

2020



# Year in Review

Animal Charity Evaluators



# Helping people help animals

**Animal Charity Evaluators** (ACE) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to finding and promoting the most effective ways to help animals. We assist compassionate donors, professionals, and volunteers in making informed decisions about the potential impact of their contributions. We do this by thoroughly reviewing charities and interventions in order to provide you with the most comprehensive recommendations in the animal advocacy movement. Inspired by the philosophy of effective altruism, we use evidence and reason to determine the most impactful ways to help animals. We believe that you can be substantially more effective by carefully considering where you donate your time and money.

# 01 Letter From ACE Staff

Welcome to ACE's 2020 Year in Review! Last year, despite the challenges brought about by the global pandemic, we were able to influence an estimated \$11 million to some of the most effective animal charities around the world. We are pleased to share that this was the highest amount of influenced donations of any previous year. We saw the completion of seven impactful research projects funded by our Animal Advocacy Research Fund, with findings disseminated throughout the movement. Additionally, our Movement Grants program (formerly Effective Animal Advocacy Fund) disbursed two rounds of funding to support promising projects among 42 recipients working to reduce animal suffering. Last year's evaluations shifted toward a unique focus on organizational resilience and adaptability in light of the extraordinary circumstances. Our research team conducted rigorous evaluations of 13 charities and published recommendations of the most effective organizations. In this process, we identified wild animal suffering as a potentially high-impact cause area.

As an agile and remote organization, the core of our work was relatively unaffected by the pandemic. However, we sought to support our staff as they faced the difficulties that it brought on a personal level. We doubled our paid sick leave, offered pay advances where needed, and continued to promote staff wellbeing through paid self-care time and opportunities for social connection. We maintained our commitment to transparency by publishing a public-facing compensation strategy on our blog, which took into account the findings from an exploratory survey conducted earlier in the year.

We hope that you enjoy ACE's 2020 Year in Review. It highlights our achievements for animals during a challenging year, 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.

Leah Edgerton

Justin Judd

Sydne Daniels

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Dina Stuessy

Marianne von Weert

[Signature]

Melissa Guzikowski

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Manja Gierke

[Signature]

Cash Callaghan

[Signature]

Fabunmi

María José Salazar

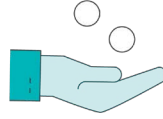
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## 02 The Year in Numbers



**\$11M**

estimated donations influenced



**\$1.1M**

RCF grants distributed



**13**

recommended charities



**8**

AARF projects funded



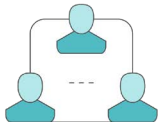
**\$822k**

Movement Grants distributed



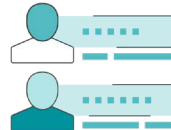
**42**

Movement Grants recipients



**17**

employees and contractors



**4**

fellows



**28.6k**

followers across all social platforms



## 03 Notable Accomplishments

### IMPACT

#### Gifts influenced

One of our goals at ACE is to influence gifts to effective animal charities. We have implemented systems to help us track these donations as well as to survey donors who have indicated that they contributed to our recommended charities, our Recommended Charity Fund, and our Movement Grants as a result of our guidance. The amount is an estimate based on donations collected by ACE and donations reported by our recommended charities and donors.

In 2020, while navigating a global pandemic, ACE helped to influence an estimated \$11 million in donations within the animal advocacy movement, including to our effective recommended charities and our promising Movement Grants recipients. This was a notable increase from the \$8.9 million influenced in 2019 and brings the total estimated amount to over \$37 million since we started tracking this metric in 2014. ACE remains committed to expanding the animal advocacy movement and making it more effective in order to help the most animals possible.

The Recommended Charity Fund is a convenient giving option for anyone who wishes to support ACE's recommended charities through a single donation. For 2020, we distributed a total of \$1,123,718 in grants from the Recommended Charity Fund to our Top Charities and Standout Charities. Recipients included the Albert Schweitzer Foundation, Anima International, Compassion in World Farming USA, Essere Animali, Faunalytics, the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations, the Good Food Fund, The Good Food Institute, The Humane League, Sinergia Animal, Sociedade Vegetariana Brasileira, Vegetarianos Hoy, and Wild Animal Initiative. From securing 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 are working to achieve significant change for animals.



