

Impact Grantmaking

[Training for Good](#)

Summary

Impact Grantmaking (IG) is a part-time, online programme which trains people in effective grantmaking practises & then provides them with the opportunity to recommend grants worth \$50,000 (i.e. they are given minimum \$50,000 to regrant).

Participants are expected to commit at least 10 hrs per week, over 8 weeks. In 2022, ~20 or less people will participate. Participants will typically have some level of experience / expertise within the area they would like to work as grantmakers.

Note: Our “beta test” of this programme will require participants to commit at least 5 hours per week, over 8 weeks. Participants in our beta test will also not be given access to regranting funds. However, capstone projects will likely involve a recommendation of how funds should be allocated. See [beta test syllabus](#).

Goals

Goal: Create impact-focused grantmakers in important cause areas (ie. add grantmaking talent to the pool).

Specifically, out of a cohort of ~20 or less, this might mean that within 6 months of completing the programme:

- ~1 person employed at an EA grantmaking organisation (eg. FTX Foundation, Open Phil, EA Funds)
- ~1-3 employed at an EA-adjacent grantmaking organisation (eg. Schmidt Futures)
- ~3-5 employed at a family foundation (not necessarily EA-aligned)

Theory of Change

- Training for Good runs training programme
- Trainees gain relevant skills & network. Demonstrate competency & good judgement.
- Trainees recommend a regranting of \$50,000 to an organisation / individual that large funders wouldn't have identified
- Trainees get hired as grantmakers (or through some other means gain ability to deploy additional funding)
- Additional grantmakers in a cause area
- More high quality opportunities get funded (either through more / better vetting of opportunities, identifying opportunities in their network which other grantmakers would miss or because capacity is freed up for active grantmaking)

→ More good done

Overview of programme (very provisional)

☰ Impact Grantmaking Curriculum

Week 1: Intro to Grantmaking

- [Grantmaking as a career path](#)
- [Grantmaking Process](#) / Shallow Investigations
- [Interview Skills & Feedback & input from busy people](#)
- [Hits-Based vs Evidence-Based Giving](#)

Week 2: Shallow Investigations

- [Quantifying Impact](#) (part 1)
- [Communication & Reasoning Transparency](#)
- [Bayesian Reasoning](#)
- [Main project](#): “Shallow investigation” into their chosen problem area (which will involve minimum 3 conversations)

Week 3: Theory of Change (& Strategic Thinking)

- [Theory of Change \(and crucial considerations\)](#)
- [Strategic Thinking \(at wider ecosystem level\)](#)
- [Active v Passive Grantmaking](#)

Week 4: Landscape Analysis (& Coordination)

- [Landscape Analysis](#)
- [Coordinating With Other Funders](#)
- [Fermi Estimates & BOTECs](#)
- [Main project](#): “landscape analysis” of their chosen problem area

Week 5: Quantifying Impact

- [Quantifying Impact](#) (part 2)
- [Assessing people](#)
- [Forecasting & Calibration](#)
- [Cost-benefit analysis](#)

Week 6: Weighing Evidence

- [Research](#)
- [Evaluating evidence](#)

- [Weighing Evidence](#)
- Main project: intervention report within their chosen problem area (alternative: external evaluation of a organisation, similar to [this](#))

Week 7 & 8

- Capstone Project: Produce report recommending what to do with \$50,000 within their problem area

Average Week

Core	Name	Description	Time (each)
	Readings & videos	Articles & videos from sources such as Open Philanthropy Project, Charity Entrepreneurship Foundation Program, etc. Bespoke content will also be created as appropriate.	2 hours
	Project (main)	Independent project focused on building key grantmaking skills (typically through a more in-depth evaluation of a real-world charity).	3 hours
	Project (sub)	Independent project focused on building key grantmaking skills.	2 hours
	Q&A	A 1 hour Q&A with a relevant expert (eg a grantmaker / researcher / expert in one of the cause areas)	1 hour
	Group Discussion	A large-group discussion focused on a topic related to the week's main project.	1 hours
Total Time (Core only)			9 hours
Optional Extras	Readings & videos	Articles & videos from sources such as Open Philanthropy Project, Charity Entrepreneurship Foundation Program, etc. Bespoke content will also be created as appropriate.	2 hours
	1-1	A 1-1 social with someone else on the programme.	0.5 hours
	Project (sub)	Independent project focused on building key grantmaking skills.	2 hours
Total Time (Core + Optional)			13.5 hours

Why this might be a bad idea

- **Could waste people's time.** The candidates we're going after for this training programme are cause area experts or entrepreneurial-types. They likely have other good options available to them (or are already in high impact careers) so the counterfactuals of their time could be high. If we don't add value to them, there's a chance of this programme being net negative.
- **Could add noise** to the grantmaker hiring pool → maybe a graduate of our programme (Amy) looks more promising than someone who didn't go through our programme (Ben) and gets hired. But Ben would actually be much better than Amy if they spent the equivalent amount of time practising & learning about grantmaking.
- **Could teach "bad practises"** to the next generation of grantmakers. The content of our training programme could just be bad. In addition to this, it could give a false sense of security in these bad practices to trainees - "I've gone through a grantmaking training programme, so I know what I'm talking about". Might be also be important things missing from this programme.
- **Could create a homogenous approach** to grantmaking within the next generation of grantmakers. (It could be argued that the ideal approach to distributing funds would be multiple grantmakers making decisions based on different tools / heuristics. Each approach could lead to different things being funded. The aggregation of ALL these approaches could result in a more diverse set of things being funded than by taking a single approach, which could lead to more "hits", ie. more impact than a single approach.)
- **Could just be worse than other ways of developing grantmaking talent** (eg. mentorship from existing grantmakers, working in impact investing (?))
- **Might not actually lead to them becoming grantmakers** → there's a bit of a gap between "attending training programme" and "getting a job in an EA / optimising foundation". It's not clear how people will transition from completing this programme to working as grantmakers.
- [Probably loads of other stuff I've missed]