

2018 Year in Review



Animal Charity Evaluators



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01 Introduction

For ACE, 2018 was a year of record-setting accomplishments. For the first time, we recommended four Top Charities doing outstanding work around the globe to effectively reduce animal suffering. We celebrated our most successful Giving Tuesday yet, thanks to the incredible coordination and support of the EA community. With the support of a most generous year-end matching challenge donor, our new Effective Animal Advocacy Fund vastly exceeded all expectations. Last year, we influenced more donations in the effective animal advocacy movement than ever before. There was certainly a lot to celebrate!

Last year was also a time of transition. After five years of outstanding leadership, ACE's executive director, Jon Bockman, took on a new role as a member of our board of directors. As the very first paid staff member, Jon guided the organization from its early days as "Effective Animal Activism" through rebranding and strategic visioning to create a solid foundation on which we can continue to build. We are all deeply grateful to Jon for his years of service and we look forward to many more years of growth and success.

We hope that you enjoy ACE's 2018 Year in Review. It highlights our achievements for animals, all of which were made possible by your generous support. Thank you for your belief in our work and for your tireless commitment to reducing animal suffering.

02 **Notable Accomplishments**

PHILANTHROPY

Gifts influenced

In 2018, ACE helped to influence \$6.5 million in donations to a variety of impactful charities working around the world to reduce animal suffering, including our recommended charities and the grant recipients of our new Effective Animal Advocacy Fund. This was an increase from the \$6 million influenced in 2017, and brings the total amount we've influenced to over \$17 million since we started tracking this metric in 2014. At ACE, we are committed to doing our part to grow the effective animal advocacy movement.

The Recommended Charity Fund is a convenient giving option for anyone who wishes to support ACE's recommended charities through a single donation. In 2018, we distributed \$114,685 from the Recommended Charity Fund to our Top and Standout Charities. Grant recipients included Albert Schweitzer Foundation, Animal Equality, Compassion in World Farming, Faunalytics, The Good Food Institute, The Humane League, L214, The Nonhuman Rights Project, Open Cages, ProVeg International, Sinergia Animal, Sociedade Vegetariana Brasileira, and Vegan Outreach. From achieving historic corporate animal welfare commitments and passing lifesaving legislative reforms, to conducting influential research and revolutionizing the way food is produced via innovative technology, our recommended charities continue working to achieve significant change for animals.

FROM OUR RECOMMENDED CHARITIES

"We stand continuously in awe of the myriad ways in which ACE amplifies and advances vital solutions to animal suffering. Thank you so much for empowering our team. I can't wait to see what we can accomplish for animals together in 2019."

—Brittany Chambers, Senior Development Manager, The Good Food Institute (Top Charity 2016–2018)

"ACE's recommendation helps position the Albert Schweitzer Foundation as an impact-minded organization that's constantly working on becoming more and more effective for the animals. It also increases our international recognition and reaffirms our existing donors' decision to contribute. One of our top donors told us: 'I am glad to have seen that ACE has rated the Albert Schweitzer Foundation as a Top Charity this year. The rating encourages me to continue to support you.' In addition, the annual ACE evaluation helps us to continually review and improve our work."

—Mahi Klosterhalfen, President, Albert Schweitzer Foundation (Top Charity 2018, Standout Charity 2014–2017)

"The recommendation of Animal Charity Evaluators has had a huge impact on our work. It profoundly motivated our team, gave us a much wider international recognition, and is helping us to significantly increase our sources of funding to improve and expand our work for the animals." —Carolina Galvani, President, Sinergia Animal (Standout Charity, 2018)

“ACE not only helps us receive much-needed funding, they also help us—and the entire movement—to recognize that critical analysis of our weaknesses and thorough analysis of our impact is what will help us be as effective as possible.”

—**Sharon Nuñez, Executive Director, Animal Equality** (Top Charity 2015, 2017–2018, Standout Charity 2016)

“ACE has been a tremendous help in increasing our effectiveness, by providing us with tailored materials and research. ACE’s review process in and of itself elevated us to a new level by encouraging us to consider how we think of our programs’ impact.”

—**Jakub Stencel, Development Director, Open Cages** (Standout Charity, 2017–2018)

Our newest giving option, the Effective Animal Advocacy Fund

The Effective Animal Advocacy Fund (EAA Fund) is for anyone who is interested in making the animal advocacy movement more effective. ACE launched the EAA Fund in late 2018 for three main reasons. First, we believe that the movement should continue to fund a wide range of approaches because a broad, pluralistic animal advocacy movement will be more impactful overall than a narrow, monistic animal advocacy movement. Second, we believe that we should continue to support a broad range of interventions given that there is little available evidence supporting the effectiveness of any given one. Third, we believe that building relationships with a large group

of individuals and charities will make our own work more effective by providing us with new information to consider and new individuals and groups with whom to collaborate.

