

GLOBAL SURVEY: U.S. NOW #1 IN CHARITABLE GIVING, RISING FROM FIFTH PLACE

WASHINGTON, D.C.///December 19, 2011///The United States now ranks the highest in terms of charity in a massive global survey that put the nation in fifth place in 2010, according to CAFAmerica, a member organization of the United Kingdom based Charities Aid Foundation International Network of Offices, providing charitable financial services to individuals, global corporations, charities, and foundations.

According to those surveyed, two out of three Americans said they donated money to charity (65 percent), more than two out of five volunteered their time (43 percent) and roughly three out of four helped a stranger (73 percent).

The new “World Giving Index (WGI) 2011” report is based on over 150,000 Gallup polling interviews with members of the public in 153 countries. The 2011 report looks at three aspects of giving behavior of individuals in the preceding month, asking if they have donated money to a charity, volunteered time to an organization, or helped a stranger.

The top-ranked U.S. was followed in the survey by Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom rounding out the top five. The four new countries in the top 20 compared to the 2010 WGI report are Thailand, Morocco, Nigeria and Liberia. Of these, Liberia has enjoyed the biggest rise from 39th to 14th place, although Morocco’s increase from 33rd to 12th is equally notable. Other major shifts in the rankings include the rise of the United Kingdom from eighth to fifth, and Thailand’s neighbor Laos moving to tenth place.

As the World Giving Report 2011 states: **“The USA had been ranked fifth in 2010, and has risen to first this year. It has shown a steady increase in each of the three measures over the past year, ranging from four percentage points ‘volunteering time’ and to eight percentage points ‘helping a stranger’. It is this even progress across all three measures that has caused the country to rise to the top of the Index.”**

CAFAmerica Interim CEO & Director of Finance David Venne said: **“In spite of economic hardships and uncertainty in the future, the American spirit is caring and strong, as these survey findings clearly show. For almost 20 years, CAFAmerica has worked to shine the light on global giving and encourage U.S. donors to support communities and cause beyond our borders. The generosity of the American spirit expands beyond the US with 5 percent of American charitable monies flowing overseas. Our organization is helping US donors connect in a lasting way with communities around the world. The results of the World Giving Index 2011 survey show that China, Russia and India are among those near the bottom of the list. Our experience shows that these countries benefit enormously from US philanthropy.”**

Venne added: **“It is important that Americans continue to build-up indigenous philanthropy in countries, helping to create a vibrant and sustainable nonprofit sector. And while Americans can take pride in the survey findings, the truth is that there is much more we can all do when it comes to charitable giving in other nations. If donating more is going to be one of your New Year’s resolutions, our message is that you need to do your homework, use the tools provided by CAFAmerica and other organizations, and think about how to give in a way that will achieve a maximum impact.”**

Charities Aid Foundation Director of Research Richard Harrison said: **“This research confirms that when we look at giving in a rounded way, including the extent to which we volunteer and help strangers, America is the most generous country in the world. America is the only country that ranks in the Top 10 globally on each of these three perspectives and this 1st place ranking should be seen as source of real pride for people across America.**

Harrison added: **“This research also shows that worldwide, more people are giving than was shown in 2010. This is a very positive and heart-warming insight into how the global community is responding to the economic and social turmoil. However at the global level, only two of the three measures have increased; the challenging news is that the proportion of people giving money to charity fell. This is worrying as falling donations mean less aid during disasters, less access to clean water, good hygiene and decent housing, and a reduced capacity to care for the most vulnerable in society. It is important for America and for the global community that Americans who can afford to give, do continue to give”.**

Only three countries in the top 20 have seen a decrease in their World Giving Index 2011 scores: Canada, Sri Lanka and Malta. In each case, the drop is of no more than two percentage points. Central America, Central Asia and Central and Eastern Europe are the only regions around the world not represented in the top 20.

The full World Giving Index Report 2011 is available online at www.CAFAmerica.org.

