

# Improving the Quality of In-kind Donations: A Field Experiment

---

Mahyar Eftekhar

W. P. Carey School of Business, ASU

# Background



**In-kind donations** refer to goods (clothing, food, or personal items) and services donated to a charity, instead of cash.

# Background



In-kind donations form a key source of supply; In 2017, 52% of Americans made in-kind donations to charities.

# Background



In-kind (e.g., personal items) donations contribute to charities' triple bottom line!

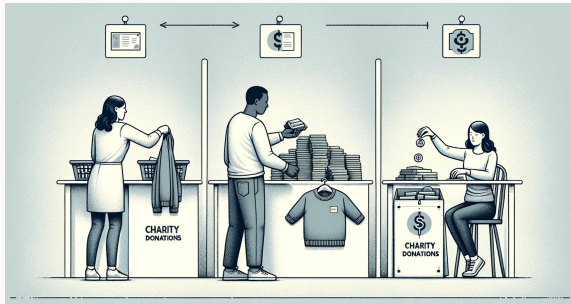
# Background

→ **Social welfare:** directly sent to beneficiaries



# Background

→ **Additional revenue:** selling items through thrift stores



# Background

In 2020, despite the COVID-19, the Salvation Army earned **\$598 million** from **1,116 thrift stores**, **18%** of their total revenue.



# Background

→ Reducing environmental waste: rechanneling used items





# Background

In 2020, Goodwill diverted **3.3 billion pounds** of usable goods from landfills.



## Why We Need to Stop Giving Our Junk to the Poor



Low-quality items are of no use!

Donation pickup is costly (e.g., fuel, labor, etc.).

Trash disposal is costly.

Having the loading area full of items is a liability.

# Challenge

## What Do Thrift Stores Do With Waste?



Low-quality items are of no use!

Donation pickup is costly (e.g., fuel, labor, etc.).

Trash disposal is costly.

Having the loading area full of items is a liability.

# Challenge

## What Do Thrift Stores Do With Waste?



Low-quality items are of no use!

Donation pickup is costly (e.g., fuel, labor, etc.).

**Trash disposal is costly.**

Having the loading area full of items is a liability.

# Challenge

## What Do Thrift Stores Do With Waste?



Low-quality items are of no use!

Donation pickup is costly (e.g., fuel, labor, etc.).

Trash disposal is costly.

Having the loading area full of items is a liability.



Goodwill Northern New England spends over \$1 million annually to dispose of 13 million pounds of unsuitable items only for 30 thrift stores.



With currently more than **3,000 Goodwill thrift stores** and over **25,000 nonprofit resale shops** in the U.S., trash donations impose substantial social costs.

# Challenge



SVdP's loading area were always stacked with items waiting for disposal service to pick up; **The charity was forced to rely on additional trash removal service**; Every month, on average, they received **90 truckloads** of junk.



## Question

Finding a **practical solution** to reduce the amount of **junk** donations **without losing donors**.

## Question

Finding a **practical solution** to reduce the amount of **junk** donations **without losing donors**.

Daniels and Valdes (2021) demonstrate that donors learn from their donation experience, and **use rejection as a self-serving excuse not to give** in the future.



## **THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL**

**FEED. CLOTHE. HOUSE. HEAL.**

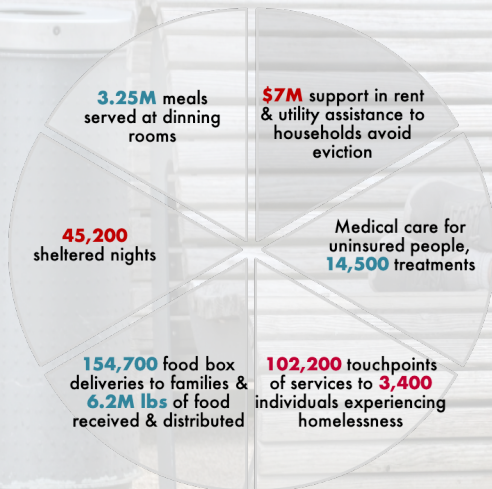
- Founded in 1833
- With ~ 800,000 members
- Operating in 153 countries
- Serving more than 30 million people



## SVdP Phoenix:

- The largest division of SVdP in the U.S.
- Serving central and northern AZ since 1946
- ~ 300 paid staff and more than 6000 volunteers

