

Czech Association for Effective Altruism was founded in 2016. We have created it as the equivalent of the local EA groups that quickly form around the world, especially in university towns.

As effective altruists, we are trying to seek the best ways to improve the world, using critical thinking and the scientific knowledge, and use our resources - money, time and skills - in the most effective way.

Local groups are an effective way to meet other like-minded people, and together we consider how we can most effectively improve the world, ideally with regard to our situation (eg political situation, price research, and other). The local altruists groups coordinate their activities and, for example, organize awareness lectures for the public and effective fundraisers for charity.

The first major activity of our group was organizing the conference [EAGxPrague2016](#). It had 122 participants and in the course of organizing it, the association grown from three founders to 15 members.

In 2017 we managed to carry out or start several relatively large projects:

1. Two workshops of applied rationality, in cooperation with the Berkeley-based Center for Applied rationality (CFAR). The Association provided all the logistics. Workshops were attended by 60 participants from many countries (not only) from Europe.
2. Project "Help effectively" founded due the strategic objective of promoting measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of the nonprofit sector. The project was supported in an incubator Social Impact Awards, successfully passed the incubation, and is working on the first impact evaluations.
3. The project "Effective Thesis" with a global focus seeks in collaboration with EA-aligned research organizations to offer students a diploma and other thesis topics with potentially large contribution to improving the world.

Number of members of the association has grown to ... and we held a public lecture. Given the increasing number of members we have, in order to achieve scalability, we elected Council of Association, which took over all decision-making functions outside of the General Assembly.

If we want our activities to really help the world as much as possible, they need to remain coordinated and well-planned. Strategic plan for 2017 in this regard proved very useful. Strategy for 2018 is an update of the plan, taking into account the development of many projects and many new information and experience. New opportunities and reality may, of course, change our plans, just as happened in 2017 with CFAR workshops.

Summary

This year, our organization will focus on the following areas:

- [Main activities, community building](#)

- The basic operation and growth of the Association. Increasing the skills and knowledge of existing members, finding new members, maintaining and activating existing members, occasional lectures.
- Coordination of the work of volunteers. Staffing management and coordinators for the association.
- Greater involvement of the Association in the international EA community.
- Fundraising: Ensuring long-term financing of the association and projects.
- **Content**
 - Improving <http://www.efektivni-altruismus.cz>, translation of key materials into Czech.
 - Building a correct picture of the EA in the Czech media.
- ***Applied Rationality***
 - Ideally arrangement other European workshops applied rationality, in cooperation with CFAR.
 - LessWrong support the local community.
- Activities in research and academia
 - Effective Thesis Project.
 - Survey the possibility of establishing a new research institution focused on the most important problems of the long-term future of humanity (existential risk, AI safety, horizon-scanning new technologies), ideally in cooperation with partner academic institutions.
 - Organizing public lectures and attending conferences.
- Safety of strong artificial intelligence (AGI safety): We would like to organize a Summer *School of AGI Safety* with Czech and foreign participants. Because the safety of artificial intelligence is very young and less institutionalized area, mostly beginners must learn the basics themselves without textbooks or teachers. At the School of Safety AGI we want to enable faster involvement in research related to people with general quantitative education (mathematics, computer science, philosophy, etc.).
- Prioritization: Founding a project investigating the most effective options for altruist taking into account the Czech environment.
- **Social impact** assessment:
 - Keeping the project *Help effectively*
 - More generally support the quantitative approach to evaluating the success of socially beneficial projects by EA methodology.

The following sections describe our experience and peculiarities of the Czech environment, which we took into account in selecting these areas. In section specific areas we describe the specific projects, their implementation status and plans for the future in more details.

Peculiarities of the Czech environment

Effective altruism as a movement originated in relatively rich countries: the United Kingdom and the United States. Compared to their citizens Czechs have lower average salaries.

