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Unlocking Asian Philanthropy

Insights from Five Families

Melissa Petros



About the Milken Institute

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Setting the Scene

Philanthropy has a long, diverse history in Asia that varies based on the identity and culture of donors. There is a strong focus on education-related causes, giving discreetly, and affiliation-based philanthropy, which is often informal or ad hoc. However, more Asian philanthropists are formally institutionalizing their philanthropy, utilizing strategic philanthropy tools, and engaging in collaborative philanthropic models to create impact for a broader range of causes. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic increased giving, and highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration to systemically addressing root causes.

In Asia, philanthropy continues to hold enormous potential. By 2025, Asian millennials are expected to hold 35 percent of global wealth. By 2026, Asia is set to surpass Europe as the world's second-largest wealth hub. With four times Europe's population, Asia currently has only one-third the social investors.

The Milken Institute interviewed five family principals for this paper. Three focused their philanthropy on their family foundation; two helmed multiple philanthropic organizations. The organizations/foundations are primarily located in Hong Kong SAR, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Singapore. Interviewees' initiatives are local, regional, and global. Most of the organizations/foundations had existed for at least 10 years. In four cases, the previous generation formally established the family foundation.

Findings

Current Dynamics of Philanthropic Giving

Interviewees commonly defined social impact as driving concrete, sustainable change in communities and combating societal injustice by harnessing their resources in intentional, cohesive philanthropic initiatives. The values shaping these definitions included collaboration, inclusivity, and a responsibility to give back.

Interviewees' philanthropy spans various areas, with all involved in at least two core focus areas. All five interviewees have education programs. Three are involved in environmental sustainability work, and socioeconomic development-related issues. Another two work on health-related issues. Principals' personal experiences often drove their philanthropic activities and how they devoted their resources.

A shared theme regarding how interviewees selected their philanthropic causes and beneficiaries was a connection to their family businesses and their role in it. Government priorities and external trends, such as climate change, also influenced the interviewees' decision-making. From their giving, most interviewees expected close collaboration with their stakeholders, and all agreed that the ultimate expectation of their philanthropy is to create systemic change.

Four of the five family principals conducted their philanthropy primarily through their family foundation with only one funded independently from the family business/family office. The remaining interviewee has several nonprofit and commercial organizations separate from the family foundation.

All interviewees endeavored to take a strategic approach to philanthropy, although strategies differed. For example, one focused on demonstrating the business case for doing social good, while another deployed philanthropy as risk capital to trial solutions. Finally, all five philanthropists sought external advice and expertise at different points in their giving journeys to inform and augment their philanthropic efforts.

Intergenerational Dynamics

Interviewees have varying levels of decision-making power to shape the structure, vehicles, and direction of their philanthropic foundations or organizations. Of the three who hold their foundation's top position, two are part of their family's oldest living generation and one is from the subsequent generation. In all cases, the founders set up specific parameters and governance systems for their foundations and organizations. These included a board of directors or trustees with a mix of family principals, members, and non-family members. All but one interviewee was on the highest-level decision-making body.

One common thread was that principals expanded upon the previous vehicles used to deploy their philanthropic capital, such as "checkbook philanthropy," into other vehicles like a social entrepreneurship model and employing philanthropy as risk capital. While grant-making remains popular, disbursement typically includes more strategic and rigorous frameworks to evaluate potential and existing grantees.

Two interviewees can completely dictate the direction and priorities of their philanthropy, while for the other three, this is a cross-generational effort. Regardless, all noted growth and evolution in their approach and priorities. All interviewees—except one whose son was already involved—expressed hope that the next generation would eventually carry on the family's philanthropic legacy. However, next-generation involvement varied and continues to evolve. All principals focused on passing down the family values guiding their giving instead of forcing participation in their existing initiatives.

Challenges

Interviewees identified four challenges affecting their philanthropic work and ability to maximize impact.

Collaboration: Interviewees' attempts to collaborate with government and other private funders (e.g., family foundations, corporate foundations, and nonprofit trusts), both nationally and across borders, were often hampered by the divergent priorities and incentives of the various stakeholders.

Risk Aversion: Two interviewees identified risk aversion among their peers and potential corporate partners as a key challenge for driving large-scale impact in their work and philanthropy.



Time: One interviewee acknowledged that their competing responsibility of running their business constrains the time spent on their foundation's work. Another referenced time as a challenge in relation to risk aversion from current potential partners. However, they predicted that with time, the next generation of leaders would play a critical role in shifting mindsets about risk and driving progress forward.

Funding: One interviewee shared that the family foundation's complete dependence on distributions from the family business can be a challenge, especially during downturns or projected declines in profits.

Opportunities for the Future

Interviewees cited three areas for further investment in the philanthropic ecosystem in Asia.

Collaboration with Stakeholders: Several interviewees highlighted the need to promote and incentivize collaboration among government and other funders, underpinned by (1) mutual alignment on goals, (2) "win-win" partnerships, and (3) an understanding of how different types of capital can work together to scale impact. One suggested government schemes to incentivize funders to work together. Another mentioned regional and global infrastructures where philanthropists can collectively contribute.

Capabilities of Families: Two interviewees shared about the value and importance of using private-sector expertise, to establish and refine their structures, missions, and strategies. Another reiterated that families can benefit from learning about other instruments besides grants to better achieve longer-term impact.

Capacity of Other Stakeholders: One interviewee underscored that developing talent should encompass all stakeholders in the philanthropic ecosystem for effective collaboration toward lasting social impact. Another shared that large funders like governments can help attract talent through proper capacity-building budgets for organizations to achieve their value proposition. A third highlighted an opportunity for funders to improve nongovernmental organizations' (NGOs) capacity by providing longer-term funding.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Asian families' long, rich history of charitable giving is evolving toward more formalized, strategic, and collaborative philanthropy. Families' philanthropic motivations are multifaceted and continue to be deeply rooted in family values and personal experiences. While education was one universal focus area, strategies and tools ranged from "moonshot philanthropy"—deploying risk capital to trial potential solutions for a pervasive issue that is difficult to solve—to social entrepreneurship to strategic grant-making. A key theme is the connection between families' philanthropy and business, typically privately held businesses, which influenced amounts, priorities, and approaches with respect to their families' philanthropic giving. Furthermore, the oldest living generation continues to play a dominant role in shaping and upholding the structures, vehicles, direction, and priorities of the family foundation, often with influence from the subsequent generation. Regardless, all interviewees hoped for growth in their philanthropy and next-generation involvement as they optimized for greater impact and continuation of the family legacy.

As its booming ultra-high-net-worth (UHNW) population puts Asia on track to become the world's leading wealth hub, governments, families, and other funders can build a more robust philanthropy ecosystem by:

- Incentivizing collaboration among stakeholders through mutual goal alignment (e.g., government schemes, regional and global mechanisms); win-win partnerships; and understanding how different types of capital work together.
- Investing in capabilities of families to implement transformative giving strategies including through private expertise that can connect them with knowledge, tools, and networks.
- Building the capacity of other stakeholders, particularly NGOs and other service delivery organizations, to include capacity-building funding for talent, planning, and impact measurement.

