



# COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY IN ASIA

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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This white paper aims to serve as a resource for philanthropists and philanthropic organisations by exploring the development of collaborative philanthropy in Asia. It looks at the enabling environment in the region, describes different frameworks for collaboratives, and presents the opportunities and challenges faced by philanthropists and philanthropic organisations looking to partake in formalised collaborative efforts. It features case studies of philanthropic collaboratives both in the region and around the world.

## Methodology

Both primary and secondary research methods were used. Primary data collection was conducted through interviews with experts within our membership and in the field of collaborative philanthropy. Secondary research included extensive desktop research, the findings and conclusions of which were validated through the conducted interviews.

This white paper also draws on analysis frameworks and insights from an October 2019 convening of leaders in collaborative philanthropy in Asia that was held in Singapore.<sup>1</sup> Facilitated by social systems designers from the Stanford d.school, the attendees examined collaborative philanthropy in the region and called on more than 80 examples of philanthropic collaboratives in their discussions.

<sup>1</sup>. AVPN Workshop: Collaborative Philanthropy and Pooled Funds in Asia

## Acknowledgements

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## Participating Organisations

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- Give2Asia
- India Climate Collaborative
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- National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)
- Prospera - International Network of Women's Funds
- Tote Board
- 10to19 Dasra Adolescents Collaborative

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFS	COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SINGAPORE
CSR	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
GDP	GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT
ICC	INDIA CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE
IMFC	INDONESIA MARINE FUNDERS COLLABORATION
L4G	LISTEN4GOOD
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION
NVPC	NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AND PHILANTHROPY CENTRE
SDG	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL
SPO	SOCIAL PURPOSE ORGANISATION
TOC	THEORY OF CHANGE

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS REPORT	3	<b>4</b> CHARACTERISTICS AND COMMON FRAMEWORKS	37
METHODOLOGY	3	4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIVES	37
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8	CASE STUDY 5: PROSPERA - INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF WOMEN'S FUNDS	42
<b>1</b> INTRODUCTION: COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY IN ASIA TODAY	10	4.2 FRAMEWORKS TO COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY	45
CASE STUDY 1: 10TO19 DASRA ADOLESCENTS COLLABORATIVE	13	CASE STUDY 6: GIVE2ASIA	48
<b>2</b> FOUR FACTORS DRIVING PHILANTHROPIC COLLABORATION	16	<b>5</b> OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES	51
CASE STUDY 2: DATA.ORG	22	5.1 OPPORTUNITIES	51
<b>3</b> COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT AND SYSTEMS CHANGE	25	5.2 CHALLENGES	52
3.1 COLLECTIVE IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY	25	<b>6</b> CONCLUSION	55
CASE STUDY 3: COLABS	29	REFERENCES	56
3.2 HOW COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY CAN EFFECT SYSTEMS CHANGE	32		
CASE STUDY 4: THE INDIA CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE (ICC)	34		





















## PROJECTS

data.org sees governments, funders, corporates, and NGOs as the key stakeholders in achieving its goals, and aims to work with all of them through its programmes to ensure and enable unified data-driven solutions across sectors. One of its first initiatives is capacity building of NGO leaders through co-developing effective education and training programmes in data science methods and approaches. data.org has also started conversations with the private sector in Asia to bring some of the global discussions around impact data to the region.



## MOVING FORWARD

data.org seeks to develop its programmes with partners across the public, private and social sector. As part of the initial field-building efforts, data.org has launched the US\$10 million data.org Inclusive Growth and Recovery Challenge, seeking to fund either initiatives that are driven by data scientists or those with an idea for how they could use data science to address social issues.<sup>37</sup> Asia is one of the focus regions, as it offers a high impact environment, strong data connectivity, advanced technological capabilities, data science expertise and an active social sector.

<sup>37</sup>. Ibid

# 3 COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

Much like collaboration itself, the concept of collaborative philanthropy is not an isolated notion but connected to the demonstrated value that lies within collective impact, i.e. the development in the wider social sector to align objectives and resources to address social challenges that require solutions that are bigger than the sum of their parts.<sup>38</sup>

Collaborative philanthropy defines and describes a practical approach of how the philanthropic sector can build on collective impact as a concept and partake in creating solutions at scale. This understanding offers an entry point for philanthropists and

philanthropic organisations to become part of the conversation, learn from each other and ultimately design collaborative solutions to effect collective impact and systems change.

### 3.1 Collective Impact through Collaborative Philanthropy

Collaborative philanthropy ideally feeds into wider social initiatives that align objectives and resources to address identified needs and social challenges that require integrated solutions. These initiatives are led by philanthropists and philanthropic organisations but often expand beyond the social sector to achieve greater impact.

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets represent global social and environmental issues that collective impact initiatives can rally around. In 2019, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) estimated the investment gap to meet the SDGs by 2030 to be US\$1.5 trillion a year in the Asia-Pacific

<sup>38</sup>. FSG, "Developing the Collective Impact Framework"

region alone.<sup>39</sup> Private capital can play a major role in bridging this gap, and philanthropic capital can act as a catalyst for leveraging it. With a pool of funders, including MacArthur Foundation and ClimateWorks Foundation, Energy Foundation China was founded in 1999 to address climate action (SDG 13) through sustainable energy initiatives. To date, Energy Foundation China has funded close to 3,000 projects in China with a combined capital commitment of over US\$330 million.<sup>40</sup>

Collaborative philanthropy can help not only by directly funding grantees that work at scale but also through fund-the-funder schemes. For example, funders might grant funds to community foundations with a strong local strategy for re-granting purposes.