This means that in the Czech Republic it is much less effective to follow strategies called *earning to give* - work in highly paid positions in order to donate a large part of their earnings to charity. People simply do not earn as much in the Czech Republic.

On the other hand, due to low wages, relatively low income inequality and free study at public universities, the comparative advantage of the Czech Republic is *cheap skilled labor*, cheap *research, development and various service works* that can contribute to the global community. (E.g. the monthly salary of very good PhD in maths or CS could be as low as 800 euro)

Research on the important areas is one of the ways to help the world. An example of a public research with good impacts is the development of resources against tropical diseases. However, we believe that there are areas where research efforts are still much smaller their importance. Thanks to the low cost, we believe research on *global problems* is one of the most effective ways to help. The Czech Republic hasin [*a comparative advantage*](#) research: if the community of effective altruists choose what to contribute, Prague would probably not be the place for raising money to finance philanthropy, but rather a place where work on research, development, or various service activities.

Another area where we probably have a comparative advantage is organizing events - eg. the costs of holding a conference or workshop with european reach in the Czech Republic are significantly lower than for example in Berlin or London. Prague has well connection to many UK airports and is within 4-5 hours driving or using a bus from mayor part of Germany.

More detailed quantitative assessment of our capabilities should be the subject of the "prioritization".

Selection of areas

Our organization is not yet even two years old and therefore we are not yet really stable and established organization. To achieve the greatest positive impact, it is necessary to ensure our future existence. Therefore, our main priority is *community building and mobilization of members*.

The experience of 2017 shows that work together is far more effective if the work of volunteers is coordinated by someone organization can devote at least about 0.6 workload. Last year, such activities were performed by President of the Association. The amount of time necessary makes it difficult to fill such position by a volunteer, which creates the need for a coordinator / chairman typecast as paid position. In 2018 we got grant allowing to hire a full-time coordinator from a foreign donor.

An important aspect of the Association's task is to build members capabilities and improve their skills. Global Strategy of Effective altruism movement is currently fairly complex topic, but we

need to maintain high level of knowledge inside the Association, to enable effective coordination both within the association and externally on a global scale.

In addition to building a community of already involved effective altruists also need to introduce effective philosophy to new people. To reduce the barriers we continue *to create information materials about effective altruism in Czech*.

These areas are "meta-activity" based mainly on the growth and promotion of movement. In 2016 we decided to also work on other activities, that are aimed at more direct impact.

These activities show that we are serious and we are not just building a debating club. From the outside perspective *we do not want* to act as one of many associations whose only activity is its own propagation and expansion.

We are fully aware that it is *more useful* to keep the organization that will be active the next 10 years and each year devotes to effective work equivalent to 100,000 CZK than in 2018 to donate the equivalent of 300 000 CZK and then fall apart. In the long term, therefore in 2018 a meta-activity *building movement* is more important than direct work.

Nevertheless, the direct work is important, as it brings the following:

- *Engagement of members and credibility*
- *Information*
- *New capabilities*
- *Contacts*

Community building

Main activity of our association in this area will be *organizing regular meet-ups*, preferably with a frequency of one month. We would like to take advantage of the experience of existing foreign groups and accordingly select the appropriate structure. At the meet-ups we will organize an informal discussions about effective altruism, lectures (recorded or live) and other activities. We would also like to organize *public lectures* and event on university grounds. Their aim is to inform the general public or specific target groups (eg students selected universities).

Fundraising

As described above, functioning of the Association is more effective with a paid coordinator / chairman. There are also the costs of lectures and conferences, which implies the need to secure the financing of the association. In this area we are considering a number of activities oriented toward to both domestic and foreign sources.

Content

One subproject is publication of Czech content, and continual *improvement of*.

<http://www.efektivni-altruismus.cz>

We would like to make this site a page that *attracts* visitors, it inspires a great opportunity to help others and gradually learn all the important concepts of EA. Content in Czech language should be enough incentive to visitor look further and read the detailed sources in English. A structure of the site was most suitable toward this goal will require careful design and some user experience and copywriting expertise.

