

Guidelines for "general support" provided by GiveWell to other organizations with mission overlap

Plain language summary:

Because GiveWell believes that its relationship with Good Ventures is important and that Good Ventures's general mission has significant overlap with GiveWell's, GiveWell staff may work on Good Ventures' priorities (that are not themselves GiveWell priorities) up to 20 person-hours per week, of which 10 person-hours may be co-Executive Director time.

So far, hours spent have been well below this threshold; counted conservatively, GiveWell co-Executive Directors spent 80 total hours on Good Ventures General support in 2013.

GiveWell anticipates that in the future, there may be more funders that it makes sense to provide some general support to. GiveWell anticipates that it will follow similar guidelines with any such funders, though the specific target hours might change.

Approved by vote of GiveWell's Board of Directors on March 8, 2013

GiveWell believes that its relationship with Good Ventures is important and that Good Ventures's general mission has significant overlap with GiveWell's. For both of these reasons, GiveWell believes that providing "general support" to Good Ventures (i.e., helping Good Ventures with its own to-do list even where this list does not overlap with GiveWell's) has value for GiveWell's mission. We believe that this form of support is included in GiveWell's charitable purpose, which is defined in our Certificate of Incorporation as "A charitable foundation that will build and share a centralized, thorough collection of information on non-profit entities and identify, promote, and financially support those that can most effectively translate funding from the public at large into public benefit."

For the time being, GiveWell is willing to spend up to 20 total person-hours per week on general support, of which up to 10 person-hours per week may be Co-Executive Director time. (Note that these are targets for *average* person-hours per week; person-hours in a *given* week may exceed the targets.) GiveWell will carefully track which of its person-hours are spent on general support to Good Ventures, and will revisit this matter if it finds that the figures are consistently or significantly exceeding these targets.

GiveWell anticipates that in the future, there may be more funders that it makes sense to provide some general support to. GiveWell anticipates that it will follow similar guidelines with any such funders. The "target person-hour allocations" (the amounts we're aiming not to exceed) could change over time and depending on the situation, but we will make sure that our targets for *total* person-hours spent on general support for other funders remain a reasonable proportion of our overall person-hours, leaving us plenty of capacity to pursue other priorities. Until declared otherwise by an act of the

Board, "reasonable" refers to the target set above: up to 20 total person-hours per week on general support, of which up to 10 person-hours per week may be Co-Executive Director time.

GiveWell will work with other funders depending on:

- **Value of the relationship** - what the organization can/will do to help GiveWell directly, in terms of operating support, "money moved," networking, etc.
- **Independent impact of the organization receiving general support** - (a) how powerful/influential the organization is or will be; (b) how aligned its mission is with ours.

General support vs. strategic overlap

For purposes of targeting, it's important to distinguish between spending time on "general support to Good Ventures [or other funders]" and spending time on "strategic overlap." The latter refers to activities that would be high priorities for GiveWell even aside from any considerations of building relationships or building general capacity for other organizations such as Good Ventures. "Strategic overlap" activities aren't subject to the targets above, regardless of whether they involve assisting/working closely with another organization.

To help make the distinction clear, we provide a few examples from 2012:

- Good Ventures was interested in evaluating a grantee. GiveWell would not have assigned a high priority to investigating this organization in the absence of Good Ventures. However, GiveWell did seek to build its general understanding of policy advocacy (the field in which this grantee works) and believed the best way to start doing so was to recruit part-time contractors with more policy experience than GiveWell's current staff and work with them to evaluate some policy advocacy organization. Good Ventures's access to the grantee, and its capacity for hiring and managing such contractors, were useful for this purpose. In 2012, GiveWell helped Good Ventures to identify and evaluate such contractors, and we consider this **strategic overlap**. However, in 2013, we have reformulated our plan for building our understanding of policy advocacy, to the point where this particular investigation is less crucial, and we will be classifying any further work on this project going forward as **general support**.
- GiveWell offered to help evaluate candidates that Good Ventures has sourced as potential employees. The main purpose is to build Good Ventures's general capacity. Time spent interviewing these candidates would be **general support**.
- Good Ventures was interested in making a grant that did not fit within GiveWell's agenda. GiveWell helped Good Ventures investigate, decide on and write up the grant. This is an example of **general support**.
- GiveWell assigned an employee to transcribe the audio of a Board meeting, so that Good Ventures could more easily determine what confidential information needed to be redacted from the public version. We would do this for any Board

member, in line with our goal of allowing Board members to speak freely. We consider this **strategic overlap**.

- The President of Good Ventures spoke at a gathering of major philanthropists, and GiveWell helped prepare for this. We believe that this work furthered the general goal of promoting certain core values of GiveWell (impact-oriented giving; strategic cause selection), but a major consideration in helping with this was to increase Good Ventures's overall capacity. We consider this a borderline case, but would count it as **general support**.
- GiveWell has provided some support in recommending foundations for Good Ventures to engage with. It has also provided some support on co-funding (by offering advice to Good Ventures on which projects proposed by other foundations to participate in financially). Learning more in general about major foundations, particularly through co-funding, would be a very high priority for us if we had the resources and access to do so, so we consider all of this work **strategic overlap**.
- Good Ventures required assistance creating content for and editing content for its website. GiveWell Research Analysts conducted this work. We believe that this work furthered the general goal of increasing transparency among foundations in addition to highlighting GiveWell's work; nonetheless, we classify this as **general support**.