

Policy Plan

October 2015

Activities and goals

The Effective Altruism Foundation (EAF) is an independent think-and-do-tank for effective altruism founded by a young, interdisciplinary team with an entrepreneurial mindset. We aim to improve the wellbeing of all sentient beings as much as possible, and use science and rationality to reach this goal as cost-effectively as possible.

The current main focus of our projects and papers lies on the following areas:

- Evidence-based, cost-effective poverty reduction
- Animal welfare, with a focus on factory farming
- Opportunities and risks of emerging technologies, in particular artificial intelligence
- Effective altruism outreach in the German-speaking area

EAF continues projects initiated by its two precedent organisations, **GBS Switzerland** and **Effective Altruism Switzerland**. The latter two organisations have been established in 2013 by the same people that are working for EAF. To make use of synergies and position oneself more clearly as one entity, the two organisations merged to found EAF in 2015.

More specifically, the following are EAF's core activities:

1. **Educate the public about the scientific research on charity effectiveness:**

Research in health economics has shown that charities' direct impact may differ by a factor of 100 or even 1000. EAF makes these findings available to a broader audience both at home and abroad. It is also currently working on a paper on evidence-based development cooperation.

EAF identifies with the philosophy and social movement of effective altruism. That is, the idea of using science and rational decision-making to helping as many people in need as possible. EAF conducts effective altruism outreach activities in order to get more people join the movement and start giving to effective charities and working on pressing social issues. To this end, EAF creates content on blogs and on social media, hosts public talks and runs chapters at several universities. Further, EAF has created a network (previously named "Effective Altruism Switzerland") of people committed to improving the world as much as possible. For members of this network, EAF organises workshops and talks on topics related to effective altruism.

2. **Raise funds for highly effective charities:**

EAF aims to raise money from donors for the most cost-effective charities. Selection of supported charities is informed by scientific research and most up to date evidence. Within this focus area, EAF has launched two projects: Raising for Effective Giving (REG) and DFS Charity.

REG is a meta charity for poker players interested in having a positive impact on the world by donating a substantial fraction of their winnings to the most effective charities. The goal of REG is to promote the idea of effective giving in the poker

community and beyond. Since its launch in mid-2014, REG has managed to raise more than \$750,000 for effective charities and acquire almost 200 professional poker players as members. For more information on REG, please visit <http://reg-charity.org/>.

With DFS Charity, EAF has recently transferred the concept behind REG to the field of Daily Fantasy Sports. This project is still in the development stages. For a first impression, please visit <http://www.dfscharity.org/>.

3. Promote more sustainable and animal-friendly nutrition:

Nutrition has been identified as one of the top causes of anthropogenic climate change, and is furthermore connected to world hunger and public health issues. Also, many non-human animals with the ability to have sentient experience suffer massively from poor conditions under factory farming.

EAF promotes a more sustainable and animal-friendly diet rich in plant-based foods. The foundation has elaborated a paper on sustainable nutrition and informs the public about the effects of nutrition on climate change and animal welfare. Moreover, EAF promotes effective animal charities that are proven to use funds effectively to relieve animal suffering.

4. Conduct research on the benefits and risks of emerging technologies:

Artificial intelligence (AI) and complex algorithms increasingly influence our many aspects of our daily lives. Mainly due to improvements in computer hardware, many AI algorithms have already achieved superhuman performance in many fields. With processes of machine learning and continuous self-optimisation of artificial algorithms come both great possible benefits and risks for humanity.

EAF seeks to both highlight the importance of this subject and work towards AI safety. It conducts research on how best to prevent dystopian scenarios for the world and has published a paper on AI, co-authored with German philosopher Prof. Thomas Metzinger.

For more information, please see effectivealtruismfoundation.org/transparency.

Allocation of funds

Funds are used according to the decision by the Board of Trustees, taking into account the wishes stated by donors (earmarking). In 2014, funds were distributed as follows among the projects: 6% or CHF 47,812 for Raising for Effective Giving (REG), 14% or CHF 112,524 for Sentience Politics, 4% or CHF 29,204 for research activities, 14% or CHF 110,894 for Movement Building & Operations, and CHF 494,935 or 62% for grants to highly cost-effective and transparent charities.

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Funding sources

The main sources of income are donations, almost exclusively from private individuals as opposed to companies or charitable foundations and trusts. While a considerable share of donors are based in Switzerland, EAF receives contributions from international donors as

well. Donations come in two forms, either unrestricted or restricted, with both categories making up about half of the total incoming donations.

One of EAF's projects explicitly targets fundraising, both for the foundation itself but mainly for other cost-effective charities. "Raising for Effective Giving" (REG charity) raises funds within the community of professional tournament poker. EAF may transfer the concept behind REG to other industries in the future in order to enhance its fundraising efforts.

Another major source of funding is the international effective altruism movement. Members of this movement support EAF projects with regular major donations. This funding supports EAF's activities aimed at growing the movement as well as projects that directly fight poverty or reduce animal suffering.

EAF periodically organises conferences and events related to its projects. These events generate income in the form of participation fees. The amounts raised this way account for about 1% of total income, however.

Grants have played a minor role in financing EAF activities in the past. However, they might become a more important source of funding in the future as EAF expands.

Capital policy

Additional donations to the Foundation by the founder or any other person are possible at any time. The Board of Trustees aims to augment the Foundation's assets through private or public donations. The Foundation's assets are not allowed to be risked through speculative trading, however they also do not have to be invested in gilt-edged assets.

In the past, the Foundation's asset have always been kept in current accounts.