# SVdP Phoenix: services in 2022



# SVdP Phoenix: resources in 2022

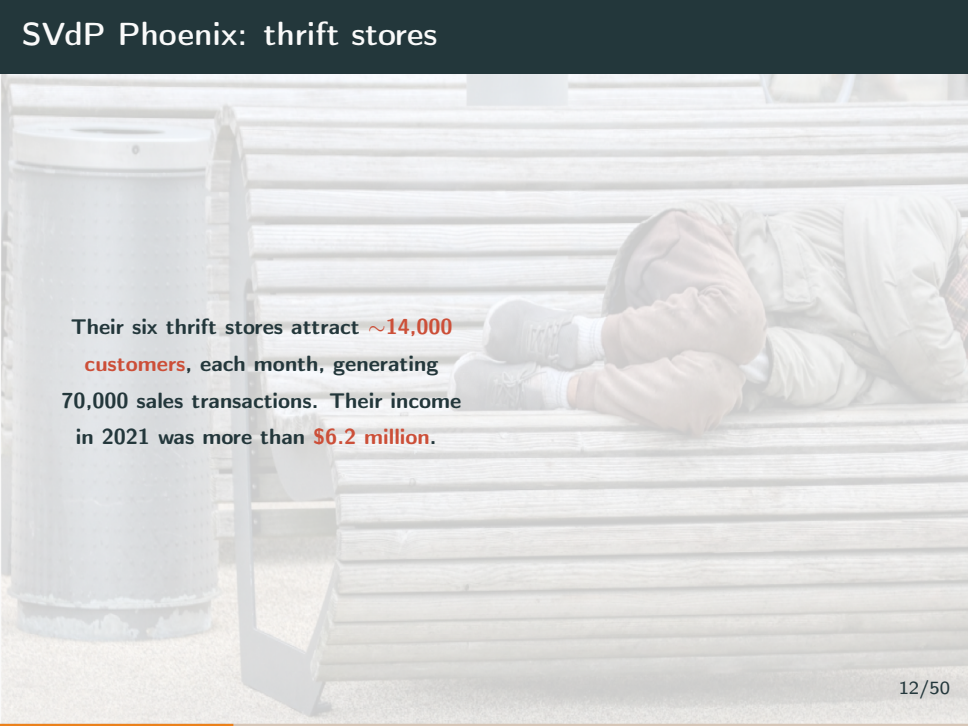
- **Cash donations** from individuals (~ \$33M)
- **Grants** (~ \$8.9M)
- All **in-kind** donations (~ \$27.4M)
- **Volunteering services** from 14,000 individuals who served 208,000 hrs (~ \$4.8M worth of labor assuming \$23 per hour)

## SVdP Phoenix: thrift stores

A photograph showing a person curled up and sleeping on a wooden slatted bench. To the left of the person is a large, grey, perforated metal trash can with a metal frame leaning against it. The scene is outdoors on a paved surface. The image is semi-transparent, serving as a background for the text.

On average, SVdP receives **400-500**  
**in-kind donations per week.**

## SVdP Phoenix: thrift stores

A photograph of a person lying face down on a wooden bench. The person is wearing a light-colored jacket, brown pants, and grey sneakers. To the left of the person is a grey cylindrical trash can with a white lid. The background is a plain wall with horizontal wooden slats. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white box containing text.

Their six thrift stores attract **~14,000** customers, each month, generating 70,000 sales transactions. Their income in 2021 was more than **\$6.2 million**.



We use **behavioral interventions** in a field experiment:

- Flexibility compared with harder forms of policies e.g., regulatory bans
- directing individuals' actions by relying on their voluntary participation
- less tension compared to directly rejecting the donations
- Cost-free action, suitable for resource-limited charities

We use **behavioral interventions** in a field experiment:

- **Flexibility** compared with harder forms of policies e.g., regulatory bans
  - directing individuals' actions by relying on their voluntary participation
  - less tension compared to directly rejecting the donations
- **Cost-free action**, suitable for resource-limited charities

We use **behavioral interventions** in a field experiment:

- Flexibility compared with harder forms of policies e.g., regulatory bans
- directing individuals' actions by relying on their voluntary participation
- less tension compared to directly rejecting the donations
- **Cost-free action**, suitable for resource-limited charities

The existing literature offers insightful studies:

- Mainardes et al. (2017): how to motivate individuals to make in-kind donations
- Ahire and Pekgun (2018): how to use food and cash donations to serve beneficiaries
- Daniels and Valdes (2021): how donors would react if their in-kind donation is rejected

