Giving What We Can

6 Month Review

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Executive Summary

Over the past six months, Giving What We Can has gained 54 members, with the total pledged increasing by $21.4M.

Our president has consulted with a number of important national and international bodies, including the WHO, DCPP, and the World Bank. In future, we aim to dedicate a greater share of resources to facilitating this kind of advocacy.

Our research team has identified one new recommended charity (Project Healthy Children) and another promising organisation (the CCC post-MDG project). They have published a steady stream of blog content and three research papers on higher-level topics arising at the intersection of ethics and economics. On balance, we are somewhat disappointed with our progress on research, and the future direction of research at Giving What We Can is presently open for discussion.

Our communications team has led a successful media push, though its impact did not quite match that of our best previous performance. In addition, the communications team has engaged in extensive 'market research', relying on the work of two groups of consultants and interviews with existing members. They have also taken first steps in re-orienting our target market towards young professionals.

We have re-launched our forum, hoping thereby to create a greater sense of community online. Steps have been taken improve the website by streamlining the joining process, as well as improving the look and wording of popular landing pages.

The results of our annual giving review (covering members' giving in 2011) were underwhelming, and we are making considerable effort to correct the problems identified. We have set up a charitable trust that will provide members (and others) with an easier method by which to ensure their donations reach the most effective charities. We are moving to new offices, shared with the Future of Humanity Institute.

We have not created any new chapters, though several of our existing chapters have recorded considerable fundraising success.

Overall, we are reasonably satisfied with our progress over the previous six months, though we recognise that there is significant room for improvement. Although many projects have experienced difficulties and delays, many others have been valuable and successful. In terms of key metrics, we have seen healthy growth, if slightly below expectations.

Key metrics

Gains in membership are somewhat impressive relative to past performance:

- On the 10th of December 2012, we had 264 members.
    - This represented a gain in 44 members over 10th June 2012, which began with 220 members.
- Presently (10th of June 2013), we have 318 members.
    - We have thus gained 54 members in the last six months, representing a gain of nearly 23% over performance in the six months prior.

The total pledged has not kept pace:

- Between June and December, we moved from US$ $68.4M in pledged donations to $105.1M.
- Today the total pledged is $126.5 M.
    - Thus, whereas we gained $36.7M in the latter half of 2012, we've gained just $21.4M in the previous six months. This represents a decrease of more than 40% in terms of additional pledged donations.
    - The latter half of 2012 saw a small number of members pledging very large amounts (three of these together pledged more than $17M). The large amounts pledged then were atypical and happened to fall very close to one another. We have not attracted similarly wealthy members in the previous six months, but this plausibly reflects nothing more than regression to the mean.

President's Activities:

In light of his role as founder and president of Giving What We Can, Toby Ord has had the opportunity to influence a number of important national and international bodies, including DfID, the WHO, and the Centre for Global Development. Here is a summary of his most recent activities:

- In April, Toby participated in a working-group organised by the World Health Organisation as part of its Universal Health Coverage initiative. This initiative will provide advice on health-care provision to over 50 countries (including India).
    - Toby had great success in pushing for the importance of cost-effectiveness considerations in health-care provision.
    - He has co-authored a paper with Ole Norheim (Harvard), which will form part of the materials provisioned by the WHO. This paper argues, very roughly, for the use of a system of health-care allocation based on the UK's National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.
- Toby also spoke at the World Bank with regard to the possibility of their sponsoring an initiative on global prioritisation, similar to the Copenhagen Consensus Centre (which is presently experiencing funding difficulties).
- The United Nations is to ratify a new set of Millennium Development Goals in 2015. The first draft of these goals is partly the responsibility of the British Prime Minister. His office sought advice from Toby, who pushed for the use of

health-adjusted life-expectancy as a metric for measuring progress on health goals.

- Toby spoke at a conference organized by the Disease Control Priorties Project in the lead-up to the publication of DPC3. He also delivered a Giving What We Can-produced paper on age-weighting of fatalities commissioned by DCP Director Dean Jamison.
- Toby has engaged in a number of other high-profile speaking arrangements:
    - He spoke at a debate on philanthropy organized by Intelligence Squared and Deutsche Bank, aimed at their private wealth clients.
    - He spoke with Peter Singer at the Oxford Union, arguing in favour of charitable giving targeted at the developing world.
    - Toby also engaged in a large number of interviews connected with the media push (see below).

Lessons going forward:

These activities are of very high value, and represent some of the most high-value activities of the organisation. However, Toby receives a larger number of invitations to speak at conferences or offer advice than he can personally handle:

- It is advised that we should train/enlist/hire another individual with a PhD and/or academic post, who would be able to take up some of these missed opportunities in his stead.

