

More than 5,000 people have committed to give at least ten percent of their lifetime earnings to effective charities, following the lead of an Oxford University philosopher, Dr. Toby Ord.

Giving What We Can, a community of people who have pledged to give a significant portion of their income to improving the lives of others, announced 5,000 individuals had made their pledge to give 10% of lifetime to effective charities.

The organisation was founded following Oxford University philosopher Toby Ord's decision to give more than half of all his future earnings to effective charities.

Since its founding in December 2009, Giving What We Can has attracted members from 87 countries. Its members come from a diverse range of backgrounds, ages, professions, incomes and philosophies – all united by a commitment to helping others. Together the members have donated at least \$127 million and their pledges are estimated to amount to ~\$1.8 billion.

Dr. Ord said: "I am delighted to reach this milestone, and that so many people have taken this pledge. And pledging is only half of the story — where you give your money is as important as making the decision to give in the first place."

"Research shows that the best charities can have at least ten times the social impact of the typical charity, and hundreds of times as much as less effective charities. By finding outstanding giving opportunities we can make a significant difference to many more lives than we otherwise would."

"We believe there is a strong moral case for people to give to the causes they deem to use money most efficiently."

Their members donate to a vast range of [highly effective charities](#). From the Against Malaria Foundation (which is estimated by charity evaluator GiveWell to save a life for every ~\$2,500 donated); to the Good Food Institute (which works to create a humane, and sustainable food supply); or the Johns Hopkins Center For Health Security (which works to protect people's health from the consequences of epidemics and disasters). The most popular option for members recently has been to pool their funds together in Effective Altruism Funds to find outstanding giving opportunities across different causes.

Dr. Ord has recently published *The Precipice*, a book that summarises his research into catastrophic risks that may pose the greatest threat to human life – and which interventions may be best-suited to address those risks. These risks include catastrophic pandemics, extreme climate change, high-fatality global conflicts, and unsafe artificial intelligence applications.

Recent research by Dr. Andreas Mogensen of Oxford's Philosophy Faculty indicates that giving and so-called "sacrifice," in the service of a more-just world, has a positive effect on our happiness. Research by Dr. Nicholas Epley at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business suggests that offering financial or material support to others generates [more happiness for the giver](#), than would otherwise retaining money and material goods for oneself.

For more information on Giving What We Can, visit: <http://www.givingwhatwecan.org/> or contact media@givingwhatwecan.org.

Case studies of people who pledge to give

We have dozens of case studies from members who come from all walks of life and all over the world. You can [read the case studies and quotes on our website](#). These are organised by the country of the member.

If you would like to interview any of our members please email media@givingwhatwecan.org and let us know if there's any particular profile you are interested in.

Quotes from early members about the milestone

Toby Ord - Oxford, England, UK

"I'm so excited that Giving What We Can is over 200 times larger than when we launched 10 years ago. It's overwhelming to be part of such a large and friendly community of people, all striving to make the world a much better place."

Toby Ord is the Co-founder of Giving What We Can, philosopher, author of The Precipice, and a researcher at Future of Humanity Institute

Will MacAskill - Oxford, England, UK

"Getting to 5,000 members absolutely blows my mind. That's a full 217 times as many members as we had at launch 11 years ago. I remember when I first took the pledge, it felt really quite scary. I was a graduate student at the time and I had a scholarship for my accommodation paid for but I was living on about £4,500 per year and I was trying to give £900 of that away over the year. It was tough. I remember I refused to get a haircut because it seemed like an unnecessary expense... One of the things I worried about back then was whether I'd be a social outcast, always having to explain to people why I've chosen this weird life for myself. The answer turned out to be "no", quite the opposite in fact. The pledge functioned like this bat signal, attracting people all around the world with a similar set of values and it's been such a joy to see so many people come together and make a commitment to use a significant proportion of their income for the common good. So thank you, for taking the pledge and for showing what it means to take giving seriously."

Will MacAskill is the Co-founder of Giving What We Can, philosopher, author of Doing Good Better, and a researcher at Forethought Foundation

Julia Wise - Boston, MA, USA

"When I first learned about Giving What We Can, I remember feeling so relieved that there were all these other people out there who were not just thinking about what we can do for others, but were taking concrete action on that."

Julia Wise is a community health liaison and former social worker who, along with her husband Jeff, have made the decision to give away half their collective income to alleviate suffering around the world. Julia was the 179th member and president of Giving What We Can from 2017 to 2020.

