

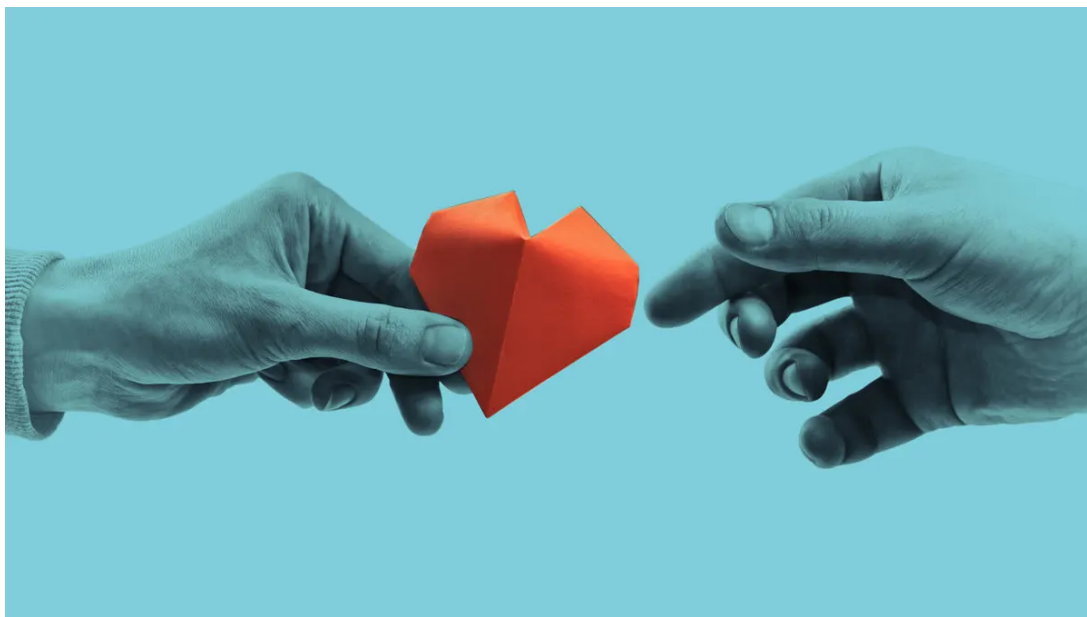
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Best Alternative Charities for Your Donations

How to find lesser-known organizations that target specific causes you care about

By Penelope Wang
December 12, 2019



You can always give money to a big, high-profile charity that embraces a number of different missions. But what if you want to find a smaller, lesser-known organization that focuses solely on a cause you care about?

There are a growing number of online resources that can help you identify reputable charities where your donations may go further in supporting your cause. We provide a list



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“Donors are increasingly interested in effective altruism—they want their dollars to make the most difference in the areas they care about,” says Una Osili, associate dean for research and international programs at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

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Say you want to help provide shelter for the homeless in your town. If you give \$50 to one organization, it might be able to give three people shelter for one night. But another homeless group that is more efficiently administered might



Information about a charity's impact and effectiveness at achieving its goals is still limited. But in recent years, several charity evaluators have begun to conduct that research and provide free effectiveness ratings.

Their recommendations often highlight local nonprofit groups and those working on targeted missions overseas, which may enable you to direct your dollars to the specific causes you care most about.

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Rating a Charity's Impact

All three of the major evaluators review the charity's financial data, such as its budgets, tax returns, and annual reports. In addition, they may gather government and academic data, interview the group's staff and clients, and conduct on-site visits.

GiveWell, for example, builds a select list of top-rated charities based in part on findings from independent academic studies. Currently, GiveWell's top-rated list focuses mainly on nonprofits that operate in regions of extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and India.

"We look for places where our dollars will go farthest, which tends to be in the poorest areas of the world," says



GlobalGiving provides a platform and tools to hundreds of small and startup charities, both in the U.S. and overseas. The organization also partners with nearly 200 corporate giving programs.

To qualify as a top-ranked charity on GlobalGiving's website, the group must provide consistent financial data and proof of social impact, says Michael Gale, director of programs at GlobalGiving. You can search for vetted charities by going to the Explore Project page and filtering by "recognition."

The newest charity evaluator, ImpactMatters, launched in November with evaluations of more than 1,000 charities. The statements for each of the rated charities describe the impact per dollar contributed.

For example, a donation of \$1 to Water for Good provides clean drinking water to one person in the Central African Republic for one year, according to ImpactMatters.

Granted, these effectiveness evaluations are far from perfect. Much of the data comes from the organizations themselves, which may be biased or incomplete, and for new or smaller charities, there may be little independent information available. (To find the top-rated established charities, you can check the major charity watchdogs, including BBB Wise Giving Alliance, Charity Navigator, and CharityWatch.)

Further, there's no guarantee that an organization will be as efficient with your donation as it has been with previous contributions. "It's a tough life being a nonprofit in the U.S.



Still, these ratings offer more insight into the effectiveness of the charities than financial data alone provides, Osili says.

The table of charities below provides a sample of the recommendations from these evaluators. Consider one or more when making your charitable donations, or look for more giving options at the ratings websites.

Some of the Most Effective Charities

If you're reading this article on your smartphone, we recommend that you rotate it to landscape mode to view the table below better.

Highly Rated Charities

CAUSE	CHARITY	MISSION
Child/Family Assistance	<u>Chef Ann Foundation</u>	Helps U.S. schools provid healthier lunches
	<u>Jake's Diapers</u>	Provides diapers in the U.S. and overseas
Environment	<u>Eden Reforestation Projects</u>	Hires local villagers in developing



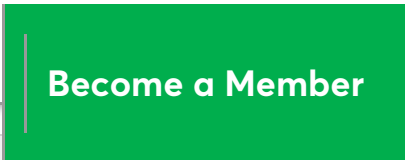
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	<u>High Atlas Foundation</u>	Helps develop environmental sustainable agriculture in Morocco
Healthcare	<u>Evidence Action/Deworm the World Initiative</u>	Works with government to bring deworming treatment directly to overseas schools
	<u>Malaria Consortium/Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention Program</u>	Prevents and treats malaria in Africa and Asia
	<u>Sightsavers</u>	Protects eyesight and promotes disability rights overseas
Poverty Relief	<u>GiveDirectly</u>	Provides cash transfers to the extreme poor in developing countries
	<u>TechnoServe</u>	Helps farmers and small businesses overseas



1. Some charities may be recommended by more than one rating group.