Co-Impact generally awards grants of US\$10-25 million over five year periods, if not to grantees, then to organisations who act as intermediaries to ensure funds are disbursed into the system by organisations that are deeply rooted in their local contexts as well as to ensure cohesive programmatic alignment.<sup>41</sup>

39. ERIA, "UNESCAP Proposes up to \$1.5 Trillion Investment Per Year in Asia Pacific to Achieve SDG 2030"

40. Energy Foundation China, Homepage

41. Co-impact: "Open Call for Systems Change Grants, Round Three"

42. Fund for Shared Insights, Homepage

43. AVPN, "Listening to the Voice of the Beneficiary"

In 2013, the US government brought together business, nonprofit and philanthropic leaders to rally around the topic of gaps in feedback loops. The Hewlett Foundation took these conversations forward and convened small groups of funders around the country to assess their options. Together with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the JPB Foundation, Liquidnet, the Rita Allen Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, this led to the founding of the Fund for Shared Insights.<sup>42</sup> The national collaborative aims to elevate the voices of people and communities often least heard. One of its most prominent campaigns, the Listen4Good (L4G) campaign, a method to collect beneficiary feedback through simple surveys, had its Asian pilot in 2019 with projects in Singapore and Australia.<sup>43</sup>

As the philanthropic sector in Asia is still growing, engaging in collaborative initiatives without delay can avoid sustained and deepening fragmentation of the landscape and ensure integrated solutions. This can help to establish a funding landscape and ecosystem that can facilitate effective collective impact beyond the philanthropic sector. In Singapore, the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), in collaboration with social service sector partners as well as funders, businesses, government agencies and service users, developed the Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST), a five-year strategic development programme for

the period of 2017 to 2021.<sup>44</sup>

This was done to broaden their own perspective of the ecosystem and to reflect the reality that social progress is accomplished by the collective endeavours of a whole community. NCSS builds on these strategic efforts by, for instance, hosting convenings around collective impact for multi-stakeholder groups that include funders and foundations.<sup>45</sup>

One example is the North East Integrated Care Programme (ICP), a collective initiative that was started in 2014 by partners, including the North East Community Development Council (NE CDC), the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), SHINE Children and Youth Services, the Singapore Scout Association (SSA), Trampoline and multiple primary schools.<sup>46</sup> The programme addresses social mobility issues through a multi-stakeholder care programme that matches at-risk children to available help across various support schemes and organisations. The programme is built on the five conditions of FSG's Collective Impact Framework. Due to its success in supporting identified at-risk children to pass their PSLE, the ICP model was replicated with the South West district in 2019 and is expanding its scope from focusing on primary schools to also include secondary school education.<sup>47</sup>

44. NCSS, "4ST"

45. NCSS, Conference On Collective Impact

46. Social Space, North East Integrated Care Programme (ICP): A Ground-Up and Grounded Model

47. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSShk1y0c&feature=youtu.be>

## THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

The Collective Impact Framework was developed by FSG in 2011 to summarize their key research findings of conditions that together produce successful collective impact initiatives that are based on true alignment and lead to powerful results.<sup>48</sup> They found these conditions to be:

- A Common Agenda
- Shared Measurement
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone Support

FSG's continued work has reinforced the importance of these five conditions and they continue to serve as their core for differentiating collective impact from other forms of collaboration.<sup>49</sup> However, they also acknowledge the importance to adapt these conditions to local contexts and projects. In the case of the ICP initiative in Singapore, the collaborative partners decided to add two conditions to account for the collective structure and project aims, namely:

- A Community of Partners
- Aggregator of Resources<sup>50</sup>

48. SSIR, Collective Impact

49. SSIR, Essential Mindset Shifts for Collective Impact

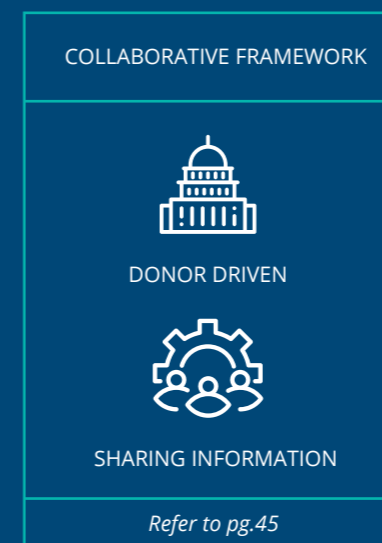
50. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WS-XSHk1y0c&feature=youtu.be>

## 3 CASE STUDY

### COLABS

YEAR OF SETUP: 2018

GEOGRAPHY: SINGAPORE



## OVERVIEW

In 2017, the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) and the Community Foundation of Singapore (CFS) pioneered Colabs. The philanthropic initiative aims to catalyse collaboration among the public, private and social sectors to facilitate joint action to tackle complex social issues in Singapore. Led by NVPC and CFS, Colabs serves as a platform for philanthropists, non-profits, businesses, government representatives, sector experts and beneficiaries to exchange knowledge and insights, deepen shared understanding of social issues and identify opportunities for collaborations for greater impact.



## MEMBERS INCLUDE

The National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) and the Community Foundation of Singapore (CFS); Project level: Actors across the private, social, and public sector.



## COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

Philanthropists, businesses, non-profits, government representatives, sector experts and beneficiaries come together around specific cause-based social issues. Each Colabs journey centres around the three phases of

- jointly learning to have a deeper appreciation about the complexity in the ecosystem and its inter-relationships
- aligning priorities to identify opportunities, assets and strengths for collaboration
- taking action by collaborating to achieve greater social impact



## PROJECTS

Since its inception, Colabs has facilitated three series, namely Children & Youth, Persons with Disabilities, and Seniors in Singapore.

The Children & Youth Colabs series in 2017 serves as a key example for the Colabs collaborative structure. More than 100 participants from 70 organisations across diverse sectors came together to discuss the impact of education on social mobility.<sup>51</sup> Stakeholders went on a learning journey to uncover the complexity of the issue and recognised that while education is an important factor to bridge social gaps, other socio-economic factors may also affect youths' socio-emotional development, academic performance, aspirations, as well as employability.<sup>52</sup> The Children & Youth Colabs journey from the inaugural session to the alignment boot camp spanned over eight months.

51. NVPC, "A Call for Collaborative Giving: Closing the Gap Disadvantaged Young Persons"

52. CFS, "The first Singapore Youth Impact Collective to empower disadvantaged youths"



## PROJECTS (Continued)

A significant outcome of the Children & Youth Colabs series is the first Singapore Youth Impact Collective in 2018, which uses the Collective Impact model. The initiative saw the launch of two youth empowerment programmes and a new A.P.T.I.T.U.D.E. Centre at ITE College Central to help disadvantaged youths transition successfully from the classroom to working life. The initiative comprised six members, who pledged an initial amount of close to S\$1 million towards the programmes.<sup>53</sup> As of the time of publication, close to S\$2 million had been raised, including funding for programme evaluation.<sup>54</sup>

53. Ibid.

54. NVPC, Interview insights'



## MOVING FORWARD

Having conducted three Colabs series, NVPC distilled key insights and learnings from the series and developed a Colabs toolkit as a guide for anyone keen to solve complex issues in a collaborative manner. The toolkit includes key principles of the Colabs framework, a guide on how to run a Colabs series as well as key considerations to foster community-based collaborations.