- In general, the central organisation should make a concerted effort to buttress these activities by carrying out necessary background activities, freeing up Toby and/or his fallback to take on a higher volume of such projects.
    - For the Intelligence Squared debate, a volunteer was enlisted to create Toby's speech by editing pre-existing material, and to draft slides. This didn't go too well, but similar activities can in principle help us to handle a larger number of engagements in future.

Research:

Charity evaluation

Evaluation of individual charities has proceeded below our expectations, though we've seen respectable progress.

- We have identified one new recommended charity (Project Healthy Children), and we are likely to recommend another in the near future (the Copenhagen Consensus Center post-MDG project).
- We have significantly enhanced our understanding of micronutrient interventions, charities working to improve developing world health policy, and meta-research organisations.
- We have completed our evaluation of ACTION, deciding not to recommend them due to lack of room for additional funding.
- We looked into three other charities, which we dropped early on, for various reasons.
- We searched for charities that were using RCT-proven, cost-effective education interventions, turning up only Pratham, already identified by GiveWell.
- Because of our success finding organisations we liked, we have done more in-depth research on fewer groups.

We have a number of concerns relating to these activities:

- GiveWell may be right that it requires significant work to identify a charity's underlying problems, raising the worry that our new recommendations will be worse than the old ones.
- We have not published very much of the underlying research informing these recommendations due to the significant time required to bring material to publishable quality.
- This work takes much longer than we had expected and cannot easily be delegated to volunteers, requiring the presence of dedicated, long-term staff.

Blog content

We met our target of producing at least one piece of research-related blog content each week.

- The content is mixed, with several high quality and detailed posts and some other lighter ones.
- Unfortunately, these posts have not attracted a large number of visitors. The blog is a useful outlet for our work, demonstrating that we are competent and active in our work. It also helps set deadlines internally and generate output among interns and volunteers. However, unless we do more to make posts that are popular and fun to read, we are unlikely to drive major traffic using them.
    - We should try to learn more from 80,000 Hours, which has managed to produce more entertaining content, whilst still communicating key messages.

    - If we can't make blog posts that are more popular, we could use a single post a week to demonstrate our activity, and find other more effective ways of driving traffic from new visitors.

Research papers

This is the most disappointing component, as far as output goes:

- We have published a paper on discounting of future health-years, a paper on giving now versus later, and another on age-weighting of fatalities (for the Disease Control Priorities Project).
- Three other papers were planned, but have not been attempted, due to a large number of extraneous distractions.

It may turn out, however, that we have been correct to deprioritize this aspect of our research work for now:

- We are uncertain as to whether research papers of this kind yield sufficient gains, given the large amount of work they require.
    - They are not read by many people - at least not yet - and in many cases are not decision relevant to the people we are trying to turn into members.
    - While we may hope that they increase our credibility with HNWs or important organisations, such as DCPP, we generally do not have a clear target market in mind, nor detailed plans to ensure that we reach any target market that we might consider. Such papers also don't fit naturally with our (draft) plan to target young professionals over the next six months.

Lessons going forward:

On balance, we are disappointed with our progress on research. It is clear that we had unrealistic expectations going in. Nick Beckstead, based on his experience doing this research, has expressed consistent skepticism regarding our prospects for success in conducting charity evaluations, especially in competing with GiveWell's work. We now largely agree with this pessimistic assessment. We *have* found two promising charities within the previous six months, but this may be more a matter of luck than skill.

Nonetheless, there remain a number of potentially useful functions for a Giving What We Can research group, such as:

- To properly understand and critique GiveWell's work on a range of issues.
- To better communicate existing cost effectiveness research through online content and presentations we write and deliver.
- To produce content with the main purpose of driving web hits.
- Looking more closely at those organisations against which GiveWell appears unduly biased, or which GiveWell are unable to evaluate.
- Identifying promising organisations in areas that have seen very little charity evaluation (e.g. climate change).
- Building up research skills among EAs, laying the ground for a community that is able to carry out the research it needs in future (GiveWell took several years to become a high quality source).

If we wanted to become a research centre that produces novel research on a par with GiveWell, we believe this could be done. However, this would be a project that would take several years to mature, rather than something which we could jump to immediately. We would need to:

- Find several good people willing to work on this project together for an extended period of time
- Bring them up-to-date with the best existing research on on these questions
- Set up good internal methodology for collating research, making difficult judgement calls, and writing up the content for the public.

