

# Introduction

We all want to be the very best versions of ourselves. But it is difficult to know which actions will best help us fulfil our potential to create a better world and to keep trying when progress gets tough. [80,000 Hours](#), [GiveWell](#) and online Effective Altruism (EA) communities provide powerful support, but many of us still feel a lack of direction and motivation, particularly once we have settled into our careers. There is much to be gained from sharing knowledge, ideas, connections and encouragement within local EA communities, including an increase in talent working on [top global issues](#) - possibly the largest [bottleneck](#) of the EA movement.

London is home to one of the [most concentrated and fastest-growing](#) EA communities in the world, as well as to many globally important institutions in politics, finance, tech, charity, academia and other areas. Already in London there are community leaders, events and career networks that are providing inspiration, advice and other support to people engaging with EA ideas.

Two experienced EA community builders are keen to work part-time supporting the EA community in London next year, under the guidance of others who have been growing and strengthening this community for the past 4 years. Effective Altruism London is seeking £33,000 by 8th December 2017 to fund this work for 2018. The purpose of this document is to outline our plan for 2018, as well as to provide other information and considerations relevant to anyone considering Effective Altruism London as a giving opportunity.

This document is mainly written for an audience familiar with EA. For an introduction to EA see [here](#), and for reasons why supporting the EA movement can be a particularly effective way to do good see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). But in a nutshell: EA is a global movement of people who have huge ambition to make the world a better place. They do not settle for making a difference; they want to make the most difference. They are passionate about doing the most good first, and particular causes and careers second - they switch their focus according to what the evidence and careful reasoning suggest is the most impactful, not the most rewarding. They see the challenge of prioritising when there are so many problems in the world and so few resources at their disposal, yet they have the audacity to try. They anticipate threats and opportunities in uncertain futures and do their best to help humanity steer a good course. And by drawing members of this movement together, we can help them to learn from, motivate and support each other to achieve far more than they could alone.

-- Holly Morgan, Sam Hilton and David Nash (28th October 2017)

## Summary

Our focus for 2018 will be to:

**Develop our capacity to provide community support for London's aspiring effective altruists in starting and leading high-impact careers and groups.**

We plan to have two part-time members of staff working on this. Our Community Director will aim to maximise attendance at focused EA events (such as career workshops, EA Journalism meetings etc.) and our Strategy Director will lead on strategy and supporting the highest-impact careers/groups.

The main costs of this work will be **1.4 person-years** and **£32,945**, broken down as:

- Community Director ([David Nash](#)), 3 days per week, £21,500pa pro rata
- Strategy Director ([Holly Morgan](#) unless a more suitable candidate is found through our recruitment round), 4 days per week, £21,000pa pro rata
- Miscellaneous expenses (event costs etc.)

We will measure our impact by tracking:

METRIC	ESTIMATE
Qualitative <b>case studies</b> of success	-
Repeat <b>attendances</b> at focused EA events/meetings (this tells us something like, "the number of times we've added value to a member of the EA community, at the level of a typical EA event that makes them want to attend another")	390
<b>Groups</b> or high-impact projects started	10
<a href="#">Impact-Adjusted Significant Plan Changes</a> (IASPCs)	110
Of which Giving What We Can <a href="#">pledges</a> (~ <a href="#">£55,000</a> to top charities)	13
Of which successful <a href="#">80,000 Hours</a> coaching referrals	-

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# Background

## On Effective Altruism London

The EA community in London has been growing steadily over the last 4 years. In June 2016, the community funded Sam Hilton to spend a year building the community. The focus of this year was on raising awareness of EA, getting people engaged with the community and supporting and inspiring them to make their behaviour more altruistic and effective.

