

# Philanthropic Foundations In Asia

## Insights from Singapore, Myanmar and China

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# Abstract

This study looks at an emerging trend in which wealthy families, individuals, and corporations in Asia set up foundations to institutionalise their giving. This giving is motivated by a myriad of factors beyond prestige and status, including the desire to give back to society, religion, family and personal values, the desire to drive change, personal experience, and/or affiliations.

This study finds that philanthropic foundations in Asia can be characterised by their operational model, governance structure, and philanthropic focus. In emerging economies in Asia like Myanmar and China, these foundations tend to give nationally and operate their own programmes. On the other hand, foundations in developed economies like Singapore and Hong Kong tend to give both regionally and nationally via grants to civil society organisations that operate programmes, as opposed to running programmes themselves. Further, families tend to retain significant control of foundations in Singapore and Hong Kong, while programme funding serves as the preferred funding mode.

This study also discusses the various challenges and opportunities faced by the nascent philanthropic sector in Asia that can address some of the developmental and structural gaps left by the public, private, and people sectors.

# ACSEP

The Asia Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy (ACSEP) is an academic research centre at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Business School, staffed by an international multi-disciplinary research team. Formally established in April 2011, the Centre has embraced a geographic focus spanning 34 nations and special administrative regions across Asia.

ACSEP aims to advance understanding and the impactful practice of social entrepreneurship and philanthropy in Asia through research and education. Its working papers are authored by academia and in-house researchers, who provide thought leadership and offer insights into key issues and concerns confronting socially driven organisations.

*For full details on ACSEP's work, please see <http://bschool.nus.edu/acsep>*

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# Glossary

<b>ACSEP</b>	Asia Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AVPN</b>	Asian Venture Philanthropy Network
<b>CAF</b>	Charities Aid Foundation
<b>CFS</b>	Community Foundation of Singapore
<b>CSESIF</b>	China Social Enterprise and Social Investment Forum
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HNWI</b>	High Net Worth Individual
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NVPC</b>	National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SGD</b>	Singapore Dollar
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar

## *Note*

*All figures are in USD unless otherwise stated.*

*CSO and NGO are used interchangeably in this report.*

## PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS IN ASIA Insights from Singapore, Myanmar and China

### FOUNDATIONS IN ASIA

Foundations are relatively new to Asia, introduced and growing in popularity over the last few decades as spurred by the growth of Asian economies and the resulting emergence of high net worth individuals (HNWIs) and ultra HNWIs.

### PHILANTHROPY AMOUNT

Foundations are projected to give \$364 billion towards Sustainable Development Goals between 2016 and 2030<sup>1</sup>.



#### CHINA

The number of foundations has increased six-fold, from 739 in 2004 to 4907 in 2015.



#### SINGAPORE

More and more wealthy individuals and families are setting up foundations, trusts, and funds to institutionalise their giving. Over 400 foundations, trusts, and funds are currently registered in Singapore.



#### MYANMAR

There are currently estimated to be 20 to 30 foundations in Myanmar. A number of these are corporate foundations created in recent years by private companies and controlled by families to disperse their philanthropic dollars.

### MOTIVATIONS OF GIVING

Philanthropy in Asia is motivated by a myriad of factors.



Desire to give



Prestige & status



Family & personal values



Personal Experience



Desire to drive change



Personal Affiliation



Religion

<sup>1</sup> Foundation Centre

# CHARACTERISTICS OF FOUNDATIONS

Characteristics of foundations are grouped along three main dimensions.



Foundations can be lean teams that evaluates and disburses grants or teams that plan and implement programme, or a combination of both.



Philanthropic focus looks at geographic focus and funding mode.



Governance structure determines who oversees the decision making and day-to-day operations.

# OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The growing philanthropy sector in Asia has its sets of challenges. But alongside are opportunities that can make it a formidable player in alleviating the regional development issues.

## OPPORTUNITIES



Strengthening Philanthropy Ecosystem



Catalytic Governmental Engagement

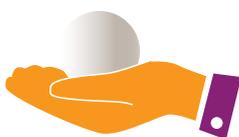


Catalytic Philanthropy & Risk taking



Collaboration & Collective Impact

## CHALLENGES



Lack of Credibility & Transparency



Lack of Quality Data



Foundation's Operational Weakness

# Executive Summary

Philanthropy in Asia is growing rapidly, nearly as fast as wealth itself. Many wealthy families, individuals, and corporations are setting up foundations to institutionalize their giving; others use intermediaries to assist with their giving. Yet not much more is known about this new giving phenomenon. Further, few Asian countries require foundations to disclose their giving information, while foundations themselves tend not to voluntarily disclose such information to the public.

Understanding why people give is important, from both an advocacy and policy making perspective. We do know that philanthropy in Asia is motivated by a myriad of factors beyond just prestige and status: the desire to give back to society, religion, family and personal values, the desire to drive change, personal experience, and/or affiliations. But philanthropic roots in Asia are as complex as social norms. Therefore, each country offers unique philanthropic trends.

Beyond understanding the psychology of giving, the foundations themselves also operate behind a curtain, enough is known to characterise them along three main dimensions. First, foundations' operational model can be a lean team that evaluates and disburses grants to CSOs working on the ground, a team that plans and implements programmes on the ground, or a combination of both. Second, foundations' governance structure, which oversees the decision making and day-to-day operations, takes three main forms:

- a) family members manage and run the foundation,
- b) professional staff run the day-to-day operations, while family members control the board, or

- c) professional staff independently run both day-to-day operations and the board.

Third, foundations' philanthropic focus can vary in two dimensions: funding mode can span programme to general operating funding, while geographic focus can be regional, national, or international.

Generally, foundations from developing parts of Asia like Myanmar and China tend to give nationally and operate their own programmes. This operating model is preferred as many of the foundations' founders are successful entrepreneurs who have difficulty finding CSOs they trust to be efficient and effective. On the other hand, foundations in more developed Asian countries like Singapore and Hong Kong tend to give both regionally and nationally. Foundations in these countries also tend to provide grants to CSOs, instead of operating their own programmes. Foundations in Singapore and Hong Kong also tend to prefer programme funding, with the family retaining significant control.

The top causes supported by foundations in Asia tend to be in traditional sectors such as education,

health, and poverty alleviation. Education is preferred as philanthropists see its potential to lift the poor out of poverty. Increasingly, though, other causes, like arts and culture and the environment, are finding support from second and third generation philanthropists. There also appears to be an emerging trend among foundations to give strategically and with impact. Some foundations have a higher propensity for risk taking and are open to testing new social solutions and catalysing self-sustaining social changes.

Asia foundations are only beginning to give along the line of international agendas, like sustainable development goals and climate change. Most focus on the agenda and priorities set internally by founders, though these existing priorities may already cohere with international agendas. International cooperation tends to be limited to events and exchanges that share ideas and best practices.

For the full potential of the philanthropy sector in Asia to be realized, several challenges must be overcome. First, the current lack of credibility and transparency within the CSO sector hampers the growth of philanthropy as foundations run their own programmes. A dearth of quality data on the philanthropic sector may also hinder cooperation, particularly as several foundations may be working on the same causes without realizing it. Yet, it is unclear what data are needed and whether this demand is real and sustainable. Operationally, foundations also tend to lack long-term strategies and struggle to attract and retain talent, both of which point to a larger trend of underinvestment in the profession-

alization and institutionalization of foundations in Asia.