An active effort is being made to recruit one of our best volunteers to work for Giving What We Can research. There is another experienced research volunteer who might be convinced to work on such a project. However, a key difficulty is that the most talented people have other opportunities and are less likely to stay with us for the long term.

The opposite approach - for Giving What We Can to allocate most of its resources to honing its fundraising model and largely free-ride on GiveWell's recommendations until it is larger - is also an entirely reasonable option. However, it conflicts with our plans to closely collaborate with The Life You Can Save. Another key consideration is how much our research is valuable for attracting and maintaining members or otherwise keeping the media and volunteers enthusiastic about Giving What We Can.

It should be noted that the Research Director has been subject to a large number of extraneous distractions. These distracting activities have been far from worthless, and include aiding the President in his work with the WHO, strategising for Giving What We

Can, helping with recruitment, and acting as Trustee for Effective Animal Activism. These are simply part of the challenge of conducting research in a start-up that regularly requires people to deal with tasks unconnected to their primary job description. To help make us more realistic in future, we should keep this point in mind. The Research Director notes that he personally finds it hard to avoid being drawn into other CEA-related activities and so may not be best-suited to a role that requires intense focus.

Communications:

Media Push

In the past, high-profile media appearances have been important in increasing the number of members and the overall rate of joining. To mark our third anniversary, Giving What We Can rolled out a media campaign in December 2012. Our hope was to reach a wider audience, and to communicate a new set of messages, focused on the importance of cost-effective giving.

This was our most successful media campaign to date in terms of coverage:

- *Local Print Media:* the Oxford Times, the Oxford Student
- *National Print Media*: the Sunday Times, the Nonprofit Quarterly, the New Statesman.
- *National Radio*: the Moral Maze (BBC Radio 4), the Victoria Derbyshire Show (BBC Radio 5)
- *National Television*: BBC Breakfast (BBC One), SkyNews
- *International Print Media*: the New York Times (online)
- *International Radio*: National Public Radio (USA); Radio New Zealand

We were moderately successful in realizing our messaging aims:

- Unfortunately, quite a number of pieces focused on the size of Toby's commitment to charitable giving, with issues of cost-effectiveness treated as secondary.

- Pieces notable for their emphasis on cost-effectiveness appeared in/on: the Nonprofit Quarterly, the New York Times (online), NPR, Radio New Zealand.

Web -traffic increased significantly as a result of the media push.

- In December 2012, the Giving What We Can website received 21,876 unique visits. By contrast, there were 13,514 unique visits in October and 14,117 in November. Thus, there was a gain of more than 50% in unique visits in comparison with previous months.
- We gained an additional 150 Facebook 'likes', moving from 500 to 650
- We gained 200 Twitter followers, going from 502 to 701.

However, the media push was ultimately not quite as successful as we might have hoped.

- It paled in comparison to the effects of Toby's appearance on the BBC Daily Politics in December 2010.
  - Between the 1st of December and the 16th of May 2010-2011, Giving What We Can went from 67 members to 143, representing a gain of 76 members, or 113.4%. We have gained 53 members in the past six months, beginning from 264.
  - In December 2010, there were 29,899 unique visits, in comparison to the 21,876 achieved in December 2012.
- While it is reasonable to attribute the higher rate of members joining in the first half of 2013 (see **Key Metrics**) to the effects of the media push, the added effect failed to meet our expectations.

In light of the magnitude of international coverage, the question of why this media push failed to generate an effect comparable to that of the BBC Daily Politics piece deserves serious consideration. Possibilities of reasonable plausibility include:

- The nature of the Daily Politics piece:
    - The power and reach of television is likely to be an important factor.
    - To a greater extent than any other television item, this allowed Toby a platform to explain the core ideas underlying Giving What We Can.
- A greater emphasis on cost-effectiveness dampened our impact:
    - Whilst we might think of 'giving more' as a harder sell, the cost-effectiveness message may be less welcome than expected:
        - It may raise worries about the morality of weighing lives.
        - It is more alien to most people's way of thought than the idea that there is value in giving more to charity.
    - There is also evidence from social psychology that subjects primed with a mathematical mindset are less altruistic.[1]
- The beginnings of a saturation effect.
    - In light of prior media coverage, the number of people disposed to join might be thought smaller: we have already captured a significant number of those who can be persuaded to join on the basis of a short newspaper article or radio piece.
- A general decline in charitable giving (in the UK)

- o The Charities Aid Foundation reports that between 2010/2011 and 2011/2012, charitable donations in the UK have decreased by 20% in real terms.[2]

Lessons going forward:

To improve on performance, it is recommended that we be more strategic in our use of the media. This may include focusing on one national market (perhaps the UK) and focusing within that market on an audience likely to be receptive to the message (perhaps well-educated, science-friendly readers who will take away the cost-effectiveness message). We should also consider more carefully how we frame the message of cost-effectiveness, to the extent that this is foregrounded. It is recommended that we find a way to translate the message of cost-effectiveness into a story - such as a paper on the world's least effective charities - or a regular 'event' in the model of GiveWell's annual announcement of recommended charities. These elements will be considered in the development of our first communication strategy.