SETTING THE SCENE

Philanthropy has long been an agent of change across the globe. In 2018, there were 260,000 foundations in 39 countries across the world. Although Asia is not far behind in terms of the combined wealth of UHNW individuals, Europe and North America currently dominate the philanthropic landscape—95 percent of foundations and 97 percent of the US\$1.5 trillion in foundation assets are concentrated in these regions.¹ Over the next 25 years, approximately US\$60 trillion of wealth will be handed over to the next generation, and a projected US\$27 trillion of that will go to charitable causes.²

The sophistication and scale of global philanthropy have grown in recent years. An increasing number of wealthy individuals and families are showing interest in institutional philanthropy, setting up foundations and other formal structures to establish frameworks around their giving.³ This appears to reflect a growing consensus among philanthropists that institutional philanthropy can foster strategic investment and collaboration to better tackle the many cross-cutting problems of the world today.

Asian Philanthropy: An Overview

The nature of philanthropy often differs based on the identity and culture of donors, and Asia is no exception—philanthropic trends can be observed both at the regional and country levels.

For instance, Asian philanthropies focus heavily on education, given its predominant role in many Asian cultures.⁴ Philanthropists in Asia are also often more discreet in their giving since many Asian cultures see modesty as an important virtue. Yet, this trend is slowly evolving: As younger generations of philanthropists become more transparent and public about their work, they are also learning to strategically use their voice and reach to attain their giving goals.⁵ Unlike the older generation, many millennial philanthropists are embracing digital technology and social media to raise awareness of philanthropic causes and the work of their foundations and partner organizations. Asian philanthropists' use of traditional and social media to publicize their charitable causes has been growing steadily.⁶

Furthermore, charitable giving in Asia tends to be affiliation-based. Philanthropists frequently begin with giving to their kin and community before expanding outward to the national or regional sphere. When giving beyond borders, they typically give to their countries of origin or communities with which they share ethnic roots.⁷

For example, philanthropy in China is influenced by the concept of *guanxi*, which can be loosely translated to interpersonal networks based on mutual connections, place of origin, or shared attributes between parties. Traditionally, giving in China predominantly took the form of “acquaintance charity,” where assistance was rendered to people who had close ties to the giver.⁸ Conversely, philanthropists felt little sense of obligation towards strangers with whom they did not share strong *guanxi*.⁹ As such, philanthropy in China was often practiced through clan-based lineage organizations, which aided the socially vulnerable, such as orphans and widows.¹⁰

Similarly, much Southeast Asian philanthropy tends to be informal, with few formal structures such as public funding calls or public proposals. Direct referrals are more common, and charitable decisions were historically driven by factors such as religion, personal preference, and connections rather than an explicit desire to enact systems-level changes.¹¹

However, Asian philanthropies are increasingly taking on a more structured approach.¹² Since 1990, the number of philanthropic foundations in Asia has grown at an unprecedented rate.¹³ This can be explained, in part, by the emergence of a new generation of philanthropists, many of whom are just beginning their philanthropic journeys and have different priorities from the first generation of wealth creators.¹⁴

Next-generation Asian wealth holders are more likely to be educated abroad and have more exposure to global issues and Western perspectives.¹⁵ They are often more willing to fund less traditional sectors, such as the environment and the arts.¹⁶ They also focus more on institutionalizing philanthropy, setting up due processes and regulatory structures to formalize giving. Additionally, these philanthropists have a higher risk appetite to experiment with innovative solutions.¹⁷ Likewise, strategic philanthropy is also being adopted,¹⁸ with a spotlight on rigorous measurement to maximize impact and scalability, as well as a willingness to fund unorthodox programs and channel funds into new vehicles.¹⁹

Many of these characteristics held true for the Asian family principals interviewed for this white paper. All five interviewees had philanthropic programs in the education space, citing education as a cornerstone of development for their countries as a whole. Their family foundations also had a strong national leaning, with all implementing at least one major philanthropic initiative in their home countries. Many of our interviewees further shared that their families' philanthropic activities had been largely ad hoc and informal in the past. However, families sought to professionalize, streamline, and measure the impact of their giving in recent years, which is reflected in their current philanthropic work.

Recent and Emerging Trends in Asia

Collaborative Philanthropy

The formation of philanthropic collaboratives—defined as collectives of at least three actors, including two or more philanthropists or philanthropic organizations working on a common issue—is on the rise in Asia. By pooling philanthropic capital, resources, and expertise, collaborative philanthropy can enact change at the systemic level.²⁰ The Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN) launched the first philanthropic pooled fund in Southeast Asia in May 2021, allowing donors to entrust their capital into the hands of dedicated fund managers who would select the most impactful beneficiaries.²¹ The fund awarded a total of US\$933,000 to four grantees and, to date, AVPN has raised US\$11 million in seven pooled and single-donor philanthropic funds.²²

Similarly, in September 2022, the Philanthropy Asia Alliance was launched to facilitate multisector partnerships and alliances to deliver impact at scale. At present, more than US\$200 million has been committed by the initiative's core members, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Dalio Philanthropies, Li Ka Shing Foundation, Tanoto Foundation, Temasek Trust, and four Sinar Mas entities.²³



Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are also gaining prominence in the region as another form of collaborative philanthropy that taps into the respective strengths of the private and public sectors, often involving the social sector, to create a win-win-win partnership for governments, businesses, and society.²⁴ A 2020 survey of 10 Asian economies revealed that 88 percent of UHNW business leaders intend to engage in more PPPs to catalyze social impact.²⁵ Blended finance structures that combine public or philanthropic funding with private-sector capital are also on the rise, with China, India, and Japan leading the charge in embracing such initiatives.²⁶ In fact, Asia, with involvement in 36 percent of global blended finance deals in 2020, has emerged as the second-most targeted region for blended finance instruments.²⁷ By first attracting concessional capital provided by governments, philanthropic foundations, and development banks, such an approach aims to improve the risk-return ratio of the investments to then attract private capital.

Additionally, donor-advised funds (DAFs) are an emerging giving vehicle in Asia.²⁸ Increasingly popular in Europe and the US, DAFs are giving accounts established at a public charity. They allow donors to have some say in their charitable contributions and benefit from tax advantages, while maintaining anonymity and avoiding the need to establish their own foundations. For instance, the Community Foundation of Singapore is an umbrella platform for DAF accounts. While DAFs are still a relatively new concept in Asia, they have the potential to gain popularity in the region.²⁹

Influence of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has also pushed philanthropists to increase donations and to do so more effectively. By 2021, the pandemic had forced an additional more than 75 million people in Asia into extreme poverty, further underscoring the need for funding towards concerted change.³⁰ Charitable organizations rose to the challenge with unprecedented generosity.³¹ Chinese philanthropic organizations raised almost US\$5.7 billion by spring 2021 to support the pandemic response, while the Community Chest of Korea garnered US\$100 million, the second-largest amount raised from a single initiative to date.³²

The sudden onset of COVID-19 prompted philanthropists to reconfigure their programs and reflect on the changes that must be made to maximize impact. For instance, philanthropists pointed to a greater need for cross-sector consolidation and collaboration and increasing partnerships between foundations.³³

Philanthropists also found themselves reaching out to whom they were best equipped to impact with their deep ties and connections to the community.³⁴ Such an approach can be considered a form of place-based philanthropy, with philanthropists concentrating their efforts on a specific geographical location to address root causes and make transformative changes within the target community.³⁵