Yet, embedded in these challenges are opportunities. The philanthropy ecosystem in Asia can be strengthened with the growth of philanthropy intermediaries and network partners who can build professionalism, facilitate information sharing, and promote best practices. Governments can catalyse philanthropy and the creation of social good with supportive policy making. Some foundations can afford to take more risks and catalyse systemic and sustainable solutions by experimenting with innovative programmes. More collaboration among foundations, intermediaries, and CSOs could likewise open new doors for collective impact.



## 1

## Introduction

Asia and the Pacific region has a population of more than 4 billion people, or about 55% of the world's population. Recently, the region has made strides in development, lifting more than 1 billion of the region's people out of extreme poverty between 1990 and 2012 (ADB, 2016a).

Despite these achievements, the need to do more remains, as exemplified by the following statistics:

- Asia is home to half of the world's poorest people, with an estimated 1.2 billion people living below the poverty line of \$3.10 (2011 PPP) per day (ADB, 2016b)
- 330 million people live on less than \$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day (ADB 2016b)
- 1.7 billion people lack access to basic sanitation (ADB, 2016a),
- 300 million people live without safe, consumable water (ADB, 2016b)
- Billions of people live in marked disparities, e.g., Singapore's 2015 GDP per capita is 44 times more than Myanmar's (ADB, 2016b),
- Levels of inequality are rising with rates of urbanization (ADB, 2015), and
- 480 million people are expected to face food insecurity by 2030 (ADB, 2014)

In stark contrast to these great needs, the region has experienced phenomenal wealth growth. Asian economies have grown rapidly in recent

decades while the number of wealthy individuals and families has increased exponentially. This suggests that philanthropic activities in Asia can be catalysed to grow even more or take on new forms or expressions.

Since 2000, wealth worldwide increased by 130% from \$25.5 trillion to \$58.7 trillion in 2015, with growth in Asia accounting for much of that growth: wealth in the region jumped by 263% from \$4.8 trillion to \$17.4 trillion in 2015 (Capgemini, 2016). With this newfound wealth, philanthropic giving has accelerated. Many of the nouveau riche and old wealth entrepreneurs, families, and their companies alike are "giving back" to their societies through foundations and other charitable institutions (Spero, 2014).

This study seeks to shed light on giving through foundations, particularly private foundations. Section 2 of this paper introduces philanthropy and reviews its surge in popularity in Asia before outlining the research method of the study. In Section 3, we discuss the motivations for giving in Asia. Section 4 outlines the characteristics of foundations in Asia, including an evaluation of their *modus operandi*. Section 5 discusses the challenges and opportunities facing the nascent philanthropic sector. We conclude this study in section 6. In an excursus in section 7, we present country profiles of China, Myanmar, and Singapore.

# 2

## Philanthropy

### 2.1 Introduction

Philanthropy is traditionally seen as giving money to the less fortunate, charities, or civil society organisations (CSOs) (Chia, 2015). Wealthy individuals and families tend to make charitable contributions to improve education and alleviate local social problems like poverty, hunger, and disease (Spero, 2014). In more recent times, however, philanthropy is seen to entail the giving of time, expertise, or money (Chia, 2015).

Two of the countries with the greatest need for philanthropy in Asia are China and India. Philanthropy has always been practiced somewhat differently in different cultures. For example, the Confucian tradition in China, with particular emphasis on the importance of family and social harmony, has a rich history of structures and conditions for the charitable exchange of goods and services between people and communities. Philanthropy in ancient China was dominated by clan-based lineage organisations that offered support to vulnerable people, such as widows and orphans. They also construct schools for the education of boys (UNDP, 2015). In India, religion plays an important role in philanthropy in both the past and present (Jansons, 2014).

Philanthropic giving in Southeast Asia, on the other hand, tends to be more informal. Giving is associated with religion, personal preference, and social connections, as opposed to evidence of need or the desire to enact systemic change

(Anand & Hayling, 2014). Prakash and Tan (2015) trace Singapore's giving initiatives since it gained independence. They find evidence that suggests that giving is endogenous to national identity whereby the government, corporations, and community collaborate in dynamic ways to meet social welfare needs on the ground (Prakash and Tan, 2015). In Vietnam, philanthropy is practiced as part of community spirit, as well as out of sympathy for the poor. Proverbs encouraging charity such as, "Whole leaves wrap torn leaves," "Love your neighbours as yourself," and "People from the same country should love one another" have been passed down for generations, reminding everyone of their responsibility to the community (Vietnam Asia Pacific Economic Center - The Asia Foundation, 2011).

While philanthropy in Asia has roots in its earliest communities, structured philanthropy through family foundations is a relatively new phenomenon. Of the 203 family philanthropic initiatives surveyed by the UBS for their Study on Family Philanthropy in Asia report, more than 75% were established as formal philanthropies after 1980 and more than 60% after 1990 (UBS, 2011). The study also finds that family plays an important role in driving philanthropy in Asia, as families pass on principles like compassion, courage, and tolerance, fostering capacities for leadership, innovation, and responsibility, with philanthropy even supporting family cohesion

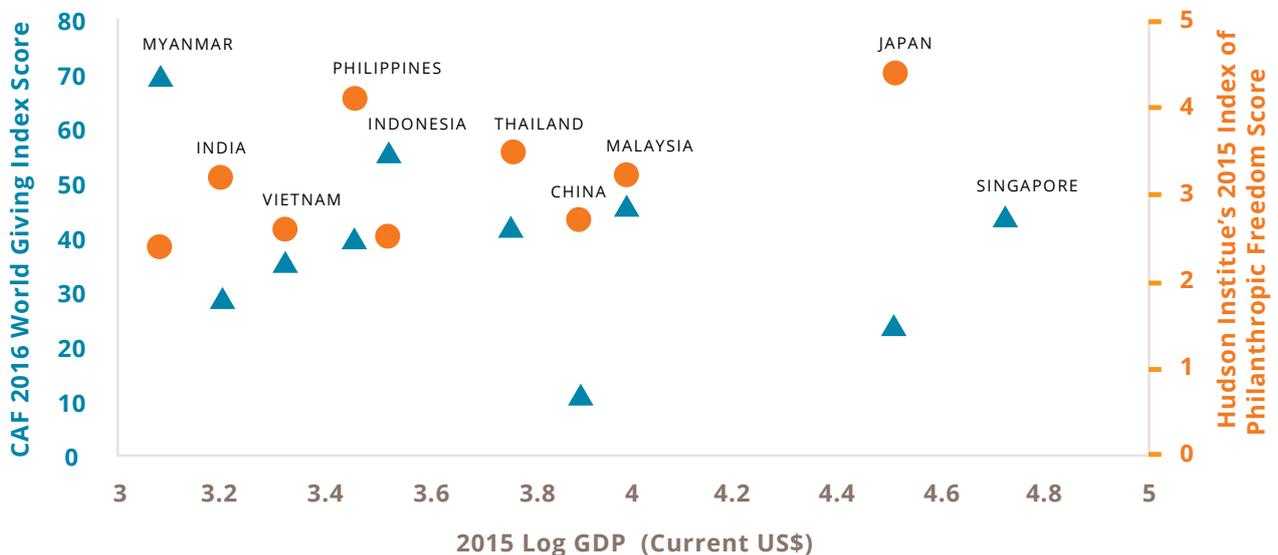
as a common activity (UBS, 2011). Giving through foundations, particularly private foundations, is the focus of this study.

