Fundraising Management in the Covid-19 Crisis: Success Factors from Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT) Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study analyses the success factors of the Peduli Palestina fundraising by the humanitarian organisation Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT) during the peak of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Methods: Data collection was conducted over three months from April to June 2021. The researcher was involved in several fundraisers and conducted interviews throughout the process. This involvement yielded deep and comprehensive data. Findings: Six fundraising success factors: having legality, marketing and communication strength, higher public empathy during the pandemic, good image of the organisation, print and electronic media publications, and budget transparency. Implications: Fundraising for humanitarian causes, natural disasters, and the construction of houses of worship are routinely carried out throughout the year. However, many charitable organisations struggle to raise funds during times of crisis. ACT’s success factor can be learnt. Originality: This article provides the success factors of fundraising in times of crisis. While past studies have focused on fundraising mechanisms in times of calm., Keywords: Fundraising Management; Fundraising; Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT); Covid-19.
A. INTRODUCTION

The ongoing war between Palestine and Israel has gained the attention of the world, especially countries where Muslims are the majority. The war has resulted in shortages of food, medicine, fuel, and no money for transactions in Palestine (Zreik, 2024; Dana, 2024; Andriansyah, 2024). Many countries have helped Palestine in dealing with the conflict. One of them is Indonesia, which adheres to the philosophy of ‘colonialism in the world must be abolished because it is not in accordance with humanity and justice’. Indonesia not only sent aid in terms of diplomacy, medical personnel and peacekeepers, but also foodstuffs, clothing and medical equipment. Philanthropic and humanitarian organisations are involved in this effort.

ACT (Aksi Cepat Tanggap) as one of the non-profit organisations engaged in social and humanitarian affairs is one of the organisations that concentrates on the Palestinian issue. On an international scale, ACT expanded its network by establishing overseas offices. ACT began to participate in every humanitarian tragedy around the world: natural disasters, famine, drought, conflict and war, including providing assistance to countries oppressed by ethnic minorities in various countries. Fundraising as the process of collecting voluntary donations in the form of money or other resources by soliciting donations from individuals, companies or government agencies. All fundraising activities initiated by ACT volunteers will receive distribution assistance and supervision from ACT. The fundraising results will be converted according to the needs of the community.

Table 1  Donations from the people of Indonesia for the Palestinians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Donation Amount</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Benefactors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>03-02-2021</td>
<td>613.825.435</td>
<td>1.000.000.000</td>
<td>4353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24-05-2021</td>
<td>256.075.668</td>
<td>300.000.000</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17-06-2021</td>
<td>61.670.1023</td>
<td>200.000.000</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14-06-2021</td>
<td>13.846.539</td>
<td>50.000.000</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>26-06-2021</td>
<td>635.853.421</td>
<td>1.000.000.000</td>
<td>5948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: https://act.id/contact_us

Fundraising in Indonesia has increased during the pandemic. The majority of Indonesia's population as the largest Muslim population in Southeast Asia is proven by the large number of Muslim donations and waqf for the Peduli Palestina programme. The donations that have been collected will be converted into waqf wells, waqf houses, clinics, Qurban (animal slaughter in Islam), Food and Medicines for Palestinians. Fundraising for voluntary contributions increases the amount of donations.

One of the challenges of implementing the Peduli Palestina fundraiser is the situation with Covid-19. To maintain, control and eliminate the spread of Covid-19 the concentration of community activities takes place from home. The economy is also slowing down seriously, this has a very comprehensive impact on all aspects of life. Social inequality occurs in society during the Covid-19 crisis situation. This is because initially the pandemic was only a health problem, but slowly became a problem on a global scale (Sonia and Darwis, 2020). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic also affects social service institutions. Every day there are more and more vulnerable groups and economic crises. When pandemic cases are increasing, the Government of Indonesia implements a social distancing policy as an effort to
reduce and break the covid-19 chain. People are encouraged to maintain a distance of about two metres, not to have direct physical contact, and to avoid crowds. This new policy has an impact in the form of challenges and obstacles for social service institutions to carry out more innovative activities (Buana, 2020).

The need for a social institution is also very important to carry out non-negotiable fundraising. Fundraising activities become something that can determine the sustainability of social institutions and become the key to the life and death of a social institution. Fundraising is also one of the factors that can determine the existence of a social institution that can increase the credibility or image of the institution (Huda, 2015). Funding is a big problem and challenge for a social institution or foundation. If an institution does not raise funds, it will certainly be an obstacle to the development of existing assets. Some of the reasons for not raising funds include most people who say it is difficult to raise funds during a pandemic, there are also those who do not try to do more innovative performance (Huda, 2015).