Asia's Philanthropic Potential

In Asia, the possibilities for philanthropy are particularly substantial. By 2026, Asia is set to surpass Europe as the world's second-largest wealth hub.³⁶ Asian millennials are expected to hold 35 percent of the world's wealth by 2025.³⁷

Even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Asia's number of UHNW individuals expanded by 7.2 percent to 170,000 from 2020 to 2021.³⁸ Additionally, in the first half of 2022, China was the only major wealth market to see an increase in the number of UHNW individuals. Despite the first downturn in the global UHNW population since 2018, whereby the total number of UHNW individuals globally fell by 6 percent, China's UHNW population grew by 2.3 percent.³⁹

Yet, Asia's growing wealth has not fully translated into increased philanthropic giving. Asia has more than four times the population of Europe but only one-third the social investors.⁴⁰ If Asia were to match its philanthropic spending to that of the United States—a sum equivalent to 2 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP)—US\$701 billion would be available each year.⁴¹ This is nearly 14 times the net foreign aid flowing into Asia and could contribute to 28 percent of the estimated costs to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030,⁴² which points to massive untapped philanthropic potential.

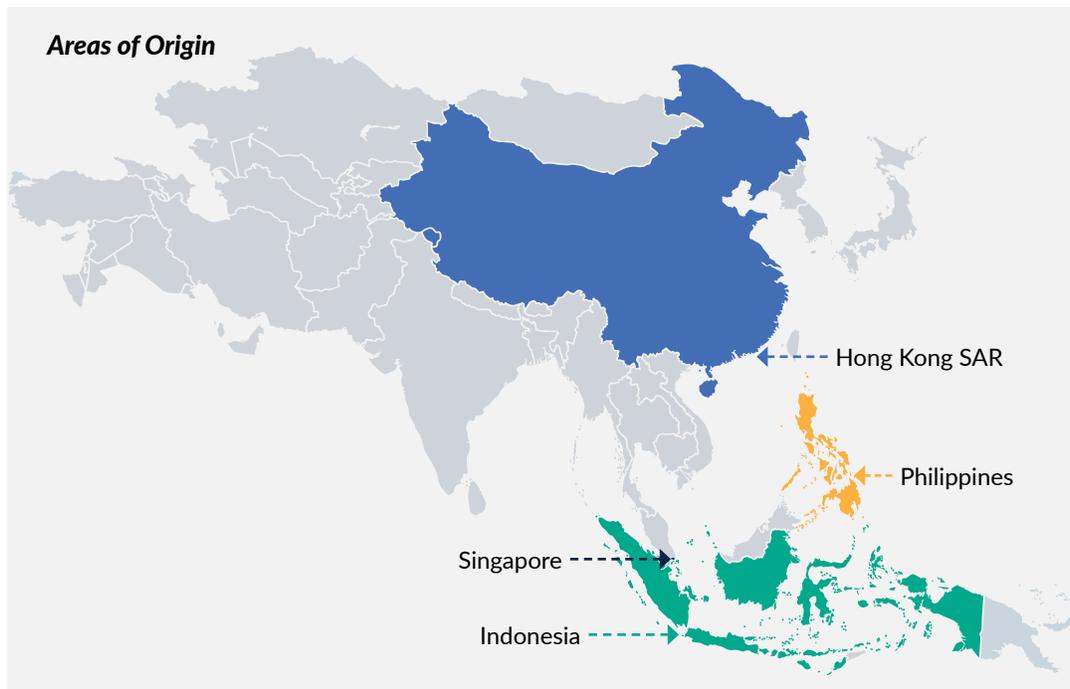
For example, when compared to regions such as North America and Europe, Asia's infrastructure for cross-border philanthropy is limited.⁴³ The lack of robust infrastructure, coupled with complications such as language and cultural differences, and restrictive or ambiguous regulations, can make cross-border giving in Asia difficult.

In this landscape, how can Asian philanthropists and families best establish and grow their philanthropic presence? How are philanthropic foundations putting their own spin on giving? Drawing on the insights of five philanthropic families in Asia, this white paper is a starting point for understanding the main motivations and considerations behind where, why, and how Asian philanthropists allocate philanthropic capital. Additionally, this white paper identifies how intergenerational dynamics shape their philanthropy. These insights illuminate challenges and opportunities that current and aspiring philanthropists, service providers, governments, and institutional funders alike can use to deepen partnerships in the ecosystem and, ultimately, better mobilize philanthropic capital to deliver transformative impact.

Overview of Interviewees

The Milken Institute interviewed five family principals, ranging from first- to third-generation, to inform this white paper. All are either the primary or a senior decision maker for their philanthropy within a formalized structure, typically the family foundation. Two of the interviewees have organizations headquartered in Hong Kong SAR, while the other three and their organizations operate out of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Singapore. The geographic scope of their philanthropic activities varies—for one interviewee, the beneficiaries of their projects were exclusively national; another three conduct activities both locally and regionally in Asia; and the remaining interviewee has initiatives at the local, regional, and global levels.

FIGURE 1: Headquarters of Interviewees' Foundations/Organizations



Source: Milken Institute (2023)

Among the five interviewees, three concentrated their philanthropic efforts in their family foundation while the other two helmed multiple organizations as part of their philanthropic portfolios. In aggregate, most of interviewees' philanthropic foundations or organizations had existed for at least 10 years (with one foundation nearly 20 years old), and a few organizations were less than 10 years old. Regarding size, all organizations were small ranging from under five to 20 implementing staff, excluding board members. For four of the five interviewees, the previous generation formally established the family foundations. The one exception was a first-generation family principal who was the first in their family to be in a financial position to give philanthropically. In addition, a second-generation interviewee founded and concentrated on developing their own philanthropic initiatives outside of the family foundation.

FINDINGS

Current Dynamics of Philanthropic Giving

Defining Social Impact

In charting the pathways of philanthropic giving, a natural starting point is understanding how UHNW families and individuals define social impact and what they see as positive changes. Interviewees described social impact from slightly different angles with a common thread of seeking to drive concrete, sustainable change in communities and combat societal injustice.

For one family principal interviewed, social impact is defined by a more cohesive, intentional program—differentiated from taking positive but disjointed philanthropic actions. This realization was brought about by their foundation’s previously undertaken social-good campaigns. Though not unsuccessful, the lack of intentional action caused frustration, mainly because there was no structured way of thinking about social impact outside of simply “doing good.” The key takeaway for this foundation, which they applied when deciding on and structuring all their philanthropic activity, was that social impact must be clearly defined—and a deliberate mission statement or guiding principle is instrumental to this end.

The interviewee also noted the need to be moderately far-sighted to develop a cogent goal and a theory of change. Now, the foundation strives to step away from funding a hodgepodge of disjointed initiatives and instead questions what to do next, how to do it, and how to achieve the desired impact.

Others elaborated that social change was more meaningful when it was grounded, sustainable, and focused. Another interviewee defined social impact for their family foundation as driving change to improve the lives of communities in which the foundation operates.