Propensity and support for philanthropy vary across Asia. The chart below displays the CAF Giving Index and Hudson Philanthropic Freedom Index for several Asian countries. The former provides insight into the scope and nature of giving across countries by looking at whether individuals in the country have contributed by: a) volunteering time, b) helping a stranger, or c) donating money in the past month. Citizens from countries with higher scores have a higher propensity to give. The

Hudson Philanthropic Freedom Index provides insights on the barriers to and incentives for giving by examining: a) the ease of registering and operating civil society organizations, b) tax policies for deductions, credits, and exemptions, and c) the ease of sending and receiving cash and in-kind goods across borders. A higher score indicates a country poses fewer barriers to and offers more incentives for giving.

Based on these two indices, there is no observable relationship in Asia between a country's facilitation of giving and the practice of or propensity to giving. From Figure 1, a country that poses a low barrier to giving may not necessarily be the most

**Figure 1**  
*Giving Score and Philanthropy Freedom Score Across Asian Countries*



▲ Giving Score      ● Philanthropic Freedom Score

Source: CAF 2016 Giving Index, Hudson Institute 2015 Index of Philanthropy Freedom

generous country. Myanmar, the country with the lowest GDP in the sample, is actually the most generous country and the country with the least philanthropic freedom. China faces similar challenges to philanthropic freedom yet pales in generosity, as defined by CAF. Singapore, with the government’s generous tax incentives and facilitation of philanthropic giving, is unranked in the Hudson Institute’s Study. Yet, it is plausible that these two indices are measuring different or unrelated dimensions of giving. The limitations of the indices underscore the lack of comparative philanthropic data for Asia.

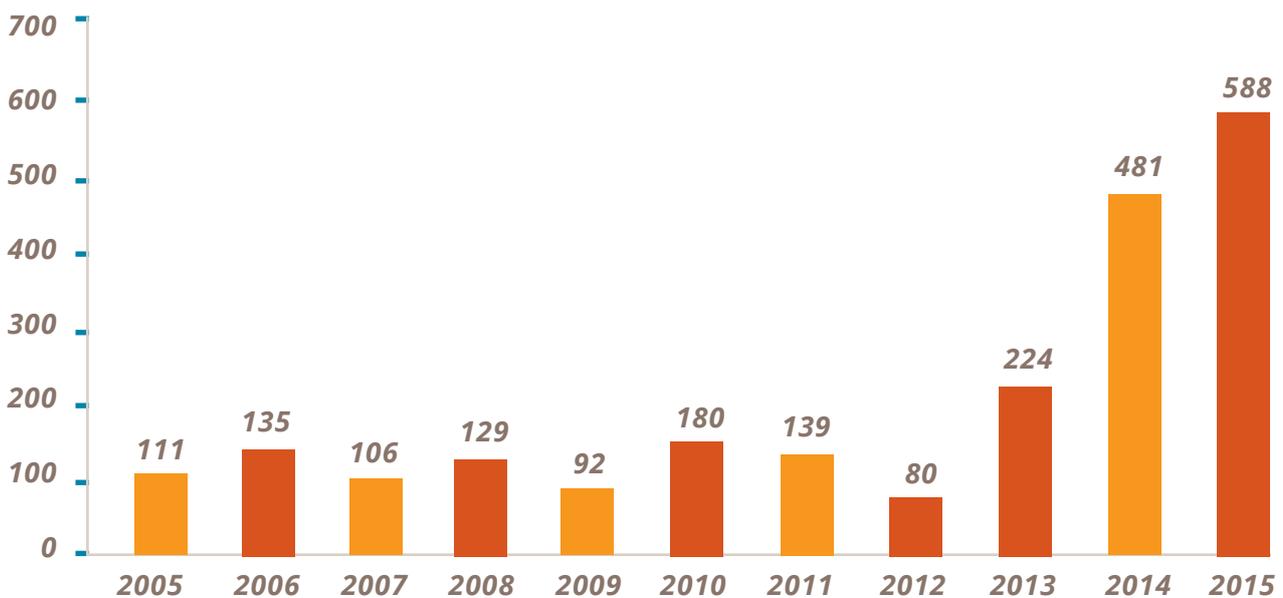
Notwithstanding this lack of comparative or quantitative data for Asia, there has been a marked increase in philanthropic interest and activity in Asia. Media coverage supports this trend. According to Factiva, there were just over 100 articles on philanthropy in 2005. This

increased by more than 5 times, to 588, in 2015. Correspondingly, news on foundations under the subject Charity/Philanthropy more than doubled between 2005 and 2015, increasing from 1,291 to 2,778. We have also seen a sharp increase in media coverage relating to both “philanthropy” and “foundation” since 2013.

## 2.2 Method

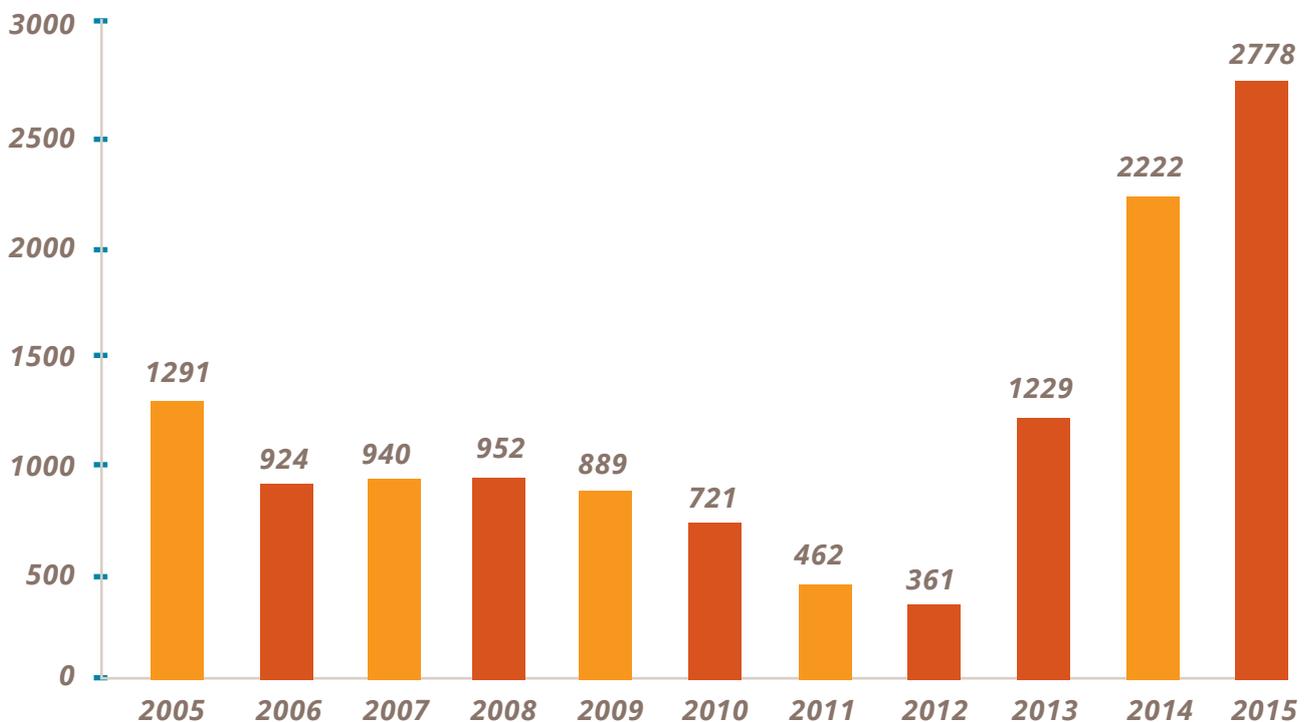
This study reviews relevant literature on philanthropy in Asia. We approach the topic with qualitative research methods, given the data limitations mentioned above and presented in more depth below. Moreover, the study focuses on a few countries due to time and budgetary constraints. Singapore, Myanmar, and China were chosen based on the interest of the commissioning party and ACSEP. Access to foundations is also a

**Figure 2**  
*Document Counts Relating to “Philanthropy” in Asia from 2005 to 2015*



Source: Factiva

**Figure 3**  
**Document Counts Relating to “Foundation” in Asia from 2005 to 2015**



Source: Factiva

major determinant to research, as many foundations in Asia shy away from publicity and allow interviews only through established networks and contacts. Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with foundations in Singapore, China, and Myanmar. We also interviewed two U.S. foundations to compare the workings of international foundations to that of Asian foundations.