Thanks to many generous supporters, the EAA Fund raised over \$1.9 million last year! Special appreciation goes to an anonymous donor who provided a significant matching challenge via ACE, as well as the organizers of Double Up Drive who selected us as a beneficiary of their year-end matching challenge. The tremendous response from both donors and applicants vastly exceeded our expectations, and we are excited to see what we can accomplish for animals with this new fund. You can learn more about the first round's 49 recipients and our research team's evaluation and selection process in our [Spring 2019 Grants Announcement](#).

Results from our Giving Tuesday promotion

Last year, ACE celebrated our most successful Giving Tuesday yet! With incredible organizing and support from the EA community, we raised \$88,904 on November 27, 2018. Facebook and PayPal provided an additional \$67,931 in matching funds, bringing the total to \$156,835 to support ACE, our funds, and our recommended charities.

FROM OUR DONORS

“A few years ago, we began looking at what charities could help us make the biggest positive impact in the world. We were aware of some of the low-cost, high-impact initiatives like distributing mosquito nets that help alleviate human suffering. But we had a particular interest in helping animals and helping avert the climate crisis. We stumbled on ACE's website and their simple infographic about the disparity between animal charity funding vs. animals spared. The logic in focusing on farmed animals was clear, and we followed ACE's recommendations when deciding which charities to support.

We learned about the Giving Pledge, and agreed that it was an annual commitment we wanted to make. Around the same time, ACE launched their Recommended Charity Fund. That fund provides us a convenient way to route our donations to the most impactful charities, which are reassessed on an ongoing basis. At the same time, it helps support ACE's research and show our commitment to their work.

These charities are doing the hard work of helping people make kinder and wiser choices. And ACE is doing the hard work of helping assess and understand how we can make the biggest impact. Our monthly contribution is a simple but important commitment from our side, but it feels enormously satisfying. We're grateful for the work of ACE and the many charities working to make the world kinder and safer for humans and animals alike.” —Andrew and Ashley Davis, Recommended Charity Fund donors

"I like ACE because I'm a supporter of effective altruism. When I give money, I want it to do a lot of good, not just a little. I also give to GiveWell, because they look for the most effective charities, but they only rate human-centered charities. Right now, nonhuman animals are suffering more, and in vastly greater numbers, than humans; furthermore, this suffering could be greatly reduced at little cost, since it is suffering that people are deliberately inflicting for trivial reasons. So donating to the most effective animal charities might be the way to do the most good that one can do. I like ACE because they help identify these most effective charities." —Michael Huemer, Recommended Charity Fund and Effective Animal Advocacy Fund donor

"I donate to ACE because I know that progress on basic animal welfare in agriculture affects a tremendous number of beings, and is a cause that even progressives leave out of their view entirely. It was important to me to donate to a charity that practices rigor and isn't afraid to tackle questions of how important a cause is dollar-for-dollar." —Daniel Echlin, ACE donor

[Read more testimonials from ACE supporters >>](#)

A special thanks to our [top donors](#).

RESEARCH

In early 2018, Allison Smith stepped down from their role as the director of research after nearly five years of dedicated service. After a thorough search, we selected Toni Adleberg as their successor. Toni was previously one of our senior researchers, and her familiarity with our team allowed us to make a smooth transition and keep our momentum as we progressed towards our goals for the year.

Made improvements to our charity evaluation process

Last year, we wrote extensively about our charity evaluation process and the thinking behind our 2018 charity recommendations. We improved upon our existing charity evaluation framework by updating our methodology for estimating each charity's room for more funding, creating a survey for the staff of each charity under evaluation, and consulting with a team of external specialists. In addition, we developed a detailed [Charity Evaluation Handbook](#) as a useful and transparent guide to our evaluation process.

[Learn more about the updates we've made to our charity evaluation process >>](#)

Published new intervention reports and foundational research

We published a comprehensive intervention report on protests using

our updated methodology. This methodology is designed to make our reports maximally useful to advocates by including a discussion of the factors that make protests more or less effective in different contexts. We also published two timely foundational research reports on [trends in meat production](#) and the [carbon and water footprints of diet choices](#). Additionally, we published our research on the [allocation of resources in the animal advocacy movement](#), which helped inform our decision-making for the first round of grants from our Effective Animal Advocacy Fund. We were lucky to have thirteen excellent interns work with our research team in 2018. They completed a number of informative projects, including a report on the animal advocacy movement in China, a report on legislative work (both available upon request), and an exploratory investigation of [dietary trends](#) in the U.S.

Funded projects through our Animal Advocacy Research Fund

The Animal Advocacy Research Fund (AARF) was created in 2016 to improve our collective understanding of effective animal advocacy through the support of high-quality research.

