

Fact Sheet

Making a pledge to give

- *Giving What We Can* is a society of people who care deeply about the suffering caused by global poverty and are prepared to donate a significant fraction of their income to help fight it.
- Toby Ord, 30, is the founder and director of *Giving What We Can*, and is a Postdoctoral Fellow in ethics at Oxford University. He has calculated that he will earn £1.5m over the course of his life and has pledged to donate £1m of that to the most cost-effective charities. On *GWWC's* best estimates, this will save about 500 000 years of healthy life for people in the developing world; a health gain that is on a par with saving 15 000 lives.
- Every member pledges to give at least 10% of their income to the causes they believe to be most cost-effective (known as *the Pledge to Give*).
- *The Pledge to Give*: 'I recognise that I can use part of my income to do a significant amount of good in the developing world. Since I can live well enough on a smaller income, I pledge that from today until the day I retire, I shall give at least ten percent of what I earn to whichever organisations can most effectively use it to fight poverty in the developing world. I make this pledge freely, openly, and without regret.'
- Several members have gone beyond this and pledged to give everything they earn over £20 000/yr (known as *the Further Pledge*).
- It's easy to underestimate one's own wealth, so *Giving What We Can* has created a calculator to work out how rich one is, in global terms. Someone earning £12 000/yr is in the richest 5% of the world's population. Someone earning £24 000/yr is in the richest 1% of the world's population.
- Members include the influential moral and political philosophers Peter Singer and Thomas Pogge.

A focus on effectiveness

- There is significant variability in the effectiveness of aid programs: for example, in a recent study of developing world health interventions, the most effective interventions were about 60 times as effective as the median intervention.
- While other charity evaluators typically focus on percentage administration costs (which are of limited usefulness) GWWC draws on reports by health and development economists in order to find out which interventions reap the greatest health benefits per dollar. Though keeping administration costs low could perhaps improve cost-effectiveness by about 10%, focusing on the right interventions can improve the cost-effectiveness of one's donations by more than a factor of ten.
- The charity that *Giving What We Can* most highly recommends is Schistosomiasis Control Initiative, which treats neglected tropical diseases in sub-Saharan Africa. Because they do not affect developed countries, neglected tropical diseases are little-known and receive little funding. Yet highly effective drug-based treatment for them costs only 50 cents per person (including all administrative costs). GWWC estimates that giving £1000 to this charity will save 450 years of high quality life for people in the developing world; it will also have highly significant educational and economic benefits.
- Other recommended charities are the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, which helps countries fortify foodstuffs with vitamins in order to combat the leading causes of malnutrition, and Stop TB Partnership, which provides a very effective drug-based therapy for tuberculosis.