A third interviewee shared that the starting point for social change is “challenging accepted norms within societies that are unfair, unjust, and outmoded”—a belief that informs their philanthropic priorities. Furthermore, they also believed in the importance of weighing the holistic cost of certain systems and societal pressures—not just financial costs but also mental costs, such as burnout, fatigue, and undue stress.

Several interviewees also characterized social impact in terms of moving past the act of donating money to a cause for which they had little familiarity, but instead “put in the time and effort to understand what’s needed and what [could be done] to help.”

Another interviewee noted that philanthropists should also consider how to obtain the best return on investment for their dollar. Thus, they define social impact in terms of a project’s potential to scale up as part of their value proposition.

Finally, two interviewees specified social impact as defined in the United Nations’ SDGs and consciously tried to align their selected areas of work with them to build global change on a local level.

Values That Inform Social Change

When discussing values that inform social change, the need for collaboration and inclusivity were linchpins in several philanthropic journeys. “Without collaboration, it is extremely hard to achieve any kind of sustainable, meaningful impact,” one philanthropist shared. For smaller philanthropic foundations, collaboration allows them to create meaningful longer-term impact despite lacking the capacity or wherewithal of bigger foundations. Inclusivity ensures that solutions go above and beyond to tackle the problem from all angles.

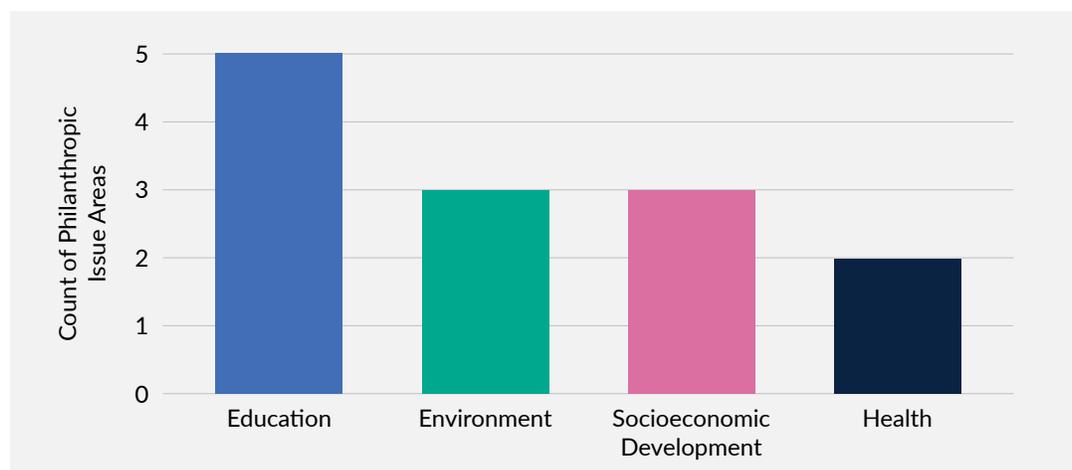
Furthermore, specific areas of focus, such as education, stem from the desire to “develop responsible citizens who can contribute to society in whatever way is meaningful for them.” Above all, an alignment of mission and values among the grantees, the foundation, potential collaborators, and other stakeholders is imperative.

Other common values that informed their philanthropy include gratitude, kindness, and giving back to one’s roots. One interviewee mentioned that they find it particularly important to “give back to the society that helped [them] to succeed.”

Areas of Focus

The focus areas of our interviewees’ organizations and foundations span various sectors, with all citing involvement in at least two core foci. Most significantly, all five interviewees and their organizations were committed to the area of education, with two that focus on early childhood literacy and the holistic development of youths, one supporting efforts in education research and policymaking, one supporting tertiary students through bursaries and financial aid, and the other focusing on the construction of schools and educational infrastructure. On the environmental front, two organizations focus on plastic waste management, while one foundation works on issues related to climate change, wildlife conservation, and animal protection. As for socioeconomic development issues, two organizations work on improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, while another aims to promote racial and religious cohesion, and advocates for marginalized groups within society. Two organizations also work on health-related issues, with one focusing on maternal health and the other on vision correction.

FIGURE 2: Focus Areas of Interviewees’ Organizations and Foundations



Source: Milken Institute (2023)

Driving Forces

Among the family principals, personal experiences were key driving forces behind their philanthropic activities and decisions concerning the allocation of their resources. For example, one foundation's motivation to create scholarships and invest in education stemmed from the patriarch receiving an education scholarship. The scholarship enabled him to study overseas and start the family business—a legacy and empire built on the “generosity of strangers.” This experience gave him the focus and purpose to replicate his experience for others.

Another interviewee shared about their experience of coming from a humble background and later attaining financial success as an investor with the help of others. Thus, they have an appreciation for role models like Warren Buffett, whose approach to life and philanthropy inspired them. In a similar vein, a second-generation member of the family further explained how their thinking was transformed by their university professor who encouraged them to use their academic knowledge to positively impact lives: “The purpose of economics is actually to help society improve [because otherwise] it's just an academic exercise.” This principle catalyzed the family foundation's work.

In continuation of their father's work in education by building schools, a third-generation philanthropist recounted how their own experience of starting a family prompted them and their spouse to invest in early childhood education by providing access to books and nurturing children's holistic development beyond traditional curricula and metrics. This same philanthropist's personal need for vision correction combined with their experience growing up in Africa and working in developing Asia also spurred their foray into the vision and eyecare space as an area of great unmet need.

A fourth interviewee shared how their philanthropic endeavors were born out of frustration that they could not convince private-sector companies to look beyond a single bottom line of quarterly earnings. Their frustration ignited a desire to model the change they wanted to see in the world by “proving to the private sector that products that invest in social good would be rewarded by the marketplace and can be profitable.”

Selecting Causes and Beneficiaries

A common thread among interviewees in terms of how they selected their philanthropic causes and beneficiaries was a connection to their family businesses and their role in them. For instance, one family foundation initially decided that one area of focus would be social entrepreneurship because the family members started as entrepreneurs. Another foundation prioritized beneficiaries from the communities where the family business operates, with the second priority being those from other areas within the same country. Another interviewee corroborated this connection between their philanthropy and family business by acknowledging that while their own philanthropy focused on personal investments that were not dictated by the objectives of the family business, the family's philanthropy aligned closely with the family business.

Two others cited their roles as investors within the context of their family businesses as key to their approach in terms of identifying philanthropic gaps they could fill. Operating under a “value investing” mindset, one chose to focus on voiceless causes that mainstream philanthropists are not addressing to contribute value-add impact. The other deployed their philanthropy as critical risk capital to find large-scale solutions to an underserved issue that other actors were not incentivized to invest in.



For three of the interviewees, government priorities also exerted some influence on their chosen causes and beneficiaries. One philanthropist started in the education space because public school classrooms were a priority area of the country's president at the time. Another cited the willingness of a government to engage in their maternal health, parenting, and early education programs as a result of a nationwide policy and as instrumental to building up their work there. A third family principal noted that their family business could also benefit from the tax deductions if their philanthropic programs and resources are channeled to the government priority areas of teacher training, health care, and national sports development. They added that, in addition to aligning with government priorities, the government always looks to them to help during national crises.

Finally, three interviewees acknowledged that they were also influenced by external trends, particularly in the environmental sphere. One cited climate change and global warming as informing the foundation's focus on the environment, especially air pollution.