# Literature: behavioral interventions in nonprofit settings

- Lacetera et al. 2014 & Goette and Stutzer 2020: material rewards are effective in motivating people to donate blood
- Conrads et al. 2016 & Gneezy and Rustichini 2000: material rewards discourage individuals to volunteer their time and effort
- Martin and Randal 2008 & Shang and Croson 2009: social norms increase individuals' cash donations
- Moseley et al. 2018: social norms do not encourage participation in volunteering
- Goette and Tripodi 2020: feedback reduces the intention to donate again
- Mertins and Walter 2021: feedback effectively increases one's volunteering productivity

# Literature: behavioral interventions in nonprofit settings

- Lacetera et al. 2014 & Goette and Stutzer 2020: material rewards are effective in motivating people to donate blood
- Conrads et al. 2016 & Gneezy and Rustichini 2000: material rewards discourage individuals to volunteer their time and effort
- **Martin and Randal 2008 & Shang and Croson 2009: social norms increase individuals' cash donations**
- **Moseley et al. 2018: social norms do not encourage participation in volunteering**
- Goette and Tripodi 2020: feedback reduces the intention to donate again
- Mertins and Walter 2021: feedback effectively increases one's volunteering productivity

# Literature: behavioral interventions in nonprofit settings

- Lacetera et al. 2014 & Goette and Stutzer 2020: material rewards are effective in motivating people to donate blood
- Conrads et al. 2016 & Gneezy and Rustichini 2000: material rewards discourage individuals to volunteer their time and effort
- Martin and Randal 2008 & Shang and Croson 2009: social norms increase individuals' cash donations
- Moseley et al. 2018: social norms do not encourage participation in volunteering
- Goette and Tripodi 2020: feedback reduces the intention to donate again
- Mertins and Walter 2021: feedback effectively increases one's volunteering productivity

# Literature: behavioral interventions in nonprofit settings

- Lacetera et al. 2014 & Goette and Stutzer 2020: material rewards are effective in motivating people to donate blood
- Conrads et al. 2016 & Gneezy and Rustichini 2000: material rewards discourage individuals to volunteer their time and effort
- Martin and Randal 2008 & Shang and Croson 2009: social norms increase individuals' cash donations
- Moseley et al. 2018: social norms do not encourage participation in volunteering
- Goette and Tripodi 2020: feedback reduces the intention to donate again
- Mertins and Walter 2021: feedback effectively increases one's volunteering productivity

**Behavioral interventions that function in one context may not work in others!**



# Behavioral interventions

We used two interventions, **social norm** and **information disclosure**, both are well-supported by a growing body of literature.

# Interventions: descriptive social norm

Social norms are shared standards of acceptable behavior by a group of people.

# Interventions: descriptive social norm

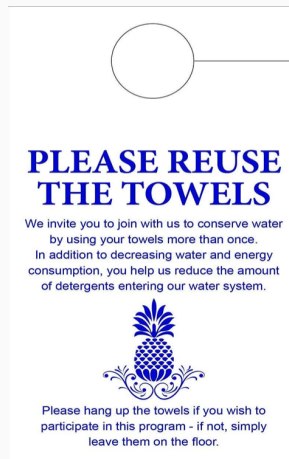
Social norms are shared standards of acceptable behavior by a group of people.

- **Injunctive:** what ought to be done.
- **Descriptive:** what has been done by others.

# Interventions: descriptive social norm

Social norms are shared standards of acceptable behavior by a group of people.

- **Injunctive:** what ought to be done.
- **Descriptive:** what has been done by others.



# Interventions: descriptive social norm

- Individuals demonstrate a strong preference to conform to social norms due to their **social-image** and **self-image** (Benabou and Tirole 2006; Ariely et al. 2009; Gross and Vostroknutov 2022).
- A positive **social-image** increases the chance of being seen as **trustworthy** (Gross and Vostroknutov 2022).
- **Self-image** matters to people as they like to see themselves as **moral beings** (Bodner and Prelec 2003), and to signal themselves about their **moral identities** (Benabou and Tirole 2006).
- Many successful examples: Goldstein et al. 2008, Shang and Croson 2009, Martin and Randal 2008.

# Interventions: descriptive social norm

- Individuals demonstrate a strong preference to conform to social norms due to their **social-image** and **self-image** (Benabou and Tirole 2006; Ariely et al. 2009; Gross and Vostroknutov 2022).
- A positive **social-image** increases the chance of being seen as **trustworthy** (Gross and Vostroknutov 2022).
- **Self-image** matters to people as they like to see themselves as **moral beings** (Bodner and Prelec 2003), and to signal themselves about their **moral identities** (Benabou and Tirole 2006).
- Many successful examples: Goldstein et al. 2008, Shang and Croson 2009, Martin and Randal 2008.

