

A conversation with Amy Steets on May 24, 2013

Participants

- Amy Steets – Senior Program Manager, Vitamin Angels
- Timothy Telleen-Lawton – Research Analyst, GiveWell

Note: This set of notes was compiled by GiveWell and gives an overview of the major points made by Amy Steets.

Summary

GiveWell spoke with Amy Steets to see whether Vitamin Angels had any interest in applying for a GiveWell recommendation. The main subject of discussion was Vitamin Angels' resources and activities, as well as background on GiveWell, not included here.

Vitamin Angels' resources

Vitamin Angels gets most of its funding from corporations. Corporations generally give to Vitamin Angels as part of their marketing efforts, rather than through philanthropic arms. Some cash gifts go toward purchasing vitamin A; hardly any vitamin A supplements are gifts in kind. Some corporations have given multi-vitamins in kind, manufacturing them to Vitamin Angels' specific formulation and specifications (<https://www.vitaminangels.org/vitamin-specifications>), which are consistent with those set by the WHO and UNICEF - with the intent of ensuring its safety and efficacy.

Vitamin Angels' activities

Vitamin Angels purchases vitamin A supplements and repackages them for distribution in developing countries. Vitamin Angels distributes the supplements via a network of over 200 local, indigenous non-profits. These non-profits work in areas that don't have access to facility-based health care. In addition to gifting the supplements, Vitamin Angels provides training and support to the local non-profits for their distribution programs.

The goal is to reach 30 million children this year (29.5 million with vitamin A supplements, 0.5 million with multi-vitamins). One of the most pressing obstacles preventing Vitamin Angels from reaching more children is finding more non-profits to distribute supplements. This requires finding non-profits in areas that don't have access to facility-based health care. Ms. Steets oversees a team of three program managers and two international consultants whose job it is to find and screen appropriate local non-profits.

All GiveWell conversations are available at <http://www.givewell.org/conversations>