All interviews, except for one, were conducted in English with a semi-structured approach. The interviewees were generally heads of foundations overseeing operations. In a few cases, we interviewed programme officers.

### 2.3 Limitations

As noted above, published research on philanthropy in Asia is very limited. Moreover, most prior works

are case studies with minimal data analysis. One major reason is the lack of both quantitative and qualitative data on philanthropy in Asia (John, Tan, & Ito, 2013). Further, the data tends not to be comparative or comprehensive (Chia, 2015). These data have limited depth and breadth. Many countries in Asia do not have regulations that require philanthropic organisations to publicly disclose their giving data. Even when philanthropic organisations provide such data to the government, the data are not typically made available to the public. With the notable exception of the China Foundation Center, there are few intermediaries in the philanthropic sector in Asia that regularly aggregate industry data for independent analysis like there are for their American and European counterparts, e.g., the Council on Foundations, the Foundation Center, or the European Foundation Centre (John et al., 2013).

# 3

## Motivations for Giving

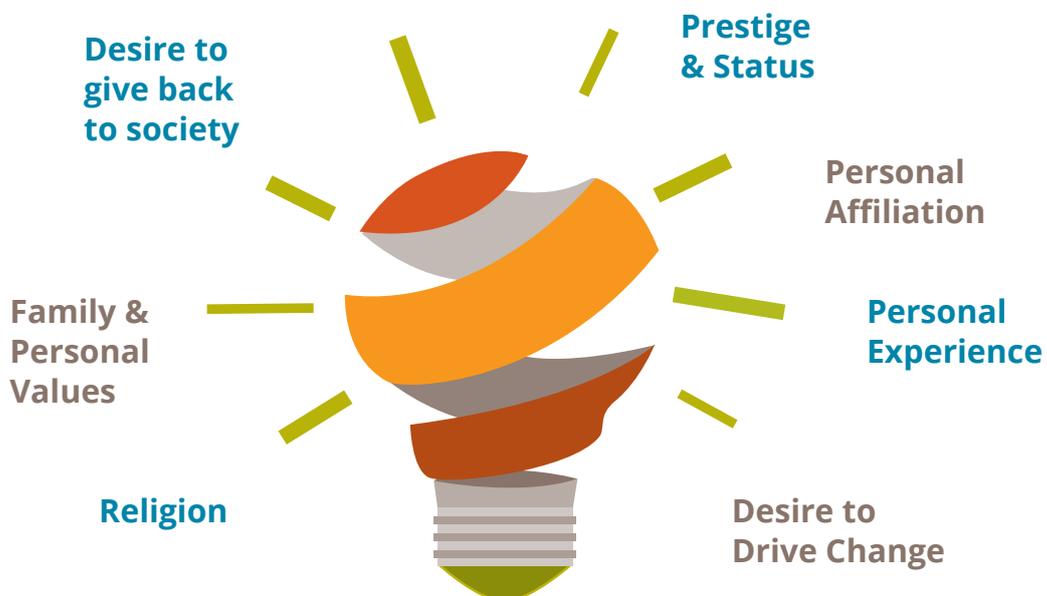
Foundation giving by Asian philanthropists may be motivated by several possible factors. These motivations drive the targeted cause, philanthropic mode of engagement, and intensity of giving.

### 3.1 Desire to Give Back to Society

The desire to give back to society can motivate philanthropy. According to the BNP Paribas Individual Philanthropy Index (2016), which surveyed 457 individuals in four regions with at least \$5 million in investable assets, the top

reason for philanthropy in Asia is the desire to give back to society. This contrasts with the top reasons in other regions, like personal experience in the United States, sense of duty in Europe, and faith in people in the Middle East. Individuals in Asia see personal giving as an expression of the wish to give back to society (John et al., 2013). India, the second most populous country in Asia, is similar to China, as many philanthropists explain their motivation in terms of gratitude, with 60% of Indians citing “giving back to society” as their main motivator (Jansons, 2015).

**Figure 4**  
*Motivations for Giving*



Among philanthropists who desire to give back are the “repayers”, or philanthropists who want to reciprocate benefits they personally received from a non-profit (Jansons, 2015). In addition, many individuals and corporations give because of their sense of social responsibility (John et al., 2013).

### 3.2 Family and Personal Values

Throughout Asia, family plays a central role in socialisation, which in turn shapes charitable giving (Spero, 2014). Growing up in a family environment in which charitable giving is openly discussed and practised can be a childhood influence that shapes giving across a lifetime (John et al., 2013).

Philanthropy is seen as an expression of family and personal values (John et al., 2013). It is used to instil family values, strengthen family ties, and promote knowledge and leadership in the family. Giving makes family values like compassion and responsibility tangible so they can be passed down by generation. Philanthropic activities also unite and strengthen multi-generational families in the pursuit of a common goal. Philanthropic activities can further create meaningful roles for family members not actively involved in the family business or serve as a training ground for younger generations before they enter the family business (UBS, 2011).

### 3.3 Religion

The driver for individuals and groups to engage in philanthropy may be traced to religion. Religion

shapes one’s values, especially concerning charity, and motivates giving. While the form may vary by specific region or culture, the world’s major religions all include the notion of charity or service (Spero, 2014).

Asia is home to several of the world’s major religions: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Much of the region’s philanthropic giving can be traced to religious concepts like merit-making, almsgiving, and performing charitable acts (John et al., 2013). Charitable giving, or “zakat,” is one of the five pillars of Islam and has shaped giving in Indonesia and the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism and Buddhism follow the concept of “dana,” meaning generosity or giving and have especially influenced giving in India and Myanmar. Confucianism includes concepts of altruism and treating others with humanity and, along with Buddhism and other religions, has helped shaped the Chinese charitable tradition (Spero, 2014).

### 3.4 Desire to Drive Change

Philanthropic giving is also driven by a desire to enact change. One study finds inequity to be a key motivator of giving, with 25% of respondents citing “effecting meaningful and measurable social change” as their top philanthropic motivation (Janson, 2015). Darius Yuen, the founder of SOW Asia, a charitable foundation based in Hong Kong, was heavily influenced by a deep sense of inequality and a need to give generously in an unequal world, where so many are poor (John et al., 2013). Philanthropic foundations in India have grown in part from the deep disparity of wealth (Barclays Wealth, 2010). The pervasiveness

of poverty throughout India has inspired HNWI's to develop a strong sense of giving to help combat inequality, particularly given the government's limited capability to provide essential services (Barclays Wealth, 2010).

### 3.5 Personal Experience

Personal experience can also influence one to give. For those who have escaped poverty, like many of China's rich entrepreneurs, they want to give back as soon as they are able to (The Economist, 2011). A deepening involvement in philanthropy may emerge as a result of changes in life circumstances. Such changes may be gradual, like nearing retirement after an active business life and thus having the ability to devote more time to charitable activity, or such changes may result from a business event like an owner of a successful enterprise 'cashing out' (John et al., 2013).

