

Since it was described here, the idea has evolved to [this proposal](#).

The project described below is one of the [alternatives](#) being considered to an abolitionist web magazine.

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Suffering Abolition fund¹

[XPrize-like contests](#)

The fund would design and support inducement prize contests for the advancement of the [abolitionist project](#), similar to how XPrize designs and conducts contests for technical breakthroughs.²

Like XPrize, a website of the prize could support an online community for discussing and helping design contests.

(The prize could also be featured on an [Abolitionist movement website](#).)

Success of the prize would largely depend on the amount of raised funds. To achieve anything close to the scale of XPrize (which has \$5-20 million prizes), a person-by-person approach to fundraising targeting wealthy donors would likely be required. Following XPrize, the fund could also seek large sponsors like big tech companies (although it'd not be likely to attract ones, as the companies might not be willing to openly associate w/ unconventional projects of the fund).

¹ A similar project was proposed before by Michael Huang as an inducement prize contest: *"Inducement prize contest for the first to genetically engineer a mouse that feels no pain or suffering and has a normal lifespan. Needs to be verified by peer review to be an appropriate and ethical goal. Needs fundraising to cover the prize money and promotion/publicity."* David Pearce later commented that such a mouse had already been created.

² Other similar prizes include prizes by the [Methuselah Foundation](#) ("M Prize") and the recently announced [Invincible Wellbeing Prize](#).

Some contests could be announced as soon as the fund is launched. Each contest would have a web page displaying how much has been raised for this prize.

Project ideas

- Non-human animals
 - Drug development w/o animal suffering
 - Welfare biology
 - Sustainable [local](#) gene [drive](#) spreading low-pain alleles in target species
 - Implement a welfare program for e.g. [elephants](#) (see also https://youtu.be/_cf9ZjA9WLY?t=440)
 - Implement immunocontraception to prevent population explosion in an area w/o predators
- Human-focused
 - [FAAH-OUT](#) somatic(?) gene therapy
 - Sustainable analog to [MDMA](#)
 - Discover a genotype of a (healthy) compassionate systematizer
- Fundamental research
 - Conduct the [experiment](#) to test David Pearce's non-materialist physicalism
- Society & culture (?)
 - Fiction work that has achieved certain success on the abolitionist future

Other funding areas

Funding research projects

In addition to organizing contests, the fund could fund new research, including creating research teams, funding implementation of its own research proposals, and offering scholarship programs.

This could also be done as the main activity of the organization. An example could be [New Harvest](#), a 501(c)(3) "research institute" which "[funds and supports open, collaborative, academic research for the advancement of cellular agriculture](#)". The fund could be an analogous organization of the field of suffering prevention.

Pros & cons compared to contests

- Pros
 - Projects could progress at a safer pace, w/o rushing.
 - Might make more sense for projects that have one relatively clear path forward, i.e. projects that benefit more from targeted approach compared to the shotgun approach of several teams competing

- Depending on the agreement, the fund could have certain ownership of the results (including intermediate ones). It thus could choose how to use the results: e.g. make them open or commercialize them to fund other projects.
- One research team could evolve through many projects and subprojects. (This can also be a disadvantage if the team is too rigid, and a new perspective is required.)
- Cons
 - Other things being equal, contests are more fun and captivating for most people. Contests are thus more likely to be mentioned and discussed, spreading this way ideas behind them (even when the contests are still far from any results).
 - When many contestants are expected, and when a solution to a challenge is not clear enough to dispense with many disparate approaches, announcing and conducting contests may be the best path forward, even when funding several research projects towards the problem is possible.

Mini-grants

If the fund has the capacity to identify and prioritise small projects and individual work, it could support such projects coming from, for example, individual activists and creators.

This grant could be used as a tool for broadening the movement and supporting “high risk, high reward” and other promising projects that wouldn’t happen (to a degree needed) [otherwise](#).

Mini-grants could be helpful where a relatively small amount of money can go a long way. Examples include part-time community-building and communication efforts, events like workshops and summits, YouTube-videos, individual studies and research, students’ projects, etc.

A mini-grants program may be especially important to prioritize in the early stages of suffering abolitionism, as the community is small (and thus more observable), and as people who could support larger projects work elsewhere.

