

High-impact giving in a nutshell

How to make a real difference with your donation

The world is full of tough problems, from climate change to inequality and diseases. Charitable giving is a powerful way to make a difference. But with so many charities out there, **how do you know where your donation will do the most good?**

Here are **five tips** to make sure **your giving achieves as much as possible**:

- 1 Choose a cause that is **large in scale, neglected and solvable**.
- 2 Consult an **impact-focused charity evaluator** to give to rigorously assessed charities.
- 3 Consider **giving outside the US** to help those whose need is the greatest.
- 4 **Go beyond disaster relief** and give to less publicized causes.
- 5 **Diversify your giving** across expert-recommended charities and those close to your heart.

Where to give for maximum impact in 2024

→ Do you want to help children in extreme need?



[Donate >](#)

Over **1,100 children die from malaria daily**, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. The **Against Malaria Foundation** combats this by distributing **insecticide-treated bed nets**. To date, they've delivered 250 million nets, protecting over 500 million people.

The Against Malaria Foundation has been rigorously studied by GiveWell and is recognized as **one of the most effective charities helping children**.



[Donate >](#)

Each year, **700,000 children under five** die from preventable diseases like tetanus and measles. In Nigeria, where vaccination rates are among the lowest, **New Incentives** offers **small cash incentives to parents, encouraging them to get their children immunized**.

New Incentives has been extensively vetted by GiveWell and is recognized as **one of the most effective charities helping children**.

→ Do you want to combat climate change?



Donate >

Fossil fuels drive climate change and pollution. **Clean Air Task Force** promotes solutions like **carbon capture and next-gen renewable energy**. They have an **outstanding track record**, including helping \$125 billion in federal funding for climate technology and working with big tech to use renewable energy.

Clean Air Task Force has been **rigorously vetted by Giving Green**.

→ Do you want to help animals?



Donate >

Over **80 billion animals are raised for food** each year, most of them in factory farms. **The Humane League** works with companies like McDonald's, Subway, and KFC to **improve animal welfare, particularly for chickens**, which make up 99% of US farmed animals.

The Humane League is **rated by Animal Charity Evaluators** as **one of the most effective organizations fighting for animals**.

→ What does \$500 donated to our recommended charities achieve?



250 people protected from malaria for 2 years



23 families incentivized to vaccinate their child



500 tons of CO₂ avoided



588 hens saved from cages

Do you want more personalized guidance?

We'd love to talk to you! [Schedule a call](#) or contact us at fernando@ellisimpact.org to **receive tailored charity recommendations** aligned with your interests and values, backed by our network of world-class research organizations and charity evaluators.

We are a non-profit, so **our advice is 100% free**, we don't take a cut from your donation, and there's no obligation to donate.

Happy holidays and happy giving!
Fernando & Helene, Co-founders of Ellis Impact



How to give so it really matters

The world faces countless problems: climate change, poverty and inequality, war, animal suffering, just to name a few. If you're reading this, chances are **you want to help tackle the world's problems** and see a world free from suffering and full of opportunities for people to flourish.

Charitable giving is one of the most powerful ways to achieve that vision. But here's the challenge: while our desire to help is strong, it can sometimes cloud the decisions that would allow us to help the most. **That's where high-impact giving comes in.**



Think about how we approach other important financial decisions. When we make a purchase, we compare options to find the best value. When we invest, we look for the highest returns. Yet, when it comes to charity, **we often don't apply the same level of care**, even though the stakes are high. After all, the lives and well-being of others are on the line. So **asking, "Where can my money do the most good?" ensures your donation creates actual impact.**

Some charities are **vastly more effective** than others.

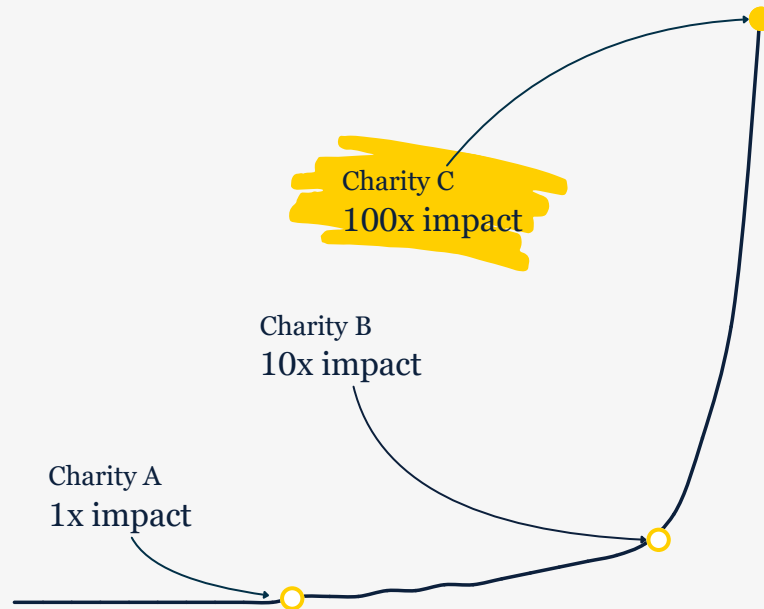
Most people think of all charities as equal players in a big "doing good" bucket. But the truth is, **the impact of different charities can vary enormously.** If our goal is to make the biggest difference possible, we need to focus on charities that make the most of our giving.