Previous studies on fundraising management are limited. The trend of studies in recent years is spread over three foci. First, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in fundraising (Bagheri, Chitsazan, & Ebrahimi, 2019; Bin-Nashwan et al., 2020; Alkhatib, 2020). Findings reveal a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations drive donor behaviour. Second, many studies discuss fundraising strategies (Fauzia, 2019; Bray, 2022; Azizah & Raharjo, 2020; Sarea & Bin-Nashwan, 2020). The reported studies reveal that there are several strategies including acquisition strategies, retention strategies, and upgrading strategies. Third, discussing fundraising campaigns exploring donor factors (Rachmasari, Nulhaqim & Apsari, 2016; Lisa, 2017; Kasri & Putri, 2018; Maftei, 2020). Through social media platforms, the factors that are very decisive for donating are regulatory attitudes, trust in an institution and relationships that are built significantly.

This paper aims to complement the shortcomings of previous studies by analysing the process and success factors of fundraising using a case study of fundraising for Palestine by ACT Institution during the crisis. Activities were carried out during the Covid-19 period for the Palestine Care programme until the reporting stage and the determinants of fundraising success. Although fundraising management tends to have been included in previous articles, researchers see a gap that has not been explained, social institutions certainly play a role during the health crisis during the Covid-19 period to carry out fundraising. Researchers argue that fundraising management during the Covid-19 crisis faced challenges in raising funds. However, it is suspected that the acquisition of funds remains stable despite being affected by Covid-19. Even in normal situations, there are many challenges in social institutions. This is because the increasing number of vulnerable groups is not proportional to the number of efforts made by social institutions.

B. METHODS

This research uses a case study approach that is guided by Yin’s standardisation (2009). The determination of the Peduli Palestina fundraising case conducted by Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT) during the Covid-19 pandemic is considered a unique and rare case in the focus of fundraising management.
ACT Bengkulu Province is designated as the location located at Jalan S. Parman, Kelurahan Kebun Kenanga, Kecamatan Ratu Agung, Kota Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia. We conducted participatory observation for most of the activities, with the exception of a limited leadership meeting that could not be attended. Throughout the engagement, in-depth interviews and documentation took place in tandem. It took four months (April - July 2021) to collect all the data. We coded the interview and observation data following the standardisation of Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). We then categorised and thematised all the codes. This systematisation has provided answers to the main research questions.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper discusses the fundraising process and success factors of ACT's Palestine programme. The context we are referring to is the year when the world is facing a crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This discussion is important to be put forward to find the fundraising process. This research found that the fundraising process that begins with mapping issues is a process that can support donations. Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT) volunteers in Palestine will provide issues related to the events experienced by the Palestinian population. The events reported are generally in the form of damaged infrastructure, economic chaos, education and all aspects of life. Issues related to Palestine will be informed to the ACT centre in Jakarta. The ACT centre has the authority to inform issues to branches throughout Indonesia.

Second, coordination and networking. Two social organisations, ACT and Masyarakat Relawan Indonesia (MRI), created a network of partners. This is an effort made to strategise, assess opportunities and identify obstacles. Third, the fundraising campaign. The target recipients of the fundraising campaign are all levels of society regardless of religion, ethnicity, and position. It can be seen from the campaign that succeeded in attracting donors to help countries in difficulty, such as countries experiencing the Israeli and Palestinian conflicts. Fourth, action: Direct fundraising and Indirect fundraising. For direct fundraising, ACT looks for innovative and creative ideas such as performing arts and speeches that raise the spirit to donate by collaborating with other institutions. Meanwhile, indirect fundraising is done through the canal platform indonesiadermawan.co.id, ACT crowfunding, whatshapp links, Qris and others. Fifth, the implementation of fundraising results by the central government is in accordance with ACT's programmes in each province. The Care for Palestine programme follows the queue from all ACT branches in Indonesia. ACT Provinces will first propose their programmes to the centre. For example, the first Bengkulu waqf well programme in Palestine. The centre will record the data and then follow the procedure to disburse the construction funds.

Researchers also found six success factors during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. First, having legality for fundraising during the COVID-19 pandemic. ACT collaborated with the relevant government by making permission letters to the governor’s office, social service office, and police chief. In its official account, ACT as the owner and manager of the indonesiadermawan.id website also has a permit from PUB (collection of money and goods) from the ministry of social affairs through a decree of the minister of social affairs. Second, the power of marketing and communication. The realisation of communication is carried out when the campaign is supported by documentation of activities, the public can find out in
detail what is being faced during the fundraising process such as, through the distribution of pamphlets to all media. Third, public empathy is higher during the pandemic. The crisis conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic have made people feel the impact of economic recession, social distancing, depression and others. The circulation of information about the conflict raises public awareness to donate to the Palestinian suffering.

Fourth, it creates a good image of the organisation. Donors will be more interested in donating to organisations that are familiar to them. ACT has a unique process of doing the real action of fundraising first and then providing a narrative. Fifth, publication in print and electronic media. ACT and MRI optimise the use of technology to expand their reach to the general public. Such as through media publications, online magazines, ACT News, ACT TV and banners. Sixth, budget transparency. ACT makes reports not only to the management, but also to the general public. This report is in the form of documents and documentation of the implementation of fundraising results, showing them that support from donors will be able to provide better donation results.

