David Reinstein - [Leverhulme International Academic Fellowship](https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/funding/grant-schemes/international-academic-fellowships)

*David’s further notes on application process linked* [*HERE*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L4twcl5kRmYJaTKIfQswF4_Adheasb2JCnG_yACK6RI/edit)

Application form (WIP)

**Title of proposal**: Understanding and enhancing effective charitable giving through Economics, Psychology, and Data Science. Open-science research, meta-analysis, collaboration, and dissemination

**Main/sub field of study**: Behavioural Economics/ Philanthropy and other-regarding-behaviour

**Abstract (100 words) ‘**Innovations in Fundraising’ aims to foment, synthesise, and disseminate evidence on motivators of impactful giving and support for internationally-effective policies, informing practical interventions. This fellowship will enable

* collaboration with overseas co-authors on an interdisciplinary evidence-driven review ‘Increasing effective charitable giving: the puzzle, what we know/need to know next’,
* advancement/promotion of [innovationsinfundraising.org](http://innovationsinfundraising.org/) collaborative research/impact hub,
* observation/incorporating groundbreaking approaches to meta-analysis, data science, experimental design, and
* engaging with practitioners on field trials and analyses of fundraising data; focusing on motivators of impactful giving, responses to effectiveness information, and predictors of support for effective/international causes. [98 words]

**Place(s) overseas where you will carry out the proposed activities**

1. (75%) MIT Institute for Data, Systems and Society, Human Cooperation Laborator (Cambridge, USA; PI and contact David Rand)
   1. also working with several academics based at Harvard
2. (25%) Berkeley Institute for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS, Berkeley, USA; contact: Emmanuel Saez)
3. Planned visits to the University of Pennsylvania, Lily School of Philanthropy (IUPUI), Ideas42 (New York), Gates Foundation (Washington, DC)
4. Planned visits to the Netherlands: Maastricht (Smeets), Rotterdam (Donkers), Amsterdam (Bekkers) and Groningen (Soetevent)

**Relevant experience/skills/training**

* BSc, Economics, the George Washington University, 1999
* PhD., Economics, University of California, Berkeley, 2006
* Continuing professional development in data science and software (University of Exeter)
* Lecturer, University of Essex (2006-2015)
* Senior Lecturer, University of Exeter (2015-present)
* Founding committee of ESSExLab (University of Essex); ESSExLab Manager (2014-15)
* Scientific Data (Nature), `e[ditorial board](https://www.nature.com/sdata/about/editorial-board#ap)
* Giving for Impact: [Academic review committee](http://www.givingforimpact.com/?page_id=245)
* [Academic advisory board](http://agitator.thedonorvoice.com/meet_scientist/david-reinstein/), Donor’s Voice
* [Catalyst](https://www.bitss.org/people/david-reinstein/), Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences

**Detailed statement of proposed activities (1000 words)**

Donors, governments and firms demonstrate substantial generosity (e.g., UK charity represents 0.5-1% of GDP). However, most donations go towards worthwhile charities that nonetheless improve human well-being far less per £ than basic medical interventions in poor countries (e.g., anti-malarial bednets; see Givewell.org).

Social science, biology and philosophy present a range of potential (non-mutually-exclusive) theoretical explanations (involving values, preferences, and biases) driving this ‘inefficient altruism’. However, evidence (e.g., for ‘availability bias’, or for ‘scope insensitivity’) comes largely from small-scale experiments in domains outside of charitable-giving itself. It is difficult to distinguish robust credible findings from interesting one-off observations, vulnerable to hype, p-hacking and publication bias (echoing the 'replication crisis' in experimental social science[[1]](#footnote-0)). Given the limited and scattered findings, don’t have a definitive picture of which factors *substantially* limit effective giving and support for policies benefitting the global poor (henceforth ‘EA-support’).