# Interventions: descriptive social norm

- Individuals demonstrate a strong preference to conform to social norms due to their **social-image** and **self-image** (Benabou and Tirole 2006; Ariely et al. 2009; Gross and Vostroknutov 2022).
- A positive **social-image** increases the chance of being seen as **trustworthy** (Gross and Vostroknutov 2022).
- **Self-image** matters to people as they like to see themselves as **moral beings** (Bodner and Prelec 2003), and to signal themselves about their **moral identities** (Benabou and Tirole 2006).
- Many successful examples: Goldstein et al. 2008, Shang and Croson 2009, Martin and Randal 2008.

# Interventions: descriptive social norm

- Individuals demonstrate a strong preference to conform to social norms due to their **social-image** and **self-image** (Benabou and Tirole 2006; Ariely et al. 2009; Gross and Vostroknutov 2022).
- A positive **social-image** increases the chance of being seen as **trustworthy** (Gross and Vostroknutov 2022).
- **Self-image** matters to people as they like to see themselves as **moral beings** (Bodner and Prelec 2003), and to signal themselves about their **moral identities** (Benabou and Tirole 2006).
- Many successful examples: Goldstein et al. 2008, Shang and Croson 2009, Martin and Randal 2008.



# Interventions: information disclosure

Information disclosure refers to **disclosing content-related information** to affect individuals' behaviors.



# Interventions: information disclosure

- This intervention has been broadly advocated as an appropriate response to a wide range of social and economic problems.
- Awareness of the need is the pre-requisite for charitable giving (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011).
- Learning about the needs of others leads to an altruistic motivation, a motivational state with the ultimate goal of reducing that need (Batson et al. 2015).
- People donate their goods, at least partially, to advance the welfare of others through supporting a charity's mission.
- Successful examples: Thaler and Sunstein (2009), Jones et al. (2015), Nelosn et al. (2021), also a typical intervention used by charities and humanitarian organizations.

# Interventions: information disclosure

- This intervention has been broadly advocated as an appropriate response to a wide range of social and economic problems.
- Awareness of the need is the pre-requisite for charitable giving (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011).
- **Learning about the needs of others leads to an altruistic motivation**, a motivational state with the ultimate goal of reducing that need (Batson et al. 2015).
- People donate their goods, at least partially, to advance the welfare of others through supporting a charity's mission.
- Successful examples: Thaler and Sunstein (2009), Jones et al. (2015), Nelson et al. (2021), also a typical intervention used by charities and humanitarian organizations.

# Interventions: information disclosure

- This intervention has been broadly advocated as an appropriate response to a wide range of social and economic problems.
- Awareness of the need is the pre-requisite for charitable giving (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011).
- Learning about the needs of others leads to an altruistic motivation, a motivational state with the ultimate goal of reducing that need (Batson et al. 2015).
- People donate their goods, at least partially, to advance the welfare of others through supporting a charity's mission.
- Successful examples: Thaler and Sunstein (2009), Jones et al. (2015), Nelosn et al. (2021), also a **typical intervention used by charities** and humanitarian organizations.

1. Collection process w/o interventions
2. The interventions, and drafting our messages
3. Measuring the quality of donations
4. Choosing the subjects, and treatment assignment

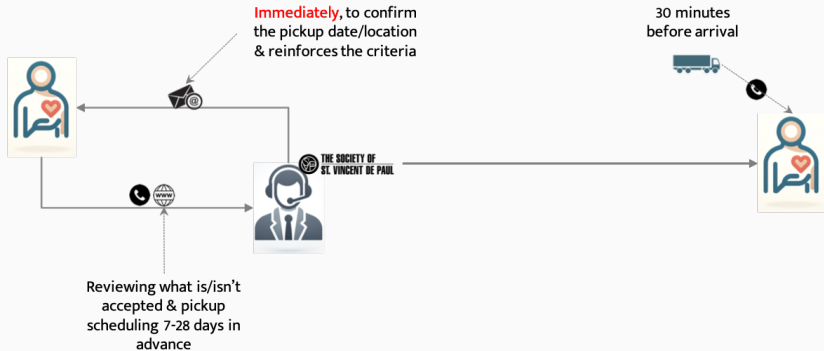
1. Collection process w/o interventions
2. **The interventions, and drafting our messages**
3. Measuring the quality of donations
4. Choosing the subjects, and treatment assignment

1. Collection process w/o interventions
2. The interventions, and drafting our messages
- 3. Measuring the quality of donations**
4. Choosing the subjects, and treatment assignment

1. Collection process w/o interventions
2. The interventions, and drafting our messages
3. Measuring the quality of donations
4. **Choosing the subjects, and treatment assignment**

