libraries, and responding to disasters in other countries. The Lisbon earthquake of 1755, in which 80% of the city’s buildings were destroyed and 100,000 people died in Portugal, Spain and Morocco, was the first natural disaster to inspire a global philanthropic response, particularly from people living in ports that had trading connections with the city.

In the early 20th century, a major development was the creation of large, endowed philanthropic foundations serving generalist purposes with indefinite timescales. Whilst the best-known foundations were created by Americans such as Andrew Carnegie and John D Rockefeller in the 1910s, they were

preceded by the Indian industrialist Jamsetji Tata whose philanthropic endowment was created in 1892 and has since funded a range of pioneering scientific and educational work. Other notable philanthropic foundations created in the 20th century include the “la Caixa” Foundation which grew out of, and now distributes the profits of, the well-known Spanish savings bank, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, whose namesake died in Portugal in 1956 and left his fortune to support the arts, education and science, and the very end of the last century saw the establishment of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2000 with a focus on global health and development.

The first decades of the 21st century have seen an increasing profile for philanthropy worldwide, as well as the emergence of new tools such as social investment and social impact bonds, new giving vehicles such as collaborative giving circles and Donor Advised Funds, and new actors such as professional grant makers and philanthropy advisors.¹⁰

Other significant contemporary developments include changes in outlook and practices by major philanthropists (both wealthy individuals and large foundations) such as trust-based philanthropy, participatory grant-making and unrestricted giving in which donors impose no conditions on how the money can be spent but instead trust recipient to spend the money in the way they think is best. All these developments are intended to address concerns and criticisms of philanthropy by shifting the power from donors to beneficiaries.

10. Salamon, L. (2014): *New Frontiers of Philanthropy: a guide to the new tools and new actors that are reshaping global philanthropy and social investing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1.5. The Relationship of Philanthropy with the State and the Market

Philanthropy has a distinctive and unique role to play in society that differs from the role played by governments and markets.

As the Irish National Policy, mentioned at the start of this report, goes on to explain:

Philanthropy is not seen as a substitute for public service provision, but as independent funding which can also be innovative, ground-breaking and take risks on potential solutions to societal challenges.”¹¹

Most notably, philanthropy is freer to move faster and take more risks because there are no voters or shareholders to please. The only thing preventing a philanthropic response is the potential donor’s preference to hold onto the money or to spend it on themselves.

Being in favour of philanthropy does not mean being against taxation and government action. Indeed, many philanthropists believe strongly in a well-funded state to deliver essential universal services, whilst seeing a role for philanthropy in acting more quickly, challenging the status quo and providing additional benefits to society. If governments decide to step in and take over funding what philanthropists have started, then donors see this as a success and are usually happy to move on to find new ways they can use their resources to make a difference. In sum, philanthropists seek to do something ‘extra’ rather than to replace state provision.

The importance and reach of the roles for philanthropy set out above, and the capacity of philanthropy to evolve and adapt to meet new and emerging needs shows that, whatever the level of taxation that funds public services, and however well people are able to fend for themselves in the market, there remains an important role for philanthropy which follows different principles to that of the state and the market, for example:¹²

- » Philanthropy is voluntary and autonomous – people are free to choose not to give, and to choose which causes and beneficiaries to support.
- » Philanthropy involves both rational and emotional decision making. Whilst some people do look for evidence and seek to make logical choices, there are personal preferences, cultural connections and social influences that affect what and how people give.
- » Philanthropy is not the same as public expenditure and it cannot replace it. Philanthropy involves much lower levels of spending than governments, and it cannot fund universal provision in the long term.

11. From Foreword by Minister Joe O’Brien T.D. in the *National Philanthropy Policy 2024-2028*, Government of Ireland, p.5.

12. These principles of philanthropy are set out in R. Davies (2023) *What is Philanthropy For?* Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Figure 6: Summary of the main strengths and weaknesses of philanthropy

Strengths of Philanthropy:	Weaknesses of Philanthropy:
Breadth: Philanthropy funds a very wide variety of services and activities, from the Arts to Zoos and every alphabetic cause in between.	Insufficiency: there will never be enough philanthropic money to meet infinite needs and wants.
Social progress: Philanthropy funds campaigning and advocacy work that lead to social and political change.	Amateurism: the voluntary element, including reliance on volunteers, may result in a lack of professionalisation.
Innovation: Philanthropy funds innovative ways to meet enduring needs, including medical breakthroughs and news of organising the provision of welfare.	Paternalism: the distribution of donations reflect donors' interests which may not be the same priorities as those of wider society, for example animal welfare may attract more donations than serious harms to humans.
Speed: Philanthropists have no voters or shareholders to please so can act more quickly to meet new and urgent needs.	Harms of omission: philanthropy's help for one group of people or focus on certain causes may mean that other people and causes get neglected.
Pluralism: Philanthropy enables minority needs and interests to be met, and enhances the voice of citizens to produce the diverse, decentralised and pluralistic civil society that is needed for a healthy liberal democracy.	Particularism: philanthropy tends to help specific subgroups of people with which the donor feels a connection, only the state can promise universal provision
Redistribution: Philanthropy moves wealth out of private hands into the public sphere, and can help avoid the accumulation and inheritance of large fortunes that entrench inequality.	Delaying systemic change: when philanthropy tackles the symptoms rather than the root causes, this might delay necessary structural reforms that would be better for beneficiaries in the long-run.
State subsidy: Philanthropy can enable state-run services to expand or be run more cheaply because of the contribution of donors and volunteers.	Undermining democracy: encouraging some people to choose what issues and causes to support – or not – may undermine the principal of equality at the ballot box because donors have more 'voice' than non-donors in how society is run.
Values: Being philanthropic enables donors to align their actions with their personal values (religious and humanitarian).	Cultural insensitivity: can be caused by well-meaning people from privileged backgrounds seeking to impose their values and views upon those they are trying to help. This critique is often levelled at donors in Western societies trying to intervene and help in other countries where they do not fully understand the situation or the full consequences of their intervention.
Donor benefit: Being philanthropic meets the needs of donors such as belonging, esteem and living a meaningful life.	Undue Donor benefit: donors may already be people who enjoy a lot of advantages (e.g. wealth) so should not make further gains by being altruistic

Source: own elaboration.

1.6. The distinctive strengths and weaknesses of philanthropy

Philanthropy can make a significant contribution to individual lives and to communities, but it is not perfect and will not necessarily be able to solve all intractable problems. In addition, because philanthropy involves private interventions in the public domain, it can aggravate existing power differentials and its outcomes may not always be positive.

Philanthropy is often political with a small ‘p’ – tax reliefs are not available for philanthropy that seeks to influence elections or to support specific politicians, but private giving can be an effective way of expressing beliefs about what matters and a desire for changes that need to be made.

Tax exemptions offered to philanthropy in many countries are intended to encourage private generosity, but it also means that the state is foregoing tax income that would otherwise be available for elected politicians to spend. Therefore, taxpayers are subsidising donations to causes they may not personally support which leads some to question whether, on balance, philanthropy is harmful to the democratic functioning of society (see figure 6).

Conclusion

To sum up: philanthropy is ubiquitous and plays a significant role in contemporary society. It has evolved over time and there are many debates about the role and impact of private giving, but it remains a crucial funding stream for nonprofit activity and a healthy civil society.

The next section presents new data on philanthropy in Spain and Portugal.