Last year, the AARF funded [13 novel research projects](#) conducted by academic teams from The Good Food Institute, Animal Ethics, and Stanford University, among others. A number of projects that were started in 2018 have already been [completed](#) and published in peer-reviewed journals such as *Frontiers*.

[See our full report on the Animal Advocacy Research Fund's performance >>](#)

FROM OUR RESEARCH FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS

“AARF funding and the guidance of the ACE team allowed us to utilize research best practices to create a pilot study to strategically assess and improve our programming.” —Katie Cantrell, Executive Director, Factory Farming Awareness Coalition

“Our AARF-funded study on clean meat messaging taught us (advocates and industry associates) a lot about the probable difficulty of trying to overcome some consumers’ concerns about unnaturalness. As a result of the study, money and energy can be put toward more fruitful avenues...the research has been published in the journal Meat Science, thereby expanding the audience of academics exposed to advocacy research, as well as on Faunalytics’ website, which received more than 200,000 unique visitors in 2018. Receiving funding for this project made it possible to reach out to a wide and varied audience, some of whom would never have been exposed to animal advocacy any other way.” —Jo Anderson, Research Director, Faunalytics

“AARF funding allowed us to conduct a thorough version of our popular ‘Dominate Facebook’ social media analysis, resulting in a comprehensive analysis of animal advocacy media on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for five different languages. Without the help from AARF, it’s very unlikely that we would have completed the project.” —Steven Rouk, Analytics and Research Specialist, Mercy For Animals

“Knowing there is a reliable source of funding for research into the most effective interventions for animals means that I can think seriously about a longer-term career in effective animal advocacy research, and encourage others to do the same. Without AARF funding, our two large-scale studies on consumer acceptance of cultured meat would not have been possible. AARF is a fantastic resource, not only for research funding, but for directing the research agenda in effective animal advocacy. It is no exaggeration to say this resource will help to save billions of animals.” —Chris Bryant, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Bath

COMMUNICATIONS

Improved media relations and increased number of press mentions

Last year, we continued our efforts to secure more widespread coverage of ACE’s work to identify and promote the most effective ways to reduce animal suffering. We increased our media contact database and achieved more quality press mentions than in previous years, including coverage in major news outlets such as [NPR](#), [One Green Planet](#), and [Vox](#). By enhancing our visibility and outreach, we aim to support and expand the animal advocacy movement.

Published content in engaging and more digestible formats

Significant progress was made towards our goal of creating more engaging content. We launched our [Medium.com blog](#) and published over a half-dozen op-eds, created a [video explaining cause prioritization](#) (published in early 2019), and built an interactive [charity quiz](#) that helps donors find which recommended charities best fit their unique giving preferences. We also launched our [roundtable blog series](#) and continued our “[Learn from Professionals](#)” interview series, adding three new interviews to our website.

Built internal communications infrastructure

In addition to public-facing communications, our team worked extensively on internal communications infrastructure throughout 2018 to facilitate our continued growth. We established an editorial content style guide website as outlined in our 2018 goals, and made significant improvements to our editorial workflow by automating tasks where possible, integrating internal communications tools, and training all staff on the updated process. Changes such as these help ACE operate efficiently so that we can continue to be an effective organization as we mature.

Increased presence at effective altruism and animal advocacy events

ACE staff attended and spoke at a number of conferences and events in 2018, including [EAG San Francisco](#), [EAG London](#), the [Animal Rights National Conference](#), [CARE conference](#), [Nexus](#), and many more.

OPERATIONS

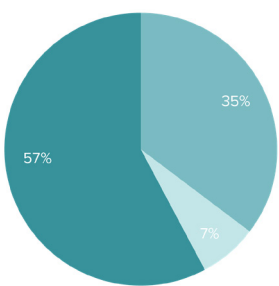
Financials

Since 2014, we have influenced over \$17.6 million to our recommended charities and the Effective Animal Advocacy Fund, while only spending \$2.1 million on our own programs and operations. Below is a snapshot of our 2018 finances.