We might assume that our instincts or passions will guide us to the best charities. After all, won't we just feel where our money is needed most? Unfortunately, this isn't always the case. **Charities often have compelling stories, polished marketing, and inspiring missions, but this doesn't necessarily mean they're making a real, measurable difference.** In some cases, they might even cause harm despite their best intentions.



Read the story of [PlayPumps](#), a water initiative that failed despite its innovative idea.

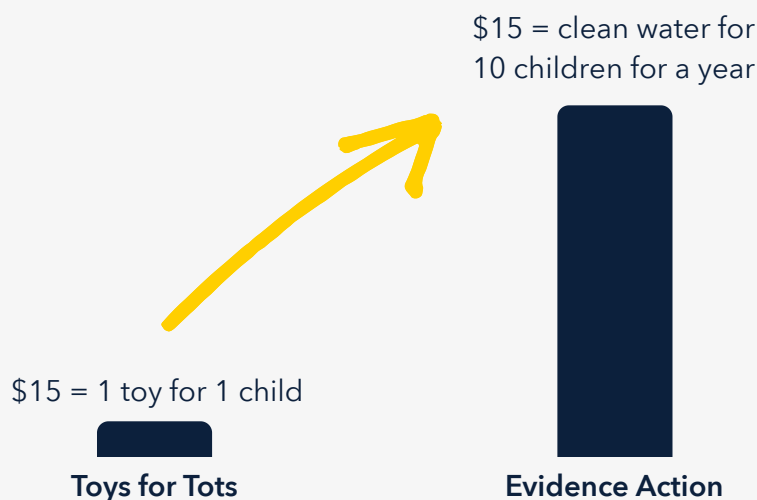
According to many experts in global poverty, health and international development, **the very best charities are 100 times more effective than the average**. That means that while an average charity might save two lives with \$1,000,000, the very best charities can save 200 lives for the same amount.



A real-world example: **Toys for Tots versus Evidence Action's Safe Water Program**. In 2022, Toys for Tots spent nearly \$360 million in 2022 to provide toys to 9.9 million children at **\$15 per toy** on average. While giving a toy to a child during the holidays is a kind gesture, **what else could that \$15 do instead?**

Globally, **2 billion people lack access to safe drinking water**, a problem that leads to one million preventable deaths each year—many of them children under five. Evidence Action's Safe Water Now program can provide **clean water to someone in need for just \$1.50 per year**.

So for the same \$15 that provides a single toy, you could provide **clean water to ten children for an entire year**.

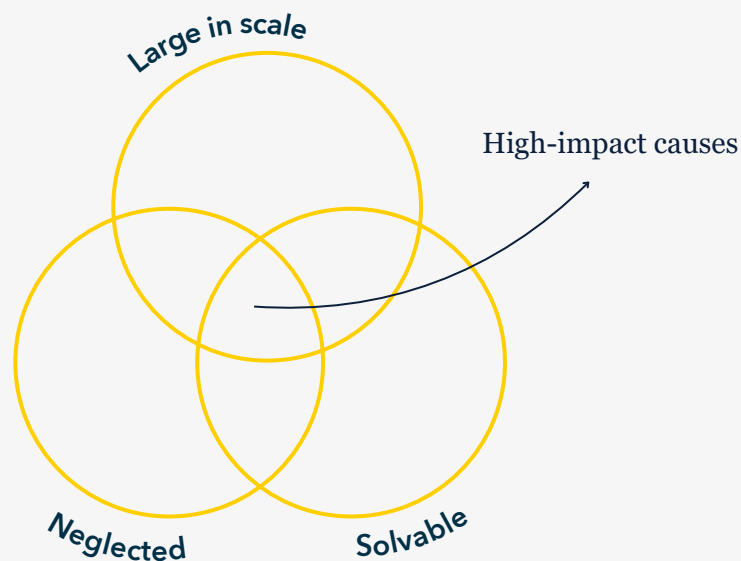


Five tips to optimize your giving for impact

1 Choose a high-impact cause

No matter our resources, we can't support every worthy cause. This means we have to make **thoughtful decisions about which causes to give to.**

But how do we determine **which causes have the highest impact?** Reasonable people can disagree on what the world's priorities should be, and that's okay. However, a useful guideline for choosing impactful causes is to focus on areas that are:



Large in scale

Some problems affect dozens of individuals and others affect millions. Some present a minor inconvenience whereas others can be lethal. **The larger the scale of a problem, the better it is when we solve it.**

Neglected

Some causes receive far less funding or attention relative to their scale. By directing your resources to underfunded areas, you can address issues where your contribution will make a bigger difference, often by solving **"low-hanging fruit" problems** that are particularly easy or cheap.