SECTION 2

New data on individual philanthropy in Spain and Portugal: Knowledge, Social attitudes and Behaviour



In this section we present new data gathered in a specially commissioned survey to find out what people in Spain and Portugal think about philanthropy, and to measure their philanthropic behaviours.

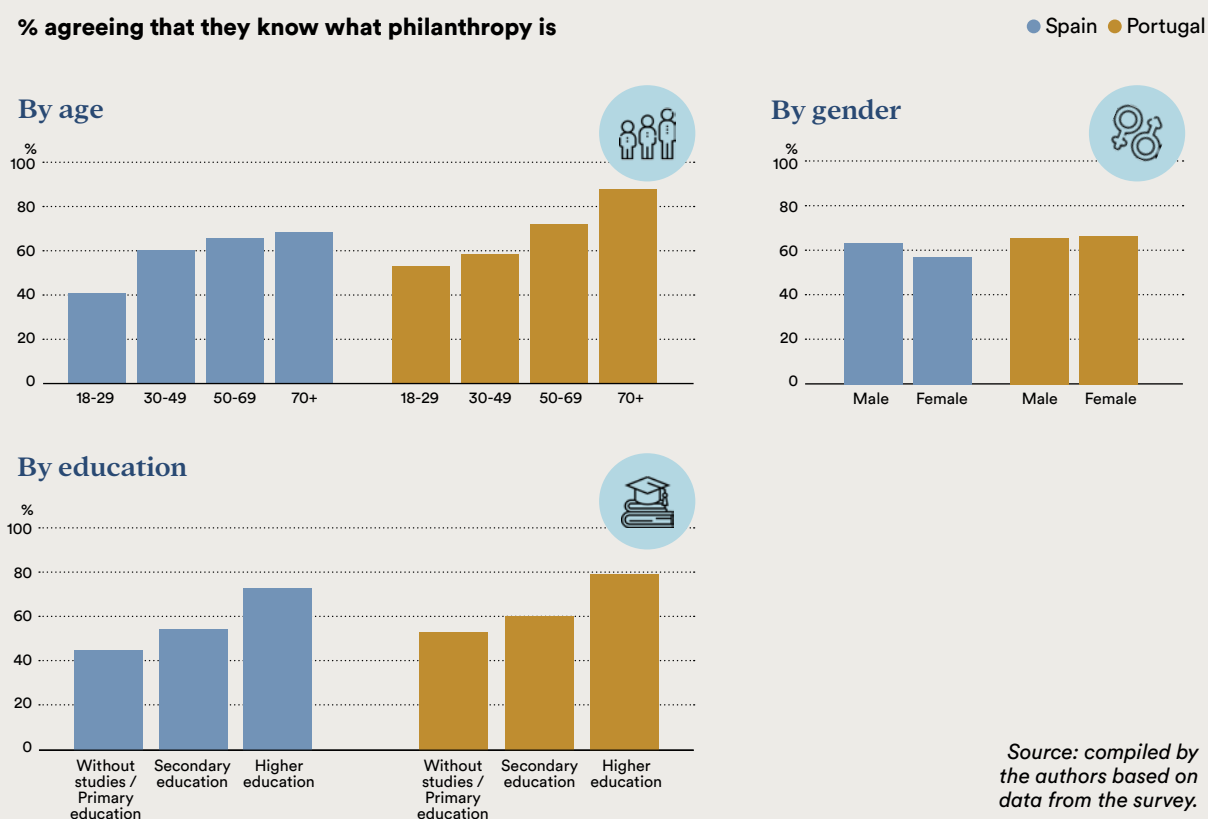
2.1. Understanding of philanthropy

When asked ‘Do you know what philanthropy is?’ A majority of people in Spain and Portugal confirm that they are familiar with this term

– with slightly higher levels of understanding in Portugal (66% of the population) compared to Spain (60% of the population).

The likelihood of understanding what philanthropy is increases in both countries with both age and educational level (see figure 7).

Figure 7: Knowledge of philanthropy by characteristics



Portuguese people aged 70 or older are more than twice as likely to say that they know what philanthropy is (87%) compared to Spanish people aged 18-29 (41%), whilst those who have completed a university education are significantly more likely to say that they know what philanthropy is compared to those who only completed a primary or secondary education.

Gender differences are minimal, with only a slightly higher number of Spanish men saying they know the term, and no significant gender differences in Portugal.

2.2. Definitions of philanthropy

When asked to define philanthropy, a large variety of words were suggested by survey respondents. Interestingly, the same four

words were the most likely to be given in both Spain and Portugal: help, love, humanity and generosity (figure 8).

Also interestingly, all of the words that were suggested multiple times in both countries were positive words, except for two, business and money, that both may have a negative connotation. Business appears in position 12 and 17 in Spain and Portugal, respectively, and money in 16 and 24.

This contrasts to the findings of a similar survey in the UK in which respondents gave many positive words such as Generous, Caring and Giving, some neutral words such as Wealthy, Rich and Donor, but also a large number of negative words including: Bad, Cheat, Cynical, Deceptive, Egotist, Erratic, Evasive, Exaggerates, Failure, Greedy, Guilty, Hubris, Idiot, Insensitive, Liar, Self-centred, Self-promoting, Tax-avoider, Tax-dodger, Too much wealth, Undemocratic, and Untrustworthy.¹³

Figure 8: Ranking of the 20 most cited words to define philanthropy in both countries



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the survey.

13. This data appears in B. Breeze (2021): "The Philanthropy Paradox: Public attitudes and future prospects for planned giving", available online: <https://research.kent.ac.uk/philanthropy/wp-content/uploads/sites/2278/2020/11/The-Philanthropy-Paradox-FINAL-Nov-2020.pdf>.

The more positive connotations of philanthropy in Spain and Portugal may be due to different cultural interpretations of private giving, or fewer examples of problematic donors, or it may be that in countries where philanthropy has a higher profile, such as in the UK, that familiarity breeds contempt.

2.3. Awareness of philanthropists and philanthropic organisations

When asked to name a philanthropist or a philanthropic organisation, it is striking how many respondents named American examples.

Individual philanthropists who are named

In both Spain and Portugal, the names that came first to mind, and are named by three times as many respondents as the next most popular suggestion – Spanish businessman Amancio Ortega – are Bill and Melinda Gates, the Microsoft founder and his now divorced wife (figure 9). This is perhaps less surprising

when we recall that the Gates’ have committed the largest amounts of philanthropy that the world has ever seen - \$69 billion by 2023. But it is less clear why half of the top ten names are also American, including Elon Musk whose fortune is larger than the Gates (c. \$200 billion versus c.\$140 billion) yet whose philanthropic efforts are much more opaque and smaller, with known gifts in the millions rather than billions of dollars.

Other than Americans, Spanish respondents suggest religious names such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi whilst Portuguese respondents are more likely to name Portuguese businessmen and footballers – with Antonio Chamalimaud, Rui Nabeiro, and Alexandro Soares dos Santos in the first category and Cristiano Ronaldo and Brazilian footballer Neymar in the latter. The American YouTuber Mr Beast who is a high-profile proponent of exhibitionist philanthropic acts online, is the tenth most frequently named by both Spanish and Portuguese young respondents, whilst celebrities such as Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie and Spanish-American chef Jose Andres also feature.

