

Conversation with Martin Short and Charles Bleehen, January 25, 2016

Participants

- Martin Short – Chief Executive Officer, The Power of Nutrition
- Charles Bleehen – Director, The Power of Nutrition
- Elie Hassenfeld – Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director, GiveWell

Note: These notes were compiled by GiveWell and give an overview of the major points made by Mr. Short and Mr. Bleehen.

Summary

GiveWell spoke with Mr. Short and Mr. Bleehen about whether The Power of Nutrition, a new partnership focused on funding global nutrition specific programs, should apply for a GiveWell recommendation in 2016. Conversation topics included The Power of Nutrition's mission, first investment and the track records of its implementing partners.

Mission

The Power of Nutrition is a charitable foundation whose primary focus is improving the nutritional welfare and care of young children and adolescent mothers in Africa and Asia. It launched in April 2015 and is the first nutrition fund with pre-negotiated co-financing arrangements.

It emphasizes prevention, and aims to contribute to measurable reductions in child stunting and wasting in these countries by 2020. Studies have demonstrated the positive knock on effects of basic nutrition on the health, education and livelihoods of children as they grow up.

Its strategy is to unlock \$1 billion in new financing to deliver a specific set of evidence-based interventions in a limited number of hotspot countries, including high-impact nutrition supplements, services and education.

For new investors, The Power of Nutrition has an innovative financing guarantee whereby contributions are multiplied by 4x. The full amount is directed to new nutrition interventions on the ground – as overheads and operating expenses are covered by a benefactor.

The Power of Nutrition is currently a UK-registered charity and is in the process of registering as a 501(c)3 in the United States.

The Power of Nutrition's first investment

The Power of Nutrition (<http://www.powerofnutrition.org>) made its first investment in the summer of 2015. It is taking place in Tanzania, and is financing three nutrition-specific interventions:

1. Vitamin A supplementation
2. Iron and folic acid supplementation for pregnant women

3. Community health workers who deliver nutrition education directly to households

These will benefit from being implemented alongside a broader basket of nutrition-sensitive health interventions (e.g. antenatal care visits, preventative treatment of malaria, modern family planning). It is a pay-for-results program, so The Power of Nutrition only pays if its partners achieve the targeted results.

In general, The Power of Nutrition expects to receive updates from implementing partners every 6 months. As the Tanzania program is its first investment, it does not expect to receive the first update on progress towards targets until August 2016 (i.e. after the first 12 month period).

Track records of The Power of Nutrition's implementing partners

The Power of Nutrition is a funding mechanism that only supports nutrition interventions grounded in evidence. It bases its selection of interventions on the latest sources in the nutrition community (e.g. The Lancet -- <http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-nutrition>) and adapts this selection as new evidence becomes available.

It works through organizations that also have successful track records in delivering these types of interventions and influence in country. It has selected UNICEF and the World Bank Group as its first implementing organizations, others may be added in future.

It has been working with each to develop a pipeline of investments where a contribution from private investors will catalyze 4x the amount of new financing for nutrition. This will give investors the opportunity to work on a bigger scale than they could directly.

The Power of Nutrition will share those organizations' monitoring and evaluation reports as an indication of the effectiveness of the types of organizations it plans to fund.

Key remaining questions for GiveWell

The following key questions remained at the end of the call:

- Is The Power of Nutrition a better fit for GiveWell's standard recommendation process (which requires a demonstrable track record) or GiveWell experimental (which aims to support the development of future top charities)?
- The purpose of The Power of Nutrition is to raise new money for nutrition. It has to raise \$1 from private donors to unlock \$3 more under its cofinancing agreements. The Power of Nutrition has attracted some major donors already, so how much room for private funding is there beyond this? Which investments in its pipeline have a shortfall that new financing unlocked by private donors is needed for?

- Donations to The Power of Nutrition will fund Nutrition Specific interventions only. What is the evidence base for these interventions?

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