There are also a large number of donors who donate out of a sense of guilt (Bain & Company, 2015). Sometimes, a sudden life-threatening event, like illness or trauma, spurs giving. One notable example is Chinese movie star Jet Li, who narrowly escaped the 2004 Tsunami while on holiday with his family. This prompted him to create the Jet Li One Foundation (John et al., 2013).

### 3.6 Personal Affiliation

Personal affiliation can also motivate giving, like philanthropists who give back to their home towns. In Hong Kong, where many individuals

can trace their roots to China, nearly half of all foundations send funds to China. The Li Ka Shing Foundation, the largest private foundation in Hong Kong, has granted 60% of its total donations to China (Alto & Wong, 2013). Similarly, the Indian diaspora is acknowledged for their generosity in giving back to India (Jansons 2015). An emotional link to their roots and community ties lead many in the Indian diaspora to make their homeland the principal philanthropic target (Murray, 2016). Recent research estimates that the potential philanthropic dollars just from the Indian diaspora based in the US to be \$1.94 billion in 2015 alone (Intellectap, 2016).

### 3.7 Prestige and Status

Some philanthropists may be motivated by prestige and status. In many emerging countries, economic liberalization and growth have been accompanied by the growth of the middle class and the accumulation of vast fortunes by a new, wealthy, and visible business class. Visible donations offer public prestige and social standing for the nouveau riche (Spero, 2014). Similarly, corporate philanthropy is a vehicle for creating goodwill and building an organization's reputation. Simply put, doing good is good for business. A positive reputation can in turn create business benefits (Chia, 2015). Therefore, reputation building can motivate corporate involvement in philanthropy.

# 4

## Foundation

### 4.1 Introduction

A foundation is a structured entity for philanthropic activities. It can be a non-profit organisation or an asset-based charitable trust. It has a stated purpose, with an established income, usually either endowed with a corpus used for grant making or operational programmes or income that combines public fundraising with endowment or earned income (UNDP, 2014). There are also private foundations and public foundations (also known as grant making public charities). A private foundation derives its money from a family, individual, or corporation, whereas a public foundation derives its support from diverse sources, including private foundations, individuals, and government agencies (Foundation Centre, 2016).

*Categories of foundations include:*

- a. Corporate foundations*, generally established by the corporate entity or the corporation's founder, sometimes with a blurred line between the institution and the individual or family (Grady, 2014).
- b. Family foundations*, usually funded by an endowment from a family. The family members of the donor(s) often have a substantial role in the foundation's governance (Council on Foundations, 2016a).
- c. Independent foundations*, distinct from other private foundations like family or

corporate foundations, in that they are not governed by the benefactor, the benefactor's family, or a corporation. Rather, they are usually funded by endowments from a single source such as an individual or group of individuals (Council on Foundations, 2016a).

- d. Community foundations*, provide the means for a wide range of donors to create permanent funds to meet local needs. Community foundations grant funds to a wide variety of causes and offer donors many services and benefits (Community First Foundation, 2016).

Foundations have diverse strategic priorities and activities, ranging from advocacy to implementing their own projects (Missika & Romon, 2014). They also vary widely in size. Some have a financial war chest to address the world's development issues, e.g., Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with more than \$40 billion in asset (KPMG, 2016), while others operate with a relatively minuscule budget.

Foundations emerged in the early 20th century as a vehicle for philanthropy with the establishment of the first large American foundations. The limited data on philanthropy suggests that the philanthropic contributions to development grew nearly 10 times between 2003 and 2012, from \$3 billion to \$29.75 billion. This includes grants from not just foundations but also grants from non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

(Missika & Romon, 2014). Although this is a relatively small percentage of net flow to developing countries compared to social development assistance, foundations are increasingly recognized as significant contributors to development.

According to a recent analysis by the Foundation Center, which has the most comprehensive set of foundation data globally, although mostly for US foundations, foundations are projected to give \$364 billion towards Sustainable Development Goals between 2016 and 2030. The Foundation Center arrived at this estimate by coding giving between 2010 and 2013 as if the goals and targets of the SDGs were already in place (Council on Foundations, 2016b). The Foundation Center believes \$364 billion to be a conservative estimate due to

- 1) the continued growth of philanthropy around the world,
- 2) greater access to philanthropic data as the sector modernizes, and
- 3) increasing awareness among foundations as the SDG framework is embraced by governments, CSOs, and the private sector alike (Smith, 2016). This supports the belief that foundations will play an increasingly important role in development.

## 4.2 Foundation In Asia

Foundations are relatively new to Asia, introduced and growing in popularity over the last few decades as spurred by the growth of Asian economies and the resulting emergence of high

net worth individuals (HNWIs) and ultra HNWIs. The potential for philanthropy to address development issues is tremendous.

In China, private foundations started appearing after the amendment of the 'Regulations on the Management of Foundations' in 2004. Prior to this, foundations were public entities, most established directly by the government. In this model, wealthy individuals could only donate to government-run charities (Deng, 2015). The 2004 amendment allowed enterprises and individuals to establish private foundations.

Since the 2004 milestone for China philanthropy, the number of foundations has increased six-fold, from 739 in 2004 to 4907 in 2015. By 2014, 65 percent of foundations were private foundations (UNDP, 2015a). Despite the fact that private foundations cannot solicit funds from the public, they still managed hold an impressive 48% of total foundations' assets in 2013 and 36% of total foundations' income in 2014 (UNDP, 2015a).

The rise of foundations parallels the rise of the newly rich in China. At the end of 2015, more billionaires reside in China than US. The total net worth of the 400 richest people in China was valued at approximately \$570 billion in 2015, a 35 per cent increase from the previous year. Many of these newly rich people have started to give back by setting up of foundations. China's top 100 philanthropists together contributed the equivalent of \$3.18 billion to support charitable causes, including education (44%), social good (26%), poverty alleviation (9%), disaster relief (5%), and others (17%), between 2014 and 2015 (UNDP, 2015a).

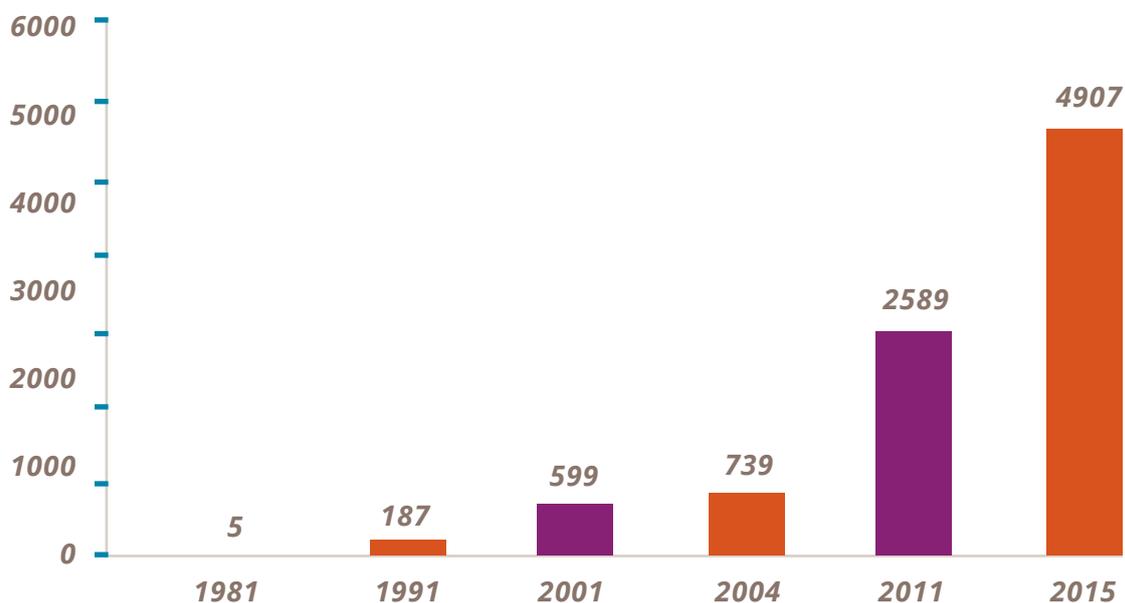
India is also witnessing an increase in philanthropy, with wealthy individuals setting up their own foundations. Private giving by individuals and institutions is estimated to be about \$8 billion annually (Intellectap, 2016). Philanthropy in India was given a boost in 2014, when the Companies Act made it mandatory for companies of a certain size to spend two percent of their net profit on corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes (Dasra, 2016a).