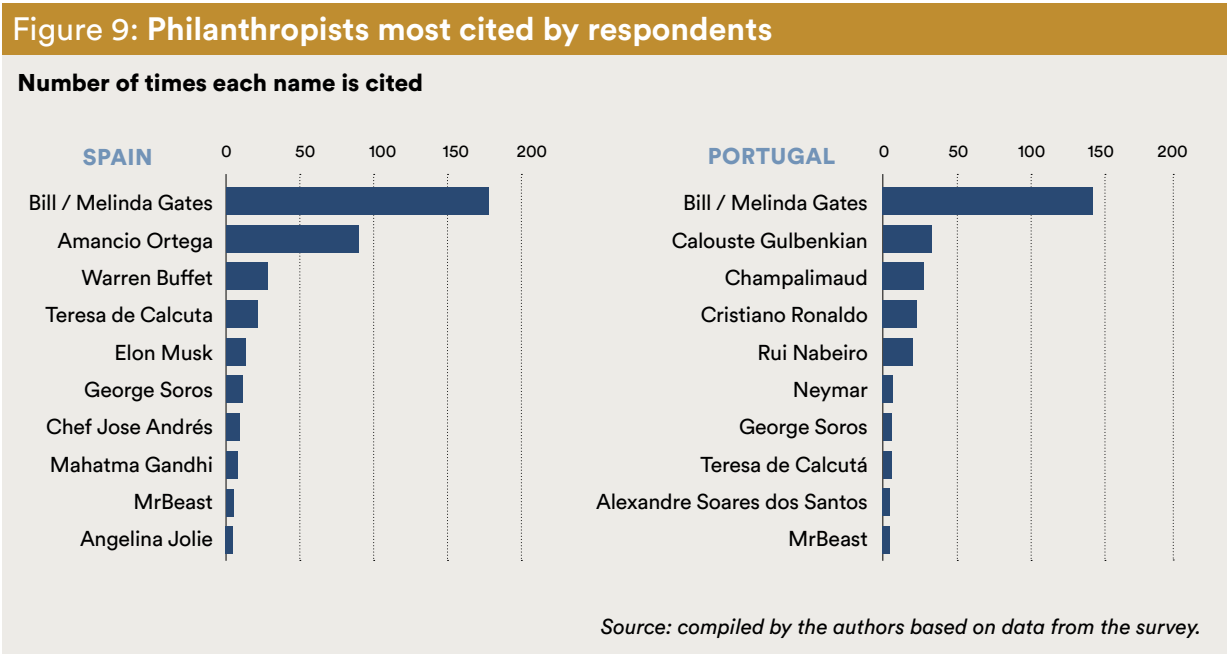
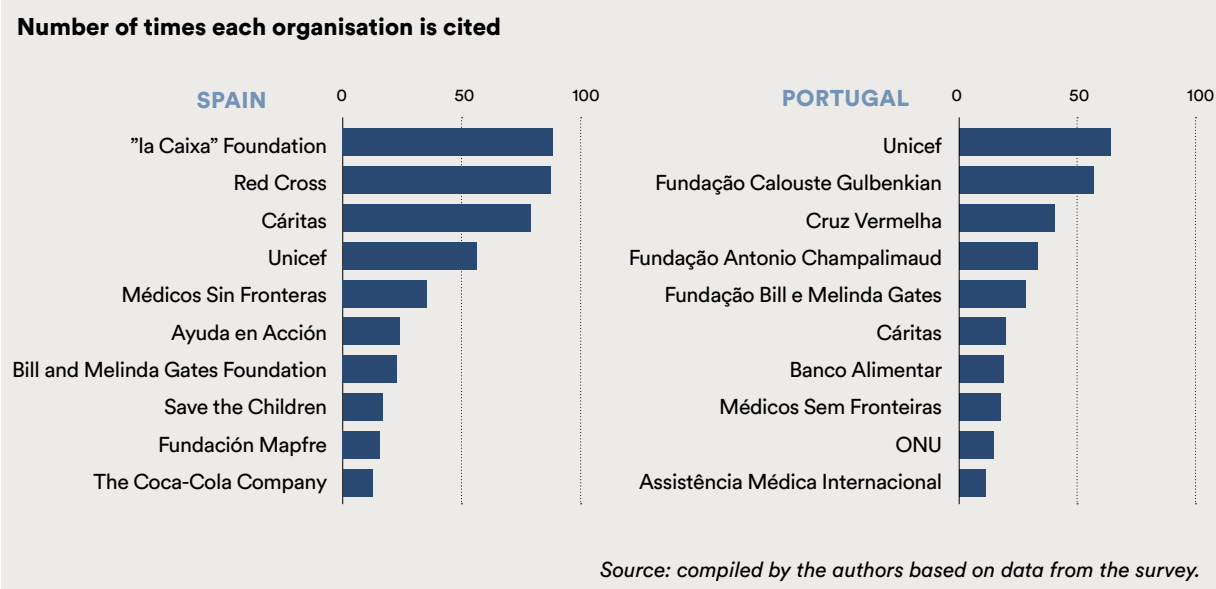


Figure 10: Organisations most cited by respondents

Institutional philanthropists who are named

Respondents found it easier to name a philanthropic organisation than a philanthropic individual.

Only 809 names of individual philanthropists were suggested whilst 1,086 answers were provided when asked to name a philanthropic organisation. However, this is still less than a third of the total number of people surveyed (3,222), indicating low levels of general knowledge about the philanthropy sector.

In Spain, the "la Caixa" Foundation, the Red Cross and Cáritas lead the list of philanthropic entities that were named (figure 10). Whilst in Portugal the most cited were UNICEF, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Red Cross.

Interestingly, nonprofit organisations are the most cited philanthropic organizations in Spain, whilst private foundations were more likely to be mentioned in Portugal.

