

Reflections on Philanthropy  
for Social Justice

A New  
Era of  
Giving

ISDM CENTRE FOR PHILANTHROPY  
FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT



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# List of Abbreviations

- ASER Annual Status of Education Report  
ATECF ATE Chandra Foundation  
AVPN Asian Venture Philanthropy Network  
BIPOC Black, Indigenous and People of Colour  
BMGF Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
CAPART Council for Advancement of People's Action and  
Rural Technology  
CPID Centre for Philanthropy for Inclusive Development  
CRY Child Rights and You  
CSR Corporate Social Responsibility  
CSIP Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy  
CSO Civil Society Organisation  
FORM Families Organizing to Resource Movements  
HDI Human Development Index  
HNI High-Net-Worth Individuals  
ICDS Integrated Child Development Services  
ICRF India Covid Response Fund  
ISDM Indian School of Development Management  
LGBTQIA+ Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex  
and asexual people

M4BL Movement for Black Lives  
MDTF [World Bank's] Multi Donor Trust Fund  
NFI National Foundation for India  
NGO Non-Governmental Organisation  
NPO Not-for-Profit Organisation  
OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and  
Development  
OECD-DAC Organisation for Economic Co-operation and  
Development—Development Assistance Committee  
ODA Official Development Assistance  
PRI Panchayati Raj Institution  
PRIA Participatory Research in Asia  
PRADAN Professional Assistance for Development Action  
SDCC Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation  
SDG Sustainable Development Goals  
SIG Social Impact Guarantee  
SMC School Management Committee  
SIDA Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency  
SPO Social Purpose Organisation  
SVP Social Venture Partners India  
TCF The Convergence Foundation  
UN United Nations  
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization  
USAID United States Agency for International Development  
UHNI Ultra-High-Net-Worth Individual  
VANI Voluntary Action Network India  
VDO Village Development Organisation  
LAKH represents the number 100,000 (one hundred thousand).  
CRORE represents the number 10 million (ten million).

# Foreword

A defining moment for Indian philanthropy

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AK SHIVA KUMAR

It is fair to assume that Parisians would not have stormed the Bastille, Gandhi would not have challenged the empire on which the sun used not to set, Martin Luther King would not have fought white supremacy in “the land of the free and the home of the brave”, without their sense of manifest injustices that could be overcome. They were not trying to achieve a perfectly just world (even if there were any agreement on what that would be like), but they did want to remove clear injustices to the extent they could.

— Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (2009)<sup>1</sup>

**H**ISTORICAL injustices have denied individuals and communities across the world the right to lead a life of dignity. These injustices manifest themselves in many forms of inequalities, discriminations and deprivations. They are typically perpetuated and exacerbated by insufficient efforts

and resources to address the root causes (and not just the symptoms) of injustices — social, economic, cultural, political and environmental.

Social injustice prevails in India despite the substantial progress made along several dimensions of human development since Independence in 1947. Most impressive has been India's economic growth record especially after the 1990s. Accompanying growth has been a considerable expansion in the provision of basic social services as well as physical infrastructure that has improved the living standards and quality of life for millions of Indians.

From a social justice perspective, however, development is not just about the growth of gross domestic product or the buildup of physical infrastructure. Development is about an enhancement of capabilities, an expansion of freedoms, a widening of choices and an assurance of human rights. Though India has grown to become the fifth largest economy in the world, the country's per capita income of US\$2,150 in 2021 was a fraction and way below that of the four larger economies — namely, China (US\$11,880), Japan (US\$42,650), Germany (US\$51,660) and the United States of America (US\$70,390).<sup>2</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the enormous insecurity and precarity in the lives of large segments of India's population. According to the World Bank's nowcast of global poverty,<sup>3</sup> Indians accounted for nearly 56 million (80%) of the estimated 71 million people globally who became poor between 2019 and 2020 due to loss of earnings. India lags behind many other countries in South Asia as well as those in the lower middle-income category on several indicators of health, nutrition, education and employment, especially amongst women. At the same time, inequalities arising out of

class, caste, gender, occupation, age, disability and geography persist. According to the World Inequality Report 2022, for instance, India is “among the most unequal countries in the world” and “stands out as a poor and very unequal country, with an affluent elite.”<sup>4</sup> The adverse sex ratio of India’s population points to the anti-female biases in society and the systematic discrimination that denies girls and women equal freedoms. Such deprivations and inequalities are the outcome of an unequal distribution of opportunities as well as unequal power relations amongst and between individuals, households and communities.

There are divergent views on the extent to which Indian philanthropy has contributed to ending social injustice. Some point out that philanthropy, especially family giving, is ingrained in Indian culture and tradition. While this may be true, others point out that giving in India is primarily driven by the idea of charity or do-gooding and a religious impulse. Such giving does not address the root causes of social injustice. Organised Indian philanthropy is at a nascent stage when it comes to addressing social injustice. Only a few philanthropists have adopted a rights-based and equity approach to addressing entrenched problems of poverty, injustice and indignity.

This is a defining moment in India’s development for Indian philanthropy to create an effective ecosystem of giving and reshape public action needed for promoting social justice. This will require philanthropies to prioritise social justice concerns, listen intently to communities, support their empowerment, encourage social movements, promote effective collaborations and assess more systematically, not only their own contribution, but also progress towards establishing a just society.

The essays in this book offer rich insights into what has been achieved so far (or not) and what it will take for philanthropy to more proactively promote social justice. The message is clear. A more concerted and strategic effort is needed for social philanthropy to step up its contribution towards expanding opportunities, reducing inequalities, ending discrimination, and building a more just, equitable and prosperous India.

# Introduction

A new era of giving

---

URVI SHRIRAM

THE disruption caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, the widening gap between the rich and the poor all over the world, and the ongoing climate emergency are raising several questions about wealth creation and distribution, and existing social contracts and structures. Such emergencies are bringing to light the urgent need for focused efforts to dismantle age-old power structures, reduce the staggering inequality threat and co-construct new visions for more inclusive development.

India has come a long way since 1947, in terms of massive progress in the official poverty rate which reduced from about 80%<sup>1</sup> after the country gained independence to 10% in 2019.<sup>2</sup> There have been steady improvements in life expectancy, literacy rates, roads and highways, electricity, number of education institutions and so on.

But despite the advances we have made over the last 75 years, the stark reality is that India is at a critical juncture,

with its growing population of the wealthiest on one hand and the poorest population on the other.

India is still a country where every second child is affected by some form of malnutrition. It accounts for about 45.8 million of world's missing females over last 50 years.<sup>3</sup> Learning outcomes in the school system are abysmal, especially for those belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and some religious groups. India is home to 63 of the world's 100 most polluted cities.<sup>4</sup> From policy making to implementation, it is a country saddled with fragmentation and now, the very foundations of democracy and civil society space are increasingly constrained.

According to the World Inequality Report 2022,<sup>5</sup> India is now amongst the most unequal countries in the world. Inequality is at a record-level high with India's less privileged and poor communities facing huge insecurities. Disparities along various dimensions persist — across class, caste and gender — in our country's development systems.

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), defined as “the world's best plan to build a better world for people and our planet by 2030”, remain a distant dream. At present, India needs an average of approximately ₹26 lakh crores in annual funding to fulfil even five of the SDGs by 2030 (zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, and clean water and sanitation).<sup>6</sup>

The task of tackling these challenges is monumental. Delivering on the SDGs — including no poverty, zero hunger, gender equality, climate action and reduced inequality, amongst others — remains a formidable challenge for the government alone. Indian businesses are contributing by integrating practices set out in the SDGs in their business strategy. But we need to mobilise other resources.



As the leader of a centre dedicated to catalysing effective philanthropy for inclusive development, the question to which I seek an answer is — how can philanthropy play a catalytic role in enabling sustainable social change and more inclusive development?

Given India's abiding commitment to charitable giving and social benefit, it's clear that philanthropy can become a major contributor to the country's development.

### **India's legacy of giving**

India has always had a rich tradition of giving. It is practiced at every level of the socioeconomic pyramid, from high-net-worth individuals setting up foundations to middle-class giving of alms; from corporates in big cities to grassroots-level organisations in rural areas.

With time, however, this act of giving has evolved.

Charity has existed from time immemorial around the world. It is defined as the “voluntary giving of money to those in need”. The motive behind charity, whether by individuals or organisations, is a desire to reduce distress and is done out of compassion. The impact is often shorter-term and may not really address the root cause of distress.

In India, historically, apart from giving for distress relief, religious causes and gifts for setting up schools, building wells, etc., have been included in the scope of charity. However, it is not envisaged as a social intervention which addresses structural problems like institutionalised inequality.

On the other hand, philanthropy, which is referred to as the “planned” use of wealth, aims to bring about social transformation for the good of all. It stems from the underlying

idea that wealth creators have the responsibility to use their wealth for the betterment of society. It involves the use of methods, planning and scientific spirit in giving. The focus is not just on immediate relief but on ameliorating larger social problems. For example, giving money to beggars is charity, but providing vocational training so the unemployed can earn a dignified living, is philanthropy.

In India, industrialisation and the Independence Movement ushered in a new era of giving. The newly-minted Constitution laid out the need to secure a social and economic order based upon the values of social justice. The following two decades saw the three sectors — the state, the market and the voluntary sector — come together to tackle the emerging tasks of nation building. This, in fact, heralded the beginning of a much broader civil society or voluntary sector participation in nation building.

It was at this time that traditional charity began to transition from being confined by community to a more inclusive approach; shifting focus from religious causes and disaster relief to developing modern institutions geared towards societal transformation. Flaws in the social system, amongst other factors, began to influence charitable decision making.

The emergence of this “constructive” form of philanthropy was spearheaded by Jamsetji Tata. His words guide many till today, “What advances a nation or community is not so much to prop up its weakest and most helpless members as to lift up the best and most gifted so as to make them of the greatest service to the country. I prefer this constructive philanthropy which seeks to educate and develop the faculties of the best of our young men.”<sup>7</sup>

The first 50 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is often referred to

as the golden years for Indian philanthropy. Many prominent industrial families such as Bajajs, Birlas and Godrejs have been inspired by Gandhiji's idea of trusteeship. (They must consider themselves as trustees of the wealth on behalf of the poor and have the responsibility to use it for public welfare.) The period witnessed a proliferation of trusts and foundations which started viewing philanthropy as an instrument of social change. Delivering services such as basic education, health and care for the elderly were other key philanthropic priorities. The contemporary nonprofit and voluntary sector also started playing a key role in the country's development by delivering social services to communities in need. From this period onwards, private philanthropy, especially family giving, has had the most pivotal influence in shaping modern India in terms of ideas, research, education, technology, innovations and most of today's well-known institutions.

Interest in philanthropy began to decline between the 1960s-1990s, as India evolved into a welfare state. Taxation and licensing policies started sapping the philanthropic spirit of individuals. At the same time, India saw a large inflow of international aid (both officially and through private channels). The non-governmental sector became dependent on government or foreign aid to fill the gaps.

Once state control was loosened, and spurred on by wealth gains post economic liberalisation in the 1990s, both the quantity and quality of private philanthropy started improving.<sup>8</sup>

During this period, the non-governmental sector and civil society organisations (CSOs) contributed enormously to health and education, and several intermediary organisations to professionalise the philanthropic sector emerged. Gradually,

Indian philanthropy started to emulate international practices as well and became more institutionalised.

Recognising the positive impacts of corporate philanthropy, businesses began to engage in diverse causes. Since 2013, corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding has steadily grown both in absolute terms and contributed to overall private giving in the country. More recent years have witnessed the emergence of “philanthrocapitalism” which focuses on impact at scale, measurement metrics, reliance on technology and setting up of social enterprises for sustainability.

History, politics, culture, religion, economic trends, foreign influences ... they all have had an impact on giving practices in India. We are seeing many advancements in the sector like social impact bonds, venture philanthropy, crowdfunding platforms, mandatory corporate philanthropy and giving circles, all indicative of a trend towards more structured giving in the future.

While the nature of philanthropy and civil society is evolving rapidly, and a large part of giving is still done informally, philanthropy is poised to play a larger role in the country’s development. But to be able to create the long-lasting structural change that is the need of the hour today, there must be a shift in philanthropy that is grounded in charity to one that is rooted in social justice and inclusive development.

### **What does it mean to approach philanthropy through a social justice lens?**

Philanthropy by business, foundations and high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) is growing at a very fast pace today. Over

the last 10-12 years, India's philanthropy sector has grown rapidly (philanthropic funding grew from ₹12,500 crores in 2010 to ₹55,000 crores in 2018).<sup>9</sup> Total private philanthropic funding in India is estimated to grow at approximately 12% annually over the next five years.<sup>10</sup> A lot has stayed the same since the colonial times, but there have been many significant changes as well (see *Emerging Trends* on p. xxxiii).

There is no doubt that there are many advancements in philanthropy and philanthropic capital has significantly contributed to supporting the government in addressing India's developmental challenges for decades. It has impacted millions and millions of lives through all the acts of charity and giving. One then might wonder, why is there a need for a special kind of "philanthropy for social justice" which consciously focuses on marginalised communities as opposed to typical run-of-the-mill philanthropic efforts? And, also, what does it really mean in practice?

Consider the earlier example I shared outlining the difference between charity and philanthropy: if giving money to beggars is charity and providing vocational training for the unemployed to earn a dignified living is traditional philanthropy, then philanthropy for social justice will go beyond addressing immediate needs to help in dismantling the systems of poverty and historical injustices that stop people from accessing jobs and opportunities in the first place.

As Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, explains it in his book, *From Generosity to Justice: A New Gospel of Wealth* (2019),<sup>11</sup> "Charity involves writing a cheque to support a cause, philanthropy goes beyond charity by addressing social challenges in a more structured and informed way. But philanthropy for social justice goes even beyond individuals, programs, outputs — it means addressing the

root causes that have created the need for charity in the first place.”

Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen, founder and president of the Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen Foundation, makes a powerful statement in *From Generosity*, “Charity is about helping people survive. Justice is about helping people thrive.”<sup>12</sup>

Contributors to this collection of essays make a case for approaching philanthropy through a social justice lens. Yvonne L Moore of Moore Philanthropy reminds us that the original definition of the word philanthropy is “love for humanity” which, for her, is a mandate to be followed. Making an urgent plea she writes, “If we claim to be philanthropists, to love humanity, we must remember that our motivations and intent, our behaviour and our speech, will all impact our work, particularly if we seek to shift the needle on fairness, inclusion and equity within and amongst the communities we seek to serve.”

Rati Forbes talks about being inspired by philanthropist Pierre Omidyar’s words to focus on long-term change. “Philanthropy is a desire to improve the state of humanity and the world. It requires thinking about the root causes of issues so that we can prevent tomorrow’s suffering.”

Of course, none of this is meant to undermine the role played by charity in our country. Charity is still needed to fill empty stomachs, give warm clothes to the needy, bring immediate relief to the communities in need, etc. Charity and philanthropy have initiated a lot of positive changes. However, for all the good it’s done, philanthropy as is traditionally practiced by corporate donors, individuals, private trusts and intermediary organisations has had a limited impact on bridging the equity divide or addressing the needs of the most vulnerable population groups in the country. Along with

the here and now issues, there is an urgent requirement for philanthropy to also address the systemic causes of poverty and injustice and create more inclusive development for all.

### **Why do we need philanthropy to focus on social justice for more inclusive development?**

While it might be beyond the capacity of philanthropy to fix the economic and political systems that give rise to social justice issues entirely (and it cannot solely be the responsibility of philanthropy either), there is an urgent need for philanthropists, corporates and foundations to play a greater role in alleviating them.

One of our goals at the Centre for Philanthropy for Inclusive Development (CPID) is to build and disseminate research on effective philanthropy. Our understanding is that Indian giving is primed to advance transformational social change once it addresses a few key issues standing in its way.

#### ***Massive increase in wealth along with growing inequality.***

Since the year 2000, wealth in the country has grown 9.2% a year, faster than the global average of 6%. But India's exceptional economic growth pre-COVID-19 has benefitted only a very small section of Indian society. The top 1% of the country own 42.5% of the nation's wealth while the bottom 50% has just 2.8%.<sup>13</sup>

Earlier, I referred to India as ranking amongst the highest in terms of income inequality in the world. Inequality of wealth and opportunities is further compounded by historical inequalities due to gender, caste and religion. Statistics show that inequality is manifested in all outcomes — health, education, malnutrition, basic needs, wages, etc.

According to the Knight Frank report,<sup>14</sup> India's ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNI) population will grow by 63% to 11,198 by 2025. The report indicates that if families in India were to give as much as their global peers i.e., 2%-3% of their wealth "it could create an additional annual investible corpus of ₹60,000 crores-₹1 lakh crores for the nonprofit sector". This could be transformational for the country if it can be deployed as risk capital in areas of high need and in the darkest corners of our country — unswayed by the cycles of politics and markets.

***Nonprofits are becoming more dependent on domestic funding.*** With around 3.3 million nonprofit institutions, the Indian development sector is one of the largest and fastest growing in the world.<sup>15</sup> Philanthropy, as part of civil society, plays a critical role in providing resources (financial and others) to other civil society actors for realising social impact at scale. This is becoming even more critical in prevailing times, given the atmosphere of intolerance and with freedom of expression being under attack.

Yet a bulk of funds for social justice causes like human rights, environment, disability, etc., has traditionally come from foreign multilateral, bilateral or private donor agencies and this is now drying up due to laws and regulations to curb it. As a result, nonprofits are becoming more dependent on domestic philanthropy for complex, long-term funding to address root causes of injustices.

According to available data, India's new philanthropy is not filling the gap left by the decline in foreign funding. India scores low on gender equality, for example, yet this issue received just 1% of domestic philanthropic and CSR funds.<sup>16</sup>



***The newer forms of philanthropy tend to avoid the complex, political aspects of change.*** Very few Indian philanthropic foundations focus on and fund social justice issues directly.<sup>17</sup>

Most of the private domestic funding tends to go to organisations, themes, sectors and individuals with whom funders already have a high degree of comfort like education and direct service delivery in health, nutrition and sanitation. For instance, in family philanthropy and retail giving, approximately 60% of funds go to education and healthcare alone.<sup>18</sup> Given its short project cycles and a rigorous focus on easily measurable outcomes, most of the CSR mandates haven't been able to respond to the complex rights needs of disadvantaged groups. In fact, marginalised communities and territories get the short end of the stick. A latest Bridgespan Pay-What-It-Takes study<sup>19</sup> shows that certain non-governmental organisations (NGOs) face greater challenges than most. For instance, 70% of NGOs led by members of the Dalit, Bahujan or Adivasi (DBA) communities have not reported any operating surplus in the past three years, compared to 45% for non-DBA-led NGOs. With respect to geographical allocation, philanthropic funds are distributed to 10 states, led by Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat, limiting the distribution of funds to cities in other states such as Bihar, Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya.<sup>20</sup>

***Unprecedented setback due to the COVID-19 pandemic.***

In India, 94% of the workforce comprises informal workers without any social security or protection. Amongst them, the marginalised groups have been hurt the most.

A report by the International Labour Organization states that over 400 million informal workers in India may have been pushed further into poverty due to the pandemic.<sup>21</sup>

Grappling with these realities as India enters its 75<sup>th</sup> year of Independence, we must stop and consider how philanthropy can work in the interests of all citizens. As Pushpa Sundar implores in her recent book *Giving with a Thousand Hands* (2017), “Philanthropy ... needs to become ‘wise’. It needs to account for systemic problems, continuous human rights violations, social injustices and state apathy toward the inequality crisis. Else, it will never make a dent in meeting basic survival needs of its population.” So, where can/do we begin? At CPID, we are curating, collecting, and creating research and evidence to facilitate a systems-level understanding of how philanthropy can create sustainable social change by tackling root causes of social and economic inequities and empowering the marginalised communities. From the literature available, it is evident that philanthropy for social justice (PSJ) is not only about the quantum of money given or where and to whom it is given, but also includes the process through which it is given. Some of the core elements that are emerging from our research and existing research studies (which are largely focused on the West) are:

- Working towards structural and institutional change to increase the opportunity of marginalised communities who are the least well-off politically, economically and socially,
- addressing the root causes of the problem rather than the symptoms,
- strengthening and empowering of disadvantaged and vulnerable populations to advocate on their own behalf,
- inculcating accountability, transparency and responsibility in the grantmaking process,

- developing trust-based, long-term relationships between funders and their partners,
- striving for the inclusion of different groups in decision-making processes and governance structures of philanthropies and
- strengthening new and/or existing social movements that work for social, political and economic equity.

You might think, many philanthropists and funding organisations in India already focus on improving the living conditions of the least well-off in society. But how many attempt to change the political, economic and social structures that drive whole communities of people into poverty in the first place? How can philanthropic strategies and approaches eliminate deep-rooted disparities in our society? Does philanthropy actively seek to empower marginalised communities, or does it largely remain paternalistically top-down? How do we support and build philanthropy's role as an agent of social change?

The essays from and interviews of thought leaders in this book, *A New Era of Giving*, are a starting point for reflection. We hope to uncover the gaps, raise new questions, share illuminating examples and practices of effective philanthropy and put forward suggestions for the sector's crucial role and purpose in India.

### **The aims and objectives of this book**

In one of the chapters in this book, Puja Marwaha, CEO of CRY, shares a great analogy to explain sustainability, in philanthropic initiatives. "You have to build the bridge," she

says. “If you want to get people from one side of the river to the other, you can either keep running the ferry service or you can build the bridges. And you must always keep your eye on the bridge.”

The contributors to this collection of essays have all exhibited that kind of single-minded focus. Departing from tradition, they are each forging new approaches to philanthropy with more inclusive development at the heart of it. The aim of this book is to highlight the advice, wisdom and learnings from their experiences with the hope that these insights provide a framework for us all to critically reflect on our understanding of philanthropy.

Together, in this book, we will explore how to:

***Acknowledge some uncomfortable truths about philanthropy.***

The inherent power asymmetry between the funders (“wealth creators”) and beneficiaries (who need the funds) can often compound inequalities. The prevailing donor-centric models and internal operating structures of philanthropic organisations often perpetuate a dynamic of “haves” and “have-nots”, with the former limiting the potential for sustainable change. Sundar Sarrukai explores some of these questions in his essay. “Just because they give money ‘away for free’, does it mean that they are not answerable for their actions?” he asks.

Yvonne L Moore frankly acknowledges that biases in philanthropy are not limited to ethnicity and race. “People of Colour are absolutely not immune from behaviours of white supremacy and other ideologies of superiority and harm,” she writes.

***Adopt a systemic approach to philanthropy to eliminate the root causes.*** There is a need for philanthropic models that are

long-term and seek systematic change at legislative, institutional and social-norms levels. They require efforts in campaigning, lobbying, research and cross-sectoral collaboration, which may not always be consistent with project-based funding models. Rati Forbes and Luis Miranda talk about evaluating their philanthropy to ensure it incorporates a human rights perspective.

***Invest in the needs of movements formed by those most harmed by injustices and include more perspectives and voices.*** We need to listen to those who are closest to the issues we are trying to solve, collaborate in new ways and bring on partners to broaden our thinking and working. Put the communities first.

Sharing the experience of collaborating with the Black Lives Matter movement, Janis Rosheuvel of Solidaire Network reveals a collaboration strategy that prioritises frontline-led efforts. Ingrid Srinath and Biraj Patnaik, while outlining the importance of people movements, write, “This community-led approach, centring the concerns and aspirations of the marginalised, ensures not only that policy change is relevant to those most affected, but also builds a constituency to ensure its effective implementation and its longevity.” Puja Marwaha emphasises the construct of “managing by enrolling at every level” to gain from the wisdom of the people who are doing the work, be it grassroots-level organisations or affected communities.

***Build trust-based relationships with grantees/nonprofits.*** Philanthropy for social justice and more inclusive development stresses on philanthropists embracing the approach to “give

money and then get out of the way, realising that they lack experience with racial justice, climate change, or other intractable issues they may be funding.”<sup>22</sup> Ashish Dhawan, Amit Chandra, Rati Forbes and Luis Miranda speak about how they enable financial resilience, capacity building and sustainability of the organisations they support through their philanthropy. They also highlight the importance of broad-based and inclusive governance structures and transparency in philanthropic efforts.

***Harness the power of data, research, expertise and collaboration.*** The field of philanthropy suffers from a lack of knowledge and evidence regarding the need to reorient our practices around funding with a social justice lens. Naina Subberwal Batra and Neera Nundy share examples of how their organisations are strengthening the ecosystem of philanthropy, enabling new partnerships and approaches, carrying out research and narrative building to encourage an intentional shift in funding organisations that work on complex social issues and with the most marginalised communities. Aniket Doegar describes how his organisation promotes inclusion through knowledge dissemination and awareness building amongst communities in need.

***Encourage diverse approaches to philanthropy for inclusive development.*** Giving by ordinary people to large-scale giving by corporates to giving by entrepreneurs helps fill the holes not only in the country’s development but also in the fabric of its society. Dr Rajesh Tandon shines the spotlight on the widely prevailing but mostly invisible, small-scale, locally rooted practices of philanthropy in the country and how valuing

this diversity will make philanthropy more sustainable in the future. Neelima Khetan and Jayapadma RV reflect on how CSR through working collaboratively with CSOs can refocus the lens on social justice while providing at-scale sustainable solutions to social problems. John E Tyler III of Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation examines how by engaging more deeply with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, philanthropy can advance social justice, especially by promoting the talents and ambitions of those people from communities that long for respect and an opportunity to thrive.

I am reminded of a quote by Audre Lorde — a seminal anti-racist, Queer, feminist activist and poet — who said, “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”

We need to adopt a systems lens to societal challenges and realise that significant and sustainable social change requires interventions that are not in silos, but are instead integrated and coordinated to tackle inequalities at every level.

Moving from charity to social justice and working for more inclusive development means bringing about a sea-change in our perspectives and practices, reflecting on and questioning our many privileges, re-examining some of our age-old institutions and systems and speaking up to challenge the status quo.

This task will not really be easy or comfortable. It will take time. We sincerely hope that this collection inspires you to walk the extra mile and contribute towards creating a more just, dignified and equitable life for all.





# EMERGING TRENDS

## Philanthropy in India

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A lot has stayed the same in the sphere of giving in India since the colonial times, but there have been many significant changes as well.

Here's a brief snapshot of emerging trends, all of which indicate an ongoing shift from charity to philanthropy-oriented giving and a gradual shift from addressing immediate needs to bringing about more lasting social change.

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### **1** GROWTH IN THE VOLUME OF PHILANTHROPIC CAPITAL

Today, philanthropy by business, foundations and high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) is growing at a very fast pace. Over the last 10-12 years, India's philanthropy sector has grown rapidly (philanthropic funding grew from ₹12,500 crores in 2010 to ₹55,000 crores in 2018).<sup>1</sup> Total private philanthropic funding in India is estimated to grow at approximately 12% annually over the next five years.<sup>2</sup>

Many landmark commitments have been made by Indian philanthropists spurring the interest in Indian philanthropy both at the national and international level. For example, founder of HCL Technologies Shiv Nadar made an annual donation of ₹1,161 crores, according to the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List for 2022.<sup>3</sup> Wipro's Azim Premji, Reliance Industries's Mukesh Ambani, Aditya Birla Group's Kumar Mangalam Birla and several others are giving a large portion of their wealth. While a lot of giving in India still happens informally and is not being tracked, the impact created by many individual philanthropists is exceptional. Philanthropists from the Indian diaspora have also been contributing to the upliftment of the underprivileged communities in India and across the globe.

Apart from greater giving by the wealthy, corporate giving has also been rising steadily in the country. Corporate social responsibility (CSR), family philanthropy (ultra-high-net-worth individuals [UHNIs] and HNIs), and retail giving cumulatively contribute about 84% of the total private philanthropic capital in India. CSR, driven by the 2% mandate, has grown at 15% annually in the past seven years, with its share in total private giving growing from approximately 12% in financial year (FY)15 to 23% in FY21.<sup>4</sup>

## **2** CHANGE IN THE PROFILE OF GIVERS

There is also a change in the profile of philanthropists with many coming from non-traditional backgrounds and engaging in philanthropy at a much younger age. More and more women are now getting involved in philanthropy. The EdelGive Hurun List 2022<sup>5</sup> features many top women philanthropists in India like Rohini Nilekani, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Leena Gandhi Tiwari, Manju D Gupta, Renu Munjal and Anu Aga.

The time needed for families to create their first foundation for philanthropic giving has sharply dropped from 30 to 50 years in the 1950s to 15 to 20 years in the 2010s.<sup>6</sup> The average age of giving in India is also dipping every year with a marked rise in the younger generation of philanthropists who are mobilising rapidly to provide their time, skills and networks to support social causes they believe in.<sup>7</sup> They are taking bolder risks and are more willing to try innovative solutions to social problems.

Prominent examples of these younger philanthropists include Roshni Nadar, founder of the Shiv Nadar Foundation, which focuses on education and rural development; Riah Forbes, a social entrepreneur working on poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods; Tara Singh Vachani, founder of the Antara Foundation, which focuses on healthcare and rural development; Shruti Shibulal, founder of the Tamara Foundation, which focuses on education and environmental sustainability; and others.

Apart from increasing philanthropy by HNIs, India's growing class of professionals from backgrounds in information technology (IT), financial services and manufacturing are rapidly engaging in philanthropy through volunteering activities through their companies or donating on retail giving online platforms.<sup>8</sup> Many of these first-generation wealth creators and globally connected entrepreneurs are becoming more engaged in philanthropy and often have different approaches to philanthropy as compared to those with inherited wealth. As the Hurun Report reveals, "Nikhil and Nithin Kamath [Zerodha founders] and Binny Bansal [Flipkart co-founder] increased their donations by more than 100% compared to last year. Many such acts from founders of start-ups could kick the Indian philanthropy curve into a higher orbit."<sup>9</sup>

Many are open to funding non-traditional sectors and areas like sector's capacity building and organisational development. Today, historically marginalised communities are standing up to advocate for themselves. For example, CORO, which has

predominantly Dalit and Muslim leaders, “builds leadership from within marginalised communities through a fellowship program that strengthens individual identity and supports participants to act as agents of change.”<sup>10</sup> The Dalit Foundation of India, established in 2003, is the first grantmaking institution in South Asia which is working for the empowerment of Dalit communities with a special emphasis on Dalit women.

### **3 GRADUALLY SHIFTING MINDSETS AND MOTIVATIONS**

Philanthropists in India mostly carry out their philanthropic activities through setting up their foundations which are largely shaped by their own beliefs and passion for a cause. Giving is largely driven by personal preferences, own objectives, sense of moral responsibility or social obligation. Transparency, accountability, impact-related communication, the ability of nonprofits to show statistical outcomes and preference for standardised approaches affect willingness to donate to nonprofits. These tighter preferences often limit the abilities of grassroots organisations to innovate, add complex dimensions like behavioural change, gender justice and caste lens which are difficult to measure and communicate.

For decades now, Indian philanthropists have mostly directed their giving to education, healthcare, disaster relief and livelihoods while largely avoiding non-traditional areas such as gender equality, mental health and populations-at-risk (including youth-at-risk, marginalised communities such as Dalits and Tribals, religious minorities, and vulnerable populations like prisoners, sex workers, immigrants and others). In total, 70% of the total CSR spending over FY18 through FY21 went to education, healthcare, rural development, environmental sustainability and poverty.<sup>11</sup> Given the crucial role of education, it is no surprise that it gets the most importance — but even within education the focus is now slowly

moving towards bringing a more systemic change and improving quality standards through innovative approaches. But philanthropy in India primarily remains engaged in questions of poverty and developmental deficits through a service delivery lens.

Today, we are seeing philanthropists steer away from a self-oriented altruistic mindset and approach to diversify their giving portfolios and direct their giving to areas which align with the needs of the country. There are examples of philanthropists like Rati Forbes, Rohini Nilekani, Kris Gopalakrishnan and Raj Mariwala being driven by long-term systemic change and directing their giving towards areas where tangible outputs might not be very easy to measure.

There are also some encouraging examples of philanthropic organisations and philanthropists forming partnerships with each other and gradually building trust-based partnerships with their nonprofit partners to carry out their operations. For example, Bharti Foundation or SRF Foundation have a hybrid model with both an implementing arm and grant-giving arm.

Private foundations in India have also been family or individually managed and not so much professionally managed – a trend that is more visible amongst smaller foundations. This is now beginning to change with greater investments in professionalisation and institutionalisation that helps build sustainability of the foundations.<sup>12</sup>

Overall, philanthropists are working towards ensuring their giving is more sustainable and efficient and is not solely driven by personal reasons. In the future, there is hope for the trend of philanthropy to invest in more risky areas, strengthen national systems, fund underserved geographical areas and work closely with local civil society actors in a hands-off manner.

## **4 FOCUS ON IMPACT CREATION THROUGH INNOVATIVE APPROACHES**

There is a visible trend of philanthropists thinking of intended impact before just writing cheques for a cause.<sup>13</sup>

Philanthropists are increasingly focusing on ensuring their contributions have the strongest possible impact by setting clear objectives and gathering proof of the impact created.

They are seeking tangible development outcomes by leveraging financial and non-financial resources and engaging with a diversity of social purpose organisations (SPOs) whether for-profit enterprises or nonprofits and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They are taking a more dynamic partnership approach, providing capacity building support and helping develop management expertise within the organisations they support.

We are seeing increased collaboration between private, government and the civil society sectors. Some philanthropists set up their own foundations to achieve the desired results. Through The Convergence Foundation, founder and CEO Ashish Dhawan has been collaborating with the government and a network of nonprofits to work on improving the quality of primary and secondary education available to citizens.

Others are taking different hands-on approaches to increase the impact of their philanthropic efforts. For example, Rohini Nilekani, chairperson of Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies, who works on actively strengthening communities by supporting issues related to water management, access to justice, gender equity, independent media, active citizenship and the environment.

To build the organisational capacity of the nonprofits they work with, philanthropists are increasingly focusing on providing more flexible long-term funding for sustained impact. Bain Capital India chairperson Amit Chandra's "giving while living" approach to philanthropy has brought several new ideas and trends to

India's development sector. He and his wife Archana support various initiatives in their foundation's two core verticals of rural transformation and sector capacity building through adopting flexibility in funding practices and an openness in accepting innovative approaches to funding.

From Anji Reddy and Azim Premji to Hemendra Kothari of the Wildlife Education Trust, there are several stellar examples of philanthropists and organisations striving for measurable differences in society.<sup>14</sup> The effectiveness lies in addressing issues at a systemic level to impact a larger section of the population.<sup>15</sup>

Many are gradually shifting away from traditional grantmaking and considering blended philanthropy that brings in impact investing, venture funding and support for social entrepreneurship. They are embracing outcome-based funding models like Social Impact Bonds (a type of financial security that provides capital to the public sector to fund projects that will create better social outcomes and lead to savings) to fund social issues. Some of the examples of stellar achievements of impact-based philanthropy in India are the Dasra Girl Alliance and the Educate Girls project in Rajasthan. Over the last four years, the Alliance has raised roughly ₹124 crores (~US\$19 million) from 138 funders and helped to build the capacity of 195 social organisations, supporting the lives of over 1.6 million girls, women and children in 2015-16 alone.<sup>16</sup>

With reference to Educate Girls, according to independent evaluator IDinsight, at the end of the first year, the organisation's program had enrolled 44% of all out-of-school girls it had identified and met 23% of its targets for learning progress in English, Hindi and math. Based on those results, the UBS Optimus Foundation already has recouped 40% of its initial investment.<sup>17</sup>

## 5 GREATER USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Philanthropic and social sector organisations are increasingly embracing modern technologies to effectively implement their programs. Online crowdfunding platforms like Ketto, GiveIndia and GuideStar are examples of organisations using technology to reach out to a large set of donors and support wide ranging causes. Ketto, which has popularised the concept of micro-donations, registered a 300% increase in the number of education fundraisers over the last one year just by democratising the donation process, says founder-CEO Varun Sheth.<sup>18</sup>

There are many tech entrepreneurs and companies engaged in philanthropy which are helping the nonprofit sector get a grip on how to embrace the technological advancements for greater social impact. An interesting example is Haqdarshak, a start-up which has served three million families and enabled access to government schemes through its technology platform.

There are also many artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications supporting solutions in different sectors like micro-scholarships, students coaching in the education sector, applications to help farmers handle food security, applications that track endangered species, etc. In the coming years, AI will have an even greater impact on the philanthropic sector. AI will help in data-driven decision making for increased social impact in the sector; it holds the potential of bringing more transparency and accountability in philanthropy by creating new ways of donating money and empowering communities and will support donor preferences and behaviours even more by creating customised funding possibilities through technology-enabled platforms.<sup>19</sup>

Along with the several positive solutions that technology is enabling, there are also challenges like regulatory and ethical



concerns which need to be addressed. A recent study showed that AI can enable the accomplishment of 134 targets across all the Sustainable Development Goals, but at the same time it may also inhibit 59 other targets.<sup>20</sup>

## **6 GROWING ECOSYSTEM FOR PHILANTHROPY**

The support ecosystem for India's social impact and philanthropy sector has been expanding to enable its sustained growth. Many organisations have come up that are helping both the CSOs and funding organisations in important areas like fundraising, governance, capacity building, strategic philanthropy, program and grant management, monitoring and evaluation, and technology solutions amongst others. There is also a growth in platforms and networks for peer-to-peer learning and collaboration amongst organisations. Some prominent examples include, Dasra, Bridgespan, Sattva Consulting, Samhita, The/Nudge Foundation, Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University and Bain & Company and wealth management firms that are guiding philanthropists in their giving journeys.