# 2020 RECOMMENDED CHARITIES

## Top Charities



*Albert Schweitzer*  
Albert Schweitzer Foundation

THE HUMANE  
LEAGUE 

**gfi** / Good Food  
Institute

Wild  
Animal  
Initiative

## Standout Charities





*“About once a week, something reminds me how lucky Wild Animal Initiative is to be part of a movement supported by ACE. A friend at another nonprofit will vent about a tedious grant application, and I’ll remember how ACE’s evaluation process actually led us to new strategy insights. My team will debate the equity and hiring implications of a new salary policy, and I’ll be grateful ACE encourages best management practices over self-defeating penny-pinching. Or I’ll meet a new donor and marvel at how many more people have joined our cause since they heard about us through ACE. We’ve always been committed to doing whatever it takes to pioneer a more compassionate approach to caring for wildlife, but we can do so much more for animals now that we don’t have to do it alone.”*

**—Cameron Meyer Shorb, Deputy Director, Wild Animal Initiative**

*“We always thought of our organization as a strategic driven one, but thanks to ACE’s evaluation we could understand much better some of our strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, their evaluation has sparked internal analysis and discussion, and being recommended as Standout Charity has been one of the most rewarding moments for Essere Animali, after years of relentless work pursuing impact for animals. This is pushing us to do even better and we are already working on improving where needed. I am sure the same is happening with a lot of other organizations, which is definitely helping our movement to become not only more effective and strategic, but also a better place to work and volunteer.”*

**—Claudio Pomo, Development Manager, Essere Animali**

*“To be evaluated by ACE is a milestone within the eight years since Vegetarianos Hoy was funded, is a moment of self-assessment and sees the results of professionalizing and improving the effectiveness of our work towards the animals. Being recommended as a Standout Charity is an accomplishment that excites, motivates, and challenges us deeply to grow, now expanding our projects in Latin America. The exposure that ACE has provided to our work in the animal protection movement is crucial for us, and we are certain that it will help us to achieve the potential of our programs.”*

**—Javiera Mayorga Osorio, Director of Projects, Vegetarianos Hoy**



## MOVEMENT GRANTS

*“ACE Movement Grants has played a key role in facilitating our capacity-building intervention that is premised on sensitization of law enforcement agencies (Police Department), State Animal Welfare Boards (SAWBs) and District Societies for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (DSPCAs) to implement animal welfare laws in India more effectively. The grant has enabled us to viably pursue efforts towards conducting workshops with the stated stakeholders in India for better enforcement of animal protection laws.”*

**—Gauri Maulekhi, Member Secretary, People For Animals Uttarakhand**

*“At Strategies for Ethical and Environmental Development (SEED), we are so grateful for the financial support we received from ACE’s Movement Grants program. Thanks to this grant, we’ve been able to focus full-time on the organization and its growth, and to bring on the administrative resources and experts that have been critical to our programs and operations over the past 8 months.”*

**—Cailen LaBarge and Vivian Mocellin, Co-Founders, SEED**

*“For an animal rights NGO in a social and economic climate as the one in Romania, the financial support from ACE’s Movement Grants program was crucial in our development. We were able to create a fundraiser position in the organisation, one which is fundamental in order for us to become more financially autonomous long term. We recommend other animal rights organizations to seize the opportunity of applying for the Movement Grants program.”*

**—Alexandra Pleşea, Fundraiser at Freedom and Respect for Every Earthling (FREE)**

ACE Movement Grants is for anyone interested in making the animal advocacy movement more effective. We launched our granting program originally as the Effective Animal Advocacy 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 larger group of advocates and charities will make our own work more effective by providing us with new information to consider and new groups with whom to collaborate. Last year, we renamed the program ACE Movement Grants, but the objective remains the same: to fund promising animal advocacy projects.

In 2020, thanks to many generous supporters, we raised \$822,185 for ACE Movement Grants and supported 42 promising projects around the globe working to reduce animal suffering. Special appreciation goes to the estate of a compassionate benefactor that backed a \$300,000 matching challenge that doubled donations! We are eager to see what our fifth round of grantees will be able to accomplish for animals with this funding. In the meantime, you can visit our website to learn more about our summer 2020 ACE Movement Grants and fall 2020 ACE Movement Grants, and enjoy our fall 2019 grantee updates.