2.4. Opinions about philanthropy

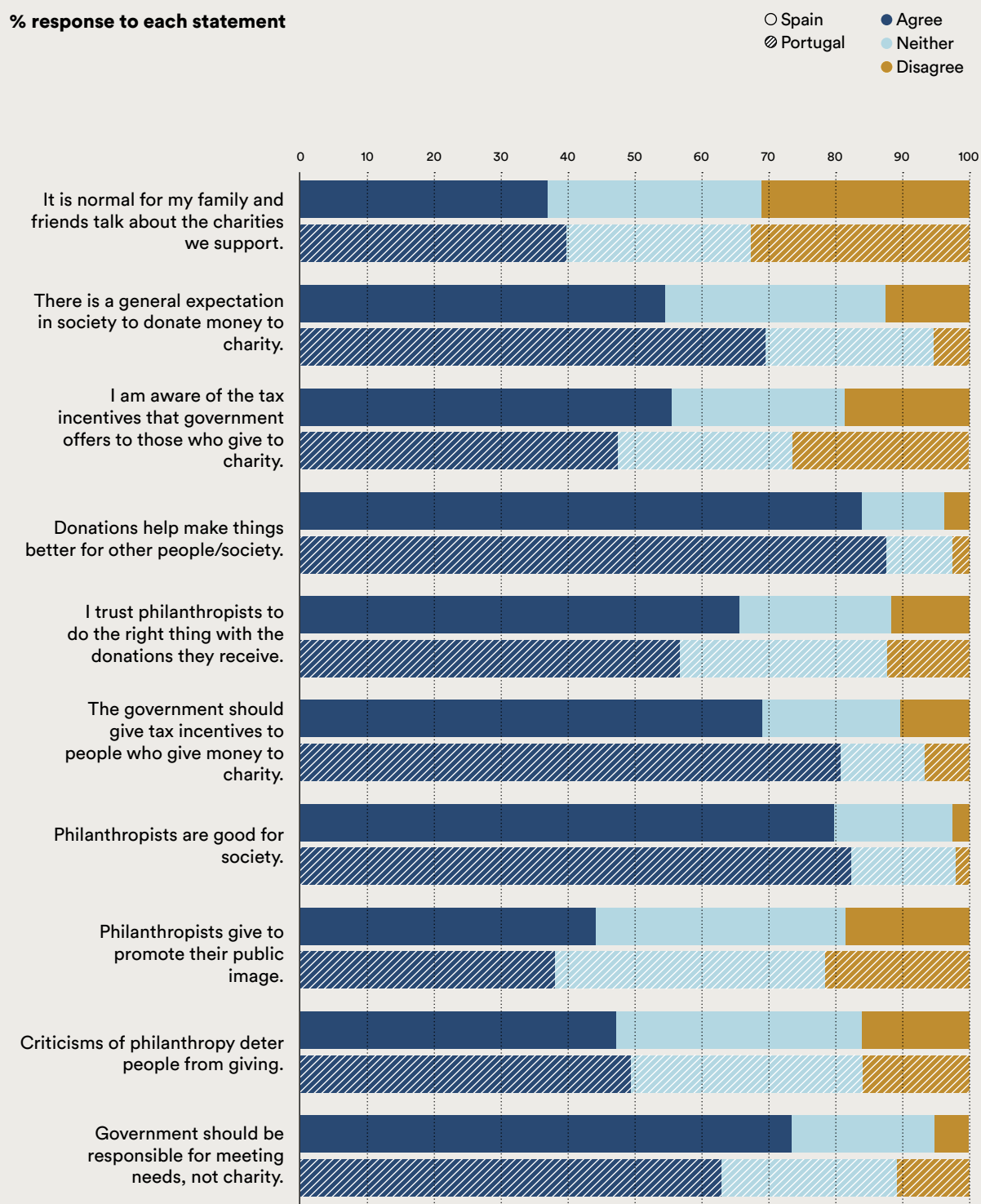
Survey respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with ten different statements about philanthropy (see figure 11).

The overall responses to these statements in both Spain and Portugal are quite favorable, although there is some mistrust towards philanthropists. In both countries there is a clear preference for the Government to be responsible for meeting the needs of society, rather than philanthropically-funded charities. These findings suggest strong support for the welfare state, but as later findings show that the Spanish and Portuguese populations do engage in philanthropy – giving both their money and their time to help others – in practice people may be open to private action alongside government-organised action.

Talking helps to establish giving as a social norm so it is interesting that more families talk about the charities they support (37% in Spain and 40% in Portugal) than do not do so

Figure 11: Opinion about philanthropy

% response to each statement



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the survey.

(31% in Spain and 33% in Portugal). An even larger proportion agree that there is a general expectation in society to donate money to charity. This expectation is felt more keenly in Portugal where 70% agree, compared to 54% in Spain.

Most people in Spain (55%) are aware of the tax incentives that government offers to those who give to charity compared to just under half of Portuguese respondents (47%). We undertook further statistical analysis to understand this finding, and discovered that individuals in Spain, older people, males and highly educated are more likely to say that they are aware of these incentives. In this sense, it would be useful for governments to communicate further the existence of these incentives, especially in Portugal.

The highest levels of agreement come in response to the statement that ‘Donations help make things better for other people/society’ which 84% in Spain and 88% in Portugal express agreement with. Very few people (3.7% and 2.4%) disagreed with this statement, the remaining 10-15% feeling neutral on this question.

Majorities in both populations also agreed that they trust philanthropic organisations to do what is right with the donations they receive, though agreement on this point is significantly higher in Spain (66%) than in Portugal (57%).

There was also strong agreement, even stronger in Portugal, that the government should give tax incentives to people who give money to charity (69% in Spain and 81% in Portugal). This agreement follows through to a well-supported belief (80% in Spain and 82% in Portugal) that philanthropists are good for society.

Reinforcing the finding of overwhelmingly positive words that came to mind in relation to the word ‘philanthropy’ only a minority of respondents (44% in Spain and 38% in Portugal) believe that philanthropists give to promote their public image. Similar

numbers (47% in Spain and 50% in Portugal) agree that criticisms of philanthropy deter people from giving.

The final statement, that Government should be responsible for meeting needs, not charity, also secures a majority in agreement, more extensively in Spain (73%) compared to Portugal. Regarding other characteristics such as age, gender and education, ‘results from further data analysis show that there are no significant differences.

2.5. Solidarity in Spanish and Portuguese society

When asked, on a scale of 1 to 10, how they perceive the level of solidarity in society, the responses are very similar in both countries, with an average of 5.9 and 6.0 in Spain and Portugal, respectively. This is a remarkably uniform response with no significant differences by age, gender or level of education (see figure 12).

2.6. Urgency of social issues

In both Spain and Portugal, Health is by far and away the top priority, with over three-quarters (76%) deeming it as a “most urgent” issue (see figure 12). Human rights are also agreed to be “most urgent” by 55% of respondents in both countries. Regarding Social action, more than three-quarters in both countries consider it to be urgent or very urgent.

There is less agreement on what other issues should be described as “urgent”, with Research being identified by 62% of Spanish respondents but only 36% of Portuguese respondents. Education and universities is also selected as more urgent by more respondents in Spain than in Portugal.

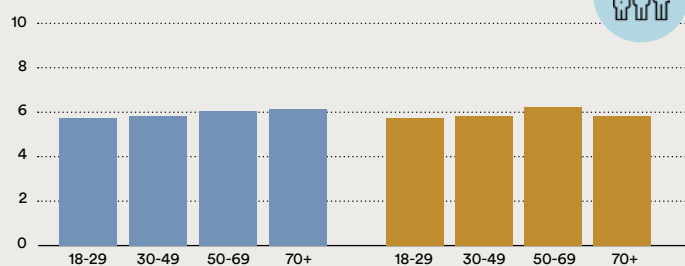
No other topic commands a majority of either population, though the Environment and animals come close (46% in Spain and 41% in Portugal).

Figure 12: General perception about the degree of solidarity

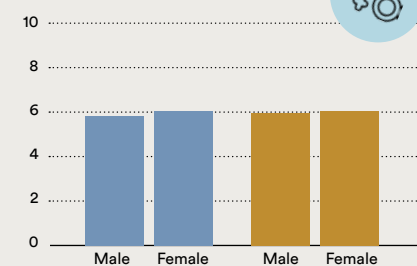
Perception of the level of solidarity in Spanish/Portuguese society where 0 = no solidarity and 10 = full solidarity

