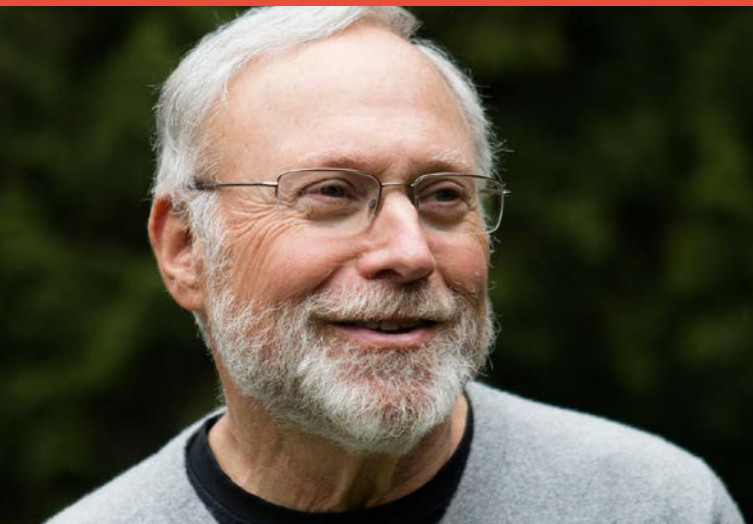


# Annual Report 2019



The Life You Can Save

# A Message from the Executive Director



**For our organization, 2019 was characterized by a massive team effort, led by our founder Peter Singer, to update and release online, free to anyone in the world, his seminal 2009 book, *The Life You Can Save: How to do your part to end world poverty.***

Another major effort went into overhauling our website and placing it on a different content management system, which makes it easier for us to update

content and consistently improve the user experience.

All of this was a significant investment of time and financial resources that we believe will have an enormous impact on philanthropy over the coming years.

**The Light Foundation’s substantial grant made this work financially feasible.**

Given the time and money that we put into the book project, and because, as a consequence, we needed to limit some of our other work (e.g., partnership development, major fundraising, our India launch), we are pleased by our overall 2019 results. Our “net impact” in 2019 (money moved to our recommended nonprofits minus our expenses) increased ~150% — to a little over \$12 million, compared to ~\$5 million in 2018.

An important caveat is that about half of this increase came from a single donor, and a significant proportion of the remaining growth was generated by a

**“ Our ‘net impact’ in 2019 (money moved to our recommended nonprofits minus our expenses) increased ~150% — to a little over \$12 million, compared to ~\$5 million in 2018.”**

handful of major donors. Obtaining these large gifts was consistent with our pivot in 2018 to placing an increased focus on major philanthropy by individuals and family foundations. If we exclude the largest donation from our results, the increase in money moved in 2019 over 2018 was 28%, which we still view as quite positive given that, per above, some major fundraising efforts were on pause while our small team worked on the book and the website overhaul.

Not surprisingly, our expenses increased significantly, from ~\$500,000 in 2018 to almost \$1 million in 2019. We attributed ~\$367,000 of these additional expenses to the book launch.

Even with the increase in expenses, **we raised ~\$13.50 for our recommended nonprofits for every \$1 we spent on operations (or \$7:\$1 if we exclude the large single donor).**

It is critical that we, like other nonprofits, make investments which strengthen our organization. This could not be more true than with our book project and website changes, both of which will pay dividends in future years even without significant new expenditures.

Another of our 2019 goals was to enter new markets. We had one large success and one effort that has not yet borne fruit.

The Life You Can Save Australia launched in May 2019 and the first eight months of operations exceeded our expectations by a large margin. We received donations of A\$1,333,172 (US\$828,428) on operating expenses of only A\$87,166 (US\$54,164). We were able to keep costs to a minimum by leveraging the existing global Team and infrastructure (e.g., website, global staff, database etc.). The results are unusual when compared to new market entries by large NGOs or companies, where it is

Image courtesy of Living Goods



common to expect negative or near-zero ROI in the first year(s) of operation. We are grateful to several Australian supporters who chose to donate to our Operational Fund, thereby enabling our positive results.