Consultancy:

In April, we received reports from two groups working for the Oxford Student Consultancy, both focused on market research and aimed at developing our marketing strategy.

The first group (known internally as *AEH*) carried out surveys (69 student participants) focused on branding and the website, as well as first-hand usability testing of the website (14 participants).

- Their overarching conclusion: “it is apparent that Giving What We Can’s message comes across well, and the website is both credible and informative. However more needs to be done to ignite people’s interest and create the emotional pull, upon which most charities rely.”
- It was recommended that Giving What We Can adopt a more engaging logo, with a more obvious link to the charity’s values.
- The website should be less cluttered, less wordy, and with a larger number of pictures. It should be more colourful.
- Inconsistencies in tone and style were noted in the writing, which was felt to shift from simplistic to esoteric.

In general, survey-responses in this group conformed to our own feelings about the website. While it is in some respect regrettable that we failed to learn much that we did not already know, it is also valuable to receive confirmation that our intuitions about branding and the website track people’s concerns.

The second group, *KRT*, surveyed 207 students and interviewed 8 with the aim of determining how they react to the core messages of Giving What We Can – the substance, rather than the style.

- Many students felt positively about the idea of giving more to charity, with most judging that donating 10% was not unreasonable.
- Many were more interested in joining through non-Pledge avenues, such as Trying Out Giving.

- Whilst personal attachment to a cause was by far the most significant reason for donating to a particular charity, ease of donation was the second most important. Cost-effectiveness lagged fourth, behind popularity.
    - *KRT* suggest that because individual causes are so important to people, there is a case to be made for offering cost-effectiveness recommendations within sub-areas.
    - They also recommend placing more emphasis on what our recommended charities do, as a means of generating a great sense of interest and identification amongst members and potential members. We are perhaps too inclined to regard the fact that these charities generate the largest number of health-adjusted life-years per $ as ‘all you need to know’.
- The status of the Pledge as a commitment device was seen as a far more compelling reason to join Giving What We Can than making a public statement or participating in a community.
    - *KRT* recommend that issues of commitment should receive more attention in public communications.
    - It should be noted, however, that in interviews *KRT* found that cost-effectiveness was a more compelling factor for interest in Giving What We Can than the Pledge.
- Most had heard of Giving What We Can through word-of-mouth, rather than the media or internet.

- Participants who were initially sceptical showed more interest in joining after having discussed the issues in a one-to-one interview
    - *KRT* suggest that Giving What We Can should place greater emphasis on in-depth one-on-one discussions as a means of gaining new members.

Lessons going forward:

We plan to follow the suggestions delivered by both teams so far as we are able. The idea of using one-on-one discussions to recruit new members is one that we have had in mind for a long time, but have had difficulty implementing, because members are quite reluctant to discuss their membership in Giving What We Can with friends and acquaintances for fear of seeming pushy (see 'Member interviews').

Member Interviews:

It came to our attention that we had a relatively poor understanding of our existing members: their motivations for joining; what they wanted out of the organisation, *etc.* To correct this problem, we conducted interviews in March with a self-selecting group of 19 members, recruited through the monthly newsletter. The key findings were:

- Most needed little convincing in order to join.
    - They felt that it was a good idea almost as soon as they heard about it.
    - Typically, they found out about us through mass media (9/19).
- Although *KRT* recommended using one-on-one conversations to grow membership, the majority of respondents (13/19) did not feel comfortable discussing the Pledge with others.

- Most valued the community aspect of Giving What We Can.
    - Few desired more active involvement, but there was general interest in making greater use of the online forum.
- To the extent that members kept up with the blog, they were primarily interested in posts on charity-evaluation/where to donate.

London Event for Young Professionals:

Giving What We Can is sometimes perceived to be a student group, not without good reason: the modal ‘occupation’ of Giving What We Can members is ‘student’; most of our work is done through universities. We have resolved to make a concerted effort in delivering talks (and other Giving What We Can events more often directed at students) to a broader audience.