● Spain ● Portugal

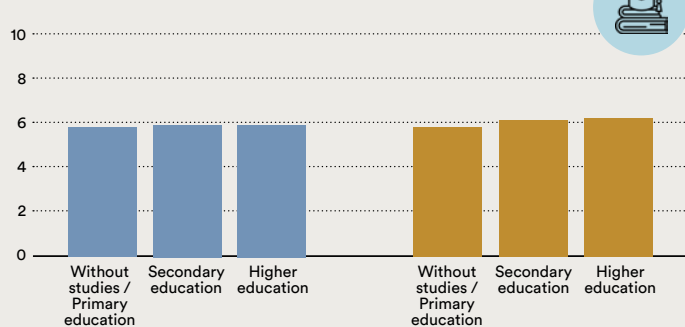
By age



By gender



By education

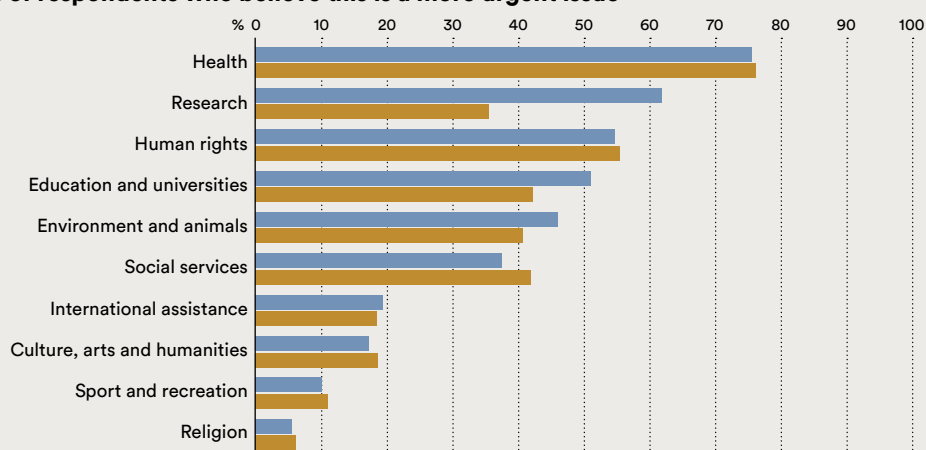


Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the survey.

Figure 13: Issues that should be addressed more urgently

% of respondents who believe this is a more urgent issue

● Spain ● Portugal



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the survey.

2.7. Individual philanthropic behaviours

The final section digs deeper into the actual philanthropic behaviours of respondents in relation to a variety of pro-social acts (figure 14).

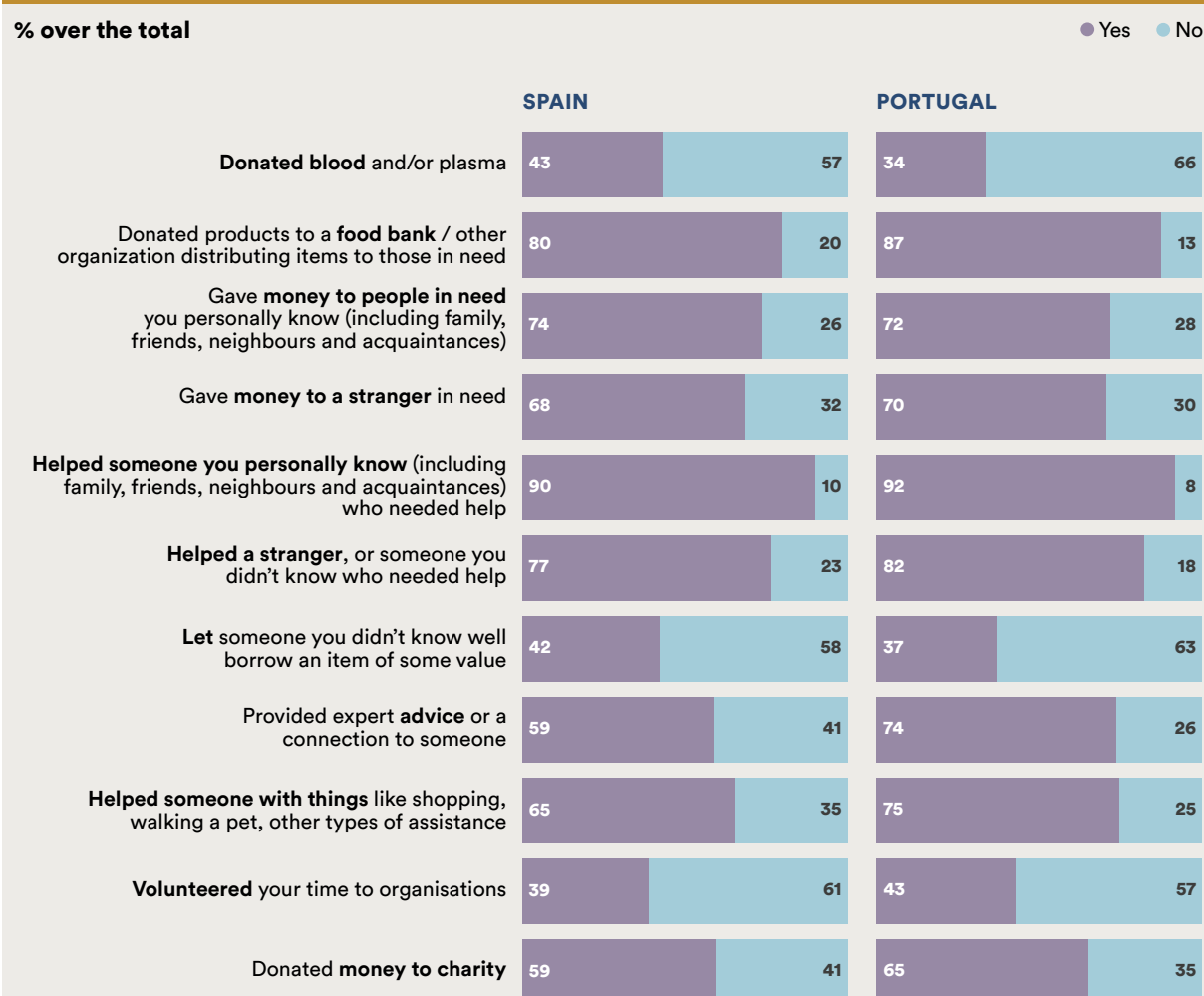
The findings show that people in Spain and Portugal are likely to be philanthropic in their daily lives. Over half of respondents have done most of the suggested acts at least once, and in some cases weekly or monthly, during the past year.

The most popular philanthropic acts are helping someone known personally to the

respondent (90% in Spain and 92% in Portugal) and donating products to a food bank or other organization distributing items for the benefit of those in need (80% in Spain and 87% in Portugal).

Other common philanthropic acts are helping a stranger (77% in Spain and 82% in Portugal) and giving money to people known personally to the respondent (74% in Spain and 87% in Portugal). Whilst we might expect generosity to those we know, it is striking that the proportion reporting giving money to strangers in need is almost as large (68% in Spain and 71% in Portugal). A majority of respondents (65% in Spain and 75% in Portugal) also

Figure 14: Pro-social acts carried out during the last year



Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the survey.

reported giving assistance to other people with things like shopping or walking a pet, as well as providing expert advice or helping someone make a useful connection (59% in Spain and 74% in Portugal).

Two philanthropic acts are carried out by less than half of the population: donating blood or plasma (43% in Spain and 34% in Portugal) and lending something of value to someone the respondent does not know well (42% in Spain and 37% in Portugal).

Overall, people in Portugal are more likely to demonstrate philanthropic behaviours in their daily lives. Reassuringly for the future, and reflecting other studies that find younger generations are more pro-social, in this survey it is the young people (aged 18-29) who report the most philanthropic behaviours, with the exception of donating money to charitable organizations which could be attributed to them having less access to financial resources.

At the more formal end of philanthropic acts which would involve dedicating explicitly time to certain voluntary actions we also see substantial participation (section 2.8).