## **7 INFLUENCE OF GLOBAL TRENDS**

India has a deep-rooted culture of philanthropy but global trends have always played a crucial role in influencing domestic philanthropy, whether during colonial times or later during industrialisation and liberalisation of the economy.

The move towards the wealthy giving large sums of money and this being celebrated as the right thing to do in part is inspired

by Western philanthropists like Bill Gates and Warren Buffet. In India, a significant barrier to giving has been that people don't talk enough about their philanthropy, including the difficulties encountered and the knowledge gained through the process.

The increasing media coverage on philanthropy is fuelling this trend to a certain degree, as more individuals are opening up about their charitable endeavours to inspire other philanthropists to amplify their own giving.

Secondly, public trust, issues of transparency, accountability and effectiveness are emerging as factors influencing philanthropy across the globe.<sup>21</sup> In India, particularly for the larger donors, focus on professionalism of SPOs and their transparency, effectiveness and credibility are becoming increasingly important.

Thirdly, there is a rise of interest and investments in developing research, knowledge on philanthropy and for building philanthropic infrastructure in India especially to support the new cohorts of funders in India.

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As these trends gather pace and newer, promising ones continue to emerge, it will be crucial to monitor the impact of these advancements on those who are at the receiving end. Is philanthropy bringing about sustainable social change and helping create a just and dignified society for all the country's citizens? It is our hope that this is the case.

# 1

## It Starts With the Heart

In time, you realise that you can provide greater value helping organisations you support build capacity

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A CONVERSATION WITH RATI FORBES

“**P**HILANTHROPY is a desire to improve the state of humanity and the world. It requires thinking about the root causes of issues so that we can prevent tomorrow’s suffering.”

For Rati Forbes, head of the foundation arm of Forbes Marshall, philanthropist Pierre Omidyar’s words struck a deep chord. Compelling her to think about grantmaking in a more thoughtful and meaningful way, they provided her that much-needed push towards supporting underserved communities. “By this, I mean very small organisations. They may be working with migrants, Dalits, Tribals, survivors of violence, etc., and are unable to access funds.” Within the umbrella are vulnerable children and women, causes that

do not get the funding that they should, and justice and governance, two areas that most people shy away from.

Participating in CPID's Philanthropy and Social Justice Conversation Series, Forbes talks to Urvi Shiram about developing a resilient ecosystem for effective philanthropy, the importance of untied funding and why encouraging giving beyond the super-rich is the need of the hour.

**URVI** I'd like to start by asking you if there were any specific learnings or examples that you can share from your giving journey that inform your philanthropy today, in terms of deciding where to give your financial capital, time and effort.

**RATI** I think you start on this [philanthropic] journey because you see something that moves you — it could be at a school, clinic or slum that you visit — and you want to do something about it. You may get involved in some way or write a cheque. At the age of 13, I started volunteering very regularly at one of the trusts where my mother was involved and that started my giving journey.

For most of us, it really starts with the heart. In time, however, you realise that you can provide much greater value to an organisation or group by helping them find more sustainable approaches to their work. Over the years, we have built long-term partnerships with the organisations that we support, including addressing their capacity building needs. Because, just as in business, strengthening an organisation is the way to ensure it scales or performs at full capacity. Whether it's through our foundation or personal giving, we always set aside some time to understand the needs of the organisation we're financially supporting, by having

conversations and listening to the voices of the people, and not just the leadership.

Going forward from that comes the second learning: I'm a huge believer in collaborative efforts because it's very clear that you can make greater impact that way as opposed to working individually.

The third is that, even within larger organisations, we look for innovative projects that are lacking funding.

These are some of the approaches that I began thinking about as we reflected more on our philanthropy.

**URVI** You've already touched upon this point about social challenges, and they continue to grow at a disproportionate pace in India. Do you see more and more movement in Indian philanthropy from charitable or traditional modes to taking on entrenched social challenges in high-need areas and providing more long-term support?

**RATI** Coincidentally, somebody shared a quote from Pierre Omidyar of the Omidyar Network where he talks about exactly this; the difference between charity and philanthropy. If I may quote, he says: "Charity is inherently not self-sustaining, but there are problems in the world, such as natural disasters, that require charity. Philanthropy is much more. It comes from the Latin for 'love of humanity'. Philanthropy is a desire to improve the state of humanity and the world. It requires thinking about the root causes of issues so that we can prevent tomorrow's suffering. And if we want to make sustainable change, we have to put all the tools at our disposal to their best possible use."<sup>1</sup>

His words really resonated with me, and I thought to

myself, how can we do grantmaking in a more thoughtful and meaningful way?

Continue your legacy of charitable giving by setting aside a small percentage of money that can go towards local schools or a venture that has been a part of your family trust for a long time. However, we need to think of philanthropy as it has been described in Omidyar's quote.

To that end, personally, we look at a couple of things while deciding on making grants. One is supporting underserved communities and by this, I mean very small organisations with basic registration and local leadership at the helm. They may be working with migrants, Dalits, Tribals, survivors of violence, etc., and are unable to access funds. Our approach is twofold; we also put some money towards developing local leadership because that's the only way the organisation will develop and grow. A local leader at the helm, who is passionate about the cause and understands the reality of the situation, has a better chance at creating a systemic change than one of us.

The other thing we do, as part of our personal philanthropy, is support vulnerable children and women. These are causes that do not get the funding that they should; again, we focus on small and medium-sized organisations working for the cause.

We also look at some horizontals; mental health and wellbeing, for instance, which has become imperative after COVID-19. Then there is justice and governance, two areas that most people shy away from or don't want to address.

**URVI** It's so good to hear about all the work that you're doing with the marginalised communities and understandably there

are lots of obstacles in taking this idea of a justice mindset forward. Do you think you would be able to share a few of the greatest challenges that you or the foundation has faced?

**RATI** An excellent question. I'll just give two examples — one is that individuals like us, or even corporate foundations, find it very difficult to identify these organisations and local leaders, and to ascertain their credibility. Is the organisation registered? Will someone undertake due diligence, ensure compliance and also make site visits to interior parts of the country? Even though foundations have dedicated teams, it is still a challenge.

We've tried different approaches to giving in these areas. For instance, organisations like Dasra [a strategic philanthropy foundation] have the Dasra Giving Circles [a collaborative giving platform] where money is pledged thematically. The issue could be sanitation or justice and governance; Dasra screens both the organisations and donors who are passionate about the cause before inviting them to join a giving circle. Once in, you meet others with a shared interest in the cause, a huge learning experience that you would not get by engaging with just one organisation.

The second model, which I've personally found very enriching over the last few years, is my own work with Social Venture Partners India (SVP India), which now has seven chapters across India. Basically, in the SVP model, donors don't have to give large sums of money; instead, you pay an annual partnership fee and then, as a group, give to small and medium-size organisations in or around the city. The focus here is skill or capacity building to enhance livelihoods.

These are some models where large sums of money do not

need to be deployed to contribute to a cause that resonates with you. It could also be a stepping-stone to giving more to an organisation or cause.

**URVI** You're talking about addressing root causes; one has heard from people that it cannot be done in a holistic way unless you really speak, engage, listen to and empower the communities that you're working with. How have you built strong relationships with the nonprofits and communities that you're working with and how do you include them in your foundation's strategic decision making?

**RATI** We consider it very crucial to listen to the voice of the organisation, both internally as well as by making site visits for briefings from other key stakeholders on the ground. We also do speak to other funders because, of course, one wants to know what the previous experience has been. We do not support a huge range of organisations, only a few; we take a long time deliberating before starting the first grant because we want to be very sure that it's the right relationship for us. It needs to be a collaborative partnership — not donor-donee — as we see it as a relationship of equals. We are just supporting, and learning, from one another.

Just as we have been backing individual organisations, over the last three to five years we have also been supporting (under a vertical) what we call resilience of the social sector. As a foundation, we believe that we must support the social sector in its entirety to build a robust social ecosystem in our country. We do this in a myriad of ways; we are supporting some organisations which are intermediaries that work with data for good, capacity building, branding communication,



better financial management and so on. We also offer scholarships and fellowships for organisations to advance a program that they would otherwise not be able to afford. We support general webinars as well.

We also provide flexible funding. Many of us in foundations only focus on funding projects and activities, but I really believe we should trust the organisations that we are partnering with and offer some amount of flexible or untied funding — money that is not tied to a project or activity — and let them use it as they deem fit. We do this with our businesses, so why is it that for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and those in the social sector, we are so uptight about every rupee and paisa having an outcome and an impact? At least 20% of funding should be based on trust or conversations, matching values and an appreciation of the work being done. The stance should be, do what you need to with this balance money. We are trying to do that more and more in our grantmaking, both through our personal philanthropy as well as the foundation.

**URVI** One keeps hearing that philanthropic capital can be more effective, but do you think there is substantive knowledge sharing on successful philanthropy? What is the role of research data in helping drive better practices and more outcome-oriented giving?

**RATI** Of course, data can help create a big impact, one cannot deny that. However, it is important to understand that we should not ask organisations for copious amounts of data. They don't have large teams sitting in their offices compiling facts and crunching numbers. So, I think it's also

for us, as grantmakers, to ask for crisp data points that speak to what can we do next.

What we try and do is, in the third year of many of our grants, we set aside a small fund for monitoring and evaluation to be done by a third party. The benefit isn't just for us as funders; it has also helped enhance the credibility of the organisations which, in turn, got them more grants. We've also discovered some amazing qualitative outcomes that we (and the organisation) had no clue about through these independent studies.

**URVI** That's very encouraging to hear. Moving on, what would be your advice to first-timers keen to engage meaningfully in philanthropy?

**RATI** In India, honestly, I really believe that no giving can be categorised as bad giving! I think you have to dip your toes in the water and just start somewhere, there is a plethora of issues that one can give to. Taking baby steps in areas that resonate with you — early child education, senior citizens, orphans, etc., — can propel you towards greater success.

I found myself doing that when I was much younger, and I would highly recommend people take that first step and get into action mode.

Today, there are many organisations offering online and blended learning opportunities where you can learn more not only about a particular sector — like education or community health — but you can also learn about better ways of giving. For instance, what you can do with small amounts of money. At some of the organisations that I'm involved with, we have monthly learning sessions; one of the

positive fallouts of COVID-19 has been that anybody and everybody can join from anywhere in the world. These are one-hour sessions on different topics, and they have been great learning opportunities for not only budding philanthropists but also for young organisations and social entrepreneurs who are just starting their journeys.

It's also very important for some of us to talk about the work we do. For example, there are some issues and opportunities that come up which you would not have anticipated. The migrant crisis, for instance; it really brought to the fore what could we do in companies and corporates and so the Social Compact Project<sup>2</sup> was born [a multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to bring about an ethical transformation of Indian businesses to ensure greater dignity and equity for vulnerable workers and their families]. I won't go into details of that, but I think it's very important for us to also speak about what one can do to help and support the government, and even lobby for change.

Finally, I think what's very heartening is that many young people are more involved with impact investment and social enterprises today. That's a great first step. One of the approaches that we've taken in our own company, which has really resonated with younger people, is a departure from pure philanthropy, charity and corporate social responsibility (CSR). We call it our shared value approach.

The shared value approach is well known from the *Harvard Business Review* article by economist Michael Porter.<sup>3</sup> We have gone into action mode and made it a vertical, a part of our corporate sustainability team. What we do is, we try and identify an issue, in our company itself, which can be better addressed by people from a vulnerable community. We've

supervised two or three shared value pilot projects across our company in the last two years. They've gained major momentum and engaged many of our younger employees because they are different from the usual CSR initiatives. It's a win-win for both the people we've engaged with from the outside world as well as for our company, and we have been able to collate both qualitative and quantitative data which can help others follow suit.

**URVI** That'll be great, as one of our aims at CPID is to focus on action-based research. So, what do you think is likely to be the role of Indian philanthropy, let's say, 10 years into the future, in reducing inequalities specifically.

**RATI** I think we have just tapped the surface of philanthropy in our country. We continue to go to the same foundations or same high-net-worth individuals in the larger metros, but I think the art of giving is really embedded in our Indian value system and not limited to those in places of privilege. One of the foundation boards that I sit on asks for contributions through a call centre. It's unbelievable, the amount of money they have collected from callers who are from "ordinary" backgrounds and all walks of life. So, I think we need to go into our Tier 3, 4 and 5 towns, build awareness around meaningful philanthropy and then make changes at the local level. I had hoped this would already be an upward trend, but I anticipate it will grow over the next decade.

## 2

# Putting Social Justice on the CSR Agenda

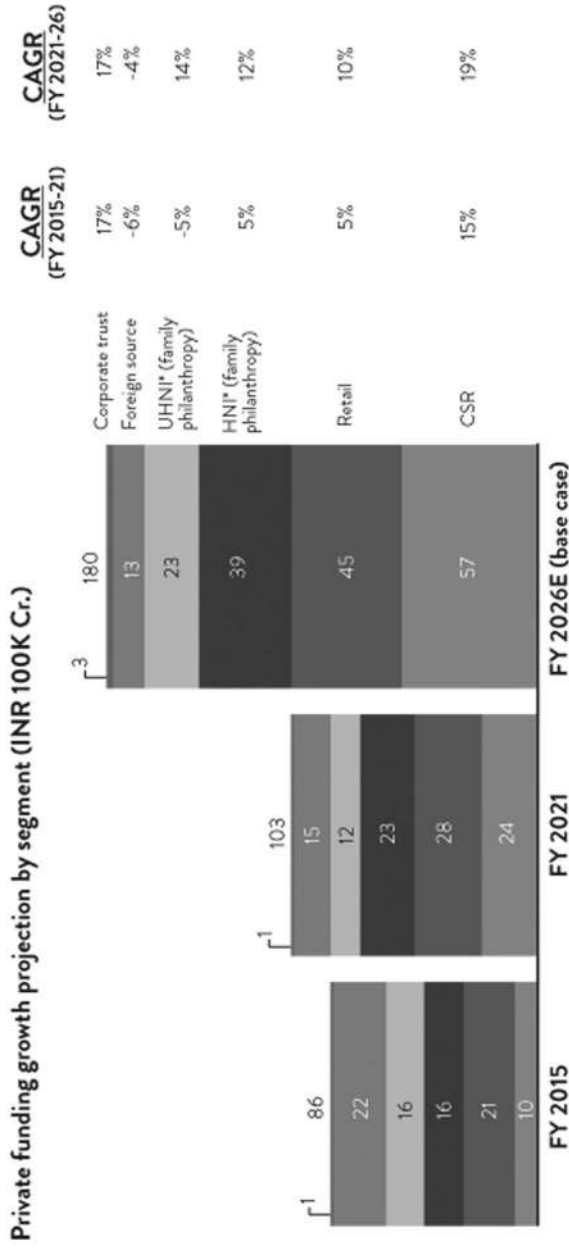
A deep dive into India's corporate social responsibility commitment reveals it's a long road ahead

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NEELIMA KHETAN AND JAYAPADMA RV

OVER the past few years, private giving under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) umbrella has risen rapidly and garnered a lot of visibility in India. At the same time, during this same period, philanthropic support from small and large donors has been significant, currently at nearly one-third of total private giving, even though it has not been discussed as much as CSR. These donors are different from the older philanthropies in that they either set up their own implementing arms or pick a specific focus/problem and then look for partners around it. With this increasing donor base, private philanthropy in India is poised to expand at a steady pace.

**Figure 1: Who gives and how much? Private funding for the social sector**



\* HNI giving is not directly tracked by existing sources, but estimated based on wealth estimates and giving ranges of adjacent buckets.

Sources: FCRA filings; HURUN donor databases; IMF; CSR Portal; proceedings of the Parliament of India; Charities Aid Foundation report; TATA Trusts annual reports; Bain analysis

The total private sector funding for the social sector for financial year (FY)21 was ₹1,03,000 crores, compared to ₹83,000 crores in FY15.<sup>1</sup>

The biggest funding shift in the giving space has of course been the steady and sharp decline in funds from foreign foundations. According to the India Philanthropy Report 2022, share of international nonprofit contributions to overall private giving has declined from approximately 26% in FY15 to 15% in FY21.<sup>2</sup>

The decline in foreign funds coming to Indian civil society organisations (CSOs) has coincidentally happened at the same time as the upsurge in CSR funds, growing from 12% to 23% share in overall private giving.<sup>3</sup> While these two sources may have substituted each other almost dollar for dollar, they are as different as chalk and cheese in character.

Which is why the volume of money flowing into the social sector does not tell us anything about the kind of possibilities and enablement that money can create. Questions like what determines the focus areas for giving money and what are the conditions governing use of funds are far more important than the amount committed.

Every donor has preferences — these could be about select themes (education, health, livelihoods, etc.), select geographies (rural, urban or specific states in the country) or even select approaches to work (getting the “system” to work, looking for at-scale solutions, setting up market-based solutions and so on). The tighter these “preferences” or boundaries, the lesser is the agency and autonomy of CSOs to innovate, respond to deviations caused by ground realities or to add dimensions such as gender justice or social justice.

Small individual donors probably leave the CSO with the greatest agency. They are the kind of donors that CSOs had traditionally depended on. However, increasingly one finds fewer and fewer instances of CSOs for whom small individual donations are a significant part of their total fund inflows, even though many seem to be once more appreciating the importance of this source of funding.

There was a time when charitable or religious trusts, known as CSOs, generated their own funds through various channels, including the sale of products and services. These channels were considered vital for achieving core autonomy and self-sustenance. However, it's important to note that if a CSO intends to claim tax exemption, it can do so only subject to a maximum of 20% of receipts being earned income, among other criteria.<sup>4</sup> This regulatory change was implemented about a decade ago and has impacted the progress of CSOs in their attempts at achieving self-reliance. CRY, for instance, was affected by this cap, as its greeting cards were once its most successful fundraising effort.

### **What is CSR and is it the same as philanthropy?**

The history of corporate philanthropy in India goes back to pre-Independence times, with the most well-known example being of the Tata group. Many corporate houses stepped forward to support the Independence struggle. Mahatma Gandhi's formulation of "trusteeship" spoke of the responsibility of business towards the larger social good. Gandhi's influence was crucial for the role that Indian companies came to play in nation building and socioeconomic development in the country between the 1880s and 1950s.



The Companies Act 2013<sup>5</sup> impacted the corporate philanthropy landscape in several significant ways. For one, it changed the idea of social responsibility from something done out of one's own volition, into something that was an obligation and a compliance. It also introduced strict board oversight over such expenditure, which in turn meant that companies became conservative in how they spent the money (a rigid result-orientation as opposed to an innovation-orientation).

Whether because CSR moved into the compliance category, or maybe because times have changed, corporate “philanthropy” is now inextricably tied into corporate goals, at times in a very proximate way (as in case of manufacturing and mining companies), or in a slightly distant manner.

While doing research for our study “Between binaries: the coming together of for-profit and not-for-profit organisations,”<sup>6</sup> almost every corporate we interviewed spoke of the need for CSR to be in sync with business priorities, whether in terms of the chosen themes or geographies. Driven by the need to be “more than just a funding partner” — informed by the idea of giving not just money, but also expertise — they were keen to undertake corporate volunteer programs as a CSR initiative.

Even though this was not the intent of the Act, most corporates expect a return on investment from CSR expenditure — be it the enhanced goodwill of local communities, strengthening of the company's social licence to operate or at least greater media visibility. Examples of corporates giving without expectation of any returns accruing to business are rare.

All in all, most large corporates are not keen to have their CSR initiatives or departments be perceived as “philanthropic”.

The popular rationale behind seeking an overlap with corporate priorities was “business is not charity”.<sup>7</sup> Which is why the majority is pleased with the industry’s new buzzword — strategic CSR.

Academic publisher IGI Global defines strategic CSR as “activities aimed at creating sustainable competitive advantages and maximising profits”.<sup>8</sup> David Chandler, author of *Corporate Social Responsibility: A Strategic Perspective*, has a similar description. “I believe that strategic CSR is related to, but is fundamentally different from, concepts such as sustainability and business ethics. While sustainability focuses on resource utilisation and ecological preservation, and business ethics seeks to construct normative prescriptions of right and wrong, strategic CSR is grounded in the day-to-day operations of the firm. As such, strategic CSR is central to the firm’s value creating activities,” he writes in a blog post.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, this perspective takes CSR as far away from philanthropy as possible.

### **The nature of CSR spending and what it looks for**

Interestingly, and as written by several others, the practices of venture capital investing — such as increased intervention by the donor, results defined through short-term measurable outcomes, emphasis on scaling up to meet potential demand, etc., — have seemingly pervaded the space of CSR as well.<sup>10</sup> Another outcome has been the emergence of new organisational forms — large corporate foundations, new types of social enterprises and intermediary organisations. These organisations are known to function in the crevices between the two sectors — the market and civil society. They adopt

and replicate principles of business while trying to address social and environmental issues.

These changes, at large, have been described by some as “philanthrocapitalism” — a movement in which business principles seamlessly combine with the search for social transformation. It is rooted in the belief that the methods of business are superior to those of civil society and the public sector; thus, solutions to social problems can be drawn from how businesses operate.<sup>11</sup> “The second claim is that philanthrocapitalism will achieve better and more sustainable results in these areas because it privileges the market as a superior mechanism for generating large-scale economic and social change, while the traditional development industry must function on highly fractured and bureaucratic structures.”<sup>12</sup> Under philanthrocapitalism, we see philanthropists behaving more like investors, and a push towards reforming civil society to become more like businesses.

The Companies Act, 2013, in a way, institutionalised these beliefs and practices — that of the business having a central role to play in social transformation. To some it suggests that the focus is shifting from “how companies make their profits” to “how companies spend their profits”. To others, it shows a structural mechanism that holds big business accountable to society.

Below, we share some of the more distinctive aspects of CSR funding which have become visible in the last six to seven years since the Act, how these are influencing the dynamics within the social sector, and the changing nature of the relationship between CSOs and corporations.

***Where is the money being spent?*** Ever since CSR became a mandate, the money spent under this umbrella has been

steadily increasing. Of course, as was to be expected, the pandemic has led to a plateauing in total spends over the last two years. Starting from a little over ₹10,000 crores in FY15, the CSR spends by companies totalled ₹25,714.65 crores in FY21. Though minuscule when compared with governmental spending in the social sector, it is nevertheless an impressive increase.

Interestingly, the pandemic has led to a huge drop in the number of companies whose CSR budgets were lower than ₹50 lakhs every year. While in FY19 the number of such companies was 21,920, in FY21 this number had shrunk to 12,904. On the other hand, companies with an annual spend of ₹500 crores or more had increased from two in FY19 to five in FY21.<sup>13</sup>

As mentioned earlier, companies look for alignment of CSR strategy with the overall business interests. While manufacturing/mining companies are more likely to be focused on their neighbourhood communities, companies in the finance, information technology and travel spaces will be more flexible in terms of geographies. The chosen themes are often those that resonate with the core business — both because companies want to build goodwill and also because the thematic alignment allows their employees to volunteer with the CSR programs. It is also not unusual to find that the themes connect back to the company's key sustainability focus areas.

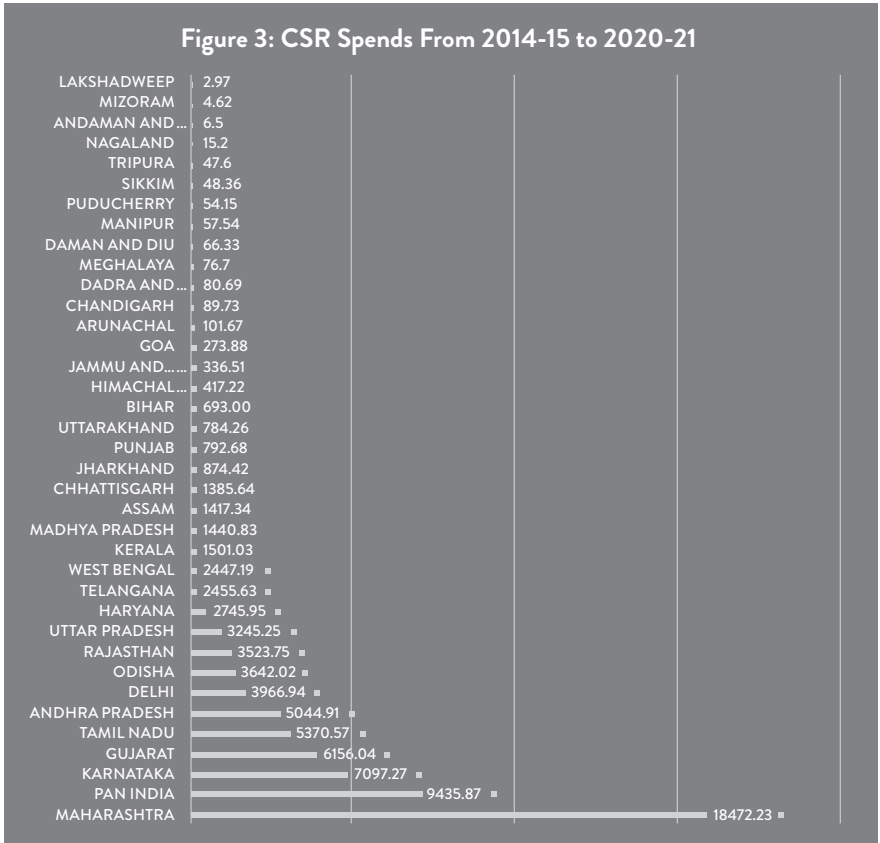
Let's look at some highlights from an analysis of CSR spending trends (across geographies and themes) over the last few years (Figure 2<sup>14</sup>).

Since 2014, education (~₹36,000 crores) has received the maximum attention and funding, followed by health

**Figure 2: What gets funded?  
CSR amount spent (₹ CR.)**



Source: Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India



Source: Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India

(₹25,000 crores). In FY21, there was also more money going to PM Cares and other government funds, possibly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Contributions from CSR to the government since 2014 amount to almost ₹9,500 crores.

What the data does not reveal is the nature of funding in these thematic areas, how much of it goes towards building infrastructure and how much towards building capacities or for developing sustainability mechanisms.

Further, when we look at the distribution of CSR across states (Figure 3<sup>15</sup>), we observe that the concentration of funds is towards the Southern and Western states which do relatively well on human development index (HDI) indicators, a trend consistent for the past few years. In the last seven years, from FY15 to FY21, there is a significant skew to Maharashtra, which has received 22% of the funds. This is followed by Karnataka (8.4%), Gujarat (7.3%), Tamil Nadu (6.4%), Andhra Pradesh (6%), Delhi (4.7%), Odisha (4.3%), Rajasthan (4.2%), Uttar Pradesh (4%) and Haryana (3.3%). These 10 states together account for 70% of the CSR spend over the past seven years. These are not the poorest states, nor the lowest on the HDI. It does, therefore, appear that CSR expenditure is not significantly correlated with human development indicators.

***Metrics and the measurement of impact.*** The OECD-DAC Glossary defines impact as “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.”<sup>16</sup>

From the definition, it is clear that there are both intended and unintended consequences of a program which should be counted as impact.

There is the familiar example of how a toilet construction program may have the intended impact of reducing open defecation and thereby reducing water-borne diseases but may also have the unintended effect of adding to women's water fetching burden (in villages where there is no running water supply). It is, therefore, important to identify, recognise and differentiate between impact in different contexts and over time, and to correctly identify the metrics that can capture the impact over a period.

Another key issue in impact assessment is what needs to be considered as impact. It is particularly important to address the difference between inputs, outputs and outcome/impact. It is understood that outputs are the products or services produced by program activities/inputs i.e., the deliverables. This means that clothes distribution, conducting after-school classes or any other activities measurable by process evaluation are the outputs. The outcome or impact is the change/s the intervention intends to achieve.

The great chasm in impact evaluation occurs when organisations measure the inputs and outputs — i.e., distribution of goods and services — as an impact of their work and the actual impact is taken for granted. For instance, take the toilet example. The output would be the number and quality of toilets constructed, while outcome would be the actual usage of toilets (reduction in open defecation). The ultimate impact would be in terms of the reduction in water-borne diseases.

An understanding of, and commitment to, impact of the kind illustrated above requires not only a good grasp of change processes; at a more fundamental level, it demands an alignment on the time horizons.



And this is where CSR funding today is very different from the money that came from foundations of an earlier generation.

Most corporates work with a one-year time horizon; only a few speak of multiyear partnerships. The shorter time horizon means that often the focus stays only at the level of outputs. As to why CSR funds generally tend to be focused on the short run are difficult to pinpoint. This could partly be because corporates lack a deeper understanding of social change processes and rhythms, but also because CSR is embedded within a larger corporate system which believes in constant measuring and tracking.

The nature of CSR funds is quite unlike what the social sector has been used to. It is also because the nature of the corporation giving money (in case of CSR) is very different from the traditional donor organisations. In case of the latter, they had been set up with the primary purpose of bringing about change in society in a select area/theme; the former, on the other hand, has been set up with a profit motive, with only a section of that larger for-profit entity striving towards a social purpose. Corporates tend to apply the same market metrics, which they are familiar with and are applied to the rest of the company, to their CSR divisions. There is thus an internal alignment challenge that most CSR departments struggle with. And finally, much of the above translates into a tendency within CSR funding to look for low-hanging fruits or for projects with a high certainty of success.

If we were to summarise, the characteristics of CSR funding seem to be tangibility, measurability, shorter time horizon to completion and an assurance of a high degree of likely success in outcomes.

## **What can one expect from CSR in terms of contributing to social justice?**

What is social justice? One rather comprehensive definition puts it as follows: “Social justice refers to a political and philosophical theory that focuses on the concept of fairness in relations between individuals in society and equal access to wealth, opportunities and social privileges ... the five main principles of social justice include access to resources, equity, participation, diversity and human rights.”<sup>17</sup>

Following from the earlier discussion, and on the face of it, one may arrive at the conclusion that CSR approaches and funds cannot really contribute to furthering the social justice agenda. This may be correct, but we would like to offer a different hypothesis — that it is not money alone which will determine the outcomes, but it is the agency using that money which can wield a much greater influence in terms of what is achieved.

Much of the CSR money (over half) is spent in a partnership mode with CSOs who hopefully understand social change much better.<sup>18</sup> Further, to say that tangible work cannot simultaneously cater to a social justice agenda would be most incorrect. In fact, Gandhiji built his entire social change premise on the base of constructive work.

In CSR funding, the money is inextricably linked with the type of work companies want to support. However, to say that the work possible is dependent on funding parameters only would be an abdication. In fact, in the course of our study,<sup>19</sup> we asked nonprofits to talk about the factors that led to impact of the kind they believed in, and here are some of the core variables that were spoken of:

***Contextualised systems, not just replicating models.*** One of the biggest criticisms of state-led development has been its monolithic view of society. The lack of contextualisation, even today, often creates unintended social outcomes. Economist Kaushik Basu's comparative study of the Indian and Chinese economies drives home the point that, due to political factors and a vastly different history, economic measures that drove China's success could not have done the same for India.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, replication of models of development have been futile or counterproductive. No two societies are ever identical. While there may be multiple ways to address the needs of a community, how well a program does is determined by the impact it creates. Affecting a long-lasting impact requires a nuanced, deep understanding of the problem as well as the community. As one respondent put it, "stamina from the NGO" to dig deeper into the social context, human behaviours and community responses is what is needed.

***Trial-and-error.*** There are countless ways to approach just about any social problem. Societies that CSOs operate in are heterogeneous where implementing projects that are suitable to the context means going through a process of trial-and-error. For example, women's empowerment can be achieved through job trainings, financial literacy, representation, etc. Many in the development space are of the opinion that the best way to uncover what works is to keep trying multiple ways, knowing that some methods fail. There is, therefore, no straitjacket formulae for good impact, given that complex social interactions form the theory of change. Moreover, the trial-and-error method is crucial to implement projects in the face of unique challenges and the context of social systems.

***Process view of social change.*** One respondent of the study said that nonprofit organisations focus more on what needs to be done and how to do it, rather than what it will lead to. Contrarily, present discourses surrounding impact obsess over results and outcomes. Process versus outcomes seems to have become a binary, whereas in conversations all respondents agreed on the necessity of both. This is why nonprofits place so much importance on a long-term vision. Even a simple program like building toilets could either be undertaken as a toilet building intervention, or one that fosters behaviour change and builds ownership of communities in the process of building toilets. While the short-term visible outcome in both cases may be a toilet, the chances of the toilet being used and maintained by the community are much higher in the latter case. The ability to think deep and work long term is what brings societal change and there needs to be a greater recognition of it. When organisations do not have to worry about funding all the time, they are able to focus their energies on the real work of bringing about change.

***Social changes during intervention.*** There are complex interactions of various social factors that take place in the course of any program. Changes often taken place while the project is being executed — shift in local community dynamics, new legislation, disasters — that could derail the original plan. Impact metrics should ideally not only make provision for contingencies, but also allow for social change and regular social processes. COVID-19 serves as a great example. According to the World Economic Forum, the pandemic has derailed the achievement of gender equality by a generation.<sup>21</sup> We need impact metrics which look at progress

under such circumstances rather than the achievement of a pre-determined outcome. Though such goal setting agreeably streamlines efforts, it also obfuscates the complexity of work in a dynamic setting.

***Community participation.*** Almost everyone underscores the importance of community involvement in the search for sustainable outcomes. However, such participation or involvement has to be woven in from the project planning stage itself, as opposed to imposing universalistic models of social change.

One anecdote that we heard repeated during our interviews was of a hand pump that was installed in a village. Intuitively, putting a hand pump in the middle of the village seemed like an easy way to ensure access to clean water for the community. The practical implications of it were far more complicated than could have been imagined by someone from outside the community. Since the hand pump was installed in front of the house of the chief of the village, caste stigma prevented the lower castes from accessing the pump. Fetching water, traditionally the responsibility of the women of the household, allowed them to also socialise — an underrated liberty. The location of the pump, thus, curtailed their freedom.

Roping in local people and hearing their voices can help in each step of the intervention, from needs assessment to impact measurement, mobilising to monitoring. It allows for double barrelling of accountability where the organisation is answerable to community, and the involved community members are accountable to the organisation.

***The people involved.*** A large section of the nonprofit sector credits the success of their work to their leaders and to the quality and dedication of the people working in the

organisation. The importance of strong boards and overall governance was also mentioned as a factor. A good and sound board plays a crucial role in giving an organisation the ability and the confidence to try out multiple things, take difficult decisions and, above all, stay true to their vision. Another aspect of good impact is an enabling environment that facilitates freedom of thought and action, where organisations and people are not constantly looked at with suspicion. The major factor which influences impact is the quality of implementation and employees are key to that.

### **Furthering social justice, with or without CSR funds**

CSR in its origins, approaches and preferences, does not give primacy to the social justice agenda. For CSOs, on the other hand, social justice is often at the core, and the key driving force. It is also the case that money is only one of the factors that influences the ability of CSOs to work on social justice. In fact, if one looks at some of the enabling variables listed earlier, most are within the control of the CSO itself.

Given the experience of the past seven years, the conversation needs to shift to why many of the new age (and earlier age) CSOs are today themselves speaking less of social justice and devoting energies to more of market-based, at-scale solutions. While not making it an either-or dichotomy, the lens needs to be refocused on social justice, and all that needs to be done in terms of processes, to look beyond activities and outputs, and a better articulation of outcomes and longer-term impact.

Maybe there is need for greater introspection and reflection required within social change organisations instead of looking to causes outside.

# 3

## ‘The Cycle of Inequity Needs to Be Broken’

A good start would be to work with the government on system reform to help lift the bottom half

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A CONVERSATION WITH ASHISH DHAWAN

**D**RAWN to philanthropy from an early age, Ashish Dhawan’s ambition has been to bridge the gap in education. “To me it just felt wrong that more than half our children are being left behind. There’s so much inequity; that inequity in a sense is being perpetuated and that cycle needed to be broken,” says Dhawan, who is founder and chairperson of Central Square Foundation, amongst India’s leading nonprofit organisations working in the education space.

As part of CPID’s Philanthropy and Social Justice Conversation Series, Dhawan talks to Urvi Shriram about the power of education in tackling inequality, creating sustainable impact at scale and the future of giving in India.

**URVI** Thank you so much for joining us today, Ashish. I wanted to start by asking what is it about philanthropy — and especially the education sector — that drew you to this work?

**ASHISH** Education was always very close to my heart. I know that it's thanks to a good education that I am where I am. It contributed to my success, but I also know that it's fundamental for societal and economic transformation. Without education, there is no healthy democracy or scope for debate; there is no weaning away from certain traditional beliefs to embrace modernity. An education, or upskilling, is a basic requirement to get a job in the current economy.

The beauty of education is that it has an impact on so many other areas we know. For instance, a woman who is well educated is also likely to be more informed about her health and take better care of the health of her children. It is a purposeful activity passed down from one generation to the next and continues thereafter. So, to me it just felt wrong that more than half our children are being left behind. There's so much inequity; that inequity in a sense is being perpetuated and that cycle needed to be broken. That is why I believe my philanthropy, or my life's work, should be focused on improving this situation as opposed to many other areas that I could have worked on.

