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## Moving beyond the helicopter test

A recent Aid Watch [blog post](#) from guest blogger, Franck Wiebe (who also happens to be my former boss,) gives a very clear explanation why the “helicopter test” makes a lot of sense in weighing which assistance programs to fund. He writes,

“In the face of particularly senseless uses of foreign assistance, aid workers sometimes say 'it would have been better to drop the money out of a helicopter' to convey how bad programs waste money.”

The helicopter analogy itself might come off as a rather flippant way to describe development work, but it does focus the mind on whether or not pursuing an intervention is worth the cost especially when facing many needs at once. [DeWorm the World](#) is a great example of putting this principle into practice. After testing a variety of interventions designed to help children stay in school, deworming programs were shown to be by far the most cost effective. Access to clean water through the use of [chlorine dispensers](#), which improves health at an estimated cost of less than \$20 per disability-adjusted life year (DALY) saved, is another. Our colleagues at [JPAL](#) are working on a new website (to be completed early next year) that will feature cost effectiveness analysis for a variety of sectors and serve as a big step forward in concentrating attention on high return interventions. Stay tuned.

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