Meanwhile, in Singapore, more and more wealthy individuals and families are setting up foundations, trusts, and funds to institutionalise their giving. Over 400 foundations, trusts, and funds are currently registered in Singapore.<sup>1</sup> These include public and private foundations

but exclude the over 100 charitable sub-funds established via philanthropy intermediaries.

Wealthy individuals and families that want more support for their grant giving can give through philanthropy intermediaries, which help them set up charitable funds and save them the administrative and regulatory duties required to set up their own organisations. Philanthropic intermediaries include Community Foundation of Singapore (CFS), as well as the philanthropy units of the various banks. CFS has created more than 82 funds since it was formed in 2008 (Tan, 2016a). SymAsia Foundation, set up by Credit Suisse in 2011, likewise helps clients with their philanthropic endeavours. SymAsia now has more than 30 charitable sub-funds

**Figure 5**  
**Number of Foundations in China (1981 - 2015)**



Source: China Foundation Centre

<sup>1</sup> This number is based on data collected from the website of Charity Portal, Inland Revenue of Singapore as well as the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority.

set up by clients required to put in a minimum of \$706,700 (\$1 million SGD).<sup>2</sup> The presence of philanthropy intermediaries has supported the growth of philanthropists with less endowment. The minimum threshold required for setting up a sub-fund ranges from \$141,340 (\$200,000 SGD) to \$706,700 (\$1 million SGD), compared to about \$7 million (\$10 million SGD) for a foundation incorporated on its own (Tan, 2016a).

Little information is available on foundations in Myanmar. Based on interviews with foundations and people in civil society in Myanmar, there appears to be growing interest in philanthropy. There are currently estimated to be 20 to 30 foundations in Myanmar. A number of these are corporate foundations created in recent years by private companies and controlled by families to disperse their philanthropic dollars.

### 4.3 Characteristics of Foundation

Based on our study on foundations, we categorise foundations' characteristics into three dimensions: operational model, governance structure, and philanthropic focus.

#### 4.3.1 Operational Model

Foundations have different operating models. Some predominantly give grants to CSOs that run programmes on the ground. These foundations tend to operate with a lean staff that evaluates potential programme and organisations to which they could disburse funds. The actual programme and interventions are executed by grantee organisations. Many of the largest international foundations, like the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation,

**Figure 6**  
*Characteristics of Foundations*



<sup>2</sup> Based on exchange rate (1 USD = 1.415 SGD) from Oanda on 31st Dec 2015.

and Rockefeller Foundation, operate predominantly as grant making foundations. The Lien Foundation in Singapore and Narada Foundation in China are also mainly grant making foundations. Some of the larger foundations can also give bigger grants to intermediaries that then disburse smaller grants to CSOs on the ground.

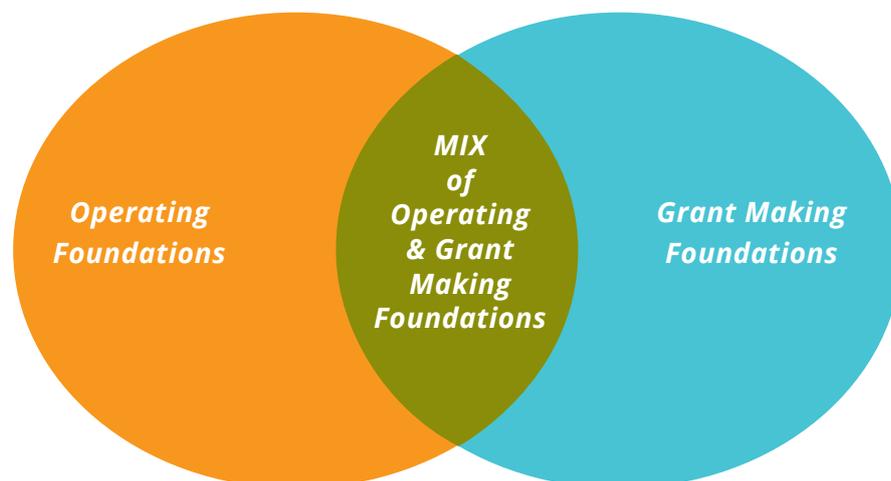
At the other end of the spectrum are the foundations that do not give grants to CSOs but instead run programmes with their own staff. Between these two ends of the spectrum are foundations that both make grants and run programmes.

In Asia, there is a strong bias towards establishing operating foundations (UBS, 2011). With the exception of wealthier countries like Singapore

and Hong Kong, there is a strong predisposition for foundations in Asia to utilize a substantial portion of their funding for their own projects and initiatives. A key reason for this is the perception that third party implementing institutions, especially those outside the educational sector, are insufficiently effective and transparent (UBS, 2011). Corruption is another concern.

The operating nature of the Asian foundations often bring with them an operational tightness and business efficiency missing in many Asian CSOs. This is often an extension of the strong, well-developed operational efficiencies of the entrepreneur-founders in philanthropic activities (UBS, 2011). Some operational foundations are leaders in their field. For example, the Tsao Foundation in Singapore pioneers replicable, community-based, integrated health and psy-

**Figure 7**  
***Operational Model***



### WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION (HEWLETT FOUNDATION)

Hewlett Foundation is one of the largest philanthropic foundations in the world. Founded in 1966, it currently has an endowment of over \$9 billion. The foundation invests its endowment in a variety of different types of assets including public equity, private equity, fixed income and real assets.

With five main programs targeted at Education, Environment, Global Development and Population, Performing Arts, and Effective Philanthropy, the foundation disburses grants to organisations whose grant proposals meet its project objectives. In the last ten years, it disbursed between \$200 million to \$450 million of total grants yearly.

In Asia, approximately 20% of Hewlett's funding goes to direct grants, while the other 80% goes to intermediaries such as Energy Foundation and ClimateWorks Foundation. These intermediaries in turn make grants to grassroots organisations working on the ground. Matt Baker, program officer of Hewlett Foundation explained "The reason we use intermediaries is because we are a relatively lean organisation with a very small number of staff relative to our endowment size. As most of our grants needs to be fairly large, it is difficult to make a lot of grants ourselves. Therefore, we depend on intermediaries who also have more local expertise." (Matt Baker, personal communication, June 10, 2016).

chosocial age care service models (Tsao Foundation, 2016). It is a catalytic advocate for the ageing cause.