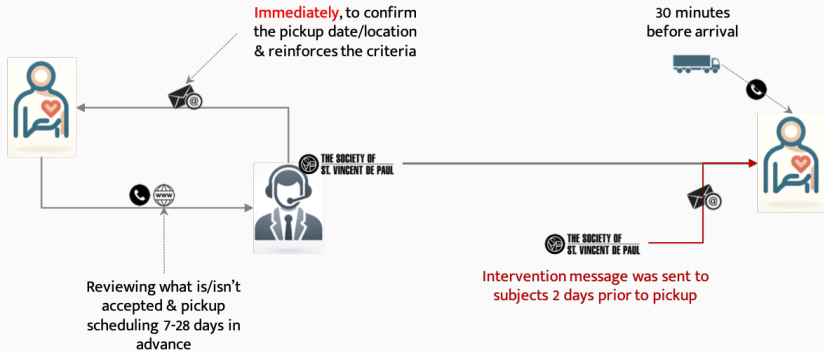


# Setting: collection process



Example of unacceptable items: dishwasher, mirror without frame, doors, weapons,...

# Setting: collection process



Intervention message was sent to subjects **two days prior** to pickup.

## **Social norm**

We designed the social norm message similar to Goldstein et al. (J Cons. Res. 2008), emphasizing that the norm of in-kind donations is that the majority of the donors donate items in good shape.

## **Social norm**

We designed the social norm message similar to Goldstein et al. (J Cons. Res. 2008), emphasizing that the norm of in-kind donations is that the majority of the donors donate items in good shape.

## **Information disclosure**

Information disclosure intervention should fit in specific settings, and so there is no standard form of message, in the literature, for this intervention. We constructed this message based on the need of SVdP and the benefits of taking the right action.

# Setting: messages



---

Hello: {{first\_name}},

Thank you for making an RSVP for St. Vincent de Paul to pick up your donated items on {{pickupDate}}. Your donated items will be sold at our thrift stores to generate funding that feeds, clothes, houses, and heals Arizona families in need.

The majority of donors give us items that are in very good condition, and have a high likelihood of being sold at our thrift stores around the Valley. Items donated that are damaged, stained, have pet hair, have missing pieces, or are otherwise unsellable, end up costing us money to dispose of them. We understand it's not always easy to figure out what is appropriate to donate to us, so we ask that you (A) thoughtfully consider which items are being given to us, and (B) click the button below to review the list of items that we don't currently pick up.

Unacceptable Items

Your reservation includes the following items. Please make sure to bring your items to the curb as we are unable to enter homes and buildings at this time due to COVID-19 guidelines. We are humbled and grateful for your donation, and we look forward to picking up your donation on {{pickupDate}}.

Items listed on your reservation:  
{{Items}}

If you need to make any changes to your reservation, please call us at (602) 254-3338, option 2 during normal business hours Monday through Friday.

Thank you,  
St. Vincent de Paul of Arizona

---



---

Hello: {{first\_name}},

Thank you for making an RSVP for St. Vincent de Paul to pick up your donated items on {{pickupDate}}. Your donated items will be sold at our thrift stores to generate funding that feeds, clothes, houses, and heals Arizona families in need.

Please know that we only accept items that are gently used. Items that we would have high difficulty selling at our stores such as items that are damaged, stained, have pet hair, have missing pieces, or are otherwise unsellable-end up costing us tens of thousands of dollars every month to dispose of them, which diverts money away from our mission. We understand it's not always easy to figure out what is appropriate to donate to us, so we ask that you (A) thoughtfully consider which items are being given to us, and (B) click the button below to review the list of items that we don't currently pick up.

Unacceptable Items

Your reservation includes the following items. Please make sure to bring your items to the curb as we are unable to enter homes and buildings at this time due to COVID-19 guidelines. We are humbled and grateful for your donation, and we look forward to picking up your donation on {{pickupDate}}.

Items listed on your reservation:  
{{Items}}

If you need to make any changes to your reservation, please call us at (602) 254-3338, option 2 during normal business hours Monday through Friday.

Thank you,  
St. Vincent de Paul of Arizona

---

# Setting: messages

## Information disclosure

Please know that we only accept items that are gently used. Items that we would have high difficulty selling at our stores – such as items that are damaged, stained, have pet hair, have missing pieces, or are otherwise unsellable – end up costing us tens of thousands of dollars every month to dispose of them, which diverts money away from our mission.

## Social norm

The majority of donors give us items that are in very good condition, and have a high likelihood of being sold at our thrift stores around the Valley. Items donated that are damaged, stained, have pet hair, have missing pieces, or are otherwise unsellable, end up costing us money to dispose of them.

