

TASK: A friend of yours has shared this video clip on Facebook and has asked you for your opinion. What would your response look like? (200-300w)
 (Note: You do not have to comment on all three points MacAskill makes.)

Now read what William MacAskill says and complete the exercises which follow.

Do you give money to disaster relief or pay that little bit extra for fair-trade produce? William MacAskill argues that you may not be doing as much good as you think you are.

Most of us like to think of ourselves as charitable people; even more we want to think we know how to help others. Actually, it's easy to make the wrong decision despite good intentions, so how can we avoid making things worse when we try to do good?

One: don't boycott sweatshops. Yes, sweatshops often have pretty horrific working conditions. Employees work sixteen-hour days, sometimes without meal or toilet breaks. So what's the answer? Refuse to buy goods produced in them, so the factories go bust and the workers can leave and get better jobs elsewhere?

Two: don't bother with fair-trade goods. Surely buying those bananas with the little (fair-trade) sticker on them can only be a good thing. Unfortunately not. Firstly, fair-trade standards are difficult to meet, so producers in the poorest countries often can't afford to get fair-trade certification. Secondly, of the additional money that you spend on fair-trade goods only a tiny portion ends up in the hands of producers in poor countries. So instead of shelling out for that fair-trade coffee, you do more good by buying a cheaper cup and donating the money you save to a cost-effective charity.

Three: don't donate to disaster relief. In 2011 Japan was hit by the fourth most powerful earthquake since records began. Tsunamis reached heights of 130 feet; millions of people were left without electricity or water; thousands died. Just one year before, an earthquake had hit Haiti: 280,000 buildings collapsed, cholera broke out, and thousands died. In both cases, there

... massive international media attention. In each, the total international aid raised in the immediate aftermath amounted to around five billion dollars, but the amounts of money raised shouldn't have been so similar due to the disproportion between the death toll and each country's ability to handle the crises that ensued from each disaster.

The Haitian earthquake caused ten times as many deaths, but while Japan, being the fourth-richest country in the world, had the resources to deal with a disaster on that scale, Haiti didn't. The trouble is we often don't think about where our donation will have the biggest impact. In fact, natural disasters receive far more in donations per person affected than other sorts of problems poor countries have to contend with. Every day tens of thousands of people die from easily preventable diseases, like Aids, malaria and tuberculosis. So even if they receive a lot less attention, these are natural disasters whose repercussions by far eclipse those of any earthquake.

If we bypass the intuitive methods of charity, we can donate money in a more cost-effective way so that only a few thousand dollars are needed to save a life and we avoid exacerbating already appalling living conditions. That's a real way to make a difference. (edited and supplemented)

D. Crossword Puzzle

Use the following clues to complete the crossword on the next page. All the words you are looking for are used in the article above. The numbers of the lines in which the words appear have been given to help you.

Across

- 5. to make something seem unimportant by comparison (line 35)
- 6. to make (a problem, bad situation or negative feeling) worse (38)
- 9. to avoid or ignore (usually a problem or an obstacle) (37)
- 10. causing fear, shock or disgust (6)
- 14. to add up to something; make something as a total (26)
- 15. unintended consequences of an event or action, especially an unpleasant one (35)
- 17. something that is worth having or doing is ... (13)

Down

- 1. to happen after or as a result of another event (line 28)
- 2. the consequences of a significant, unpleasant event (26)
- 3. in a less advantageous position (12)
- 4. the state of two things not being on an equal level (27)
- 7. a three part verb which means to pay for (18)
- 8. another expression for 'go bankrupt' (8)
- 11. helping or giving to people in need (3)
- 12. to have to deal with (a problem or difficult situation) (33)
- 13. horrifying or shocking (39)
- 16. a part of something larger (18)