Expectations from Their Giving

"For every program, what we wish the end game to be is either to be adopted by the community themselves or to be adopted by the government."

Fifi Setiawaty Pangestu, Chairperson, Bakti Barito Foundation

In terms of expectations from their giving, interviewees almost universally cited close collaboration with their stakeholders. They described collaboration as a dual partnership along a spectrum of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, government, service delivery organizations, and other foundations, with the mutual alignment of mission, goals, values, and strategy. One foundation shared how they devised a standardized framework to assess collaboration opportunities based on vision alignment with the proposed program, implementing team, and final outcomes.

Some family principals further mentioned the ability to measure the return on their philanthropic investment using reliable and tangible metrics as a key expectation because "you can't improve what you can't measure." In line with this, having data to establish baselines was seen as critical, particularly when philanthropists were branching out into uncharted areas of impact.

Finally, in keeping with their expectations regarding close multistakeholder collaboration, all interviewees were united in their conviction that, regardless of cause or issue area, the ultimate expectation of their philanthropy is to engender systemic level change, as it is the only way to meaningfully move the needle on solving any issue. One philanthropist elaborated that they were only interested in supporting initiatives with the potential to scale.

"The ultimate goal is to create systemic change that allows what we've proven to have to live beyond our money."

Nanette Medved-Po, Founder and Chairwoman, HOPE and PCX Groups

Structures and Strategies

Four of the five family principals interviewed channeled their philanthropy primarily, if not completely, through their family foundation, with one establishing additional nonprofit entities as an outgrowth of their work. The remaining interviewee, who is involved in their family foundation as a board member, focuses their philanthropic efforts through a mix of nonprofit and commercial organizations that they created to specialize in specific interventions.

Philanthropists decided to formalize their philanthropy through the creation of a family foundation for a variety of reasons. One philanthropist shared that their family foundation was created to better coordinate and organize their overall giving across the many operating companies within their family business to prevent overlap, improve governance, and provide tax benefits. Three others mentioned the importance of legacy and a means to pass down the core family values as key motivators. A first-generation philanthropist added that they saw the formation of the family foundation as a way to “shape, strategize, and achieve a bigger impact” instead of simply writing a check. This was echoed by a third-generation family principal who viewed the consolidation of their family’s ad hoc philanthropic contributions into a foundation to advance their father’s drive to create a positive impact.

In terms of funding, only one of the four foundations was separately endowed and not tied to the family business or family office. As one interviewee explained, their family foundation relies solely on periodic contributions from the family business. Thus, when the family business’ profitability falls or is projected to fall, the foundation is correspondingly constrained by a reduction in funding.

In the context of their chosen structures, foundation or otherwise, all interviewees endeavored to take a strategic approach to their philanthropy. They deliberately sought out knowledge, tools, and networks to help them better invest their resources for maximum impact. However, specific strategies differed among the group.



The Milken Institute's Strategic Approach to Philanthropy

The Milken Institute defines a strategic approach to philanthropy as follows:

Strategic philanthropy is philanthropy that has done its homework and has clear direction. This means taking a big picture approach to understanding how systems function, identifying patterns and root causes of problems, and then pulling the levers that lead to sustainable change. Philanthropic capital has distinct advantages, but it must be deployed intentionally and strategically to realize the impact donors want to achieve. For philanthropy to be strategic, donors must:

- **Be tolerant of risk.** Understand that philanthropic capital can be applied to take risks on new ideas in ways that public-sector and commercial capital cannot.
- **Be courageous.** Set an example for innovation in considering who you fund and how.
- **Be patient.** Remember that philanthropic capital is one of the best tools for supporting efforts that need time to bear social benefits. This alone makes philanthropic capital a catalyzing force unlike any other.
- **Be collaborative.** Facilitate cooperation and enable partnerships that break down the silos and systemic barriers that hinder equitable progress.
- **Be equitable.** Take the extra steps to ensure those closest to the problems are engaged, empowered, and part of the solution.

Notably, one interviewee's strategy of demonstrating the business case for doing social good led to scalable, commercially viable solutions in education, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability. In their initial efforts to support education through a commercial company that donated 100 percent of their profits, they came to realize that while solving one problem, they were inadvertently contributing to the problem of single-use plastics. As a result, they created the world's first standard and system for plastic offsetting. Following a successful small-scale pilot program, they realized they needed to prove that their solution would work on a large scale. This led to a partnership with their family's business, which was also interested in achieving sustainability, to demonstrate that a large company could become plastic-neutral without compromising its profit margins.

For this philanthropist, engaging with business, both their family business and others, rather than seeking support from the family foundation, was key to setting the tone for other large and multinational companies to follow suit. Making business the catalyst for doing good ultimately allowed for engagement and impact to scale beyond a family by providing opportunities for consumers, shareholders, and employees to also be part of the solution.



“The ability to scale is so much larger with business, and you’re then engaging the imagination of all the consumers.”

Nanette Medved-Po, Founder and Chairwoman, HOPE and PCX Groups

Another family principal described their strategy for driving philanthropic impact in terms of moonshot philanthropy. For this philanthropist, the ultimate challenge was to enable access to vision correction for the approximately 2.2 billion people globally who struggle with poor vision despite doubts from others about the prevalence of the issue and the ability to deliver a cost-effective solution on a large scale. Undaunted, they funded catalytic ideas and learned from setbacks until they succeeded in creating the first model for delivering primary eye care to the poorest socioeconomic group in a developing country and putting vision correction on the global health agenda. As the interviewee noted, the success of this strategy lies in recognizing that philanthropic capital, unlike most institutional capital, is unique in its ability to accept the personal risk of failure for asymmetric societal gains, and philanthropists must be willing to invest long-term in learning and trialing ideas to find solutions.

“The ability to deploy high-risk capital is the ‘superpower’ of UHNW philanthropy.”

James Chen, Chair, The Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation

External Advice and Expertise

All five philanthropists actively sought external advice and expertise from stakeholders to inform and augment their efforts featured prominently among all interviewees. This expertise covered a broad spectrum of types and sources.

One philanthropist working on a highly specialized issue emphasized the need for ongoing domain expertise and creating a team that includes credible research partners as critical for testing and finding cutting-edge solutions. In line with this team-building approach, another philanthropist assembled a network of individuals with skill sets in different areas (e.g., advertising, logistics, etc.) who were keen to contribute their pro bono services and drew upon this group’s expertise to develop their board. Another two philanthropists consulted with both public and private institutional funders and service delivery organizations working on similar issue areas to assess how they could complement their work. A final philanthropist found it useful to work with third-party philanthropy advisors to undertake a strategic planning exercise that resulted in a new streamlined mission and vision for a more cohesive philanthropic program.

“What were we trying to achieve? We asked that question of our grantees at the time, but we weren’t asking ourselves that question, and because we didn’t really know how to answer that, we retained philanthropy advisors to help us figure it out.”

