

# EA + Giving What We Can Chapter Growth Mentor Guide



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## Introduction

Welcome to the EA + Giving What We Can Chapter growth team! You are going to be working on a project that has the potential to have an incredible impact! For just over 3 hours a week, your guidance can be the difference between a new Giving What We Can chapter succeeding or failing. Some rough calculations have led us to believe that a new chapter starting up should be valued at roughly 2 pledges<sup>1</sup>, so your actions could potentially produce over a hundred thousand dollars for effective charities!<sup>2</sup> This is an incredible impact, thanks so much for working with us to bring it about!

If you haven't done so already, feel free to join the [Mentor Facebook Group](#).

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<sup>1</sup> This is admittedly a difficult number to calculate- Many new chapters produce 3 or so members in their first year, and many large well established chapters have likely produced over 50 pledges over the 5 years they have been running. We think estimating the value of one well functioning chapter at 2 pledges helps to balance these considerations, as well as incorporating the benefits of having a well functioning chapter at a university.

<sup>2</sup> We generally value a pledge at around \$20,000 US. This is a great deal lower than how much the average earner would give away if they took the pledge (roughly, \$150,000 US). This drastic discount represents our desire to be conservative in evaluating the pledge, and to take into account counterfactual impact and attrition rates. Given this valuation of the pledge, and given that we value a chapter at 5 pledges, we should expect a chapter to produce \$100,000 US for effective charities

## What do Chapter Mentors Do?

Chapter Mentors work with Giving What We Can chapters who are just starting out. They do this by Skyping with them weekly in the early days of the committee, helping them find committee members, connecting them with other chapters. In general, mentors are people who are there to support people who are on the way to starting a new chapter.

## Who are Chapter Mentors?

You! Well, not just you- Chapter Mentors are generally individuals who have had first hand experience with chapters, often at their university. That being said, anyone can be a mentor- even people who have not themselves been in a chapter. The rest of this document will outline the main elements of being a Chapter Mentor. The most important character trait for a mentor is a strong desire to help new chapters, and a willingness to follow the best practices in doing so.

## Why is this important?

Both Giving What We Can and other EA Organizations have found that the most difficult time for chapters is in their first year, particularly the first term. We believe that one of the major barriers for new chapters thriving in new cities and universities is that individuals who would be interested in starting a chapter feel overwhelmed by the difficulty of the task. We believe having someone who is experienced and supportive would be hugely beneficial in this process. Indeed we believe that this will be a key factor in determining whether or not a chapter is formed and sustained in many areas.

## Mentorship

We believe that the most important element of this role is mentorship- the general tendency to be friendly and supportive toward the individuals who are starting the chapter, while helping to guide them through the major pitfalls that often affect chapters just starting out. It is important to stress that this role is not a top-down imposition on new chapters- these chapters are still very much their own, we only want to help make them better.

***This tone of supporting chapters, not dictating to them, is a key element of our approach!***

## Getting in Contact With New Chapter Heads

Your role will begin when you are put in contact with one person or several people who are interested in starting a chapter at a particular University or in a particular City. For the time being these individuals will be found by Giving What We Can Central, although we are considering expanding the mentorship role to include this in the future (see [beta]). After being introduced to these individuals, feel free to make some small talk over email. There is no need to make every interaction restrictively formal, if anything received wisdom is that a bit of informality will help build rapport and make the whole process function more smoothly. Feel free to talk about hobbies interests, backgrounds, and how you both heard about EA. In this first few emails, it's important to schedule your first Skype call. Either do this by emailing back and forth, or use the excellent online calendar [Calendly](#) (makes setting these up a breeze!). It also is a good idea to link them to the [Chapters Resource Folder](#) and in particular to draw their attention to the Starter Packet

## The First Skype Call

In the first skype call it is important to communicate your excitement about them starting a chapter and to aim to get a good rapport with the chapter member (an easy task for you I imagine!) After chatting for a bit, it would be helpful to fill out a Meeting document using the [Giving What We Can Meeting Template](#). Generally, it is easiest to keep all of the meetings in the same document (simply copying and pasting the template for each new meeting)

## Organizing Skype Calls/Meetings

It is generally advisable to have the next Skype call one week after the first call. Try and make some plans for what you want to accomplish in the next week, and add them to the 'actionable items' list. Agree on a time for your next Skype call near the end of your first one. Once the chapter starts having a more solid committee, it is less important to make contact every week, and you can schedule calls every other week or every month at your discretion. Again, organizing calls through [Calendly](#) can help keep things simple!