In India, foundations tend to follow the operational model, which combines elements of grant giving with occasional partnership with other funders. Philanthropists cited the desire to be engaged and in control, which reflects Indian cultural boundaries and the entrepreneurial spirit of business leaders in ensuring that what they develop is successful, so they can in turn take credit for it. The hesitation to entrust money with a CSO lies in part with the perceived and

sometimes real non-professionalism of Indian CSOs (Jansons, 2014).

Similarly, in China, most foundations assume an operating model that allows them to conduct projects themselves instead of giving grants to CSOs. The factor driving this is a general lack of trust in sub-granting programmes and a lack of capacity in the CSO sector (UNDP, 2015a). However, this may soon change. The Narada Foundation, one of the leading private foundations in China, has advocated for foundations to be grant making, as opposed to operating foundations, over the past few years.

It has created peer-learning platforms like the China Private Foundation Forum and the China Donor Round Table through which it promotes the grant making model to both individuals and foundations. According to Yanni, the secretary-general of Narada Foundation, private foundations in China increasingly make grants to CSOs as the sector developed (Peng Yanni, personal communication, July 27, 2016).

With the development of foundations and the CSO sector in Asia over time, it is expected that the dynamics will evolve as more foundations turn to grant making. This will facilitate a positive cycle. As more foundations fund CSOs, the CSOs will be better able to attract talent and improve their operational capacity. The competition for funding among the CSOs will also drive transparency and efficiency that will further attract foundations to disburse grants.

## 4.3.2 Governance Structure

The governance structure of a foundation determines the decision-making responsibilities necessary to run the foundation. There are three main structures, as described below.

### 4.3.2.1 *Predominantly run by family members*

Spouses, children and relatives play a substantial role in the running and management of some family foundations. Some family foundations serve as an avenue for the younger generation to meaningfully participate in family affairs, including those who are interested in philanthropic causes but not the family business (UBS, 2011).

**Figure 8**  
**Governance Structure**



In addition, in some Asian countries where philanthropy is in nascent stages and/or the registration of private foundations is difficult, families and entrepreneurs may choose to conduct their philanthropic activities through their unlisted, family-controlled companies. Philanthropists typically donate in the name of company foundations or corporate social responsibility arms and use their staff to run day-to-day operations. However, decisions and activities are often determined by the family or entrepreneur. Examples include the Ayeyarwady Foundation and the City Hope and Love Foundation, both based in Myanmar.

#### *4.3.2.2 Run by professional staff with a board that consists of family and independent members*

In this structure, a team of professionals runs the foundation. This team handles daily operations and/or grant making activities and reports to a board comprised of both family members and non-related individuals. The number of board members varies, such that foundations with larger endowments tend to likewise have more board members. The benefactor family retains significant control in the decision-making process, typically formalized with important board positions.

Many of the largest foundations in Singapore, like the Lien Foundation and the Tsao Foundation, have family members on their boards. The most senior position on the board, notably the board chair, is held by a family member to advance the family's philanthropic interests.

#### *4.3.2.3 Run by professional staff and a predominantly independent board*

Some foundations are run by a team of professional staff working under a predominantly independent board. Here, the benefactor family who endowed the foundation maintains a relatively small influence, with decision-making power resting with independent individuals selected based on expertise and qualification. International foundations like the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation have such a governance structure. This is much less common in Asia, where family foundations tend to maintain significant ties to the family.

### 4.3.3 Philanthropic Focus

Foundations are diverse in their philanthropic focus, both in terms of geographic focus and funding mode.

#### *4.3.3.1 Geographic Focus*

In terms of geography, foundations can give nationally, regionally, and or internationally. The most predominant type of giving in Asia is national giving (BNP Paribas & Forbes Insights, 2016). UBS finds affiliation to play the most important role in giving, with families giving most to their home country (70% of family giving is directed to national-level causes), to the country they emigrated from, or to their own ethnic or socio-linguistic communities. However, the UBS study also finds that philanthropists in wealthier

Asian countries are increasingly looking to act in disadvantaged regions, even when no actual affiliation exists (UBS, 2011).

Foundations from developing parts of Asia, like Myanmar, India, and China, tend to give nationally, in part due to development challenges and issues at home. Although some foundations in China give regionally and internationally, they are more the exception than the rule. Foundations in developed Asia, like Singapore and Hong Kong, on the other hand, tend to give both nationally and regionally. Singapore foundations are known to give across Asia, particularly to Southeast Asia. Foundations that give internationally tend to have greater endowments and more established histories, like the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation.

#### 4.3.3.2 Funding Mode

For grant making foundations, there are two main funding modes: programme (or project) funding and general operating funding.

Programme funding supports a specific project or activity run by a CSO, with ties to specific, project-based outcomes. Here, foundations contribute to project expenses but do not cover the overhead costs of running the CSO. General operating funding, on the other hand, allows the CSO to use funds at its own discretion for both operating expenses and overhead.

In a way, programme funding requires grantees to stick closely to project budgets, while general operating funding gives grantees the flexibility

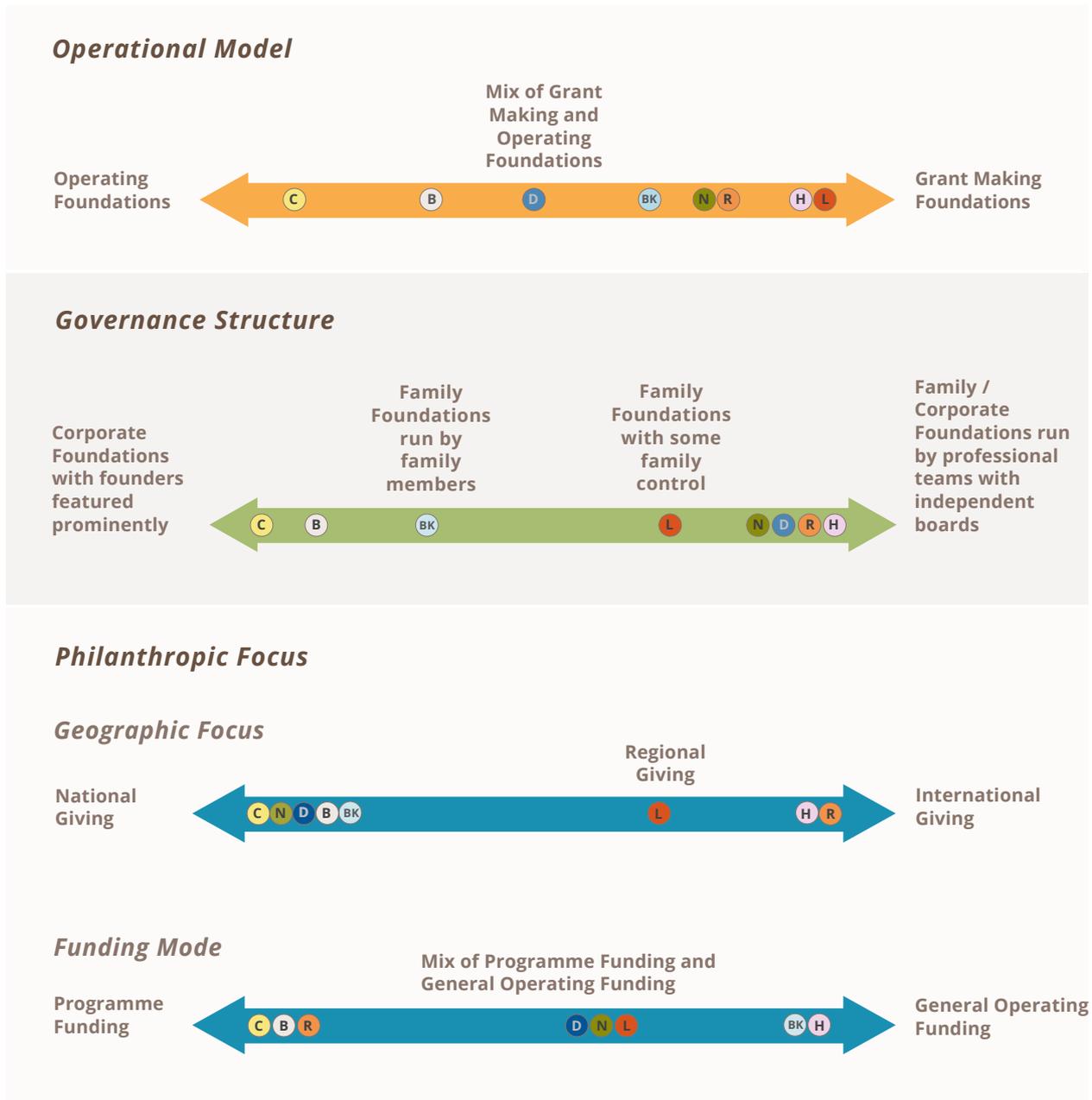
to determine the desired allocation of resources based on needs, efficiency, and changing context. However, it may be more challenging to attribute any outcome to general operating funding. Due to the various advantages and disadvantages posed by the two funding models, foundations may choose the approach best suited to its purpose. Programme funding is more common among foundations in Asia.