Peter Singer - Melbourne, VIC, Australia

"I date the start of the Effective Altruism movement from the founding of Giving What We Can. I'm delighted that it has now reached the significant milestone of 5000 members, because that means a very significant sum going to help the most effective charities. But let's not forget that GWWC has done so much more than that - it has been the spark for a movement that has inspired many more people to think about their charitable giving, and about the overall direction of their lives."

Peter Singer is a moral philosopher and author of books including Animal Liberation and The Life You Can Save. Peter was the 16th member of Giving What We Can.

Derek Ball - Fife, Scotland, UK

"I first read about Giving What We Can in a newspaper article almost 10 years ago. At the time, I strongly felt that I needed to do more to help others, but I wasn't sure what to do. Giving What We Can provided guidance and inspiration that I needed — an easy-to-follow recipe for doing some good. I can honestly say that it has changed my life."

Dr Derek Ball is a lecturer in the philosophy departments at the University of St Andrews. Derek was the 57th member of Giving What We Can.

Ben Eidelson - Boston, MA, USA

"It's extraordinary to see the way this community has grown over the past decade and all of the good that it has accomplished. When Will MacAskill shared the idea of a giving pledge with me in 2009, I thought it was a great way for a handful of people committed to certain values to raise the cost of drifting away from them. But I don't think anyone imagined that the community would grow as it has, or that it would help to spark a broader movement. I'm grateful for and inspired by all of the work that so many put into achieving a milestone like this."

Benjamin Eidelson is an assistant professor of law at Harvard Law School. Ben was the 26th member of Giving What We Can.

Joseph Millum - Northwest, Washington DC, USA

"For more than a decade, this pledge has reminded me and inspired me to give. The incredible growth of the effective altruism movement in that time – exemplified by nearly 5000 people taking the GWWC pledge – makes me optimistic about what we can do, as individuals and as a collective. Each of us can make a meaningful difference to the lives of others. Together we can keep each other committed to giving more, and to doing so on the basis of good evidence."

Joseph Millum is a bioethicist at the National Institutes of Health. Joe was the 6th member of Giving What We Can.

Nick Beckstead - San Francisco, CA, US

"I took the GWWC pledge because I believed my donations could do much more good for others than they could do for me; I had enough money to be happy and productive; and I wanted to encourage others to give for the same reasons. I think there's something powerful about putting our ideals into practice as a group with the core intention of doing the greatest expected good for others. It's been a great way to inspire myself and connect with people who have similar priorities. I'm delighted that our numbers have grown to 5,000, and I look forward to celebrating the 10,000 mark in the future!"

Nick Beckstead is a Program Officer at Open Philanthropy. Nick was the 26th member of Giving What We Can

Michelle Hutchinson - Oxford, England, UK

"It's been really incredible watching GWWC grow from a few members early on to a 5,000 strong community. It's really incredible how much people in our community donate and how much they think about how to use those donations to help people as much as possible. I really feel it's helped me to live up to my values and I hope it'll make a better world for [my son] Leo to grow up in."

Michelle Hutchinson is the former Executive Director of GWWC, and current Head of Advising at 80,000 Hours. Michelle was the 153rd member of Giving What We Can.

Habiba Islam - Oxford, England, UK

“I first came across Giving What We Can at a talk that I went to as an undergraduate at Oxford University. The talk was about 80,000 Hours and they mentioned The Pledge. So I’d already thought that I’d donate some proportion of my income to charity but hearing about Giving What We Can really helped me raise my ambitions to donate a significant portion of my income and also think really hard about the effectiveness of the charities that I was donating to. Both those ideas made a lot of sense to me and so I signed the Further Pledge while I was an undergraduate. Fast forward 10 years and now I really enjoy being part of the effective altruism community. Many of my close, best friends, and my colleagues are people that I’ve met through EA – and that all traces back to that first meeting about 80,000 Hours, and hearing about (and signing) the Further Pledge.”

Habiba Islam is an advisor at 80,000 Hours. Habiba was the 105th member of Giving What We Can.

Peter Eckersley

“It’s felt extraordinary to be part of a growing movement to try to structurally address those problems with the resources we have available... Now at 10 years on, with Giving What We Can having now having 5,000 taking that pledge, and being part of a larger and flourishing effective altruism movement, it seems like we’re really succeeding... To pause in reflecting on this particular moment in 2020, it feels in some ways a stranger and darker time than the period in which we were setting up to create this movement. But I really think that we’re positioned as effective altruists to be a constructive force for change in the years ahead.”

Peter Eckersley is an expert in law and computer science, who has worked with the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Partnership on AI. Peter was the 8th member of Giving What We Can