### 3.2 How Collaborative Philanthropy can Effect Systems Change



Systems change necessitates a fundamental change in policies, processes, relationships, and power structures, as well as deeply held values and norms.<sup>55</sup>

This is a complex process which cannot be achieved overnight. In the context of development, systems change involves the participation of diverse stakeholders including non-profits, civil society, private sector, and the public, in addition to the indispensable role of governments. It requires developing a theory of change (TOC) based on solid research, identifying the organisations and individuals interested in working on a similar issue, and helping them join forces to achieve common outcomes.<sup>56</sup>

Philanthropists and philanthropic organisations are increasingly interested in alleviating root causes of social problems alongside funding remedial measures. They want to prevent diseases instead of treating them.

They want to eradicate hunger rather than feed the hungry. This growing interest in so-called “audacious social change” is partly propelled by examples of philanthropy-led large-scale impact like the virtual eradication of polio and the huge reduction in malaria-related deaths worldwide led by the Gates Foundation.<sup>57</sup>

Collaborative philanthropy offers the opportunity for the philanthropic sector to play a leading role in catalysing systemic change by:

- 1 |  Pooling philanthropic resources at scale
- 2 |  Ensuring credibility and visibility at a systems level
- 3 |  Leveraging cross-sector assets and expertise

55. Srik Gopal et al., “Fostering Systems Change”

56. Jeffrey C. Walker, “Solving the World’s Biggest Problems: Better Philanthropy Through Systems Change”

57. Susan Wolf Dittkoff et al., “Audacious Philanthropy,”; David Gelles, “Major Foundations, Eager for Big Change, Aim High”

## 1 |

### Pooling philanthropic resources at scale

Tackling big problems requires flexible and coordinated investments of a scale and duration commensurate with the challenge and ambition of the work.<sup>58</sup> An individual foundation may have multiple priority areas and thus be unable to solely provide the resources necessary to achieve systems change in a particular domain. Collaboration among funders, especially through pooled funds, makes more resources available to address a specific development issue as well as enables greater impact through economies of scale.<sup>59</sup> Ten philanthropists working together may be able to achieve more than a hundred working in silos.

## 2 |

### Ensuring credibility and visibility at a systems level

Systems change involves changing laws, policies, and governance practices, which makes the role of the government indispensable. Government buy-in makes it easier for other stakeholders to add value to a systems change initiative. However, public administration is usually hard-pressed for time and resources given the multiplicity of challenges it is mandated to address. Philanthropists and philanthropic

58. Olivia Leland, “A New Model of Collaborative Philanthropy”

59. The Bridgespan Group, “Value of Collaboration Research Study: Literature Review on Funder Collaboration” OECD, “Venture Philanthropy in Development: Dynamics, Challenges and Lessons in the Search for Greater Impact”

60. Olivia Leland, “A New Model of Collaborative Philanthropy”

61. The Bridgespan Group, “Value of Collaboration Research Study: Literature Review on Funder Collaboration”

organisations yield the ability to influence policy given their voice, networks, and convening power.<sup>60</sup> Collaboration among funders brings greater visibility to the cause they are supporting as well as increased credibility to the collaborative as a whole.<sup>61</sup> Heightened public attention for a particular policy issue can help give more traction in engagements with policymakers. In addition with their increased influence, philanthropic collaboratives are better placed to leverage public funds for their cause compared to solo efforts.

## 3 |

### Leveraging cross-sector assets and expertise

Successful collaboration requires a common agenda, shared measurement systems, and a mechanism for knowledge sharing, learning and course correction. This can be enabled and supported through tools such as regular in-person meetings, guided knowledge transfer and exchange, project dashboards, and feedback loops. Having a philanthropic collaborative that adheres to these norms ensures that partners build on each other’s knowledge so that together, they are better informed and more effective in addressing the issues at hand.

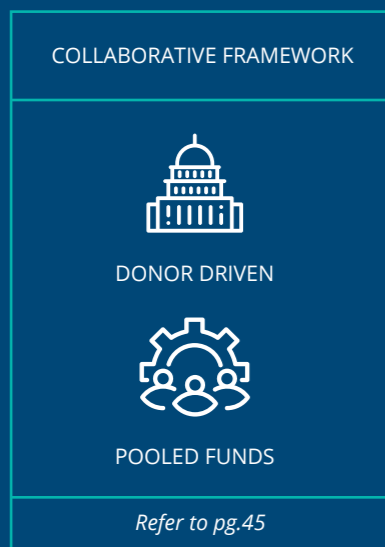
# 4

CASE STUDY

## THE INDIA CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE (ICC)

YEAR OF SETUP: 2019

GEOGRAPHY: INDIA



### OVERVIEW

The India Climate Collaborative (ICC) is the first collaborative to address climate change in India.<sup>62</sup> Formed in 2019, the collaborative launched operations in 2020 and already counts over 40 members that include philanthropists, government agencies, corporates, and universities and research institutes who are partnering with downstream organisations and working with media and civil society to scale their collaborative impact in the climate sector. The ICC serves as a platform for collective investment and knowledge sharing and aims to direct visibility and funding towards climate change and convene collective action in India.<sup>63</sup>

62. India Climate Collaborative, Homepage

63. Oak Foundation, "India's top philanthropies come together to launch the India Climate Collaborative"



### MEMBERS INCLUDE

40+ organisations, including Tata Trusts, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, Mahindra Rise, Wildlife Conservation Trust, Swades Foundation, Sanctuary Asia Foundation.



### COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

The ICC is jointly funded by its network and leverages their diverse resources and skills to improve the efficiency of the collective investment and to co-create programmes and initiatives. The platform also seeks to matchmake funders through co-investment opportunities using its extensive ground network. To support this, ICC focuses on building trust amongst its members and ensuring agreement on governance and defined roles and responsibilities.



### PROJECTS

The ICC approach aims to inspire, connect, and empower institutions, individuals and communities to rise to India's climate challenge. ICC's grants are targeted towards creating catalytic impact by driving greater funding and visibility of Indian philanthropy towards climate change. Its initiatives address critical knowledge gaps such as deficient public awareness about the negative impacts of climate change and a lack of expertise across divergent stakeholder groups.