Methods of fundraising. As Norton (2022) argues, it is also important for an organisation to find people who are willing to support and feel involved for a long time. Regarding the process of direct fundraising and indirect fundraising, it supports the theory (Nugroho, 2015). Implementation of fundraising results is an accountability and maintaining the mandate of a social institution. As Allah SWT’s command to carry out the mission is perfect and clear, including the mandate of power and property, and keeping secrets. Some scholars, one of whom is As-Sa’di rahimahullah said, "Amanah is everything that is carried out by someone who is ordered to be fulfilled" (Ghofur, 2018).

This study is special from previous studies because it not only reveals the stages of ACT’s fundraising process during the crisis. The researcher also found a series of different processes, namely the mapping of issues. Before planning to formulate the best strategy for fundraising. A prioritised issue is mapped on ACT Bengkulu’s planning map. This will serve as a control tool to connect the community with ACT Bengkulu City. A series of issue mappings are organised in a certain sequence, leading to the final achievement.

In this case, mapping the issue of the Palestinian conflict is the first step that needs to be done. The view that planning is a guide for future actions can be realised if there is an understanding of the issue. An understanding of the Palestinian issue is an asset that is needed in an effort to plan for the future. The issue in this context is as a knowledge that needs to be bridged by planning activities. The increasing echo of the issue will attract more donors who will donate. Strategic issues are conditions that must be considered in social service institutions to maintain their existence in society.

In Harrison’s writing, it can be explained that there are two types of issues, namely defensive and offensive issues. Defensive issues are issues that tend to pose a threat to the organisation, therefore, the organisation must defend itself in order not to experience a loss of reputation. Offensive issues are issues that can be used to improve the company’s reputation (Rachmat, 2012). In this case, ACT is included in offensive issues because it maps issues in the Palestinian society so that people want to contribute to...
Six of ACT’s categories of success factors in fundraising. Researchers found the main findings of fundraising success factors. First, having the legality to conduct fundraising during Covid-19. Legality in this case is a form of approval and permission to organise activities, fundraising during Covid-19 so that it can run more efficiently and effectively. Therefore, it is an important requirement to be fulfilled so that the social institution is legally valid. However, legality is often overlooked by some social services. In this case, ACT has obtained a licence from the government, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, regarding the licence to collect goods and money. This permit is obtained so that the fundraising results can be accounted for and free from extortion.

Second, there is higher public empathy during the pandemic. The donor’s decision starts from a sense of empathy and then is realised in the act of donating. According to Myers, altruistic behaviour will occur with empathy in a person. Someone who is the most altruistic feels themselves to be the most responsible, social, always adjusting, tolerant, self-controlled, and motivated to make a good impression. The influence of empathy has a positive effect on the occurrence of altruism behaviour, namely people by putting the interests of others ahead of their own interests. Indonesia as a Muslim-majority country is known as a people who are aware of social problems (Bramantoro, 2020). This research also supports the findings of Marhayati (2020) where an individual considers infaq and alms as worship, so that his behaviour does not affect the individual. Then the phenomenon of sharing food on the streets has proven this. In 2018, the Charity Aid Foundation Indonesia became the most generous country. The researcher’s findings also strengthen Alifah, Fauziah, & Syafrida’s (2021) research that the empathy aspect has a dominant impact during Covid-19.

The findings of the success factor support the argument for the need for budget transparency (Suhaimi, 2021). Other factors come from internal and external fundraising, such as the number of shares that lead to public trust derived from transparency, credibility, ease of access, urgency, and marketing strategies that can attract the majority. Print and electronic media publications support the findings of Firdaus (2004). Media campaign strategies in fundraising are decisive during fundraising in the millennial era (Muhammad, 2022; Warapsari, 2020). Furthermore, success factors are also supported by the good image of the institution (Zebua, 2019; Prasisty, 2010) and marketing communication (Yanuar, 2017; Fauzia, 2019; Ma'sum, 2020). The quality of a good communication programme with donors is an attractive promotional medium.

D. CONCLUSIONS

This research has found fundraising management in the Palestine Care programme implemented by Aksi Cepat Tanggap during Covid-19. The process starts from mapping issues, building networks between institutions and volunteers, fundraising campaigns, actions, and implementation of results. The Palestinian issue is an important asset in the effort to plan when conducting fundraising. Meanwhile, ACT’s success factor in fundraising is that it has the legality to conduct fundraising during Covid-19 and the public has a high sense of empathy during the pandemic, including altruism. This ability to build
networks in the community is a solution to the many problems that occur due to the pandemic. Fundraising management during the Covid-19 Pandemic crisis built partnerships despite the challenges of work from home, social distancing and others. The greater the partnership of non-profit organisations has an impact on fundraising results that are more increased than before. It turns out that during the pandemic, people have one of the traits of altruism where people have higher empathy during the pandemic. Altruism plays an important role when in an urgent situation due to Covid-19.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT
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REFERENCES


