

FINANCIAL TIMES

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Let us put an end to blind giving

From Mr Martin Brookes

Sir, With reference to your editorial, "Venturing for good" (November 5), you are right that the world needs "more Mr Omidyars, not fewer". We will get more Mr Omidyars if donors are able to see their money is going to the best use and the greatest need.

And giving away wealth to others - whether as a social investment or charitable donation - is one of life's true feel-good experiences and an answer to the question posed on the front page about where well-off people find happiness ("Happiness begins with a wealth of experience").

The frustrations Mr Omidyar, eBay's founder, has experienced in trying to get results by giving money to non-profit groups in the US are similar to those felt by many philanthropists in Britain. These can discourage both first-time and experienced donors from giving to charities.

There are, however, many charities in the UK doing good works and having a profound impact on people's lives. The problem is donors are not getting enough information on this impact and how they can help build on it.

The key to attracting donors in the charitable sector is to depend less on blind giving and more on an informed approach which makes philanthropy more rewarding, not only for donors but also for the charities and people that ultimately receive it. New Philanthropy Capital is trying to fill this information gap by providing rigorous, analytical research into the performance of charities to ensure that donors' money has the greatest impact.

If this becomes the future of how people give, as we hope it does, you might just find that there are a lot more Mr Omidyars around.

**Martin Brookes,
Head of Research,
New Philanthropy Capital,
London SE1 9BG**