## PROJECTS (Continued)

Some of the first ICC projects include:

- Building expertise and knowledge on climate change in India, and making this information more widely available and digestible through videos, interactive tools, infographics, etc.
- Convening donors and funders to engage them on various climate subsectors (e.g., introducing India's air quality landscape, key actors, and opportunities for philanthropy to Indian donors)
- Identifying, articulating and measuring climate co-benefits of ongoing programs run or funded by ICC members
- Creating and maintaining India's densest low-cost network in Mumbai, by building a multi-stakeholder five-year project that will help identify pollution hotspots and work with the local municipality to strengthen capacity and enable action to improve Mumbai's air quality.<sup>64</sup>

64. Livemint, "Can the India Climate Collaborative make a difference?"



## MOVING FORWARD

Realising that a shared narrative is vital for coordinated action and convening power, the ICC is working on building a convincing, India-focused climate narrative. It will integrate a set of strategies to fill gaps in the system and systematically strengthen climate action in India by diving deep into sectoral areas and moving towards a greater balance of proactive and reactive programming.

# 4 CHARACTERISTICS AND COMMON FRAMEWORKS

## 4.1 Characteristics of Successful Collaboratives

The success - or failure - of any philanthropic collaborative depends on several variables. Some key determinants of success include:

- 1 |  Shared aims
- 2 |  Leadership & governance
- 3 |  Trust
- 4 |  Communication
- 5 |  Adaptability
- 6 |  Local participation

# 1 |

## Shared aims

One of the strongholds of successful collaboration is not cohesiveness, but members that offer unique value to both the collaborative and each other. Having experts of different fields is a benefit to the collaborative, especially if they come with varied perspectives on issues. Actors across the social and private sector can provide financial capital, enable access to networks, provide capacity building opportunities and technical assistance, design programmes and support their implementation, and facilitate community outreach. Policymakers and the public sector are in a unique position to add legitimacy, public funding, provide scale and mass outreach, as well as hold a unique position to catalyse public awareness and take the collaborative forward by modifying or formulating policies.

However, having aligned desires to collaborate does not necessitate having similar motivations. While it is important to understand why each member is participating in the collaborative, all members do not have to have similar reasons. All members do not need to agree on all the dimensions of the problems they seek to address. However, all participants must agree on the primary goals for the collaborative as a whole.<sup>65</sup>

The Indonesia Marine Funders Collaboration (IMFC), launched in 2017, is a collaborative involving four core U.S.-based funders—David & Lucile Packard Foundation, the

65. John Kania et al., “Collective Impact”

66. Indonesia Marine Funders Collaboration, Homepage

67. Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, “Collaborative Giving”

68. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation “ClimateWorks: Lessons in Learning and Leadership”

Walton Family Foundation, Margaret A Cargill Philanthropies, and USAID—as well as regional donors. Its purpose is to facilitate alignment of individual grantmaking strategies for shared aims of marine biodiversity conservation and effective fisheries management through coordinated research and knowledge sharing.<sup>66</sup>

# 2 |

## Leadership & governance

The leadership structure and governance frameworks of any philanthropic collaborative should be tailored to suit the needs and aims of the collaborative. Their primary objective should be to ensure that all voices are embraced and represented, and sub-factions that may lead to conflict are avoided.<sup>67</sup> Strong yet adaptive leadership in the context of collaborative philanthropy entails having an appetite for risk, being patient to the slow process of developing effective solutions to tricky problems, and having the candour to accept success and failure equally.<sup>68</sup> Unsteady, hesitant leadership will be ineffective in steering challenging relationships within a collaborative environment and enabling members to strategically align their interests.

One way to support formalised leadership is to establish a backbone support organisation to steward governance norms and processes. Individual members in a philanthropic collaborative may be hard-

pressed for time and bandwidth to engage in the administrative and logistical tasks necessary to keep a collaborative initiative focused and moving forward. As a neutral body, a backbone support organisation, even with a lean staffing model, can help with coordination across members and over the lifecycle of an initiative, can play a vital role in developing strategy and shared measurement systems, mobilising funding, and advocacy.

10to19, a multi-stakeholder collaborative launched by Dasra in 2017 focusing on improved health and education outcomes for adolescents in India, initially grappled with the lack of trust amongst partners. Dasra as the backbone organisation was able to deal with this issue by breaking their ambitious impact goal into short-term achievable targets, focusing on quick wins, and continuous internal communication which demonstrated accountability to the partners and helped build trust.<sup>69</sup>

# 3 |

## Trust

Collaboration is enabled through strong relationships and mutual trust. Individual relationships between members are just as important as organisational relationships that the collaborative may develop with partners and communities. Cultivating a culture of transparency and reliability between the collaborative members enables building up trust and enhances the credibility of the collaborative.

69. The Bridgespan Group, “Philanthropic Collaboratives in India: The Power of Many”

70. Alliance, “Philanthropy’s deliberate leaders: the story of the ClimateWorks Foundation”

71. *ibid.*

The ClimateWorks Foundation, a global philanthropic collaborative focusing on climate change, found that organisational culture is equally as important as programme strategy.<sup>70</sup> With more than 25 funding partners, it realised that strong trust among the partners ensured the accountability and integrity required for successful collaboration. ClimateWorks commits its leaders to prioritise respect, honesty, and transparency while at the same time aiming to achieve organisational goals, such as securing additional funding and creating an organization with a worldwide reach. To enable such an environment, leaders take on the role of supporter and convener, rather than unilateral manager. Additional learnings of the collaborative that support this organisational environment are to embrace risk and failures, to account for all perspectives, to align values, and to continuously recalibrate based on deep reflection.<sup>71</sup> The foundation has made grants amounting to over US\$1 billion since its inception in 2008.

# 4 |

## Clear and regular communication

Frequent communication within the collaborative is critical for successfully navigating the “human dimension” of collaboration. This could entail resolving differences, managing power politics, cultivating willingness among participants to cede control in the collective interest, or accepting vulnerability that comes with being

honest about successes and failures.<sup>72</sup> While regular internal communication is necessary to maintain trust and transparency within a collaborative, communication with the wider group of stakeholders about how the collaborative's work and interventions are bearing fruit helps to reinforce commitment. This helps to keep participants and stakeholders focused and on the same page. Streamlined external communication is similarly important to generate awareness about the cause, provide visibility to the collaborative's efforts, and provide a call to action for further engagement and collaboration. These are essential components for driving systems change. Social media can play an important role here in getting the message across to relevant networks and influencers.

