

Thanks for being a giver!

A Giving Guide from True Charity

Did you know the word “philanthropy” means “love of mankind”? We appreciate your commitment to willing the good of the other through charity.

As a giver, you likely take time to discern whether your chosen causes steward your donations wisely. This guide can help you do just that.

As specialists in program design, we can tell you that impact is about more than a high number on a fact sheet or a number of stars on a charity ranking.

Let's look at an example.

Note: These organizations have identical budgets and missions – “to give kids hope and a future.”



**Stuff
for Kids**

MODEL: Free coats and school supplies for kids

OVERHEAD: 5% to facilities, fundraising, and admin, 95% goes to buying stuff

CLIENTS SERVED: 1,000 kids per year

OUTCOMES: Not measured, but they've generated five stories of kids who got into college and are thankful for the support.



**Mentors
for Kids**

MODEL: Staff-intensive case management and success coaching

OVERHEAD: 30% to facilities, fundraising, and admin, 70% to program staff

CLIENTS SERVED: 50 kids per year

OUTCOMES: 10 kids per year make it on a path for better life outcomes.



**Upstream
for Kids**

MODEL: Training, coaching, and equipping parents in poverty

OVERHEAD: 25% to facilities, fundraising, and admin, 75% to program staff

CLIENTS SERVED: 20 families per year

OUTCOMES: 10 families per year stabilized on a range of financial and relational measurements.

Traditional measures of overhead rates and clients served would lead you to support the first program. However, the outcomes strongly suggest that the second and third are more impactful. If you asked the questions on the following page (either in conversation with a staff member or by exploring their published materials), you'd end up ready to make a confident decision.

Here are a few questions to ask of organizations:

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR THE PEOPLE YOU SERVE?

People need more than money to flourish. We are created in the image of God and have spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual needs. Effective organizations articulate a holistic perspective of the goal and align their efforts toward it.

ARE YOU ASKING PEOPLE CLOSER TO THE PROBLEM TO DO THEIR PARTS IN SEQUENCE?

People closer to the problem should do their part before people and institutions further away step in. That starts with the individual's responsibility to himself, then extends to family, friends, church, charity, and finally government. This principle also extends to funding — don't ask for a federal grant to fund a program that a local community is able to support.

HOW ARE YOU PRIORITIZING RELATIONSHIPS?

Good ministries seek to be in genuine, reciprocal relationships with the poor and connect them to new ones. This will significantly limit the number of clients any single program can serve well.

DO YOUR PROGRAMS HELP CLIENTS NOT NEED YOU IN THE FUTURE?

While one-way giving is an appropriate response to a short-term crisis, a chronic lack requires development. Development cannot be done "to" someone. It must build on the existing strengths of the person in need so that they can support themselves in the future. There are some who may not have the capacity for full financial independence (e.g. the elderly), but even they can grow in other ways.

DO YOU MEASURE OUTCOMES IN THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE YOU SERVE?

Look for charities that track meaningful changes in the lives of their clients like improvements in housing, employment, education, and relational health. Don't confuse these with measures of activity like meals served. Activity doesn't prove that programs are making a difference.

HOW ARE YOU PARTNERING WITH CHURCHES, NONPROFITS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS?

The best ministries are team players. They are quick to refer clients and even donors to ministries better suited to serve them. They specialize and partner rather than spread themselves thin and compete. They collaborate with businesses and government as needed to address barriers to client success.

HOW CAN I HELP?

No ministry has it all figured out. If you're talking to an organization that's headed in the right direction, chances are they need you to be a part of the solution. Donating your time, treasure, and talent will help them serve more people more effectively.



TRUE CHARITY®

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