## Our impact so far

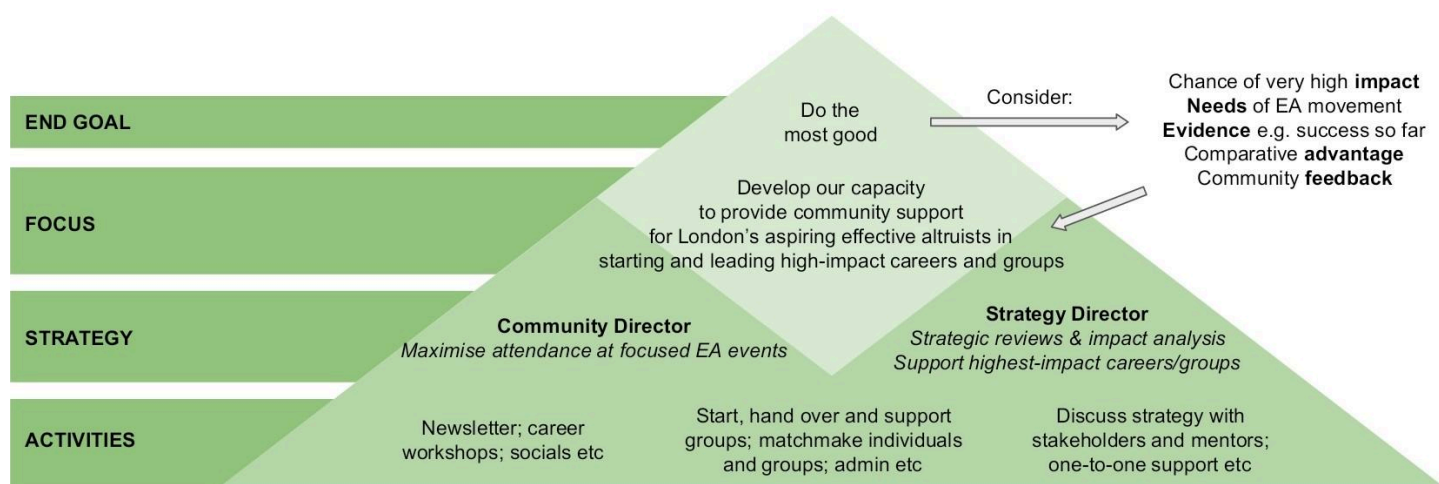
We estimate that over this year we caused 900 people to attend our events, 240 people to attend multiple events, 175 small but significant changes to behaviour or beliefs, 12 Giving What We Can [pledges](#) and 6 other large (pledge-level) behaviour changes; we also supported 7 new EA sub-communities in London. With a direct financial cost per pledge-equivalent of around £1,500, we estimate that we are in the same ball-park but slightly less effective than the more established EA organisations doing movement-building work.

A full write-up of this work and the impact we had - including examples of individuals and sub-communities supported - can be found in our [impact assessment](#).

# Plans

## A new focus for a new year

We have learned a lot in the past year and we think that by choosing a new focus we can lead to even more impact on the world.



## Focus

For the next year our focus will be to:

**Develop our capacity to provide community support for London's aspiring effective altruists in starting and leading high-impact careers and groups**

What do we mean by this?

- **“focus”** - 80-90% of our activity; remaining 10-20% maximising impact in other ways
- **“develop our capacity”** - prioritise activities that put us in a better position to support the community in future years e.g. starting a community database, personal skill-building, gathering data relating to what does and doesn't work
- **“community support”** - support that leverages our comparative advantage (over online support) of face-to-face access, particularly in groups

- **“aspiring effective altruists”** - people for whom doing good is a major goal in their life, who are open to changing their focus - including at the level of causes and careers - if presented with sufficient evidence and reasoned argument to, and who are already aware of EA
- **“high-impact”** - according to research from the global EA movement, with a focus on the highest-impact e.g. working on one of 80,000 Hours’ [top causes](#)
- **“groups”** - includes sub-communities, ongoing projects and budding organisations

We arrived at this focus by considering the following five factors:

- **Importance** - If EA London continues to develop and grow with this focus, it could be hugely impactful in the long-run as an incubator for EA projects, organisations and career networks in London (see the “Potential for growth” section below for more).
- **Neglectedness** - This focus addresses the main current (and probably [long-run](#)) bottleneck in the global EA community as we see it - a need for more redirection of talent within the community towards top global issues.
- **Tractability** - Effective Altruism London has had some success in this area already despite it not being our main focus thus far (see [impact report](#) from last year).
- **Comparative advantage** -
  - *EA local group* - Face-to-face support is plausibly much more effective than online support at sustaining/increasing altruistic motivation, and in many cases (e.g. facilitated networking at events) it is also a faster way to exchange relevant information regarding effectiveness.
  - *London* - London is home to many globally important institutions and so is a key location for people working on top global issues.
  - *The EA community in London* - Our community is of sufficient size to make direct outreach by Effective Altruism London staff a less effective strategy than indirect outreach through supporting community members to start EA groups in their existing workplace/common interest/religious etc. communities.
  - *Effective Altruism London* - Last year we established the administrative and legal infrastructure to financially support people who want to dedicate a large amount of time to developing the EA community in London.
- **Community support** - We took this list of factors and our initial plans to an open strategy meeting on September 24th attended by 26 members of the EA London community, and adapted our plans to reflect their feedback.

## Strategy

This focus will guide our decision-making over the course of the next year.

We expect to have two part-time staff and each of them will approach the focus in a different way:

Community Director	Strategy Director
<i>Maximise attendance at focused EA events</i>	<i>Reviews and highest-impact opportunities</i>
<p>The Community Director will try to maximise a core metric, specifically:</p> <p><i>Number of repeat attendances we've caused at focused EA events/meetings in London</i></p> <p>Note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By "repeat attendances" we mean the total attendance at events minus the unique attendance at events (as a proxy for the number of times we've added value to someone)</li> <li>• The metric includes one-to-one meetings</li> <li>• By "focused EA events/meetings" we mean events and meetings aimed at aspiring effective altruists (as defined above) that are focused on increasing the impact of attendees in a predefined area (e.g. software development, personal productivity, <a href="#">far future</a> etc.)</li> <li>• The metric includes attendance attributable to us but not necessarily at events hosted or even attended by us (e.g. if we direct someone to</li> </ul>	<p>Rather than optimising for a core metric the Strategy Director will use their judgement to support the highest-impact careers and groups.</p> <p>In practice we expect this to mean that they will be starting and supporting groups alongside the Community Director, but will invest extra time and support into the highest-impact groups and career plans that arise. They will coach, mentor, support or lead the people involved in such projects.</p> <p>As well as this the Strategy Director will take the lead on reviewing plans, assessing impact and lessons learned, and setting targets and direction for themselves and the Community Director.</p>

the EA Finance group in London, or we support someone in organising their own events)	
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Both roles will involve a large amount of exploration and “**little bets**” - choosing small projects to work on and evaluating the extent to which they contribute to our focus. The hope is to build an understanding of how local EA groups - particularly Effective Altruism London - can support local aspiring effective altruists in having significantly more impact.

We will have **reviews every 4 months**. We will hold an open strategy meeting, at which we will assess the evidence of impact for our activities, re-consider our focus and strategy, brainstorm new activities and re-prioritise for the coming months.

While the Community Director and Strategy Director will be focused on their respective areas as outlined above, we expect there to be some crossover in activity where one person’s expertise is particularly relevant to the other’s goals.

## Activities

Our new focus means that compared to last year we will put less effort into outreaching EA and also less effort into immediate altruistic behaviour change or donations (for example, we expect to do less: tabling at fairs, introductory talks at other groups and organisations, meeting new people somewhat interested in EA one-on-one, external publicity for events, asking event attendees if they have or will change their behaviour etc.).

In considering activities that best align with our new focus, we can take some pointers from our work last year.

In the past year we have caused a number of [career changes and new projects](#), and much of what we did to cause this was facilitating networking. We put people considering moving out of teaching in touch with one another, we connected people to high-impact job opportunities, we ran events for people in policy, we directed influential people to CEA etc.