## 5 |

### Adaptability

Collaboratives need to be sensitive to both trends in society as well as the dynamic relationships between stakeholders.<sup>73</sup> In response to changes in internal circumstances, a collaborative often needs to modify its engagement approach and adapt its strategies as it progresses in its lifecycle. The ability of a collaborative to do so can be a distinct contributor to its success.<sup>74</sup> This requires receptivity to feedback in addition to strong measurement systems.

The Education Alliance, which started as a collaborative to champion the public-private partnership model in government schools in India, faced a major disruption when two of its core funders dropped out in late 2016 and early 2017 due to a shift in their priorities away from the public-private partnership model.<sup>75</sup> While bringing in new core partners and acquiring new funding, the Alliance decided to transition from a collaborative structure to an independent nonprofit over a six month period. The leadership and partners remained committed to the original impact goals, the TOC, and the public-private partnership model, yet felt that they could best serve these with a different organisational setup. Being adaptable to shifts, even in organisational structure, can help the collaborative continue to best serve its aims by prioritising the ultimate goal over the specific approach.

Similarly, changes in the external environment are often sudden and require a quick and joint response from the members of a collaborative. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, for instance, the immediate needs of many groups of beneficiaries dramatically changed.

The 10to19 Dasra Adolescents Collaborative, for example, had to review its approaches and programmes in line with the ground realities of its beneficiaries to ensure that it continues to effectively deliver on its aims.

## 6 |

### Local participation

In addition to building trust within the collaborative, a close engagement and strong relationships with beneficiary communities, policymakers, and the private sector can ensure the efficacy and longevity of a philanthropic collaborative. Building consensus among local stakeholders can be a demanding process, but at the same time, the added value is essential. An initiative that doesn't engage community leaders and intended beneficiaries is likely to fail.<sup>76</sup> Community organising, civic engagement, and advocacy help build democratic solutions and are among the best-known strategies for effecting systems change. Research suggests that donors are most effective when they spend at least 25% of their grant money on strategies to promote equitable solutions.<sup>77</sup> This can be supported through tools such as the simple beneficiary feedback methods that Listen4Good (L4G) developed, described earlier.<sup>78</sup>

Similarly, active engagement with policymakers at all levels can be a key determinant of long-term success and ultimately is the only way to achieve impact at scale.

The government's influence, both in the breadth and the depth of its activities, is unparalleled and its buy-in can ensure that the collaborative's work is taken forward without duplication of efforts.

For example, Dell Foundation and Central Square Foundation are collaborating to support the state government of Rajasthan in India to improve the education system by establishing "model" schools equipped with all necessary infrastructure within every village council in the state, setting the benchmark for all state government-run schools.<sup>79</sup>

72. Nancy Pole, "Collaboration among grantmaking foundations: A review of the literature"

73. SSIR, "Fostering Systems Change"

74. SSIR, "How Philanthropic Collaborations Succeed, and Why They Fail"

75. The Education Alliance, Homepage

76. SSIR, "Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever)"

77. NCRP, "Philanthropy at Its Best"

78. Listen4Good, Homepage

79. The Bridgespan Group, "Bold Philanthropy in India: Insights from Eight Social Change Initiatives"

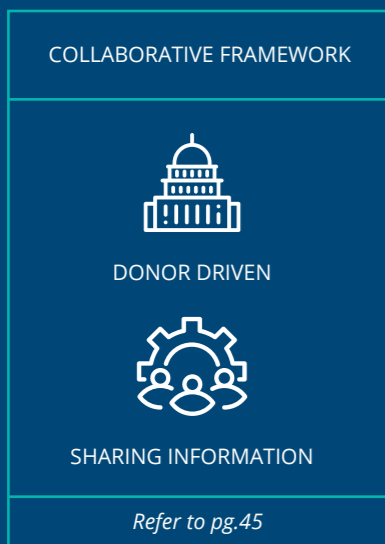
# 5

CASE STUDY

## PROSPERA - INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF WOMEN'S FUNDS

YEAR OF SETUP: 2000

GEOGRAPHY: GLOBAL



### COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

The membership-driven collaborative network is supported by a dedicated Secretariat that is steered by a Board of Directors representing the member funds, thus ensuring the formulation and management of a joint strategy and agenda. Within the membership, each geographic region is organised in a dedicated chapter. The 6 member funds that are based in Asia form one such chapter, working together more closely. One recent example is the “Revolutionising Philanthropy” Conference which brought together women’s funds, private foundations, and activists and organizations in order to talk about what feminist philanthropy means and how it fuels movements towards achieving gender justice. To facilitate collaborative efforts, the members of each chapter meet annually, while all 44 members of the network meet on a biannual basis. The collaborative structure centers around trust, transparency, and formulated *Rules of Association*.

### OVERVIEW

Founded in 2000, Prospera INWF has grown from a peer-learning network of and for women’s funds to a structured, membership-driven collaborative that advances the rights of women, girls, and trans\*<sup>80</sup> people across the globe. Initiated by 6 women’s funds based in Latin America, Asia, Europe and the United States, Prospera has grown to being a network of 44 member funds over the past 20 years, with the members working internationally, nationally or regionally.<sup>81</sup> Prospera’s members mobilise an average of US\$120 million annually and provide more than 2,700 grants to women, girls, and trans\*-led organisations in 173 countries.<sup>82</sup>

80. trans\* encompasses transgender, transexual, and gender non conforming people