**URVI** Looking back, how effective would you say philanthropy has been in tackling this inequity and creating real sustainable impact at scale?

**ASHISH** It's not that I want to undermine philanthropy or anything but fixing inequity in education is a very difficult



and challenging task. At the heart of it lies very complex societal problems; deeper issues, sometimes around caste or religion, come into play. There is power that teachers have vis-à-vis the parents that creates a lack of accountability at times. These underlying factors must be kept in mind when devising solutions as well.

I think philanthropy has played some role, at least initially, in reducing educational inequity. Let's step back and take a look. The government spends about seven lakh crores on education, about three percent of the gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>1</sup> Now I know that the prevailing belief is that we need to spend six percent.<sup>2</sup> The truth is that citizens have spent an additional three percent by paying out of pocket and so, in aggregate, we're spending close to five-and-a-half to six percent on education, which is quite a bit. Therefore, I don't think it's the money that's the issue.

In aggregate, India is unique like many other emerging countries but unique relative to the developed world or East Asia in that half our children go to private schools, largely because the state sector has been failing them.<sup>3</sup> They're escaping government schools and going to private schools. At times, it is because these schools offer English as the medium of instruction, which state schools don't. There are multiple reasons behind this choice.

Now, how do we improve all of this at scale is the question that I think a lot of philanthropists have been asking. Despite all the work being done by donors and innumerable non-governmental organisations (NGOs) — good ones at that — over the last 15 years we haven't seen much improvement in learning outcomes in school education.

One of the reasons for that has been the early focus on

massification — making certain that every child was at least getting to school. I think in this, we should be proud that India has made strides. After the British left, getting to the school enrolment stage we have today is an achievement. To accomplish that, there is obviously minimal demarcation between boys and girls or a Scheduled Caste student and one of a higher caste, etc., so I would say it's a good job on the access and equity counts.

Where we've done poorly is at getting our learning outcomes right. Philanthropy has earlier been funding nonprofits often doing work in parallel to the system. Remedial work, for instance. These are temporary fixes; they're not sustainable because they're not embedded within the system.

Some philanthropists say, I'll set up my own school, I'll be in control, and I can do it well. That's great, but you can't get scale through that and often you may not be catering to the lowest segment of society.

To accomplish change at scale, in a sustainable and impactful way, one must work with the public sector on system reform, an idea that philanthropists are coming around to now. The Azim Premji Foundation was probably the first to start working at scale in this area; today, many others are doing the same, so I'm hopeful that, going forward, philanthropy can play a bigger role than it has in the past.

However, I also think we have to be cognizant of what that role should be if the government is spending seven lakh crores, of which five lakh crores is on school education. I think philanthropy's role really is innovation i.e., working with nonprofits to find new methods — whether it's pedagogy, curriculum, teacher development assessment, new tools, etc., — and build evidence around what works and what

doesn't and document that scaling. It is to work on policy advocacy to bring about change, and to provide technical support and policy implementation to help the government carry out measures. If we go in saying that we want to replicate the system or create a parallel one, that is neither scalable nor sustainable. That's at least been my learning over the last decade.

**URVI** There's a lot that philanthropy has done but somehow the growth has been in silos and the complex areas like human rights, gender equality, environment and other entrenched issues tend to get left behind with not just funding, but also attention. So, in your view, what are the focal points that philanthropists should keep in mind when addressing social challenges in high-need areas?

**ASHISH** I'm very passionate about system reform because if we look, at least in education, it's primarily the bottom half that goes to government schools. I mentioned earlier 50% go to private schools;<sup>4</sup> people who have a high income, and belong to a higher caste, would be a more accurate representation. By working with the government system, you're working with primarily the bottom half of the social hierarchy; as a philanthropist, if you focus on that, you are automatically targeting the big inequity issue as these are the children being left behind. Within that public system, we have to pull up the bottom half. If you look at the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) data, more than half the children can't do even the basic stuff they should have learnt by Class 2 or 3. So it's that bottom half *even within the government system* that's really behind.

To lift the bottom, there's two ways to achieve results. One is to get the kids who are already doing reasonably well to a grade better. Another is to say, I'm going to prioritise the ones who are really falling behind — the ones who are two or three years behind already — and systematically work to change that. It could be by making changes in the educational program because, as Rukmini [Banerji, CEO of Pratham Education Foundation] says, and she is absolutely correct, we have an over-engineered curriculum so often designed by elitists who don't keep in mind the children who are coming into the system. We may need a more structured pedagogy for teachers; given the challenges we deal with, particularly with the bottom half, we may need certain kinds of formative assessment and remedial strategies. So, I think one is approaching it with the right mindset, that my goal is to reduce inequity by lifting the bottom, and not just improving results.

The second is to really understand the beneficiary as best as possible. We can't change society; we're working on education at the end of the day. However, there are some deeply entrenched issues around discrimination in society that we can't necessarily solve but we need to understand and address them as best as possible, right?

I think that's the approach. Focus on inequity, understand that there are issues — whether it's as you said, gender discrimination, caste discrimination and their power structures — and consider how one can potentially get around those by involving the broader community. Shine a spotlight on the bottom half and constantly ask questions to collect data about what we're doing to ensure that learning outcomes are improving for those kids.

Part of the work is also encouraging behaviour change. Getting teachers to recognise some of the biases that they have and helping them see the beauty in every child. Emphasising that their role — to ensure that every child will succeed — is almost like a higher calling. Parents also need to play a slightly different role in terms of supporting the child.

Often, people focus on governance, changing the curriculum, teacher development ... those are all activities. Ultimately, if the classroom transaction doesn't change, if something at home doesn't change, we are not going to bring about change.

**URVI** Absolutely. So, a lot of what we are talking about, and what you practice in your own philanthropy, is focusing on addressing the root causes and that can happen only if we engage with the communities and people who are closest to the challenges. How can this be encouraged or seeded more broadly in the Indian philanthropic ecosystem?

**ASHISH** Honestly, I didn't know about the social justice angle coming in and it's only later that I appreciated the value of it.

I think there needs to be more conversations about it — the kind of thing CPID is doing, for instance — to get the word out. I have seen how Ford Foundation made a transition at a global level to address this and why it is so critical. Any area you work in, you often bump into issues around inequity as they are deeply entrenched in our society, right? So, for one, philanthropists need to acknowledge that.

Two, I think the respect or the humility to say that look, none of us have the smarts to figure this out; they're

very complex problems and we must be open to constantly learning. Many of the nonprofits, for instance, have shown stunning results by working with communities. We must listen to the ultimate beneficiaries and understand their condition, what the challenges and barriers are, and incorporate that into the work.

Third, as a foundation, what I think about is — do we want to be an operating foundation or only focus on grantmaking? I decided we'll be somewhere in-between. When you're a philanthropist, you're not as close to the ground. We live in our own rarified bubble, we don't really interact with the beneficiaries on a regular basis, so having a set of NGO partners connected with ground realities helps. In a foundation, we have people who are good at strategic thinking, policy advocacy and project implementation but we may not have people who really understand or have worked on the ground, and are from the community or the state, etc. A healthy partnership is the best route.

At the same time, if you're just cutting cheques, then you're leaving it to the nonprofits to do the work, which some people think is right. I, however, believe there's a value addition that philanthropists or foundations can bring. For instance, NGOs are often not the best at building the hard evidence because, ultimately, there's a conflict there. (It's around their programs that the evidence needs to be built.) I think we may be better at policy advocacy. At times, we may be better at mobilising capital to bring the ecosystem together; we may be in a stronger position to coordinate and project manage a program if the nonprofit partners are in competition with one another. When it comes to working closely with the state, we may have better connections with government.

We have to understand our core competence and ask what we are really good at and who can we partner with. This space is one where I think there are lots of good people, with different skill sets, doing great work. Bringing them together, that partnership, can really help drive change.

**URVI** We're witnessing a massive intergenerational wealth transfer that is going to lead to a significant increase in philanthropy. What would be your advice to first-time givers, people in their late 30s or 40s who are privileged in many ways and are keen to engage in philanthropy?

**ASHISH** My motto or slogan is “give more, give sooner, give better,” and I think the sooner part is important for people who are in their 30s. People tend to think of philanthropy as something for their later career; they say, maybe when I'm in my 50s or 60s. I think young people — particularly entrepreneurs who've done well and are creative and talented — should really start in their 30s, albeit in a small way. Pick up one issue and delve into it. Start by making a few grants, getting to understand the ecosystem, maybe hire one or two people so you have some structure around having a foundation and over the first three to five years, just start to engage with that one area that you picked. If somebody chose an area like improving the judicial backlog, say. Let them spend three to five years reading up and understanding the issue, interacting with organisations that have done work in the area and networking with judicial reform advocates who are passionate about making a difference.

That initial “dipping of the toe in water” is important. All these youngsters have busy day jobs; starting in a small

way is a show of commitment. My sense is that most entrepreneurs will eventually get sucked in because they will see how complex these problems are. Entrepreneurs are problem solvers, and they'll want to do more as opposed to just leaving the issue. I think giving them a taste of it when they're young will result in them going even further. And better things will happen because these are smart people — they'll read, reflect and, over time, become more strategic with their philanthropy.

**URVI** Very quickly, my last question: what is likely to be the role of Indian philanthropy 10 to 20 years into the future and how should it reshape its working to be able to make an even more significant contribution to development?

**ASHISH** I'm not sure I'm qualified to give you an answer to this, but I'll approach it keeping in mind my own work or thinking.

I would say I feel optimistic about the next 10-20 years. Philanthropy is age-old, people and families have been doing it for a long time, but I think that it has gathered a certain momentum in the recent past and it will accelerate even more with all the wealth that's been crystallised lately. So, I think in that sense there will be more of it. I also think that people are going to be more engaged with their philanthropy. They are going to want to take a lot of what they've learnt in building their business and bring those skill sets to bear.

The profile of those working in the foundations, etc., will also change as we go forward as there is now the capability to hire some very talented people from other sectors who want to switch over and come into this space.



As you have more people working on these issues, there's potential for increased collaboration as well between philanthropists. I think there is a one plus one equals 11 (or at least three) kind of equation here.

I'm hopeful that in many of these areas, as the number of philanthropists getting involved grows, there will be a greater focus on system change. I think the one thing we've been missing is a lot of great work being done by nonprofits and sometimes at the scale of a block called district where you can see improvement in learning outcomes, but it doesn't translate into systemic change at the state level. I think foundations can help make that transition possible.

We often see fantastic programs and ask why it hasn't gone to scale or why this system hasn't picked it up. I think that's where philanthropists can come in and say we have the connections, we can broker something here, help white label this or push the government, etc. There are many ways in which we can bring new approaches to the field as well, through technology and other methods. Greater focus on data, research, should lead to greater change going forward.

But I think the point you made earlier, which is that we need to bring a lens of social justice to this, I think focus on that. There is inequity in our society, which is very deep-rooted, and I think understanding that — in not losing sight of that — our role really is to lift the bottom half. I think it's something that we must always keep top of mind and keep pushing for.

# 4

## Doing Good Isn't Good Enough

Why ethics plays an important role in philanthropy today

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SUNDAR SARUKKAI

PHILANTHROPIC institutions are well established in India and abroad, and they have already disbursed a significant amount of money to society. What kind of ethical issues arise in this process? Just because they give money “away for free”, does it mean that they are not answerable for their actions? If they are answerable, then to whom? What type of responsibilities and answerability can we expect from those who want to do “good” to others?

While there has been a long history of charity, the shift to philanthropy accomplishes multiple objectives: moving away from merely “giving” to “giving with larger purpose”, a shift away from the individual to social groups, a deeper concern with social and environmental justice and a measure of professionalisation. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise

that those who “give” are most often at the apex of the power pyramid in societies and thus wield enormous financial and political power. Thus, however laudable the act, the very asymmetry of giving demands a deeper analysis of the ethical questions involved. Given the influence of philanthropy on social processes, structures and systems, it is a matter of urgency to formulate an ethics of philanthropy.

Much of the discussion seems to be focused on models of giving, whom to give and how much to give. Should one give to change systems or individuals? Should one give so as to maximise the benefit of giving a particular amount of money? These and other similar questions become important when funds are distributed over time and in a consistent manner. Since most of the major philanthropic organisations such as the Tata Trusts, Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and others have strong ties to business, any ethics of philanthropy will also have to focus on the relation between business and philanthropy.

In general, there are dilemmas that are common to any philanthropic activity across the world. The issues that I highlight below are those that have arisen from engaging with the experiences of both funders and fundees (usually referred to as “beneficiaries” in funding parlance) in India based on a study of some of these philanthropic initiatives.

### **Some ethical dilemmas**

*Inherent asymmetry.* The major problem in philanthropy is the inherent asymmetry between the giver and the receiver, between the funder and the fundee. This relation is always asymmetrical since one has money to give which the other

needs. What are the ethical issues arising due to this asymmetry? Will this lead to power asymmetry? Does the funder have “power” over the fundee? For example, there are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who have been working in the field for decades. But when the funder gives money to this NGO, they intervene in various ways — by choosing what component to support, by making the NGOs conform to various financial and administrative rules that are applicable to business concerns and corporates, by pushing and nudging the NGOs to change their practices. A common clash that we have often observed is that between the field experience of the NGOs and the funders’ worldview which is not informed by the nature of the field in the same way as the NGO.

***Perceived motivations for philanthropy.*** Why does a person or a group want to give their money away? How do the receivers understand this giving? Is this giving a transaction, a kind of contract? Or is it a giving without any strings attached to it? Some receivers of funds feel that they are not obligated to the funders in any sense. Some of them have even taken the position that the funders are doing it for some reason of their own. These reasons may range from ideological beliefs about how people should live their life to the conviction that philanthropy is a form of social engineering that can (and should) be the goal of philanthropy.

***Benefits to the funder.*** Can the funder expect anything at all from the fundee? Can they “demand” something for the support they give? Can accountability be asked for the money given to somebody as philanthropy? If there are expectations, then does philanthropy become a form of lending?

***Origin of the money.*** Does it matter who is giving the money? Or how the money is generated in the first instance? These questions are actually related to a larger concern about businesses and the project of generating profits. Is a company setting aside some of its profits to distribute as philanthropy? Can a business concern take a decision on this by itself? Is it a problem to take money from a business that does not have good business practices or a good public image?

***Accountability.*** What kind of projects and communities should be supported? If philanthropy intervenes in those areas which the government is supposed to be taking care of, such as health, water, education, then is the organisation ending up doing the government's work? The main reason that this issue becomes such a critical ethical problem is that when the government intervenes in society there are many measures of accountability. The officials, including politicians, who are supposed to enable certain interventions can be questioned and held accountable in principle. But in philanthropy, can there be any accountability? Should there be accountability? Or should we just say that since money is being given due to the "goodwill" of the funder, we should not expect any serious measures of accountability from either side?

***Domain knowledge.*** How should one support the poor and the dispossessed? How much knowledge should the funders have of the situation before they intervene? Sometimes trying to help without proper understanding of the field may be more disastrous than not helping at all.

***Scope of support.*** Typically, philanthropic interventions are within a small segment of the population. (The government,

on the other hand, is responsible for the whole population. This is another important distinction between them.) Is it correct to support a small segment of the community while the problems continue in other parts of the community? How many financial strictures should be put on NGOs? Is it right to fund for a few years and then get out? (Ratan Tata, in an interview on philanthropy, points to the effects of stopping funding and adds how they became “most hated” when they stopped funding an initiative after some time.<sup>1</sup>) What are the effects of the intervention of the funder on the community? After the funder leaves, should they worry about how the community will be able to sustain itself without the support from the funder? Should they be political or non-political? Is it possible to be non-political? (For example, politicians can expect to get votes, but can true philanthropy also be based on some expectations?)

***Causes to support.*** This is related to giving money not to the poor and the vulnerable but to artists and others who do work that is “valued” by the funders. What vision will enable supporting the arts? Many social groups depend on various forms of artistic and performance practices. So, supporting art is also a form of supporting social justice.

We can identify a set of concepts that are closely related to these ethical questions in these contexts.

### **Where ethical issues could arise**

***Tainted money.*** An important hurdle for fundees to negotiate is whether it is acceptable to use money derived from dubious means for philanthropy. To illustrate this problem,

let me consider one extreme case. If a drug dealer who makes money illegally wants to give some of that money for philanthropy, would that be morally acceptable? Should the nature of business matter to their philanthropic work? There is an interesting parallel with Gandhi's argument that money made from the sales of alcohol should not be used to support schools. Such an issue is not a problem for private philanthropy per se since Gandhi was actually criticising the government's use of money which is got as tax from the sale of alcohol to fund its schools. But one can extend this argument of dubious origins to private businesses too. For instance, Gandhi considered that all profit arises from exploitation of one kind or another, and indeed there are many who speak about the making of profits through what is referred to in economics as the "externalisation of costs". All these involve ethical questions.

***Privacy and data.*** When a funder funds an organisation, what can they expect in return? Can they get personal data from the beneficiaries? If so, what kind of use can they put this data to? For example, can the photos of people (including children) who are funded be used without explicit informed consent from the subjects? Can details about their lifestyle be shared with others? Or equivalently, do the funders have any "rights" over data or even narratives of those who receive these funds?

***Self-regulation.*** The deeper ethical question here arises from the fact that organisations and individuals who are given funds to continue their social work with communities may sometimes be so grateful for receiving money that they sign off on some things that they probably should not. So, this

means that the responsibility of regulation falls on the funders themselves. How then does one regulate oneself even while being in a position of “helping” somebody else? Funders often do so by focusing on process-based disbursements which gloss over, or even conceal, ethical issues which arise in engaging with the social sector.

***Honesty and full disclosure.*** Should the funders (and perhaps the business concern that they are associated with) share their intentions, motivations and long-term plans and vision with the communities they intervene in?

***Conflicts of interest.*** Is there an ethical issue when a company helps a community to get an edge on their business? Many times, businesses have entered communities by supporting their cultural activities. Witness the business delegations that accompany foreign cultural organisations based in India.

***Unintended consequences.*** While a philanthropist engages with a community to do some “good”, the end consequence might not turn out that way. So, what should the ethical stance of philanthropy be in such situations? Are they responsible in any way? Do they just walk away after their funding gets over? What kinds of responsibility and accountability does a philanthropist have?

***Partnership.*** Equivalently, should the funders be true partners with the groups they work with? What does true partnership mean or imply? After all, the organisations on the ground have been working in the field for years, and the funders are only giving money — so what should the ethics of this relationship be?



One specific issue in partnership is the following — should the funders expect that the fundee organisation follow codes of conduct similar to their own? For example, let us say that there is an NGO which does not have the rules of hiring, gender practice and other norms that a funder might have. Just like the expectation of having uniformity of financial systems, should the funder expect that the NGO also follow their best practices with respect to employees, etc.?

### **Ethical challenges in the Indian context**

It is important to recognise the kind of responses towards philanthropic initiatives, both from the people who are beneficiaries and those who are doing the work on the ground with these people, so that we are aware of some blind spots in philanthropy.

I do not necessarily agree with all the criticisms, but I do believe that it is necessary for philanthropists to be more aware of these issues and factor them into their philanthropic initiatives. Some would argue that the critique of the philanthropic organisations is from people and NGOs who want to retain status quo and are resistant to certain kinds of change. I will not make a judgement on this debate except to point out certain examples which may be illustrative of the way forward and to show how these problems are largely related to ethics.

***Social vision of the philanthropist and the key decision makers.*** One major criticism of Indian philanthropy has been the role of the views of the founder and other dominant members of the philanthropic organisation. In this kind of

set up, the founders' views tend to dominate thereby forcing the organisation to deliver what the founder and the founder's family understand as social change. Themes for philanthropic work then depend on what these people consider important and how the intervention must be done on the ground.

In principle, this is based on the view that the person who foots the bill and gives the money has a right to expect what they want done with that money. However, in philanthropy, such an argument can be a problem since the impact of the intervention is not on their business but on the people and community. So, when the funders and their representatives make decisions based on their opinions or beliefs about the society, then there is an ethical issue.

One would hope then that these philanthropists will hire competent people to not just follow their bidding but also to properly advise them on the impact of their social intervention. However, what frequently happens is that people close to the parent company are chosen to run the philanthropic organisations. Often, there is a quick translation from a person's capacity to run a business to taking care of the problems of society, but many a times these capacities are not transferable. This is similar to the government's propensity to hire scientists, who are experts in their particular domains, to advise the government on everything ranging from poverty alleviation to international diplomacy!

At times, when philanthropic organisations attempt to solve problems in societies as understood by them, we end up with more problems. Some groups who thought technology is a solution for problems in education or trading of commodities (including vegetables and fish) dumped technologies on communities which were not prepared, or had the infrastructure, to engage with these technologies.

The fact that the business tycoons have the power to intervene in ways that they think are “correct” has less to do with the correctness of their vision and more to do with the money they are willing to give.

***Field and domain knowledge versus modern management techniques.*** An associated complaint about Indian philanthropy from those who work on the ground, including the beneficiaries, is related to the employees of philanthropic organisations. The notion of “competent advisors/employees” has become a contentious issue in philanthropy. In the name of professionalism, there are many MBAs and those from the corporate world who now occupy leadership and decision-making positions in these organisations. In principle, there is nothing wrong with this for, after all, any organisation will be effective when it is managed professionally. However, what are the expectations and skill sets needed of a person working in the social sector field? Can they be responsible for decisions without an adequate understanding of society, social processes, the nature of political action and so on? Is competence in finance or engineering enough to take on this role?

The leadership of philanthropic organisations live in a world that is quite different from the domains they want to change. The people they hire to help them take these decisions are also rarely part of these groups who are the beneficiaries or working directly with the beneficiaries.

A good illustration of this dissonance lies in the salaries of the employees in philanthropy organisations. It is well known that salary and administrative costs of many philanthropy organisations ranges from 70%-80% of the total funds raised

for, or allocated to, philanthropy. The salaries paid to their “professional” employees are more comparable to the corporate structure of the parent business group. In the social sector, there is a huge disparity between salaries, payments and expenditures of employees of the philanthropic organisation and that of the salaries of the fundees and the beneficiaries.

More worrisome is the fact that these employees have to take an empathetic and informed decision on the problem of the recipients and decide whether the approach they are funding is indeed the best one in the given circumstances. One of the common complaints from NGOs that have worked for decades in the field is that many times the representatives of the philanthropic organisation, who come with little understanding of the social situation, or the work people have already been doing in these places, will dictate what needs to be done. Since any help to the poor is a boon, the receivers of the funds often remain silent. This attitude compromises both the philanthropic act as well as the NGOs struggling to survive doing social work.

What helps the philanthropists in this view is the decline of the welfare state and the growth of the power of the corporates. Through philanthropy, these private business organisations play the role of politicians and administrators but without the accountability that regulates government administrators.

***Philanthropy and suspicion.*** While the attitude of the philanthropists towards alleviating poverty is commendable, the mechanism is not. Since the organisations deal with the fundees as if the money they give is somehow “ours” there is an inherent tension, an underlying sense of suspicion, in the act of giving.

There are two levels of suspicion in Indian philanthropy — first is the suspicion (and many times disdain) of the government and second is the suspicion that their “hard-earned” money will be squandered by those who are receiving support. The role of suspicion distinguishes charity and philanthropy. Many times, when people give money away as charity, they are not really holding the beneficiaries to any form of accountability. In philanthropy today, the beneficiaries have to constantly “prove” that they are honestly using the funds and this larger mood of suspicion has turned a lot of people away from approaching these funders.

Many groups working in the social sector feel that funders look upon them always with suspicion. Since suspicion is really about the money, there is excessive focus on auditing and accounting procedures. When an NGO gets money from these corporate philanthropic organisations, they typically have to get the latest management and financial accounting systems. To get this done, they have to hire people with competence in these fields. This leads to a complete reworking of salary and management structures in these organisations. The worst impact of all this happens when the funding is stopped after three or five years. The NGOs are left with all these systems and bloated salaries for which they cannot get funding! The excessive use of management and financial strategies are pushed onto the social workers as a way of making them more efficient. The success of such initiatives should be evaluated now since many of the NGOs either follow some of these rules ritualistically or opt out of being dominated by the funder.

## **Ethical giving and the power of accountability**

We should remember that institutionalised philanthropy intervenes not only in individual lives but also in larger communities. Actions of philanthropy have an effect on social practices and social structures. They obviously can help people, but they can also have consequences that are not desirable. Should a funder evaluate all these possibilities before deciding on support to their fundees? But will too much of analysis cause paralysis of action and lead to a situation where philanthropy becomes more of a burden?

We are in a situation today where some organisations have more money than they can disburse and so there is a pressure to disburse money. The specific issues discussed above include the enduring problem of what happens to the fundee and the community when the funder withdraws. It is surprising how much of residual bitterness is present amongst those organisations which have been funded for a few years and then dropped from funding due to the view that philanthropists do not want to keep funding an organisation beyond a fixed time frame. It has also impacted the results of their work on the ground and on the people and communities they have been working with.

Furthermore, there are deeper issues of accountability. Funders enter the social sector genuinely wanting to do good and make a difference to abject living conditions of the poor and marginalised. However, the people who manage the funds are most often not from the field areas. Typically, in India, the majority of people who work in the big philanthropic organisations are urban, English educated and well off. Should they be expected to have certain kinds of training

before they make decisions that can change people's lives and social dynamics? The government officials who are involved in similar interventions come with a different training, experience and background. This does not make them better employees but in the case of government employees there is a sense of transparency and public accountability. On the other hand, private philanthropists enter these domains only because the government has miserably failed to provide basic dignified health service, education and other necessary social amenities.

So, the main question is the nature of accountability applicable to philanthropists. In the name of doing a "good" act, can they get away with doing anything? Can they be held responsible for any of their decisions?

There is a parallel in medical ethics that illustrates this problem. Many hospitals give medicines, and sometimes other facilities, for free to poor patients who cannot pay for these services. But just because they give these for free, can the doctors experiment with the patients as they like? Can they afford to test new drugs or do a procedure differently for these patients just because they are getting it for free due to their poverty? In principle, this cannot be done, and the codes of medical ethics are ways to protect the patient from such abuse. Similarly, what is the minimum that we can and should expect from this "free" distribution of wealth to the needy and others?

Today, the only strong accountability that is followed, as mentioned earlier, by most of these philanthropic organisations is financial accountability — but this is more of a check to see if the funds are being utilised properly. This attitude has led to cases where the funders do not take a position on the unethical acts of an organisation as long as the accounting

is done as required! Financial probity has replaced more urgently needed sense of ethical codes applicable both to the fundee and the funder.

We only have to realise that wherever there is the presence of power, then there are bound to be ethical issues lurking around. The power in philanthropists comes from the money that they have, the money that they can distribute, the social capital in terms of their social standing, class, caste and many times gender, the organisational support they have and the political ties and relations with the government that many of them enjoy. An ethics of philanthropy is first and foremost an awareness of this power, self-regulation of this power, and the realisation that there should be some notion of accountability of this power when they use it to intervene in society.

While the points above give an idea of the complexity of philanthropy in India, it is necessary to realise the importance of philanthropy by the private sector. The enormous disparity in wealth, the lack of basic access to health and education, the lack of proper systems of justice across the country has led to a position where the private has to intervene in order to “help out” the government. The government too, in general, has been open to such interventions and in some cases, like in the case of self-help groups in Tamil Nadu, the political parties and the government themselves enter into the social work sector.<sup>2</sup> The problems mentioned above are only to highlight the importance of framing proper and broad ethical guidelines in philanthropy. These guidelines have to be sensitive to the nature of the social world and not be reduced only to certain management techniques.



A philanthropic organisation cannot afford to be unaware of the complexities of class, caste, religion and gender in India while it intervenes in society since that would lead to serious ethical issues. On the other hand, ethics cannot be reduced to a checklist and a set of dos and don'ts. It needs sustained reflection and dialogue. Since there are no clear-cut solutions to ethical dilemmas, many people who confront these dilemmas end up taking decisions in the best way they can at that moment.

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This essay is a lightly edited version of an extract from the chapter on ethics of philanthropy in the book *JRD Tata and the Ethics of Philanthropy* (Routledge, 2020) by Sundar Sarukkai.

# 5

## Unleash Your Love for Humanity

Motivation and intent are critical to the success of our philanthropic pursuits of equity and social justice

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YVONNE L MOORE

**W**HILE the philanthropy sector in and beyond India grew rapidly over the past decade, there has been limited movement of the needles of poverty, social justice, human dignity and equity. This essay explores some of the foundational conditions — the enabling ecosystem — that will likely be needed to promote impactful social justice philanthropy within and across the country.

We have exciting opportunities today to reshape the philanthropic ecosystem in India that have never existed before. In no way do I mean that philanthropy has not long existed in India — such a mindset would be ahistoric. When I think of communities and histories from my own African Diaspora, I'm constantly reminded of the depth of our giving

across the globe. While white societal norms continue to dismiss, downplay or erase these histories, this rewriting has not been successful. It is no secret that philanthropy within and by Indian communities has long been extensive and also global. However, it is also true that it will take a concentrated effort to build a lasting ecosystem that will nourish donors and philanthropists, allowing you to build clearer visions for your giving — not from a Western orientation, but from a perspective that taps into your own networks, learnings, knowledge, languages, priorities and spheres of influence.

A parallel failure of the West and the formal philanthropic sector has been an unwillingness to and discomfort with truly and authentically engaging communities by listening and better understanding the root problems that require a reorientation to fairness. Access has been one of our greatest challenges. In my own company, Moore Philanthropy, we are trying to do better. Our theory of change says that the most powerful solutions are very often found amongst those navigating the problems of focus daily. Sustainability is impossible if community members where we seek to advance change are not authentically engaged, supportive and taking leadership.

Here, I offer my own experiences, challenges, successes and failures — as well as my convictions about how “philanthropy” truly takes shape — in the hope that my own learnings can inform your individual and shared journeys.

While I will often raise examples from the US philanthropic sector and speak here primarily to institutional and corporate philanthropic norms and opportunities, the learnings, potential solutions and behaviours of focus that I put forward certainly apply to any philanthropist, whether you are part of an institution or pursuing change as an individual, corporation or family.

There are so many interesting and catalytic partnerships already coming out of India and I believe my colleagues would agree, we would welcome the sector's ideas and conversations. It is becoming incredibly clear that all of us need to start working together more respectfully, efficiently and productively to alleviate the world's most entrenched problems. Silos have not worked, and no complex problem will be solved in the absence of authentic idea sharing, partnerships and channels for ongoing feedback and adaptation.

As philanthropists committed to transformation, we need to change what has not worked in the past. So, let's step back and consider what philanthropy is really about!

### **Philanthropy is love**

At a conference hosted by the Council on Foundations [a nonprofit leadership association] in 2021, I gave a talk on global philanthropy. In my keynote speech, I told the audience that none of us have the right to call ourselves "philanthropists" if we are not going to honour the basic definition or tenets of philanthropy. I was not alluding to the distorted interpretation that passes off as philanthropy today; I meant the original, Greek definition of the word: love of humankind. I honestly have no idea how most audience members felt about that, as it was the COVID-19 era, and we were on video. However, I do know that our business has not been impacted, and I did receive a few encouraging notes afterward.

My boldness is fostered by a deep anger about philanthropic actors' disrespect of the meaning of love, and the inhuman treatment of those we say we seek to help. The lack of dignity in how we operate.

If we deconstruct the word “philanthropy” in its original Greek, the first half of the word — “philos” — means love and the second half — “anthropos” — means man or humanity. And this is incredibly important because love of humanity is what brings nearly every one of us to this work. At least I hope that’s your primary motive and intent! And to be clear, they are critical to the success of our philanthropic undertakings. Whether or not you agree, your motivation and intent are directly connected to the impact and outcomes of your philanthropy, particularly the pursuits of equity and social justice.

Whenever I discuss or write about philanthropy, I always return to the definition. Language is critical in everything we do, and even more so in philanthropy — a realm in which we have asked for the public’s trust! Therefore, it’s important that we, as philanthropists, continually remind ourselves of our mission and purpose.

In a sector whose primary mandate is love of humanity, I rarely hear us speak in ways that reflect that meaning. And what concerns me more is that I don’t often see it in our behaviours. That failure to reflect on our actions remains acute even now, as we move towards new chapters marking the official end of the global pandemic.

As a Christian, the definition and meaning of love has been explained to me and I can draw clarity from my biblical studies as well as how my family members interact with each other and within the communities we are part of. Black American community members are often raised with ideals of philanthropy, of giving, and often use the word itself to speak to our financial gifts. Yet, we do not give only through financial assistance. Black Americans have robust traditions of

sharing our time, talents and treasure language and practices that also have deep meaning in the broader Christian tradition.

As a practitioner and a life-long student of the core tenets of philanthropy, I've sought to learn and respect how colleagues of different cultures and backgrounds express the concept of love and expressions of giving or helping.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the reference alludes to formal or institutionalised philanthropy, but sometimes it is informal. Many of my close colleagues from Africa choose to use another word to reflect their giving, particularly young people. A colleague from South Africa shared that her conversations with young people suggest that they find the word "philanthropy" dated, offensive, and incapable of defining the goals and *intent* of their own giving. Sadly, some of their discontent with the word comes from their observations of how others with wealth have chosen to engage in philanthropy with disrespect for the communities and people they claim they want to, and claim they do, help. Amongst some Africans, the terms "giving" or "helping" are preferred.

I've also learnt that in Judaism, giving may be linked to both giving *and* receiving, suggesting that some type of relationship should be formed to sincerely carry out any act of philanthropy.<sup>2</sup> In the Hebrew language, the word "tzedakah" speaks of philanthropy or charity, and for some is a concept of giving that might also be considered a form of social justice. In Hindu communities, I've discovered that wealth is accumulated not for oneself, but for giving back to one's community, and that any giving motivated by selfish considerations loses its value, from a spiritual point of view.<sup>3</sup> This belief and poignant lesson links back to my strong conviction that our motivations and intents

have a direct connection to the experience and impact of our work.

For those who hold no connection to any spiritual deity and may not hold a shared definition of the concept of love, I've often referred to the teachings of author, professor and activist bell hooks. In her book *All About Love: New Visions* (2000), she states, "Wherever abuse and neglect is present, love cannot be.... We cannot claim to love if we are hurtful and abusive. Love and abuse cannot coexist. Abuse and neglect are, by definition, the opposites of nurturance and care."

So, if we claim to be philanthropists, to love humanity, we must remember that our motivations and intent, our behaviour and our speech, will all impact our work, particularly if we seek to shift the needle on fairness, inclusion and equity within and amongst the communities we seek to serve.

I'm frequently reminded of the program staff at the Rockefeller Foundation's Refugee Scholar Program, which ran from 1933 to 1945 (and could have been better named). In 1933, as fascism moved through Europe, the social science program team was pushed to question their core beliefs regarding whether the Rockefeller Foundation should move beyond the work of investing in scientific research or think and do more about the basic safety and protection of their grantee partners throughout Germany, Great Britain and France. At the time, the Foundation was investing in the work of scholarship, but as the Nazis began to dismantle intellectual communities within Europe, the staff began a small program to help scholars relocate to the United States so that they (and their families) might continue their work safely. However, as the war raged on and Nazi efforts intensified,

the director of the social science program began to challenge both the vice president of the Foundation and other staff members to do more. His plea resulted in a small refugee program that assisted more scholars to leave their homelands for safety. Debate continued amongst the Foundation's leaders and program staff throughout 1940, as they quietly continued their efforts to save as many scholars and their families as possible.<sup>4</sup> Now, the refugee program was by no means perfect; staff at the time shared their sadness and frustration about having to essentially choose who might be saved, and how they made those decisions. But the work of social justice is rarely easy; it's a long road that is challenging, frustrating and sometimes risky.

As we dig into the journey of creating conditions and spaces in which we can do philanthropy work well — creating an ecosystem in which philanthropy and the core tenets of social justice might flourish — I invite each of us to begin with and repeatedly reflect on the definition of philanthropy, the reason/s why we do this work, behaviours that are true to it, and, of course, whether it is honestly appropriate to consider and call ourselves “philanthropists”.

## **Pursuits of social justice**

The global call for social justice has been long and far reaching, although many still believe the public work of justice began in 2020. However, the civil — and highly televised — protests that began in the United States in the summer of 2020 were a profound and urgent call to the rest of the world regarding racial, class and gender injustices that have been happening for many generations as well as to the efforts of activists and



supporters that has gone ignored by those in philanthropy unversed in the work of social justice.

While the sector of philanthropy globally has grown at a rapid and exciting pace, providing new ideas around social investment and impact, practitioners remain ill-prepared to tackle the entrenched systems of inequity that have only continued to deepen with COVID-19 and years of massive levels of wealth accumulation across the globe.

The field of philanthropy cannot claim a lack of knowledge regarding the need to reorient our practices around funding with a racial justice lens. In 2016, the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity released a toolkit entitled *Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens: A Practical Guide*<sup>5</sup>, sharing tools and recommendations to help donors strengthen their grantmaking around social and racial justice issues and organisations that would inevitably help improve related outcomes. The toolkit provided a map to better understand the structural systems and disparities at work within a country (equity) and served as a manual to build community power and access (key to justice) to help bring about major transformation.