To that end, we arranged a talk aimed at young professionals in London on February the 11th at the Stafford Hotel. This was advertised primarily to public sector workers. Overall, the event was a success:

- 21 people attended (as well as 5 Giving What We Can members.
    - 11 expressed interest in attending future events.
    - 8 wished to become involved with Giving What We Can.
    - 4 wanted to discuss taking the Pledge.
- The only downside was the very high cost: £800 (£400 room hire, £280 refreshments, + VAT)

Lessons going forward:

This event was a success that we should aim to replicate, *at lower cost*:

- We aim to host similar events in future, albeit at less expensive venues, using a similar event format.
- A follow-up social event connected to this talk is already planned, as is a follow-up talk focused on cost-effectiveness research.
- We hope to branch out to other cities with local chapters, as well as to broaden the range of companies through which we advertise.

Website:

Forum:

An online forum has existed since the earliest days of Giving What We Can, but has been little used. As part of what we aim to offer is a community of givers, we felt that this was a missed opportunity:

- We have redesigned the forum. Although delayed by 2 months, it finally went online in the middle of May: http://community.givingwhatwecan.org/.
- In an effort to kick-start a vibrant online community, we have encouraged volunteers to make regular contributions to the forum:
    - The research team will use the forum as a means of trying out new ideas and discussing work-in-progress.
    - Fortnightly Giving What We Can updates are now posted as they go out.
    - 32 new posts have been created so far, a significant improvement on the old forum.

Online Joining:

There has been much discussion over whether we should ease the joining process by cutting out letters and envelopes and making the whole process fully-online:

- While some have felt that the existing joining process creates undue hurdles to joining, others have felt that such hurdles may be valuable in ensuring that our members are serious and committed, ensuring low attrition rates and a positive image to outsiders. (We already have sufficient problems getting our existing members to complete the giving review. See below.)

    - The physical act of signing one's name to a piece of paper is also thought to be a powerful commitment device.

- Present plans are to implement a compromise position worked out by Rob Wiblin. This allows members to join online, but requires that they subsequently sign the Pledge. Within the UK, we will trial sending the Pledge with return postage already paid.

Improving Landing Pages:

We are continually trying to make our website more engaging and less academic, at least at typical landing pages.

- In late December, Stephanie Crampin and Tom Greenway together designed a short, text-animation video explaining our message and values in 95 seconds. This video has been featured prominently on the frontpage of the website, as an introduction to Giving What We Can.
- We have updated the figures in our 'How Rich Are You?' calculator and made a number of changes to the appearance and text on this page.
    - Unfortunately, there has been no detectable change as a result in terms of pages viewed per visit or bounce-rate.
- Plans for additional infographics and calculators did not come to fruition.
- The 'Charity Quotations' page is a popular landing page, but plans to improve its appearance and layout were not implemented.

Miscellaneous:

A number of other projects in the plan supplied in December 2012 were deemed too low-value to be worth pursuing, including:

- Online advertising.
- Translation mirror-sites.

In addition, we entirely failed in our initiative to raise our profile through guestblogging: contributing posts to high-profile external blogs. This proved more difficult than we had expected, and initial resistance led to neglect of the project by volunteers.

Operations:

Giving Review:

Giving What We Can aims to conduct regular surveys of its members' giving, with the following aims:

- Ensuring that our members keep the Pledge.
- Gauging how much is given, and to which charities.
- Bolstering the confidence and/or interest of potential donors to Giving What We Can.
- Reminding members of their commitment.
- Assessing our own effectiveness in moving money to the best charities.

Data from the latest giving review covers members' donations in 2011, but was not sent out until the winter of 2012. A new feature of this review is that it allowed respondents the option to confirm that they had kept the Pledge and skip all remaining questions. Although the data to be obtained from these questions is very valuable to us, we hoped to improve the response rate over the previous incarnation. Many have felt, however, that the design of the review obscured how easily it could be completed.

Data from the review was analysed in January. Overall, results indicate that this review failed on numerous points and that considerable work must be done to ensure that future results are able to meet the aims outlined above.