## Setting: quality measurement

We trained **eight drivers** who were responsible to collect the donations.

# Setting: quality measurement

To rate, we used a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5: all garbage, mostly garbage, 50% garbage and 50% good stuff, mostly good stuff, and all good stuff.





## Setting: quality measurement

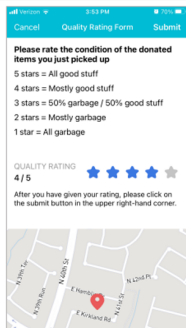
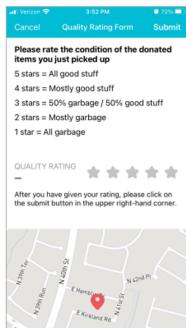
Training took a few sessions – in each session drivers rated 20 items – until the degree of consensus among drivers reached to a “good” level; Fleiss’ kappa score = 0.73 reflecting a “good” level of agreement. (A moderate level,  $\kappa \in [0.41, 0.60]$ .)

## Setting: quality measurement

- SVdP provided a phone to each driver with our **quality rating app** installed.

# Setting: quality measurement

- SVdP provided a phone to each driver with our **quality rating app** installed.
- Drivers who picked up the donations were asked to rate the quality of donations **immediately after loading** the items.

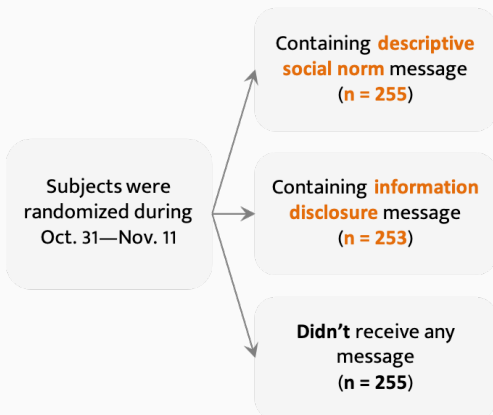


## Setting: quality measurement

1. The app is customized within the routing software Geopointe; it provides directions, and requires the drivers to “check in” for each location when they arrive.
2. The app automatically asks the drivers to rate the donation once the pickup is finished.
3. The rating is immediately sent to SVdP dataset.

# Setting: subjects

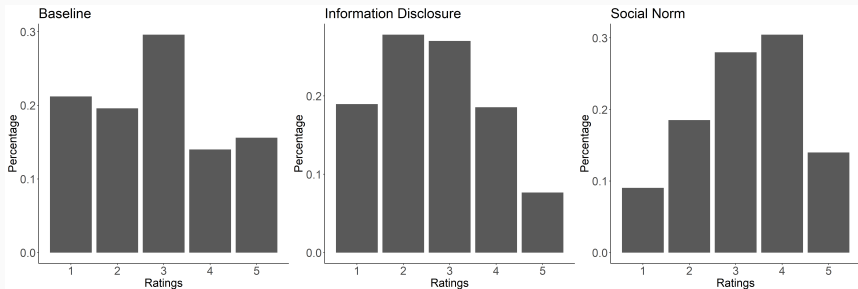
775 households that had never donated to SVdP were randomized to one of the three groups.



**Table 1 Summary statistics by treatment**

	Social Norm [N = 255]	Information Disclosure [N = 253]	Baseline [N = 255]
Cancellation	12	5	5
Cash donor in the past	14	9	9
Email opened	196	189	–
Household Median Income in \$1000	86.63 (28.38)	84.98 (29.83)	83.69 (28.71)

# Results

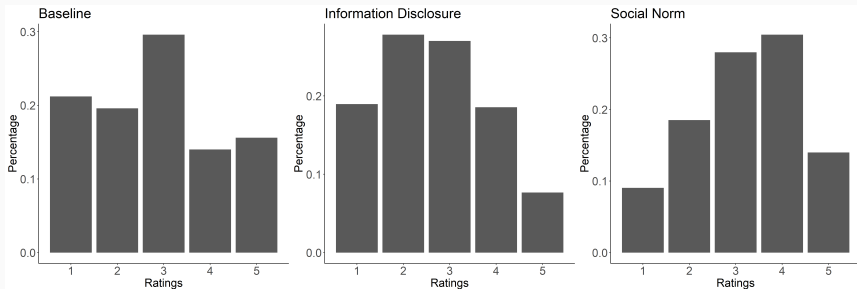


Average rating: social norm group **3.22**, information disclosure **2.68**, baseline **2.83**

The difference in ratings between social norm and information disclosure (baseline) group is statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0.001$ ).