Yvette Yeh Fung, Chair, The Yeh Family Philanthropy



Two philanthropists further highlighted the importance of connecting with their peers, both to learn from them and source collaboration opportunities. For one interviewee, joining a membership platform for Asian philanthropists seeking to collectively grow their impact provided valuable opportunities to learn from others' experiences, plug into a network of potential partners, and leverage the geographic diversity of the membership to explore vetted ways to work across borders. Another interviewee shared how, as part of their efforts to build trust amongst peer funders, they created an informal network of four to six like-minded family foundations who are working on different aspects of the same topic area. They added, "I'm always happy to share because I only figured out how to do things by talking to a lot of people, and they told me what their family was doing and how they did it."

Intergenerational Dynamics

"What is the true wealth of a family; is it just money? Should I just give them wealth, or should I give them a rich life?"

Teng Ngiek Lian, Founder and Executive Chairman, The Silent Foundation

Intergenerational dynamics was a key topic in the interviews. Interviewees shared about family dynamics and succession plans as well as the evolution of giving mechanisms and the family foundation with each subsequent generation.

For each family principal interviewed, their level of decision-making power, including their ability to shape the structure, vehicles, and direction of their philanthropic foundations or organizations, varied along with their ages. Of the three interviewees who hold the top position in their family foundations, two are part of their family's oldest living generation and one is from the subsequent generation. The other two interviewees, who are also from the subsequent generation, have high-level, decision-making roles within their family foundations but are not ultimately in charge. Of these two, the second-generation interviewee who focused on their own philanthropic activities separate from their family foundation does have final decision-making power over these.

Governance

In all cases, the founders set up specific parameters and governance systems for their foundations and organizations, including one who used a combination of nonprofit and for-profit structures for their philanthropic organizations. A ubiquitous governance structure is a board of directors or trustees that includes a mix of family principals/members and non-family members. All but one interviewee was on the top decision-making body of their family foundation. However, this remaining interviewee is part of the senior management governance structure for the family foundation and was key to streamlining the family's philanthropic funds through the foundation.

One interviewee recounted how their father, the founder, stipulated that the majority of board and other committee members must be non-family members to promote objectivity and focus on the foundation's philosophy while also preventing the family from using the foundation as

a potential means of control or manipulation. They further elaborated that their father wished the foundation to exist in perpetuity. Thus, having a majority of non-family board members was intentional for counterbalancing or in case future family members no longer have interest in participating.

Another family principal took a different approach to prescribing the longevity of their foundation by putting in place a “nuclear option” in addition to adopting the practice of having a board comprising a majority of non-family members. Specifically, the foundation must maintain a minimum level of disbursement. If it drops below this threshold, a compulsory shutdown of the foundation would be triggered, with any remaining funds given to the Commissioner of Charities to donate at their discretion.

Vehicles

One common thread among interviewees was a distinct effort or desire to expand upon the vehicles that previous generations used to deploy their philanthropic capital, with several citing a deliberate movement away from traditional checkbook philanthropy.

One interviewee commented that they continue to follow their father’s philosophy that their philanthropic capital also comprises their time and expertise—resources that are often as valuable as monetary contributions. This shaped their investment approach of applying knowledge, due diligence, and risk capital to their philanthropic endeavors.

Another interviewee, who forged their own philanthropic path separate from their family’s foundation, uses social entrepreneurship as a vehicle. Through the nonprofit and commercial organizations they founded, they harness the power of companies, local communities, and government to drive business solutions to plastic waste, improving livelihoods, and education.

Furthermore, while grant-making continued to feature as one vehicle for most, this was coupled with more strategic and rigorous frameworks to vet potential grantees and evaluate existing grantees. One family principal added that while they are not currently aligning their family’s investment portfolio with their foundation’s grant-making, they know of other family foundations that have done so or are starting to do so. Moreover, they are looking more seriously into how their future investments can better align with and be useful for their foundation’s work.

Another family principal also shared their hopes to branch out into venture philanthropy to further demonstrate to the government how much the private sector can contribute and encourage more public-private partnerships.

Direction and Priorities

All interviewees noted growth and evolution in their direction and priorities as they honed their strategic focus, better understood the linkages between different issues, and explored new ways of making an impact. In the case of two interviewees—one of whom is a first-generation philanthropist and the other who is a second-generation founder of their own philanthropic initiatives—they were able to completely dictate the direction and priorities of their philanthropy from the beginning. Focused on causes “suffering in silence,” one family principal shared how their background and nationality were the primary drivers for them to divide their support

between two areas: racial relations (particularly with respect to supporting minorities) and environmental protection. The second interviewee noted that “simplicity is your friend” when starting out, so they decided to focus on a tangible outcome for education by building classrooms that were 100 percent funded by bottled water sales. However, as their work gained traction, they expanded their portfolio to include carbon sequestration with smallholder farmers and offsetting the global plastic footprint.

For the other three family principals, determining their family foundation’s direction and priorities was a cross-generational effort. One family principal recounted how their father specified that he didn’t want the foundation to fund religious or political causes but otherwise tasked them with deciding its area of focus. To this end, they hired an external consultant who, after interviewing everyone in the family, determined that there was consensus around education. Another family principal spoke about how they expanded upon their father’s philanthropic legacy of building schools to include promoting early childhood literacy and development through increased access to books and other types of learning opportunities (e.g., soft skills). Driven further by a desire to make a more global impact, they then decided to take on the challenge of addressing vision correction.

A third family principal discussed how they worked with both first-generation and other second-generation family members to hone their family foundation’s focus on addressing environmental issues. While both generations take part in oversight and final decision-making for the direction of the foundation, the first generation does not partake in day-to-day decision-making activities. Second-generation family members with senior leadership roles in the family companies are actively involved in suggesting initiatives and ensuring that the foundation’s work aligns well with the family’s business operations.

Looking to the future, one philanthropist shared that they wanted to double down on their current priority areas where there is still much to be done and where they would best be able to create game-changing impact that is potentially replicable in other countries.

Involving the Next Generation

“I have not involved [my children] in the foundation, but what I have instilled in them is to remember your roots and the value of giving back.”

Fifi Setiawaty Pangestu, Chairperson, Bakti Barito Foundation

All of the interviewees, except one whose son was already actively involved, expressed hope that the next generation would, at some point, be ready and interested in carrying on the family’s philanthropic legacy. However, the ways in which the next generation is involved vary and continuously evolve.

Furthermore, the overwhelming focus was on ensuring that the family values guiding their giving were passed down. As one philanthropist put it, “To whom much is given, much is expected.” Interviewees attempted to inculcate these values often by providing and encouraging age-appropriate exposure to philanthropic efforts and community service, both within and outside of the family’s existing foundation or programs.



One family principal described how they purposely decided to involve the next generation in their foundation's work by creating a Next-Gen Committee and asking for their input on potential focus areas during the set-up of the family foundation. However, the level of engagement fluctuated as the next generation became older. Initially, when they were spending summers at home, the next-generation family members worked more closely with foundation staff to identify causes and beneficiaries for grants. Eventually though, their attention became more focused on their careers, and they are not currently involved in the foundation's work at all. While the door is always open to become more involved, this interviewee emphasized that the next generation needs to approach it with the right mindset of "learning more about what we're doing, whether what we're doing is correct, and if it is welcomed in the market."