*To access the link above, open the camera app on your smartphone. Hold your device so that the QR code appears in the viewfinder. Tap the notification that appears to open the link associated with the QR code.*



# GIVING TUESDAY

## GIVING TUESDAY

Last year, ACE celebrated another successful Giving Tuesday. With the exceptional organizing by the EA Giving Tuesday team and generous support from donors during a challenging year, we raised \$86,422 on December 1, 2020. Facebook provided an additional \$15,161 in matching funds, bringing the total to \$101,583 to support ACE, our effective recommended charities, and our promising grant recipients. Thank you to everyone who participated on #GivingTuesday!



*“Donating to ACE brings me hope that we can unlock disproportionately impactful wins for animals with our limited resources, thanks to fostering strategy and collaboration within the movement. In particular, I appreciate ACE’s humility and recognition that it’ll take many different approaches to end animal suffering, such as through the Movement Grants and a commitment to geographic diversity. The team has left me confident that they do not view themselves as some high-and-mighty gatekeeper, but that ACE is a collaborative partner with the activists and organizations on the ground.”*

—Eric Arellano

*“ACE is a wonderful solution to two major problems in our world and philanthropic ecosystem: 1) Given the massive scale of animals raised for food, very little money makes its way to farmed animal advocacy and 2) Many charities do not use their money as effectively as they could. ACE, being an effective animal advocacy (EAA) charity, is helping to solve both of these challenges. The team at ACE does an astounding job at doing one of the most important pieces of work that not many others are willing to do: the research.”*

—Jeffery McLean

*“We were very excited this past year to learn about and provide financial support to ACE Movement Grants program. In addition to our direct support of prominent domestic farm animal welfare organizations, we believe support of ACE Movement Grants is a highly efficient and effective way to support the smaller, less well known organizations that are doing impactful work and promising projects around the world to reduce animal suffering.”*

—John and Timi Sobrato

*“ACE helps me identify the best ways to reduce animal suffering. As a donor I can roughly see what different animal advocacy organizations are doing, but it’s hard to find out how effective their programs are and how efficiently they are using the donations. The research and evaluations of ACE are very helpful for me. I think donations are especially needed in the Global South, so I appreciate very much that ACE supports the movement in neglected regions.”*

—Felix Werdermann



*“The project would not have been possible without AARF. Working on the project has shifted my research plans to continue with this line of research, trying to increase the effectiveness of animal advocacy.”*

**— Shiva Pauer, PhD candidate, Social Psychology Program, Department of Psychology, University of Amsterdam**

*“As a dedicated funder of effective animal advocacy research, the existence of AARF has given me the confidence that I will have funding which is closely aligned with my research interests, and can develop ventures along those lines. Since finishing my PhD in 2020, I have been involved in a number of animal advocacy research projects, and have established a company, Bryant Research Ltd, to continue this work. One of my major projects is funded by AARF.”*

**—Christopher Bryant, PhD, Director of The Cellular Agriculture Society**

*“We would not have been able to begin, let alone complete, our project without AARF funding. This was a stepping stone to a number of other projects. We have now completed several studies that followed up our initial investigation of motives to be vegetarian. Overall, this grant was instrumental in helping me orient towards this exciting and important area of research.”*

**—Chris Hopwood, PhD, Professor of Psychology, University of California, Davis**

# RESEARCH

In early 2020, there was a transition in the leadership of ACE's research team. Toni Adleberg stepped down from her role as Director of Research, following nearly four years of valued contributions as a member of ACE's team. Following Toni's departure, Senior Researcher Greg Boese and Researcher Jamie Spurgeon were appointed Co-Managers of Research. We also welcomed the addition of Senior Researcher Manja Gärtner, who brings valuable knowledge and expertise in economics to our team.

## New research publications

We published the results of our exploratory compensation strategies survey targeting charities within the effective altruism (EA) and animal advocacy movements. The report served as foundational research to aid other organizations that are reviewing their salary-setting procedures and compensation strategy, as well as to inform ACE's review of our own compensation strategy. We also published blog posts on our thinking about building alliances with the environmental movement, why we are not a "watchdog" organization, and how our new Co-Managers of Research intend to adjust our approach to research in light of the changing landscape within the effective animal advocacy (EAA) movement.

