



Giving What We Can

6 Month Review

January - June 2014

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1. Key numbers

- 144 members this period (since the start of January), taking us to 532. Over the last 6 month period we gained 83, and previous to that 54 and 58 respectively.
- Reserves: around 12.5 months (~£150,000 in the bank, and an average budget of £12,000 per month going forward)
- Average cost per member: ~£450 (£60k budget/130 members). Context: Nick Beckstead's report estimated that an average new member would move \$17,000 to our recommended charities.

The two main focuses over this period have been getting the new website up and individual outreach (emailing people from Facebook, who donated to AMF, who signed up to the newsletter and so on).

Overall, this period went well – our membership growth rate greatly improved. We think the largest two factors behind this were increased following up with people who had stopped part way through the process (for example requested a pledge form) and an uptick in people requesting to join online (who we hadn't previously had contact with, which seemed to be due to growth in the EA movement as a whole. It was also partially due to individual outreach: individually emailing/contacting people who have shown interest in effective giving /GWWC. A final factor is likely to have been adding an online 'confirmation' form, which allowed people we knew were serious about the pledge to join without having to deal with a paper form (it was not public on the website – we only emailed it to interested individuals).

2. Important events

- We launched the new website (beginning of April)
- Director of Community, Ben Clifford, left (late April)
- Jon Courtney joined as our new Director of Community (end of June)

3. Overall lessons from this period

- Chasing works – people are happier than we expected to be asked to join and to be reminded multiple times.
- Individual outreach appears to be reliable but not outstandingly effective.
- Focusing on giving people gradual and personal ways of joining is seeming promising.

4. Events

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- Number of events we aimed to put on over this period: 10. Number we actually put on: 6. (Reasons for the shortfall: website took more focus than expected and joint events took longer to come to fruition than anticipated.)
- Number of people we aimed to have at events we spoke at: 300. Actual: ~200
- Number of people we aimed to get email addresses from during those events: 100. Actual: 22. (We didn't manage to give out feedback forms at many of our events)
- Time taken to organise talks (representative sample; including the time of multiple individuals involved): joint event with YTFN ~100 hours; Softwire (the workplace of a member) ~25 hours. (Couple of differences: Softwire was entirely organised and done by one person, other had multiple of us involved; Softwire was much simpler – didn't have to organise venue etc).

Last period, it seemed like joint events were very promising. The reason was that GWWC has a clear suggested action, but not necessarily an obviously interesting draw for people to come to. So, we worked with Global Hand, YTFN and Global Poverty Project. The key lesson from these was that joint events take a lot of coordination, and do not typically seem to lead to results which would make them worthwhile. This indicates we'll need to put more effort into making our own events more appealing so that people will want to come to them.

One thing we've learned from working with TFN is that it works well to have a core of people who come to all of your events, and are therefore enthusiastic about helping advertise them and bringing other people along. Our comparative advantage, and what our members find interesting, seems to be in-depth research talks (e.g. the presentations 'Giving and Happiness', 'Aid Works'). Therefore, it seems we should increase the number of those talks we put on compared to the number of times we put on a standard introduction to Giving What We Can talk. There are others of these we can develop (maybe 'Why not to donate to Microfinance?', one on Climate Change). Unfortunately, it seems like people care a lot about whether the person giving the talk is the person who did the research (since the value people would get from coming rather than just reading it online is hearing it from the person themselves and being able to ask questions). One way we could address this would be having a number of research volunteers, who could each specialise in giving a talk on the research area they've done.

We did another workplace event (at Softwire). This was successful, with around 3 people joining from it (although small audience – only 8 people). Workplace events seem to be a good way to reach out to young professionals, since they're busy and these are convenient. The most promising way to organise these seems to be through members. We did research into which of our members we knew the workplaces for, and reached out to ask if they'd be willing to organise this. We're currently in discussion with a number of people about this.

5. Website

- Average sessions Jan-May this year: 25,000 per month.
- Average sessions per month Jul-Dec last year: 22,800.
- Google AdWords campaign: consistently getting 1,500 clicks per week from it.

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The main focus of the Communications team over this period has been setting up the new website. There was about a month's delay from what we had hoped – it went up at the beginning of April. Traffic does not appear to have increased with the launch of the website. We've tried to make it have a clear path towards joining.

Try Giving: we were planning to make Try Giving a greater focus on the website. When writing the copy for the website, we realised that the Try Giving scheme doesn't make much sense when not in the context of the main pledge. So, we combined the two pages, and put Try Giving as a 'not ready yet?' option on the pledge page (which also has a section on why to take a pledge). So far, this seems to have increased the number of people doing Try Giving through the website a little, from 1 or 2 per month to over 5 per month.

'My Giving' dashboards: These aimed to be a good way to get people to start tracking their giving, to get them on the pathway to joining. We also expect them to provide a more convenient and motivating way for members to track their giving than the yearly giving review. So far, 364 members have signed in, and 43 people are using it exclusively (i.e. aren't members or Try Givers). In the future, we'll measure the number of people who signed up for these and then ended up doing TG or joining.

The new website is synced with the CRM, so that it automatically updates with e.g. number of members. It also makes it easier to join (although you still have to do an email confirmation). In order to check that people are still taking the commitment seriously, we try to talk to all new members. At the moment we are skyping around 50% of new members.

6. Social Media

- Number of new Facebook likes aimed for: 800. Number achieved: 841.
- Number of people aimed to 'engage with us' on Facebook: 50. Number achieved: 83 (January - March)
- Number of new Twitter followers aimed for: 700. Number achieved: 434

Social media wasn't prioritised highly over this period, but we did continue to update it regularly. There are two reasons in particular for thinking that it is important for us: our target audience of young professionals use it a lot, and it is a good way to build gradual relationships and reach out to people.