There is no significant difference between the information disclosure and baseline groups.

# Results



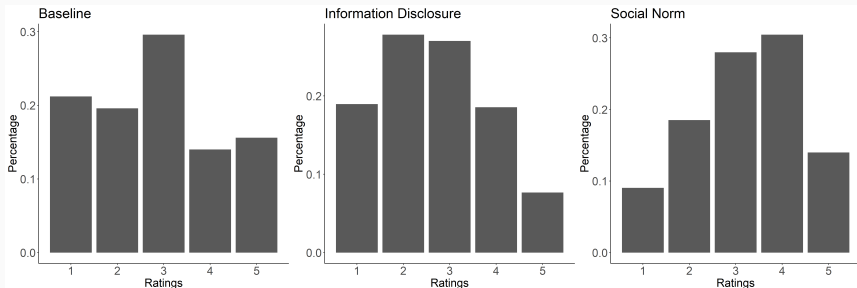
Average rating: social norm group 3.22, information disclosure 2.68, baseline 2.83

The difference in ratings between social norm and information disclosure (baseline) group is statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0.001$ ).

There is no significant difference between the information disclosure and baseline groups.



# Results



Average rating: social norm group 3.22, information disclosure 2.68, baseline 2.83

The difference in ratings between social norm and information disclosure (baseline) group is statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0.001$ ).

There is no significant difference between the information disclosure and baseline groups.

## Further validity

Investigating the treatment effects on donors who opened the intervention email (i.e., compliers), and those who did not (i.e., non-compliers), we found the **social norm group had an average rating of 3.33** (SE = 0.08) and the **information disclosure group had an average rating of 2.69** (SE = 0.09).

## Further validity

Investigating the treatment effects on donors who opened the intervention email (i.e., compliers), and those who did not (i.e., non-compliers), we found the **social norm group had an average rating of 3.33** (SE = 0.08) and the **information disclosure group had an average rating of 2.69** (SE = 0.09).

We compared the ratings for the non-compliers: The social norm group (59) had an average rating of 2.86 (SE = 0.16) and the information disclosure group (64) had an average rating of 2.67 (SE = 0.14). There is no statistically significant difference in the quality of donations between the non-compliers and the control group ( $p = 0.643$ ).

**Table 2 Intent-to-treat effect of all groups (OLS regression)**

	<i>Dependent Variable: Ratings</i>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Social Norm	0.386*** (0.111)	0.430*** (0.112)	0.404*** (0.112)
Information Disclosure	-0.151 (0.111)	-0.119 (0.112)	-0.151 (0.112)
Households Median Income			0.006*** (0.002)
Existing Donor			-0.078 (0.222)
<b>Time and Rater Fixed Effect</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Constant	2.832*** (0.078)	2.628*** (0.378)	2.172*** (0.396)
Observations	741	741	731
R <sup>2</sup>	0.032	0.068	0.091
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.030	0.045	0.065
Residual Std. Error	1.238 (df = 738)	1.228 (df = 722)	1.214 (df = 710)
F Statistic	12.257*** (df = 2; 738)	2.944*** (df = 18; 722)	3.547*** (df = 20; 710)

**Table 3 Comparison between the social norm and information disclosure groups (OLS regression)**

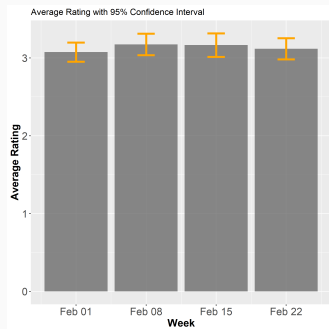
	<i>Dependent Variable: Ratings</i>		
	(Full Sample)	(Opened Email)	(Did Not Open Email)
Social Norm	0.574*** (0.107)	0.667*** (0.124)	0.356 (0.233)
Household Median Income	0.005** (0.002)	0.005** (0.002)	0.004 (0.004)
Existing Donor	-0.306 (0.253)	-0.105 (0.296)	-0.785 (0.517)
Time and Rater Fixed Effect	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	2.610*** (0.459)	3.551*** (0.634)	1.769** (0.705)
Observations	482	364	118
R <sup>2</sup>	0.114	0.154	0.189
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.078	0.107	0.032
Residual Std. Error	1.165 (df = 462)	1.155 (df = 344)	1.153 (df = 98)
F Statistic	3.139*** (df = 19; 462)	3.289*** (df = 19; 344)	1.204 (df = 19; 98)

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

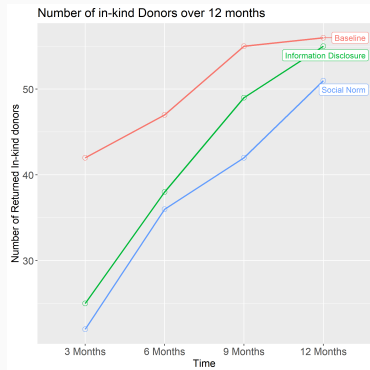
# Further validity

Additional ratings on 1,301 in-kind donations during February 2021 who received a social norm message.