Key results are as follows:

- 124 people completed the review.
    - Of these, only 114 asserted they had kept the Pledge.
    - It is difficult to say to what extent 124 is too few respondents, or even too many.
        - The number of members who have joined at some point prior to end of 2011 is 183, but the number of people who have been members throughout all of 2011 is only 74.
- Based on responses, the total donated by GIVING WHAT WE CAN members was ca. £374,000.
- The total donated to highly effective charities was £217,000 or just 58%.
    - ‘Highly effective charities’ covers AMF, SCI, DWtW, Village Outreach, Stop TB, GiveWell, and CEA.
    - 89 respondents (71%) gave more to highly effective charities than to other causes.
    - 21 respondents (17%) did not donate at all to highly effective charities.
    - In order of decreasing popularity, members also gave to: Oxfam, Doctors Wthout Borders, Unicef, and Wateraid.
- It was felt that too many members offered very little detailed information about how much they had given and to which charities.
- The delayed timing of the review created considerable confusion.
    - It is clear that many respondents were offering answers based on their giving in 2012, rather than 2011.

Overall, the results can hardly be used as a confident demonstration of impact to donors and external assessors.

Lessons going forward:

A number of recommendations were worked out by Adam Casey, Michelle Hutchinson, and Andreas Mogensen in response to the giving review. Some of these have already been actioned. Key recommendations include:

- To encourage participation, we wanted to explain to the Giving What We Can community that the review is extremely important to us, and the results obtained most recently not to standard.
  - This was done via the February newsletter.[3]
- We must not allow a similar lag between the time of the review and the period it covers (not that this was ever intentional).
  - Sadly, we are in the position of playing catch-up: the next review is to go out in June, covering the whole of 2012. Presently, it is on course.
  - The review for 2013 should hopefully go out at year's end.
  - In addition, we have in the works a means for members to report their giving in real-time, similar to the system used by 80k.
- To address the worryingly large number of members donating to less-effective charities, we hope to generate one or more blogposts explaining, via constructive criticism, why we do not recommend donating to these causes.[4]

  - As Oxfam was the most popular less-effective charity supported by our members, 'Why I do not give to Oxfam' is first in line.
  - Any such blogpost will be highlighted in the members' newsletter.

Donor Advised Fund/Charitable Trust:

After registering considerable interest from members, it was resolved that we should create a donation vehicle that would allow members (and others) to pay in, with us disbursing funds in accordance with our latest charity recommendations:

- The hope was to provide new and existing members with an easy and reliable way of ensuring that their donations reach the most effective charities.
  - This would also provide a greater ability to monitor the amount of money moved by Giving What We Can.
- Unfortunately, progress on this issue has been very slow.
- We have now set up a trust with HSBC and are working towards making its donations tax-deductible. We hope to be able to advertise the trust on the website by end of July.

Moving Office:

By February, we had hoped to move to new offices in Littlegate House, sharing space with the Future of Humanity Institute. However, we are still in the office on St. Clements. The projected move hit major delays due negotiations over pricing with the University.

- Office space rented at commercial rates would be prohibitively expensive for us.

- We have therefore applied for a reduced rate in light of our status as a charitable organisation, with close ties to the University and various of its departments and colleges. Our application has received support from the Future of Humanity Institute and the Philosophy Faculty (of which FHI is a division).
- It is currently awaiting final approval, at which point we should be able to move. Estimates of the time required are uncertain.

Recruitment & Internships:

On the 18th of April, Joseph Mitchell was hired as full-time Director of Communications, a post previously filled on a part-time volunteer basis by Stephanie Crampin. Joe has previously worked as a strategist at the UK Government's Central Office of Information and as an intern focused on social media for the UN's Department for Public Information.

The September internship was advertised as planned and is on course:

- We drew over 90 applicants, as compared to 27 last year.
- 24 interns for September have already been confirmed, as compared to 9 last year.
- Accommodation, events, and venues are currently being planned and confirmed.

CEA:USA:

Establishment of a US sister organization for CEA has been delayed in the extreme:

- We had planned to have filed papers with the IRS by now.

- However, CEA:USA has yet to take the first step of incorporating as a registered non-profit in New Jersey.
    - This was due to mistakes involving the relevant papers and difficulty in contacting our designated registered agent, Boris Yakubchik.

Chapters:

New Chapters:

Although we had projected the creation of two new chapters over the previous 6 months, none have been created.

- No suitable candidates were found (one group had its application rejected).
- We have supported the launch of a separate Effective Altruism Meet-up in Denmark.
- We are nurturing a relationship with a potential Parisian chapter.

Chapter Fundraising:

Some chapters have independently moved significant funds to top-ranked charities:

- Giving What We Can:Warwick ran the Big Match, a campaign to match student donations to AMF.
    - Originally aimed to match donations up to £4,000, societies at Warwick added an additional £2,000 to the matching pot. £6,517 has been donated, which will be matched with an additional £6,000. In light of the campaign's success, the Vice Chancellor of Warwick University allocated an additional £5,000 to the next phase of the campaign, beginning in mid June.
- Giving What We Can:Cambridge managed to ensure that 50% of the University's May Ball Charity Fund will go to SCI.
    - Exact figures are not yet certain, but the Fund raised £15,000 last year.