We had also hoped to form a partnership with a local organization in India, but the alliance did not turn out to be a good fit and we mutually decided that pursuing it was not in the best interest of either organization. We still hope to form an organization in India that is similar to The Life you Can Save, either independently or through a partner. If restrictions related to COVID-19 permit, our current plan is to launch the updated book in India.

Through the Giving Game Project—a form of experiential philanthropy education—we continued to educate people about the importance of high impact philanthropy and introduce them to resources that can guide their effective giving journeys. Our [2019 Giving Games Impact Report](#) outlines the evidence concerning Giving Games’ impact.

At the time of this writing in April 2020, all individuals, families, communities, governments and nonprofits are dealing with very challenging, unprecedented events. Several of our recommended nonprofits have already responded by developing and executing specific programs to help mitigate the damage of COVID-19 among people in low-income countries. Our commitment at The Life You Can Save is to continue to support

our recommended nonprofits vigorously, as their beneficiaries live in communities which are likely to be the most ravaged by COVID-19. In saying this, let’s not forget the charities that are still doing impactful and cost-effective work that’s essential for those living in extreme poverty but which may not be specifically COVID-19 related.

Our plans for 2020 (see below) will be impacted by COVID-19 in ways we cannot yet anticipate, but we will try to maximize our impact as much as possible under the circumstances, while being cautious about our spending in light of all the uncertainties which we, like everyone else, are facing.

I hope that our continued growth in money moved to effective charities will encourage you to consider making The Life You Can Save itself part of your giving portfolio. Based on our track record, every dollar donated to support our work can generate \$7-\$13 dollars for our recommended charities—an ROI which we hope you’ll agree is meaningful in many respects.



**Charlie Bresler**  
Executive Director

[Make a donation](#)