Another family principal shared how they initially exposed their children to their philanthropic work by encouraging them to participate and contribute. However, as their children became older, this principal took a more hands-off approach to allow them space to observe and figure out their interests. This sentiment was echoed by the other four family principals, who emphasized the importance of letting the next generation find their own philanthropic passions and ways of giving back, even if they do not necessarily align with the current areas of work. One further elaborated that the family foundation was an important structure for bringing purpose to a family across generations and creating the space for family members to collectively explore new areas of interest and avenues for impact.

Finally, all interviewees conveyed a conscious effort to avoid strong-arming or putting pressure on the next generation to participate in their existing philanthropic initiatives. One interviewee, in particular, explained that they deliberately did not put the family name on their foundation so as not to impose the obligation on subsequent generations to continue it. They added, however, that they felt lucky that their son shared their view that "we have everything that we need already and so it is good to use what excess that we have to help society" as the impetus for starting the family foundation.

Challenges

Interviewees identified four main challenges—collaboration, risk aversion, time, and funding—that affect their philanthropic work and ability to maximize impact in their chosen areas.

Collaboration

While all interviewees acknowledged the importance and value of collaboration in maximizing the impact of their philanthropic activities at the systemic level, their actual experiences of being able to collaborate with other funders and the public sector, both nationally and across borders, highlighted some gaps. They emphasized that the divergence and disconnect amongst the priorities and incentives of different stakeholders hampered effective partnership and cross-sector collaboration to scale up initiatives.

Two interviewees spoke about specific challenges they sometimes encountered when working with governments. One shared that relatively short parliamentary terms of four to five years give rise to government officials who are focused on instant results in the short term or are driven by other vested interests and motivations. The other recounted how the reticence of one government's bureaucrats to share about their priorities precluded opportunities to potentially

partner and align their work. This experience starkly contrasted their work in another place where the local government, which is accountable to clearly established national priorities, was more proactive and engaged. Thus, they felt that they had a better chance of influencing policy there.

This same interviewee elaborated that they also faced challenges in finding collaboration opportunities with other private funders, such as family foundations, corporate foundations, and nonprofit trusts that are answerable to their boards on different priorities. In addition, large funders can also have fairly bureaucratic processes for grant approvals, which creates another hurdle to collaborative funding.

Collaboration challenges also extended to working across borders. While acknowledging that many issues are intrinsically cross-border, a third interviewee explained, “When you work with your neighbors, things are very different. The rules of the games are very different—they have their own priorities in their country; they have a different way of doing things; their players are different ... [T]he challenge is how to work with neighboring countries effectively and without getting into trouble.” While this philanthropist joined a regional platform that is experienced in catalyzing collaborative cross-border philanthropy, such institutions and resources to facilitate giving across borders remain relatively few and far between.

“We’re not the size of the Gates Foundation ... but it doesn’t mean that we’re any less ambitious than them. It’s just that we don’t have the resources to do it like them, so we must collaborate.”

Yvette Yeh Fung, Chair, The Yeh Family Philanthropy

Risk Aversion

Two interviewees identified risk aversion among different funders in the philanthropic ecosystem as a key challenge for driving large-scale impact in their work and through philanthropy more generally.

One family principal expressed that their guiding philosophy of harnessing their wealth to drive paradigm-shifting social change through high stakes-high reward philanthropic investments remains an alien concept to most of their peers. Acknowledging that theirs is the road less traveled, they are trying to socialize the idea of moonshot philanthropy and inspire other UHNW individuals and families to leverage their impact in this way.

Another family principal who focuses on engaging corporates to make the business case for creating scalable social change shared that their main challenge is companies’ aversion to risk. However, they believe this stance is evolving, particularly as the younger generations—many of whom are passionate about doing social good—begin to populate leadership positions in companies. They noted that this is especially the case in privately held companies where progress can happen more quickly due to the strong influence of the family.



“A dollar from the USAID is not the same as a dollar from me. My dollar has a lot more information and risk-taking behind it. And frankly, [institutions and corporations are] not going to be able to take those risks.”

James Chen, Chair, The Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation

Time

For all interviewees, philanthropy is only one aspect of their responsibilities. Typically, they helm executive and board positions in various organizations and divide their time among these. Two interviewees specifically mentioned time as a challenge in terms of how they and others can continue to contribute to their philanthropic goals.

One family principal who is still running their family business mentioned that they would like to devote more time to their family foundation and are contemplating how to make this possible. They pointed out that “Giving money is a very easy matter if you don’t want to influence the outcome. But in our case, we have our own ideas and programs to try.”

Another interviewee referenced time as a challenge in relation to risk aversion from current potential partners. However, they predicted that as the next generation takes up leadership positions, they will play a critical role in shifting mindsets about risk and driving progress forward.

“I think money is important, but time is very important. The time will decide a lot of the quality of the work.”

Teng Ngiek Lian, Founder & Executive Chairman, The Silent Foundation

Funding

One interviewee shared that funding can be a challenge due to the family foundation’s complete dependence on the family business for funding. Specifically, downturns or projected declines in profits for the family business result in a reduced budget for the foundation. Consequently, this constrains the family foundation in terms of carrying out their medium- to long-term plans.

Opportunities for the Future

Interviewees cited three main areas of opportunity for further investment in the philanthropic ecosystem to expand giving and increase the impact of philanthropy in Asia.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

Several interviewees highlighted the need and opportunity to promote and incentivize collaboration among the diverse stakeholders in the philanthropic ecosystem.

Three family principals spoke specifically about the role of government. One shared the idea that the government could develop schemes to incentivize funders to work together more collaboratively and strategically to avoid funding the same organizations. They added that this

could also help ensure that there is a common understanding of which stakeholders should be involved from the beginning and an alignment among them on “What are you ultimately trying to achieve? And what are you doing for the beneficiaries?”

Another family principal explained how they overcame the challenge of working effectively with local government representatives by leveraging officials’ two-year terms to incentivize collaboration and create a symbiotic relationship. Realizing that local government representatives are eager to increase their chances of re-election by quickly demonstrating how they have positively benefited their constituencies, this interviewee harnessed the opportunity to expedite the implementation of win-win collaborations whereby they gained government support for their philanthropic initiatives and the government representatives received positive recognition for their campaigns.

Two other family principals touched upon collaboration with other stakeholders. One identified the need for greater collaboration among different types of capital. They shared that “the critical lever is to have a dialogue with institutional risk-averse capital to [figure out] how to interact with high-risk taking capital [from] individuals or families so that we can help to scale up.”

Referring to some of the cross-border collaboration challenges they faced, the second family principal expressed that they would like to see the development of more regional and global infrastructures, including trusted organizations where philanthropists can feel confident that their contributions are being used impactfully. They reiterated the importance of these types of mechanisms for meaningfully addressing specific regional and global issues like climate change.

Capabilities of Families

Building philanthropic capability, particularly with respect to families’ philanthropic infrastructure, strategies, and tools, was also a key theme.

One interviewee expressed that “a lot of people have good hearts, [but] not many have the organizational background” to set up the appropriate infrastructure, governance systems, and strategy for their philanthropy. They further shared that because of their extensive experience running a corporation, they knew how to put these in place for their family foundation. However, the private sector could play a role, particularly in helping families identify trustworthy beneficiaries as part of their overall strategy.

