

Research meeting

May 9, 2013

Natalie has been reviewing papers that address the question of whether protecting children with bednets when they are very young delays their acquisition of immunity to malaria. If this is the case, it could offset the benefits of bednets. Natalie is currently working to write up what she's learned.

Natalie has also been working on improvements to GiveWell's donation processing, specifically preparing for GiveWell to start using the Salesforce platform for tracking donor information and communications. GiveWell is going to be receiving pro-bono support to help transition our current system to Salesforce. Natalie is also looking into automating our check processing, which is currently done manually, at a marginal cost per check of about \$1.50 (fixed cost makes average cost much higher). Natalie has also been talking to GiveDirectly about how we can capture more of the donations that are given to GiveDirectly as a result of GiveWell's recommendation, in order to get a more accurate estimate of our money moved.

Holden gave an update on GiveWell Labs. Currently, GiveWell is finishing its first "medium-depth investigation" (conducted by Alexander) of a cause (meta-research), and we are considering contracting out more "medium-depth investigation" We'd like to conduct a few more "medium-depth investigation" in the near future, which will be chosen from a short list of causes we'd like to know more about. Based on Alexander's experience working on meta-research, it seems like it takes about 20 hours to get a sense of an area and what people in it are talking about, and about 3 months to know what a funder could do in that area. It would take longer to have a good sense of which are the best giving opportunities. One of the intended outcomes of GiveWell labs work is to identify future focus areas for GiveWell.

Holden has been landscaping the field of political advocacy. GiveWell's history of philanthropy project is related to this because it will give us a better sense of the role that philanthropy has played in past policy wins. This will help us understand how likely it is that certain advocacy battles can be won and what the likely outcome will be.

In his work on scientific research, Holden's first priority is to build a network of advisors from within the scientific research community. Here, it may be even more difficult to measure, but the goal is also to understand the overall expected impact of giving to scientific research.

Staff discussed the question of how much research work GiveWell should be outsourcing: how much management this requires, whether existing resources could suffice in some cases, how it may be difficult to find people with subject matter knowledge who also understand the approach we'd take.

Elie gave an update on GiveWell's recruiting: 2 analysts are starting this summer, as well as one analyst summer intern, and 2 additional analyst trial hires. Because GiveWell has made significant progress in recruiting, we are slowing our recruitment. GiveWell had considered hiring an administrative assistant, but

has since decided against this for the time being.

Elie also updated staff on GiveWell's public research event and meeting with journalists to discuss the history of philanthropy, both of which were hosted in New York in early May.