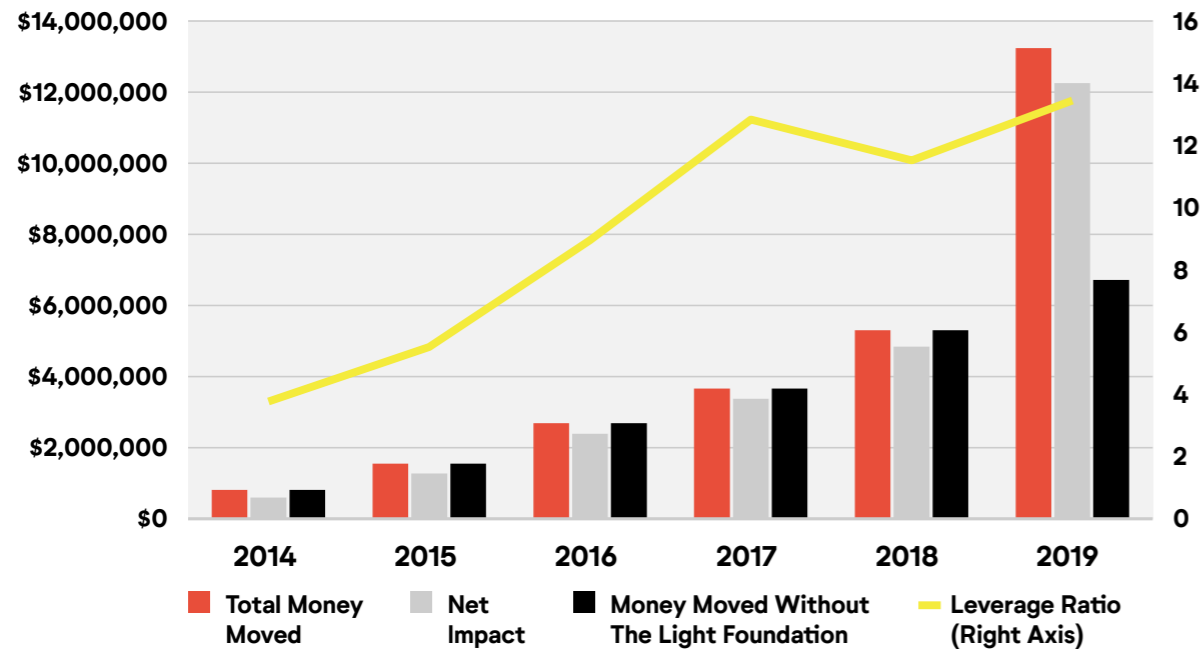
# 2019—The Year in Numbers

Metric	2019	2018	1 yr % change	Compound annual growth rate since 2014
Net Impact	\$12,324,021	\$4,836,603	155%	83%
Money Moved	\$13,308,729	\$5,299,121	151%	75%
Money Moved Without The Light Foundation	\$6,785,298	\$5,299,121	28%	53%
Expenses	\$984,708	\$462,518	113%	36%
Leverage Ratio	13.5	11.5	18%	29%



Image courtesy of SCI Foundation

### Impact Over Time



# The Book Project

**In 2018, we obtained and transferred the distribution rights for Peter’s landmark book, *The Life You Can Save: How to do your part to end world poverty, from traditional publishers to our own organization, giving us complete control over content, distribution, marketing and, most importantly, price—including being able to give the book away for free and measure success based on funds raised, not book sales.***

in shorter formats like reading guides, videos, graphics and synopses.

The new book includes all new content, including updates on progress made in reducing global poverty; descriptions of organizations that are particularly effective in contributing to such progress; individuals, companies and groups that are incorporating effective giving into their lives and workplaces; revised pledge guidelines; and a new foreword, preface and afterword. Besides leveraging the skills of our existing Team, the book

In 2019, the book project was our entire Team’s primary focus. This ambitious undertaking, which we intend to build upon for several years as we work to increase the number of people who will download, read and share Peter’s book, has thus far been funded by a generous grant from The Light Foundation, as well as gifts from several other donors. In order to maximize the impact of Peter’s message, we will continue to plan book-related events (online and, eventually, in-person) and to create relevant content for distribution partners who want to help spread our message through the book or



Image courtesy of IGN



Image courtesy of the Fred Hollows Foundation

project required engaging professional assistance in a variety of areas, including project management, public relations, copy editing, proofreading, indexing, publishing

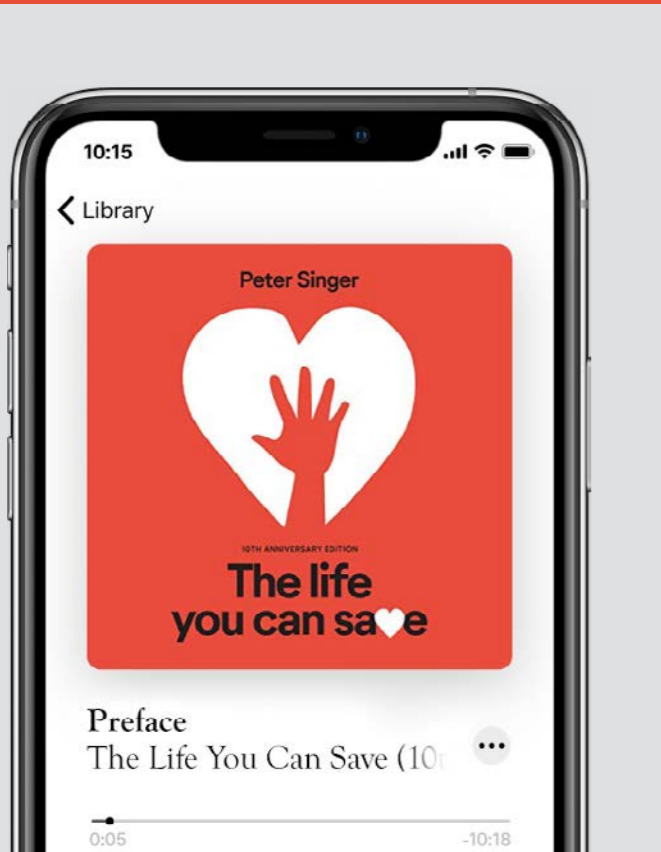
in multiple formats, technology, marketing, events, etc. A special shout-out to the many supporters who volunteered their time and expertise to contribute to this work!