## Improvements to our charity evaluation process

We implemented several improvements to our charity evaluation process last year. We updated our menu of outcomes to better capture and communicate both how the animal advocacy movement works as a whole and how individual charities operate within the movement. We improved our method for predicting charities' revenue and expenditures. We intensified our verification process and devoted a significantly larger proportion of our time to verifying claims reported by charities. We spread out the information requests we send to charities, so as to limit the burden placed on them, and we replaced our interview

calls with charities' leadership with written questionnaires, relieving capacity by not having to transcribe call summaries. Our new operating model enabled us to work more collaboratively as a team when drafting the reviews, which allowed us to make numerous smaller improvements to how we assess each criterion. Following the evaluation process, we identified several areas of improvement to focus our efforts on in 2021.

## Projects funded through our Animal Advocacy Research Fund

ACE created the Animal Advocacy Research Fund (AARF) in 2016 to improve our collective understanding of effective animal advocacy through the support of high-quality research. For the past five years, the AARF has helped to establish and legitimize a novel domain of research that aims to empirically determine the most effective forms, messages, and strategies of animal advocacy. Through the financial support of high-quality research, the AARF has resulted in numerous impactful, freely accessible publications and welcomed dozens of new researchers into the field of animal advocacy.

Last year, the AARF funded eight research projects (round 8) conducted by academic teams in India, South Africa, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, and Poland. It was the most geographically diverse funding round to date. Seven previously funded projects were completed and published in 2020: "Establishing a Research Field in Natural Sciences," "Educated Choices Program—An Impact Evaluation," "A Review of Advocacy Interventions Deployed by Grassroots Vegan Activists," "Monitoring a Meat-Free Pledge with Smartphones: An Experimental Study," "Antecedents of Alternative Protein Adoption: A US Focus Group Study," "Surveying Attitudes Towards Helping Wild Animals Among Scientists and Students," and "Intervention Profile on Ballot Initiatives."

ACE is seeking funding to continue building on the success of the AARF. This will allow us to encourage further research into EAA and help establish EAA as a recognized academic field.







# ENGAGEMENT

## Fundraising success supported by communications campaigns

In 2020, we focused on strategic campaigns developed by our communications and philanthropy competency areas to meet our fundraising goals. These included running successful donation matching challenges for both our Movement Grants and Recommended Charity Fund. Our success in this area exceeded gains from 2019. We met the target of reaching ACE's fundraising goal while navigating all the challenges of a global pandemic.

## Partnership with Vox Future Perfect

In 2020, thanks to a generous gift from a donor, ACE collaborated with Vox Media to highlight animal welfare issues. This support enabled their Future Perfect series of journalism and podcasts to commit its third podcast season exclusively to farmed animal welfare topics. Episodes covered human interactions with animals from angles that weren't previously popular in the broader discourse, such as how animal agriculture affects immigrant workers and local communities. The podcast was also able to highlight the relationship between factory farming and pandemic risk. ACE used our communications expertise to support the third season's launch and promoted it via our channels, including our recommended charities, animal advocacy Facebook groups, and the broader EA community.



## Introduction of online events

Last year we launched our ACE Community Chat event. This online event allowed our audience to participate in discussions about ACE's work, such as our research and future goals. It also created a space for us to provide guidance to our Movement Grants and Animal Advocacy Research Fund applicants. We plan to continue our ACE Community Chat events on topics including but not limited to our organizational strategy, remote workplace management, and more.



Our staff also spoke at online conferences, such as International Effective Giving Day and an Effective Altruism University event.





# FINANCIALS

While this page is intended to document ACE’s finances, we are proud to play a role in influencing revenue in the animal advocacy movement. Since 2014, we estimate that we have influenced more than \$34 million to our recommended charities, and we have raised \$3.4 million for ACE Movement Grants, while only spending \$4.1 million on our programs and operations (excluding the Animal Advocacy Research Fund, which is a privately funded program).

◀ ACE operating expenses in 2020: **\$975,014**

▼ Estimated amount influenced to recommended charities and promising projects in 2020: **\$11M**

*This was published before finalizing our 2020 financials; check our website for updated information and prior years' financials.*

## 2020 revenue by restriction

Unrestricted*	\$1,138,899
Gift restricted to Movement Grants program staff time	\$65,000
Gift restricted to Animal Advocacy Research Fund	\$52,400
Gift restricted to country prioritization research	\$4,560
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,260,859</b>

\* Our unrestricted revenue includes gifts, investment gains, and interest earned.

## 2020 expenses

Research	\$332,577
Operations/Management	\$296,537
Communications	\$198,986
Philanthropy*	\$146,913
Animal Advocacy Research Fund grants and expenses	\$139,977
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$1,114,991</b>

\* A significant but undeterminable portion of fundraising expenses is allocated to fundraising for our recommended charities and our Movement Grants program.

