

Research meeting

June 6, 2013

Politics Update (Holden)

Right now we are working to set up conversations with issue-specific experts for humanitarian issues that we care about. One of our primary questions for these calls will be who are the funders in the space and is there room for another funder?

We have engaged with two think tanks that we feel are fairly humanitarian in their orientation, as opposed to left or right ideologically. We have spoken with the Presidents of both think tanks and are now considering how to proceed.

I have read 3 more books on policy advocacy that focus on lobbying and/or philanthropy. Now I'm wondering if there is an efficient way to look into political advocacy from outside of philanthropy to get a check on the very philanthropy-oriented people we've spoken to so far, possibly by meeting with someone on Capitol Hill or from a corporation that does lobbying.

So far what we've seen is that it is very difficult to get a sense of the ROI of political advocacy. Benjamin Soskis, who is consulting for GiveWell on our history of philanthropy project, is looking for literature on specific cases that have been highlighted to us as philanthropic successes in policy change to help us better understand the evidence for philanthropy's impact.

Science Update (Holden)

Through my conversations in this area I've been working towards different frameworks for how to categorize the types of biomedical research. One way of dividing it up is by the goal of the research – on a spectrum from basic research aiming to gain fundamental insights, to industry research aimed at things like developing drugs. Another way of thinking about types of research is by field, another is by disease/condition, and yet another is by career stage. For each of these, different people could have different theories of which ones most badly need more funding.

I've had two conversations with major biomedical research funders and heard how they think about these issues. We're currently setting up more. My main goal right now is to try to have an inclusive picture of what these debates and questions are, and to think about how to build scientific advisory capacity to help us do our investigations.

AMF Update (Eliza)

We recently had a call with Rob Mather, the CEO of Against Malaria Foundation (AMF), in preparation for our next update on AMF. This update will cover progress in collecting data from households and health centers in Ntcheu, a district of Malawi that AMF previously distributed nets

to. The update will also cover progress in AMF's ongoing distribution in Balaka and Dedza districts of Malawi and in planning future distributions. Staff discussed questions to follow up on in this update.