2.8. Volunteering for charitable organisations

The survey also asks individuals to identify the cause areas to which they dedicate volunteer time, using the same categories asked in section 2.6. This enables us to identify if those elements considered as more urgent are also those receiving more volunteering time by the respondents because someone might consider a topic to be urgent but nonetheless encounter barriers for contributing their own time.

Results show that giving time to support the work of charitable organisations is also common across both populations: 39% in Spain and 43% in Portugal volunteered their time for the benefit of a charity.

The three causes most likely to attract volunteer help are health, social services and environment and animals in both countries, with a slight variation in the order (see figure 15). This is broadly in line with the views on which issues are deemed most urgent (topped by health).

People with higher levels of education spend more time volunteering in both Spain and Portugal, though this could be due to other factors such as their workplace providing opportunities to volunteer during work time,

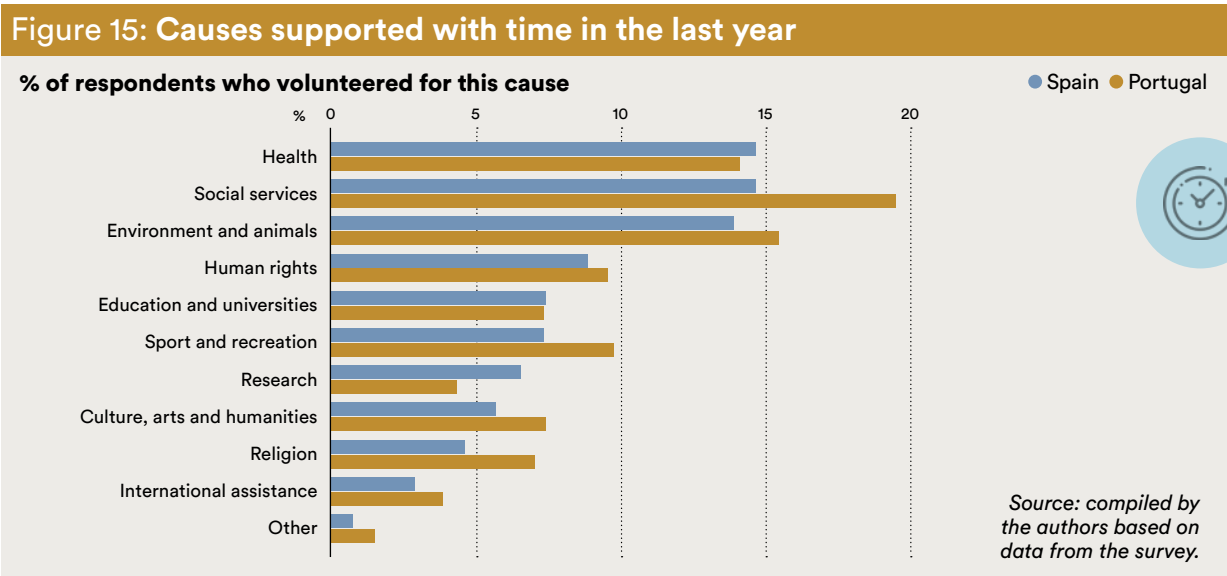
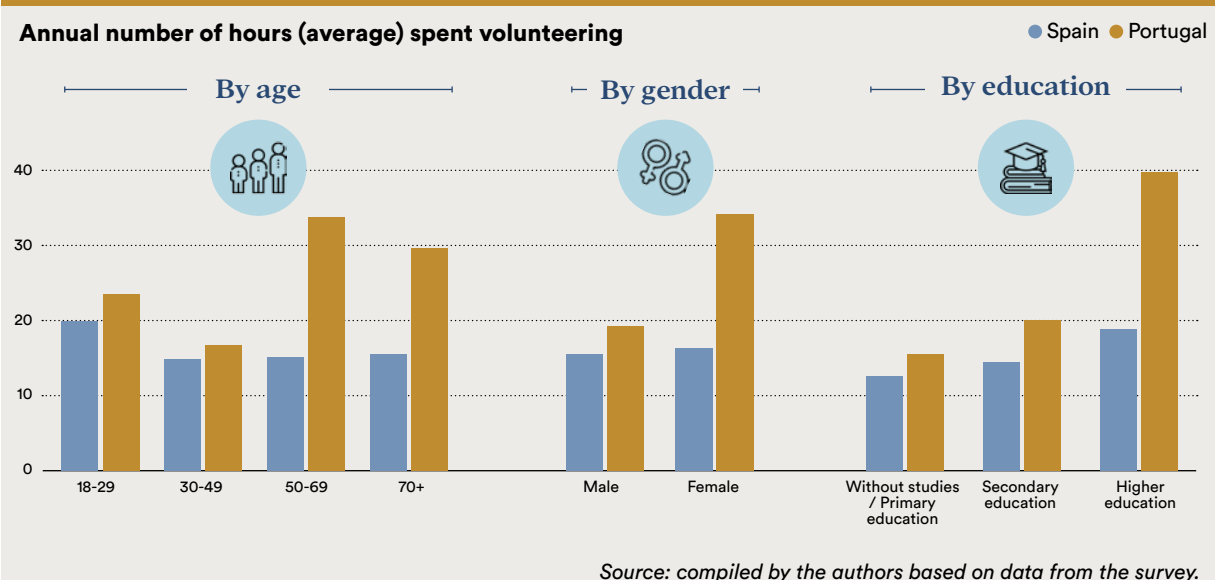


Figure 16: Estimated time volunteering in the last year

or having a higher level of income that would allow them to free time on household duties by paying for these services, to undertake more fulfilling activities such as volunteering (figure 16).

In every age bracket, Portuguese people report doing more volunteering, with Portuguese women over the age of 50 are the most likely to volunteer. Amongst older age groups (50+) Portuguese people commit twice as many volunteering hours as their counterparts in Spain.

When we focus on those who report the largest number of hours of volunteering, in Spain there are 22 people committing more than 5 hours a week (38 people in Portugal). These people are mostly females in Portugal (no gender difference in Spain) and tend to support various causes.

2.9. Donations to charity

Donating money to charity is typical in both countries, with 60% of the Spanish population reporting that they made at least one donation in the past year and an even higher figure of 65% in Portugal (see figure 17).

In both countries the same four causes are the most likely to receive financial support in the last year: Social service, Health, Environment and Animals and Human Rights. Social action and health were significantly more popular than other issues, each receiving support from over a fifth of both populations, and Social service being supported by almost a third of the Portuguese respondents.

Whilst all other cause areas receive some support from charitable donors in both countries, there are some distinct differences, with research and international aid being around twice as popular in Spain than in Portugal (respectively 12% and 9% in Spain versus 5% for both causes in Portugal), whilst Culture and Arts is almost twice as popular in Portugal (6%) than in Spain (4%).

We did not ask how much people donated to each cause, but we did gather data on the amounts that people reported donating to all causes in the past year.