## Finding A Committee

In many cases, you will only have one or two individuals who are really interested in starting a chapter. In these cases the most important first step is to get a committee. There are many good ways of going about doing this, to quote from the Starter Packet:

**Who should you ask to help you?** Here are some options that have worked well in the past:

- Current members of GWWC that live near you. Ask your chapter coordinator to check if there are any.
- Philosophical utilitarians/consequentialists that you know personally.
- Friends/acquaintances who you think are likely to want to help.
- Quantitatively inclined people that you know personally, like math/physics folks.
- People who are already involved in poverty-focused organizations.

Keep in mind that these are just 'broad brush' ideas, so don't let them limit you! Talk to anyone and everyone you think might be interested in alleviating poverty or making a difference.

**The next step is to ask the contacts you just got on board to go through the same process as you.** Hopefully, they can find some additional people to help you out.

I think going through the individual's course or personal social circle is the best place to start. In addition to this list, Giving What We Can central will be doing outreach for each of the startup chapters, and will hopefully send other interested individuals in that direction.

We are currently developing template emails that you can encourage the new chapter head to send out to Philosophy, Economics, Politics departments, as well as Student Hubs. Feel free to work on changing these with them to fit their context!

### **Easy Event to Attract People**

Sam, the head of the Manchester Chapter, once held a really simple event (with relatively little prep time) showing Peter Singer's TED talk and fielding questions afterwards. The key objective of the event was to get people who would start with him to join a chapter. He openly stated this fact at the end of the Singer TED talk before fielding questions. From that events he got around 7 people who were really interested in joining him in forming a chapter. He followed up with these individuals shortly after the event and from this formed his first committee.

## **Pre-Launch Event**

In general we should make sure that chapters aren't too eager to rush to their big launch event.

Before the event, we should be sure that they have a big enough/active enough committee to organise an event with an attendance around 300. We should also make sure that they have plans for follow up events to keep the momentum going for their chapter.

To help build the capacities necessary to host a big launch event, it can be good to take it slow, and host a number of smaller, less difficult events when starting off- these can go anywhere from a giving game, to inviting a smaller speaker, hosting a debate, or having one of the committee members give a presentation themselves. The main purposes of these early events is to gain a bit more visibility, and importantly to find new committee members, so marketing to people who are particularly interested in these messages (philosophers, etc) can be a good idea.

## **Resources**

The main place to get resources is the [Chapters Resource Folder](#), this will be updated further in the next few weeks. In particular it will be worth pointing out the poster and pamphlets the chapters can use to promote Giving What We Can. A new pamphlet design, and a new fillable poster will be completed in the next few weeks.

## Customizing your Approach

It is important to customize your approach to the kind of chapter you are mentoring. Some chapters have a few very driven people who prefer a hands off approach. Others are being started by individuals who really appreciate support and guidance. Regardless of which kind of chapter leader you are dealing with, a few structural notes are always appreciated:

- Make clear actionable items in each meeting- invite the chapter head to fill out their action items before or during the meeting
- Set dates for actionable items, follow up on those whose time have passed.

If you feel that the chapter is doing really well, and would appreciate a more hands off approach, feel free to space out your skype meetings, and have them see the meetings as an opportunity to share with you their plans and their accomplishments, and to get feedback. In either case, just try to communicate clearly about what everyone's preferences are so that you all stay on the same page - if in doubt, ask!

## Community Chapters Versus University Chapters

There is an important difference in running a university versus a community chapters. Community chapters have been, thus far, primarily focused on social gatherings. This reflects the fact that most of the people who are part of Community chapters a quite short on time, reflecting the fact that they are usually employed full time, and thus can only meet on evenings and weekends.

In the next few weeks we will be developing a guide for best practices for community chapters. Until that goes live, here are a few suggestions:

- Have regular meet-ups in a social location, like a bar or a coffee shop.

- Consistency is important, having local people interested in EA or Giving What We Can know that there will consistently be meet ups every three weeks/month will help to develop more of a core, which people can build out of.
- Post your meet ups on: <http://www.meetup.com/> to get new members
  - This is a paid service, and central would be happy to reimburse chapters if they are worried about the cost.
- Have a facebook group for the chapter, and post regularly, both with the monthly events and with posts from the main Giving What We Can facebook page (also encourage them to post any local news they feel is interesting!)
- Have them post the facebook events for their meet-ups on other pages

A great guide by Sam from the London Chapter here:

[http://effective-altruism.com/ea/ey/how\\_i\\_organise\\_a\\_growing\\_effective\\_altruism\\_group/](http://effective-altruism.com/ea/ey/how_i_organise_a_growing_effective_altruism_group/)