Given that we are trying to get people to engage with our content (e.g. 'like' posts), some thought needs to go into working out what content is most likely to attract 'likes'. The sentence summary of a link (as well as how interesting the link is and whether people agree with it) seems to make a big difference to this. In the future, we think it makes sense for the Community Director to curate our social media pages, as they will be the one following up with people.

7. Outreach

This refers to writing to individuals who have expressed some interest in Giving What We Can or effective giving in general, to ask how they heard about us, whether they have considered joining, and whether they have any questions or concerns we could help with.

Groups we wrote to: GWWC Facebook page 'engagers' (people who 'liked' or 'shared' content), AMF donors (who said their donation was due to GWWC), newsletter readers, EA Facebook group and Twitter.

- 1005 messages sent.
- 243 responses
- 11 Try Givers and 14 members.

Time spent: A rough estimate seemed to be that it took 5 minutes per non-responder, and 20 minutes per responder. Hence around 150 hours in total. Ignoring Try Givers, that means 10 hours per member. This doesn't take into account the time spent updating Facebook, since we think we would have done it anyway. Also, note it assumes the person has already 'liked' the Giving What We Can page on Facebook or donated to AMF citing GWWC, so this isn't the time it takes to get someone from never having heard of effective giving to having joined.

This seems often to work as a nudge for people who already know about us/effective giving. It's not a full process of changing behaviour to getting people to donate, but does seem to be a useful step along the way. However, the numbers so far are small, so we want to continue testing. The group most likely to join were the people who engaged with us on the Facebook page (7% of those contacted joined).

8. Chapters

We didn't focus on chapters over this period. We did add an Australian chapter coordinator (Thomas Wynter). A couple of new chapters started, including one in Bowling Green, Ohio, which got 9 members when it first started!

We held a chapter day for UK chapter committees, because the chapter workshop at the September internship had been popular. The day seemed to be appreciated – about 30 people came. We should have done more follow up. One thing this seemed to show is that while chapters can be reluctant to reply to emails that might mean they prefer more personal contact.

9. Member engagement

We have been trying to talk to as many members as possible via skype when they join. While we had previously offered this, we now suggest it would be very useful to us, and make it more clearly the default option. This is partly because now that we have changed to online signup, we are more

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concerned that people might not be serious about joining. This has raised the number of people we skype with from essentially zero to about 50% of new members. This also allows us to find out in detail what led them to join, to get them feeling more part of the community, and to work out if they would like to get involved in any other way.

We have a Facebook group for members to try to increase community feeling among them. This currently has 240 members (around 50% of our membership). It gets some activity from people we otherwise hadn't heard from, though more from ones that we knew but don't see often. It seems somewhat useful and does not take much effort to maintain.

We held a member party. It seemed popular, with a couple of members we had never met before coming, and a number who we didn't see often. One member we hadn't met before organised a talk at his workplace following the event. Another commented that he thought there weren't enough of these kinds of GWWC community activities. The time cost of this was much less than the members open day we organised a year or so ago, and it was more popular. We think we should aim to do more events of this kind.

The weekend away provided a good opportunity for increasing community feeling among members. We advertised it among members more than we did in previous years, and a few members came who we hadn't met before, as well as numerous people from UK chapters and potential EU chapters. It seemed to be a good way for chapters to swap ideas, and members to get to know each other.

We are currently in the process of collecting data on members' giving in 2013, through the 'My Giving' dashboards. So far, 68% of members have logged into their dashboards, but not all of those have filled in their giving for this year.

The GWWC Trust has received £168,500 since January. Most of this was in April, the end of the tax year. 64% of this was through the GWWC website, 36% through GiveWell. The most popular charity was GiveDirectly (30%), with SCI, DWI and PHC each getting around 20%. Most people wanted the GWWC or GW recommended split. 12% of members are signed up to and using the trust. Only 6 Try Givers are.

10. September internship

We had far fewer applicants than last year, but the quality of the people we accepted was similar.

11. Live Below the Line

The GWWC team raised nearly £10,000 for SCI. It's unclear how much of this would have been given anyway, but there didn't seem to be many very large donations from members, so it seems plausible it wasn't just current members using this as an opportunity to fulfil their pledge. 14 participants were part of the GWWC team. It seemed to promote community feeling among them, and be a good opportunity to do a social media campaign, at little cost to us.

12. Research

We de-prioritised research somewhat over this period. Andreas did research on GiveDirectly and AMF, which informed our recommendations. Various volunteers contributed to the blog. Our main aim was to create interesting activity, without taking too much staff time. This seemed mostly successful.

Sam Donald did a new overview on microfinance. We plan to make a presentation on microfinance, since it's a topic many people are interested in. Elina, another volunteer, updated our page on maternal mortality.

Some theoretical work relevant to GWWC was done by Owen, but it is not yet in a publishable state.

13. Finances

Fundraising for GWWC has been reasonable. As of June we have approximately £150,000, which represents 13 months' reserves at our planned rate of expansion. We will aim to maintain a minimum of 12 months' reserves unless there is a compelling reason to go below that level. GWWC now has enough funding to hire a Director of Community while maintaining its target of 12 months' reserves. This was our key goal. However, we have not raised enough funding to hire a Director of Research while maintaining our desired reserves. This was our 'secondary' target. The fact that we haven't secured plenty of funding for this role has made it harder to attract interest from people with the necessary talent.