This suggests the following basic theory of change:



## **Bring together aspiring effective altruists**

**+ Focus them on doing more good**

**→ More good gets done**

The Centre for Effective Altruism [sums up](#) this approach nicely: *“Our current priority is to take people who are already interested in the ideas in effective altruism and help them become more engaged. By bringing the community together, we hope to connect talented candidates to promising organizations, encourage those with the right skills to pursue risky but high expected value paths and facilitate new research ideas and partnerships.”*

## **Example activities**

Under our new focus, strategy and theory of change we are considering:

### **Meta**

- Database of community members (to facilitate better matchmaking of people to each other, to support we can provide e.g. with careers advice, and to projects we'd like to see; also to assist with impact reporting)
- Strategic reviews (e.g. impact analysis; risk management i.e. minimising the chance that actions we take have a [significant negative impact](#) on the EA movement or the wider world; survey community members formally and informally about their needs and project ideas)
- Fundraising
- Read the [EA newsletters](#) (to inform strategy and to pass on the most relevant updates to the community)
- Outsource high-impact opportunities wherever possible (e.g. group management; one-to-one meetings with new people interested in EA; pledge drive)

### **Community-wide**

- Socials (e.g. continue existing monthly pub socials and occasional picnics; additional socials in settings more conducive to focused conversation e.g. cafes, restaurants, hikes; retreats)
- Events that help aspiring effective altruists better understand and apply core EA ideas (e.g. Getting Started With Effective Altruism events; beginner-intermediate career workshops; donation discussions)
- Where impact of support is high, reactively supporting existing London-based EA organisations, groups, projects and events with publicity, feedback, event co-hosting,

connections etc. (e.g. EA Global; Founders Pledge; SCI; Finance; High Impact Policy Engine; Future Generations APPG; Effective Animal Altruism London; student groups; Effective Education; Climate Change; Quakers; research methodology reading group)

- Proactively building connections between related sub-communities (e.g. continue to host meetings of EA student group leaders; an event for staff from top poverty charities, and perhaps donors)
- Maintain monthly newsletter (mainly to connect community members to relevant job opportunities, projects and events in London)
- Building a vibrant and cohesive community (e.g. supporting flatsharing and coworking; being mindful of the demographics of our community; ensuring events feel exciting, fresh and welcoming)

### **New groups**

- Careers
  - Industries (e.g. marketers; journalists; software developers; economists)
  - Organisations (e.g. host a workplace activism workshop)
- Causes
  - Support the development of the new Far Future group in London
- Research groups
  - Support members of the Equality & Justice and Effective Volunteering research projects to run another in a high-impact area
- Other (e.g. support group; self-improvement)

### **One-to-one**

- With us (e.g. career coaching)
- With each other (e.g. run an accountability buddy system)

## **Roadmap until mid-January**

Until we hire a Strategy Director in January, we will spend the remainder of our first year's funding on David Nash who will continue to work three days a week on Effective Altruism London. For details of what David will be doing in this time and how this fits in with our plans for next year, see [here](#).

## Who will do this work?

Since its launch 4 years ago Effective Altruism London has been led by Sam Hilton. Sam is now returning to the Civil Service but has taken on the formal role of trustee.

*[N.B. The remainder of this section was written by Sam.]*

We have two fantastic staff members lined up.



**Community Director: David Nash** – has been volunteering with EA London for 3 years and has essentially been running EA London for the past 5 months whilst Sam has been looking to return to the civil service. David is a bastion of competence and gets events organised and other stuff done with gusto. Will plan to work 3 days a week.



**Strategic Director: Holly Morgan** – previously ran The Life You Can Save and helped found EA London 4 years ago and has volunteered with EA London in various capacities since then including acting as a Trustee and developing the strategy set out here. Holly is highly charismatic and has a superb understanding of the EA ideas and the global EA community. Will plan to work 4 days a week.

[Please note that whilst Holly is highly capable of doing the job well it is possible that better candidates for this work are available. As Holly was previously a Charity Trustee of Effective Altruism London, we believe it is our due diligence as a charity to have an open and fair competition for the post. If you would like to apply for this role please see details [here](#).]

