



## Event Summary Report

On 12 September 2023, AVPN launched the AVPN Climate Pathfinders Asia, a pivotal initiative of the AVPN Climate Action Platform, to empower philanthropic funders, impact investors, and other funding bodies across Asia. The primary goal of this capacity-building programme is to equip participants with a comprehensive understanding of the current climate investment landscape in Asia and the essential elements required to initiate and sustain impactful climate initiatives. The cohort of AVPN Climate Pathfinders in Asia will emerge from this programme with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate the intricacies of climate action in the region and effectively engage in launching climate initiatives across the region.

This cohort saw 24 new pathfinders joining the programme with an average funding overlay of approximately USD 7.3 million. The launch of this programme took place as part of the Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum hosted by the Hong Kong Jockey Club with a panel session on the emerging trends in climate leadership arising from within Asia and a workshop that engaged the pathfinders in deeper discussions on climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience in the context of Asia. This summary report highlights some of the key points of discussion between the pathfinders over the course of the day.

## Panel 1 - Climate Leadership - An Asian Dialogue



*Image 1 - Panel Discussions, Climate Leadership - An Asian Dialogue*

In light of the escalating global climate crisis, Asia is at a critical juncture that calls for strong climate leadership. This session introduced the Climate Pathfinder Asia Programme. The session explored the current landscape across adaptation, mitigation, and resilience from an Asian perspective and dived into collaboration opportunities to unlock more inclusive finance mechanisms in the region.

The session was moderated by Aravindan Srinivasan, Director - Thematic Collaboration, AVPN, and included the following speakers, He Xin, Director, Guangdong Community Foundation, Anthony Gao, Head of Philanthropy Services, Asia, Pictet Wealth Management, Gu Qing, Senior Programme Officer, Ford Foundation, and Angela Bai, Founding Secretary-General, CASVI.

Aravindan kicked off the launch of the Climate Pathfinders programme by sharing insights from AVPN's [research](#) into barriers and opportunities for climate action for impact-led capital across Asia, specifically focussing on the intersectional nature of the impact of

climate change require funders (especially with the growing community of HNI's in Asia) to shed siloed approaches and look at deploying their capital in strategic ways where it can be catalytic for the whole ecosystem.



*Image 2: Understanding the Barriers and Opportunities for Climate Action in Asia*

During the panel, He Xin emphasised the importance of local community and government engagement in climate action. She highlighted the role of foundations in fostering community-driven sustainability initiatives and the need for a partnership approach with various government departments, with technical and management support. Subsequently, Anthony Gao shared his optimism about the rising appetite amongst wealth holders for climate investments and the opportunity to collaborate with Development finance institutions and policy efforts such as carbon exchanges. He also stressed the significance of integrating sustainability into investment strategies, enabling philanthropic investors to align their financial resources with climate goals. Gu Qing shared the Ford Foundation's perspective on just transition, emphasising the importance of supporting innovative solutions and nurturing the ecosystem for climate investments, for example through their support of curriculum development for climate in business schools in partnership with Wall Street actors and also through their efforts to promote investment guidelines via the China national advisory board for impact investments. Lastly, Angela Bai highlighted the role of



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technology and innovation in climate solutions and shared examples of predictive modelling using AI that can generate ratings of companies based on their carbon impact.

## Climate Pathfinders Workshop



*Image 3 - The First Cohort of Pathfinders in Asia*

The workshop that followed the launch of the AVPN Climate Pathfinders featured TED-style snapshots from sector experts, including Qiang Liu, Director of Climate and deputy Chief Representative China at the Children Investment Fund Foundation; Callum Douglas, Nature and Climate Senior Advisor; Fatma Ben Fadhl, Senior Programme Officer for Sustainable Investment at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); and Justin Chang, Director of Philanthropy and Catalytic Capital at RS Group.

