

A conversation with Michelle Hutchinson and Robert Wiblin on 16 December 2013

Participants

- Michelle Hutchinson—Executive Director, Giving What We Can (GWWC)
- Robert Wiblin—Executive Director, Centre for Effective Altruism (CEA)
- Nick Beckstead—Research Fellow, Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University; Board of Trustees, Centre for Effective Altruism

Summary

Purpose of the call: I organized this call to learn about GWWC's room for more funding, primarily to help a friend who was considering making a donation to GWWC.

Why these people: Michelle runs GWWC. GWWC is a sub-organization in CEA and receives support from CEA, and Rob is the person to ask about that.

GWWC would like to raise £170,000 over the next 12 months, supporting an annual budget of £140,000. This would allow them to keep six months in reserves. Over the last year, GWWC spent about £62,000. They have been growing and they currently spend about £9,000 per month. They raised about £100,000 in the last year and hold £30,000 in reserves.

GWWC has specific people they would like to hire in the near future and would use additional funding to hire them. Additional employees cost about £20,000 per year.

GWWC has some plans for increased monitoring and evaluation in the coming year.

Disclaimer: Nick Beckstead is a trustee for CEA, and GWWC is a sub-organization of CEA.

Pure finance issues

How much did you spend last year?

GWWC's financial year begins in July. From July 2012 to July 2013, GWWC spent about £62,000. GWWC currently spends about £9,000 per month. This figure includes about £3,000 per month from a pot of money that is not restricted to either GWWC or 80,000 Hours, and provides support for both organizations.

How much did you raise last year?

About £100,000.

How much do you have in reserves?

About £30,000.

Are you actively seeking funding right now? How much would like to have?

Yes. GWWC is seeking to raise £170,000 over the next 12 months. They would like to spend about £140,000 over the next year, and raising this much would allow them to do that and have six months of reserves. This would involve raising about £70,000 more than they raised last year.

Funding constraints vs. talent constraints

Are there specific people you would have liked to hire, but couldn't hire because of lack of funds?

Sort of. GWWC had an intern they wanted to make a permanent employee, but they had to delay making the intern a permanent employee due to insufficient funding. The employee agreed to an extended internship and will be hired soon, so this ultimately didn't result in a lost employee.

GWWC has a few people specific people they'd like to hire in the future.

How much does an additional person cost for a year?

About £20,000.

What would you do if you got the amount of money you're looking for?

Plans would be subject to change and involve some guesswork at this point. The current idea is that extra funds beyond the first £100,000 would be spent on upgrading the intern previously mentioned to a full-time staff member, hiring another specific person that GWWC would like to hire, and then having more reserves.

Monitoring and evaluation

How might GWWC's monitoring and evaluation change in the future?

1. GWWC plans to keep more detailed records of how each new person taking the GWWC pledge came to take the pledge. GWWC is increasing the amount of effort it spends on one-on-one contacting, and this kind of activity makes it easier to identify people who joined only because of GWWC's efforts.
2. GWWC doesn't know why some people took the GWWC pledge. They are contacting these people to learn more about why they joined.
3. GWWC is creating software that would allow people to track their donations online. They hope that people will use it to track donations. If they do, this would yield additional information about donations influenced by GWWC.
4. Some people are now using the Giving What We Can Trust to make their donations. GWWC will have more information about where and how much these people give.

Appendix: Questions sent to Michelle and Rob prior to our meeting

Room for more funding issues

1. Pure finance issues
 - a. How much did you spend last year?
 - b. How much did you raise last year?
 - c. How much do you have in reserves?
 - d. Are you actively seeking funding right now? How much would like to have?
2. Funding constraints vs. talent constraints
 - a. Are there specific people you would have liked to hire, but couldn't hire because of lack of funds?
 - b. How much does an additional person cost for a year?
3. What would you do if you got the amount of money you're looking for?
 - a. If no specific amount, what would you do with:
 - i. \$50,000
 - ii. \$150,000
 - iii. \$500,000

Monitoring and evaluation

How might GWWC's monitoring and evaluation change in the future?