Week	Observations	Average Rating	SE of Ratings
Feb 01	307	3.07	0.06
Feb 08	356	3.17	0.07
Feb 15	308	3.17	0.08
Feb 22	330	3.12	0.07

# Long-term effect



We tracked the cumulative number of in-kind donors who made another donation after the experiment.

The number of cumulative returned in-kind donors among the three groups converges over time.

We can attribute this difference to

- thinking process
- information overload
- individuals' utility



# Reason: thinking process

Two types of thinking process:

- automatic system that is intuitive, unconscious, and effortless
- reflective system that is self-aware, effortful, and requires deductive thinking

→ With social norm, one simply follows what others are doing, without analyzing the situation.

→ With information disclosure, one must first understand the altruistic needs in a particular setting, then make deductive connections between the ask and others' benefit

# Reason: thinking process

Two types of thinking process:

- **automatic** system that is **intuitive, unconscious, and effortless**
- **reflective** system that is **self-aware, effortful, and requires deductive thinking**

→ With social norm, one simply follows what others are doing, without analyzing the situation.

→ With information disclosure, one must first understand the altruistic needs in a particular setting, then make deductive connections between the ask and others' benefit

# Reason: thinking process

Two types of thinking process:

- **automatic** system that is **intuitive, unconscious, and effortless**
- **reflective** system that is **self-aware, effortful, and requires deductive thinking**

→ With social norm, one simply follows what others are doing, without analyzing the situation.

→ With information disclosure, one must first understand the altruistic needs in a particular setting, then make deductive connections between the ask and others' benefit

# Reason: thinking process

Two types of thinking process:

- automatic system that is intuitive, unconscious, and effortless
- reflective system that is self-aware, effortful, and requires deductive thinking

→ With social norm, one simply follows what others are doing, without analyzing the situation.

→ With information disclosure, one must first understand the altruistic needs in a particular setting, then make deductive connections between the ask and others' benefit

# Reason: thinking process

Two types of thinking process:

- automatic system that is intuitive, unconscious, and effortless
- reflective system that is self-aware, effortful, and requires deductive thinking

→ With social norm, one simply follows what others are doing, without analyzing the situation.

→ With information disclosure, one must first understand the altruistic needs in a particular setting, then make deductive connections between the ask and others' benefit



## Reason: information overload

Fewer than 3% of consumers read the privacy disclosures on websites.

75% of consumers **wrongly** think that the existence of a privacy policy implies privacy protection.

When individuals see some **numbers**, they discontinue reading the email.

## Reason: utility



Information disclosure offers **the freedom of choice**.

Automobile manufacturer publicizes the safety characteristics of cars, car purchasers can trade safety concerns against other attributes e.g., price and styling.



## Reason: utility

Social norm intervention directs people's attention to the **social identity** utility, and conforming to the social norm will **enhance one's social image**.



Individuals use their perceptions of peer norms as a **standard against which to compare their own behaviors**; People measure the appropriateness of their behavior by how far away they are from the norm.

## To theory

It highlights how a small intervention can have a significant impact on behavior.

## To theory

Our field data challenges the common notion of the effectiveness of information disclosure, but the social norm intervention is found to have promising outcomes.

## To theory

This is an example showing that individuals **follow the norms even in private** and when violations are difficult to detect and are not sanctioned.

## To practice

Before implementing the intervention, SVdP received **roughly 90 truckloads of junk donations per month**. With the social norm intervention, SVdP handles about **45 truckloads** of junk donations per month.

## To practice

Before implementing the intervention, SVdP received **roughly 90 truckloads of junk donations per month**. With the social norm intervention, SVdP handles about **45 truckloads** of junk donations per month.

## To practice

In disaster settings: **60% of the in-kind donations are “completely useless”** in the aftermath of a disaster (Holguin-Veras et al. 2016). The issue of junk donations is one of the most crucial, yet understudied, challenges in the context of disaster relief operations.

# Thank you!

---

Improving the Quality of In-kind Donations: A Field Experiment

Mahyar Eftekhar