During the workshop group discussions, several key findings emerged:

**1. Intersectional Impact of Climate Challenge:**

- a. Discussions acknowledged the complexity of climate action, considering its scale and economic dimensions as well as its impact on other SDG areas.
- b. Recognizing the importance of building local capacity to effectively tackle climate change within communities.
- c. Stressing the importance of breaking down silos and fostering collaboration regionally to tackle transboundary issues.
- d. Recognizing nature-based solutions as an asset class and emphasising the importance of funding small NGOs in climate action efforts.

**2. Energy Transition:**

- a. The need to discuss energy transition in totality, looking at solar, wind water and others in combination to achieve carbon peaking while keeping a clear view of the transition roadmap from a livelihood lens.
- b. The urgency of addressing energy shortages and the necessity for sustainable energy solutions in relation to other goals such as last-mile healthcare access were highlighted.

**3. Financing through co-investment:**

- a. The importance of co-investing in green transition projects as an effective approach to addressing environmental challenges.
- b. Exploring the role of blended finance and philanthropic capital as instrumental tools for advancing climate initiatives.
- c. The consensus on creating an enabling environment for philanthropy to bridge gaps, connecting the global north and south but also locally within countries.

**4. Collaboration with geographical networks featuring diverse stakeholders:**

- a. Participants recognised the potential for enhanced collaboration for example platforms for ASEAN countries to engage with China and India and vice versa.
- b. Nurture regional networks that possess a critical mass of diverse stakeholders capable of shaping authentic demand-driven narratives.
- c. Develop ecosystem infrastructure and build local technical capacity (in governments and private sectors) by promoting more knowledge, peer sharing and expertise.



The cohort shared ideas for future workshops on a variety of topics that can be explored.

In summary, the workshop provided a platform for in-depth discussions and insights into various facets of climate action, including challenges, opportunities, and the role of philanthropy. The shared aspirations of the participants revolved around fostering collaboration, leveraging finance, and driving sustainable solutions to address climate change effectively. Some testimonials from the workshop participants include:

*"Individual Actions are linear but nature is an exponential force. To counter the speed and scope of an exponential force our response also needs to be exponential which is why we need networks like AVPN, as networks are force multipliers"*

**Sanjay Purohit, Chief Curator, Societal Thinking**

*"I wanted to express my heartfelt gratitude to you and the entire AVPN team for having me at the launch of the AVPN Pathfinder Asia programme in Hong Kong. It was a truly enriching experience, and your thoughtful arrangements for the workshop made it all the more enjoyable. I must say I had a fantastic time during the workshop and had the opportunity to learn from the valuable insights shared by other guests. It was a great chance to broaden my horizons in the field of climate finance. I genuinely look forward to the next workshop and any future opportunities for collaboration."*

**He Xin, Director, Guangdong Harmony Community Foundation**

*"It was my pleasure to attend this workshop and have a great discussion with all the other participants. This kind of communication is key for aligning all philanthropy work in the Asian region and leveraging more philanthropic resources and efforts to promote climate work more strategically. Really hope we can work together to mobilize key players in the region to work more on the climate field with more tangible impacts, especially in China and supporting China's cooperation with other developing countries in low-carbon transition. I think it is also key for not only raising awareness on why we need to enhance the inputs on climate but also how we can do better to build the enabling environment and system and promote climate actions through our engagement in key areas."*

**Qiang Liu, Director, Climate and Deputy Chief Representative China**

## Moving Forward

As we continue this journey with the climate pathfinders, the programme will review the findings and discussions from the workshop to develop a curated and bespoke learning experience. The Pathfinder programme will draw greater focus towards the topics that were highlighted during workshop discussions through more online/hybrid workshops which include areas such as blended finance, nature-based solutions, circular economy, ESG, and carbon markets.

Furthering our goals to drive Asian Leadership to global forums, the Pathfinder programme will aim to engage our pathfinders at COP28 and will invite members to a webinar in the third week of October (date to be confirmed soon) to share plans of members from the pathfinder community and broader AVPN membership.

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