Solvable

This refers to causes where progress is realistically achievable. The **most impactful causes have clear, evidence-based solutions** or opportunities for improvement.

2 Consult an impact-focused charity evaluator

Once you've chosen a cause, the next step is finding a charity that's truly effective at making progress on it. However, **identifying high-impact charities can be challenging and not always easy to do on your own.**

Whether a charity is highly impactful is determined by factors like reliance on evidence, cost-effectiveness, transparency, room for funding, and a proven track record. Given the complexities of this evaluation process, an efficient way to maximize your impact is by **turning to expert charity evaluators.**

They **spend tens of thousands of hours each year on research and analysis** to identify charities that deliver outstanding results. The charities they recommend are some of the **most well-studied, rigorously vetted, and effective charities in the world**, so you can be sure your money achieves what you want it to achieve.

Supporting children
in extreme need

**Give
Well**

Helping animals



Combating
climate change



3 Consider giving outside the US

If you're looking to maximize the impact of your donation, **giving to charities that work in low-income countries is one of the most effective choices you can make.** While the US and other developed nations still have pockets of extreme poverty, it's much rarer and more difficult to address effectively compared to the challenges faced in developing countries.



Living in extreme poverty means **living on less than \$2.15 per day** –and that number is already adjusted for the fact that goods and services are vastly cheaper in low-income countries.



The poorest Americans, despite their hardships, often have access to healthcare, education, and social safety nets that are far superior to what's available in low-income countries. While giving to local charities is commendable and can feel like the right thing to do, if your goal is to make the biggest difference possible, your donations should **target the places where needs are greatest**. Whether it's preventing illness, improving nutrition, or increasing access to education, **your contribution can have a much larger impact when directed toward areas of extreme need**.



Read more on [GiveWell's evaluation of highly effective US-based charities](#), such as [KIPP charter schools](#), and how they compare to charities in low-income countries.

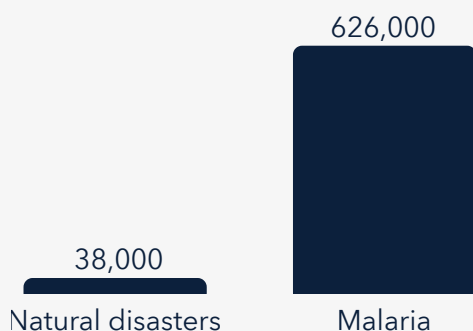
4 Go beyond disaster relief

In the aftermath of hurricanes like Helene and Milton, many people feel a strong urge to donate to disaster relief efforts. While this generosity is admirable, it's important to **take a step back and consider where donations can have the greatest long-term impact**.

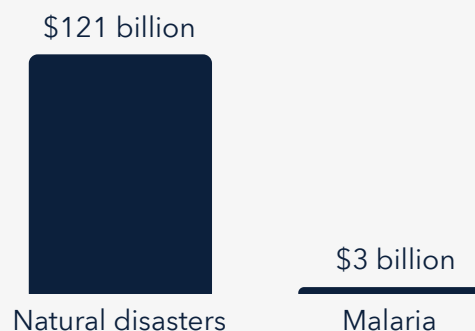
Research, including a [World Bank report](#), shows that **disaster relief is often not the most cost-effective form of aid**. The window for life-saving emergency interventions—such as search-and-rescue or emergency medical care—often closes within days or weeks. Once this window passes, efforts shift toward rebuilding infrastructure, which is typically less urgent and more costly.

Rather than focusing on highly publicized disasters, **consider giving to underfunded global crises that are less visible**. Every day, over 1,100 children die from malaria, and 1,000 die of diarrhea—issues that receive far less media attention but can be tackled with highly cost-effective and proven interventions.

People killed by natural disasters
vs. malaria in 2020



Giving to natural disasters
vs. malaria in 2020



Data sources: [ourworldindata.org](#) | [disasterphilanthropy.candid.org](#) | [globalfund.org](#)

5 Diversify your giving

Many people already have favorite charities or causes that are close to their hearts, and that's a great thing! **Giving doesn't have to be an either-or decision**—you don't have to choose between supporting a cause you're personally connected to and donating to the most effective global charities. **You can do both by diversifying your giving.**

Our 2024 giving recommendations

Our recommended charities for 2024 have been rigorously evaluated by some of the best-in-class charity evaluators. They are **some of the most effective charities, achieving outstanding results for every dollar donated.**

Protect children
from malaria



Donate >

Immunize children
against diseases



Donate >

Combat
climate change



Donate >

Get chickens
out of cages



Donate >

Do you want more personalized guidance?

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