

New Report Disrupts Conventional Approach to Charitable Giving for Global Wellbeing

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Investing in mental health is a more cost-effective way to improve human wellbeing than giving direct cash transfers.

This comes from [recent research](#) by the Happier Lives Institute, which draws on evidence from over 80 studies (140,000 participants) in low- and middle-income countries. It compares the effect of treating depression and providing cash transfers on an individual's subjective wellbeing and uses that to estimate the cost-effectiveness of two charities: StrongMinds and GiveDirectly.



Clarity discusses how group talk therapy improved her ability to run a business.

The [analysis](#) concludes that the psychotherapy services delivered by StrongMinds are 9x more cost-effective than \$1,000 lump-sum cash transfers at improving subjective wellbeing, not just for the recipient but for the rest of their household too.

StrongMinds treats depression in women and adolescents in Uganda and Zambia. They are the only organization scaling a proven, cost-efficient solution to the depression epidemic in Africa.

The findings suggest that investing in StrongMinds' depression treatment goes further than direct cash in positively impacting an individual's life and livelihood. This challenges the prevailing notion among philanthropists that direct cash transfers may be the most productive way to improve global wellbeing.

"Before therapy, I was depressed. I could not manage to do things like eat. I had no appetite. I slept all the time," said Clarity, a former StrongMinds client. "Now, I am able to run my tailoring business. I can go to church, interact with friends, and I feel much more strength within myself. Overcoming depression has really helped me and my business. I am very grateful."

Clarity is just one of the more than 150,000 women StrongMinds has treated for depression. StrongMinds' clients are over 80% depression-free following treatment, and the results are sustained six months later.

Approximately 66 million women on the African continent experience depression, and due to lack of investment, about 85% of these women have no access to effective treatment. StrongMinds aims to change those statistics by scaling access to free interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT-G), the WHO- recommended intervention for low-resource settings.

About StrongMinds

Founded in 2013, StrongMinds treats depression in women and adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. Our well-researched group talk therapy model is delivered by trained lay community members, enabling us to reach tens of thousands of people each year. For more information about StrongMinds, please visit strongminds.org.

About the Happier Lives Institute

The Happier Lives Institute connects donors, researchers, and policymakers with the most cost-effective opportunities to increase global wellbeing. Using the latest subjective wellbeing data, we identify the problems that matter most and find evidence-based ways to solve them. For more information about the Happier Lives Institute, please visit happierlivesinstitute.org.

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