- Giving What We Can:Princeton ran an initiative for student's to pledge 1% of their spending money to cost-effective charities.
    - This raised $3,900 in pledged donations.
    - They also ran a philanthropy fellowship raising $2,000-3,000 for Nyaya Health.
- Giving What We Can:Oxford sold gift certificates in December to support our top-rated charities.
    - These raised approx. £650.

In total, chapter activities have been responsible for approx. £25,000 moved to cost-effective charities, with an additional £10,000 potentially arising from the next round of Giving What We Can:Warwick's Big Match campaign.

Miscellaneous:

A 'best practice' policy has been developed to standardize and optimize chapter events.

- Implementation proved painless, as most chapters were already in compliance.
- This policy is now part of the chapter starter pack.

Chapters have been encouraged to expand their range of events beyond the standard format of talks:

- We have seen an increase in more socially-oriented events, such as film nights and garden parties.

An attempt was made to get chapter volunteers using the on-line task management system Asana.

- Volunteers found the system more onerous than helpful, and the initiative was abandoned.

Funding gaps were assessed, but virtually no chapters requested additional money.

- Chapters were encouraged to send out regularly newsletters, and have begun to do so.

A new resource plan has not been drafted due to difficulty in recruiting a stable resource officer.

Building Links:

Giving What We Can hopes to support the growing effective altruism movement by establishing working relationships with like-minded groups, within and without the CEA-umbrella.

- In April 2013, we established a partnership with AidGrade, an organisation that conducts meta-analyses of poverty-reduction interventions.
    - We have offered advice on cause selection, as well as some technical support.
    - In turn, they will aid us in data analysis and offer access to large data pools. In future, they may also provide connections to the World Bank and JPAL.
- We have been in contact with Oxfam. It is not clear where our relationship with Oxfam is headed, but we been provided access to valuable information about their cause-selection process.
- We are in discussions with the Life You Can Save, with respect to the possibility of establishing a much closer relationship, possibly eventuating in the existence of a single organisation with two brands. See Prospectus for further details.

Miscellaneous:

Live Below the Line:

This year, Giving What We Can once again participated in the Live Below the Line challenge:

- We raised £19, 228, finishing #1 in the teams' leader-board.
  - We expect that many of these donations would have happened in any case, representing Giving What We Can members' donations channelled through the LBtL donation mechanism.
  - Nonetheless, we feel that this event was valuable in raising publicity and energizing the Giving What We Can community.

Middlebury Philanthropy:

Middlebury College in New York ran an interdepartmental course on philanthropy, ethics, and practice, concluding with a class assignment requiring students to give away $100.

- As part of the course, Giving What We Can Vice President Will Crouch and GiveWell's Alexander Berger spoke on behalf of SCI.
- $35,000 of the total 100K was eventually allocated to SCI.

Publishing with OUP:USA:

We have been contacted by OUP on the possibility of publishing an edited volume related to our research. The present aim is for the book to consist of proceedings from a conference on *The Theory and Practice of Effective Altruism*, currently being planned for the summer of 2014. Once a list of speakers/authors and topics has been finalised, we should be in a position to sign a contract.

Deprioritized Projects:

A number of activities proposed in the 6 month plan presented in December were deprioritized and not pursued:

- Improving Giving What We Can's gender balance:
    - Although it remains the case that only 27.2% of Giving What We Can members are female, we have seen the gender balance amongst volunteers effectively right itself without much concerted effort on our behalf.
- Logo redesign.
- Merchandising.

Lessons Going Forward: the Bigger Picture

Overall, we are not too disappointed with our progress over the previous six months, though we recognise that there is significant room for improvement. Although many projects have experienced difficulties and delays, many others have been valuable and successful. In terms of key metrics, we have seen reasonably healthy growth, if slightly below expectations.

At the time of the previous review, two interrelated concerns were raised about Giving What We Can's progress. We use this final section to address these worries.

Firstly, a worry was raised that we are not seeing accelerating growth, despite a substantial increase in the number of volunteer hours, the addition of paid staff, and greater all-round expenditure. In spite of an increased rate in gaining new members, we doubt that this concern has been put to rest.