## Audiobook Celebrity Narrators

One of the primary reasons we believed that updating Peter’s book was highly warranted was that we would be able to reach a new and wider audience because of the popularization, over the decade since the first edition, of ebooks and audiobooks.

We particularly felt if we could offer an audiobook version for free and have it narrated by well-known, mission-aligned personalities, the result would be especially compelling.

[Download the Book](#)



**Charlie Bresler**  
Executive Director of The Life You Can Save



**Nicholas D’Agosto**  
Actor and artist



**Stephen Fry**  
Actor, author & director



**Marc Evan Jackson**  
Actor & philanthropist



**Michael Schur**  
Writer & executive producer



**Paul Simon**  
Singer/Songwriter & philanthropist



**Winnie Auma**  
Uganda Country Director, Village Enterprise



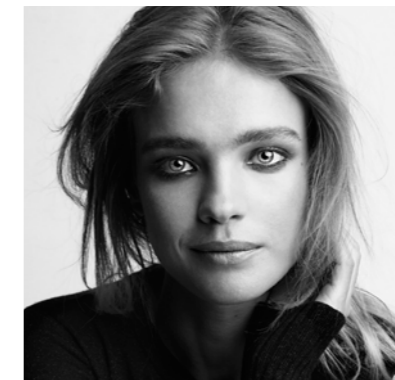
**Shabana Azmi**  
Indian actress & activist



**Kristen Bell**  
Actress, singer, writer & director



**Peter Singer**  
Philosopher & founder of The Life You Can Save



**Natalia Vodianova**  
Model, philanthropist & angel impact investor

Thanks also to Hachette Audio for their management of the audiobook production and distribution and for allowing us to offer free downloads of it on our website.

## Media Recognition

Media coverage about the book included interviews and articles by the [Associated Press](#), [CBS News](#), [CBS This Morning](#), [ABC Eyewitness News](#), [Vox](#), [The Big Think](#), [Crazy Money](#), [Devex](#) and [Nonprofit Chronicles](#) as well as social media posts from many of our narrators.

## Free book distribution through partners

We partnered with our recommended charities as well as other companies, organizations and groups who distributed the free book (in its various formats) to their supporters, customers, employees, boards and other stakeholders. Through these initiatives, our partners were able to give their audiences access to a free, thought-provoking book while we benefited by getting our book in the hands (and ears) of more people at no cost—a win-win-win approach!

Our mission-aligned partners shared the book and its message in a variety of ways. Some organizations—such as the Heath Brothers, Angel News, Bain & Company

and King & Wood Mallesons—sent the free book to their audiences' inbox through tailored emails and newsletter features. GiveWell added a pop-up on their site offering the free book to all their website visitors while 80,000 Hours invited Peter to their podcast to talk about the book and our organization. Finally, multiple organizations, such as Giving What We Can, Centre for Effective Altruism and the Centre for High Impact Philanthropy, shared news about the book on their social media channels.

We want to grow these efforts even more in 2020 and beyond, so please [contact us](#) if your organization or company would like to discuss a potential partnership.

## Results so far

We are pleased with how successful the book campaign has gone so far. In December, we distributed over 25,000 copies across all formats and we acquired ~10,000 new subscriptions to our email list—a huge increase relative to the 15,000 subscriptions we started the month with. Our web traffic for the month was up ~65% over 2018, and excluding traffic from our free adwords account, it nearly doubled (+99%).