The Innovations in Fundraising (IiF) project aims to produce, foment, synthesise, and disseminate evidence that will inform practical methods of boosting *EA-support*. This project will incorporate an unusually-high level of collaboration and cooperation, enabled by the intrinsic motivation of researchers in this area. We will pursue rigorous, replicated evidence (and meta-analysis), open science, and methodological integrity, incorporating tools and standards of the 'credibility revolution in social science'.[[2]](#footnote-1)

Our main ‘policy’ audience includes both effective nonprofit organisations and ‘effective altruists’. The EA movement is highly-motivated, growing, and gaining funding. However, it represents and caters to a niche: the ‘hyper-analytic but morally-scrupulous’. EA organisations have focused on identifying effective causes and career paths, but have not extensively pursued outreach nor ‘market research’ to a larger audience. There have been only limited efforts in this direction (see [Charity Science](http://www.charityscience.com/operations-details/scaling-down-charity-science-outreach), [Gates Foundation/Ideas42](http://www.ideas42.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ideas42-Best-of-Intentions_Charitable-Giving-1.pdf)).

A Leverhulme IAF grant will provide time, travel funds, and resources to intensively pursue and advance the following.

1. **Synthesis of evidence**: Our interdisciplinary team (Psychology: Fitz, Kagan, Bergh; Biology: Nemirow; Economics: Reinstein, Smeets, Kretschmer) is building an evidence-based review paper ‘Increasing effective charitable giving: The puzzle, what we know, what we need to know next’, outlined below.

* Major underlying issues (Econ/Psych/Experimental philosophy)
  + Preferences/values: To what extent does a ‘moral utilitarian’ ethic govern beliefs/behaviour?
    1. To the extent it does, the limited effective giving represents a puzzling intention/action gap, potentially driven by biases and ‘barriers’
    2. With non-utilitarian motivations the ‘puzzle’ dissapears. Still, specific approaches may better align effective giving with parochial/self-interested/reputation-seeking values and intentions.
  + Does one contribution crowd-out another? If so, social pressure, systems enforcing ‘local public goods’, and inertial factors will limit effective (non-local) giving.
* A categorisation of sets of *barriers* to effective giving; considering the relevance and evidence for each
  + 1. Psychological and emotional distance: less proximate needs are less salient, thus under-funded
    2. Identity and signaling: Giving effectively may conflict with one’s self-perception and how others evaluate you.
    3. Aversion to *doing* evaluations (of charity effectiveness) and the demotivating effect of calculating (dual-system theory)
    4. Quantitative biases that drive depatures from EA-giving or particularly hurt *effective* charities
* Prior reviews
  + - Loewenstein and Small, 2007
    - Berman et al, ‘17 (Introduction)
    - Baron and Szymanska (2011) - Heuristics and Biases in Charity: Conceptual, minimal survey of specific empirical/experimental papers, moderately effectiveness-focused
    - Unpublished, preliminary, non-academic: Gertler; Miller slides; Ideas42
  + Differentiation/innovation of our work
    1. Effectiveness focus
    2. Considering ‘choosing among charities’ as well as isolated choices
    3. Incorporate recent work (many updates) and developments from ‘EA movement’
    4. Rigorous, sceptical approach to evidence
       - building-blocks to organise deeper meta-analyses and evaluations
    5. Pushing a research agenda (with a new ‘policy’ audience), building and sharing tools for building robust evidence

While we are targeting a peer-reviewed publication (planned submission: July 2020), we will also incorporate a ‘living’ version into [IiF](http://innovationsinfundraising.org), allowing continual update, reader feedback, and access to data and modeling elements allowing independent re-analysis.

2. **Evidence hub**: [InnovationsinFundraising.org](http://innovationsinfundraising.org) aims to be an interactive database and collaborative wiki[[3]](#footnote-2) providing, assessing, and synthesizing the evidence on motivators and shifters of impact-driven donation behaviour. A multi-layered approach will make this accessible to less-technical users while also providing valuable data, tools, and (meta-)analysis to quantitative practitioners and researchers, and allowing them to engage and contribute. Partial models for this include AidGrade, GiveWell and B-Hub. This fellowship will enable me to further build, organise and present this, integrating with (others’) related projects. I will benefit from guided self-study, consultating with experts and practitioners at MIT, Harvard, Berkeley, and UPenn, particularly in:

1. Managing collaborative content and presenting it in an organised, accessible, and sustainable hub, encouraging users to contribute case studies, institutional and academic expertise, primary data
2. Producing rigorous but flexible and interpretable Bayesian meta-analytic assessments of evidence on diverse outcomes using distinct methodologies, incorporating raw and aggregated data/results. Key methodological challenges include:
   1. Weighing/weighting evidence from diverse methods
   2. Adjusting for publication bias/file-drawer
   3. Integrating results with different, but related independent variables (treatments)

3. **Advancing primary research**: **field experiments, data analysis**

* Social fundraising (with Max Kasy, Harvard; Toby Jolly, UK-DfE ): Field experiment measuring the impact of early (large/small) donations on *later* donations on social fundraising pages for effective/international charities. Treatment assignment follows Kasy (2016). Extension calibrating ‘optimal second donation’ (dynamic Bayesian design).
* Substitution: Scaling-up previous experiments on ‘Does an additional charitable ask crowd out later giving’; pursuing larger-scale trials with multiple fundraisers (with Riener and Vance-McMullen)
* [Donors’ Voice advisory team](http://agitator.thedonorvoice.com/meet_scientist/david-reinstein/): Preparing A/B trials for international fundraisers, focusing on the presentation of effectiveness/impact information
* Market profiling psychometric/demographic predictors of EA-support, responses to de-biasing and particular appeals. Representative surveys/giving-experiments following Fitz/Kagan ([2018](http://www.academia.edu/35258430/Understanding_effective_givers_talk_)).
* Building links with practitioners[[4]](#footnote-3): generating support, involvement, research, knowledge-exchange, and impact.

These projects will benefit from collaboration and expertise at Harvard (Kasy, Exley), MIT (Rand, Yoeli), UPenn (Simonsohn, Small), and Berkeley (Vivalt, Miguel) in **building and augmented methodological tools and platforms** for efficient experimental design, registration, data-collection, analysis and communicating/sharing with researchers (through innovationsinfundraising.org).

*[970 words excluding footnotes]*

**Major publications (\* for most relevant to proposal)**

\*[**Ex-ante Commitments to "Give if you Win" Exceed Donations After a Win**](https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/32001/GivingProbabilityMaster1_commentsout.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)(with Christian Kellner [Southampton], Gerhard Riener [Dusseldorf]); Forthcoming, *Journal of Public Economics, 2018.*

\*“Does One Contribution Come at the Expense of Another? Empirical Evidence on Substitution Among Charitable Donations.” *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, Vol. 11: Iss. 1 (Advances), Article 40, 2011.

* Also see mimeo: [**Does one contribution come at the expense of another? Empirical evidence on substitution between charitable donations**](https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/30603591/dp64802.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1519821227&Signature=YHRCZIWQTBdbvPs0Ftv4rWMmRGc%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DSubstitution_Among_Charitable_Contributi.pdf); *Status: updating, incorporating additional evidence from web-based field and lab-in-field experiments, rewriting paper with Gerhard Riener [Dusseldorf] and Danielle Vance-Mcmullen (Memphis)*

\*“Efficient Consumer Altruism and Fair Trade Products” (With Joon Song, Sungkyunkwan University). *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy,* Volume 21 Number 1, Spring 2012.

\*“Reputation and Influence in Charitable Giving: An Experiment” (With Gerhard Riener, Mannheim). *Theory and Decision*, pp. 1-23, 2012.

\*“Decomposing Desert and Tangibility Effects in a Charitable Giving Experiment” (With Gerhard Riener). *Experimental Economics*, 1-12, 2012.

"The Influence of Expert Reviews on Consumer Demand for Experience Goods: A Case Study of Movie Critics" with Professor C. M. Snyder, *Journal of Industrial Economics*, Vol. 53, No. 1, pp. 27-51, March 2005

“Anonymous Rituals” (with David Hugh-Jones, UEA) *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 81, 478, 2012.

“The Economics of the Gift” in:*Gift giving and the "embedded" economy in the ancient world*, edited by Filippo Carlà and Maja Gori, Universitätsverlag Winter Heidelberg, 2014, pp. 83-99.

Any other matters you wish to bring to the attention of the Committee (200 words)

I want to highlight the reasons for my location choices.