In addition to producing our own content we would like to support translations of key publications such as Doing Good Better. Especially useful it could be for example informing high school students before graduation on choosing a career, so they can choose the college rationally with regard to long-term strategy rather than a "random selection".

Applied rationality

By "applied Rationality" we mean the use of cognitive sciences, behavioral economics, and so on, pointing to systematic distortion and errors of human reasoning, to improve this reasoning. The association cooperates in this area with the Center for Applied Rationality, which is the leading organizations striving for the transfer of scientific knowledge into practice teaching of rationality toward high-impact groups.

Meaning of rationality applied for effective altruism is two fold - both for internal decision-making of members and the association it is crucial to be able to make decisions rationally.

Second, improve decision-making processes and promoting critical thinking seems promising area, allowing potentially eg. a better global collaboration and better functioning of insititutions.

In addition to working with CFAR we would like to continue in cooperation with the Growjob Institute, especially in the promotion of critical thinking and rationality towards the general public and in schools.

Social impact assessment

Currently, donors and providers of grants and subsidies (or in the case of social entrepreneurship investors) are increasingly demanding information about what a specific impact will and intervention produce if supported by their financial resources, and especially how successful such intervention really is and will be. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is

experiencing rapid growth in the international environment, and our objective is to promote knowledge and use of these approaches in the Czech Republic.

The main activity in this area is the project "Pomahej Efektivně", which primarily offers donors audits the effectiveness of their chosen organization. The projects currently has several customers among the non-profit organizations. Our ambitions for 2018 are more maintenance, however, should find a suitable team leader, would consider coming stronger growth project or department into an independent organization.

The long-term aim of the association is to more to build an awareness, and position itself as an independent consultant, to which both the NGOs and donors could turn when he realize that it is in their best interest to apply the approaches to the SIA's own activities.

Research initiatives

in the field of research, we want to continue the global focus of the project Effective Thesis, which tries to connect students seeking bachelor's and master themes with EA related research organizations.

Our reasoning leads to the conclusion that support of research is an activity that can have global consequences. As particularly promising in this respect we consider and prioritize research on global existential risks, especially the safety of artificial intelligence (AGI). In terms of EA, it seems that these areas are generally neglected in proportion to their potential impacts. Eventual successful development of AGI has the potential to transform the future of all mankind more than e.g. nuclear energy. We want to reach students interested in artificial intelligence by for example specialized lectures. Another potentially important area that are as improving institutional decisions, and issues of global coordination.

Probably our biggest initiative in the field of research will *AGI School of Safety*, to which we will invite Czech and foreign participants. Because the safety of artificial intelligence is young and little institutionalized area, the beginners usually have to learn themselves without textbooks or teachers. At the School of Safety AGI we want to give newcomers a boost.

A relatively simple way we can support students in valuable research fields are grants - such as announcing rewards for bachelor's and master's thesis or articles in important areas.

Finally, as activity on the border between the research and growth we will reach Czech academic community and try to spread awareness about topics that have great potential to improve the world.

Conclusion

We are relatively certain that we can raise funds to finance basic activities focused on community building. The success of other projects (eg. School of Safety AGI) will depend on the amount of time that our members will be able to contribute, and financing options. The amount that would have allowed us this year to implement our projects in full, estimated at CZK 500 000.

It would be ideal if we could have some of our members employed at least part-time or otherwise compensated for, in order to devote more focused attention to the activities of the association - one person working full-time work does more than 10 people working tenth of productive time. We estimate that an equivalent of 3 persons work full time should meet the requirements of our projects for 2018.

If we are able to obtain more resources, we would like to expand our work - for example, towards our own research, direct addressing major donors, philanthropists and others. As an inspiration we can take the German [Foundation for effective altruism](#) and several of their spin-off organizations such as the [Institute Sentience](#). Our long-term dream is to build in the Czech Republic, the new center of effective altruism, working with existing centers.