But six years later, the sector is *still* unprepared to render thoughtful strategies or decision making to quickly, and authentically, partner with community leaders.

When colleagues and donors come to Moore Philanthropy for help crafting a strategy around social and racial justice philanthropy, we welcome them to the conversation. We never mislead clients. This work is new, it challenges us, and it requires each person to be willing to understand the origins of the need for social justice in multiple contexts, not just one's own. For example, if you work in an American foundation and are funding in India or the

Caribbean, you cannot invest for impact that which you do not understand.

The most challenging aspect of this work requires each of us to reflect on how we, as individuals, might have taken part in or been responsible for rendering injustice. And how we continue to do so. It is a very hard truth to acknowledge, one that applies to individuals of all races, classes and ethnicities. As a Black American woman of some privilege, I too am responsible for rendering harm. Injustice is not just reserved for white people; People of Colour are also culpable.

In 2011, during a speech at Howard University, Washington DC, Dr Cornel West, professor of philosophy and Christian practice at Union Theological Seminary and professor emeritus at Princeton University, provided us with a very thoughtful definition of justice when he stated: “Justice is what love looks like in public.”

When we seek to define, unpack or understand any complicated concepts, we often overwhelm ourselves to the point where we can no longer identify much useful meaning of the word, phrase or idea. I believe, for many, that’s an issue with the concept of social justice.

Now, the formal definition of justice is a “basic respect for people.” The definition of social is “relating to society or its organisation.” Logically, the definition of social justice is thus the distribution of all the critical elements of wellbeing within a society — wealth, political access, opportunities and, ultimately, power. But for some reason when those words are brought together there is often tremendous rejection of what social justice might mean and imply — in no small part because we, as individuals or groups, might lose our existing power.

While I absolutely respect the desire and legitimate need for different words and definitions of social justice, in the United States, the term originates amongst Black America's movement, after legalised slavery and during the Jim Crow era,<sup>6</sup> to gain access to basic human rights to life and safety. Later, this also included social (the right to gather, marry, freely move about without harm), political (the right to vote, peaceful protest, express dissent) and economic (the ability to work at any job, to buy a home) rights for both men and women.

A story I often share when I talk about what justice looks like for an average citizen is the story of my great-grandfather's determination to vote in the US South in the 1930s. Born and raised in Texas, my great-grandfather was fortunate enough to be literate and a working farmer during the Jim Crow era. This was a period in American history during which brutal intimidation tactics, created to prevent Black Americans from any type of social progress, began to fail significantly. As such breakdowns began to be evident in a political construct meant to oppress, white Southerners began to create new tactics to prevent Black Americans from voting. Amongst those tactics were legal tests to which every citizen had to submit to vote, crafted with distinct favouritism toward white citizens' access to well-paid jobs, as well as those benefitting from formal education.

In January of 1936, my great-grandfather paid a day's wages to cast his ballot in Harrison County, Texas. He was fully supported by my great-grandmother, who did not yet have the right to vote but understood that they would need to plan how the family would get along without that money. Exercising the right to vote was that important. When I was

older, my paternal grandmother shared a copy of my great-grandfather's poll tax receipt. I keep it on my wall to this day to understand what it means to have access and opportunity.

I do not need to refer to that event as an act of social justice to understand the significance it would have not only in my grandparents' life, but also in my own father's and later my life, as I continue to seek equity in and through philanthropy.

### **Relinquishing power has real potential**

If we're honest with ourselves, based on the definitions I raised earlier, how many of us really begrudge the principle of another person having a safe place to live, healthy food or a great education for their children? It's the tenets of social justice that raise more challenging questions. Determinations about who decides who has those things and how that can happen, forces us to reflect on issues of gender, class, race and — even more frightening — the likely possibility that we may rightly have to relinquish some level of influence and, quite possibly, power.

For some, giving means losing. Losing a particular lifestyle, access to exclusive spaces, the ability to show we have reached a certain status. Yet for those of us who see our status or access as means to an end — an end to poverty and injustice(!) — it gives us the opportunity to give back to our communities. To leverage our wealth and power not just for our families and our communities, but to a larger vision of the world we want to see.

I believe there is an opportunity to rethink power. I would like to argue that relinquishing it gives you more. It

frees you to acknowledge, accept and foster true innovation. Trusting someone other than yourself can pave the way for creativity and life-altering relationships and solutions.

We are living in a time when we can no longer withstand our ego, our pride and unwillingness to examine that what might be considered risky ideas may just be different ideas. Ideas that may have been generated by people who might not look like you, live in your neighbourhood or attend the same university as you. Ideas not generated in the West or by the white dominant culture in the United States and abroad.

The COVID-19 pandemic gave us an example of the failure to explore solutions and tactics already in practice in countries like Nigeria and Liberia. While the United States and other countries debated whether the average unemployed citizen could be trained in contact tracing, they failed to recognise that our grantee partners in West Africa had already implemented it successfully during the Ebola epidemic that ravaged the country in 2015.

If your goal is real change, how often do you shift your strategies or tactics based on what you hear from the communities in which you are providing funds?

Finally, the practice of justice cannot only be outward facing. It must begin at home, in your office, in your organisation. Practice behaviours that nurture and accelerate social justice at home. Have you explored what values are important to you as an organisation? How do you, as a leader, treat your team? How do you expect your team to treat those with whom they work? How do you expect them to treat external partners? You must begin to create the ecosystem you hope to see in the world within the spaces you manage and the spheres you influence.

As my team and governing board have reflected on the impact of the philanthropic sector over the last two years — both as an organisation and in relation to our grantee partners — we have learnt many lessons about what may need to change. But we were also excited by the realisation that we have an opportunity to build an organisation that speaks firmly to our values. We are making space for our team to take extra time off. We are closing our offices a few times a year to make it clear to our staff that we mean what we say when we tell them to rest. We are thinking about whom we partner with and give our business to, from banking institutions to consultants and clients. And thus far, we have found that some of our colleagues are excited by what we are trying to do internally as an organisation.

As I continue to engage in conversations with colleagues in the sector, I've found that our most difficult challenge is behaviour change. We continue to engage in the same practices but expect different outcomes. In my organisation, we understand that trying to work differently, in a global sector so steeped in history and tradition, is challenging. But it is not at all impossible.

One client with whom we work, a global fashion brand, launched a racial justice fund in 2020. The company had created a private foundation years ago, focused specifically on the advancement of women. However, the US arm of the company felt they could further invest specifically in the work of racial justice. The company began with the right approach. The head of the company was very involved, as were senior members of the company. Additionally, they were very honest about the extent of their internal knowledge of race and equity and giving with a justice lens, so they

sought out the help of our firm to ensure they approached the work in a very authentic and honest way. We were very clear with them about the learning they, as leaders of the company, would have to personally do, and how it would further advance the overarching work of the fund. There were challenges, but nothing unexpected for us. Challenges of how much time they would need to carve out for their own learning around racial justice. Sometimes having to put the fund first, over their primary duties at the company. Understanding different, and sometimes completely foreign, concepts of justice, race and power.

These explorations led to shared understandings that to create lasting and impactful change means investing in smaller, community-based organisations building civic, cultural and political power within their communities. And being honest about how much time they could give to the fund and conversations around trusting our firm to make decisions in their stead. An advisory firm solely led by People of Colour. As we now move into the second year of the fund, the project has been transformational for the organisations with whom they are investing and partnering. Their work has deepened with their grantees; grantee partners have been able to leverage other funding sources, and the employees of the company have also become more engaged in the work of the fund, giving their own time and money to the organisations based in their city.

### **The messy middle of change**

We've spoken about the core tenets of both philanthropy and social justice, but a concept we have not spoken about, which is elemental to the work we want to do, is change.

Change is one of the most complicated concepts in human nature. However, those of us in philanthropy strategise, plan and make decisions as though change is a simple concept. While change is truly inevitable, classes of people often experience change very differently. Those in community who we think of as grantees or grantee partners might experience change as unexpected and oftentimes with no say over how it happens and impacts their own lives, as can occur when public goods or services are deployed. However, those of us in more privileged positional roles, such as philanthropy and social investment, often direct or influence large-scale change. But are we making those decisions with our all communities in mind? Are we considering that we are rarely approaching a problem alone but with others who share the same dream of thriving communities?

The type of changes leading philanthropists seek today are long-term, systemic and powerful. And that type of change might present as frightening. There is a gap between where we currently sit and our desired purpose or outcome, and we have a choice to move beyond any discomfort we might feel because of the change that will come about. One author called it “the messy middle of change”.

However, while the discomfort we might experience during this planning period is not infinite, the potential impact of no action (change) could be devastating for communities.

Be careful that you don't suppress a potentially magnificent outcome because of your personal fears, pessimistic thoughts or even challenges.



## **Creating an ecosystem for social justice**

You cannot create, and more importantly sustain, a successful ecosystem around any concept you do not understand, or a mission and/or vision that has not been collectively agreed upon.

An ecosystem is composed of networks and organisations and the individuals that must navigate and work within. And those individuals must be able to thrive to push the mission and vision of your work forward, as well as sustain the ecosystem created to protect and support your work. To help members thrive, we must be prepared to create an environment in which those individuals can continue their learning, be allowed to operate authentically in their purpose, have clearly defined roles within the community, be able and willing to bring in partners who share the same values and vision of the ecosystem — in this case, work that elevates and magnifies the core tenets of social justice philanthropy.

As we consider the roles needed to build an ecosystem that pushes the work of social justice forward, an amazing tool I have tapped into is the work of the Building Movement Project.<sup>7</sup> In 2018 (revised in 2020), Deepa Iyer, the project's senior director of strategic initiatives, created the Social Change Ecosystem Map. I have found this tool invaluable in helping clients build an internal system that truly supports the tenets of social justice philanthropy. I also appreciate her map because it clearly defines the roles of the individuals within a successful ecosystem and lets them to find a position best suited to their skill. Another impressive advantage is that the tool allows clients to envision what they will have to move and shift in their organisation's structure to achieve the success or impact they seek.

Often, we place the onus on our grantee partners to create and build systems for change and are then confused as to why these systems are not moving change forward at a particular speed or depth. That is unfair and unrealistic. The complex work of social change cannot be done in isolation. It requires donors and change-makers alike to create ecosystems that together can create a real difference.

To test out this theory of community, partnership and accountability, we worked with one client to create and manage a Community of Practice (COP) around giving specifically focused on investments in women and girls of colour. It was designed to help monitor the implementation of the donor's funding strategy, as well as help the foundation maintain a level of accountability as they moved through their investments over the next three years. Additionally, the community helps to build relationships within the donor's ecosystem. Now to be clear, this was a smaller ecosystem created within a larger ecosystem — the larger ecosystem supporting the advancement of women and girls of colour across the country. One of the responsibilities of our client's COP is to maintain a deep and regular connection to the larger network of both donors and grantee partners who shared this same mission and vision for women and girls of colour throughout the United States.

Deciding to create, trust and invest in the COP is a powerful example of inclusive and justice-focused philanthropy. And I want to highlight two words — trust and invest. It's one thing for a foundation to create a body of community members who they say they will trust for advice, but it's another to empower them to implement their ideas. The other word is invest. Our client paid each member of the COP,

because not to would be extractive. As philanthropists, we must move away from taking knowledge and expertise from both grantee partners and community members under the guise of learning. The learning our grantee partners bring to us via their work and their willingness to inform us is highly valuable.

Finally, two outcomes of our work I'll also highlight from the creation of the COP includes sustained relationships which facilitate creative investments, as well as expanding the potential for even more inclusivity as the foundation moved deeper into their long-term commitment to women and girls of colour.

An exciting outcome was the building of close, authentic and sustained relationships. While it was always the intent of the curators of the COP, it was exciting to see the growth of connections between the members of the COP and leaders within the foundation. These relationships enabled the foundation to continue learning and engaging in honest conversations and transparency as they move into the next phases of investments. Additionally, the more time people spent in community, the more they trusted each other. And that trust invites the ability to be more creative and bolder in their thinking and strategising.

The relationships nurtured within the COP were instrumental in engaging the community in self-examination and exploring thoughtful and sustainable expansion. Again, the COP was curated to be inclusive, yet realistically manageable. Now the COP and the foundation hope to expand the community. However, with that expansion, there is also an honesty about the work to be done when welcoming new members into the COP while promoting a cohesive culture

and building trust amongst members. All in an effort to keep a daring agenda for women and girls of colour moving forward.

### **It is time to look within**

“You have to make your peace with the chaos, but you cannot lie.”

A close and trusted colleague in philanthropy, an American white man, reminded me of this quote by Ta-Nehisi Coates from *Between the World and Me* (2015). I was interviewing the man as a potential board member for a nonprofit on whose board I sit, and I asked how he might approach the work of diversity, equity and inclusion amongst the organisation’s trustees. He went on to speak about how no organisation or sector could avoid truth telling.

This is such a powerful quote for those working in social justice. For me, I hear Coates telling his young Black son about the world he will inherit, whether he wants to or not. There is a responsibility he will inherit to hold on to the history of Black Americans, a very complicated and painful one. But he wants him to try and make peace the best way he can so that he can carry on the work of justice.

While we continue to deal with the complexity of global challenges such as climate, democratic practices and economic security (especially amongst women and girls), those of us within institutional, corporate, private and family philanthropy often remain the biggest barrier to actual long-term change and impact. It’s hard to hear this. Because if we are truly honest with ourselves, what may have been thought of as the bad behaviours of the West or Western donors are clear and present in philanthropic practice norms globally. Current reckonings

with racism, classism and other remnants of colonialism have not made things tangibly better. We write statements and manifestos, we create racial and social justice funds, and we hire staff whose sole focus is diversity and inclusion. Yet much of our work remains performative. If we do modify our behaviour, I've found it's often temporary. I cannot tell you how many grants were proposed or interviews I was asked to do around the anniversary of George Floyd's death.

We are not changing our behaviour; we are not doing the hard mirror and root cause transformation work. No matter how many grants you make, or how much money you deploy, you cannot invest for impact in something you do not understand. We must be accountable for acknowledging our role and behaviour as a significant threat to transformative change. People of Colour are absolutely not immune from behaviours of white supremacy and other ideologies of superiority and harm.

We spend a lot of time on advancing a certain type of persona of power or importance in philanthropic giving. Sadly, we are often more devoted to the appearance of rigour than willing to truly dig into the words and processes we so often propel into the world. Yet, the journey of social justice philanthropy requires us to do this work.

### **Focus on the possibilities**

The work of social justice, the reflection it requires, can be exhausting and overwhelming. But there is also a powerful joy in the opportunities, the partnerships, the impact possible when we focus on exciting outcomes for communities, and the potential to shift entire systems.

I cannot tell you there is no power in using terms such as social or racial justice, classism and gender justice. Whether or not you choose to use the terms of the social justice movement, you will be committing to its core tenets. However, being able to name as-yet-unknown dynamics of inclusive wellbeing that can crush and replace systems of oppression and unfairness must always be starting points as we take steps to create environments and ecosystems that truly position us for transformational impact.

I invite you to build or rebuild an ecosystem that focuses on reshaping the role and the potential of philanthropy for social justice pursuits in India. One that sets both the donor and grantee partners up to succeed, and not only with smaller projects.

As we rethink the dynamics, forge an environment aimed at truly breaking down systems of power and unfairness that block all of us from envisioning what catalytic change might look to from everyone's perspective.

May we find ways to invite new voices and actors into the journey. We need innovative and authentic partnerships to deeply understand and then tackle root problems, not silos and band-aids.

Do not focus on what has been done; focus on the possibilities of what it would mean if we truly unleashed our love of humanity.

And always remember to dream.

# 6

## Come Down from That Ivory Tower and Listen

Community participation is critical to decision making that impacts their lives

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A CONVERSATION WITH LUIS MIRANDA

**W**HILE mulling over his decades-long involvement in the social sector, Luis Miranda had a major epiphany.

A former banker and private equity investor, he is currently chairperson at Indian School of Public Policy, CORO and Center for Civil Society, and supports several nonprofits such as Educate Girls, Take Charge, Sunbird Trust and SNEHA. Education, healthcare, leadership development and mentoring are some of the areas he and his wife Fiona Dias Miranda are involved with. “Suddenly, we realised that some of the work we’re doing is to do with social justice, because that’s how you empower people,” says Miranda.

As part of CPID's Philanthropy and Social Justice Conversation Series, Miranda speaks to Urvi Shriram about the importance of including community in decision making, championing unrestricted funding and why, despite the challenges of raising money for social change, he remains optimistic for the future.

**URVI** Luis, you wear so many hats, from private equity to helping nonprofits with capacity building to academics to connecting the dots for amazing social entrepreneurs. What inspires you to do what you're doing now?

**LUIS** It's an interesting journey that I've had, partly because of the people I've met and new opportunities that have come my way. I got into banking, and private equity, by chance — people said, why don't you look at this and I did — and similarly, my involvement in the nonprofit space came from some fortuitous encounters.

When I was thinking about what we're going to talk about today, and how my wife [Fiona Dias Miranda, director at Seeds of Awareness and 17000 ft Foundation] and I ended up in this area of social justice, it was just by accident. It wasn't something that we consciously said we got to work on. We looked at education, healthcare, leadership development and mentoring, and suddenly we realised that some of the work we're doing is actually to do with social justice because that's how you empower people.

**URVI** Over the course of this series, we've realised that the definitions and practices of philanthropy for social justice are very contested, globally. Holding conversations such as



this one, we've been trying to identify a family of practices through secondary research. Given your experience as a philanthropist and as someone working directly with the marginalised communities, what in your opinion are the key elements to create a strong framework?

**LUIS** I've learnt so much about social justice issues from the organisations that we've been involved with. One of them is CORO, set up around 30 years ago in Mumbai. It started off as an organisation teaching adult literacy; over the last three decades, it has evolved and today we primarily run grassroots leadership development programs with specialised verticals looking at the rights of single women, promoting constitution values, creating water access for people in drought-affected areas, etc.

CORO offers one-year fellowships; over the last 12 years, we've trained over 1,300 fellows. Almost 70% of them are from backward communities, 70% are women and a little over 40% haven't studied past secondary school,<sup>1</sup> and yet the way they look at programs and have been able to address issues is just terrific.

We have been taught that there is this ivory tower from where all the wisdom flows and everyone imbibes that. What I've learnt from CORO, however, is that listening to the community is critical to decision making that impacts their lives. Through CORO, and the work done by our phenomenal collaborators, I've learnt so much about issues and real-world challenges facing the communities we work in.

Let me give you an example from the time of COVID-19. Firstly, CORO is not a relief organisation; our area of work is grassroots leadership development. However, we realised that

people don't have jobs or food, the pandemic had intensified violence against women ... the world had turned upside down. The team said, let's redirect our focus and suddenly we became this large relief organisation. It gave us a huge amount of purpose for a year or so and energised the team in this challenging period.

Similarly, at the Center for Civil Society, an organisation which I currently chair, we run a School Choice Campaign.

I recall how Parth Shah, who started this campaign, was in a panel discussion on the Right to Education many years ago. School vouchers, school choice, etc., were options under debate. A joint secretary (JS) on the panel said, poor people do not know how to make decisions about their children's education, so the government has to do it for them. Parth asked him what school he had attended, and the JS mentioned a fancy public school. Why did you go there, Parth queried, and the JS said that his parents had decided for him. How did your parents make that decision, Parth wanted to know. The JS said they talked to their friends. Parth countered, "That's exactly what the poor do; they talk to their friends, and to other people. The decision-making process of the poor is the same."

So, I think the first lesson I've learnt is the importance of really listening to people. It's not about us sitting at the trustee meetings and discussing what needs to get done. The sad part — and this is interesting — we have very few people from the community on our managing committees. At a meeting just yesterday, we said that by the next meeting, we've got to fix that because otherwise we're not practicing what we preach.

Two, know that it's an evolving world; there's no black-

and-white. Recently, I connected with Vijay Raghavan, a professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences who runs an organisation called Prayas, which helps jail inmates reintegrate into their communities. Honestly, until six or seven years ago, I never even thought about this issue but the work being done by Prayas showed me that there are no bad people, only bad actions. Those inmates had done their time and they deserved a second chance. Then, I got introduced to Maja Daruwala, editor of the India Justice Report, which tracks how justice is being served across states.

These are the type of organisations Fiona and I have recently got involved with, in a small way. Now, the challenge that many of them face is that it's difficult to raise money because donors believe, probably mistakenly, that it will not make the government happy. So, it requires funders to take a stand and say, yes, we will do it.

Of course, there are some unethical nonprofit organisations in this space that fudge data, and don't do proper reporting, and they deserve to be penalised. But there are many doing good work.

How can you be true to a cause when fundraising is a challenge? It requires people to step up.

**URVI** Can philanthropic practices embed a social justice lens without having to completely challenge the status quo?

**LUIS** There is a lot of inequality in the world, and a lot of authors and politicians have talked about why that is bad. I personally don't think inequality per se is bad. The question to ask is, what type of inequality? If someone is rich and came by that money honestly and ethically, that's perfectly fine.

Years ago, I read *On Inequality* by Harry G Frankfurt, a professor of philosophy emeritus at Princeton University. In the book, which was just fascinating, Frankfurt argues that economic inequality is not morally objectionable or evil. What is evil is the fact that today there are so many people living in abject poverty. If we focus on the view that inequality is bad, then we're just focusing on taxing the rich and taking money away from them. And we do not focus on taking the poor out of poverty, which is more difficult to fix. Inequality is bad only if it leads to inequality of opportunity.

The second thing that I've learnt is that the best way to take people out of poverty is through economic development. "A rising tide lifts all boats," the saying goes. Today, we're seeing so much unrest in the world. Look at what happened in Sri Lanka. When there is a struggle to meet basic needs, you will see social change. Think about the Arab Spring; people were fed up. So, politicians and rich people must understand that while economic inequality is not bad, conspicuous consumption is dangerous; it upsets people when they see people in fancy cars or fancy buildings, even as they starve. You can't ignore the fact that there are so many poor people and there is inequality of opportunity. That's when people will rise and challenge the establishment.

So, one of the reasons why you must care about social justice is because one day, it may lead to your downfall.

Because what is social justice at the end of the day? It's about equity, access, participation and rights people should have. If denied, they are bound to protest.

The main challenge, therefore, is can we reduce poverty. China has done the best job in recent times. There are many issues with social justice over there, but at least people have been lifted out of poverty like we've never seen in history before.

**URVI** The civil society sector is thriving, yet nonprofits are struggling to become financially resilient. It would be great to know your thoughts on what can be done to change mindsets and practices to build a long-term partnership between funders and NGOs.

**LUIS** Previously, a lot of the money for social justice causes came from overseas, but from what we're seeing, we cannot continue to rely on that going forward. We need to build a base of domestic donors and investors.

When my wife and I started on this journey, a lot of our money went towards requests for specific projects. That was until we realised that these organisations were struggling financially. Some of them were run by smart people who know how to conserve and manage money, so why were we placing restrictions on what they do with the money that we give them?

Today — I don't have the exact number — I'd say at least 90% of the money we give is unrestricted.

I feel it's important to reiterate that, again, this was something we learnt along the way. When we first started, if someone had suggested this to us, I don't know how we would have responded.

My wife and I are a part of a couple of organisations where people pool money to give. Some time ago, we had a couple of people come and talk to one of these groups about unrestricted giving. Everyone who attended said they agreed. But when I suggested that going forward we all should commit that at least 75% of what we individually give should be unrestricted, I got a lot of pushback. This made me realise there's a disconnect between what people say and what they actually do. So, we have to keep pushing these ideas.

Everyone starts with the assumption that you can't trust nonprofits and I think that's stupid. You trust the companies that you invest in, and look at the number of frauds that happen in the corporate and government world. There are some amazing people working in nonprofits, and the trustees of these organisations can also ensure that corporate governance standards are fulfilled. They are working with some fabulous donors. So we should stop talking about poor governance as a reason to not donate to the nonprofit sector.

**URVI** Worldwide, we're seeing the trend of new funders or first-time givers doing some fabulous work to tackle the root causes of problems and systemic issues. Do you anticipate this generational shift in philanthropy in India? What would be your advice to the first-time givers?

**LUIS** So, the quick answer is yes, I do see a new generation of philanthropists coming in. How can they learn to navigate the sector? I should think the same way we did. While Fiona has had grassroots-level connections for a long time, the corporate world I inhabit has always been at a distance from this. So, I've had to learn through conversations; I don't see why tech entrepreneurs and others can't do the same too.

Exposure and awareness are critical for anyone starting their giving journey. I learnt that from Ravi Sreedharan [ISDM president]. At one of the ISDM graduation ceremonies that I attended he told students to "hang out with people who are different from you". That's so important, for us to get out of that echo chamber that we all live in. That is part of social justice. I've discovered so much about the importance of inclusion and the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community

from my children. At CORO, I've been castigated for using words like "donors" and "beneficiaries" instead of "partners".

Lastly, always remember that it's not only that you are helping communities; it's a two-way process. At CORO, we are talking to one of the large corporates in the country to understand how our community can help the staff develop empathy and manage the aspirations of staff from Tier 3 and 4 towns. We'll see how we can run training programs with this organisation.

When I hear someone from a privileged school background say, "Oh, we're going to go and help the poor," I get irritated. That attitude must change. Help goes both ways and understanding that is how you make a better world. Figure out how that poor kid can help you become a better version of yourself, is what is equally important.

**URVI** How do you see philanthropy and the philanthropic ecosystem evolve and embed some of these things that we've been talking about, let's say, five to ten years from now?

**LUIS** When I quit full-time work in 2010 and asked myself what I would do with my time, I chose to be in education (because all of us say, "we need to improve the quality of education!"). But what's the purpose of education? It's to improve the lives of people. It's about social justice. We need to look at our interventions through that lens. I mean, we just emerged from a global pandemic and have understood that spending on healthcare is essential to preserve society.

Now, I'm not going to try to take money away from helping people in jail or poor communities, but I'm saying that it is important to keep asking how philanthropy is

really changing the lives of people. There have been times when I've left a board because I've felt the organisation was too focused on the wrong metrics. I always ask, how are we changing the lives of people? Because that's what we're all here to do, really. There's no point — or there's less point — in educating someone if they can't then use that education to improve their lives.

I'm actually very optimistic that there will be a lot more funding going into social justice causes because of awareness created by CPID-ISDM and others on this topic. I think it's just wonderful that you have started this, and I hope we can make this a better world for our children and their children.



# 7

## Small Acts Can Make a Big Impact Too

Various approaches and forms of philanthropy can cohabit in a mutually respectful and supportive manner

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DR RAJESH TANDON

**G**ROWING up in a joint family in the city of Kanpur, certain habits were inculcated amongst all children. One of these was savings in a gullak (Hindi for earthen money box). These savings, in paisas, were essentially made from gifts given by visiting relatives or on certain festivals and, occasionally, the loose change pocketed when we were sent to the shops. Every now and then, we were asked to break our gullak — it was the only way to take the money out — and share some of those savings with certain “causes” supported by our family of teachers. Two of the most prominent ones I remember donating to were a local orphanage (where

my mother served on a managing committee) and cultural activities organised in our neighbourhood between Dussehra and Diwali, or Sankranti and Shivratri (two periods — October and February/March — roughly coinciding with autumn and spring seasons in North India).

Little did I realise that this practice will be called charitable giving or philanthropy!

Even back then, many families like ours supported the schooling of children whose parents were providing various services to the family. Organising sports competitions and festivals by collecting donations (chanda) was very common then; it is still a popular practice in North India for Ramlila (and Pujo in Bengal). Wrestling competitions (kushti dangal) with prizes are still organised through donations. Just the other day, a Dahi Handi festival in Mumbai was put up with such funds, including massive prize monies amounting to lakhs of rupees!

This type of giving — of time, skills and monetary contributions, including assets — has been an integral part of Indian society. All religions born and practiced in the Indian subcontinent encourage giving for the wellbeing of the needy. From feeding birds and animals to pyayu, a custom in North India (providing drinking water to passers-by), these are universal practices of giving, much of which is second nature to us. These practices of contributing to the wellbeing of others, a larger societal good, were part of the socialisation of growing up in this region.

In every religion, contribution to society is mandatory for its followers. The concept of dana (voluntary giving) has been the cornerstone of the spirit of volunteerism in India. A noteworthy feature of all major religions has

been the emphasis they placed on charity and sharing of wealth with others, especially the poor and the needy. In all probability, it is the persistence of the above preaching flowing from generations that the psyche of an average Indian has been completely ingrained with the concept of benevolence. Most think that God loves those who feed the hungry and those who give their clothes to the needy.<sup>1</sup>

In pre-Independence India, Mahatma Gandhi called upon citizens and the business community to support constructive social work practices to encourage mobilisation of volunteers for the freedom struggle against the British empire. Their support was critical, but it also left many of those businessmen and their enterprises vulnerable to “imperial” harassment and regulation.

This practice of business community members giving back for the benefit of society and helping the needy continues even today.

## **PART I: 25 years of philanthropy for nation building**

During the first 25 years of freedom (1947-72), philanthropic activities continued along the same lines as before Independence. Local giving for immediate and visible causes remained popular. Donation for religious causes, an age-old practice, was a favoured custom during this period too. Construction of temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras was done through charitable giving. In the event of droughts or floods, concerted efforts were made to reach out and mobilise donors. At the time, the channels of contributing towards relief were primarily controlled by the government. I recall how even children were asked to “break their gullaks”

when the then Prime Minister(s) appealed for support during 1962 war with China and 1965 war with Pakistan.

Another stream of charitable giving at that time comprised of support for the hundreds of Gandhian institutions set up across the country during the Freedom Movement. Several such institutions received support from the local business community. Two important public agencies created post-Independence acted as supporters of such local initiatives in that period. In 1953, there was the Central Social Welfare Board to support local efforts in institutionalised care to the needy and “destitutes” — orphans, abandoned women, street children, etc. (Later, state boards were also set up.) Then in 1957, the Khadi and Village Industries Corporation was set up as an independent entity to provide access to credit and act as markets for village industries that had sprung up during the Freedom Movement.

Both these agencies were instituted by the then national government in the belief that local philanthropic efforts for such charitable causes could be strengthened with additional inputs.

The more formally organised “voluntary development” sector (as it was called then) emerged in the second 25-year period after Independence (1972-97).

It may seem as though global giving to causes in India began during this period. But, throughout the Freedom Movement, donors from around the world also supported the nation’s struggles. Education and health programs established by missionaries in India were recipients of foreign aid ever since the subcontinent was colonised (a practice followed in other regions under the British rule as well).

## **PART II: 25 years of formalising giving**

By the mid-1970s, the sociopolitical scenario in India and abroad had changed.

Drought and famine in Bihar (1966-67) preceded a tropical cyclone that devastated coastal Odisha and Andhra Pradesh (1977). The Indo-Pak War of 1971 was followed by the birth of Bangladesh. Soon after, Gandhian socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) launched the Total Revolution movement for social transformation (1974); then came the declaration of Emergency in India (1975).

Subsequently, a widespread unrest in the country due to inability of the government to tackle the problems of general masses resulted in imposition of an Emergency with severe restrictions on the functioning of the nonprofit sector, which was looked upon by the then government with particular suspicion. The post-Emergency phase saw a significant thrust in nonprofit activities, when a large number of development NGOs, founded by young, educated sections of the society, sprung up with the avowed aim of supplementing the development efforts of the country, mostly supported by government funds. Availability of foreign funds since about the same time gave a further boost to the sector, which seems to have grown enormously in the last two decades.<sup>2</sup>

The promise of Independence — eradication of illiteracy, poverty and exploitation — was nowhere close to being realised. Many young people, educated in independent India and concerned about the uneven development of society, were drawn to a newly emerging space of charitable activity, a formalised philanthropy. Their focus was on issues

of literacy/education, primary/women's health, agriculture/rural livelihoods and Tribal development. These new entities (legally incorporated as "society" and "trust") began to invite somewhat more "systematic donations" from government, private and international sources.

This era also coincided with the rise of the international development "industry". Bilateral and multilateral development assistance, international agenda-setting conferences of the United Nations (UN) and World Bank systems became arenas for development discourses; and new development actors — variously called village development organisations (VDOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc. — now labelled as "civil society" began to emerge in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as well as "developing" countries. A small proportion of international development assistance began to be routed through international NGOs, and their developing country counterparts.

In countries like India, a new generation of independent development actors were creating innovative solutions to practical challenges faced by excluded and marginalised communities. Much of this had the nature of research and development (R&D) and needed flexible resource support. Several government ministries and agencies — Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Rural Development, etc. — and flexible international philanthropy (mostly through well established foundations like Ford, Rockefeller, MacArthur, etc.) were partnering with these new generation development actors on an ongoing basis to support such innovations. It is no surprise then that a large

number of public policies emerged out of such R&D efforts by independent development actors and ongoing partnerships with government agencies.

The growing visibility of NGOs provoked a series of associated responses. Major international and national development agencies, planners, ideologists and theoreticians had to deal with the NGOs, their roles, positions, behaviours and dynamics — a phenomenon largely missing a decade ago. Most bilateral agencies engaged in providing development aid have started including NGOs in their framework. The same can be said for multilateral institutions and, in recent years, by such bodies as the World Bank. National governments through the length and breadth of the world, have had to deal with the growing visibility of NGOs, in varying degrees.<sup>3</sup>

Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)<sup>4</sup> itself is a product of this era and part of this phenomenon. Demonstrating the sustainable impact of community participation in development programs, PRIA was instrumental in influencing public policies and programs, from social forestry, watershed development, primary education, women's empowerment to mainstream systems, structures and processes of participation. Flexible resources enabled PRIA to experiment, pilot, demonstrate and then influence public agencies, both national and international, from the mid-1980s onwards.

For example, a component of the scheme or program is implemented by NGOs and certain funds made available in the official development assistance (ODA) are provided to them by the Government of India ... for example, the Dutch government has given a portion of its ODA to

Dutch NGOs (like Cordaid) which in turn finances the programs of southern NGOs (like PRIA in India).<sup>5</sup>

This flexibility to combine public and private resources supported PRIA's nationwide (and Pan-Commonwealth) program entitled "Governance Where People Matter" taking advantage of new constitutional provisions of panchayati raj institutions (PRIs). With funding support from the Government of India, Ford Foundation, Cordaid, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), PRIA mobilised nearly 3,000 other NGOs in 27 Indian states to support the development of newly established PRIs.

From structured capacity building workshops for elected representatives of these new bodies to massive awareness campaigns involving community-based organisations (Gram Sabha Mobilisation and Voter Awareness), to participatory research studies and analysis — all efforts were aimed at strengthening both the "demand" and "supply" sides of the local institutions. This meant developing voices from below as well as advocating for strengthening the institutional capacity of these local bodies and representatives to deliver the goods.<sup>6</sup>

### **PART III: 25 years of supply overshadowing demand**

The third phase since Independence — 1997 till present — has witnessed the establishment of a formalised domestic philanthropy.

New generations of entrepreneurial Indians successfully created surplus personal wealth in a "new" global economy driven by the information technology (IT) sector. New forms



of formal philanthropic structures have since emerged, led by this set of Indians based both in India and abroad (mostly from the United States). New international foundations (again, primarily US-based) like Gates, Dell, Omidyar et al., entered the philanthropic “industry” in the country. The movement towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) gained traction nearly 15 years ago; after it became a legal mandate for companies in 2013, CSR has helped mobilise substantial new resources for the philanthropic sector of late.

The transformative potential of mandatory CSR is not limited to the list of activities in Schedule VII of the Act. Its real transformative potential lies in the board of a company to formulate a focused and result-oriented policy for CSR, which is based on a systematic analysis of challenges and gaps in socioeconomic development of the country. Its real potential can be harnessed when the board-led CSR policy of a company aligns its CSR activities to nurturing long-term business environment in the region or country that promotes sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic development for all.<sup>7</sup>

Owing to these two factors, the dominant discourse in philanthropy in India today is about scale and impact. Pre-designed packages of “investments” are available for going to scale; essentially, however, they measure coverage in the short run. The language of present-day philanthropy has changed to adopt corporate lexicon, systems and practices as a new generation of philanthropists (with success in commercial enterprise behind them) are increasingly hands-on. These “corporate-style” practices have adopted the funding instruments created by large international bilateral and

multilateral donors in the previous era ... and are now firm believers in the “God of Logframe!”

This style of formally organised, large-scale philanthropy is driving many civil society actors to become primarily “service providers” in a rapidly privatising neo-liberal policy environment. Following deliberate action by the government, most basic services — education, health, water, sanitation, waste disposal, financial inclusion, skilling, etc. — are being turned over to private service providers.<sup>8</sup> Hence, for these commercial enterprises, an association with nonprofit organisations perhaps ensures difficult-to-reach *customers* (not citizens) in far-flung rural and Tribal areas.

This focus on the “supply-side” of development by large-scale formal philanthropy agencies in India today has shifted support away from “demand-side” interventions — awareness-generation, social mobilisation, community organisation, bottom-up knowledge and the voice of millions who have become increasingly marginalised. Even the most meagre philanthropic resources are unavailable for efforts that generate feedback from below, for new innovations and for advocacy to adapt national programs for contextual differences and diverse needs; this push for a one-size-fits-all approach has only resulted in a waste of resources. Civil society actions towards holding suppliers of services and governance institutions and actors accountable to citizens have been largely disappearing.

