Consent

Welcome to our study on social issues

Thank you for your interest in helping us with this study. Your participation will consist of a simple online questionnaire and should take approximately 7-10 minutes**.** Do not hesitate to ask any questions or mention concerns about the study either before, during, or after your participation by emailing lucius.caviola@psy.ox.ac.uk.

Before you begin, **please read the following information to confirm you are happy to take part**. Reading it is a requirement by the university.

1. I have read and understood the above participant information. I have had opportunity to ask questions about the study, and if I have, I have received satisfactory answers to these questions.
2. I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to leave the study at any time, without giving any reason, without penalty.
4. I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by authorised individuals from the University of Oxford where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I permit these individuals access to my research records.
5. I agree to results of this research study being reported in student dissertations, peer-reviewed journals, or at scientific meetings, but I know that I will not be named or identified in these publications.
6. I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee (reference number R56657/RE001).
7. I confirm I am over 18 years of age.
8. I agree to take part in this study.

If you agree with all above points, please continue.

This study has been used in a survey on Mechanical Turk. We want to compare the responses to that survey with responses of effective altruists. Thus, please keep in mind that the questions are worded in a simplified way for lay people to understand.

Please don't participate twice. If you have questions or inputs, please contact me at lucius.caviola@psy.ox.ac.uk. Thanks!

Manipulation info

You will be presented with six short questions and hypothetical tasks about charitable giving. All tasks involve a choice between two donation options (e.g., two charities). When deciding between the options, imagine that you have $1,000 to give away, and that you can only choose one of them.

For each task, we will ask you the following question:
Of the two donation options, which would you personally donate the $1,000 to? There is no right and wrong answer. Respond as honestly as possible - please indicate the option you would choose in real life.

For each task, we will ask you the following question:
Of the two donation options, which do you think is likely to save more lives with your $1,000 donation? Please estimate carefully and as accurately as you can which option is likely to save more lives with your money.

Please read all the text and the questions very carefully. There will be questions designed to check how carefully you read the texts. **If you give incorrect answers to these questions, you will get excluded from the study.**

Disaster relief

Consider the following two charities:

Charity A
Yesterday Mexico was struck by a powerful earthquake. Critical medical infrastructure was destroyed, leaving many residents without medicine. Charity A distributes medicines to people affected by this catastrophe.

Charity B
Charity B focuses on recurring health problems in Africa such as neglected tropical diseases and parasitic worms. Charity B distributes medicines to people affected by these issues.

Before you respond, consider the following:

Donating to disaster relief is typically not a very effective way to help people. This is because disasters tend to get lots of attention from the media, so there are already plenty of other people willing to help these victims. Choosing instead to donate to reduce recurring health problems, such as neglected tropical diseases in Africa, is generally more effective. **Therefore, Charity B will likely save more lives with your donation**.

${e://Field/q}

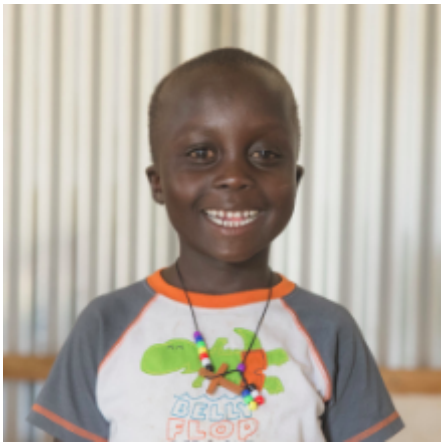
Definitely Charity A (1)	(2)	(3)	Unsure (4)	(5)	(6)	Definitely Charity B (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Identifiable victim

Consider the following two charities:

Charity A

This is Benge. He is seven years old and lives in Kenya. When he grows up, he wants to become a teacher. Benge contracted HIV and needs to be flown to Europe to be treated in a hospital. Donating to Charity A will help save Benge's life and give him a bright future.



Charity B

Charity B distributes bed nets in Kenya to protect children against malaria-carrying mosquitos. Donating to Charity B will allow for the distribution of such bed nets in the

areas that are most affected by malaria-carrying mosquitos.

Before you respond, consider the following:

Scientists have shown that distributing bed nets is one of the most cost effective ways to help people at risk of malaria. By contrast, treating individual people who have contracted HIV is much less effective. **Therefore, Charity B will likely save more lives with your donation.**

${e://Field/q}

Definitely Charity A (1)	(2)	(3)	Unsure (4)	(5)	(6)	Definitely Charity B (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

According to the text you've just read, how does Charity B help people at risk of Malaria in Kenya?

- ○ by distributing medicine
- ○ by distributing bed-nets
- ○ by organizing information campaigns

Risk aversion

Consider the following two charities that focus on saving lives in poor countries:

Charity A
Charity A uses a technique that is proven to work every time. Each $1,000 donated will save one life with 100% chance.

Charity B
Charity B uses a more experimental technique that can be extremely effective but doesn't work every time. Each $1,000 donated will save 100 lives with 10% chance, and 0 lives with 90% chance.

Before you respond, consider the following:

There's a large chance that your donation to Charity B won't save a single life. However, there's a small chance that donating to Charity B will save many many lives. So many lives, in fact, that on average (i.e., in expectation) we should expect a donation to Charity B to save far more lives than the same donation to Charity A. To make this concrete, let's review the numbers: on average Charity A will save 1 life with your donation (100% × 1), and Charity B will save 10 lives (10% × 100).

As an analogy, think of a gamble involving money. Suppose that you play a gamble where you can either win $1 with 100% chance or $100 with 10%. You can play the same gamble over and over again. In expectation (on average), you will only win $1 if you always choose the first option but $10 if you always choose the second option.

