

1 DO I KNOW WHO THEY ARE?

Sometimes we may think we know an organization because of marketing, or because we've seen them in the news. But what do we know about them firsthand? Knowing the people who head an organization and who they are associated with takes a few minutes, but gives you incredibly valuable information. Also, knowing if they are certified and registered with the government, which keeps them accountable, is very important.

2 WHAT IS THEIR VISION / MISSION?

Every organization should have a mission statement easily accessible and understandable. We can often assume an organization is about one thing, and be frustrated if they focus time and energy somewhere else. Their vision or mission statement should make it clear why they started their organization and what they will use your donation for. Non-profit organizations are legally bound to use donations towards accomplishing their mission.

3 WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

Look at what they are spending their time and money on, and you will have a good understanding of what they are doing. A good organization should also be giving regular updates of their activities, in addition to an annual report wrap up. They should be upfront with their financials, and if they are not, consider it a red flag.

4 DO I AGREE WITH WHAT THEY ARE DOING?

This is a big piece. Everyone is unique with different passions given by God. Our hearts beat different, and what moves one person may not move another. We tend to engage more and be loyal to organizations that we have a strong "heart" connection with. It's OK to be selective.

5 IS WHAT THEY ARE DOING SUSTAINABLE AND TRULY HELPING THE PEOPLE?

This is a tough one because it takes time to observe and our emotions can't help but get involved. No one wants to see a child starving, or people without homes, but there are some methods that are proven more likely to help without hurting. Is what they are doing hurting local industry? Do they have a game plan for the program to be self-sufficient? Is there a cycle of poverty being perpetuated?

A great resource on this is the book ["When Helping Hurts"](#) by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett

SOME HELPFUL SITES WHEN LOOKING AT NON-PROFITS AND CHARITIES ARE:

- Guidestar- www.guidestar.org
- Charity Navigator- www.charitynavigator.org
- Givewell- www.givewell.org/

When looking at these sites realize that many good, ethical non-profits not included on these and other sites. These websites sometimes take years to get organizations listed on their database because there are so many new and existing ones out there. Just because they are not listed, doesn't mean they are not legitimate. This is just a good starting place.