In order to ensure this data is realistic, and in line with best practice for reporting average individual donations in other countries, we made two adjustments: removing those people who reported making no donations at all, and removing those who report especially

Figure 17: Causes financially supported in the last year

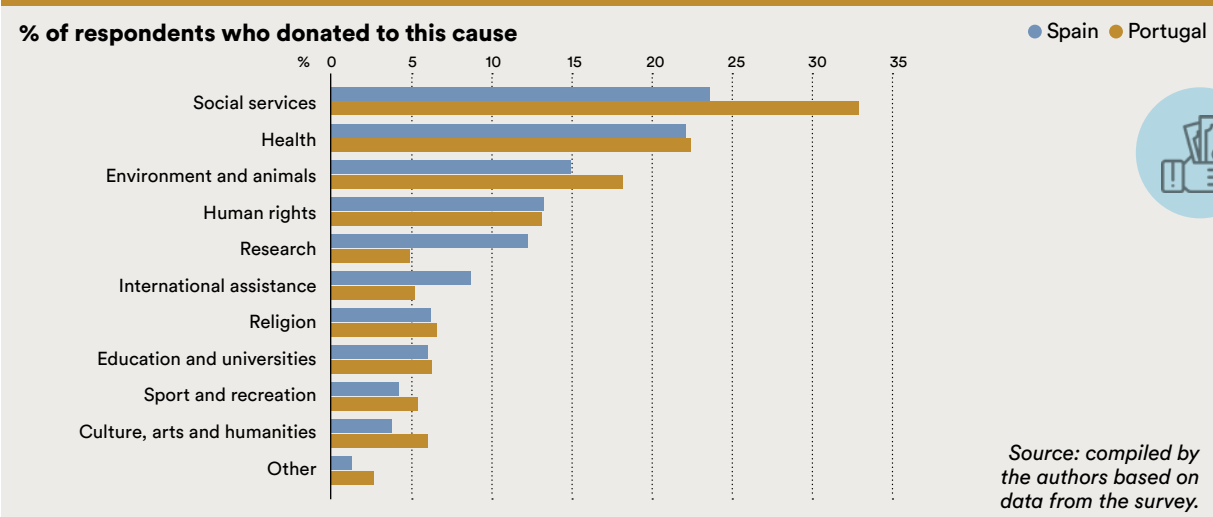


Figure 18: Estimation of the total annual reported donations

	MEAN:	MEDIAN:
SPAIN	725 €	75 €
PORTUGAL	765 €	30 €

Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the survey.

high amounts (the top 3%). We present the 'average donation size' in two ways - both the mean and the median - because it is typical that many people give very small amounts and only a few people give larger amounts, so the mid-point size (the median) is often considered a better reflection of the reality in practice (figure 18).¹⁴

This compares favourably to levels of average annual giving in most other countries as shown in figure 19. However, it is important to examine closely the process of data collection and analysis, as discussed in the

Methodology appendix, which may not be directly comparable with the research design used in other contexts.¹⁵

Within our new data there are interesting variations in amounts given by age, education and gender: The most financially generous part of the Portuguese population are women aged 50-69 years old. In Spain there are no significant differences across gender and age. In both countries, people with higher education also typically make higher donations, but this is likely a result of having a higher income. There are 86 people in both countries who

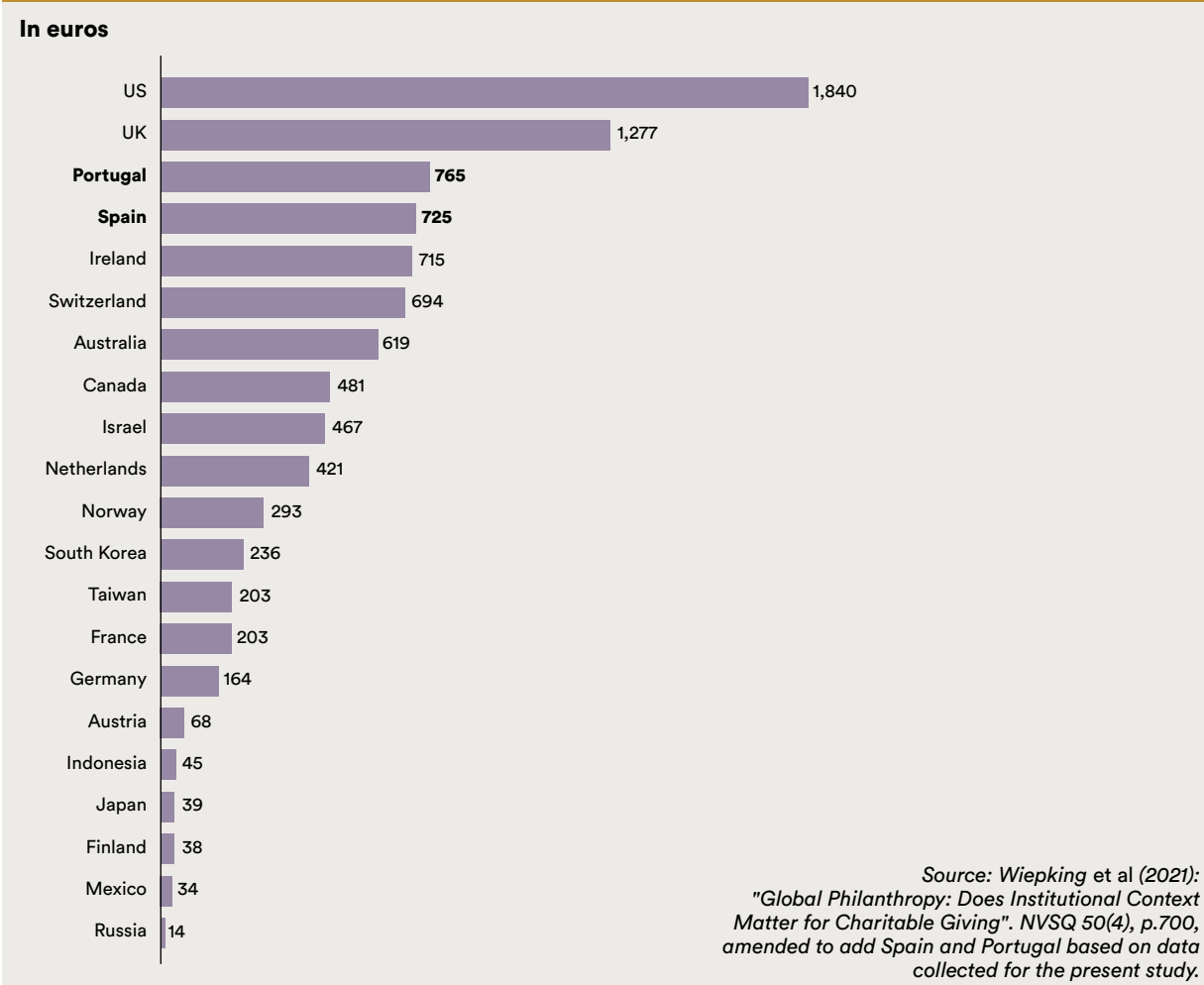
14. This practice helps avoid the 'Bill Gates effect' whereby including the amounts given by one significantly large donor gives an inaccurate impression of typical generosity.

15. These average annual donations are based on figures reported in P. Wiepking et al (2021) Global Philanthropy: Does Institutional Context Matter for Charitable Giving. NVSQ 50(4), p.700, adjusted for inflation and converted from dollars into euros. Information on the methodology behind data collection for each country included in the International Philanthropy Database is available at [http://www.wiepking.com/papers/Documentation_IIPD_\(2016_version1\).pdf](http://www.wiepking.com/papers/Documentation_IIPD_(2016_version1).pdf).

report making the largest donations of 5,000 euros or more a year (47 in Spain and 39 in Portugal). Within the 39 in Portugal, 38 were females aged 50 to 59, and supported various causes. However, it is important to remember that, whilst the overall sample size for this research was robust at over 3,000 survey

participants, when we break figures down by country, age and gender, the samples become smaller, so we must treat the results with some caution and remain focused on the overall averages. For more information on the data collection and analysis, please see the Methodology Appendix.