Meta fund

Another, probably an alternative, proposed activity for the organization is to work as a meta fund or charity: analogously to [Animal Charity Evaluators](#) (ACE) and [GiveWell](#), the organization could recommend promising funding opportunities to donors based on its own research (if it finds such opportunities), and publish its findings.

Even in the case it makes the “meta” activity its main line of work, the organization could still have its own fund (like ACE³, for example).

³ In addition to researching and recommending charities, ACE has its own fund: see the [Effective Animal Advocacy Fund](#) and the [Recommended Charity Fund](#).

Since it appears that there are few opportunities for individuals to donate to suffering abolition projects, a meta fund would have little work to do. So a meta fund may not be even viable at this point. However, we could still create a web page listing the few organizations.

WIP Next steps

- Write out the doc
- Gather feedback
 - [Solicited feedback](#) in “The Hedonistic Imperative - Action Group” FB group
 - Solicited feedback on “Suffering Abolitionist Community and Working Space” Discord server

[DEPRECATED as well] Against extreme suffering foundation: proposal notes

Mission

The mission of the organisation is to abolish unnecessary suffering and prevent it thereafter, giving priority to the most extreme suffering.

Name

“Against extreme suffering foundation” (AESF) is a working title.

The following are some ideas for the final name of the organisation:

- Against Severe Suffering Foundation
- [One Hundred Year Plan](#) Foundation
- Robust Future Foundation
- (Suffering) Prevention Foundation
- Alleviate (Suffering) Foundation
- Suffering Abolition Foundation
- Against Extreme Suffering Foundation (this is the working title currently)
- [Purple Pill](#) Foundation
- Abolition Global
- Suffering Alleviation and Prevention Foundation

See this FB [discussion](#) (on a name for the now-know-as Center for Reducing Suffering) for many good points.

Concerns

Does “foundation” sound wealthy? Could this reduce the amount of spontaneous donations since people may think that a foundation may already be properly funded?

Activities

AESF would operate one fund or several thematic funds to support others’ and conduct its own projects related to achieving the [mission](#).

The fund part of AESF may be similar to [Effective Altruism Funds](#) in presentation at least.

Potentially, specific interventions may be delegated to spin-off charities, including possibly charities incubated in a program analogous to Charity Entrepreneurship’s [Incubation Program](#).

Project types

- Feasibility analysis
 - Literature reviews
 - Simulations
 - Forecasting
 - Etc.
- Awareness raising
 - Guest writing
- Theoretical research
- Pilot interventions and PoCs (proof of concept)
- ? Charity incubation
- ? Training programs
 - for young adults: see [Future Foundations](#) as an example of the concept
- ? Consulting
- ? [XPRIZE](#) or “[M](#) Prize” like contests
- Etc.

Project areas

- WAS
 - Gene drives
 - Contraception
 - Relatively small interventions
 - E.g. infertile screw flies
 - Replacing wild habitats
 - ? Civilised “wild parks”

- Factory animal farming
- Animal testing alternatives
 - Ex vivo
 - Software simulations
 - Organ/body-on-a-chip
- [Cluster headaches](#)
 - Genetics thereof
- Pain relief
 - Genetics of low pain sensitivity
 - [Anti-tolerance drugs](#)
 - Access to pain relief
- [MBE](#)
 - Genetics of [malevolent](#) traits
 - Genotype of a compassionate systemiser
- Future civilisation
 - Can humanity give rise to a suffering-prioritising civilisation?
 - Interventions to prevent psychopathy & sadism
- Support aligned organisations
 - Create a network

Fundraising

AESF would try to find donors who wouldn't otherwise donate to any of aligned organisations or even to any EA charity. This way AESF would reduce drawing money from the common pool and would even increase the pool (by bringing new donors and via its own fund).

Similarly, a priority would be given to grants that aligned organisations have not applied for.

Reaching donors

- [Google Ad Grants](#) ?

Impact

Theory of change

TODO make a diagram and also note how each step towards change could be measured

Example ToCs:

- [ACE](#) (Objectives section)
- [Rethink Priorities](#)
- [Leverage Research](#) (this one is *huge*)
- [Convergence Analysis](#)
- [The Happier Lives Institute](#)

Limiting factors

For particular interventions, what are limiting factors and how do they constrain the impact despite the scope of a given problem?