*Note: The figures in these tables are rounded to the nearest dollar. In addition to the expenses and revenue tabulated above, we also regranted \$262,500 of a restricted \$350,000 donation we received for a project in collaboration with Vox Media's Future Perfect.*



- Research
- Operations/Management
- Communications
- Philanthropy
- Animal Advocacy Research Fund





## 04 Lessons Learned in 2020

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 things we could have done better in 2020.

### Difficulties in the implementation of our new operating model

In March 2020, we implemented a new operating model based on Scrum, a framework for agile project management. In general, we think this new model has been a positive change for our organization—both in terms of improving productivity and internal communication. That said, our recent culture survey results highlighted some areas for improvement. In line with the new model, we have structured some of our work in two-week sprints that contribute to the production of a defined product (e.g., charity reviews). This has worked well for most of our research work, but not as well for many of our communications and philanthropy projects. While this isn't a problem in itself, it has made it difficult to involve non-research staff in sprints, leading to a situation in which some staff feel more siloed into their departments, despite efforts to remove formal departments at the organizational level. To address this concern, we have started planning sprints with more notice so that staff have more time to organize around them.

Another challenge we've discovered is some perceived ambiguity between the role of the Product Owner and "Scramster" (ACE's creative way of describing Scrum's "Scrum Master"—a role focused on building team velocity by removing bottlenecks and improving efficiency). In particular, there has been a lack of clarity regarding how the decision-making responsibilities of the Product Owner interact with those of the leadership staff. We are currently producing internal guidelines to delineate the responsibilities of ACE's Research Co-Directors in relation to researchers acting as Product Owners. Most significantly, we have recently appointed our former Director of Communications, Erika Alonso,

into a newly-formed Project Manager role, whose main responsibility is to oversee the continued implementation of the operating model.

### Miscommunication regarding available funding in ACE Movement Grants

We unintentionally did not disburse all of the funds available for Movement Grants in 2020. Due to an internal miscommunication, we failed to use an updated balance including the donations that we received for the program during the first months of the year, which resulted in the distribution of only the funds received in 2019. Additionally, during the summer round of 2020, we were unable to disburse funds to several of the grantees we had initially selected; we also changed a few of our granting decisions due to the discovery of new information. Some of the funds were accounted for in the fall round but due to an oversight, a balance remained. To avoid this in the future, we will verify the total funds available for distribution at an explicitly defined point: the closing date of the current application round. We have updated the spreadsheet we use to record Movement Grants decisions to better track the amount of funding remaining to be disbursed.

Read more about our lessons learned from 2020 on our website.



*To access the link above, open the camera app on your smartphone. Hold your device so that the QR code appears in the viewfinder. Tap the notification that appears to open the link associated with the QR code.*







## 05 Looking Ahead

ACE is looking forward to even more successes in 2021. We've revised our annual goal-setting process to better align with our new operating model, which will give our team the flexibility needed for working in the uncertain landscape of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Below we've shared a few of our 2021 prospective goals that we are especially excited about!

Our research team is currently working on making large-scale revisions to ACE's charity evaluation process. In addition to an updated process, we are also redesigning the way we present the charity reviews so that the content is more accessible to a wider audience. Be on the lookout for our new and improved charity recommendations, to be released in November 2021.

As in previous years, one of ACE's main goals is to direct funding to animal advocacy activities through our recommendations, giving opportunities, and grant-making programs. However, this year we have set our most ambitious targets to date: We aim to influence an estimated \$13 million in donations to our recommended charities, including at least \$1 million distributed through our Recommended Charity Fund.

Internally, we are dedicating resources to identifying and implementing additional key performance indicators by which we can measure ACE's impact on the animal advocacy movement more broadly.

As the pandemic continues into 2021, we will adapt our programs and plans to better support our team, recommended charities, and grantees, and to strengthen our community of supporters like you! We look forward to forging ahead in these unprecedented times, together, and bringing about meaningful change for as many animals as possible.

**Thank you for working with us to help the greatest number of animals in the most effective ways!**

To learn more about our 2021 prospective goals, visit our website.



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# Helping people help animals



ANIMAL CHARITY  
EVALUATORS

[animalcharityevaluators.org](https://animalcharityevaluators.org)