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Giving is hard

A while back, a donor posted a [charitable-giving-comedy-of-errors story](#) on the [GiveWell blog](#). In it, Ian Turner simply wants to give away money, and ends up spending years doing background checks, reading research papers, and making a lot of direct calls to NGOs. After all that, he still feels that he often gave to groups that didn't use the money well.

Ian Turner is not (at least, according to his self-description) a millionaire philanthropist or a program officer at a multi-billion dollar foundation, or any other role that we commonly associate with painstaking research to identify the most effective way to donate money. Instead, he is a well-intentioned, generous individual who gives in the thousands, not the millions or billions. He doesn't have a staff working full-time to give away his money. But, not unreasonably, he still wants to know that he is having an impact.

Although Mr. Turner is optimistic that his "own skills at giving will continue to grow" it's a shame that it should be so hard to do a good thing. At IPA, we hope that the research we do informs the decisions of donors of all sizes, from \$50 to \$500 million. But, we recognize that academic research is not accessible to everyone, and further, that it's especially hard for donors on the smaller end of that spectrum to make the time to dig through and interpret dozens of reports.

The Proven Impact Initiative (coming soon to an internet near you!) is IPA's effort to make life a little easier for people who have a bit of money and want to see it go to a good cause. PII will highlight programs that have been proven effective through rigorous research at reducing poverty and improving the lives of the poor around the world. It will offer an easy way for donors big and small to find out what we know about what works, and will allow them to personalize their giving by drilling down as deep as they want (or not) into the research behind our recommendations.

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