As has been noted, the absence of accelerated growth need not mean that additional volunteer hours have been ineffective or wasteful: they may have sustained roughly linear growth, which would otherwise not have occurred. We believe that a reasonable degree of confidence should be assigned to this hypothesis. That we are seeing a diminished ability to effect organizational growth via the same old methods receives support from the results of the media push. Interviews with members indicate that most had needed only to hear of the Pledge in order to be motivated to sign up: we haven't had to work to convince them. In light of our previous success, it would not be surprising if we have been capturing people of this kind at a higher rate than new people have been entering into a similar mindset. This should make it harder to sustain the same rate of growth by identifying and attracting potential members. Finally, it would just be surprising if our increased activities had genuinely been useless.

A general lesson may therefore be that we should consider new tactics and new audiences, to supplement our existing repertoire. Otherwise growth will remain linear, or even begin to decelerate. We have already seen a shift to targeting young professionals via our London event. Young professionals will also be identified as a target market in our media strategy. We should also try harder to pursue activities that would convince people who are not immediately inspired by the Pledge: if we are running out of low-hanging fruit, we have to move farther up the tree. Interviews by *KRT* suggest that there is room for conversion in this direction, if only we can do more to capture people's attention and sustain their engagement. We should aim, for example, for media appearances that provide greater opportunity for us to explain our ideas at length: for example, articles that we ourselves author. In our move to work closer to LYCS, we hope to implement a general strategy of gaining members by moving people from the more modest LYCS pledge to the Giving What We Can pledge, perhaps in the form of an incremental escalator of commitment. We have also been led to think again about strategies for gaining new members through one-on-one discussions. While people have difficulty bringing up Giving What We Can -related issues with friends and acquaintances, there may be techniques available to overcome elements of awkwardness or pushiness.

A second, closely related concern raised at the previous external review was that we did not have a good enough idea of which activities are most effective in generating donations to the best charities. If we could identify those activities, we could shift increasing resources thereto and increase growth. Unfortunately, identifying the effectiveness of programs is difficult for Giving What We Can because of the obliquity and delay in the causal chain between events and Pledges, as well as the fact that a large number of activities are ongoing simultaneously. We don't have the freedom to try out isolated projects and assess returns. Evaluating specific activities requires proxies for the ultimate goal of increasing money moved to the best causes. These proxies have to be tailored so as to be able to capture the success of individual programs within the short-term. We have made some progress on this issue, with steps taken to design proxy metrics in areas such as research and chapters. We hope to be able to make greater use of these metrics in the upcoming six months, and to continually monitor programs for efficacy. As a general matter, we aim to decide upon the measures of efficacy that we'll use to assess a project as that project is being planned. See Prospectus for further details.

We can, of course, already make many reasonable inferences about which activities are of high value and which should be prioritized in future. For example, it seems clear that Toby's presidential activities are of very high value, and that we have not done enough to think seriously about how to optimize these activities in light of Toby's time constraints. In terms of generating new members, although the recent media appearance did not quite meet our expectations, it is plausibly responsible for the modest upsurge in members that we have seen. We have also seen a good response to Peter Singer's recent TED talk on effective altruism, at least in terms of web hits and people requesting the Pledge. Keeping up a steady stream of media appearances is thus something we should aim for, taking on board the points made earlier in this section. We've also seen encouraging results from our talk aimed at young professionals, providing a mandate for future pursuit of this market. Questions about the value of certain research activities and Giving What We Can chapters remain, and will be the object of further monitoring in future.

References

[1] S. Dickert, N. Sagara, and P. Slovic "Affective Motivations to Help Others: A Two-Stage Model of Donation Decisions." In D. M. Oppenheimer & C. Y. Olivola, eds. *The Science of Giving: Experimental Approaches to the Study of Charity*, 161-179. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis, 2011.

[2] http://www.ncvo- vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/uk_giving_2012_full_report_1211.pdf

[3] "We'd like to thank everyone who completed the review. The information you volunteer is extremely important to us, as it allows us to measure our own cost-effectiveness as an organisation and provides evidence to potential supporters and funders that we as a community are accomplishing the goals and ideals set out in the Pledge. We're very grateful for your participation. Unfortunately, we feel that the review hasn't produced evidence of the high quality we'd like in order to be able to measure the good we're doing. Regrettably, due to delays here at Giving What We Can HQ, we didn't manage to send out a review of giving in 2011 until late in 2012; we're aware that this created quite a bit of confusion. The next review will appear much sooner."

[4] Cf. GiveWell's post: "Why I didn't give to the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative last year": http://blog.givewell.org/2013/03/07/why-i-didnt-give-to-the-schistosomiasis-control-initiative-last-year/