* Boston-based co-authors: Max Kasy, Jason Nemirow, Robin Bergh
  + Contacts/collaborators: Erez Yoeli, Christine Exley, Ashley Whillans, Max Bazerman, Josh Greene, Elizabeth Keenan
* Berkeley-area-based co-authors: Nick Fitz, Ari Kagan
  + Contacts/collaborators: Eva Vivalt, Ted Miguel, Rob Wiblin (80,000 hours), Stefano DellaVigna
* Boston and Berkeley are the most relevant hubs for this project. I will exchange ideas and learn from leaders and innovators in academia (Psychology, Economics, Political Science, Evolutionary Biology, Computer Science, Statistics/Data science). I will also interact with leaders in the Effective Altruism movement, the Open Science movement, the nonprofit sector, and with IT/web innovators (wiki/collaboration, dynamic documents), furthering both the research and the innovationsinfundraising.org project.

Why Leverhulme: Leverhulme is distinct in its willingness to support non-traditional interdisciplinary projects combining research and impact for the benefit of society.[[5]](#footnote-4)

Further value: the knowledge gained through this project will allow me to develop innovations in teaching:

* As a Catalyst I give at least one course per year on the principles and methods of open science and research integrity.
* I will disseminate innovative research techniques, particularly in efficient experimental design and data-science (especially for Exeter/Southwest DTC postgraduate students)

Details of other research projects and commitments during the Fellowship

I expect to have two research projects (in addition to those mentioned above) still ongoing during the project; one relating to returns to higher education, and another involving trust-measuring and predictors of ‘who punishes’ in social dillemmas. However, I have no other hard research commitments during the period of the fellowship, and. I will commit to devoting at least 75% of my research time to the projects described in this application.

**Referees**

*Provide the details of three people who have agreed to act as referees and who will be able to do so via the on-line system. These should be from outside your department, faculty or institution. Referees must be available to comment between 1 December 2018 and 31 January 2019.*

The duration of the project as a whole if likely to extend (this may be longer than the period of the Leverhulme Fellowship). Word limit: 100 words.

This research and impact project has no fixed end. However, we have timetables for specific components in particular, we aim:

* to submit the synthesis/review paper for peer-review by July 2020,
* to complete the Social fundraising experiment by May 2020, and submit this academic paper by September 2020 (also producing extensive tools and dissemination materials tied to this)
* to assemble a working and user-friendly version of the meta-analysis of the literature (hosted on innovationsinfundraising.org) on several motivators of effective giving by January 2021.

Duration of Fellowship

Nine months

Proposed start date

1 January 2020.

Percentage of time to be spent on the project during the fellowship: 75%

Note: remaining 20% of full-time hours devoted to other research projects, as well as 5% to teaching preparation/followup and limited administrative tasks.

Previous and Current Applications

Previous Leverhulme awards or pending applications to the Trust: None

Other awards received in the last 3 years related to this research

**2017** Giving for Impact grant (under £600 to fund experiments)

**October 2016** ESRC Active Engagement Award (Impact Acceleration): Innovations in Fundraising (£19,900 to fund impact activities associated with innovationsinfundraising.org and Giveifyouwin.org and associated research and impact travel)

**June 2016** ESRC Impact Cultivation Award: Innovations in Fundraising (£3000)

**July 2015** British Academy/Leverhulme Small grants (under £10,000, to fund experiments into charitable donor’s substition behaviour)

Applications you have made or intend to make to other bodies related to this research proposal

Planned application for Exeter Internal Grant: ‘International Academic Mobility Funding 2018/19’ (up to £5000) for travel funding to visit Harvard/MIT in March 2019 and July 2019.

Details of any overseas residencies (lasting over 3 months) during the last 5 years?

* Spring 2014: Sabbatical visit to UC Berkeley and UCLA (4 months)

## Research Expenses

Budget Summary

Finance

Replacement Costs

*Proposed:*

* Nine months absence from all (or nearly all) administrative, supervision, and teaching duties during period of grant (Note: no teaching was assigned during this grant period, so this itself does not require ‘teaching buyoff’).
* Marking support for two final examinations and resit exams from Autumn 2019.
* Teaching reduction (reduced by one module) in Autumn 2020 to enable above project work to continue through 1 October 2020 without extensive teaching preparation.