Therefore, Charity B will save more lives with your donation in expectation (on average).

${e://Field/q3}

Definitely Charity A (1)	(2)	(3)	Unsure (4)	(5)	(6)	Definitely Charity B (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

According to the text you've just read, how many lives does Charity B save with 10% chance?

- ○ two
- ○ 100
- ○ 100,000

Overhead

Consider the following two charities.

Two independent charity evaluators have evaluated two charities, Charity A and Charity B. Both charity evaluators are seen as highly credible. They have evaluated Charities A and B as follows:

Charity A
The first charity evaluator has found Charity A to be a highly cost-effective charity.
The second charity evaluator has found that Charity A has been spending more than 60% of their donations on overhead, including relatively high staff salaries.

Charity B
The first charity evaluator has found Charity B to have a medium level of cost-effectiveness.
The second charity evaluator has found that Charity B spends less than 5% of their donations on overhead.

Before you respond, consider the following:

Many people believe charities must have low overhead ratios because they think that overhead costs are wasted money. However, this is often not the case. Overhead money is usually required to make the charities effective. For example, charities need to hire competent staff and build infrastructure critical to accomplishing their mission. High overhead costs do not mean that the charity is wasting money. The only relevant criterion telling us how much good a charity does per dollar is cost-effectiveness, not overhead ratio.

As an analogy, think of a car company. The amount of money the car company spends on overhead is irrelevant to you as a buyer: the only thing that matters is what you get per dollar (cost-effectiveness). Similarly, as a donor the only thing that matters is how much good the charity achieves per dollar (cost-effectiveness).

Therefore, Charity A will likely save more lives with your donation.

${e://Field/q}

Definitely Charity A (1)	(2)	(3)	Unsure (4)	(5)	(6)	Definitely Charity B (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

According to the text you've just read, how high is the overhead of Charity A?

- ○ 45%
- ○ 60%
- ○ 70%

Splitting

Suppose you had to donate $1,000 and could choose from the following two charities.

Charity A focuses on helping people at risk of HIV by distributing medicines.
Charity B focuses on helping people at risk of malaria by distributing bed nets.

Independent charity evaluators have found that **Charity B is twice as effective than Charity A**. This means that it saves twice as many lives per dollar.

Consider the following two donation options:

Option 1) Donate $1,000 to Charity B
Option 2) Donate $800 to Charity B and $200 to Charity A

Before you respond, consider the following:

When donating, people have the tendency to split their total contribution among several different charities. However, if one charity is clearly more effective, it saves more lives to give all of your money to that charity. This is because every additional donated dollar achieves the most good when it goes to the most effective charity. **Therefore, choosing Option 1 will likely save more lives.**

${e://Field/q2}

Definitely Option 1 (1)	(2)	(3)	Unsure (4)	(5)	(6)	Definitely Option 2 (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Local_foreign

Consider the following two charities:

Charity A
Charity A helps sick people in India. It is considered to be a well-run charity that doesn't waste resources. Donations are primarily used to buy medicine and hire competent medical staff.

Charity B
Charity B helps sick people in your local community. It is considered to be a well-run charity that doesn't waste resources. Donations are primarily used to buy medicine and hire competent medical staff.

Before you respond, consider the following:

Dollar for dollar, charities helping sick people in poor countries tend to be far more effective than charities helping sick people in rich countries like the United States or in Europe. **Therefore, Charity A will likely save more lives with your donation.**

${e://Field/q}

Definitely Charity A (1)	(2)	(3)	Unsure (4)	(5)	(6)	Definitely Charity B (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

According to the text you've just read, in which country does Charity A help sick people?

- India
- Nigeria
- Bangladesh

Charity choice

In the last few decades, there has been a lot of research into the cost-effectiveness of different charities. By 'cost-effectiveness', we mean the amount of good that can be done per dollar (e.g., saved lives or 'units of health' as measured by experts who compare health problems of different kinds). The research on cost-effectiveness has yielded surprising results. In a recent report, researchers concluded that only very few charities are clearly very effective, and that most well known charities are much less effective than the most effective charities. This means that the most effective charities in the world tend to be charities that are not very well known.

The organization GiveWell is an independent scientific charity evaluator and identifies the most cost-effective charities, i.e., those that help the most people as much as possible per dollar donated. GiveWell is considered highly credible by many researchers. Their research is backed by a lot of evidence. On the following page, GiveWell has a list of the few charities that are considered to be among the most cost-effective ones: https://www.givewell.org/charities/top-charities

Suppose we gave you $1000 to donate to any charity. You are free to choose any charity out of all real charities in the world. Which charity would you donate to?

Of all the real charities in the world, which one do you believe is the most effective one (i.e. does the most good for the greatest amount of people)? In other words, which charity would do the most good if we donated $1000 to it?

Please take some time to think about this question and perhaps do some online research, then write down the charity's name and website.

Name of charity:

Website of charity:

Why did you choose this charity?

How effective do you believe the charity you chose is compared to a charity of average cost-effectiveness level?

Much less effective	Moderately less effective	Slightly less effective	Equally effective	Slightly more effective	Moderately more effective	Much more effective
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Final block

When I give to charity, I want my donations to achieve the greatest amount of good for the largest number of people possible.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How much have you donated to charity within the last year? (in USD)

To what extent do you identify as an effective altruist?

None at all (1)	A little (2)	A moderate amount (3)	A lot (4)	A great deal (5)
○	○	○	○	○

Which of the following causes do you find most important? (Please don't consider "meta-work" as a cause for the purpose of this question.)

- ○ Long-term future, e.g. existential risk mitigation
- ○ Animal welfare
- ○ Global health and development
- ○ Other cause

Do you have any general comments about the study, such as things that were unclear or could be improved?

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