In PRIA’s own experience, the scale of mobilisation for inclusive and accountable urban governance attempted since 2011 or so has not been possible, largely because flexible philanthropic resources have not been available for both demand and supply-side interventions by civil society. The nationwide civil society mobilisation to make PRIA effective

(by focusing on both demand and supply-side interventions) that was gathering momentum between 1998-2005 could not be realised when it came to municipal governance and implementation of provisions of 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment (which grants the decentralisation of powers and authorities to the municipal bodies at different levels). The disappointing performance of urban local bodies during the pandemic, and consequent large-scale exodus of migrant workers from cities, only illustrates the lack of investment in strengthening systems of inclusive urban governance in the country till date.

Yet, the pandemic also shone the spotlight on the almost-invisible, small-scale, locally-rooted practices of philanthropy, a tradition described earlier in this essay. Neighbours provided food to residents of informal settlements, volunteers provided medicines to sick families, local animators in far-flung villages translated and disseminated COVID-19 standard precautions and government directives (mostly provided by national government in English through digital platforms). Migrant workers and their families were provided with shoes, water and food as they walked home in the summer heat. Local gurudwaras, temples, mosques and churches offered shelter and food to the needy, and able-bodied middle-class citizens drove sick people to hospitals in their own cars. Volunteers ferried oxygen cylinders to clinics, hospitals and people's homes; local youth organised village quarantine facilities for returning families and workers.

The rise of everyday philanthropy was as momentous, spontaneous and widespread as the COVID-19 infections in India!

## Back to the future

These every day, hyper-local, small-scale, family-driven philanthropic efforts are not a part of the national and international discourse on philanthropy. Their stories do not attract attention of policymakers and the media. They remain invisible, informal, below the radar! Yet they are widespread and effective.

The first and only nationwide survey of the nonprofit sector conducted nearly 20 years ago captured this essence of everyday giving in this country. “Nearly 40% of all households give for charitable causes; two-thirds of all givers live in rural areas; two-fifths of all giving households belong to poor households (annual income below ₹25,000); two-fifths of all giving households had education only up to primary levels.”<sup>9</sup>

This trend of household giving received a new impetus during the recent pandemic, as evidenced by the many media reports from all corners of the country.

Whither will Indian philanthropy go in the future?

It is important to acknowledge diversity of practices and forms of philanthropic giving, from everyday charity to fellow citizens to large-scale investments in service provision. The essential challenge for all philanthropy is to link it to the giver’s vision of a desirable future for the community, a sort of “good society”. How does that vision get articulated?

As the momentum for formally organised, large-scale philanthropy gathers speed in the country over the coming years, it may be useful to think about issues raised in a thoughtfully reflective interview by one of these philanthropic leaders in the country.<sup>10</sup>

The cultural and historical roots of everyday philanthropy

in India needs as much encouragement, visibility and enabling ecosystem as is being demanded by and provided for the large-scale formalised philanthropic investments. Recognising and valuing this diversity will make philanthropy more sustainable in the years ahead.

# 8

## The Secret to Sustainability Success? Broad-based Governance

If you want to truly scale up movements, you must ensure that they are participatory

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A CONVERSATION WITH AMIT CHANDRA

**A**S co-founder of the ATE Chandra Foundation and member of several philanthropy boards, Amit Chandra calls himself an optimist with a hands-on approach.

He believes philanthropy does have a role to play in addressing social justice issues. “There are inequalities and that means a lot of people get left behind. To simply say trickle-down economics will take care of them ... well, it will not,” says Chandra, who was on *Forbes* magazine’s Asia’s Heroes of Philanthropy list in 2016 along with his wife Archana.

In an interview with Urvi Shriram for CPID’s Philanthropy and Social Justice Conversation Series, Chandra discusses how

flexible goal setting can help your philanthropy, promoting broad-based governance and his predictions for where philanthropy is headed.

**URVI** I wanted to begin by asking you, what is your vision of success as a philanthropist and how is your philanthropy working to address the issues that you care about the most? We would love to hear any examples of what has worked well, and what has not.

**AMIT** A lot of questions in that question! While we have always had targets, they are constantly moving. And that's been a part of our journey, I would say, over the last 20 years. I think — and this is very important — if we had stuck to the targets that we had set for ourselves when we started this journey, we would've really sold ourselves short.

Our vision has also changed as we have had both failures and successes. I wouldn't call myself a visionary; I'm much more a person who learns by doing things and seeing what works, by observing what's working (and not working) for others, by embracing both joy and sorrow. I spend a lot of time in the field, and that shapes a lot of what we do and how we do it. Therefore, the choices — be it the verticals we support or the approaches we take — have changed based on our experiences, observations and learnings.

When it came to bringing ideas to life, there was one point in time when our choice of verticals was very wide. Then my wife [Archana Chandra, CEO of Jai Vakeel Foundation], who is much wiser than me, told me that what I do on boards of companies is something that I should practice in the social sector. That is focus. And so, gradually, we decided to get a lot more focused.

Given that we were spending a lot of time in the social sector and were amongst maybe a handful of philanthropists who were delving deeper into issues, I felt that it was important for us to concentrate on the underserved areas. Consequently, over the years, we steered away from areas like education and health, even though they were verticals of great action for us. We started focusing a lot more on rural development, for example. Archana is, of course, deeply involved with mental disabilities advocacy. Her experience running a foundation [Jai Vakeel], and mine sitting on company boards, made us recalibrate our horizontal choices as well. We realised there was a lack of emphasis on capacity building in the social sector. So, over the years, we began focusing on that for the whole philanthropic ecosystem and I would say we are now amongst the two or three largest players in this field.

In terms of both verticals and horizontals, our choices have evolved. Even the way we spend our time, and our money, too. I think we do things very differently now than we used to early on in our journey. We will probably continue to make mistakes, as we go along, and keep changing our approach.

**URVI** Coming back to a point you made earlier, about concentrating on underserved areas — global inequality statistics point to how unequally distributed is the chance to live a healthy long life, even in modest prosperity. And the people who've been historically pushed to the margins of their societies — migrants, people with disabilities, people from certain castes, tribes, etc. — face the brunt of those inequalities. But we keep seeing that funding priorities hardly ever take these multiple inequalities and the deeply entrenched issues into account. How do you think Indian philanthropy can shift to giving that really puts justice at its core?



**AMIT** It's a very important question and while I believe that philanthropy has some role to play in this, I don't think it is the only answer to it. But that does not mean philanthropy should not focus on the issue of inequalities.

I do believe — and this is a personal view, one that my wife and I both hold — that the wealth that we are blessed with is a result of the nurturing society that surrounds us. Having a little bit beyond what is needed to lead a certain kind of a lifestyle is somewhat unnecessary; it is our responsibility, then, to use it in a way that can impact as many lives as possible.

Now, as philanthropists, we believe that the best way to accomplish that is to do two things. One, is to play in spaces where the government does not play because the government cannot reach everyone through its social programs. So, there are lots of gaps that exist, and I think someone must fill them. Because, as you rightly pointed out, there are inequalities and that means a lot of people get left behind. To simply say trickle-down economics will take care of them ... well, it will not. So, I think that is one role of philanthropy.

I think another role of philanthropy, and one where we are very active, is to show what's a better mousetrap for social spending and to work collaboratively with the government to improve the quality and the delivery of benefits. Now, whatever we do as philanthropists will be massively dwarfed by public spending. It has always been so, you know. But the government cannot do a lot of things. It cannot take risks or be entrepreneurial or do certain things as part of its programs. I believe that it's the responsibility of philanthropists to come in and play in those areas, and then to improve the quality of social spending, be it in education, health,

etc.; they should forge partnerships with the government, as opposed to doing exactly what the government is doing. There's no point in trying to run a school exactly the way the government does, but it's important to develop a tool that can be transferred into government schools. The risk of failure may be high, but to succeed is great; you can then partner with the government to ensure that the tool is adapted. The same can be done for healthcare, etc.

So, I personally feel that it is the role of philanthropy — to take high risks, ensure success and to build partnerships.

Part of the problem is that every philanthropist wants to run their own initiative, their own non-governmental organisation (NGO). We don't work in a collaborative manner to forge partnerships and address matters that are far bigger than the business issues that we address; far bigger, stickier, difficult problems that we trivialize instead. But, if we got together to try and solve these problems, made sure that the government is equipped to handle them, then I think we will actually see social change.

And then the third issue in all of this, going back to your question is, of course, how much capital — human and financial — are we going to put to work addressing some of these issues?

We have huge expectations from the government to tackle all these problems and they are not being addressed, right? On the other hand, the amount of wealth that exists in the world is just staggering, and it's not being used. *It's basically just lying there.* And we know, in most of these cases, even if that wealth is squandered, three generations won't be able to go through it.

So, the question is, how can some of that wealth be

used productively to solve issues that are relevant during our lifetime? Now, before things on this planet become irreversible, whether it's climate change or other causes. Right? So, I think that again is a separate issue, which is how to bring urgency to addressing issues that we see every day around us, but are doing nothing about, focusing instead on simply creating wealth. This is an important conversation to be had, for philanthropists amongst others.

**URVI** We're seeing a massive intergenerational wealth transfer happening everywhere, but more so in India. And that will probably lead to significant increases in family philanthropy under the guidance of younger members who may take a different approach. Do you think, through their philanthropy, they can play a catalytic role in improving the structures, institutions and systems in our country? What would be your advice to them?

**AMIT** If you spend time in the social sector, you either become a cynic or optimist. I'm an optimist; I do land up interacting a lot with youngsters and see a great deal of hope amongst people of that generation as compared to mine.

My generation has had this quest for extraordinary wealth creation and the mechanisms we've chosen to achieve that have probably screwed up the planet in irreversible ways. I see a lot more interest in the next generation, and the one after that, in trying to act responsibly. Of course, intent is one thing; we will have to wait and see what their course of action will be when that wealth (which in many cases, is inherited) comes into their hands.

An encouraging trend, however, is that first-generation

wealth creators appear far more mindful about their fortune and generous in how they want to use it. This began with the IT wealth creation in the country and has spiked even further with venture capital funding. Entrepreneurs and founders of knowledge-based enterprises are unsimilar to those with inherited wealth and think differently about society. There's clearly hope because India is becoming a more entrepreneurial society.

**URVI** We are also seeing that the role of philanthropy, and the power that it holds, is increasingly being challenged across the world. Movements like #ShiftThePower, proximate philanthropy, decolonising philanthropy, etc., all essentially point to the importance of giving power to the people who are closest to the problems and letting them advocate for themselves.

The prevailing donor-centric model, however, perpetuates the dynamic of the haves and have-nots. So, how do you feel philanthropy can encourage power sharing? How do you practice that in your own work with the communities that you support?

**AMIT** Over time spent in the sector, you realise that it's very tough to scale something, anything grassroots, unless you involve the community. I'll give you an example — one of the flagship programs we run is probably one of the largest water schemes for rural India, and it's a completely participatory model, which is driven by the community. I can tell you without a doubt, if it was a top-down model, it would not work. We recognised this very early on, and so the design principles are bottom-up with top-down support offered to the community and NGOs who are working with them.

This was a big realisation that we had; water has been a pressing issue for decades and people have tried all kinds of interventions. Ours scaled this year and has been implemented in 1,200 villages across seven states. If all goes well, next year we hope to be in double the number of states and maybe 5,000-10,000 villages.

If you want to truly scale up movements, you must ensure that they are participatory. I also think that's true about the institutions that we have built. If you really want them to be sustainable, then you need broad-based governance. You cannot seek to control them. So, every institution that we have been a part of, we made sure that we do not control it in any way, that no one person dictates things. Ashoka University [Chandra is a founder] has a very broad-based governance structure; no single donor, irrespective of their contribution, dominates it. In fact, if you take a closer look at the governance, members are rotating out of it — I stepped down after a very long tenure. That doesn't mean you don't continue to support it. This broad-based principle of governance is actually very important.

This is true for other establishments that we've helped as well. We don't sit on the boards of any of the institutions that we've supported, and at this point, we have about 15 partners. We don't sit on any of their boards, and we don't control any of their evidence. These are all partner-oriented models.

Making sure that you have trust in the people that you work with, and that they're deeply rooted in their communities, is very important to us. It doesn't always work, but that doesn't mean you don't do it.

**URVI** Participatory processes may not be a silver bullet solution, but there are probably other practices that funders can embrace. For example, multiyear funds or unrestricted giving.

**AMIT** We learnt this the hard way. Three years ago, we asked our partners (I am maniacal about not calling our partners NGOs) what is right, and wrong, about our engagement with them. They said: you ask us to think long term but give us annual grants. How can we plan ahead? So, we said okay, we will sign multiyear memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with you. We have now a three-year grant cycle. It meant changing the way we work — we had to add three years of expenses to our balance sheet to be able to give them the comfort of knowing that we have the money, so you will have it too.

**URVI** I think it's all about building trust and fully backing those partnerships, yes. And while on the topic of investment, we've been talking to people from donors down to the grassroots level and realising philanthropists and organisations are reluctant to support causes like human rights, gender equality, etc., as they are considered "political". What do you feel are the apprehensions or barriers that are stopping people from taking more risks with their philanthropic capital and what can be done at an ecosystem level to deal with these challenges?

**AMIT** We've actually done work in gender inequality and we continue to associate with a whole bunch of organisations in that space; we work very closely with CORO which is one of the best-in-class programs; we run a fellowship program with them.

While I see no reason why philanthropists should not venture into these areas, I can see why they hesitate to engage with organisations that, in some instances, are activist. I think it's a question of risk appetite. A lot depends on whether you feel that the risk is too much because you are vulnerable to backlash. I think that's a personal call and each person must make that assessment for themselves.

But by and large, I think people should work in areas that they're deeply passionate about. You know, we've chosen our verticals and we work with CORO mainly in the area of capacity building. We also collaborate with Vidhi [Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy] on a program for gender.

People should make these choices; I don't think they should simply say that because there's a risk, I won't work in this space. I think it also depends on the organisation's behaviour: are they simply being antagonistic? Or are they saying things because they generally care and are making their point in a mature way? That needs to be taken into account as well.

**URVI** What do you feel will be the role of philanthropy, let's say five to 10 years from now? How do you see the sector evolving?

**AMIT** I think we have already seen the sector change a lot over the last five to 10 years; the one good thing I have seen is domestic philanthropy is stepping up. And that may have happened because Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) has been tightened. But to my mind, it should have happened in any event. I mean, given the amount of wealth that exists in our country, we should be able to take responsibility for solving our own problems.

The trend that I hope to see is far greater engagement from not just wealth creators at the top, but also people who can give time at the bottom to understand the issues and find solutions. That is one thing; the second is a maturing approach to how these problems are to be solved. I think there was a lot of cheque writing and board display that was happening earlier; now, you're beginning to see people thinking a lot more about impact and driving sustainable change. They are contemplating exit strategies for when they've solved the problem and are ready to move on to something else. I think we will see a lot more of that.

We'll also see creation of new platforms and more collaborations. We already have examples of some collaborators in the country during the COVID-19 phase. We saw Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator coming together and doing a fabulous job. Ashoka, Pay-What-It-Takes, GROW Fund ... all examples of very good collaborators. I think we will see a lot more.

We'll also see people work much more closely with the government, not to simply supplement their work but to do things in a manner that makes a lot more sense. People will invest more in knowledge research and intellectual property to help drive change. I think there will be a big pivot in the next five to 10 years after what seemed like a long period where people were doing things in a very incremental way.



# 9

## A Win-Win Connection

Philanthropy can advance social justice by supporting entrepreneurs, their enterprises and their environments

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JOHN E TYLER III

**W**HAT is the first thought that comes to mind when you think about entrepreneurship?

Private, business sector, would be my guess and it's quite understandable. On further reflection, you may consider the role — both favourable and unfavourable — that government policies play in the development of entrepreneurship. More deliberation may lead you to the connection between business and philanthropic funds; a company that created wealth from which charitable giving could emerge was built by an entrepreneur.

Though the latter is rarely given thought to, the possibilities of collaboration are endless; philanthropists can effectively support entrepreneurial activity by aligning some part(s) of

their mission and programmatic efforts to entrepreneurship in the private, business sector.

Even less often considered is that this engagement can pursue social justice. (For purposes of this essay, I do not mean mission-related or “impact” investing of endowment money. Here, I focus on using programmatic, exclusively charitable, mission-centric funds in ways that support entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship and, in so doing, advance social justice.)

The first part of this essay considers how entrepreneurship activity can connect to social justice. Part two presents various strategies and tactics by which foundations and philanthropy can pursue entrepreneurship agendas as programmatic priorities, both as an end unto itself and as a means to other mission ends — all consistent with regulatory mandates (at least in the United States) that require charity and avoidance of impermissible private benefit. These activities generally fall into three categories:

- understanding the entrepreneurship phenomenon and environment,
- directly engaging entrepreneurs and their ecosystem, and/or
- supporting the work of others who so engage.

By highlighting the powerful effects that entrepreneurship can have on marginalised and poor communities and those who inhabit them, and because philanthropy so frequently neglects entrepreneurship, this essay presents a new model of philanthropy for social change that contributes to significant transformation for those lives and communities. This essay also shares lessons from the experience of philanthropy in other countries, in my case the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation<sup>1</sup> in the United States.

A key program area of the Foundation since before I joined in 1999 has been entrepreneurship through both grantmaking and operating programs directly. Ewing Kauffman dedicated his foundation in part to entrepreneurship as a core mission area well before his death in 1993. Mr Kauffman was an early — and perhaps the first — person to overtly connect his wealth creation to his entrepreneurial roots and then to dedicate his foundation to advancing that experience for others. He saw in entrepreneurship his own economic mobility and rise. More importantly, he saw its power to raise others, including as a means to financial stability or even wealth, meaningful jobs, advances in human welfare, improved standards of living, more unified communities and emboldened personal dignity.

In other words, in dedicating a substantial part of his philanthropic vision and resources to entrepreneurship, Mr Kauffman saw the means for helping meet basic needs and for advancing opportunity, hope, and achievement for individuals and communities — that is, social justice.

### **Entrepreneurship as social justice**

People who start and grow companies make goods and services available to the people and enterprises who can buy them. They test new concepts and innovations — both in what is available and, sometimes, in how they are made available. They hire people — sometimes only themselves but quite often others as well, a growing phenomenon in many regions of the globe. They are companies around which neighbourhoods and communities coalesce. Of course, large, established companies do these things to degrees as well, but

usually not until after they have established their roots and proven their market viability first as entrepreneurial ventures.

How is that social justice? It sounds like commercialism, or capitalism, and not a place for philanthropy. It would be a mistake to contend otherwise. It would also be a mistake to go to the other extreme by conflating the former (commercialism and capitalism) with the latter (social justice and philanthropy) or by suggesting that they are indistinguishable. They are different, and the private/business sector and its supports can certainly take care of itself generally. However, it would also be a mistake not to inquire and find where there is common ground and opportunity for engagement, especially if doing so can advance social justice. This can be a meaningful role for philanthropy.

Although a robust treatment is beyond the scope of this essay, there are many ways in which entrepreneurship and social justice intertwine, thereby also paving the way for philanthropic engagement with entrepreneurship. For instance, some entrepreneurs and companies prioritise pursuing social justice from their perch as unabashedly for-profit. There are those who seek to provide goods and services for communities that otherwise lack sufficient access to the same even though the economics of doing business there do not meet traditional market standards. There also are those who strive to provide other types of economic development and opportunities in and for those same communities, including but not limited to jobs that allow people to provide for themselves and their families. Also, there are people whose entrepreneurial journeys are impeded by prejudices and other still present barriers and/or vestiges from experiences over time.

Across each of these categories, entrepreneurs and their

companies are a source of work and a paycheque, a way to elevate standards of living and quality of life, and avenues for personal pride, fulfillment and dignity. Moreover, these are amongst the categories that can — maybe even should — be opportunities for philanthropy to engage.

These endeavours arguably are integral to the pursuit of social justice, or at least components of it. Two of history's greatest and wisest thinkers help make this point: Aristotle and Maimonides. Other religious, philosophical or moral traditions also reinforce this way of thinking.

Aristotle, when speaking of justice and equating it with the greatest of virtues, emphasised its completeness because it can be exercised not only for oneself but also for one's neighbour. Justice, "alone of the virtues, is thought to be 'another's good' because it is related to our neighbour" and that which is "advantageous to another".<sup>2</sup> The entrepreneurship experience does not happen in isolation but is inherently other-oriented, at a minimum through customers, suppliers, distributors, sources of financial capital, and/or providers of talent and labour.

When presenting his ordered levels of giving (as others have pointed out), Maimonides spoke of giving using a Hebrew word ("tzedakah") whose meaning is rooted in notions of equity or justice, thereby positioning his approach to the levels of giving as being grounded therein. Within that context, Maimonides characterised as the highest level of giving when a person gives a gift or a loan, enters a partnership with someone, or finds another employment and in so doing helps to strengthen the other person until s/he no longer needs to ask of help from anyone.<sup>3</sup> There are degrees to which the activity of entrepreneurship and support thereof

can exemplify this highest level of giving, which consistent with Aristotle's approach, is other-centric.

Other conceptions of equity and justice overtly invoke the dignity of the person and fulfillment of talents and potential. As entrepreneurship endeavours hire talent, they help those people meet the material needs of themselves and their families. As they provide goods and services, they meet people's needs and demands therefor. In both cases, they contribute to people meeting at least fundamental standards of living which can help people live with dignity.

There is the belief that the dignity inherent in human beings is, in part, reflected through work. In providing that, entrepreneurs can advance towards their own fulfillment while also creating conditions for others to do the same, and in both cases help in developing and advancing their respective personality/dignity. Work and the conditions thereof, then, are also matters of social justice from the sense of meeting both material and intangible needs of individuals. Thus, entrepreneurship and its pursuits can be — and frequently are — integral to social justice, especially when done with integrity and respect.

This is not to suggest that every entrepreneur's intentions are grounded in all or any of the above. Nor is it to suggest that there aren't entrepreneurs or their ventures whose behaviours are contrary to the above or that entrepreneurship and social justice are interchangeable. They are not; they don't need to be, and they really shouldn't be. Even so, there is enough meaningful overlap such that neglect of where they intersect could mean that neither is fully pursued, much less fulfilled, without some outreach to and from the other.

Too often, the market economy and proper government

policy interventions do not most fully support or sustain the efforts of entrepreneurs and the environments in which they operate, especially under conditions and circumstances that qualify as charitable. Those entrepreneurs and their ventures could use some help, especially when enabling and/or serving marginalised and poor communities and people. Philanthropy can be a source of such help.

### **Philanthropy/foundations and entrepreneurship**

There certainly are opportunities for foundations to prioritise entrepreneurship as a core programmatic mission area, as Mr Kauffman did. However, foundation support for entrepreneurship need not be so limited. Entrepreneurs and their efforts also facilitate the work across the panoply of program mission areas. Amongst them could be medical and healthcare and their component parts (e.g., scientific advances in treatment, diagnosis and prevention; biomedical devices; delivery of services by providers; etc.), clean energy, the environment, artistic and cultural endeavours, education across the spectrum of ages and types and more.

Stated differently, in the Kauffman-like scenario, entrepreneurship might be considered the programmatic end or objective for such a mission albeit while simultaneously a means towards social justice. Whereas, in the latter scenarios, entrepreneurs and their endeavours might be considered means for achieving other programmatic mission orientations. In either case — ends or means — there are opportunities for foundations to engage with entrepreneurship in service to their charitable purposes. This essay is intended to promote awareness of those opportunities and to encourage strategic reflection thereon.

There are two frequently asserted legitimate concerns that often (and rightly) arise about philanthropy engaging with entrepreneurship. The first is concern about whether such engagement is charitable given how deeply entangled entrepreneurship is with markets and commercial activity. The second is that such entanglement necessarily involves private benefit not permissible for foundations and charities to support (at least under US law). Stated differently, how is supporting entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in the marketplace sufficiently charitable for legal compliance purposes? And how is it that helping those with orientation towards profit and market engagement is not impermissible private benefit? These are important concerns, at least under US law, from which critical limitations do arise, but limitations are not prohibitions.

One way of addressing these concerns is to limit philanthropic engagement to those who start and operate or grow a nonprofit, tax-exempt, charitable endeavour. This essay is not so limited because such a limitation would not as fully embrace pursuit of the social justice outcomes of entrepreneurship, which necessarily involve some degree of market engagement. This essay more expansively focuses on three categories through which philanthropy can engage entrepreneurship that is both charitable and consistent with permissible private benefit. These three categories are as follows:

- understanding the work and contributions of entrepreneurs and the environments in which they operate,
- working directly with entrepreneurs or the environment in which they work, and/or



- working through others who support entrepreneurs and their environment.

Thus, there are ways that philanthropy can legally engage entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship without being limited to supporting start-up nonprofit, tax-exempt, charitable entities.\*

***Understanding entrepreneurship — research and policy.***

While entrepreneurship writ large is not charitable, researching and better understanding entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs and the environments in which they operate can be charitable when done and used primarily in service to the public good. That means that there should be scrutiny of what happens to the information such that timely and broad-based dissemination are essential for the activity to qualify as charitable. In the process, such dissemination likely undercuts private benefit potential by reducing or even eliminating commercial or market advantages that holding the information closely might permit.

Foundations can conduct this research themselves and/or support others in doing it, including demonstration projects

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\*Given my legal background, it is important that I ensure clarity about this essay and its uses. This discussion further explains generally how foundation engagement with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship can comply with the law, especially in the United States, but necessarily does so at a generally high level. It is intended to facilitate understanding of what foundations can do and to encourage a deeper examination of those possibilities consistent with stewardship, compliance and mission.

This essay is not and should not be considered legal advice in any respect, especially as it might be applicable to any specific circumstance for which appropriate legal counsel should be obtained. Consistent with the earlier introduction to my background and experience, this discussion is also rooted in my US experience.

that are a very specific type of research.

Research and its derivative understandings can be specific. Examples include research about advancing knowledge of industries, fields or their subparts (e.g., technology, retail, transportation, food service, beauty and grooming, house cleaning, pet services, theatre, music, entertainment, social media, etc.); the influence of certain conditions on entrepreneurial activities (e.g., access to healthcare, presence of student loans, need for childcare, etc.); the usefulness or barriers associated with various government policies (e.g., zoning, licensing, permitting, tax treatment, labour, wages, etc.); the value of different activities or engagements (e.g., access to knowledge, capital, mentors, networks, etc.); relevance across stages of life (e.g., ages, marital status, presence of children, employed, etc.); experiences across certain immutable characteristics of the individual (e.g., race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc.); variations in types and stages of entrepreneurship (e.g., lifestyle, supplemental income, family, growth, idea stage, early stage, being in or preparing for decline, etc.); access to capital (e.g., prevalence of different types of capital, barriers and/or ease of access thereto, etc.); and so much more.

This understanding also can be more general, such as collecting and analysing data about rates and/or types of entrepreneurship activity within and across jurisdictions and/or effects of the phenomenon on the economy and its components (e.g., employment, gross domestic product, borrowing and lending, immigration, etc.). All of this can allow deeper understandings beyond only collecting data. It allows for comparisons across subject matter topics, locations/communities, and different points in time, and it helps identify trends that suggest opportunities for subsequent actions.

This research into entrepreneurship and the knowledge it contributes can be used in many ways. For instance, it can inform government policies, including statutory and regulatory incentives, protections, barriers, and enforcement mechanisms and practices. (As it disseminates or supports disseminating the research or its results in a policy context, a private foundation operating under US law will need to protect against engaging in lobbying prohibited by law.) Research can influence what information government provides to the public. It can also inform other ways in which philanthropy can engage with government, including strategic financial support through grants or otherwise.

Research also can be relevant for private sector activities, especially by informing about the presence of knowledge gaps and how to address them. It can shape educational programs and experiences for entrepreneurs and those with whom they intersect, including approaches to substantive content and curriculum.

Educating entrepreneurs can be an activity that a foundation undertakes directly or through support for the work of others, which are the two remaining categories for discussion.

***Directly engaging with entrepreneurs and their environments.***

Foundations can work directly with entrepreneurs while maintaining necessary connections to charitability and protecting against impermissible private benefit. However, not all such interactions are or can be charitable, and some will involve impermissible private benefit and/or commercial competition. Care must be exercised, which usually involves ensuring that the engagement

- is charitable in its own right (e.g., providing an education),
- is for a group that otherwise constitutes a charitable class (e.g., supporting economically disadvantaged people or geographies), and/or
- involves a fair value exchange (i.e., a contract).

This section has some overlap with the next, which discusses foundation indirect support for entrepreneurs by aiding the work of others whose interactions are direct. As foundations understand what they can do directly, they should gain confidence in what and how they can (and cannot) support the work of others.

## **EDUCATING ENTREPRENEURS**

The first subcategory of this section is activity that is charitable in its own right — albeit while still being mindful of concerns around commercial activity and private benefit. For instance, healthcare can be charitable as can clean energy, the environment, various artistic and cultural endeavours and more. Support for entrepreneurs whose primary activities are in these and other spaces could be charitable. However, there also are for-profit, commercial, market-oriented actors in these spaces as well, and using principles of charity to undermine competition is not likely to be compliant. Neither will intentions of maximising or pursuing financial returns (i.e., impermissible private benefit), except as provided for in the next subpart.

Providing an education where there is less commercial competition can raise fewer concerns about impermissible private benefit for those who do the educating.

Some foundations undertake such educational activities by engaging directly with entrepreneurs, while others support third party engagements; some foundations (like Kauffman) do both.

In either instance, teaching entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs can be charitable. If as a result of what they learn and putting that knowledge to work they expand their resources, that activity and its outcomes are incidental to the education and learning that is charitable. As such, it can be permissible private benefit. Consider colleges and universities that offer undergraduate and graduate degrees and other certifications in practical business applications — some even focused on the entrepreneurial experience. Or vocational education. In both instances, the organisation's emphasis is on teaching and student learning. It is still up to the student to turn that knowledge into the activities from which they earn revenue, which then is permissible private benefit as an outgrowth from the learning.

For entrepreneurship education to qualify as charitable and thus for the private benefit to be inextricably connected to that activity, it is not required that it be provided through a formally recognised educational institution. Less formal approaches can also be charitable but must be distinguishable from consulting and/or general life learning. A few additional caveats are necessary, and both emerge from research showing the importance of mentoring and networking to entrepreneurs and their experiences such that — and like knowledge — their presence can facilitate the journey and their absence can inhibit it.

Under current US law, neither mentoring nor networking is considered charitable in their own right. However, when

integrated into the formalised educational experience so as to advance learning, mentoring can be charitable. Moreover, it can be charitable to teach people how to be proper mentors and how to use and engage with them.

Regarding networking, it also is not charitable in its own right under US law unless it is unavoidably integrated into the gathering of people for other substantively charitable purposes. For instance, students cannot help but expand their networks by virtue of interacting with other students, teachers, guest lecturers, etc. From a different lens, networking may be considered presumptively impermissible private benefit when undertaken as a primary activity rather than as being inextricably intertwined with an otherwise charitable activity that is primary.

### **ENTREPRENEURS WITHIN A CHARITABLE CLASS**

In addition to directly engaging with entrepreneurs to further their education, foundations can also engage with entrepreneurs who constitute a charitable class. This is the second subcategory identified above.

There are generally two types of entrepreneurs who fall into such a charitable class:

- those who operate in and for the benefit of economically disadvantaged areas, and/or
- those who have been or likely would be denied access to capital because of historic, systemic conditions applicable to their race or gender.

The nature of philanthropy's engagement with these entrepreneurs can be broader and deeper than would otherwise

be allowed. For instance, for this class of entrepreneurs, foundations could more likely support mentoring without its integration through a curriculum, networking without being incidental to charitable activities, or even providing access to financial capital for their business ventures. As an example, the Kauffman Foundation has provided money to lenders and even private equity funds that provide capital to businesses that operate in and for economically disadvantaged communities and/or to entrepreneurs who are likely to have difficulty getting loans or investments because of historic, systemic conditions that have disproportionately affected their race or gender.

In all respects, there is still a private benefit analysis that must be conducted, but the charitability side of the equation can largely be addressed.

Regarding private benefit and its limitations on these engagements, providing financial capital to support a large, successful business plan in the ordinary course of its business to expand its operations to an economically disadvantaged area probably would not qualify for receiving a foundation's charitable dollars. Likewise, investing with an already wealthy person from a race or gender that has experienced historic, systemic discrimination would also not likely qualify, perhaps unless the person's business was going to operate in and for the benefit of an economically disadvantaged area without financial returns being a priority.

There can sometimes be a temptation to label allowable activity in poor areas as "economic development," which it is. However, confusion can arise from the label because not all economic development is charitable. Using the label without clarifying its charitable application runs the risk of

people mistakenly believing that all economic development is charitable and/or that the private benefit from any such activity is permissible when neither is likely true.

The subset of economic development activity that seeks to advance the financial welfare of those in poverty can be charitable and permissible private benefit. As such, a foundation even directly providing financial capital under such conditions could be permissible. Without that, or the presence of vestiges of historic systems of discrimination, it would not be fathomable to use charitable funds.

### **ENTREPRENEURS AS PROVIDERS OF GOODS AND SERVICES**

The third subcategory through which foundations can engage directly with entrepreneurs is in how foundations acquire goods and services they use in their operations. Foundations often contract for audio-visual services, website development and maintenance, legal services, brand development and “marketing,” accounting and auditing services, technology and related services, investment management, evaluation, catering, facilities maintenance, office equipment, data collection and analysis, and other administrative supports. Foundations that operate their own programs might also contract for curriculum development, data collection and analysis, outreach services, and more.

In some cases, the best provider will be established companies. In other cases, it may be worth contracting with a smaller, newer company to provide those goods and/or services — or at least ensuring that such companies can compete for the chance to be the provider. Note that these



are presumptively fair value exchanges otherwise conducted through the marketplace.

Overpaying for such goods or services beyond fair market pricing could constitute impermissible private benefit.

***Supporting the work of others.*** The final general category by which foundations can engage with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship and in doing so advance social justice is in supporting others who work with and support entrepreneurs and the environments in which they operate as charitable endeavours. There are a growing number of nonprofit, tax-exempt, charitable organisations and government agencies whose programs and missions engage entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship consistent with legal boundaries. Amongst these might be schools, think tanks, researchers, certain incubators and accelerators, advocacy groups, youth serving organisations, community development financial institutions and more. Support for these organisations can be charitable and within the bounds of permissible private benefit.

All of what was discussed in the preceding section about how foundations can engage directly, they can support indirectly through others, especially those who qualify as tax-exempt, charitable enterprises under 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code.<sup>4</sup> More and more charities and other organisations are educating entrepreneurs and those who support them, providing charitable financial capital, conducting research, engaging in policy advocacy with lawmakers and the public, and more.

Moreover, beyond providing funds, foundations can convene groups, connect people and organisations, provide expertise, provide meeting space and/or administrative

support services, and more. Often, a foundation making introductions or creating opportunities for introductions can be life changing.

There are a couple of caveats to convening and connecting activities, however. The caveats are the corollary to the point above: what foundations can do directly they can also do indirectly. The corollary is: what foundations *cannot* do directly they also *cannot* do indirectly. For example, unless the activity is limited to charities and/or government agencies, no substantial purpose of the activity should be to facilitate networking, although networking can be incidental to the charitable activities that are primary. As another example and tying back to the first category about policy, even though charities can undertake some limited lobbying activities, foundations' abilities to lobby under US law are substantially more restricted. Thus, a foundation cannot use a charity or other intermediary as a proxy to execute on its lobbying agenda.

Another caveat is that, unless being done as a charitable activity in service to a charitable class, foundations generally cannot directly or indirectly be in the business of connecting entrepreneurs to for-profit service providers (e.g., capital, lawyers, consultants, accountants, insurance brokers, etc.) because both the entrepreneur and service provider risk being given an impermissible private benefit from the foundation's connections.

### **A win-win connection**

By engaging more deeply with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, philanthropy can advance social justice,

especially its conceptions that strive to address the conditions of marginalised and poor communities and those who live in them. There is no doubt that there are entrepreneurs amongst them, people whose talents and ambitions long for respect and an opportunity to thrive. Through such opportunities, it is more likely that they will be able to better provide for themselves and their families, create opportunities for others to do the same, and even help advance standards of living and quality of life through the goods and services they provide.

In addition to entrepreneurs being from these communities, there are other outsiders who want to meaningfully dedicate their experiences to operating in and thereby serving those communities and their residents in the same ways.

Both sources of entrepreneurship strive to recognise the dignity of the person, including by helping meet material and intangible needs such as talent development and personal fulfillment.

These entrepreneurs can benefit from research that philanthropy can conduct and support along with policy changes that can enable their efforts. They can benefit from knowledge they gain from foundation-provided or supported programs. They can benefit from other resources that foundations provide directly and/or support indirectly, especially if they are in a charitable class.

A more expansive awareness that philanthropy can engage entrepreneurs and their experiences and environments is critical as they consider missions, strategies, tactics and allocation of their various resources.