## Costs

### Time

We are planning to put 3 days a week of David Nash's time and 4 days a week of Holly Morgan's time\* into Effective Altruism London in 2018. This amounts to **1.4 person-years** (~2,600 hours), excluding the time we expect trustees, advisors and volunteers to invest, nearly all of which we expect to come from existing members of the EA community.

David is looking to shift his career away from data analysis towards community or coaching work and feels that this is a good opportunity for him to do that. Working on Effective Altruism London would move him in the direction he feels he can have more impact - and so does not represent a time loss.

In hiring a Strategy Director we will encourage them to think about what positive impact they would be having with their time if they were not working for Effective Altruism London.

Please comment below - or contact David (david [at] ealondon [dot] com) or Holly (holly [at] ealondon [dot] com) directly - if you would like to know more about how potential staff would otherwise spend their time and why they think that Effective Altruism London is one of the most impactful uses of it.

\*Or the time of someone similarly/more qualified for the role.

### Financial

CATEGORY	ITEM	NOTES	COST
Community Director	Salary (inc. pension contribution)	£21,500 pro rata on 3 days a week, 15 Jan 2018 - 31 Dec 2018, (inc £219 pension)	12625
Strategy Director	Salary (inc. pension contribution)	£21,000 pro rata on 4 days a week, 15 Jan 2018 - 31 Dec 2018, (inc £286 pension)	16441
Miscellaneous	Event costs, meetup.com subscription, employers liability insurance, etc	Applying a 1.4x multiplier on 2016/17 expenses of £1650 based on increased staff time of 1.4x	2310
Contingency		5%	1569
Total			£32,945

We will accept funding up to £35,000 to allow for a larger contingency budget, but beyond this point we do not feel sufficiently confident that we could use funds effectively.

If we do not reach our funding target of £32,945 by 8th December 2017, we intend to fund staff as follows:

FUNDS RAISED	STAFF FUNDED
£0-£15,000	Community Director for 0-18 months, 2 days a week
£15,001-£25,000	Community Director for 12-18 months, 3 days a week
£25,001-£35,000	Community Director for 12 months, 3 days a week Strategy Director for 6-12 months, 4 days a week
£35,001+	<i>Turn away funding (or, if too late, regrant to other organisations that fulfil our charitable objectives)</i>

If a Strategy Director is not funded, the plans for the Community Director will remain roughly the same as set out above, focusing on the number of repeat attendances caused at focused EA events/meetings in London. Overall this would mean less time creating new projects, learning and adjusting strategy or supporting individuals.

Rough estimates of impact for scenarios in which we raise <£25,000 and only fund a Community Director can be found [here](#).

# Impact

## What we will be measuring - case studies

**Case studies of success will be our main focus for evaluating impact.**

We believe that our actions and support so far have led to a [broad array of exciting new projects and life changes](#) by members of our community, as well as a deeper understanding of effective EA community building for staff. We want to improve our tracking, analysis and communication of these “case studies” and expect that at the end of the year this will form a significant proportion of the evidence of our impact.

We will attempt rough quantitative estimates of the impact of these case studies, giving priority to metrics popular with other EA movement-building organisations, and we will look to engage with experts from across the EA community and elsewhere in order to do so. Some of these estimates will be easier than others (e.g. if we started a reading group we could track the number of EA-related books read, but if we set up a mentor relationship between a senior figure and someone in our community, or built a database of EA London community members, then impact estimates would be more difficult). We feel that it would be premature to state our expectations now of the main metrics we will use to capture the impact of these case studies.

## What we will be measuring - metrics

We also want to track pre-defined quantitative measures of impact, specifically:

<b>Core metric</b>	The Community Director’s core metric: Number of repeat attendances we’ve caused at focused EA events/meetings in London.	We may add more nuance to this metric, for example “impact-adjusted events/meetings”.
<b>Groups</b>	Number of groups or projects started.	We may add more nuance to this metric, for example “self-sustaining groups”.

