

A World-First Scientific Study Reveals Most Cost-Effective Charities for Creating Happiness

The Happier Lives Institute Contributes Groundbreaking Research to 2025 World Happiness Report

OXFORD, OXFORDSHIRE (COUNTY), UNITED KINGDOM, March 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For the first time ever, a scientific review has assessed the cost-effectiveness of global charities based on how much happiness and wellbeing they create per pound donated. The Happier Lives Institute (HLI), a pioneer in applying happiness science to charitable giving, has authored a revolutionary chapter in the 2025 World Happiness Report, released today. Their findings, published in Chapter 8, reveal that some charities are hundreds, or thousands of times more effective at improving happiness than others, fundamentally changing the way we think about giving.

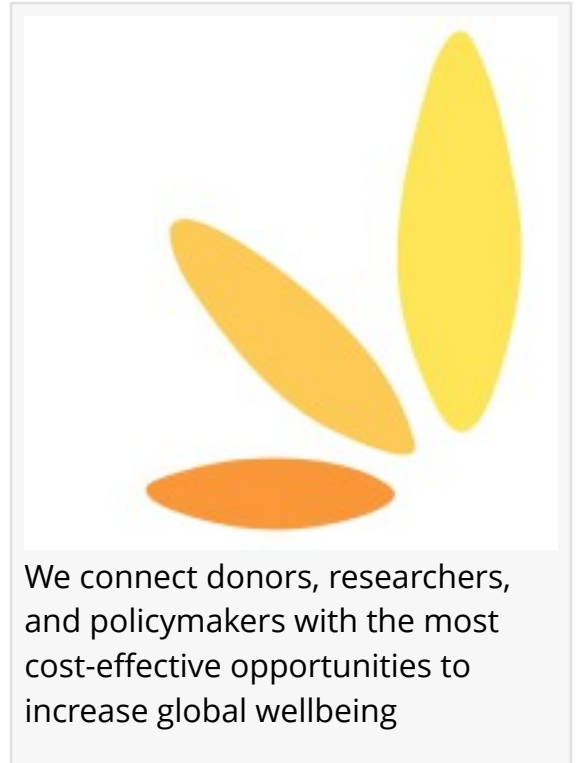
HLI's research introduces a new standard for charitable impact assessment by measuring effectiveness in WELLBYs (wellbeing years) – a happiness metric increasingly used by governments to guide policy decisions. HLI's review finds that donating £1,000 to a highly effective charity can generate the same wellbeing impact as donating £150,000 to an average charity. This revolutionary research highlights the potential for donors to make a much bigger difference at no extra cost.



Our findings are a wake-up call for donors, charities, researchers and policy-makers”

Dr. Michael Plant

“Our findings are a wake-up call for donors, charities, researchers and policy-makers,” said Dr Michael Plant, Founder & Research Director at the Happier Lives Institute and also a Research Fellow at the Wellbeing Research, Oxford University, which publishes the World Happiness Report.



“By shifting the focus from traditional impact measures to happiness and wellbeing, we can help

donors ensure their money creates the most positive change possible.”

Which Charities Improve Happiness The Most?

Surprisingly the most cost-effective charities aren't necessarily the most well-known. The research identifies several organisations as exceptionally effective:

Pure Earth – working with governments to tackle lead poisoning and take it out of household products, like cosmetics.

StrongMinds – Providing free group therapy for depression in Africa.

Friendship Bench – Training community health workers to deliver mental health support in low & middle income areas.

Taimaka – Tackling child malnutrition in some of the world’s poorest regions.

NEPI (Network for Empowerment & Progressive Initiative) – Providing psychotherapy to those with violent or criminal backgrounds to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

By funding these organisations, donors can multiply their impact at no extra cost.

These findings challenge conventional wisdom about giving. While only 10% of charitable donations go to international recipients, the data shows that international giving can often create significantly more wellbeing per donation than domestic charity.

A New Era in Charitable Giving

Research to assess charities and policies by their ‘bang for buck’ at improving wellbeing is very new, with all the work carried out in the last five years. This is the first time a global comparison has been undertaken and of the charities assessed so far, the top five were on average 141 times more cost-effective than domestic charities.

“Collectively, people give around \$0.5 trillion to charities each year - the GDP of Austria,” said Dr. Plant, “but, we have shockingly little idea of how much difference our money makes - and if it’s doing any good.”

It was hard, if not impossible, to compare charities in an evidence-based way before the wellbeing approach. Now, we can capture what really matters. This means we can give with more confidence and have a much bigger impact. On World Happiness Day, we call on donors to give what they can and do their bit for global wellbeing.”

To explore HLI’s groundbreaking new research—featured in Chapter 8, "Giving to Others," of the 2025 World Happiness Report, together with information on HLI recommended charities, visit www.happierlivesinstitute.org . Follow the Happier Lives Institute on social media for the latest

insights on how to make your giving more impactful.□□

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The Happier Lives Institute (HLI) is the only charity evaluator in the world applying happiness science to empower donors to give more effectively. HLI conducts rigorous, scientific research to identify the most cost-effective opportunities to increase global wellbeing.□

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