# 10

## No Rest Until We Redeem Our Pledge

A promise of social justice was made by those who fought for our freedom. Despite the potential risks, Indian philanthropists must honour it

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INGRID SRINATH AND BIRAJ PATNAIK

AS India geared up to usher in the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its independence from British colonial rule, the festive spirit was disrupted by news of the death of a nine-year-old Dalit boy in Jalore district, Rajasthan. Inder Meghwal, a student of Class 3 at Saraswati Vidya Mandir school, was brutally beaten by a teacher, Chhail Singh, for the “crime” of touching the earthen pot reserved for teachers and drinking water from it.<sup>1</sup> The stark reminder that 75 years on, untouchability and caste discrimination remain pervasive, led many Indians to question the triumphalist rhetoric of the country’s accomplishments since Independence.

The landmark anniversary has seen many Indians quoting the stirring words of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, with which he ushered in Independence at midnight on August 15, 1947. Most focus on his opening remarks:

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

Much less attention gets paid to the section of his speech that focuses on the task ahead of the newly independent nation.

The future beckons to us. Whither do we go and what shall be our endeavour? To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease; to build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.

Those goals have proven elusive for all those who subscribe to that vision of India especially India's Dalits, Tribal communities, women, religious minorities, informal workers, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ groups, residents of several border states and other citizens who are relegated to the margins of the country's development trajectory despite legal protections and affirmative action policies. Each day sees news of atrocities, slurs, exploitation, abuse, rape,

domestic violence, falling rates of labour force participation, rising unemployment and precarity, deaths from hunger and malnutrition or from asphyxiation in sewers, unjust incarceration, extra-judicial killings and custodial torture, the application of draconian laws to quell dissent and free expression, violations of environmental protections, and sharply increasing inequality.

Setting aside comparisons to China and Southeast Asian counterparts, India, whose economic prowess is much lauded, has systematically fallen behind its immediate neighbour, Bangladesh,<sup>2</sup> which started later and from a vastly poorer base, on core indicators of development. This is due, in large measure, to the ability of elites and powerful interests to corner the gains of economic growth at the expense of those on the margins and to enjoy impunity under the law.

### **Philanthropy: an unalloyed good?**

The starkness of this reality poses hard questions for Indian philanthropy. Though reliable data are scarce, many Indians believe that this is “a golden age” for philanthropy in India. Economic liberalisation since the early 1990s has seen massive transfers of wealth to private control. Each year we witness further leaps in the number of Indian dollar billionaires and unicorn start-ups. Ever larger pledges are made by the wealthy to allocate some fraction of their vast resources to uplifting their less privileged compatriots. The breathless news coverage of the growing prosperity of these Indians and their generosity is entirely uncritical. It neither seeks to examine the source of the gains nor to question the methods or motives of the givers. The only substantive critique that has been offered

points out that India's rich could give more, especially in comparison to their global peers. Philanthropy in India is still largely seen as an unalloyed good and gratitude is, therefore, the only possible response.

Philanthropy has a long and storied history in India. Millennia ago, the Rig Veda counselled that "the riches of the liberal never waste away, while he who will not give finds none to comfort him."<sup>3</sup> Every religious and ethnic tradition practiced in India enjoins charity and mutual aid on its followers. Indian businesspeople contributed handsomely to the struggle for freedom and, post-Independence, their philanthropy built some of the fledgling nation's greatest institutions of learning, research, culture and sports. Together with pioneering international funders, philanthropists in India became active partners in development, supporting critical initiatives and enabling the establishment of a vibrant nonprofit ecosystem.

Almost any Indian nonprofit that has thrived for three decades or more has been the recipient of patient, flexible investments in organisation capacity by visionary funders, international and domestic. More recently, fortunes made through the largesse of privatisation and the opportunities of liberalisation have been directed towards ambitious goals in education, health and livelihoods in particular. Indians in the diaspora too have sought to pay back or forward the debt of gratitude they feel towards their homeland. And Indian business has had to comply with mandatory corporate philanthropy in the form of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) provisions of the Companies Act, 2013.<sup>4</sup>

Critics of philanthropy in the West have focused on two pernicious aspects. First, the use of philanthropy to exert

disproportionate influence on policy, thereby subverting democratic decision making. And secondly, the use of philanthropic resources to legitimise untrammelled inequality, to distract from the way the wealth was accumulated, and to launder ill-gotten gains and suspect reputations.

At its best, Western philanthropy has fuelled the fight against slavery, apartheid, inequalities of class, gender and race, and fostered the creation of the welfare state. At its worst, it has been complicit in the hollowing out of basic rights and entitlements leaving citizens to the mercy of the market. From the criticism of pledges by French philanthropists to rebuild the roof of Notre Dame cathedral when it was destroyed by fire,<sup>5</sup> to stripping the veil of protection that philanthropy provided the Sackler family to reveal its unscrupulous peddling of opiates,<sup>6</sup> it is now routine for philanthropy in North America and Europe to be subjected to intense scrutiny from activists and commentators on the Left and the Right as well as from academics and practitioners.

In India, however, there has been little evidence of such critique. While a 2020 report examined some of the “Perils and Opportunities of Big Philanthropy” in India,<sup>7</sup> there has been no serious attempt to challenge philanthropic norms or practices or to shine a light on the sources of the wealth that fuels giving by the wealthy. As funding from government and international donors dries up, social impact capital is now almost entirely the preserve of business and wealthy businesspeople. This dependence, coupled with the dearth of transparency in private philanthropy in India, results in concerted silence on the antecedents, methods, outcomes, even effectiveness, of Indian philanthropy.

Foundations, family offices and the consultants that



advise their philanthropic strategies too often find little, if any, representation from the communities they purport to serve. Too many are echo chambers pandering to corporate values of efficiency, productivity and return on investment rather than those of justice, equity, inclusion and dignity. Top-down, techno-managerial interventions that pursue the low-hanging-fruit of beneficiary headcount making no pretence of centring community priorities in design or implementation are the norm. Worse still are the vanity projects that focus on image building or employee motivation rather than on ensuring tangible shifts in power equations in communities. This inability or unwillingness to acknowledge that social change requires shifts in power to be effective, is cloaked in jargon espousing “transformational change”. The predominant theory of change appears to pursue partnership with government as the only pathway to impact at scale even if that means sanitising interventions to avoid ruffling any feathers. The persistence and courage of the few Indian philanthropists who direct their support to organisations focused on the root causes of exclusion, discrimination and exploitation, and to finding structural solutions to them, is therefore, even more laudable.

### **People’s movements are the key driver of social change**

While the lack of hard data prevents rigorous analysis, it would be fair to say that all but a negligible fraction of giving by business and wealthy families in India today is directed towards supporting short-term, easy-to-measure, techno-managerial programs that fill gaps in public service delivery. A significant portion is channelled towards causes championed

by powerful politicians. These preferences leave rights-based, community-driven approaches to development, and policy advocacy aimed at social justice, severely underserved despite the hard evidence that most national scale, sustained, inclusive social impact has been achieved, not through philanthropic support, but despite it, by grassroots movements.

People's movements in India have been the key driver of social change in the decades since India's independence. The first three decades saw trade unions, land movements and peasant struggles at the forefront of driving social change, led by the organised Left political parties, echoing the key societal imperatives of the newly independent nation state. These were followed by social movements in the form of autonomous women's movements, anti-dam/anti-displacement struggles and those led by marginalised people including Dalits and Adivasis. The early 1990s saw the emergence of rights-based "new social movements" which continued the legacy of people's struggles in India. These included national level campaigns and networks on the Right to Information, the Right to Food, the Right to Education, the Right to Employment and Forest Rights. The new social movements and campaigns peaked between 2004-2014 when they combined popular mobilisation with campaigning and advocacy targeting the then open political opportunity structures to ensure that legislations were enacted by Parliament guaranteeing these rights. The success of the new social movements was exemplified by the fact that the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition created the National Advisory Council as the formal interface with civil society, granting it unprecedented legitimacy within the structures of the State.<sup>8</sup>

It is worth noting that none of these new social movements received much support from philanthropy, which at best remained distant from progressive movements and, in its business avatar, often opposed rights-based legislation either on grounds of alleged fiscal profligacy or because it conflicted with private interests. There were, however, exceptions to this rule with at least one prominent domestic philanthropist serving as a member of the National Advisory Council.<sup>9</sup>

The decade of the 1990s also saw a significant number of domestic civil society organisations (CSOs) adopt rights-based frameworks, echoing the global movement in this direction. Local units of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) recrafted their programming to reflect this transition and, together with some domestic intermediary organisations, actively partnered the new social movements in India.

Indian civil society advanced the application of the rights-based framework not just to civil and political rights as was happening in the West, but equally to economic, social and cultural rights. From the mid-1980s, spurred by litigation by the environmental movement, Indian courts allowed Public Interest Litigations (PILs); these legal cases are often filed by CSOs to extend the discourse of rights. In a series of path-breaking judgements, India's judiciary elaborated the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution to include rights to dignity, livelihood, shelter, information, education, liberty and privacy, among others. The landmark Right to Food case filed by the Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties, for instance, led to almost 200 orders between 2001-2017 becoming the longest continuing mandamus on a socioeconomic right anywhere in the world as it made the right to food a justiciable fundamental right.<sup>10</sup> The battle for

rights was championed not just in and by courts but also a range of other critical institutions, the National and State Human Rights Commissions, the Election Commission, the erstwhile Planning Commission, amongst others, partnering civil society in the national project of realising social justice and deepening democracy.

Even when social movements failed to achieve their proximate objectives they had long-lasting impact, often globally. The direction of travel to a more equitable, rights-based development paradigm through decades-long struggles came from a deep understanding of the size, complexities and diversity of India. And the understanding that social justice can only be achieved when the State is held accountable as the principal duty bearer on whom citizens could stake their claims to rights.

This community-led approach, centring the concerns and aspirations of the marginalised, ensures not only that policy change is relevant to those most affected, but also builds a constituency to ensure its effective implementation and its longevity. Today's philanthropy, on the other hand, too often seeks to effect policy change via lobbying policymakers directly, often supported by consulting firms and think tanks. Even when this approach results in policy change, citizens are often unaware of the entitlements now available, and lack the community mechanisms to ensure faithful implementation. Ivory tower design — drafting legislation, manufacturing community consent and legitimising the bad faith actions of the State — by people with no lived experience of the issues they seek to tackle, very often results in irrelevant, impractical or even counter-productive outcomes. The large-scale protests against ill-conceived legislation in recent years

stands testimonial to this syndrome. CSOs, meanwhile, are reduced to low-cost, last mile service delivery channels, either as agents of the State or as private service providers.

The impact of this parallel ecosystem of philanthropy-driven, well-funded CSOs not only undermines the efforts of social movements and people's struggles but also seeks to return the relationship between the State and the citizen back to the feudal paradigm of benefactor and beneficiary.

But it need not be so. In many other contexts, philanthropy has played the role of speaking truth to power and amplifying muted voices, challenging the narrative of populist authoritarians. Most notably in the United States, where leading philanthropic institutions changed their focus to domestic issues through the Trump presidency — unafraid of the consequences, and (often) paying a price for it. Arguably, the United States as an older democracy had more institutional depth for them to mount a comprehensive challenge against a regime which, in their view was inimical to the principles on which the country was founded. In India, on the other hand, reprisals are swift, and indiscretions rarely go unpunished.

### **Funding a more equal future**

Why, then, in the face of potential risks, should Indian philanthropists seek to pursue social justice goals and are there strategies to mitigate and manage these risks? The most direct motivation is that it is simply more efficient. By shifting power to marginalised communities, enabling them to demand and protect their own entitlements as citizens, rights-based philanthropy delivers a far higher return on investment than other forms that fail to meet community priorities or require

service delivery virtually in perpetuity. Such empowerment also optimises the impact of public spending by ensuring accountability for service delivery at every level. The hazards of runaway inequality, inadequate social protection and fraying social cohesion are all too familiar and were thrown into sharp relief during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring greater equality, widespread purchasing power, a healthy, well-educated workforce, minimal social conflict and action against the climate crisis are not just key tenets of democracy, they are also hugely beneficial to business.

Secondly, as the growing criticism in the West has shown, failure to deliver tangible impact in the form of shared prosperity, inclusive institutions and trust in the rule of law, undermines the legitimacy of philanthropy. The experience of the pandemic, combined with the movement for racial equity have galvanised change in philanthropic priorities and practice in several Western countries. Getting ahead of the curve on developing norms for transparency, governance and accountability would help prevent long-term damage to public faith in Indian philanthropy and philanthropists. This in turn requires investment in creating institutional mechanisms to develop norms, promote their adoption and report progress.

A more calibrated approach to risk management and finding ways to intelligently manage risk is also imperative. Arm's length, upstream investments and collective rather than individual action are some avenues that need to be explored. So too, engaging with CSOs and philanthropists in India and internationally to share learning and experiences.

Above all, Indian philanthropy must see its relevance, capacity for impact and purpose as being inextricably intertwined with its civil society counterparts and both sides

must work to build greater awareness, trust and solidarity for their shared purpose.

Being focused on providing private resources to fill the gaps left by the failure or withdrawal of the State, and facilitating the privatisation of public services, Indian philanthropy has largely abdicated responsibility for protecting democratic rights and freedoms and for supporting those who defend them.

This leaves citizens with no means to seek accountability for the provision or quality of those services. It exacerbates runaway inequality and lays waste any pretensions to redeeming the pledge made 75 years ago in that speech by Nehru:

We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for any one of us till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India what destiny intended them to be. We are citizens of a great country on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard. All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action.

## A Brave New Model

In Asia, a bolder, more collaborative and responsive approach to giving is emerging

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NAINA SUBBERWAL BATRA

PHILANTHROPY in Asia has undergone a unique and organic evolution, shaped by forces including the socioeconomic history, culture as well as religious and political ideologies of its respective nations. Public understanding of philanthropy, however, has been largely informed by a handful of long-established donors and major new entrants that have made a significant impression.

India, for instance, is renowned for its rich culture of giving<sup>1</sup>; the country's earliest philanthropists pioneered the concept of building wealth for the public good. Tata Group founder Jamshetji Tata was on par with his Western contemporaries Joseph Rowntree, a British businessman, and Andrew Carnegie, an American industrialist, and was one



amongst several Indian business leaders who reflected on the responsibility of wealth and engaged in philanthropy in the early days of industrialisation.

In recent years, Asia has seen one of the highest growth rates of high-net-worth individuals in the world. Asia's billionaire population has already made up more than one-third of the world's total billionaires, with 36% originating from the region as of 2021.<sup>2</sup> While a significant proportion of philanthropy is being primarily funded by first-generation wealth, especially in markets such as China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, across the region the second generation is starting to take over fast.<sup>3</sup> India alone expects to see a transfer of US\$128 billion from one generation to the next in the coming decade.<sup>4</sup> In parallel with this growth in wealth has been a growth and formalisation of the philanthropic ecosystem in Asia-Pacific, with more than 75% of the 13,170 foundations in the region established during this century.<sup>5</sup>

As the region grows wealthier, there has been a paradigm shift in the way philanthropy is practised in Asia. Wealth holders are becoming acutely aware of their role and responsibility in taking a systems approach to address the root causes of pressing problems. Such a practice sees issues as multidimensional and interconnected, demanding a holistic and, therefore, collaborative approach to solutions development. Philanthropists in Asia are gradually becoming more at ease with collaborating both locally and across borders, sharing information and resources and, consequently, are beginning to demonstrate inclusive and equitable giving. Recognising the interconnectedness of issues and actors has led the way to a responsive breed of philanthropy, which is willing to broach the thorny issues of access, justice and

civil rights within their communities. This could not be timelier, in view of the pandemic and its adverse effect on existing social and financial ecosystems. Regaining our footing necessitates a focus on the core principles and values that bind us as people.

Social justice is not solely the government's responsibility but also that of the private sector, civil society and everyday citizens. It means paying more than lip service to the central tenet of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — leaving no one behind. It requires the integration of public-private partnership and civic responsibility. Collaboration between government institutions and private sector organisations to finance, build and operate projects must be undergirded by a sense of civic responsibility, which is the emphasis on the common good, evidenced by the active participation of individuals in the public life of a community.

Philanthropy for social justice then necessitates a shift from a “charity-based approach” to philanthropy to one which prioritises justice as a guiding principle. This can be a challenge when issues like access and distribution of resources are “wicked problems”, complex issues with no clear, one-size-fits-all solution and often interconnected to other systemic problems. These challenges cannot be addressed in isolation. They demand a systems approach, grounded in multilevel thinking and an open-mindedness to all voices; not just the resource providers, but also the intermediaries and end-beneficiaries being part of the solution.

Philanthropic advocates for social justice exist and are willing to engage with these issues at the grassroots level. However, in our experience, most Asians will not fund social

justice when it is called *social justice* or *advocacy*. They will not fund gender justice when it is called *gender justice*. They will, however, fund women's access to capital, keeping girls in schools and even family planning. Part of this has to do with being prudent, and not ruffling too many feathers. It doesn't matter if they are from Thailand, the Philippines or Indonesia. Just like Indian philanthropists, they will not fund things that could make them look like "troublemakers", even if it's a cause that they privately believe in.

Enabling support for social justice philanthropy, therefore, entails a continued demonstration of its value — at all levels of society. We need to promote the exchange of ideas across stakeholders and help build partnerships with unusual allies. Addressing social justice at its core requires addressing systems that have been built and reinforced over decades. Change will not be achieved overnight.

In this essay, we dive into the facets of stakeholder engagement, the significance of strategic alliances in the philanthropic ecosystem, as well as the need to ensure diverse, equitable and inclusive action plans, all of which are critical to social philanthropic success.

### **Giving every stakeholder a say**

Given how entrenched social inequalities have become in society, redressing the issues requires innovative thinking at the systems level. The entire ecosystem that works with the communities most marginalised must be strengthened through collaboration and deliberate empowerment of end-stakeholders.

In 2019, global travel company Expedia Group began

incorporating beneficiary feedback to make their own grantmaking more efficient and empathetic. Their grantee was Daughters of Tomorrow, a Singapore-based nonprofit dedicated to facilitating livelihood opportunities for underprivileged women.

To do this, Expedia Group piloted the Listen4Good (L4G) program in Asia. An initiative of the Fund for Shared Insight, L4G supports nonprofits through a five-step feedback process designed with the recognition that philanthropists cannot perfectly understand the needs and experiences of their beneficiaries without hearing directly from them. The Expedia Group found that incorporating feedback into their grantmaking not only impacted beneficiaries but also inspired their staff towards greater empathy for those they serve. Thus, in addition to improved program effectiveness, this type of approach can also have a positive impact on organisational culture, values and decision-making processes.

An equitable approach to grantmaking has gained momentum since the COVID-19 pandemic. In Indonesia, we saw an example of cross-sectoral collaboration working effectively to ensure education recovery during the pandemic. The idea of “Gotong Royong”, or mutual assistance, is intrinsic to the Indonesian culture. It is based on the principle of sharing burdens between members of the community. A number of cross-sectoral partnerships that channelled this spirit of solidarity and partnership emerged amongst education, health and social protection agencies to create safety nets for vulnerable children and families who would have otherwise dropped out of the education system.

The various stakeholders came together to identify complementary areas of work, synergies and partnership

opportunities. While some partners focused on enhanced nutrition, immunisation and allied services, others focused on free online learning for students and the digital literacy of teachers.

Following the success of these partnerships, the government now plans to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration and partnership between education and the industry sector for higher education and job readiness.<sup>6</sup>

While the Gotong Royong movement was successful primarily due to the localisation and contextualisation of the initiative, and to the Javanese culture of a harmonious and collectivist society, it can serve as a blueprint for other countries working towards recovering and rebuilding after the pandemic.

Prioritisation of the agenda has also moved to the community. AVPN partner Red Dot Foundation developed the Safecity crowdmap platform for anonymous reporting of gender-based violence. Data Yoo, a company specialising in data science and artificial intelligence (AI), has developed a proprietary AI Crop Algorithm that provides data prediction services in Taiwan, particularly for small farm households, often a policy implementation blind spot.

This bottom-up approach is pivotal for private philanthropy, presenting the potential for significant change. Why you ask? First, knowledge transfer and ownership of success happen in situ amongst the target groups. Second, a network of change agents is activated to facilitate this process, including intermediaries who catalyse conversations between governments, corporates, funders and impact organisations, breaking existing silos and building impactful ecosystems. Third, the governance approach of the public sector evolves,

bringing in the expertise of impact organisations and scientific bodies into the policy process. It's important to underline that these changes are being undertaken within or near the community.

### **Unrestricted funds, results-based accountability**

Multiyear, unrestricted core funding is the new way of strengthening the impact organisations. The pandemic-induced travel restrictions were a reminder to philanthropists that it is the not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) working on the field that are most effective at addressing on-the-ground needs during the time of crisis. Not only are they deeply embedded in the communities, but they also have the access and know-how to support them in a meaningful way.

The focus is now shifting from programmatic funding to organisational development and capacity building grants. The inherent logic here is that the NPOs that serve the communities know their jobs well and can be trusted to get things done. Funders should support them to survive and thrive instead of dictating how to serve their own communities.

In 2021, our members Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Chevron, Johnson & Johnson, Macquarie Group Foundation, Sequoia Capital and Vitol Foundation, came together to launch Southeast Asia's first-ever Philanthropic Pooled Fund through AVPN. Through this partnership, impactful NPOs in rural and hard-to-reach urban areas in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have received unrestricted funding to support their efforts to strengthen primary healthcare systems. Unrestricted funding is hard to come by in the philanthropic ecosystem, and these funders

are remarkable pioneers in their openness and responsiveness to collaborate and consider this form of grantmaking.

That same year, KKR, a leading global investment firm and AVPN member, announced a dedicated fund in response to the disruption and dislocation caused by the pandemic. The KKR COVID-19 Relief Effort is a US\$50 million philanthropic fund that provides grants and mentorship opportunities to small business owners and NPOs helping frontline workers and first responders amongst others. The deployment of unrestricted flexible funding and partnership support is a significant show of trust by KKR, empowering the NPOs to respond to the needs of their communities in a timely manner.

KKR's mission investing goal is to find scalable and commercial solutions to solve critical global challenges. They also seek to provide innovative financial solutions and have developed an effective approach that integrates environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into their investment process. By identifying potential risks and opportunities for achieving favourable investment outcomes, they help those who contribute to AVPN's philanthropic funds to achieve their investment goals.

More such funds are in the pipeline. These funds serve two main purposes — strengthening the NPO ecosystem that works within the communities and scaling up impact through collaboration while empowering the stakeholders.

Recent needs have also given rise to collaborations between unlikely partners. The unprecedented scale of the challenge to meet the SDGs calls for a broader engagement of capital and collaboration with the investor community. Blended finance structures that combine public or philanthropic funds

with private sector funds are one way to increase the pool of available funding, allowing private investors with various return expectations to tap into social finance opportunities.

Philanthropists are collaborating with public sector partners to plan, test and validate new approaches, which agencies can then adopt if proven effective. Climate finance has emerged as a particularly ripe area for such blended finance in Asia, with China, India and Japan leading the call for more renewable energy.

Convergence, a global network for blended finance, launched the Asia Natural Capital Design Funding Window in 2021. Funded by the RS Group, a Hong Kong family office focused on sustainability, the Window will support the design and launch of blended finance solutions focused on natural capital, which attract private investment at scale. It aims to support practitioners who are finding new ways to enhance and protect the world's stocks of natural assets, including water, land, soil, air, plants and animals.<sup>7</sup>

While funding new ideas, debates and advocacy, private philanthropy is also ensuring that vulnerable communities are not left behind. The Vision Catalyst Fund (VCF) was created in April 2018 to bring eye care to one billion people by raising an initial US\$1 billion in catalytic finance by 2050. AVPN members including ophthalmic optics company Essilor, Standard Chartered Bank, UBS Optimus Foundation and philanthropist James Chen are founding partners of the fund that will provide those living below the poverty line free ophthalmic lenses.

VCF also accelerated the launch of The Vision Entrepreneurs Bond focused on India. The objective of the US\$9 million development impact bond is to tackle



vision care coverage in India while also addressing the unemployment crisis — worsened by the pandemic — in lower-income households. Eye Mitra is one of Essilor's flagship inclusive business programs providing access to vision care for underserved populations. Using this model, the Vision Entrepreneurs program will train 3,500 unemployed and underemployed people — especially women and young people — to become primary vision care entrepreneurs in their communities.

Like other development impact bonds, outcome investors only invest in the program if agreed outcomes are met i.e., paying for results. Risk investors put up the initial capital and receive the full principal plus interest if the project is successful.

In another example, The TL Whang Foundation, Lorinet Foundation and the YMCA launched the first-ever Social Impact Guarantee (SIG) in 2021 to increase employment and education amongst youth-at-risk in Singapore. The SIG is a results-based financing mechanism that functions similarly to a money-back guarantee — if the program does not achieve the social impact outcomes that it committed to, a third-party guarantor will reimburse the funder and the resources can be used towards other projects. In exchange, the guarantor may take a small premium payment. SIGs require no modifications to existing funding processes and the final step effectively works like an insurance policy. In this way, SIGs aim to encourage social innovation, rigorous measurement of outcomes and cross-sector collaboration.

This shows how philanthropy is ready to take risks with funding solutions where vulnerable populations are at the core, even if the results of the program that they fund may not necessarily be guaranteed at the outset.

## **Everything is connected: systems approach**

The issues within the realm of social justice stem from root causes that may overlap or have cross-cutting effects. To solve one problem, funders may have to address the source of other problems that exacerbate a particular issue at hand. For example, an issue like malnutrition in marginalised communities has so many causes; focusing on “feeding” alone cannot create the impact desired.

Philanthropists are increasingly attuned to this and have begun funding at the intersection of issue areas. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) announced in September 2021 a commitment of US\$922 million over the next five years to address global nutrition and advance the foundation’s systems approach, prioritising efforts across food, health and social protection systems to reach the most vulnerable.<sup>8</sup>

One of BMGF’s partners in Indonesia is the Tanoto Foundation, an independent family philanthropy organisation. Initially, Tanoto Foundation was committed to primarily funding education but expanded its focus to include nutrition, having concluded that nutrition and education are intimately intertwined. Through various projects spanning research, data analytics and behaviour change, it hopes to track and improve stunting rates in 100 districts.

The Tanoto Foundation is also a founding member of the World Bank’s Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for Indonesia Human Capital Acceleration. Operating from 2020 to 2024, the MDTF will support and accelerate whole-of-government stunting reduction efforts. Both the BMGF and the Tanoto Foundation have committed a total of US\$4 million donation to the MDTF.<sup>9</sup>

While discussing the systems approach, it is important to pay attention to the intermediaries that play a crucial role in orchestrating the various players in the impact ecosystem. Asia has seen a rise of such intermediaries that are guiding the vision, supporting aligned activities and establishing shared measurement practices for the impact ecosystem. Be it policy advocacy or mobilising funding, each one of these organisations is ensuring that social justice and equality remain at the centre of social impact.

AVPN as a funders network has always rallied its partners towards a systems approach. We have brought together funders to pool their resources for addressing the issues of the hard-to-reach communities of Southeast Asia. We have partnered with Impact Frontiers to support our investors to focus on stakeholders while measuring and managing the impact of their investments. We have also created learning circles where we provide a safe space for corporate social responsibility professionals to engage in peer-to-peer learning through the exchange of ideas, solutions and insights.

### **A safe space for partners to learn together**

There are many ripples across Asia that speak to philanthropists' awareness and desire to bring about a paradigm shift in their funding and investment practices to address social justice issues.

From acknowledging the need for new thinking about social justice in the context of historical injustices to giving agency to marginalised and vulnerable communities, the changes — though seemingly small — have sparked little revolutions in thinking and approach.

Every example cited in this essay fortifies the belief that funders and social investors are now truly seeing the potential of the systems approach.

In our journey to strengthen the ecosystem with responsible capital, AVPN provides a safe space for partners to learn together, collaborate and test solutions, share best practices and challenges so that others can build on their work, and leverage the social network effect for catalysing widespread sustainable change.

For instance, starting in 2019, we have placed a strong emphasis on SDG 5 — gender equality. At AVPN, we believe women and girls are the main stakeholders as well as the torchbearers of society's welfare. When empowered, women not only accelerate the achievement of gender parity but also solutions across other SDGs, including access to education, poverty alleviation, climate change and more. Through the AVPN Asia Gender Network, formally launched on March 8, 2021, we have brought together around 30 Asian women funders who are mobilising capital towards gender equality. These women are already doing a lot of great work in their local markets to empower women and girls, but collectively, they can achieve so much more by learning and collaborating with one another.

Such a coming together of actors will bring about sustainable change and the long-lasting impact that is needed to reduce inequities and put us on the path of equal opportunity.

# 12

## Transforming the Way Families Give

How Dasra is steering family philanthropy towards building a stronger, more equitable India

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NEERA NUNDY

**A**T the current rate of progress and funding, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be achieved by 2094 — 64 years after the United Nation’s original target of 2030.<sup>1</sup> The COVID-19 crisis has brought to light the deep fault lines in the inequities seeping through our country’s development systems. It has disproportionately impacted disadvantaged groups such as migrant workers, women, Tribal communities and children, amongst others.

Philanthropy has historically been a part of Indian culture and tradition. Of all forms of private philanthropy, family giving has had the earliest and arguably most pivotal influence

in shaping modern India by means of ideas, innovations and institutions.

Given the post-pandemic scenario, the scale and complexity of India's development challenges far outpace the government's ability to singlehandedly address them. As compared to institutional foundations and corporates, family philanthropists have greater flexibility and freedom to provide risk capital. Therefore, they must look to step up their efforts and lead alongside the government in accelerating India's development.

### **Rich legacy of family philanthropy in India**

The culture of giving in India dates back to the pre-Independence era, predominantly through social networks and religious institutions. Philanthropy then was ad hoc and limited to one's own community. During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, India witnessed industrialisation and the Independence Movement, both of which acted as catalysts for philanthropy to step into a new era.

***Industrialisation.*** This revolution paved the path for creation of massive fortunes that were unheard of earlier, thus increasing the pool of funding available for public welfare. It also shifted the way giving took place in India as business families started setting up their trusts, making their philanthropy more institutionalised and secular. Families also invested in building some of the country's leading philanthropic institutions, of which many stand strong even today.

Sir Jamsetji Tata emerged as one of the most remarkable philanthropists who shaped giving in India. He believed in

the potential of harnessing India's finest minds and established the JN Tata Endowment fund in 1892, long before similar foundations emerged in the West. Perhaps one of his most incredible contributions towards nation building has been establishing the prominent Indian Institute of Science (IISc), which continues to be funded by his estate. He drew inspiration from a conversation he had with Swami Vivekananda on a voyage where he discussed his idea of starting a scientific institution of excellence in India. Towards this endeavour, he persevered for over a decade and pledged half of his personal wealth. Five years after his unfortunate passing, IISc was founded in 1909.

The Tata family continues to be a role model, serving as a custodian for the public good and inspiring many more through their legacy.

***Freedom Movement and commitment to education.***

Consolidation of the Freedom Movement under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership created another shift in the Indian philanthropic landscape. To uplift the rural masses, philanthropists expanded their focus from endowing institutions to changing mindsets. Many prominent industrial families such as the Bajajs, Birlas, Godrejs and Hamieds were inspired by Gandhiji's theory of trusteeship which suggested that they must consider themselves as trustees of the poor and use their wealth for public welfare. "I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood ... The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community," Gandhiji said.

These families' contributions have played a pivotal role

in shaping modern India. Beyond the Freedom Movement, family philanthropists supported Gandhiji's constructive efforts towards removing untouchability, popularising khadi and village industries, promoting basic education and communal harmony.

Many families have established educational institutes that remain prominent to this day, such as the Birla Institute of Technology and Science in Pilani (GD Birla), the Indian Institute of Management (Kasturbhai Lalbhai) and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Sir Dorabji Tata). They have also established foundations and trusts that work directly with nonprofit organisations and communities to address critical issues like healthcare, skill building and livelihood generation. Education and healthcare continue to remain prime focus areas amongst families till date.

## **Personal philanthropy beyond CSR**

Revisiting history brings to forefront the transformative role family philanthropy has played in shaping India and the long way it has come since its inception. Beyond their philanthropic endeavours, Indian family businesses have also upheld social responsibility as a core value. They considered business as a force for good long before the corporate social responsibility (CSR) law was even a mandate. In 2001, Cipla's 3-in-1 fixed dose combination was the first anti-AIDS cocktail that brought the cost of treatment down from US\$12,000 per patient per year to less than US\$1 a day, enabling millions across the developing world to access life-saving therapy.<sup>2</sup> Godrej's "good and green" approach with the aim of building a more inclusive and greener India is an example of keeping sustainability at the core of business ethos.



Not only have families engaged in giving before the CSR mandate, but they also continue to engage in personal philanthropy to uplift marginalised communities. The 2% CSR mandate may be a starting point for them, but their commitment to nation building is far greater. According to the EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2022, HCL Technologies' founder Shiv Nadar and his family's personal giving has been the highest in India.<sup>3</sup> While HCL's CSR arm, HCL Foundation, invested ₹216 crores in FY22 across various causes in urban and rural geographies,<sup>4</sup> Nadar's personal giving was exponentially higher at ₹1,161 crores. Another leading example is Azim Premji and family. Wipro's CSR contributions for FY22 were ₹221.6 crores,<sup>5</sup> but Premji's personal giving stood at ₹484 crores.

### **Catalysing India's strategic philanthropy movement**

Since its inception over two decades ago, Dasra has spearheaded a strategic philanthropy movement by supporting funders to deploy equitable philanthropic capital, creating funding vehicles and building the infrastructure for family philanthropy in India as well as deepening impact by championing collaborative action in focused fields including welfare of adolescents and informal workers, urban sanitation and child protection. Dasra's work has been guided by a strong belief in prioritising the lives of vulnerable communities, trusting and respecting the wisdom of local, home-grown nonprofits and leveraging the power of networks to build social capital with a gender, equity, diversity and inclusion (GEDI) lens.

During the pandemic, Dasra witnessed families in India respond with an unprecedented level of generosity, speed

and agility to support their neighbours and disadvantaged communities and help nonprofits sustain their work. For example, by October 2020, online donation platform GiveIndia received over ₹220 crores in donations from individual philanthropists and foundations towards the India Covid Response Fund (ICRF), which was instrumental in supporting more than 56 lakh people during the pandemic.<sup>6</sup>

In April 2021, at the peak of COVID-19's second wave, Dasra and Tarsadia Foundation began a 12-month COVID-19 rapid relief campaign called #BackTheFrontline, which raised over US\$10 million for 150-plus non-governmental organisations (NGOs) across 31 states and union territories in India.<sup>7</sup> The fund prioritised speedy deployment of relief aid and ensured reach to remote areas and demographics rarely covered in mainstream discussions. Today, this campaign has grown to become the Rebuild India Fund<sup>8</sup> — a US\$50 million, long-term resilience movement that will commit five years of flexible funding and capacity building support to 100 new grassroots NGOs each year.

Evolving alongside the country's changing needs, family philanthropy has today come to be characterised by greater structure, collaboration and audaciousness than ever before, with significant potential to be unlocked further as evidenced by the trends below.

***Increase in wealth.*** According to the India Philanthropy Report 2022 by Bain & Company and Dasra, family philanthropy is expected to grow at a robust 26% compound annual growth rate from FY22 to FY26.<sup>9</sup> Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2022 identified that the number of ultra-high-net-worth-individuals (UHNIs), with net assets valued over

US\$30 million, increased by 11% in 2021 — the highest percentage growth in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>10</sup>

***Ecosystem to support families.*** Intermediary organisations such as Bridgespan, Sattva Consulting and The/Nudge Institute have joined the sector. Along with Dasra, Bridgespan and Sattva are also working to advise Indian families on their giving journeys. Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University and Bain & Company are publishing research that provides insights and data pertaining to philanthropy. Wealth Management firms such as Waterfield Advisors and Kotak Wealth Management, amongst others, have philanthropy advisory desks to cater to client needs.

***Innovative and bolder giving.*** Families are increasingly showcasing willingness and conviction to walk the path less travelled by experimenting with their grantmaking and seeking to influence systems change. For example, Rati Forbes (of Forbes Marshall) and her daughter Riah Forbes' personal philanthropy focuses on historically, socially and economically marginalised groups like children with disabilities, Musahars, Devdasi communities, Nomadic and Denotified Tribes, women survivors and manual scavengers.

***Rise of the NowGen Philanthropists (NGPs).*** This group is more action-oriented, seeking cutting-edge solutions while balancing their family legacies. They are creating consensus within their families by introducing new ideas such as investing in mental health and climate action, leveraging research, and involving mentors and sector experts. There is a “learning mindset” amongst this cohort as they continuously

seek knowledge in ways that enable them to take affirmative action and deploy capital at a quicker pace, thereby being more “entrepreneurial” in their approach and more accepting of “innovation” and “risk” in philanthropy.

***Increased collaborative efforts.*** Perhaps the most significant change in the recent past has been the increasing inclination for family philanthropists to pool their resources into more collaborative efforts. For example, Social Compact<sup>11</sup> is a multi-stakeholder platform founded with the support of philanthropic families such as Rati and Farhad Forbes, Anu Aga and Meher Pudumjee (of Thermax). It seeks to ensure greater dignity and equity for one million informal workers and their families in India.