IASPCs	<a href="#">Impact-Adjusted Significant Plan Changes</a> , including the proportion of which we attribute to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving What We Can <b>pledges</b></li> <li>• Successful 80,000 Hours <b>coaching</b> referrals.</li> </ul>	<p>We may add more nuance to this metric, for example “number of <a href="#">Level 10 IASPCs</a>”.</p> <p>We will look to work with 80,000 Hours and Giving What We Can to gather more relevant information here.</p>
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Other metrics we may track include events run/caused by us, contactable individuals, unique event attendance and time invested.

## Estimates of impact

The estimates below are made by Sam. They are based on the impact that we had last year and adjusted largely following Sam’s intuitions and estimates from Holly. You can see the full calculations, assumptions made and details [here](#).

**Impact estimates for 2018: main metrics.** If fully funded we expect (with 80% confidence intervals) that at the end of the year we will have caused:

- 130 - 650 Repeat attendances at focused events
- 3 - 18 New sub-communities or high-impact projects
- 40 - 190 [Impact-Adjusted Significant Plan Changes](#) (IASPCs). Of which:
  - 7 - 20 Giving What We Can pledges
  - 20 - 80 [Level 1 IASPCs](#)
  - 1 - 11 [Level 10 IASPCs](#)

**Impact estimates for 2018: other metrics.** If fully funded we expect (with 80% confidence intervals) that at the end of the year we will have caused:

- Contacts 500 - 2200 New contactable individuals
- Number of events: 70 - 130 Events
- Total attendances: 1300 - 2600 Attendances
  - 700 - 1500 Repeat attendances (excludes first time)
  - 300 - 1100 Attendances at focused events
- Unique attendees: 600 - 1100 Unique event attendees
  - 150 - 390 Unique event attendees that return
  - 120 - 480 Unique attendees at focused events
  - 30 - 160 Unique attendees at focused events that return
- 30 - 130 Net increase in number of people receiving support (self-reported)

## Potential for growth

With steady growth in staff time and sustained evidence of impact, Effective Altruism London could scale up successful outreach activity and/or general community events such as socials and career workshops.

Another vision of Effective Altruism London that particularly excites us is of an incubator for EA projects, organisations and career networks in London. We would:

- Draw together people, ideas and seed funding to help aspiring effective altruists in London test new EA projects and launch new EA organisations.
- Establish industry-/organisation-specific EA career networks that support members through industry-/organisation-specific research and mentoring as well as with social support for sustaining altruistic goals.

We expect the demand for this kind of incubation support to grow steadily over the coming years alongside continued [growth of the EA movement](#), which attracts a similar demographic to London (ambitious young professionals).

However, while this vision is one that currently seems impactful enough to be worth working towards, we would not be surprised if our vision for the future of Effective Altruism London changed substantially over the coming year, and so we want to also engage in activity that allows us to learn more about and pursue alternative paths to major impact.



# What are the most compelling reasons to not fund Effective Altruism London?

This document has so far presented reasons in favour of funding Effective Altruism London (see, in particular, the following sections: *Introduction*, *Focus*, *Who will do this work?* and *Potential for growth*) or provided neutral information. If you are currently considering donating to us, we first encourage you to see if you find any of the following reasons to *not* fund us compelling.

We can separate reasons to not fund Effective Altruism London into two categories: reasons mainly stemming from the plans as laid out in this document and reasons mainly relating to funding a local EA group in London regardless of the plans. It should be noted that if you have strong disagreements with the specific plans then we want to hear from you. We are very open to critical feedback and to adjusting our plans based on the views of the London EA and wider EA communities.

The following reasons are those that we find most compelling.

