

Attachment B - GiveWell Values

Draft for Board feedback

BACKGROUND

We plan to double the size of staff and we want to maintain / enhance what's best about GW in that process. A mechanism for reinforcing GW's strengths is defining and articulating our core values.

This means not only communicating what our values are, but also sharing how those values shape our work, our work decisions, our internal work relations, and our manner of engaging with other people, ideas, and organizations. Essentially, our values should be strong influences on our decisions and conduct throughout our work here at GiveWell.

What we want this list to be

A rigorously winnowed list of only those values that are truly essential and decisive to our work and work relations, and that distinguish us from other organizations.

What we don't want this list to be

An exhaustive list of every positive attribute GiveWell possesses or acts on. There will be many Values and strong principles that influence or motivate our work that nonetheless do not make our list.

How To Read This Document

1. Value - this is the headline principle.
2. Practical Applications - The practical applications are as if not more important than the headline value. This section provides tangible examples of how where this value intersects with our work and how we expect to implement each value.

Value 1	Maximize Global Health and Human Wellbeing (i.e. Impact)
<p>Practical Applications</p> <p>(How do we practice/action this value?)</p>	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treat people as equally important regardless of where they are; considers the big picture over local immediacy; - If ideas or values are in conflict, optimize for GiveWell's impact/beneficiary interests rather than individual careers, donor interests, etc. - Make decisions to maximize ROI with available resources - Prioritize long-term/overall wellness over immediate gain - Prioritize actions that are useful to human wellbeing over those that are prestigious - Individually, do the work that most benefits GiveWell's purpose and mission, even if this at times requires a scope change - [something about At times being satisfied with the really good, not the perfect answer] - <i>We make decisions that are bad for GW but good for the world.</i>

Value 2	Truth-Seeking
<p>Practical Applications</p> <p>(What does this mean in practice? How do we practice/action this value?)</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remain open minded and motivated by a desire to explore, investigate, and learn - Be proactive - Ask tough questions; encourage others to ask tough questions, including of us - Consider ways in which a path or decision might be wrong and admit when we are wrong - Learn from mistakes - Update our beliefs in response to new information - Use reason and evidence to make decisions rather than hierarchy/precedent - Embrace rigor - Be willing to engage in challenging, difficult, or uncomfortable conversations - Recognize what we don't know; when others may do something better, help them do it or ask for their help - Be humble

<p>Value 3</p>	<p>Be considerate</p> <p>(What we call this value is still being debated. Alternatives being debated include: Humility, Respect, Empathy, Compassion, Caring)</p>
<p>Practical Applications</p> <p>(What does this mean in practice? How do we practice/action this value?)</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider the impacts on individuals on staff, grantee organizations, and beneficiaries when making decisions without relying solely on aggregate effects to make decisions - Remember that our fact finding and rationalism are motivated by our deep desire to help others - Treat each other and our partners and counterparts with equal respect - Optimize for collaboratively getting the best answer rather than taking credit for an outcome - Agree and/or disagree respectfully

<p>Value 4</p>	<p>Transparency</p>
<p>Practical Applications</p> <p>(What does this mean in practice? How do we practice/action this value?)</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internally, provide candid feedback and be receptive to feedback - Engage openly with charities/potential grantees about our process and assessments - Solicit independent feedback on our work - Share fulsomely with donors/other audiences about our work (including failures and challenges) - Seek to communicate explicitly (rather than implicitly) - Communicate clearly about what we know and what we don't know, what the sources for our beliefs are, and what would cause us to change our minds - Acknowledge minority, alternative, or dissenting opinions

How These Values Interact

A very very modest list of ways these values might interact in practice:

- We provide candid feedback, but that feedback needs to be productive/constructive and also presented in a way that is honest but considerate (so it can be heard/absorbed)
- We are going to be as transparent as possible, but if maximal global good requires less than maximal transparency, we might do that

- If a donor wants to do something that is more for their benefit than the beneficiary benefit, we would not be in favor/would encourage a different course of action OR if the opportunity costs outweigh the expected benefits we would not pursue
- We will be open to critical feedback on our work as individuals and an organization and engage with our critics (productively, when appropriate) to achieve a better outcome