Despite these developments, a stark gap between the giving potential of families and the needs of the country’s disadvantaged communities continues to exist. Efforts are mainly taking place in siloes, with service offerings fragmented across various organisations that lack adequate coordination. Additionally, most organisations working with family philanthropists also serve corporates, institutional foundations, nonprofits and other stakeholders with very different needs and ways of working, likely diluting their focus on families. The sector lacks a single hub that focuses on families and brings together diverse offerings and services onto a collaborative platform to make their philanthropy more strategic.

## **Towards a nation of a billion thriving**

As we strive to rebuild from the aftermath of the pandemic, it is imperative for India’s philanthropic community to

think about how we, as a society, are caring for our most vulnerable populations and make an intentional shift in funding organisations that work with the most marginalised communities — especially at the intersections of caste, class, ethnicity, disability and gender — who have the greatest chance of falling through the cracks.

While unlocking greater family philanthropic capital in India is critical, it is not enough. Amid the ever-widening inequality gap, further orchestrated by COVID-19, the need for families to deliberately engage and approach giving in a way that enables dignity, equality and social justice for the most marginalised communities across India has never been more significant. Grantmaking practices need to be reflected and improved upon. The discourse and direction of mainstreaming family philanthropy should put social justice at its core. This means that families must start reflecting on their privileges and acting towards shifting the power dynamics that adversely affect communities on ground.

### **Strengthening the ecosystem of family philanthropy in India**

Towards unleashing a strategic philanthropy movement anchored by families, leading philanthropists in India and Dasra have launched GivingPi<sup>12</sup> — India's first and exclusive invite-only family philanthropy network focused on growing the philanthropy circle to ensure a transformed India, where a billion thrive with dignity and equity. By 2030, the network aims to be India's largest family philanthropy network of 5,000 members, annually giving US\$1 billion to social causes in India towards the audacious goal of #ABillionThriving.

The network is committed to creating a vibrant community of family philanthropists by supporting them in their giving journey, nurturing collaboration and growing family philanthropy for a developed nation. The network will provide philanthropy-focused offerings such as connections to credible NGOs and trusted philanthropy advisors, peer networking, theme-based learning and collaborative funding opportunities while also mainstreaming the narrative around family philanthropy in India.

### **Learnings and recommendations**

Through the last 22 years of experience in the Indian development sector, below are the insights and recommendations for families to rebuild a stronger, more equitable India.

***Invest in building institutional resilience.*** Families must provide flexible capital to support partner organisations for strengthening their institutional backbones. Offering non-financial assets such as capacity building opportunities, resilience-building tools and advisory support are essential ways that can help build grantees' organisational resilience.

***Adopt a strong GEDI lens.*** This lens can be adopted in terms of funding decisions with grantee partners and increased incorporation of the GEDI lens within the culture and principles of grantmaking institutions.

***Engage in “proximate giving” to support rural, localised, community-led efforts.*** Funders need to expand their focus beyond large, well established, city-based nonprofits to support

more grassroots organisations that have the greatest proximity to vulnerable communities.

***Participate in collaborative action.*** There is a fast-growing realisation that the magnitude and complexity of India's development challenges necessitate large-scale collaborative action amongst multiple stakeholders. Joining forces with various allies to drive collective impact provides family philanthropists the opportunity to deepen their impact by leveraging greater resources, a wider network and more diverse skill sets.

***Fostering listening as a core value.*** There is a growing need to analyse the status quo of practices followed by funders in India with regards to "listening" and building feedback loops with NGOs/communities. While we are witnessing some families being more intentional about putting their ears to the ground, we need to continue the upward momentum.

Unleashing an inspiring and audacious movement for strategic philanthropy led by families continues to be at the core of Dasra's approach. As a sector, we need to focus on building a community of empathetic philanthropists who understand the needs of the most vulnerable communities, are willing to adopt bolder and newer approaches to giving, lead by example and learn from each other's giving journeys. Families have a real opportunity to play a catalytic role in accelerating our progress to achieving the SDGs that can usher India on a new growth trajectory.

# 13

## Don't Run a Ferry Service. Build a Bridge Instead

Factor sustainability into everything that you do to create enduring change

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A CONVERSATION WITH PUJA MARWAHA

**A**FTER three decades of involvement in social issues surrounding children, Puja Marwaha knows that real change requires playing the long game. “Imagine if you had the choice of putting one rupee into reviving a school or educating a child. Do the latter, and that one child will get educated. Choose the former and advance the 2,000-odd children attending the school.” She adds, “One rupee put into rights-based work can be stretched very far.”

Chief executive officer at Child Rights and You (CRY), Marwaha believes rights-based philanthropy requires patience, persistence and a two-pronged approach that addresses core



beliefs and practices. It's a slow process, she admits, but change is possible and there's a lot each one of us can do to help speed things along.

In an interview for CPID's Philanthropy and Social Justice Conversation Series with Urvi Shriram, Marwaha talks about saviour complexes, the need for instant gratification and why building a bridge is a better practice than running a ferry service.

**URVI** What do you think are the pillars of a rights-based or justice-oriented approach to solving social problems?

**PUJA** I think the first pillar is belief. You need to *believe* that these are people's inherent human rights, and not something that they happen not to have or that bestowing it upon them is charitable of us. I always say that for this kind of work, first you must get out of the giving-and-receiving mode; counter the inequality on a mental level. Without belief, it will be very difficult to do this work because you will not respect the people that you are working for or listen to them; instead, you'll be creating solutions yourself.

The second, and very strong, pillar is factoring sustainability into everything that you do, ruthlessly. You must keep asking yourself, is this going to create change that will remain after I am gone? Create practices that make you redundant in five or 10 years. One of my favourite paradigms is: "You have to build the bridge." If you want to get people from one side of the river to the other, you can either keep running the ferry service or you can build the bridges. And you must always keep your eye on the bridge.

All of us need to do some ferry service running, right? For instance, if there is no school, you must run a school

for some time. But if it becomes an unending situation, you will never be able to put your energy into making the shift for a better system. So, sustainability is the second largest pillar that should inform your thinking.

And to me, the third pillar is the multiplier effect. Rights-based work means that you invest in fixing, or doing, things that have myriad of consequences. So, you need to develop a construct that looks beyond the first year. Look at the task i.e., what you want to shift. Define it; are you trying to shift this community from helplessness to agency? Are you trying to shift the child from not wanting to be in school to understanding that education will change her life? Keep digging till you reach the underlying human values that are at the core of your work. Without that, your efforts will be short-lived.

**URVI** A lot of this type of work [social justice-oriented] has intangible returns and outcomes that are only visible over a longer time frame; on the plus side, the change then is more permanent. So, how do you gather support for this work? What are the biggest barriers that your organisation [CRY] faces?

**PUJA** In terms of difficulties, it's interesting. I would divide it into problems that are of a personal nature, i.e., as a person doing the work, and those that are external, i.e., brought on by the set of people from whom you seek support.

I believe that the first thing that needs to be dealt with is what I call the Florence Nightingale, or "saviour" complex. Understand where it comes from. For me, it came from my own need to save myself. Once I recognised that, I stopped

visualising myself waltzing in and distributing love and happiness. I acknowledged that I, too, was gaining much from my work. I want to be a helper, make a difference and shift power in this world. So, it's about *my* need, and not the other person's.

We all want to rush in and help and, in the process, make ourselves feel better for a little time. That should be resisted, especially in the kind of work we do. You may dash in and rescue kids, but have you thought about how they're going to be rehabilitated? Because poverty or lack of access to schools are issues that haven't yet been solved. So, confront that part of you that wants quick and easy outcomes.

At the beginning of my career, I was told you have been trained to run 100 metres, but now you are running a marathon. Working towards real social change is a complex process that will take time; expect upsets caused by factors that you may never have thought of. For instance, just the other day, I met some young women who run Free Pads for India which, amongst other initiatives, conducts free sanitary pads distribution drives. They talked about how there was zero pick-up in a community that they visited. It caused some consternation because they had otherwise seen a good success rate. On further inquiry, they realised that women from that specific community don't wear standard underwear, so they couldn't use the pad that was being distributed. That's a good example of how lack of information can derail your work. Cultivating patience and persistence is important.

In our field, eagerness for instant change is the greatest hurdle posed by others as well. People want to see a classroom filled with shiny happy children or they won't support the work. I've heard donors say that our intervention is so

invisible, the school still looks miserable. And there you are, happy to have hired an extra teacher for the school or built a separate toilet for girl students. We know that these are huge wins, but it requires a different mindset, this kind of thinking.

We have been criticised for discouraging donation of water coolers if there is a need in schools. There is already a budget for it! Most people running schools, hospitals, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) schemes, etc., are totally unaware of the resources that are available to them. Addressing that information gap alone can make such a big impact. Show your benevolence by working with the education department officials and school authorities to ensure that the money allocated is requisitioned and utilised.

Earlier, I had mentioned the multiplier effect as a pillar of rights-based work. Show your benefactors the math. One rupee put into rights-based work can be stretched very far. Now, imagine if you had the choice of putting that one rupee into reviving a school or educating a child. Do the latter, and that one child will get educated. Choose the former and advance the 2,000-odd children attending the school. If the school authorities and parent community gain knowledge in the process, your contribution may have the school set on a course for the next two decades.

**URVI** These are very complex issues, so thank you for using real-life examples to explain how a rights-based approach leads to permanent change even though you may not see very measurable results in the shorter term.

One of the goals at CPID is to help shift the narrative in philanthropy to place social justice at the centre of all the

giving that's happening. Do you think philanthropy in India is focusing enough on the root causes of issues related to social and economic inequity and how can it be supported better?

**PUJA** I think philanthropy is itself at a nascent stage [in India]. There are, maybe, a few shining examples of philanthropists who get it and, more importantly, respect that it is a profession and work towards building on the existing expertise. From my experience, I can say that the levels of accountability in the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector are a hundred times greater than that of the corporate sector. At some level, we are so conscious of the fact that we're raising funds for children, right? And it's entirely self-driven; s/he didn't ask me to do it. So, I owe it to these children to be as efficient as I can, to be accountable for every action and to get things right.

I would love to see more respect for the work being done by the communities. The social sector workforce doesn't need to be told what to do; we can't just design philanthropic programs for them. Look at the whole concept of participatory evaluation [stakeholders in a community project set evaluation criteria for it and use the data collected to adjust and improve the project]. Organisations like Praxis, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) have done a wonderful job at creating awareness about bringing communities into the fold to understand the issues and realistically assess which ones can, and cannot, be dealt with.

Regarding social justice issues, I expect gender equality to be a very long fight. Caste too, because it is discord created over centuries and buried deep inside people's hearts. You may

create better practices like affirmative action or reservation, but they're not addressing the underlying beliefs people possess about those from a lower caste. Or self-belief that can foster feelings of unworthiness and subjugation.

It's a slow process, and I think that is hard for philanthropists to fathom. Maybe the answer lies in simultaneously looking at both the work required to transform deep-rooted attitudes and practices that can be instituted to help build a more equitable society.

It is also upon us to explain why things happen in a certain way and to reiterate that there are no silver bullets. Too many from our sector are going around offering those silver bullets! I have heard somebody once convince a very big philanthropist by saying, "Oh, you know, you can stop 90% of child trafficking in this country if you address six railway stations," or, "We can change everything if we can get every child into preschool." Let's just focus on preschool, without understanding or addressing any realities about that child's family or parents' livelihoods? How are you going to do that?

**URVI** CRY has supported hundreds of grassroots initiatives throughout the country, very often in economically backward locations. How do you ensure that the voice of the community is included in decision making and strategic planning within your organisation?

**PUJA** It is really the most difficult thing because it's so easy to believe in our own cleverness, isn't it?

Over time, we've developed a whole bunch of best practices. One is that we try very hard to ensure that

the organisations/individuals that we work with are from/ embedded in the community. We've found that when it's your karmabhoomi (world of action), commitment is very strong. Then, ensuring that work being done is participatory. Each quarter, every frontline worker is meeting everybody up the line.

This has caused a lot of frustration at CRY. Sometimes, I hear my teammates say, "Why can't someone just take a decision and tell people what to do? It will be faster." I have to say, "No, that's not who we are. I would never do that."

This construct of managing by enrolling at every level has become, for us, almost institutionalised because you get the wisdom of the people who are doing the work on the ground. I mean, a piece of data may look promising to you, but a frontline worker may cite reasons for why that data is false. For example, school enrolment data across the country is said to be 98%.<sup>1</sup> With those enrolment numbers, how can child labour exist? That's why it's important to listen to and empower communities.

Another thing is transparency, which builds trust. A community that knows an NGO's grant amount and how it's being spent is one that will walk farther with you. Having professional methods to measure accountability is also important. For example, assess how many community members have become second-line supervisors, or have come up in the organisation as leaders. Check if the accounts are being maintained. Don't leave anything to chance, is my big learning.

**URVI** It's interesting that you've brought up the point about collecting data. Very often, limited evidence on complex issues

like child rights, gender, justice, etc., becomes an obstacle to raising funds. So, we need data to unpack the layers of inequities that stop us from making substantial programs.

**PUJA** Yes, and we need it to effectively get our message across. For example, what if building community groups is one of my paths to make the community take responsibility for the children. How will I know that they are doing so? By process mapping all the signs of empowerment. For instance, have they begun to deliberate over the school? Have they identified whether there is a school management committee (SMC) that they can engage with and hopefully, at some point, sponsor and ensure the SMC is working? Has the panchayat passed the correct resolutions?

As enablers, it's important for us to look past the mandate of outcome data. There is process data, pitch that instead. Just be clear about the outcome, which is simply that children should be in school, happy and secure.

**URVI** Lastly, I'd like you to share some action steps or advice on how philanthropy and civil society can play a critical role in ensuring that children of our country are able to reach their full potential, irrespective of caste, class and gender and how our demographic dividend can become a true strength in the future.

**PUJA** We have to work together to decode the complexity of factors responsible for the problems children face and understand that change requires a holistic approach. Yes, I can revive a school or find some high-tech solutions to teach a child. But if I don't resolve the nutritional issues,



the child will be unable to absorb anything. So, how do we build knowledge around the issue that we are dealing with? I think that is a critical silver bullet.

I think the other thing is to relentlessly question things, be it other people's prejudices or your own, for instance. I don't know how we can create a space for people to do that, but I believe self-growth will lead us forward, right? Then, other hard questions like, is this community most in need of support? What is your exit strategy? How are you going to transfer power? How are you ensuring your intervention is sustainable? Ask those questions and ensure that you support work that talks that language. Stay focused on the bridge analogy.

The last thing that I say to people is, stop believing that poverty is impossible to beat. It's not. Look at the data across the world — the number of people who are living in extreme poverty has fallen. So, it is possible. Quit the "nothing is going to change and it's only going to get worse" mindset; take action and look around you. Things are progressing. Maybe not as fast, or as much, as we wanted them to but it's there to see. As more of us decide that *change is possible* and therefore, contribute to it, the sooner we will get there.

# 14

## Listen and Disrupt

The Solidaire Network's collaboration strategy with movement partners provides a blueprint for others

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JANIS ROSHEUVEL

### **PART I: What's at stake for US social justice philanthropy**

More strategic action is required from social justice philanthropy in the United States. Climate collapse, global pandemics, fascist white nationalism, the devastation of social safety nets, mass incarceration and deportation, the undermining of bodily autonomy and credible threats to electoral democracy demand a response from philanthropy that goes beyond what we have been doing. Today, many large philanthropic foundations, wealthy individual donors and family foundations in the United States are turning their focus to supporting grassroots groups challenging this status quo.<sup>1</sup>

The relatively small cadre<sup>2</sup> of us engaged in funding leftist social change efforts in the United States are frequently driven by our commitment to support movements led by the people most harmed by oppressive systems. We believe in funding groups who organise alongside deliberately marginalised communities. We believe in philanthropy being led by the needs of movements rather than the confines of philanthropic practice. We believe in being responsive to the changes and challenges that movements face in real time. We believe in using our positions to move more resources creatively, purposefully and over the long term. And we act grounded in this vision.

Yet too many of us in the philanthropic sector, even and especially those with a commitment to helping seed left grassroots social change, are hamstrung by structures imposed on us as well as those of our own making. Many millions of dollars have moved from philanthropy's bursting coffers in the past few years, but many more billions remain out of reach due to stagnant and unjust practices within the sector.<sup>3</sup> Further, while philanthropy in the United States has seen more diverse leadership in the last two decades, institutional structures are often openly hostile to these leaders. Indeed, in a recent survey, President and CEO of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, Aaron Dorfman noted, "Fewer than half of people of colour working in philanthropy feel that their racial identity is actualised — meaning they feel recognised, valued and have agency to authentically engage in their organisations. Far too many of our colleagues report their racial identity is unseen, ignored, erased or exploited."<sup>4</sup> Additionally, philanthropy remains largely unwilling to practically undermine the inherent injustice of wealth hoarding that makes its existence as a sector possible.<sup>5</sup>

How can philanthropy support efforts to realise a just world with a clear view of its limitations and opportunities as a sector?

We must follow the lead of movements for social change. Movements have been clear about what they need to win: resources, including time, safety, money, energy, access, information and people power.<sup>6789</sup> Social movements in the United States vary in tactics, yet their relationships to philanthropy are nearly universally fraught. Movements distrust philanthropy and with good reason. Inherent power imbalances mean movement organisations have to constantly fight for too meagre resources from a donor and philanthropic class that demands onerous oversight and exerts undue influence.<sup>10</sup> Movements have pronounced that they need to be liberated from the excessive and abusive processes of philanthropy that prevent them from thriving and fighting in the ways that most make sense to their communities. Movements have also become frustrated with philanthropy's complacency. As Ash-Lee Woodard-Henderson, executive director of the famed Southern movement institute the Highlander Center said of 2020, "It was a catalytic moment for philanthropy." Henderson said of the killing of George Floyd by police officers and subsequent protests that ensued, "Philanthropy had to see that we were telling the truth for years. It should be shameful that it took this much cumulative Black deaths to prove to philanthropy that there was a level of crisis that needed to be paid attention to."<sup>11</sup>

## **PART II: How social change philanthropy got here**

These dynamics mean the practice of funding social change in the United States is in deep trouble. This crisis is of course

inherent in the nature and history of US philanthropy. As a practice, modern US philanthropy was created to wash the sins of robber baron era moguls who grossly violated labour protections, initiated the devastating decline of the natural world and brutally displaced large swaths of people in the pursuit of building their industrial fiefdoms. Wealthy men like Henry Ford, JD Rockefeller Sr, Andrew Carnegie, Andrew Mellon and John Jacob Astor, building on a legacy of white nationalism and capitalism without bounds, were ruthless in their efforts, as has been well documented.<sup>12</sup>

As part of their vision to harness the world to their wills, and following the passage of legislation that, “allowed Americans to take tax deductions for their charitable gifts as a way to avoid the personal income tax laws”,<sup>13</sup> many of these men created permanent charitable foundations. These foundations were established to give resources, via tightly circumscribed methods, to create citizens in these men’s image often through funding of hospitals, schools, museums, libraries and colleges. These efforts benefitted many and transformed the landscape of the nation. Their core assumption was, however, that social, political and economic systems worked well for elites who should exercise generosity to help the rest.<sup>14</sup>

The intervening century has shown us the deep flaws in this assumption.

In response to the staggering scale of oppression that resulted from the founding of the United States and the Industrial Revolution, many of those who were brutally pushed to the margins of society fought to challenge and improve the systems that were impacting their lives. Throughout the progressive and labour movements, Black liberation struggles, fights for immigrant rights and Indigenous recognition and sovereignty, women’s liberation, Queer justice and more,

oppressed people in the United States mounted historic efforts to stake their claims, assert their rights and realise needed structural changes. Their efforts improved material conditions for individuals and communities alike, yet these advancements have in many ways been ephemeral and too easily undone.

Another response to the growth of grassroots social movements from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was the policing and criminalisation of dissent via various legal and political mechanisms.<sup>15</sup> For example, while the main aim of the 1969 Tax Reform Act was for Congress to constrict, “the influence of the wealthy on private foundations and [hinder] the abuse of dollars put into charitable solution through income tax rules”,<sup>16</sup> it also propelled the creation of the modern nonprofit sector. These changes in US tax law positioned philanthropy as a means to stymie the power of grassroots groups via their funding streams. In order to give funding, philanthropic foundations would require movement groups to be government sanctioned and accredited 501(c)(3) tax-exempt not-for-profit organisations. Nonprofits in the US had political and fiduciary restrictions imposed on them that often stifled their ability to be creative and challenge oppressive structures. From the limits that US nonprofits have on political lobbying, to the ways the US government has targeted and destroyed organisations using violations of their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status<sup>17</sup> and prosecuted organisers and activists via specious means, the very nature of how movement nonprofits are funded in the United States is highly regulated and under routine threat from the state.<sup>18</sup>

Today nonprofit organisations, often serving communities the government has openly neglected, are primarily funded by philanthropic interests rather than by governments or even the communities they work alongside. Philanthropic

entities are not elected nor are they, with few exceptions, representative of the communities they fund and as such have little to no accountability to these communities.<sup>19</sup> They make decisions about where and how to fund with little if any direction from people who are receiving the resources.<sup>20</sup> It is in this context that some of us currently find ourselves trying to change the mandates of social justice philanthropy in the United States.

Despite all of its many challenges, philanthropy still matters. It matters not because it is any real threat to oppressive systems that are designed to fail most people in this country. Philanthropy matters because it is a vital step toward repairing the unjust distribution of resources that helped set up our current state of affairs. Moving money from people with access to wealth to the communities from which the wealth was extracted is just a start. Dollars from philanthropy allow communities held at the margins to have the resources they need to concretely challenge systemic oppression but more importantly, to begin building new life-sustaining systems that serve all. If driven by our partners on the frontlines of social change, philanthropy can be a key stepping-stone toward meaningful redistribution and repair.

### **PART III: Solidaire Network — origins, complexity and evolution**

The Solidaire Network was founded in 2013 to try to answer the question: can people with access to wealth be held accountable for the ways they move money to frontline social movements? Solidaire was created by a few people with access to wealth, and as a way to fund movements fighting against corporate greed, economic inequality, climate change, gender

and racial injustice and anti-Blackness. Since then, Solidaire has moved millions of dollars directly to the frontlines. Today, Solidaire is a community of donor organisers who pay annual membership contributions to be a part of a network that pools its funds in order to get critical resources to social movements. Solidaire's grantmaking has acted on two key principles — firstly, listening to, hearing and funding mandates from movement leaders and organisations, and secondly, disrupting business as usual in philanthropy. But Solidaire has itself experienced a clear evolution in its philanthropic practice that has allowed us to realise our values of rigorous learning and strategic disruption more fully.

The organisation was established based on the deep relationships the founders had with one another and other wealth holders. Their connections and shared political vision for moving money to leftist work drove how they funded and learnt collectively.

Moving money was frequently a tool for donor education and development. Simultaneously, in the first years of its existence, Solidaire moved money to social movements in rapid, ad hoc, generally one-off ways. The focus on moving money quickly was a huge success with our wealthy donor members. One of them commented in a 2019 evaluation report of our work, “Actually having a rapid response mechanism, it really is hard to come by. Just seeing how literally you have an email list and get support, I think how much money has come by that is a huge ... innovation and an achievement.”<sup>21</sup> Solidaire's first disruption to philanthropy was shifting money quickly to the movement; often within days or weeks, sometimes even hours. This was anathema to traditional US philanthropy with its burdensome decision making and oversight methods.



While moving money in rapid, seemingly responsive ways captured the imagination of many Solidaire donor members, it also challenged philanthropic norms and got money directly to the frontlines. But the limits of this set of practices were clear from the start. When rapid response requests came in, wealthy members made 100% of decisions about what to fund. In the first two quarters of 2020, while 95% of all organisations who sought rapid response funding received some level of support, the gap between funding requests and funding provided was over US\$6.4 million or over 48%.<sup>22</sup> Even outside of our member-led rapid response mechanism, when we moved money in more traditional ways via an open application for our movement research and development fund, we mostly gave one-time grants to groups. A clear exception was a strategy Solidaire started to fund the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) that focused on donors choosing one organisation to fund for five years. But while over US\$6.1 million<sup>23</sup> was committed by donors, the strategy lacked the infrastructure to be a tool for deeper organising of wealth and redistribution of money to M4BL.

Movement leaders gave us strong feedback that while our funding vehicles got them needed money, they remained lacking. In a 2019 survey of groups we funded, 65% said that Solidaire's giving practices were not transparent, one respondent saying decision making to them was "completely opaque".<sup>24</sup> One movement partner was equally pointed in their critique of our practice, "When people with money are excited that can be awesome and they can also cause big problems without understanding the context of what is happening at the grassroots. It can sometimes prevent movement development and sometimes creates a level of expectation that cannot be met. Resourcing is one part of it and one part is creating a

view of power building.”<sup>25</sup> Other movement leaders remarked that while Solidaire’s efforts to reduce the burden of annual reporting and oversight were commendable, they often felt funded but not supported beyond their grants and abandoned by our lack of deeper partnership.<sup>26</sup>

Our efforts to evaluate Solidaire’s work and respond to movements’ legitimate critiques of our grantmaking coincided with the cataclysmic pandemic and protest events of 2020. Shifting from being a network focused on the interests and learning of donors to one that prioritises frontline-led efforts, where donors and philanthropy can be engaged on movement’s terms, became increasingly urgent in 2020. For Solidaire’s work to remain relevant to dynamic movement ecosystems, we needed to change direction, deepen some aspects of our work and jettison others. After seven years of mobilising donors, moving US\$20 million to the movement,<sup>27</sup> 2020 presented an unprecedented opportunity to further challenge the status quo. Through a series of internal evaluations and dialogues with movement partners and donor members, Solidaire began forging a new path. This path has attempted to honour and regularly incorporate grantee partner input as well as respond to the current moment in ways that help build up movements for the long term.

***Grantmaking evolution.*** Responding to the feedback from our movement partners, efforts to shift our processes in 2020 included honing our funding to bolster organising for Black liberation as well as work to build movement infrastructure. We also began creating processes to enhance our accountability to our movement partners that we named liberatory learning and evaluation. And we revised our grantmaking practices to build deeper trust with and lessen the burden on our grantee

partners. The chart on the next page shows how Solidaire transitioned from our previous way of working toward a more movement-centred philanthropic approach.

As shown in the chart (p. 186), since 2020 Solidaire has implemented processes that directly take in movements' feedback that we must be more accountable, responsive and long term in our thinking and execution of philanthropy. Our newly revised and updated grantmaking and reporting structures have offered us a chance to demonstrate that we can listen to movement and concretely apply new learnings to our practice. We shifted to a funding structure that ensures we fund for a minimum of five years. While making a five-year funding pledge to our grantee partners is, in fact, a modest commitment given the multi-decade nature of social movements, it is still an outlier across philanthropy. Indeed, our movement partners have told us repeatedly that knowing funds are going to be available for five years means they can have a level of stability in their organisational life and planning.

Our new funding processes have also responded to movement organisations telling us that they need more than just a grant to thrive; they need deeper and more meaningful relationships with Solidaire's staff and members. One partner in a recent evaluation survey affirmed this approach. "Long-term partnership that allows organisations to have the confidence to thrive is key. Thank you for understanding this principle."<sup>28</sup> Other partners have noted changes in how we discuss and share our work and internal processes and the rarity of this in philanthropy. "We find your transparency and consent model to be refreshing and very much appreciate Solidaire's relationship-based approach to grant reporting."<sup>29</sup> Our partners also share that we continue

to be cutting-edge grantmakers that seek out and fund work that is in various places of formation. We fund ideas and experiments as well as newly created and well established organisations, large and small. A grantee partner building a land trust in northern California mentioned in a recent annual reporting conversation that, “Solidaire was one of the first ones to fund us and help us be seen as a movement innovator. So much gratitude to you for that support and for the ongoing support.”<sup>30</sup>

<b>Solidaire’s timeline of social funding</b>	2013-2020 (Beginnings of Solidaire’s trust-based philanthropy practice)	2020 and Beyond (Growing toward Solidaire’s movement-centred, solidarity-based approach)
<b>Expanding funding for Black liberation</b>	> 30+ donor members pooled funding to support groups in the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) > US\$6.1M committed > maintained a strong partnership with core leaders of M4BL	* implemented the Black Liberation Pooled Fund to resource an entire movement ecosystem, not just one grouping of organisation * five-year funding commitments made to 102 grantee partners * moved US\$13.8M between 2021-2022
<b>Funding movement infrastructure</b>	> moved grants to hundreds of organisations from 2013-2020 > majority of grants were one-time only > only able to maintain relationships with small number of grantee partners	* implemented the Movement Infrastructure Fund to support long-term movement building * five-year funding commitments made to 55 grantee partners * moved US\$7.4M between 2021-2022

<p><b>Mutual learning and practice with movements</b></p>	<p>&gt; movement groups engaged in learning sessions to educate donor members                  &gt; movement leaders served on funding decision-making committees alongside donor members</p>	<p>* implemented a consent-based liberatory learning and evaluation process to build partnerships with grantees                  * hold 1-2x a year one-on-one conversations with all grantee partners                  * implemented movement oversight and direction setting committees for each funding vehicles                  * movement groups engaged in strategic learning sessions to educate donor members and organise wealth</p>
<p><b>Creating less burdensome grantmaking practices</b></p>	<p>&gt; annual application processes for the movement research and development fund, no reporting required                  &gt; no application process for M4BL funded orgs, no reporting required</p>	<p>* 1-3 question application forms, no renewal applications required                  * replace written reporting with annual conversations with grantee partners                  * creating a capacity and accompaniment program to support partners beyond the grant on issues like technical assistance, peer learning and organising donor members</p>

***Growth in organising wealth.*** In addition to all of the changes to our grantmaking practice, Solidaire has begun to thrive within the unique position it holds in philanthropy. Solidaire sits at the intersection of organising people with access to wealth and being in trusted partnerships with movement leaders and organisations. While donor members do not make grantmaking decisions as they once did at Solidaire, they have a pivotal role to play in continuing to disrupt philanthropy.

One example with the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) that came to fruition in 2020 reflects Solidaire's ability to live into its role as an organiser and resource mobiliser alongside movement ecosystems. Solidaire's partnership with M4BL resulted in deep shared learning and increased resources to this ecosystem in the midst of the unprecedented national protests for racial justice in 2020.

M4BL was formally established in 2014, a year after Solidaire's founding. From its formation as a decentralised network in the ongoing fight for Black liberation, M4BL was supported by Solidaire and others via grants, individual donors and in-kind donations. Moving money was just the beginning. Solidaire worked alongside M4BL from 2014 on to support donor education about the mechanics of organising a broad-based movement for Black liberation. We worked with M4BL to mobilise donor members to make five-year commitments to organisations in this movement ecosystem. Solidaire staff also served on a monthly coordinating committee with M4BL leadership to help determine the best ways to mobilise funds for the movement. It was this plodding, deliberate, trust building work over years that enabled 2020 to be a key collaboration year between Solidaire and the M4BL.

The brutal murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, led

to the largest public protests in US history.<sup>31</sup> In the midst of these protests, the constellation of groups within M4BL were keeping people in the streets with Freedom Summer 2020,<sup>32</sup> fighting against the targeting of protesters<sup>33</sup> by the police and vigilantes and turning street power into legislative and policy power.<sup>34</sup> These groups and their leaders were also agitating and marshalling philanthropy. The M4BL Resource Table, which had been organising funding for the movement for several years, called on Solidaire, along with two other philanthropic allies, to help plan and speak at a briefing for funders on June 8<sup>th</sup> 2020, at the height of the protests. Because of Solidaire's history funding M4BL and regularly collaborating on donor education and organising over years, their invitation affirmed the trusted and deep nature of our partnership. Solidaire, along with other invited funders, was asked to get donors to join the call and to convey M4BL's mandate to mobilise US\$100 million to fund the movement in this pivotal moment but also to help secure its financial foundation for the decades to come.

Following the June 8 funder briefing, Solidaire was invited to join weekly calls until December 2020 to organise alongside M4BL and other philanthropic partners mobilising money to the movement. Because Solidaire donor members had already moved considerable resources to the M4BL ecosystem, the call to support the movement's new fundraising goal of US\$100 million came with a powerful and resounding, YES! Solidaire donor members not only moved and dramatically increased their own resources to M4BL,<sup>35</sup> they also began organising money for the movement in the wealth holding networks of which they were a part.

In one instance, several Solidaire donor members and

members of an ally funder network, Resource Generation, created Families Organizing to Resource Movements (FORM), “a project to organise wealthy families and family foundations to move resources to M4BL and transform how families resource social justice movements at large through ongoing peer support.”<sup>36</sup> The structure of FORM aims to organise wealth holders on behalf of the movement. In its working statement of purpose, FORM organisers are concrete about the work of the people they are seeking to mobilise, “visioning your wildest family organising dreams, mapping your family structure, role-playing tough conversations, offering more background on M4BL’s current programs and campaigns, preparing you to use an M4BL slide deck we created for families that are on the fence [about supporting M4BL].”<sup>37</sup> Driven by explicit movement demands, FORM and other such efforts to organise wealth across individuals, families and foundations are growing philanthropy’s funding<sup>38</sup> to social movements.

The origins and practice of modern US philanthropy mean that there is hard work to do for decades to come to transform how money is organised and wielded by movements. We funders must see ourselves as accomplices willing to take bigger risks to disrupt the comfort of our practices, institutions and money to align with movements’ mandates. Being an accomplice means we seek out opportunities to challenge power structures in our sector and institutions, even if it will cost us. We must also demonstrate solidarity in material ways that can make immediate and long-term support possible for movement groups.

Solidaire has created an organisational structure that aims to organise donor members and the wider philanthropic sector



*and* listen to and fund movements. What has worked has been to be in regular dialogue and experimental co-creation with our partners. An example like Solidaire's collaboration the Movement for Black Lives demonstrates the pieces necessary for us to walk alongside movements with integrity and responsiveness. To be a successful contributor during M4BL's fundraising campaign, Solidaire needed to have been doing deep political education and wealth organising within its membership and beyond before 2020. Solidaire and the rest of philanthropy needed to be primed to take on the call of a movement ready to raise US\$100 million. Without the long-term work alongside M4BL, since its inception, Solidaire would have been far less effective. Knowing our role, building authentic relationships and creating structures to move money and agitate and incorporate donors led to Solidaire making immediate and lasting impacts in M4BL's resource mobilisation campaign.

#### **PART IV: Creating a new paradigm**

Solidaire's work in the past near decade has impacted philanthropy, but it is not a standalone. There are many such earnest and growing efforts within the US philanthropic landscape to be responsive to the needs of movements and mobilise money and other resources creatively. Here the work of Resource Generation to do peer education and organising of donors, the Tides Advocacy Fund's aim to increase resources to chronically underfunded Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC)-led electoral justice work, the Kataly Foundation's intent to spend down its US\$445 million endowment within 10 years, the Kolibri Foundation's

movement-led board and the Stardust Fund's effort to move direct payments to people in need are worth mentioning.

These funders and other individual donors and philanthropic foundations are in a critical moment of change. The needs of social movements are ever-increasing, including responding to coinciding pandemics, burnout amongst staff and community leaders, threats to personal, digital and organisational safety and more.<sup>39</sup> If we continue to centre movement organisations' wellbeing and longevity while seeking transformative justice partnerships with them, social justice philanthropy has the potential to help create a new paradigm.

Borrowing from movement leader and philosopher, adrienne maree brown, "if we want to create a world in which conflict and trauma aren't the centre of our collective existence, we have to practice something new, ask different questions...".<sup>40</sup> Some of the most urgent questions being asked inside and outside US social justice philanthropy now are: how can our work in philanthropy undermine injustice today and over time? How can we help fund creation of a world that is not extractive but regenerative? What do we want our comrades in the future to know we have done to transform unjust systems in the decades and centuries to come? These are big and daunting questions. Within each of these, there are a multiplicity of questions. We can start with those that help to direct our path forward based on where we sit in philanthropy: "How do I relate to the power that I have? How do I relate to those that are in coalition with me? How do I move and share my power across the coalition?"<sup>41</sup>

Philanthropy can and must be a tool for movements. Money from the philanthropic sector can help to bridge gaps, meet urgent needs and build long-term movement

infrastructure. This infrastructure enables so much. The mass protests of the past decade solidified because there is organising and coalition building and narrative change and legislative advocacy and leadership development of impacted communities and more happening all the time. Movements are always challenging entrenched power structures, whether there are protests on television and social media or not. Our drive as philanthropy must be to stand doggedly alongside movements as they change, evolve, fail, recover and win.

## ‘Haqdarshak Stands for Inclusion’

How a simple, output-based pitch can help secure funding for a social justice cause

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A CONVERSATION WITH ANIKET DOEGAR

**E**STABLISHED in 2016, Haqdarshak is the first Indian social enterprise to digitalise welfare programs on a single platform. It was the culmination of a problem that co-founder and CEO Aniket Doegar had been grappling with for over a decade.

Haqdarshak, he says, stands for inclusion. “If I go to a philanthropist today and say, I want to work on inclusion, I don’t think anybody will give me funding. But, explaining what you want to do under that umbrella (for us, it is social security, financial inclusion, gender) and sharing a simple, output-based pitch, has worked,” says Doegar, who made the *Forbes* magazine’s 30 Under 30 list in 2019.