## Reasons to not fund a local EA group in London

- **Local groups rarely have sufficient evidence of impact to warrant substantial investment** - The purported impact of “meta” organisations should be held under [additional scrutiny](#) as their work is (at least) one step removed from actual impact. The geographical limits of a local group’s target audience pose a further challenge to gathering evidence of impact (when compared with the global reach of online meta work). Plausibly, these considerations render Effective Altruism London too intractable a project to justify more than a few hours’ worth of work a week, which could be achieved with a [volunteer-run](#) model or minimal funding.
- **Most of the value captured with much less work** - You might also expect local EA groups to not be worth more than a few hours’ work a week if you anticipate rapidly diminishing returns to additional time invested. You’d expect the low-hanging fruit to be taken first (e.g. monthly socials to sustain altruistic motivation among people Earning to Give), and there may not be many high-value opportunities that require a critical mass of regular time invested. Note that this could also be merely a reason to partially fund Effective Altruism London e.g. to fund one member of staff.

- **Staff time more impactful if used elsewhere** - Again, please comment below (or contact David (david [at] ealondon [dot] com) or Holly (holly [at] ealondon [dot] com) directly) if you would like more information on how potential staff would otherwise spend their time.
- **Bias** - Perhaps you're aware of other high-impact giving opportunities, but this one is a rubber-stamped "EA" organisation and/or you are friends with the people who run it, and you think that this might account for a significant part of the motivation you have to fund it.

## Reasons to not fund these plans

- **Insufficient priority given to the most promising people** - You might think that our focus on aspiring effective altruists and our judgement of the highest-impact careers/groups they are working on is too broad. Given that opportunities to do good are [power law distributed](#), perhaps we should focus more narrowly on supporting people who can demonstrate particularly high dedication to EA or who have achieved particularly impressive things in the past.
- **Insufficient focus on a single metric** - Having one single metric to optimise for allows for more robust learning about what does and doesn't work, so we should plausibly choose one metric that captures a lot of what we're trying to achieve and invest close to 100% of staff time in trying to maximise that metric.
- **The more "meta" you get, the more uncertain you are of the impact** - Not only is Effective Altruism London already a meta-charity in virtue of being a local group, but many of our proposed activities are yet another step removed from impact (e.g. supporting people to do workplace activism), so we should be particularly uncertain regarding the impact.
- **There should be a more focused effort to learn from outside of the EA echo chamber** - The global EA community is relatively [young and homogeneous](#) (~80-90% under-35s and e.g. ~80% not religious, ~70% male, ~60% in the US/UK), which we can expect to contribute to a naïvety and homogeneity of thought. Perhaps our plans should focus less on supporting aspiring effective altruists to act according to prevailing EA thinking, and more on amplifying the perspectives of those within the EA community from underrepresented demographics and outreach to those demographics.
- **Londoners don't or shouldn't have the time for side projects** - The London EA community is comprised mainly of young professionals. Perhaps it would be net harmful in the large majority of cases to attempt to divert some of their attention away

from their current careers and towards side projects, exploring other careers, supporting other aspiring effective altruists, workplace activism etc.

- **You don't know enough about our plans or the people who will execute them -**  
Of course, it could be the case that while Effective Altruism London is worth funding, you simply don't have enough information to know that, particularly with regard to the Strategy Director who will not have done paid work for Effective Altruism London before.

## Donating to us

If you are considering donating to Effective Altruism London but would like to find out more about our plans first, please get in touch at [fundraising@ealondon.com](mailto:fundraising@ealondon.com). We particularly encourage you to reach out if you are considering donating more than £500.00.

Donations can be made to Effective Altruism London via BT MyDonate [here](#).

Donations from UK taxpayers are eligible for Gift Aid.

While BT MyDonate do not charge commission, there is a 1.3% credit card charge or a 15p flat rate fee for debit card transactions.

*Effective Altruism London is a trading name of Effective Altruism UK - a registered charity with the Charity Commission of England and Wales, no. 1170614. Details available [here](#).*

## Acknowledgements

For input into the plans laid out above, we would like to thank our other trustees Sanjay Joshi and David Moss, Richard Batty, Josh Goldenberg, the 26 attendees of our last open strategy meeting, Harri Besceli, Nick Beckstead, Will MacAskill and the many people who have volunteered their time and money over the past few years to get Effective Altruism London to the place it is in today.