81. Prospera - International Network of Women’s Funds, Homepage

82. MONTSAME, “Asia regional meeting of Prospera begins”

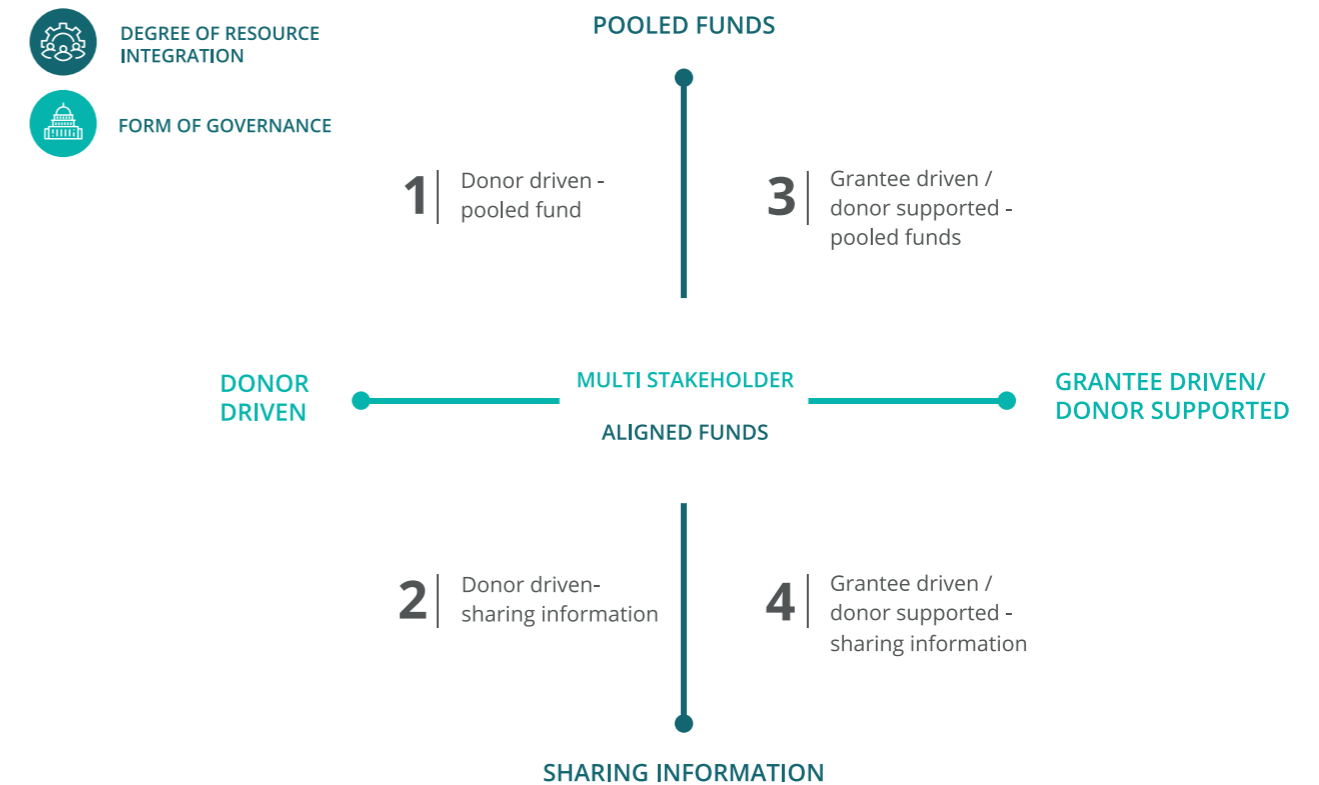


### MEMBERS INCLUDE

44 women’s funds located in 33 countries, including Prospera Asia members: HER Fund in Hong Kong, Korean Foundation for Women, Women’s Fund Asia, Mongolian Women’s Fund, Urgent Action Fund Asia and the Pacific, and Tewa in Nepal.


## 4.2 Frameworks to Collaborative Philanthropy


FIGURE 1 | 4 Frameworks for Collaborative Philanthropy<sup>83</sup>



Philanthropic collaboratives have inherently dynamic structures and the frameworks they operate in may evolve over time. This depends on a combination of internal factors, such as their intent to scale or deepen their collaboration, as well as external factors such as changes in the local operating context.

The framework of a collaborative will influence, for instance, the autonomy of the individual members, how loosely or tightly they align resources, how decision-making is distributed, and how the collaborative is managed and operated. One way to differentiate collaborative frameworks is to consider philanthropic collaboratives along a spectrum of

 Form of governance

 Degree of resource integration

As seen in Figure 1, this approach of differentiation leads to four different types of philanthropic collaborative organisational structures.

83. Source: Graphic devised based on Stanford d.school Analysis Framework



## PROJECTS

The overriding objectives of the network are (i) to share information, strategies, and build deeper relationships amongst the membership, (ii) to influence philanthropy and mobilize greater resources for women’s, girls’, and trans\* communities, activists, and groups, and (iii) to support and uplift women’s, girls’, and trans\* communities through capacity, financial, and technical resources. This translates into jointly hosted convenings where funders engage directly with activists and communities, learn from them, and create joint strategies for furthering human rights and justice.



## MOVING FORWARD

The agenda for the network is set by the membership. The central aim is to keep building a transformative, not transactional, network that is active across the globe and rooted in its local communities of beneficiaries.

### 1 | Donor driven - pooled funds

Donor driven - pooled funds requires donors to allocate capital, generally a portion of their annual quantum of funding, towards a specific philanthropic collaborative. Often these types of collaboratives are supported by a dedicated backbone support organisation. The boards of these organisations are generally made up of representatives of each of the members of the philanthropic collaborative to ensure that the collaborative collectively steers the direction.

Examples mentioned in this report include 10to19 by Dasra (p.13), data.org (p.22), The India Climate Collaborative (ICC) (p.34).

### 2 | Donor driven - sharing information

Donor driven - sharing information can begin as fora to exchange knowledge about a particular issue, trends, and best practices, as well as to coordinate and strategise donors' grantmaking towards specific causes. Such collaboratives usually convene at regular intervals yet lack the level of formalisation of pooled funds.

Examples mentioned in this report include Colabs (p.11, 29), Prospera (p.42), Give2Asia (p.12, 48).

### 3 | Grantee driven / donor supported - pooled funds

Grantee driven / donor supported - pooled funds are based on the premise that the grantee is in the best position to address and serve the purpose of the collaborative. This might be based on in-depth expertise, local networks or the needs of the beneficiary community. The formation process of the collaborative usually covers a procedure of due diligence, to ensure the grantee has the appropriate abilities and capabilities. Often these collaboratives directly partner with nonprofits and allow them to have greater autonomy in channelling the funding from donors.

Examples mentioned in this report include Sayang Sayang Fund (p.20).

### 4 | Grantee driven / donor supported - sharing information

Grantee driven / donor supported - sharing information allows donors and grantees to establish joint learning and communication frameworks that serve a defined aim. This might mean regular, directed knowledge exchange, but can go as far as data integration or joint data platforms and resources. The agenda is driven by grantees, who often are deeply rooted community-based organisations that hold unique expertise and relationships.

Examples mentioned in this report include The Shared Gifting Circle (p.47).



## THE SHARED GIFTING CIRCLE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH IN SINGAPORE

The shared gifting model is an innovative approach to grantee-led, participatory grantmaking. Working towards a shared aim, a group of selected nonprofits receives a grant and then collectively decides and allocates the grant payment to each of the peer organisations in order to best utilise the collective resources. Unlike traditional grantmaking, which is led by the funding organisation, shared gifting democratises the access to decision-making and shifts funding power to grantees that have robust field experience and related expertise. This collaborative framework builds trust and accountability between all members of the shared gifting model and facilitates the co-creation of solutions on an equal footing.