Figure 19: Estimation of the annual donations by country



Conclusion and Recommendations

Results from the survey offer interesting insights into philanthropy in Spain and Portugal, not only regarding how society understands the role and impact of private giving but also to what extent they participate with their own individual acts.

Giving time and money to support the work of charitable organisations are common across both populations: 39% in Spain and 43% in Portugal volunteered time for the benefit of a charity, whilst 59% in Spain and 65% in Portugal reported that they had made at least one donation in the past year. Hence, individuals are quite generous about volunteering time and making donations.

The data also identifies the most popular charitable causes that people think should be prioritised and how this relates to their own personal contributions, both in terms of volunteering time and in making donations. The data shows that in Spain and Portugal **Health** is by far and away the top priority, with over three-quarters (76%) deeming it as a “most urgent” issue. This is consistent with the cause most likely to attract volunteer help and donations, which is health.

When asked to define philanthropy, **help, love, humanity and generosity** were the **four most commonly mentioned words in Spain and Portugal**. It is interesting that almost all were positive words, except for two, business and money. This contrasts to the findings of a similar survey in the UK in which respondents gave positive, neutral and many negative words including liar, self-centred and tax-avoider. The more positive connotations of philanthropy in Spain and Portugal may be due to different cultural interpretations of private giving or it may be that in countries where philanthropy is more present, such as in the UK, there is more self-criticism.

Respondents found it easier to name a philanthropic organisation than a philanthropic individual. In Spain, the most cited organisation was the “la Caixa” Foundation, together with the Red Cross. In Portugal, after UNICEF, the most prevalent entity was Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The “la Caixa” Foundation was only mentioned three times in Portugal, which means that despite currently having quite an important presence in the country, the Portuguese population do not seem to be aware of it.

Finally, in terms of **who gives the most**, there is a differentiated group within the whole analysis: **highly educated females in Portugal aged 50 to 69 years old**. One plausible explanation might be the low employment rates of this group due to early retirement, which might lead to more free time for philanthropy. If this is the case, it is possible that as this group ages the total amount of time in volunteering will be reduced. However, it might be the case that gradually the younger generations will also engage more in volunteering activities as it seems to be happening in Spain where the youngest are contributing more than the older in philanthropic activities.

As a result of this research we suggest **5 recommendations as follows:**

1 | EXPLAIN MORE CLEARLY WHAT PHILANTHROPIC ORGANISATIONS DO

Regarding the **understanding of philanthropy**, many people are familiar with the term “philanthropy”, **60% in Spain and 66% in Portugal**, and this percentage increases with age and education. However, this still indicates that a third of the population do not know what philanthropy is, and this rate could be increased by improving communication by philanthropic organisations to explain what they do to the general public.

2 | COMMUNICATE THAT PHILANTHROPY AND GOVERNMENT PLAY COMPLEMENTARY ROLES

The **perception of philanthropy**, based on asking individuals to what extent they agree or disagree with ten different statements about philanthropy, indicates overall **quite favourable** results in both Spain and Portugal, although there is some mistrust towards philanthropists. Moreover, there is a clear preference for the Government to be responsible for meeting the needs of society, rather than philanthropically-funded charities. That is, **there is still the perception that governments should take the main role in offering equal opportunities, and not philanthropy**. In this sense, it would be useful to **increase the effort in communicating** to the general public that it is not a zero sum but **that government and philanthropy have complementary roles**.

3 | REMIND THE PUBLIC THAT BEING PHILANTHROPIC IS A NORMAL, EVERYDAY ACTIVITY

Respondents claim that the level of solidarity of the society is not very high: from a scale of 0 to 10, the average is close to 6 in both countries. This contrasts with the actual rates of participation in a variety of pro-social acts. The findings show that **people in Spain and Portugal are very likely to be philanthropic in their daily lives**. More than half have done all the suggested acts at least once, and in some cases weekly or monthly, during the past year. Yet people do not seem aware that their participation is typical and that there are relatively high levels of helping behaviour across society.

4 | RAISE AWARENESS OF TAX BREAKS

The data also shows that younger people are less aware of tax incentives for donations than their older counterparts. One recommendation would be improving the communication of the existence of this type of tax incentives, potentially using social media or other channels which young people pay more attention to, in order to prompt further donations.

5 | SUPPORT THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS

In order to avoid consequential declines in levels of volunteering, more investment in support for recruiting and supporting volunteers would be advisable, as well as better communication of the benefits to the individual and wider society as a result of becoming a volunteer.

Methodology Appendix

The results of this analysis come from a survey commissioned in Spain and Portugal. Data collection took place in April 2024. To create a representative sample, gender, age, and region quotas were weighted. Likewise, the level of household income and the level of education of the person interviewed were used as control variables. The resulting number of observations is a total of 3,222, comprised of 2,009 respondents in Spain and 1,213 in Portugal.

Regression analysis has been run to understand better the relationship between certain responses and demographic characteristics: country, age, gender and educational levels.

Data on time in volunteering and money spent in donations was collected in intervals and with time frames (weekly, monthly, and yearly). To calculate the total amount spent yearly in volunteering the middle values for each interval were taken. For example: for those who reported having spent between 0 and 1 hour a week, this was calculated as 0.5 hours. For those who spend more than 5, the value taken for the previous interval was added to this number. Hence, those who said more than 5 were considered to have spent 9 hours. This creates an imperfect but reasonable estimation of the total number of hours spent. The same process was used to calculate monthly and yearly reporting. The total annual volunteering time spent was calculated as: 52 x total estimated weekly hours for those who gave a weekly figure and 12 x total estimated hours for those who gave a monthly figure.

A similar exercise was done for the reporting of value of money donated. To estimate the annual amount, middle values of the intervals were used and, for the highest band (those who reported more than 5,000 euros) we added 4,000 (the middle value of the second largest category) to create a value of 9,000 euros for the highest band. Since

these numbers were also reported weekly or monthly or yearly, the total annual amounts were calculated by multiplying by 52 or 12 respectively. This is an estimation to help build a picture about the levels of donations, but it is not perfect.

As noted in the report, we remove non-donors and the 3% largest donations to calculate typical annual individual donations. When we include all of the data without making any adjustments for those who do not donate or for the outliers who donate large amounts, then the overall annual average donation is 1,160 euros across both Spain and Portugal, with an average (mean) of 722 euros in Spain and 1,887 euros in Portugal. Interestingly, the median (considered the more robust figure for a right-skewed distribution) does not change much as a result of the reported adjustments. When we do not remove either non-donors or the 3% largest donations, the median is 30 euros in both Spain and Portugal. When we remove non-donors the median is 75 euros in Spain and 30 euros in Portugal; when we remove non-donors and the 3% largest donations, the median is also 75 euros in Spain and 30 euros in Portugal. The latter means that Portugal has a higher number of outliers with a very estimated high donation. In fact, the top 3% cut off is 9,000 euros for Spain and 30,000 euros in Portugal.

Since the collection of this information (volunteering time and donation money) is an estimation as described above, it is important to point out the limitations of reporting the means and the relevance of focusing on the medians in the description of the results. However, despite any limitations, the data that is presented and described in this report is the first representative study of philanthropic actions and attitudes, and is therefore a useful tool to better understand the levels of solidarity undertaken in Spanish and Portuguese society.



"la Caixa" Foundation