[Discuss a potential partnership](#)

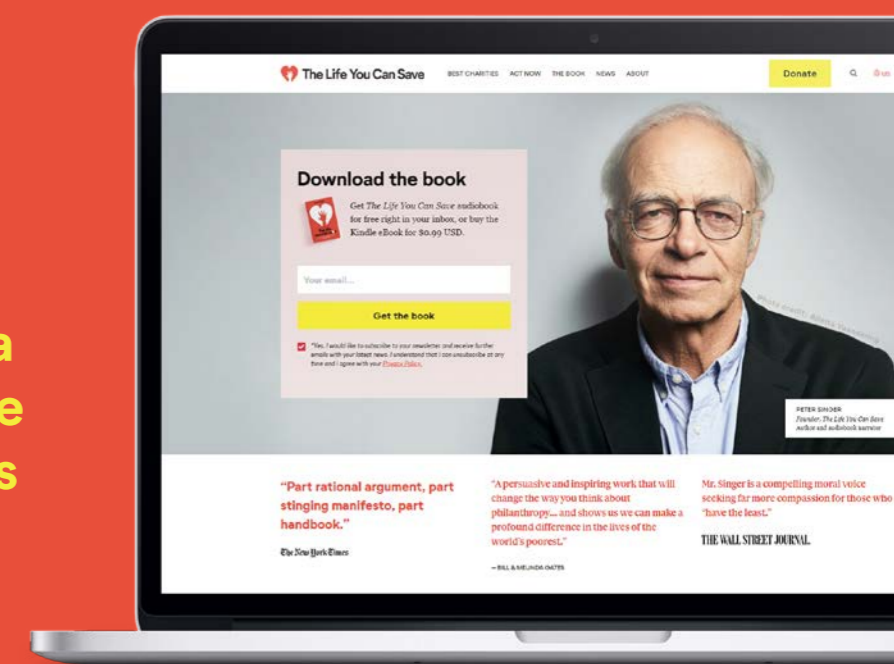
## New Website

**We wanted a great new website that would allow book download functionality as well as an improved user experience for interaction with our content and donation platform, especially in anticipation of the increased traffic we expected to get once the book was launched.**

We were thrilled to find a highly talented and mission-aligned partner in Bilberry, a digital agency headquartered in Seattle. The ambitious plan became for Bilberry to

modernize the website's user experience, streamline its messaging, and ramp up conversions, as well as officially launch the 10th Anniversary Edition of the book. While they were at it, Bilberry would implement a flexible, user-friendly content management system as well as a solid infrastructure built for thousands of simultaneous file downloads. And all of this was to be accomplished by Giving Tuesday—only 13 weeks from kick-off! Bilberry came through in a huge way—you can read more about the amazing work they did in a blog they wrote for us about it [here](#).

**“...a flexible, user-friendly content management system as well as a solid infrastructure built for thousands of simultaneous file downloads”**



# Looking Ahead

## Content & Distribution

Our focus for 2020 will continue to be distribution of the book and related content around Peter’s message. We will create compelling short-form content and “asks” to attract new audiences and to retain and invigorate existing followers. Distribution will be via a wide range of channels, including our website, newsletter, social media, partners networks and influencer engagement. A new platform we are currently trying out is Amazon’s KDP Select (Kindle Direct Publishing), which moves our eBook exclusively to Amazon.com in order to increase downloads by leveraging their significant traffic. This campaign includes paid ads on Amazon & strategic third-party book publishing platforms.

## Partnerships

A priority area for sharing content and gaining new followers and donors is partnerships. We are building our outreach efforts to engage companies and organizations that value helping people living in poverty. In particular, we’re looking for partners that want to co-create content and whose audiences (staff, customers etc.) would benefit from free access to the book.

## Scoping New Markets

Following the success of the establishment of The Life You Can Save Australia, we’ll be exploring options for establishing a larger presence in the UK and other new markets, thereby enabling more people in more countries to give effectively—again, pending additional operational funding. We’ll also be looking at options for publishing our book in other major languages and for publishing partners.

