



Animal Charity Evaluators

Strategic Plan

March 21, 2014

Introduction

This document outlines ACE's strategy for 2014 and overall vision. It was jointly written by the staff, volunteers, and board, and its primary purpose is to be used internally to guide our work, and provide orientation for newcomers to our team.

Mission

ACE's mission is to find and advocate the ways to most effectively help animals. We conduct analysis, make recommendations on where to give and what to do, and promote them to animal organizations and the public.

Vision

ACE's vision is a society where people have sincere concern for animals and use evidence to help them as effectively as possible. See "[Our Philosophy](#)"

Goals

1. Provide the best available advice to donors, charities, and animal advocates on how to be effective.
2. Move ten times our annual budget to our recommended charities.
3. Create an environment where organizations strive to find and use the most effective ways to help animals.
4. Spread a meme of greater concern for animals.

Objectives and corresponding activities (2014)

Goal 1: Provide the best available advice...

- Objective: Considered more interventions and organizations and analyzed them deeper
 - Create charity & intervention templates
 - Limit first scope to simpler interventions and US charities in order to produce actionable results
 - Map the US animal organization & intervention landscape
 - Ask publicly for submissions of promising giving opportunities and actions
 - Apply heuristics to investigate those categories of charities deemed potentially effective
 - Perform shallow, medium, and deep investigations respective to organizations' performance in [our criteria](#)
 - Document work process thoroughly, including why organizations are filtered out

- ❑ Objective: Created useful new evidence
 - ❑ Complete impact studies on leafleting and humane education
 - ❑ Conduct majority of pay-per-view video outreach study
- ❑ Objective: Published a broader framework that helps identify the most effective actions
 - ❑ Complete pain and suffering matrix (quantifying animals' ability to experience pain/pleasure)
 - ❑ Publish learnings from successes and failures of social justice movements
 - ❑ Revise wild animal suffering
 - ❑ Veg recidivism
 - ❑ Explanation of elasticity and less well-understood effects
 - ❑ Master survey

Goal 2: Move at least ten times our annual budget...

- ❑ Objective: More user-friendly website
 - ❑ Appearance (more images)
 - ❑ Functionality (based on Analytics data)
- ❑ Objective: Raised awareness of ACE and our recommendations
 - ❑ Media campaigns – interviews, talks, social media
 - ❑ Collaboration with recommended organizations
 - ❑ Presence at conferences
- ❑ Objective: Tracked money moved
- ❑ Objective: Improved transparency to make it easier to follow our thought process
 - ❑ Share internal discussions and thought processes

Goal 3: Create an environment where organizations strive to find and use the most effective ways to help animals.

- ❑ Objective: See “Raised awareness of ACE and our recommendations” above

Goal 4: Spread a meme of greater concern for animals.

- ❑ Objective: See “Raised awareness of ACE and our recommendations” above

Target audience (2014)

1. Primary: those already interested in effective altruism and care about animal suffering
2. Secondary: people in the wider animal movement who want to become more effective

Resource needs

- Budget: \$87,000
- 6-12 months of projected operating expenses in unrestricted liquid assets¹

¹ The following sources together suggest 6-12 months of reserves is a good idea.
<http://www.nonprofit-consultants.org/documents/MinimumReserveFundsESCnonprofitconsultants.pdf>
 “We seek to be in a financial position such that our cash flow projections show us having 12 months' worth of unrestricted assets in each of the next 12 months.” Quote from
<http://www.givewell.org/about/official-records/Excess-Assets-Policy> (Dec 29, 2013)
<http://www.givewell.org/international/technical/criteria/financial-metrics#Metric2> (archived)

- Additional researcher: Additional \$24,000 (minimum)
- Additional board member(s)

Milestones/important dates

1. February 1: Charity criteria evaluation template finalized
2. February 21: New foundational research section
3. March 4: ARZone Podcast
4. March 18 : Leafleting study final report published
5. April 15: Humane education study report published
6. April 30: First revision of recommendations
7. May 30: Intervention evaluation template finalized
8. July ~10: AR Conference, ACE presentation and tabling
9. September: Video Outreach Study started
10. Dec. 1: Recommendations updated and published

For more about time planned for different activities, see this [Gantt chart](#) (which we plan to remain static after this strategic plan is finalized).

Evaluating ACE

Board to check in on the progress every month during 2014 by dedicating a part of the standard monthly meeting to it.

By the end of 2014, evaluate to what extent we've reached our 2014 goals:

- Self-evaluation by staff
- Evaluation by the board
- Potential external evaluation²

Appendix 1: Guidelines for Goal 1: Provide the best available advice...

- Network effects: We prefer something that creates influencers rather than influencing people at the end of the chain – for example, influencing companies to abolish factory farm products or influencing celebrities who will in turn influence many more followers.
- Giving opportunities and actions that could be supported by abolitionists, welfarists, and negative-leaning utilitarians: Even though this kind of robustness is not an end in itself, looking for it is probably a good way to narrow down our options.
- Avoid areas that have potential net negative in the future: We will not recommend advocacy methods that could have a significant chance of eventually leading to greater suffering.

² Note that GiveWell has stopped doing formal external evaluations for the time being <http://blog.givewell.org/2013/03/01/external-evaluation-of-our-research/>