In 2018, Tote Board adopted the shared gifting model in Singapore for the first time with the launch of the Tote Board Shared Gifting Circle for Children and Youth Mental Health. Tote Board allocated S\$2 million to the Circle, aiming to empower children and youth in Singapore through building stronger networks and resilient communities over the next three years. The 7 grantee organisations that form the core of the Tote Board Shared Gifting Circle were tasked to collectively determine the distribution of funds and are encouraged to prioritise the collective aims above their own ideas in order to facilitate effective, needs-based collaboration in project implementation. To design and implement the Tote Board Shared Gifting Circle, Tote Board engaged the services of Empact for facilitation and Eden Strategy Institute for impact evaluation.



# 6

CASE STUDY

## GIVE2ASIA

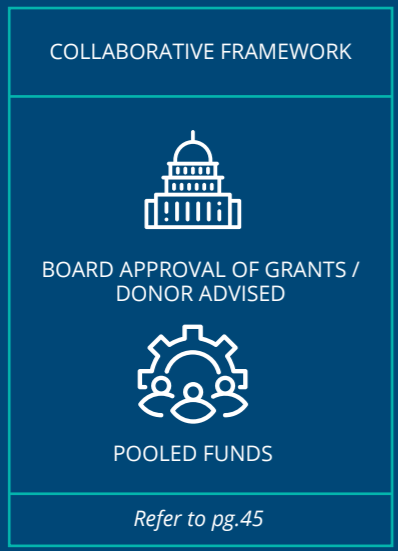
YEAR OF SETUP: 2001

GEOGRAPHY: ASIA-PACIFIC



### COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

Give2Asia collaborates with philanthropic donors, including individuals and families, private foundations and corporations, and local organisations. Give2Asia is able to pool funds from multiple donors for specific causes when donor interests align. Its collaborative strategies reflect the priorities of both donors and grantees. By building a team of local staff, partners and consultants in each country it is active in, Give2Asia is able to work closely with community-based organisations and gather on-the-ground information. For its grantee partners, Give2Asia helps navigate the red tape in international philanthropy, handling all relevant legal requirements for international grantmaking and streamlining the efforts of organisations.



### OVERVIEW

Founded in 2001, Give2Asia serves as a platform to mobilise philanthropic support from donors around the globe that is directed towards charities in Asia-Pacific. It has built a network of over 17,000 donors and granted US\$350 million to more than 2,500 organisations to date. The philanthropic efforts focus on 11 different social causes, such as education, livelihood, healthcare, and social service, and the funds are disbursed to organisations and initiatives across 23 countries.<sup>84</sup>

84. Give2Asia, Homepage



### MEMBERS INCLUDE

Funding partners include Fortune 500 companies and corporate foundations, individual and family donors, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and others.



## PROJECTS

Based on local knowledge and familiarity with beneficiary communities, Give2Asia helps to deliver targeted support from donors to where it is needed most. In addition, the platform stimulates the transparency of project management on the ground.

Give2Asia and its funding partners have worked on projects such as:

- Building infrastructure and educational centres for childhood education, which serve over 7,400 children in rural China
- Providing training courses in business skills to help deprived women in India gain a sustainable income approach, reaching more than 6,000 members in one of the programme tracks
- Responding to over 40 disaster emergencies and connecting 160 local organisations to enhance disaster preparedness.<sup>85</sup>

85. Give2Asia "Disaster Services"



## MOVING FORWARD

Give2Asia's collaborative network continues to be dedicated to simplifying international philanthropy and creating more efficient and targeted local impact. In addition, Give2Asia is looking to expand its focus by supporting the building of giving ecosystems.

# 5 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Several drivers facilitate the adoption of collaborative philanthropy models in Asia. Below are some of the most imminent opportunities and challenges that philanthropists and philanthropic organisations who are looking to partake in formalised collaborative efforts in the region should consider.

## 5.1 Opportunities

### 1 | Collaboration between philanthropy and policy

There is a mutual interest from the social and the public sector to engage in cross-sectoral collaboration. Philanthropists are inviting new forms of tri-sector partnerships to achieve systems change, while policy actors grapple with a lack of human and financial capital to achieve development outcomes across the region.<sup>86</sup> Institutional voids in many countries

86. Harvard Business Review, "Why the World Needs Tri-Sector Leaders" AVPN, "Uncovering Collaboration Opportunities Between Philanthropy and Policy Actors"

87. Asia Philanthropy Circle, "Why a Green Paper on Effective Public-Philanthropic Collaboration in ASEAN?"

across Asia open a space for philanthropic collaboratives to efficiently address needs that would otherwise be left unserved. In this space, public-private philanthropic collaboratives can lead to initiatives that are complementary and supportive but that also translate shared resources to shared responsibilities and ultimately shared solutions that all stakeholders buy into. Effective public-private collaborations require:

- Continued, structured and participatory dialogue platforms
- Opportunities to collaborate in various areas of joint interests
- Documented shared learning points
- A conducive fiscal structure, and
- Dedicated liaison partners or departments<sup>87</sup>

Initiated by Malaysia's government, the Social Outcome Fund is engaging philanthropic actors with principal-only returns if they fund initiatives that address pressing social problems identified by the government. Toyota Foundation supports research to scale-up success factors of social innovation programmes around Asia that have been amplified by the respective governments, including the government of Japan.

## 2 | Post-COVID-19 learnings and forged paths

The COVID-19 pandemic has not just highlighted the interconnectivity of our society and planet, but also the interdependence of social issues across all sectors. The pandemic has impacted the global economy and with that also supposedly distinct philanthropic areas, such as health, livelihoods, education, employability, agriculture, and nutrition. The philanthropic sector has responded swiftly and collaboratively across sectors and issues. The Narada Foundation together with at least ten other foundations co-launched the China NGO Consortium for COVID-19 in under a week.<sup>88</sup> This would not have been possible - or as successful - if not for well-established networks, build on partnerships and trust developed over years.

The COVID-19 crisis bore many learnings for society, for issues focused philanthropists and philanthropic organisations it might be that impact can be achieved based in collaboration, just as much as in expertise. This mindset shift, the connections that were made, and the learnings that were shared demand to be taken forward and utilised not just in times of a brief crisis of all, but in times of enduring needs of many.