2018 Revenue

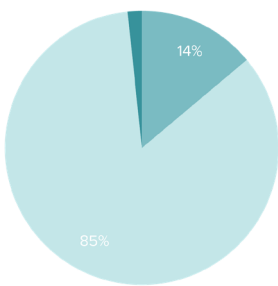
Unrestricted Revenue ¹	\$1,088,872
Restricted Revenue	
Gifts restricted to Animal Advocacy Research Fund	\$178,679
Gifts restricted to advertising	\$20,000
Total	\$1,287,551

2018 Revenue by Source



- Individual giving
- Corporate giving
- Foundational Giving

2018 Revenue by Restriction



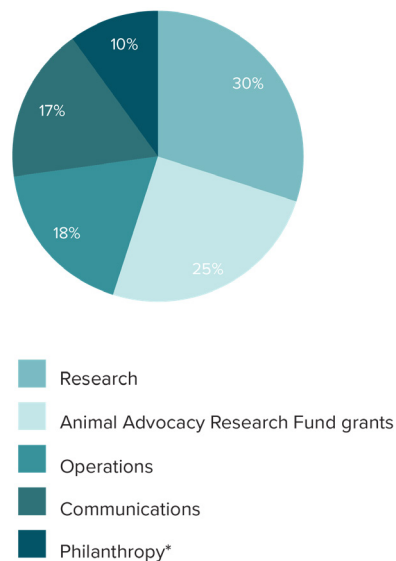
- Gifts restricted to Animal Advocacy Research Fund
- Unrestricted*
- Gifts restricted to advertising

¹ Our unrestricted revenue includes gifts, investment gains (losses), and third-party revenue sources such as Amazon Smile.

2018 Expenses

Research	\$347,880
Animal Advocacy Research Fund grants	\$296,085
Operations	\$206,807
Communications	\$194,245
Philanthropy ²	\$119,478
Total expenses	\$1,164,495
Net assets	\$3,233,770³

2018 Expenses



Note: We did not include here the donations that ACE collected for our recommended charities and EAA Fund, which totaled \$2,390,560.

[See full details about this and prior years' financials on our website >>](#)

² A significant but undeterminable portion of fundraising expenses are allocated to fundraising for ACE's recommended charities and the Effective Animal Advocacy Fund.

³ \$1,941,765 of this was collected for the Effective Animal Advocacy Fund and \$1,402,946 was distributed in quarter 2 of 2019. An additional \$51,750 is being held for AARF grants, and \$12,296 is restricted to advertising.

03 Mistakes

At ACE, we realize that we are not perfect in our work. As is the case with any organization, we sometimes make mistakes. In the interest of fully disclosing our past activities, and showcasing how our thoughts and research have developed over time, we have identified some things we could have done better in 2018.

RESEARCH

We initially invested significant time and resources in publishing our report on the Chinese animal advocacy movement on our website. However, when we heard concerns that our public report could potentially compromise the safety, security, and/or strategy of advocates working in China, we immediately removed it. Prior to publication, we had gotten approval from our external reviewers and every individual whose interview was featured in the report. However, we realize now that we were not sufficiently conscious of the extent to which cultural barriers could impede successful communication with these individuals and our understanding of the risks involved.

We've since taken down the full report and have made it available by request only, and to a limited audience. In the future we will be more aware of cultural differences in communication style, and we will be more conscientious when dealing with sensitive issues outside of our sphere of geographical familiarity.

In 2018, we archived our intervention reports on corporate outreach, undercover investigations, humane education, and online ads. In general, archiving out-of-date content is a normal part of our research process, and not necessarily indicative of a mistake. However, it can be difficult to determine the best point at which to archive a report, and in this case we believe we waited too long. Moreover, we were left with very little up-to-date intervention research to inform our 2018 evaluation process.

OPERATIONS

We recognize that our onboarding program failed to offer sufficient opportunities for new hires to gain a deep understanding of our mission, philosophy, strategy, and thought processes. We also realized we could do more to introduce EA concepts, and to make our onboarding experience more engaging overall.

We have already made some improvements for 2019. Specifically, we've created a more structured and engaging format for the onboarding process. This new system includes more relevant video/audio content, a "scavenger hunt" for new team members to familiarize themselves with ACE and other EA-aligned organizations' websites, an improved "buddy system" to ensure a smooth transition into ACE's team, and more.

We've also created a 3-month evaluation form specifically tailored to new employees. Previously, we used our yearly evaluation form for this purpose, but we think that we can gain more from these early-stage evaluations by using a more specific and relevant form.

COMMUNICATIONS

In the beginning of 2018, Google changed the requirements and restrictions to their Google Ads Grant program. While we thought we made the changes necessary to comply with the new requirements, we ended up having our AdWords grant account suspended twice for non-compliance. In hindsight, we could have been more vigilant in checking our account for compliance prior to the rule change, and we should have placed greater priority on getting our account reinstated as soon as possible. In late 2018, our data analyst worked with volunteers to restructure the account and we have not had any account suspensions since. While we expected a very significant amount of lower-quality web traffic as a result of the new grant restrictions, we had an even greater drop due to losing all search advertising traffic for about 60 days throughout the course of 2018.

04 **Looking Ahead**

ACE celebrated many accomplishments in 2018. With your continued support, we plan to do even more this year! Thank you for working with us to help the greatest number of animals in the most effective ways.