[Endgame](#)

The organisation will exist as long as it effectively contributes to the [mission](#) or until it cannot be sustained.

Still, the concept of endgame could be applied to AESF's interventions and spin-off organisations. In fact, AESF would open source and otherwise seek adoption of its research and interventions, except for cases of significant risk of accidental or intentional harm.

For example, a spin-off organisation that has successfully implemented an intervention could open source all of the relevant findings and implementation protocols and then seek wider adoption of the intervention (e.g. by other organisations or a government). To facilitate successful adoptions and expansions, that organisation could serve as a knowledge hub and provide consulting about the intervention.

Evaluation & measurement

To ensure that the organisation contributes to the mission in an effective way, AESF will adapt various evaluation practices.

Metrics

AESF will maintain an explicit effort to not drift towards metrics that are easy to measure but are very approximate correlates of impact. For example, it will give most weight to metrics closer to the final steps of its [theory of change](#) (as in general shorter distances in (putative) causal chains mean higher probability of the inferred causality being true).

Transparency & feedback

As a way to cultivate epistemic health, AESF will be deliberately open to feedback and criticism and will assess those for potential change in the organisation.

One example of such practices can include annual impact surveys (see Rethink Priorities' [impact survey](#)).

AESF will also practice transparency (except cases where research may be misused) to make itself easier to evaluate by external agents.

Organisation

Countries of registration

A related [question](#) on the EA Forum.

Since registering as a 501(c)(3) organisation [may not](#) require US citizenship, and since being tax-exempt in the US may be important due to the country's having a large number of potential wealthy donors, AESF may seek to register there.

Generally, as of January 2021, it is not clear in what country to register AESF. The main reason is that the only person who is considering founding the organisation (Alex) has no citizenship or permanent visa in countries other than Russia⁴. (He is planning to relocate to the UK, but will be tied to a software engineering job for five years.)

Team & roles

In the beginning the team would consist of one or two founders and persons in research, operations, fundraising, and other roles.

The team would probably need to work on a volunteer basis until enough funds are secured.

Depending on the legal structure and other considerations, there may be an advisory board.

Cooperation

AESF will maintain a close contact with suffering-focused organisations like the [Center for Reducing Suffering](#), [Invincible Wellbeing](#) (IW), and the [Organisation for the Prevention of Intense Suffering](#). In particular, AESF will seek input on its major projects and try to work out possible disagreements and their source.

The organisation will also look for opportunities of joint projects where the partner organisations can complement each other.

Not least, AESF may fund work of the organisations.

⁴ Registering AESF in Russia would be arguably a bad choice, as in Putin's Russia some NGOs which receive money from foreign donors must be marked as "foreign agents" and have significant [restrictions](#).

And as [alluded to](#) in “Project areas” section, AESF may facilitate a tighter network for productive exchange in a form of online knowledge base, online meetings, and offline events.

Planning

Each year AESF would set a one-year plan defined in terms of AESF’s long-term goals (outlined in a multi-year plan). In turn, short-term planning (quarterly, say) would be set to accomplish the annual plan.

Team members would define their plans themselves, with a requirement that they together accomplish the one-year plan.

Task management

A task management tool like Trello or [Taiga](#) would be used within the team. All major tasks at different stages of progress would be visible to all team members.

[Pre-mortem](#)

TODO threats & mitigations

Seed funding

Examples of big foundations started w/ relatively few funds

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vancouver_Foundation#History

Alternatives to starting this organisation

- Joining [IW](#)
- Support (by donating or volunteering, for example) suffering-focused organizations like the [Center for Reducing Suffering](#), IW, & the [Organisation for the Prevention of Intense Suffering](#)

Next steps

Suggestions

- Form a team
- Start with a wiki outlining the domain of abolishing suffering
 - This partly overlaps w/ IW’s efforts to create a wiki about research directions to achieve sustainable wellbeing. So it’s worth reaching IW on their thoughts for potential collaboration.

- Start w/ AESF's website outlining the mission and interventions