Another interviewee echoed this view and initially engaged two different sets of philanthropy consultants—first to help them set up their family foundation and later to streamline its mission, vision, and strategy. They acknowledged that while Asian families “may generally be more cost-conscious than their global counterparts,” it’s critical for them to not only invest in building their capabilities but also implement what they learned to maximize their philanthropic impact.

In line with the other two interviewees, a third family principal shared that “helping families understand the breadth of opportunities out there for their funding in terms of instruments” is a crucial investment for building up the philanthropic ecosystem in Asia. They noted that many families still think about their giving primarily in terms of grants because they might not know about other vehicles to use their philanthropic capital more efficiently to achieve longer-term impact. Moreover, expanding their philanthropic toolkit provides families with access to different skills and collaboration opportunities that can enrich their work.

Capacity of Other Stakeholders

Two interviewees specifically emphasized the importance of developing and attracting talent among other stakeholders in the philanthropic ecosystem.

One interviewee spoke about the need to further develop national talent that feeds into NGOs, the government, and the private sector “because those are the human resources that will transform the country.” They added that while they all play different roles, they must come together in order to achieve any profound societal change.

Another interviewee stated, “There are people who, even if they want to go into philanthropy or work for an NGO, need to make enough money to support their family, to support their parents. If the money is not there and they can go to work in an accounting firm instead, then why not?” They further pointed out that government funders can play a detrimental role in discouraging talent acquisition and upskilling by fixating on reducing overhead costs as much as possible instead of determining the proper capacity-building budget needed for an organization to achieve its value proposition. As a result, this interviewee’s family foundation deliberately funds several different organizations purely to build their capacity.

Expanding upon the capacity challenges NGOs face, a third interviewee highlighted that nonprofit service providers, with their insecure sources of financing, often spend the bulk of their time and efforts on fundraising instead of planning for the long term and focusing on impact. Thus, public and private funders have an opportunity to increase NGOs’ capacity to achieve greater and more efficient impact by providing more stable, long-term funding.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of education, giving discreetly, and affiliation-based philanthropy are broadly shared areas of interest among philanthropic giving families in Asia. In addition, Asian philanthropists are increasingly formalizing their endowments, integrating a more strategic approach, and engaging in different models for impact. Spurred by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the region has also undergone a rise in philanthropic giving along with increased recognition of the need for cross-sector collaboration and addressing underlying causes of giving areas. Moreover, as wealth increases in the region and transfers to the next generation, Asian philanthropists are well-positioned to make an even greater impact.

This paper illustrates that families' philanthropic motivations are multifaceted and deeply rooted in family values and personal experiences. As one interviewee stated, "Philanthropy is most effective when it's really meaningful for you." Similarly, while all interviewees took a structured and strategic approach with a focus on creating systemic change, their specific priorities, strategies, and tools varied. Although education was one universal focus area, strategies and tools ranged from strategic grant-making to moonshot philanthropy to social entrepreneurship.

A key theme that emerged was the connection between families' philanthropy and business, typically families' privately held businesses, which influenced amounts, priorities, and approaches with respect to their families' philanthropic giving. Among interviewees, most family foundations are directly funded by the family business, leaving their philanthropic funding subject to any fluctuations in the businesses' profitability. Moreover, philanthropic priorities and beneficiaries are often aligned with the family business' main industry and the locations where they operate. Their types of businesses also influenced their philanthropic approaches, with two interviewees specifically citing their investor-focused skill set as fundamental to approaching their philanthropy as an investment in finding answers to underserved issues.

Interestingly, the privately held nature of family businesses further provided pivotal opportunities to test out the market viability of philanthropic solutions. Additionally, these types of businesses can accelerate progress toward multiplying social impact because of the strong family influence. This is especially true as younger family members, who may be more willing to try new models of creating social good, move into family business leadership positions.

The oldest living generation continues to play a dominant role in shaping and upholding the structures, vehicles, direction, and priorities of the family foundation, either as the current top decision maker or as part of the highest-level decision-making body for the foundation. However, interviewees from the subsequent generation also have significant influence ranging from involvement in their family foundation's boards to being the foundation's primary decision-maker. Regardless, all spoke about growth in terms of the vehicles, directions, and priorities as they refined their strategies for greater impact. Looking to the future, every interviewee expressed a desire to engage the younger generation, hoping they would continue the legacy of giving back in line with the family's values. Nevertheless, there was a deliberate effort not to

force involvement from this generation and instead focus on providing them with the exposure, structure, and resources to figure out how they can best contribute.

Interviewees also faced similar challenges related to collaboration and the need for further understanding among stakeholders in the philanthropy ecosystem and how best to employ capital for maximum impact. Specifically, governments can proactively develop schemes to incentivize funders to work together more strategically, avoid duplication, and align goals among all relevant stakeholders. Philanthropists must also take the lead in seeking out win-win partnerships and dialogue with both government and other types of funders to deploy their different types of capital in a complementary manner. These extend to creating regional and global mechanisms that encourage collaboration with the “best in class” regardless of location to address cross-border issues like climate change.

Likewise, building the capabilities of families and the capacity of other stakeholders in the ecosystem are other key opportunity areas for growth. Several family principals emphasized the need for families to invest in learning about how they can develop and implement transformative giving strategies. They further identified engaging private-sector expertise, like third-party philanthropy advisors, as critical investments for connecting them and the next generation with the knowledge, tools, and networks to put their philanthropic capital to work more productively for long-term impact. Similarly, funders are vital to building the capacity of other stakeholders in the ecosystem, especially NGOs and other service delivery organizations, in terms of talent attraction, skills-building, and funding predictability. For governments, philanthropists, and other funders alike, this entails changing the way they fund these organizations to include capacity-building elements so that they can plan long-term, measure the impact of their work, and ultimately achieve their full value propositions.

In short, Asian philanthropy is not a static, one-size-fits-all endeavor. Underpinned by their values, a family’s philanthropy will continue evolving to encompass different priorities, approaches, and abilities as their family dynamics change. Furthermore, by combining their collective resources such as time, money, skills, and networks across their personal and business spheres, families can create a more integrated and effective approach to philanthropy that magnifies the impact of their work. Finally, investment by governments, philanthropists, and other funders to strengthen the entire ecosystem of philanthropy actors such that incentives, goals, and capabilities are aligned, is essential for helping Asian families to realize their full potential as global change-makers. As the booming UHNW population in Asia puts the region on track to become the world’s leading wealth hub, governments, families, and other funders can build up a more robust philanthropy ecosystem in the following areas and ways:

- Collaboration with Stakeholders
 - Governments can develop schemes to incentivize funders to work together more strategically, avoid duplication, and align goals among all relevant stakeholders.
 - Philanthropists must seek win-win partnerships and dialogue with the government and other funders to deploy their different types of capital in complementary ways.
 - Public and private funders can work together to create more regional and global mechanisms to address cross-border issues like climate change.

- Capabilities of Families
 - Families must invest in their learning about how they can develop and implement transformative giving strategies.
 - Private expertise can help connect families with the knowledge, tools, and networks to put their philanthropic capital to work more productively.
- Capacity of Other Stakeholders
 - Governments, families, and other funders must adapt the way they fund NGOs and other service delivery organizations to include capacity-building elements so that they can attract and develop talent, plan long term, measure the impact of their work, and ultimately achieve their full value propositions.



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