Charity Navigator is an organization that examines the structure and finances of non-profit charities and can give donors a better picture of where exactly all the money goes. They have a list of the top ten (and bottom ten) charities, tips, charts and numbers galore. So if a patron finds themself in the position of being able to donate, suggest this website as part of the process!
Invisible Children: The Charity Behind KONY 2012

Charity Navigator Responds to Misinformation About our Rating of Invisible Children

Early in March 2012, the charity, Invisible Children, released a viral video titled "KONY 2012," and used the popularity of the video to raise awareness against Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and his terrorizing of Ugandans. Invisible Children created the video in an effort to draw attention to Kony's reign of terror. For a while, Invisible Children and its video were all over the news. But to raise support for his arrest and set a precedent for international law enforcement, Invisible Children created the video in an effort to draw attention to Kony's reign of terror. For a while, Invisible Children and its video were all over the news.

But the video's tremendous popularity brought the charity a mixed bag of praise and scrutiny. Overnight the charity was hit with a string of criticisms that attacked everything from how it spends its money to the appropriateness of its mission. Like Larry Magid pointed out on the Huffington Post, we too believe in the importance of critical thinking. Heart wrenching appeals, like Kony 2012, are powerful tools for inspiring altruism, but they are meaningless if we don't take the time to ensure that the charity behind the cause is worth the investment. That's what we're all about at Charity Navigator – looking under the hood and doing the analysis to help you be an informed donor.

While it is fair to debate the appropriateness of this charity's approach to solving a serious problem, some bloggers, donors and even reporters have mischaracterized the financial health of Invisible Children and our evaluation of the charity. Rather than back away from the criticism, Invisible Children's CEO, Ben Keese, addressed many of the concerns raised about the charity via another video (see below). We commend the charity for this approach and what appears to be its commitment to transparency. And we'd also like to take a moment and set the record straight on a few items related to our rating of Invisible Children.

1. We give the charity 4 out of a possible 4 stars for its Financial Health. It spends upwards of 80% of its budget on its programs and services. As such, Invisible Children is actually outperforming most charities in our database in terms of how it allocates its expenses.

But some have mischaracterized the charity's spending. They've pointed to the 37% the charity indicates it spent on "Central Africa Programs" (direct programs and services in Africa rather than awareness

Here is a look at the charity behind last spring's viral video, KONY 2012...