## Fundraising

Of course the ultimate goal of all of our content, distribution and partnership efforts is to inspire more people to give more generously to our recommended nonprofits. Secondly, we also need to raise enough funding for The Life You Can Save itself so that we can continue supporting the charities. In 2020, we’ll continue with a strong focus on encouraging people to sign up for monthly recurring donations, and we’ll also build our efforts to assist major philanthropists in developing their giving portfolios to include our recommended charities. To that end, we’ll be expanding our **Impact Portfolio** to showcase large giving opportunities.



© Evidence Action

In terms of generating support for our own operations, we rely on voluntary donations to enable our work of spreading Peter Singer’s ideas and thus to reduce poverty. We have a strong track record of generating \$7-\$13 for our recommended charities on every dollar donated to our operating budget. By making a donation (tax-deductible in the U.S., Australia and the U.K. so far) to The Life You Can Save itself, you can help us popularize Peter Singer’s ideas about effective giving, get our book in the hands of more people, and expand to new markets. We also welcome in-kind donations of media space, marketing expertise, technology, etc.

## Raising Funds for COVID-19 Response

At the time of writing this report, all of our recommended nonprofits are pivoting rapidly to safeguard their staffs and to adapt their work in order to continue to serve their beneficiaries’ needs—needs which will undoubtedly be greater than ever, as the already-poor will surely be the hardest hit by the pandemic crisis.

We are posting **regular updates** on our website about these projects and attendant funding needs.

**Donate to The Life You Can Save Operations**

**Donate to our COVID-19 Fund**



Image courtesy of IGN

That said, we all know that not just now, but every day, 15,000 children under five years old die from largely preventable, poverty-related causes; 2.1 billion people are without access to safe drinking water (29% of the world's population); and 734 million people are living in extreme poverty (on less than the equivalent of US\$1.90 per day). We therefore remain steadfast in our mission to save and improve lives by supporting our recommended effective charities and the work they do *every day* to help the world's most disadvantaged people.

**Donate to all our charities**

Please contact us if you're interested in enabling any of the initiatives in this report:

**Charlie Bresler**  
*Executive Director*  
[Charlie@thelifeyoucansave.org](mailto:Charlie@thelifeyoucansave.org)

**Rickard Vikstrom**  
*Chief Operating Officer*  
[Rickard@thelifeyoucansave.org](mailto:Rickard@thelifeyoucansave.org)

# Appendix

## The Life You Can Save Subsidiaries

Organization	Money Moved
The Life You Can Save US	\$12,444,614
The Life You Can Save Australia	\$828,428
The Life You Can Save UK	\$35,687



Image courtesy of One Acre Fund



## By Recommended NonProfit (RNP)

Organization	Donation*
Fistula Foundation	2,171,342
Against Malaria Foundation	1,245,029
GiveDirectly	601,017
Oxfam	297,409
Development Media International	268,404
Evidence Action	237,190
Seva	226,817
Innovations for Poverty Action	207,655
D-Rev	179,958
Schistosomiasis Control Initiative	154,393
Malaria Consortium	143,710
Helen Keller International	134,737
Population Services International	133,725
Living Goods	132,295
Project Healthy Children	112,753
One Acre Fund	104,826
Village Enterprise	104,152
Fred Hollows Foundation	100,067
Iodine Global Network	83,846
Global Alliance For Improved Nutrition	77,701
Possible	55,076
Zusha	13,197
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,785,298</b>

\* Excluding gifts from The Light Foundation

## Type of Donation

Type of Donation	2019	2018	% Change
Donations through TLYCS (website or check)	1,736,519	1,112,998	56%
High Net Worth Individuals	2,073,255	1,450,000	43%
Donations directly to RNP (reported)	2,260,674	1,856,599	22%
Donations directly to RNP (estimated where no reporting available)	210,180	161,683	30%
Partnerships	504,671	717,841	-30%
The Light Foundation	6,523,431	-	#N/A
<b>Total (excl. The Light Foundation)</b>	<b>6,785,298</b>	<b>5,299,121</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,308,729</b>	<b>5,299,121</b>	<b>151%</b>



Image courtesy of IGN

 **The Life You Can Save**

**MAKE A DONATION**