## 3 | Collaboration enabled by technology and informed by data

Technology does not only continue to change the world we live in, but it is emerging as a powerful instrument of change.

Driven by the private sector, technology and data solutions slowly find adaptation in the social sector. Data.org is just beginning to build the field of data science for social impact.

These technological solutions are being developed along the entire social value chain, from gathering insights and feedback from beneficiary groups, digitising administrative work, through to programme design and impact measurement and management. This saves time, increases accuracy, and enables data sharing and joint learning across the sector, facilitating collaboration with more ease, compatibility, and comparability. Asia, in particular, offers a private sector environment with multiple technology and data hubs throughout the region, renowned STEM education institutions, and a drive towards technological innovation.

## 5.2 Challenges

### 1 | Scale demands scale

Collaborative efforts, especially those aimed at systems change, require resources and capacity at scale as well as expertise and long-term commitment. In a developing philanthropic environment, in particular, finding the right partners can be just as much of a challenge as finding investable opportunities. Often knowledge and capacity building of funders is needed in addition to capacity building of grantees. This takes time, demands resources, and holds risks that lie outside the control of their own organisation. The increased risk levels might

not only hold true for philanthropists and philanthropic collaborations, but also for grantee organisations who start to take on projects at scale and in turn need to adjust their risk-taking appetite and ability. In addition, collaboratives come with the risk of groupthink. The need to align around a joint aim and agenda often means compromise at scale, this can lead to mistakes at scale. Clear roles and areas of expertise of all members of the collaborative help to counterbalance this.

From a grantee perspective, the challenges incurred due to scale of philanthropic collaboratives are twofold. On the one hand, they need to reach a certain stage of capacity and maturity to attract funding at a higher scale, yet, on the other hand, by funders pooling their resources, the number of funding opportunities available are effectively reduced.<sup>89</sup>

### 2 | Focusing on the activity most needed, not the activity that is most measurable

Clear accountability is a prerequisite for building trust, guiding communication, and ensuring that a collaborative is jointly working towards a shared aim. This accountability is often translated into measurable activities. Impact assessment metrics and impact management frameworks warrant tools when multiple stakeholders need to coordinate their activities and express the results of their work to internal, as well as external

stakeholders. This is especially important and helpful if the members of a collaborative come from different sectors and don't necessarily share the same sets of vocabulary.

However, focusing on the most measurable activities can distract the collaborative from the most necessary activities. In addition, for instance, a focus on short-term data will likely not be appropriate when the philanthropic collaborative aims for systems change, for which more long-term data is necessary. Integrating grantees and beneficiaries in the design stage of impact measurement development is one way to mitigate this risk.

## 3 | Challenging ground realities

The ground realities in many Asian countries, rooted in diverse histories, cultures, and governance practices, pose systemic and operational barriers to philanthropic collaboration. Trust still needs to be negotiated with various stakeholders due to differing levels of transparency in some ecosystems and organisations. This situation continues to improve however, owing to effective government regulation as well as self-regulation models within the sector.<sup>90</sup>

From an organisational perspective, the social sector still falls short of attracting the best human capital. This is exacerbated by regulations that restrict professionalisation and institutionalisation of the sector. For example, in China, administrative costs as a

88. Philanthropy in Focus, "The Chinese and global philanthropy communities mobilize against Coronavirus"

89. Exponent Philanthropy, "Essentials Summer 2016: Gifts of All Sizes"

90. Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society, "Doing Good Index 2018"

share of annual expenditure of foundations are capped at 10%.<sup>91</sup> The CSR law in India limits administrative overheads including salaries to less than 5% of total annual CSR expenditure of companies.<sup>92</sup> Intra-sectoral trust and capable human capital are crucial for building partnerships and fostering collaboration.

Although there is a growing acceptance for philanthropy-led systems change within the public sector, it will require officials at policymaking as well as implementation levels for such initiatives to succeed and enable true cross-sector collaboration.<sup>93</sup> Funders who collaborate reported having deepened field expertise that led to more strategic, informed, and effective investments.<sup>94</sup> Such learning can be applied beyond the social, into the private and public sectors .

91. ACSEP, NUS Business School, "Philanthropic Foundations In Asia Insights from Singapore, Myanmar and China"

92. Ministry of Corporate Affairs - India, "FAQ On CSR Cell"

93. SSIR, "Want Your Big Bet to Pay Off? Don't Forget About Government Capacity"

94. The Bridgespan Group, "Value of Collaboration Research Study: Literature Review on Funder Collaboration"

## 6 CONCLUSION

The time is ripe for collaborative philanthropy in Asia. The amount of philanthropic capital is growing across the region, fuelling a diversifying and maturing philanthropic ecosystem that can function as the backbone for successful collaboration across issues, sectors and borders.

Against the backdrop of a rich history of community giving, innovative collaborative approaches are being driven by donors just as much as by grantees and communities. This already led to successful philanthropic collaboratives such as the 10to19 initiative in India, Colabs in Singapore, and Give2Asia and Prospera across the region. Further enabled by technology and informed by data, collaboratives such as data.org and the India Climate Collaborative are continuing to evolve and grow.

The aim of collaborative philanthropy and collective impact is not to achieve homogeneity of the social sector by unifying

all actors around the same issues. In fact, the variety in types of philanthropy is one of the reasons for the nonprofit sector's continuing growth and robustness in Asia and beyond. However, conventional contributions of small-scale donors will not change the status quo as they are not designed for systems change.<sup>95</sup> And this is where collaborative philanthropy can make a difference.

With systems change initiatives aimed at scale, however, comes social responsibility. Foundations that drive systems change initiatives, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation or the Rockefeller Foundation, are adamant about the transparency of their operations and ensure that they are held accountable by third parties.<sup>96</sup> With a foundation trust endowment of US\$46.8 billion, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's resources are about half the size of the annual GDP of Sri Lanka, which stands at US\$91 billion.<sup>97</sup> With this amount of resources controlled by a single entity needs to come scrutiny and liability. Collaborative philanthropy facilitates pluralistic and democratic solutions and especially when integrating government stakeholders, inherently aligns with the most pressing social needs that governments can't address by themselves.<sup>98</sup>

95. SSIR, "Catalytic Philanthropy"

96. GlassPockets, "Who Has GlassPockets?"

97. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, "Foundation Fact Sheet" Trading Economics, "GDP - Countries - List | Asia"

98. Ruth A. Shapiro et al., "Pragmatic Philanthropy: Asian Charity Explained"

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