HOW U.S. GIVERS CAN GET MORE INVOLVED

CAFAmerica outlined the following tips for those who plan in 2011 to either start giving or to step up their donations:

1. **Focus on a charity that makes sense for you.** Charities have an obligation to provide detailed information to interested donors. Never give to a charity you know nothing about. You may wish to pick a charity or an initiative in one field of interest and in one geographic area and then stick to it. To get started finding a charity that is a good fit for you, go to <http://www.cafamerica.org/cafa/SearchModule/NpPublicProfileSearch.aspx>. This Web tool allows you to search approximately 1,000 charities by nation, region, focus (religion, education, social services, health and medical research, the environment) and other key factors. Beyond the organizations documented in CAFAmerica’s online tool, donors may also select a target for giving from more than 100,000 charities around the world, and opt to make donations to the eligible organization of their choice.
2. **Consider giving more to fewer charities.** If you do give to many non-profits, consider donating larger sums to fewer organizations. In the world of small- and medium-size charities, a \$1,000 donation to one charity may achieve a much bigger impact than \$100 given to each of 10 different charities. This is not to say that someone has to give more than \$100 to make a difference, and there is no right or wrong answer about which charity you should give to and at what level. However, it is generally true that, for those who can afford to do so, a few large gifts will generate a bigger impact than several small gifts.
3. **Do your homework and donate safely.** There is no substitute for due diligence when it comes to international charitable giving. Donors who give via CAFAmerica can be reassured that any foreign or U.S. charity that they want to support will be reviewed to make sure that funds are used for their intended purpose. We get answers to these questions: How long a charity has been working? What risks are associated with giving to a specific country? Can we independently verify a charity’s mission? These are a few of the many questions we ask before we make an advised grant. As a donor you should also ask questions before you give. Ask about the charity in which you are interested and find out more about it. Talk to friends, family and neighbors, and use the internet to learn more about a charity or issue that interests you. Ask the charity about its achievements, what has failed, and how it is financed. Many charities provide some of this information online or you can email them. If they are being transparent they will tell you. Then you will be able to find out whether the charity is likely to use your gift wisely. If you’re interested in a major donation to a charity or for an initiative in a country then there is no substitute for seeing their work in action. So consider making a visit or a country tour to find out what you really would like to support.

4. **Focus on sustainability – not “one shot” giving.** If you are considering a larger donation, it's important to think about what happens after your money is spent by a foreign charity. Do the services offered decline? Do programs get dismantled? This is why “sustainability” is increasingly an important issue for donors who don't want to see their gift go to waste. Think about the long term by asking the charity how they spent your gift and what was achieved by it.
5. **Review your giving regularly.** Look back over the past year and ask the tough questions: Did you fulfill your goals for cross-border giving? Do you need to make changes? Do you need more help in establishing your goals? If so, what worked and what will you change for next year? It's important to avoid the “check off the box” syndrome of international charitable giving, where you simply go back each holiday season to the same charities and write them the same check as the previous year.

ABOUT CAFAMERICA

Founded in 1992, CAFAmerica (<http://www.CAFAmerica.org>) is a member organization of the United Kingdom based Charities Aid Foundation International Network of Offices, which provides charitable financial services to individuals, global corporations, charities, and foundations. CAFAmerica is dedicated to expanding borderless charitable giving by providing guidance and international grant making solutions for donors and charities. CAFAmerica makes over \$40 million in grants annually to charities in more than 75 countries around the world. CAFAmerica's range of charitable solutions include: Donor Advised Gifts, Donor Advised Funds, Matching Donor Advised Funds, Designated Funds, bequest planning and 'Friends of' Charity Funds.

MEDIA CONTACT: Leslie Anderson, for CAFAmerica, (703) 276-3256 or landerson@hastingsgroup.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A streaming audio replay of the news event will be available on the Web at <http://www.CAFAmerica.org> as of 7 p.m. EST on December 19, 2011.