Research Expenses

* £500 for web support, hosting and web software
* £5000 to contract hire a technical developer (200 hours at £25/hour) to extend, improve, and maintain innovationsinfundraising.org hub and associated resources. Benchmark: previously hired Katia Abramova for 125 hours of work @£15/hour to build roughly half of innovationsinfundraising.org as well as associated Airtable [interface](https://fundingwiki.readthedocs.io/en/latest/index.html#features) application)
* £1800 to pay and provide base payments and incentives for 600-700 participants in surveys and experiments on Prolific.ac or a related platform (on EA-support beliefs, attitudes, and actual donation choices, reponding to framing and de-biasing treatments).

Transportation:

*Flights*

* UK-Boston (one return flight)
* Boston-California (two return flights)
* Four additional return flights within the US (Durham-Duke, Indianapolis-IUPUI, Philadelphia-UPenn, Washington DC-Gates/Ideas42)
* Two trips Exeter-Amsterdam (visits to Maastricht, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Groningen)

*Ground transportation*

* Anticipated 2x from Boston to New York City area, 2x from Berkeley to Stanford
* Taxi app/Public Transportation within Boston and Berkeley area: £30 per week
* Three return train fares within the Netherlands

*Housing*

* 6 months accomodation in Boston area
* 2 months accomodation in Berkeley area
* 10 nights hotel/AirBnb stays during visits to other US locations
* 6 nights hotel/AirBnb stays during trips to Netherlands

Total

**Study Leave Details**

Your institution's policy for paid or unpaid study leave

Amount of paid study leave in the last 4 years: None

Amount of unpaid study leave in the last 4 years: None

Study leave eligibility in the next 3 years: Uncertain; none is guaranteed

Details of teaching and/or administrative activities to be replaced: See above proposal

Institutional Approver

I confirm on behalf of the applicant’s head of department/school and this institution:That this institution will grant the application the period and proportion of time requested for the Fellowship requested in the Duration and Timing section; That if replacement costs are requested the applicant will be in receipt of his/her normal salary during tenure of the award, and that the institution will accept the sum requested to provide such cover asrequested in the Budget section; That if research expenses are requested, this request has the support of the head of department/school and institution.Institutional Approver

Name

Position

Email

1. The alleged ‘crisis’ stems largely from the outcome of the Open Science Collaboration. "An open, large-scale, collaborative effort to estimate the reproducibility of psychological science." Perspectives on Psychological Science 7.6 (2012): 657-660. This has been widely discussed and debated, see, e.g., Maxwell, Scott E., Michael Y. Lau, and George S. Howard. "Is psychology suffering from a replication crisis? What does “failure to replicate” really mean?." American Psychologist 70, no. 6 (2015): 487. And Lilienfeld, Scott O. "Psychology’s replication crisis and the grant culture: Righting the ship." Perspectives on psychological science 12, no. 4 (2017): 660-664. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Angrist, J. D., & Pischke, J. S. (2010). ‘The credibility revolution in empirical economics: How better research design is taking the con out of econometrics’. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 24, 3–30. Nelson, L. D., Simmons, J. P., & Simonsohn, U. (2018). ‘Psychology’s renaissance’. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 69, 17.1–17.24. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Each of these will be carefully linked and integrated. For example, the analysis and discussion in the survey paper will be mirrored in the structure of the wiki, providing a platform for discussion and updating. Each element of the surveyed evidence will be provided as a database entry, cross-referencing relevant papers, theories, use-cases, and available raw data. This living resource will be able to quickly compile and disseminate the best available evidence to users. Meta-analysis will be presented in the database and wiki, and in a web app (e.g., R Shiny Rstudio). This will permit users to consider alternate assumptions and methodological criteria, and to focus on particular domains as relevant to their own practice. We aim to engage a diverse user-base, including fundraisers, charities, academics, and donors/philanthropists. Thus we will offer multiple formats (while avoiding confusing overlap), allowing users to choose their preferred level of technicality and detail. We will provide all data elements and code transparently, to facilitate future development and independent research. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Key existing contacts: Gates Foundation Giving by All (Laura Tomasko), Ideas42 (Omar Parbhoo), Compassion in World Farming (Marjolein vd Hoven-Humphries), The Life You Can Save (Jon Behar). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)