In conversation with Urvi Shriram for CPID’s Philanthropy

and Social Justice Conversation Series, Doegar discusses solving social problems with data, building a scalable, sustainable social enterprise and why Indian philanthropy needs to move from an output to outcome focus.

**URVI** Thank you for joining us today, Aniket. I wanted to begin by asking you to tell us about Haqdarshak and your vision for the future.

**ANIKET** Haqdarshak is a technology-enabled, for-profit social enterprise; our purpose and mission are to ensure every citizen gets access to their rights — social security, financial inclusion — thereby raising the standard of living. We do that with the help of women entrepreneurs, whom we train on the ground. So essentially, we are an assistive technology model; our delivery service partners offer doorstep support in rural and urban low-income communities to help secure documentation that establishes both identity and access to welfare benefits. Our focus is on informal workers — labourers, urban and rural citizens who are earning less than ₹1,000 per day, and the very small businesses which are earning less than ₹10 lakhs per year.

Haqdarshak started in January 2016, but I have been trying to solve this access problem for close to 10 years now, since I began my journey in this sector as teacher-coach for Teach for India Fellowship. During my years spent in different roles, lack of documentation and access to government schemes and entitlements was a problem that consistently kept coming up, and because of which groups and individual citizens were unable to get the money that they are entitled to from the government.

Addressing this at a time before the smartphone boom, we created a Wikipedia-type site for schemes in 2014. Quickly, we realised that model will not work. Gradually, we were building up towards Haqdarshak.

The first two to three years after launching Haqdarshak, we tried multiple business models. Over the last three years or so, our model has been to work with corporates, philanthropies, corporate social responsibility (CSR) teams and nonprofits to ensure last mile delivery for workers and small businesses.

We have now trained over 10,000 rural women entrepreneurs who are our agents; overall, our cross-country reach has now crossed 20 lakhs, out of which we have ensured that 15 lakh families and 50,000 small businesses have received benefits.

**URVI** As you know, India has seen a surge in philanthropic work, yet that growth has been in silos. Complex areas like human rights, environment, gender equality and some of the other deeply entrenched issues receive minimal funds and attention.

How effective would you say Indian philanthropy has been in reducing the inequality of opportunity? What do you think can be done to increase and amplify that impact?

**ANIKET** So, I'll answer in two parts. Regarding the landscape of Indian philanthropy, one thing we need to acknowledge is that our country has been a pioneer. Philanthropy has been a practice here long before it emerged in the Western world. A great number of family offices and trusts were formed, and it was all very professionally done, even before the advent of CSR. So, it's a long-standing tradition, but

what has happened is that we have very few family or corporate philanthropies which are run *independently* of the individuals who are backing them. It is not yet ecosystem driven, which is typically what a philanthropy should be ... because once you put the money in philanthropy, it's for the public, it's not your money anymore. That's the definition, right? So, philanthropy remains nascent till the time we are not ecosystem driven (by which I mean, once you've given money for a cause, it should be used for whatever is best for the people who need it).

With the economic growth of the country, there are many more individuals who want to give back today and I think that's very encouraging. We now need to work towards institutionalising a lot of this to make a collective impact and build enduring foundations. For instance, the Tatas invested in the Indian Institute of Science, and we are reaping the benefits years on. How we similarly succeed in taking Indian philanthropy from individual to institution is where we currently are, in our growth phase.

Therein lies the answer to your question about why there is less funding for social justice issues. I personally believe Indian philanthropy has a very output-based funding model. That is, if you put in this much money, you want to know how much return you are getting. Gender, justice, rights are not output but outcome centric. An outcome has no timeline. That's why, despite the surge in people giving, we are not getting funding for these tricky, complex grey areas or those that are mid- to long-term outcome driven.

**URVI** Regarding social justice philanthropy, I think what we are also realising is that you have to put the people who

are at the centre of these injustices in the decision-making seat, to empower them. What are some of the root causes of the injustices that you and Haqdarshak care about and how are you addressing them? How can that lead to long-term systemic impact in the communities that you support?

**ANIKET** At the broader level, what Haqdarshak really stands for is inclusion — financial, social, gender — and those are the three main buckets that we really focus on with our partners. We feel the way to promote inclusion is through knowledge dissemination on our platform.

While we are really pushing these three agendas under the inclusion umbrella, the fact is that when the narrative is about advancing inclusion, it's difficult to raise money. It's easier when we break it down to say, "We are training 'x' women that will lead to 'x' livelihood opportunities" or "We are going to ensure 'x' number of people get access to scholarships or pensions or their rights (by improving access to caste certificates)."

So, while it's very important for organisations and founders to have their core mission very clear and communicated to their teams, in the current landscape, it's equally important to be able to break down that narrative for funders. If I go to a philanthropist today and say, I want to work on inclusion, I don't think anybody will give me funding. But, explaining what you want to do under that umbrella (for us, it is social security, financial inclusion, gender) and sharing a simple, output-based pitch, has worked.

We want to get philanthropists to think about outcome, and I believe that will also come with time. You can't push it.



**URVI** Thank you for being so candid about your struggles with funding. Based on your experience, how do you think funders — individuals, corporates, foundations or social purpose organisations like yours — can build better relationships with each other and the communities that they're working in? How important is collaboration for creating sustainable impact?

**ANIKET** It's extremely important for us to have a collaborative ecosystem and at the heart of it lies technology and data.

At Haqdarshak, we collaborate with civil society, communities, nonprofits and funders. I believe whatever we've been able to accomplish has been through the power of data and I'd recommend it as a practice to be followed by all.

I'll give you an example — let's say, you are working in a gram panchayat, and you want to train 'x' number of rural women to become field support agents. While the approach must be collaborative, technology and data will help you determine what you have to work with. With these assistive technology interventions, we will get to our collective goals faster.

**URVI** You've briefly touched upon this earlier, but could you tell us about two or three main challenges that you have faced while raising funds or support for Haqdarshak's work, especially when it comes to getting access to funds? How have you managed to make Haqdarshak sustainable by ensuring efficiency and profitability along with purpose?

**ANIKET** It is a continuous challenge, and we have a few approaches to deal with it. One I mentioned already is breaking down your narrative because while you may be passionate about the problem, your funder may not. S/he

may want you to solve the problem, but that may not be *their* passion. Understanding and accepting that reality is very important; finding a funder who matches your passion for the problem very rarely happens.

Secondly, I think what has worked for us at Haqdarshak, and made us both sustainable and scalable, is that we've adopted a person-led approach. We really concentrate on building one-on-one relationships with funders and people at the philanthropies we work with.

Internally, we focus a lot on data, but we believe in sharing case studies with our funders. The project may cover one million families, but that's a number. Narrating an individual's story to donors and others in the ecosystem, and explaining how it impacts them, is a powerful move and one that works.

A social purpose venture can't be individual-centric, it needs to be organisation-centric; that's the only way you can build an institution. Still, many organisations, even very large ones, have a very founder-driven model. If the founder is there, then they are able to raise unlimited money, but if the founder isn't present, and someone else enters the same room, with the same deck, for the same problem, s/he won't be able to raise the money. That is not sustainable, right? So, how do you ensure your mission and vision garner the attention over an individual? That is a problem on the execution side of philanthropy, as it's a very individual-centric sector.

Young leaders need to be more transparent, and democratic. From the start, delegate. You can't be a superhero and solve everything.

**URVI** You're a young founder and visionary leader who's taken on a critical problem in the country. What do you

think other leaders, both on the funding side and founders of social purpose organisations, can do to make their capital or efforts more effective, especially when it comes to increasing the welfare of less privileged communities?

**ANIKET** This may not be what founders of social purpose organisations want to hear, but it's been proven effective. Funders need to talk less to the founders and more to the community.

At Haqdarshak, we've had situations where we've wondered how to explain why our work is important. Bringing the community or our Haqdarshaks into the conversation is often the best way to do that since it's their problem that you are trying to solve.

Funders want to support that last mile family or citizen who really needs it. So young people who are thinking about getting into the funding side of philanthropy need to engage with them a lot more. I feel there is not enough of a connect there and lots of ideas and innovation can come from that interaction.

Social purpose organisations seeking funds assume that their program proposal won't make the cut even before it has been presented. They have a mental block about inputs from funders. But I think funders can bring a lot to the table, in terms of ideation and program design.

If founders can be more open-minded and proactively engage funders on the program design, and funders take the initiative to interact with the community before deciding whether to finance the project or not, I think that will make a big, *big* change in the way we look at philanthropy.

**URVI** Now, if you were to just summarise, what do you think will be the role of Indian philanthropy in supporting social sector organisations, let's say 10-20 years into the future, and how will that help build a just and equitable India?

**ANIKET** I think it will play a very pivotal role. All ideas or big changes in our country have been supported by philanthropy. Whether you look at Right to Information (RTI), Right to Food and other innovative health solutions, there have been philanthropists who have been ahead of the game. I think the pivotal role that philanthropy can play is in taking more risk, staying closer to the community and even, in some cases, being okay with failure. That's the whole point, isn't it? Why do we only want to look at successes? Haqdarshak has, over the last two or three years, grown, but we also failed miserably in our first three or four years in terms of our operations or partners who were not happy with us. Some of them came back and gave us a second chance and that's the reason Haqdarshak is here.

Can philanthropy be okay with failure? Are philanthropies willing to take risks? I think then, in 10 or 20 years, they'll play a pivotal role in innovation.

I don't think we should really worry about scale; sometimes, we get too fixated with scale, philanthropy and giving but if we can get into a lot more innovation and risk-taking, then I think it will be tremendous. I really see that happening; I have a lot of hopes for what we call "old school philanthropists", but I am more excited about the new age philanthropy. If this younger generation applies the same principles to their philanthropy that they have employed to transform their companies into unicorns (risk-taking, using

capital, being okay with burning capital, hiring quality talent, rewarding talent), I think we have very bright prospects for the future.

**URVI** Lastly, do you have any specific learnings or advice for youngsters who are keen on getting involved in the social development sector?

**ANIKET** Grassroots, founder or funder, it doesn't matter which side you are on. What matters is being able to figure out and stick to a problem that you want to solve.

I've seen a lot of young people getting into the sector and switching between problems. It's okay to change organisations, geographies or even sides (from funding to execution and vice versa), but young people coming into the sector really need to think through their objective for being here.

Some people find the problem they are passionate about in a year, two years or five; others can take a decade and that's fine too. Sticking to a problem that you want to solve and continuing to feel passionate about it, I feel, is crucial. That's the only advice I have.

# Afterword

A beginning for scholarly inquiry, a call for action  
from practitioners in this space

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LATHA POONAMALLEE

THIS collection brings together some of the thought leaders sharing their perspectives on how philanthropy can be engaged in advancing social justice. They also boldly and honestly reflect upon their own role as philanthropic actors in becoming barriers to long-term change and impact. Grounded in their experiences and contexts in India, the United States and Africa, the authors have described different models of philanthropy such as formal, informal, institutional, corporate, private, family and community-based and other emergent ones. They have presented their perspectives on barriers to philanthropy being socially just and how to address some of the hurdles through structural and other interventions. In this concluding chapter, I throw light on some of the overlapping threads in the chapters and propose a few lines of inquiry that will be useful to both scholars and practitioners in this space.

One of the hard questions that the field must contend with is the one that Rob Reich, political science professor and author, poses to US philanthropists: is private philanthropy truly a private moral issue?<sup>1</sup> He argues from the premise that philanthropy is an exercise of power that is incentivized at the expense of the public. Philanthropies are built using wealth amassed in an unbalanced and unfair society in which one group of people extract labour and other resources from other groups for private benefit. In addition, philanthropies and wealthy individuals get more financial credit for their charitable giving and power over public welfare. How philanthropy, especially institutional philanthropy, came to be and its role in the world is riddled with contradictions and injustices. Some individuals or families or firms become philanthropic because society allows them to accumulate vast amounts of wealth compared to the rest of the world. Twenty-six wealthy individuals collectively own the same amount of wealth as the bottom 50% of the world, i.e., 3.8 billion people.<sup>2</sup>

Countries such as India further suffer the adverse effects of colonialism of the past and the continued privatisation and capitalisation that benefit the already wealthy and privileged. While poverty seems to have declined, wealth inequality between the top 10% and bottom 50% has worsened<sup>3</sup> thus creating a very unequal and poor society although with an affluent elite. Philanthropy is focused on redistributing resources towards addressing the effects of some of these intractable challenges. All the authors in this volume assert that it is essential that the field confronts its own history in creating and perpetuating these conditions and develop new ways of giving that go beyond charity to consider an inclusive partnering process that addresses the root causes of these

divides. The fundamental philanthropic contradiction is usually accompanied by a lack of critique,<sup>4</sup> and a lack of transparency in private philanthropy<sup>5</sup> and a need for reflection on how we contribute to and participate in the systems of oppression and injustices.<sup>6</sup> With this orientation, philanthropies are more comfortable supporting last mile delivery organisations than supporting social movements that challenge the status quo including the philanthropies and philanthropists themselves. Yvonne L Moore of Moore Philanthropy, Janis Roshevel of Solidaire Network and Ingrid Srinath and Biraj Patnaik urge philanthropists to invest in building movement infrastructure. To do this, philanthropies need to cultivate their risk appetite to be bold enough to engage with activist or even antagonistic organisations. This also requires philanthropies to be not just alleviators of misery like hunger and poverty but also invest their considerable resources in strengthening democracy and citizen participation in decision making.

As Srinath and Patnaik point out, in many contexts outside of India, “philanthropy has played the role of speaking truth to power and amplifying muted voices, challenging the narrative of populist authoritarians.” As funding becomes more inclusive and equitable, funders are likely to be willing to broach the thorny issues of access, justice and civil rights within their communities.<sup>7</sup> Philanthropists must also pay attention to demand side interventions such as awareness generation, social mobilisation, community organisation, bottom-up knowledge and the voices of the marginalised.<sup>8</sup>

### **On trust and solidarity**

In the Indian context, contemporary philanthropy is shaped by the new corporate social responsibility (CSR) law and its



impact on the philanthropic landscape. This is not unlike many foundations funded by multinational corporations of yesteryears and the more modern phenomenon of IT wealth fuelling change in the philanthropic landscape. Khetan and RV<sup>9</sup> and Tandon<sup>10</sup> have written eloquently about this aspect in their chapters. CSR law as well as new forms of formal philanthropic structures led by both Indians who participate in the global economy as well as the international foundations such as Gates, Dell, Omidyar have entered the philanthropic industry in India.<sup>11</sup> Many CSR funders bring a techno-managerial perspective to the giving process that focuses more on scale and impact and uses metrics that benefit their own return on investment in terms of positive image-building for the company and/or employee motivation through creating volunteer programs for community issues. They may not be as invested in facilitating or resourcing challenges to the existing power structures in communities. Bringing in a private corporation mindset and practices, they tend to focus on short-term projects in which impact is more concretely measurable. They also tend to be more focused on filling gaps in public service delivery than rights-based legislation that may conflict with their own private interests. They also tend to be needlessly bureaucratic in their grant administration process creating an unrealistic reporting burden on the grantee organisations instead of facilitating their ability and capacity to do the actual work. Yet, they are confused why these systems are not moving forward at a particular speed or depth.

To address this, philanthropies must deepen trust and lessen the burden of grantee partners. The authors in this book advise reversing accountability to philanthropists, a move

from trust-based to solidarity-based philanthropy. Above all, they exhort to treat funding as more than a grant but a set of relationships that need to be nurtured.

Moore writes that sustainability is impossible if community members where we seek to advance change are not authentically engaged, supportive and taking leadership. A barrier to philanthropy and social justice is the problem of not centring community priorities in the philanthropic project especially by institutional or corporate philanthropies. This is reflected in a lack of representation from the communities themselves, an inability to listen to the constituents, understand their root problems and engage with the communities with an eye towards fairness. To transcend this, philanthropists and decision-making executives will need to trust that someone other than themselves can create life-altering solutions and relationships. That beneficiaries and community members can be trusted to make decisions regarding resources, identifying problems and developing solutions that will work in their communities. As Tyler<sup>12</sup> writes in his chapter, equity and justice invoke the dignity of the person and fulfillment of talents and potential and is, in part, reflected through work. Forbes<sup>13</sup> also refers to the need for ethical transformation of Indian businesses to ensure greater dignity and equity for vulnerable workers and their families.

### **Strong ecosystems, solid knowledge creation are steps towards sustainability**

Not all the barriers are pertaining to the philanthropies themselves and how they function and manage their own organisations and their giving process. Some of the challenges

are related to the ecosystems in which they operate. There is a shared understanding amongst all the authors that a lack of collaborative and partnership approaches, top-down models, siloed efforts are impediments to moving social change in a radically different way. Part of the challenge in partnerships is the difficulty in identifying the correct partners — organisations and local leaders and how to determine who is a credible person and who is not. As proxy for credibility and unsureness about how or who to trust, funders end up having to require elaborate accountability mechanisms that in turn hamper the trust-building process and the autonomy of the leaders and community actors. This also requires the willingness and patience to take the necessary time before starting the first grant.<sup>14</sup>

All the authors refer to the importance of ecosystems and shared platforms to bring together organisations, leaders and communities in advancing transformative work. Forbes highlights the need to build a resilient ecosystem for effective philanthropy and states, “As a foundation, we believe that we must support the social sector in its entirety to build a robust social ecosystem in our country.” Moore describes an ecosystem as being composed of networks and organisations and the individuals that must navigate and work within and nourish donors and philanthropists as well. For *Solidaire*, it also means paying attention to staying relevant to dynamic social movement ecosystems. Ecosystem is also relevant to entrepreneurship and economic development. Tyler describes how the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation has undertaken this work in using philanthropic investments to support entrepreneurship in inclusive ways.

Knowledge creation and dissemination emerges as an

important and much-needed role for philanthropies, partly because they are borne of the knowledge-based enterprise and era. Tyler writes about how the Kauffman Foundation supports research and education in the entrepreneurship arena as well as research about different industries and entrepreneurial factors. There will be a big pivot in the next five to 10 years and we will see philanthropy invest more in knowledge and IP to drive change. This knowledge will not be from a Western orientation but from a perspective that honours local networks, learnings, knowledge, languages, priorities and spheres of influence.<sup>15</sup> Dasra discusses the importance of investing in new ideas and areas such as mental health and climate change, leveraging research and involving mentors and risk in philanthropy.

I'll conclude by presenting a few lines of inquiry that will prove productive for the field.

1. Examine how ecosystems operate in the philanthropic landscape in India. Who are the players? How do their interests conflict and/or align? What are the power and resources structures in these ecosystems? Are the network requirements different in community philanthropy versus institutionalised philanthropy? What is the role of the State in it? What function does technology play? How do exemplary and aspiring social justice philanthropies approach building ecosystems?
2. We learn from the contributors that words such as social justice and social movements can be occasionally repelling to philanthropies. What are the other unmentionables in the Indian context? Do organisations use proxy terminology to avoid naming

- some issues to mitigate any damage to their funding patterns?
3. Does length of grant duration influence outcomes?
  4. How much justice and human rights-oriented training and skill sets do philanthropies and nonprofits provide to their employees? Does that correlate with giving strategies, local giving, grant duration and restrictions on funding?
  5. How do they select the right grantees/relationship? Do they collaborate with other philanthropies themselves? Do they collaborate with governments and public agencies?
  6. Do they engage in knowledge creation and dissemination? Do they use technology? Do they engage in intellectual property strategies?
  7. Difference between older and newer philanthropies? Do they set up their own implementing arms or do they pick an area and look for partners? Do they do multiyear or short-term grants?
  8. How do they identify root causes? Do they use any common methodologies for identifying root causes and then driving resources towards those causes?
  9. Is their leadership diverse? When and how did it get diversified? Is it possible to track these decisions over time and correlate with their funding strategies and approaches?
  10. Do individual or crowdfunding or community philanthropy tend to be more justice-centred but less systematic than formalised philanthropy?

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**Note:** This essay draws on the research study by Neelima Khetan, Angira Shukla and Mallika Anand, which resulted in the Impact Paper titled “Between binaries: The coming

together of for-profit and not-for-profit organisations” for the Centre for Social and Economic Progress published in January 2022. (<https://csep.org/impact-paper/between-binaries-the-coming-together-of-for-profit-and-not-for-profit-organisations/>)

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## About the Authors



**AK Shiva Kumar** is chairperson of the academic council at the Indian School of Development Management. A development economist and policy advisor, he works on issues of human development including poverty, health, nutrition, basic education, and the rights of women and children.

Prof Shiva Kumar teaches economics and public policy as a visiting faculty member at Ashoka University, Indian School of Business, SP Jain Institute of Management and Research, and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He is an advisor to the United Nations and other agencies and has served as a member of India's National Advisory Council as well as other national and international academic, research and civil society organisations.

He is an alumnus of Bangalore University and the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad as well as Harvard University from where he did his master's in public administration and PhD in political economy and government.



**Urvi Shriram** leads the Centre for Philanthropy for Inclusive Development at the Indian School of Development Management. Urvi is passionate about developing actionable knowledge on effective philanthropy, to help philanthropy deliver

sustainable social change and is involved in diverse development sector initiatives.

Prior to this, she led a research initiative with the Research Triangle Institute India to promote social mobility for the under-privileged in India.

She was earlier an economist at Willis Towers Watson, a global advisory company. Her research there concentrated on various topics related to human capital management and has been published in local and international journals. She has been a frequent speaker at the Global Economic Symposium.

She is an economics graduate from the Shri Ram College of Commerce, University of Delhi and holds a master's in economics from the University of Warwick, UK.



**Rati Forbes** has been a director of the Forbes Marshall Group since 1992; she was responsible for the human resources and learning and development function till 2011. During this time, Forbes Marshall was thrice recognised as one of the top 25 companies to work for in India, in the “Great Places to Work For” ranking — the highest placement being sixth.

Today, Rati heads the Forbes Foundation and is responsible for corporate social responsibility and foundation activities across the company. She has been recognised for her social initiatives both within the company and in the wider world. She chaired Confederation of Indian Industry’s western region cell for social development for a span of six years, the cell’s main objective being to sensitise corporate entities to their social responsibilities.

Rati has served on the board of two international foundations; she continues to serve as an independent director on listed companies, as well as on the boards of varied foundations and nonprofits across India.

Rati graduated in psychology (honours) and sociology from the University of Mumbai and has also taken executive courses in human resources, organisational behaviour and strategic philanthropy. She

holds a master's in sustainability management and leadership from Cambridge University, UK.



**Neelima Khetan** has extensive experience with civil society organisations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) groups and has held leadership positions. She worked with Seva Mandir, a leading nonprofit organisation in Rajasthan and led its work for over a decade. Subsequently, she served as director, CSR and Sustainability, for Coca-Cola India and Southwest Asia and later was the group CSR head for Vedanta Group.

Neelima currently serves on the boards of several foundations and nonprofits and does consulting work on development issues, especially strategy, governance, design and impact.



**Jayapadma RV** worked with Gram Vikas, a nonprofit organisation in Odisha for a decade, and subsequently engaged in the area of knowledge exchange and learning across South and Southeast Asian countries through the USAID South Asia Regional Initiatives/Energy and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)'s Local Government Initiative and Network. Over the years she has taught in the areas of rural management and sustainable development at leading academic institutions. She also led the CSR work of InterGlobe Foundation for some time. She currently works as a consultant in planning, evaluation and documentation of development interventions.



**Ashish Dhawan** is the founder-trustee and CEO of The Convergence Foundation (TCF), which is focused on accelerating India's economic growth and development. He is also the founding chairperson of Ashoka University and Central Square Foundation, a nonprofit foundation working to improve the quality of education for all children in India.

Ashish has been amongst India's most successful private equity investors. He founded and ran ChrysCapital, the country's leading private equity firm. He graduated from Yale University and received his MBA from Harvard Business School. He is also on the India Advisory Board of Harvard and a member of Yale's Development Council.



**Sundar Sarukkai** is the founder of Barefoot Philosophers. He was professor of philosophy at the National Institute of Advanced Studies until 2019 and was also the founder-director of the Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities. He is the author of the following books — *Translating the World: Science and Language*, *Philosophy of Symmetry*, *Indian Philosophy and Philosophy of Science*, *What is Science?*, *JRD Tata and the Ethics of Philanthropy*, *Philosophy for Children: Thinking, Reading and Writing*. He has also co-authored two books with Gopal Guru — *The Cracked Mirror: An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory* and *Experience, Caste and the Everyday Social*. His most recent book is *The Social Life of Democracy* (Seagull, 2022).

Sundar is the series editor of Routledge's Science and Technology Studies as well as the co-chief editor of the *Springer Handbook on Logical Thought in India* (2022).



**Yvonne L Moore** is managing director of Moore Philanthropy and president of its collaborative partner and exempt entity, Moore Impact.

With over 25 years of experience in the government, civil and philanthropic sectors, and expertise in family dynamics, participatory and equitable grantmaking, international giving, and administration of private foundations and funds, Yvonne brings a wealth of knowledge to the creation of philanthropic goals for her clients.

Prior to launching Moore Philanthropy, she was the chief of

staff to filmmaker and philanthropist Abigail E Disney where she oversaw the family's network of media, philanthropic and advocacy organisations.

Before joining the philanthropic sector in 1999, Yvonne spent 10 years working in child protection and advocacy. She holds a BA from Texas Tech University and an MS in nonprofit management from the New School. She completed her post-graduate studies in democracy and civil society at the University of Cape Town, and nationalism, post-conflict violence and gender at the University of Lower Silesia in Poland.

**Moore Philanthropy** is a Black-founded and woman-led philanthropic advisory firm bringing over 25 years of knowledge and experience to provide thoughtful, strategic and tailored philanthropic services to individuals, families and private institutions helping to solve some of the world's greatest challenges.



**Luis Miranda** is chairperson and co-founder of the Indian School of Public Policy. He is also chairperson of the Centre for Civil Society and CORO. Luis co-founded Take Charge, a mentoring program for Catholic youth in Mumbai. He is also on the board of Educate Girls, a nonprofit supporting girls' education in India's rural and educationally backward areas, and SBI Foundation.

Luis has been involved in setting up two highly successful companies — HDFC Bank and IDFC Private Equity. He is also chairperson of ManipalCigna Health Insurance and senior advisor at Morgan Stanley.

An MBA from the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago and a chartered accountant, Luis is a member of the global leaders group of the business school and on the advisory board of the Leadership & Society Initiative of the university. He also teaches at the Accelerated Development Program of Chicago Booth.

He and his wife Fiona Dias Miranda, director at Seeds of Awareness and 17000 ft Foundation, work on a number of causes that are dear to them. They are signatories to #LivingMyPromise and members of Soivial Venture Partners.



**Dr Rajesh Tandon** is founder-president of Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and an internationally acclaimed leader and practitioner of participatory research and development. He is also co-chair of the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education since 2012.

Dr Tandon has authored more than 100 articles, a dozen books and numerous training manuals. He has served on numerous expert committees of Government of India, University Grants Commission, United Nations, Commonwealth Foundation and World Bank. The University of Victoria, Canada, awarded Dr Tandon the degree of Doctor of Law (Honoris Causa) in June 2008. He is the first Indian to be inducted to the International Adult and Continuing Education (IACE) Hall of Fame (class of 2011).

**Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)** is a global centre for participatory research and training based in New Delhi. PRIA has linkages with nearly 3,000 NGOs to deliver its programs on the ground. PRIA’s work is focused on the empowerment of the excluded through capacity building, knowledge building and policy advocacy. Over the four decades, PRIA has promoted “participation as empowerment”, capacity building of community organisations and people’s participation in governance. Initiatives are undertaken in the overall perspective of “making democracy work for all” — in the political system; democratic culture in families, communities and society; and participatory democracy with active citizenship.





**Amit Chandra** co-founded the ATE Chandra Foundation (ATECF) with his wife Archana. ATECF works closely with nonprofits and governments to design and scale solutions that impact the most marginalised populations. The couple was listed in *Forbes* Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy list in 2016.

Amit is the chairperson and founder of Bain Capital's India office. Prior to this, he spent most of his professional career at DSP Merrill Lynch and retired as MD and board member in 2007.

He has been a trustee of the Tata Trusts, chairperson of Give India and The Akanksha Foundation, and board member of Tata Sons, Piramal Enterprises and Genpact, amongst other corporations. He is a founder/trustee of Ashoka University, a member of the advisory boards of Bridgespan India, and the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy.

Amit is a BE, MBA and was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in 2007.



**John E Tyler III** has been the general counsel and secretary for the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation since 1999. As a lawyer and a leader, he provides both operational execution and even vision for programs, grants, affiliated entities and other efforts. It was the Foundation's president for nearly all of the 2000s from whom John first began to understand philanthropy and entrepreneurship differently and together — a core theme of his essay. He also provides guidance for other foundations, organisations and practitioners as they seek to incorporate entrepreneurship into their philanthropic work, including through speaking, publishing, guest lecturing, teaching and direct interactions.

**The Kauffman Foundation** helps people access opportunities to achieve financial stability, upward mobility and economic prosperity.

Its entrepreneurship activities have Kansas City roots while extending throughout the United States. Two other key programmatic mission areas are (1) urban core education and real-world learning in the Kansas City, Missouri region of the United States and (2) engaging with and supporting key local civic organisations and initiatives. The Foundation grounds its work on principles of racial equity, diversity and inclusion. Per donor intent and the corporate charter, the Foundation's programming and giving can only occur in the United States.



**Ingrid Srinath** was, till recently, director of the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University. She has been a passionate advocate for human rights, social justice, and civil society in India and around the world for the past 24 years.

A graduate of IIM Kolkata, Ingrid transitioned to the nonprofit sector in 1998 with Child Rights and You (CRY), where she was CEO from 2004-08. She has also served as secretary general at CIVICUS, executive director of CHILDLINE India and Hivos India and on multiple boards and committees.

In 2020, she received the Distinguished Alumna Award from IIM Kolkata.



**Biraj Patnaik** is the executive director of National Foundation for India (NFI). Prior to joining NFI, Biraj was the South Asia director of Amnesty International. He was the principal adviser to the commissioners of the Indian Supreme Court in the landmark Right to Food case for close to a decade.

A well-known human rights activist, he has been part of many national and global campaigns, including the Right to Food campaign in India and has played a key role assisting with the drafting and advocacy of the National Food Security Act.

Biraj co-founded the Mitanin community health worker program that trained and deployed 70,000 health workers in Chhattisgarh and led to the nationwide rollout of the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) program.



**Naina Subberwal Batra** has been chief executive officer of Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN) since 2013. Her leadership has nurtured the AVPN community, growing the membership base fourfold. Under her direction, AVPN has grown from focusing only on venture philanthropy to supporting the entire ecosystem of social investors, from catalytic philanthropists to impact investors and corporate social responsibility professionals.

Naina also serves as the chair of the International Venture Philanthropy Center (IVPC), a consortium of four regional sister networks, of which AVPN is one.

In 2021, she was listed amongst Asia's Most Influential by *Tatler* Asia and in 2019, named one of Asia's Top Sustainability Superwomen by CSRWorks International.

Prior to joining AVPN, Naina was a member of the senior leadership team of a purpose-driven unit at the Monitor Group, a leading global strategy consulting firm aimed at catalysing markets for social change.

She has a master's degree in industrial and labour relations from Cornell University where she graduated at the top of her class. She also holds a bachelor's degree in economics and international relations from Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts, and a general course diploma in economics from the London School of Economics.

**AVPN** is the world's largest network of social investors active in Asia, with over 600+ diverse members across 33 markets. Its mandate is to enable collaborations between policymakers, family offices, foundations and the private sector to increase the impact and

flow of capital deployed toward closing Sustainable Development Goals gaps in Asia.

AVPN is part of the IVPC, a family of networks that collectively represents 1,100 social investors in 70 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe.



**Neera Nundy** is the co-founder and partner at Dasra India, a strategic philanthropic organisation. She leads ecosystem-building initiatives and facilitates key partnerships with global leaders like Harvard University, Stanford University and USAID to accelerate social impact.

Her overarching goal is to enable social entrepreneurs and funders with the support they need to achieve big goals in areas such as gender, urban resilience and sanitation through systems change and collaborative philanthropy.

An MBA from Harvard Business School, Neera was awarded the Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellowship instituted by the Ananta Aspen Center. She is a fellow of the Aspen Global Leadership Network and board member of The Hunger Project, American School of Bombay and Aangan Trust.

**Dasra** was founded in 1999 by Neera Nundy and her husband Deval Sanghavi, a former investment banker. Over the last two decades, Dasra has worked towards shaping the strategic philanthropy movement and strengthening the family philanthropy infrastructure in India. Dasra has catalysed more than US\$300 million towards social causes in India, supported over 1,500 diverse non-governmental organisations across the country, advised more than 750 philanthropists, foundations and corporates, and impacted the lives of over 90 million Indians since it began.



**Puja Marwaha** is the CEO of Child Rights and You (CRY), India's leading child rights organisation. She has been with CRY since 1994, having joined to set up the organisation's human resources function. In 2002, she moved into more general management roles.

For over two decades, Puja has helped build an organisational framework for CRY that best captures the essence of justice and equity. Her work is focused on creation of an organisational character that attempts to foster a passion for children, a high degree of individual accountability to children and a belief in every person's potential to bring change for children.

A post-graduate in human resources from XISS Ranchi, Puja is an Aspire India Fellow, a board member at VANI (Voluntary Action Network India) and is on the academic advisory boards of XIM School of Sustainability and XISS Ranchi.

In 2018, she was awarded the Olga Alexeeva Memorial Prize for social innovation.



**Janis Rosheuvel** is an organiser, resource mobiliser, teacher and trainer. She has held many roles across social change movements over the last 20 years. For five years she served as director of movement partnerships and grantmaking at Solidaire. She is currently senior strategist for learning and reflection at Solidaire.

**Solidaire** is a community of donor organisers and resource mobilisers who offer solidarity and support to the frontlines of racial, gender and climate justice with a collective vision of radical giving and solidarity beyond funding. Their three-pronged strategy includes donor engagement and activism, resource mobilisation, and strengthening donor practices through education and peer support.



**Aniket Doegar** is the founder and CEO of Haqdarshak, a social enterprise working to support individuals and microbusinesses to avail the benefits of government welfare schemes. He has been building Haqdarshak for the last seven years and has been awarded as one of the Global Social Innovators of the Year, 2023 by Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Motsepe Foundation and World Economic Forum.

An alumnus of Shri Ram College of Commerce, Aniket has been a Teach for India, Acumen and Unreasonable fellow. He was on the advisory board of Teach for India for two years and is also currently a board of trustee for the YP Foundation. He made the *Forbes* 30 under 30 Asia list in 2019.

**Haqdarshak** uses a mobile app and field force of 25,000-plus trained women agents to help citizens discover, apply for, and benefit from government and private schemes/benefits. They have helped three million-plus families and microbusinesses get over ₹5,000 crores in benefits, while the women entrepreneurs earned over ₹5 crores-plus over the years.

Haqdarshak works closely with companies and supports their workers and staff to avail the benefits of government welfare schemes.



**Latha Poonamallee** is the Chair of the Faculty of Management and University Fellow at The New School, New York City, and professor, researcher, tech entrepreneur, Fulbright Fellow and thought leader on management and social justice. Latha is academic director of the Centre for Philanthropy for Inclusive Development. She founded the Management and Social Justice Initiative.

## About the Publisher

**Centre for Philanthropy for Inclusive Development (CPID)** is a centre-of-excellence (COE) at the Indian School of Development Management (ISDM). It is dedicated to catalysing philanthropy as a force for inclusive development through a combination of rigorous research, learning programs, knowledge exchanges and convening diverse voices.

We believe in philanthropy that strives for more inclusive development by tackling root causes of social and economic inequities and empowering the underserved communities.

**Indian School of Development Management (ISDM)** is a first-of-its-kind institution collectively set up in 2016 to establish the domain of Development Management distinct from business management or public administration and enable social purpose organisations to have an impact at population scale.

To enable this, ISDM is building excellent high quality Development Management programs for postgraduate students and sector professionals, establishing the ISDM Knowledge Institute for Development Management practice in the social sector and catalysing the ecosystem for Development Management through effective partnerships and collaborations.

Know more about us at <https://www.isdm.org/in/>

# AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP TOWARDS BUILDING A MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

The act of giving is deeply entrenched in Indian culture,  
a virtue that has only grown with time.

Philanthropy in India is growing at a steady pace, with a surge  
in funds and advancements in practices. The question remains,  
how can this redistribution of wealth be effectively harnessed  
to achieve transformative social change and more inclusive  
development?

In *A New Era of Giving*, thought leaders from India and abroad  
share their insights and perspectives on the challenges and  
issues to be addressed to make a shift from a charitable model  
of support to an approach that prioritises social justice.

**AK Shiva Kumar | Urvi Shriram | Rati Forbes**

**Neelima Khetan & Jayapadma RV | Ashish Dhawan**

**Sundar Sarukkai | Yvonne L Moore | Luis Miranda**

**Dr Rajesh Tandon | Amit Chandra | John E Tyler III**

**Ingrid Srinath & Biraj Patnaik | Naina Subberwal Batra**

**Neera Nundy | Puja Marwaha | Janis Rosheuvel**

**Aniket Doegar | Latha Poonamallee**