#### 4.3.4 Spectrum of Foundations

Based on the information gathered from interviews, as well as publicly available sources, we have attempted to characterise foundation types according to operational model, governance structure, and philanthropic focus (see Figure 9). Foundations interviewed for this study skew towards bigger and better known foundations. Therefore, their characteristics may deviate from typical foundations in each host country. We also acknowledge that in every country, a full spectrum range of foundations often exists along these three characteristic spectra, so future research will be needed for further nuanced validation.

In general, foundations in Myanmar and China are more likely to adopt an operating foundation model, while Singaporean foundations are more likely to make grants. In terms of governance, Myanmar foundations are typically structured as corporate foundations controlled by the founders' family. On the other hand, China and Singapore have a mix of family foundations with family control and family or corporate foundations run by professional teams and

**Figure 9**  
*Spectrum of Foundations in Asia (Foundation Analysis)*



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**Legend**

- Lien Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Narada Foundation
- B.K. Kee Foundation
- Dunhe Foundation
- City Hope Love Foundation
- Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation
- Hewlett Foundation

independent boards. Singapore foundations also give regionally, while foundations in China and Myanmar focus on local causes. Funding is skewed towards programme funding in Myanmar while a mix of programme and general operating funding characterizes foundations in China and Singapore.

(UBS, 2011). In China, 59 of the top 100 philanthropists include education as one of their supported causes, channelling 57.5% of their total giving into this sector. Many philanthropists continue to give to this sector because of the positive role that education played in their own lives (Cunningham, 2015).

#### 4.4 Foundation at Work

##### 4.4.1 Causes supported

The top philanthropic cause in Asia in general, and China and India in particular, is education, followed by poverty alleviation and development, health, disaster relief, and arts and culture

Giving to education also has deep cultural roots in Asia. According to Confucian philosophy, education enables one to become capable, know oneself, and, most fundamentally, live morally. In Hinduism, “student life” is one of the four Ashrams that comprise the major, necessary stages of a person’s life (UBS, 2011). Besides these cultural roots, philanthropists see the potential for education to break the poverty

**Table 1**  
**Top 5 Causes Supported Across Asia**

	Asia	Singapore	China	India
1	Education	Health	Education	Education
2	Poverty alleviation & development	Education	Social Welfare	Child Welfare
3	Health	Arts & Culture	Disaster Relief	Old Age
2	Disaster Relief	Public & societal benefit	Healthcare	Disaster Relief
5	Arts & Culture	Human Services	Environment	Health

Source: UBS, 2011

Source: Coutts, 2015

Source: Cunningham, 2015

Source: Bain & Company, 2015

cycle. Edwin Soeryadjaya, co-founder of the William Soeryadjaya Foundation, explains, “Education is something that everybody needs, and once you are educated, you can take care of a lot of your own needs, and you can be a blessing to others” (Channel News Asia, 2015).

Disaster relief is also a significant cause in Asia due to the frequent occurrence of natural disasters in the region, including floods in China and typhoons in the Philippines and Myanmar. Despite the recent international focus on climate change, the environment remains an area that receives relatively little support from foundations in Asia.

#### 4.4.2 Strategic Giving

In the past, philanthropy in Asia has been a “chequebook” affair, whereby donations are given to CSOs focusing on traditional sectors like education and health. This practice has evolved over time such that philanthropy has become more strategic. Many wealthy families are setting up foundations with the aim to ensure that their giving is more than mere chequebook philanthropy. Instead, they seek giving that has direct impact or meets unmet or underserved needs (Tan, 2016a).

The younger generation of philanthropists in Asia gives to a broader range of causes, including arts and culture, the environment, and animal protection. More younger philanthropists are interested in measuring outcomes and impact and proactively identify partners for their strategic giving.

Foundations also increasingly look at giving to projects that can be self-sustaining in order to ensure the impact extends beyond their grants. More and more foundations in Asia seek to catalyze self-sustaining programmes and are coming up with innovative approaches to do so, e.g., the B.K. Kee Foundation and Dunhe Foundation.

#### 4.4.3 International Agenda

In recent years, international organisations have discussed strategic environmental agendas like sustainable development goals (SDGs) and climate change. While certain individual foundations, like the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, are invested in climate change, many foundations in Asia and elsewhere are not engaged in this international agenda.

Based on interviews with foundations and secondary research, it seems that while foundations may be aware of the international agenda, they do not explicitly plan their activities around it. Many of them note that their priorities for giving have been around for a while and their work already resonates with several of the 17 SDGs.

Giving by Asian foundations tends to be driven by the founders’ vision for a good society. This vision has to be interpreted by the current leadership staff and board. As such, founders maintain strong influence over the strategy of foundations. Corporate foundations consider activities that maintain or improve the company’s public reputation and profile. It is common for philanthropy priorities to be based on internal drivers, as opposed to the external context (Grady, 2014).

## DUNHE FOUNDATION

The Dunhe Foundation, one of the leading foundations in China, pioneered an innovative approach to helping small and medium sized foundations and NGOs recruit talent and manage challenges.

Regulation in China limits staff wage expenditures in the social sector. The resulting relatively low wages make this sector unattractive to potential talent.

Instead of simply doling out once off donations, the Duhne Foundation sets up an endowment programme under the Dunhe Seed Fund. Selected NGOs as well as small and medium sized foundations, are given an endowment of

\$462,000 (3 million yuan). The annual income from the fund, about 8% of the endowment, is used to fund wage expenditures. This seed fund has two aims. First, it helps smaller foundations that otherwise lack the budget to pay management and human resource expenditures attract talent. Second, it helps them gain financial expertise. As part of the programme, the endowment is initially managed by the Dunhe Asset Management Company, which assists grantees with the financials and investments of the endowment. It is hoped that in five years' time, these grantees will be able to gain expertise to choose their own financial consultant/expert (Liu Zhou Hong, personal communication, July 26, 2016).

Despite the fact that Asian foundations tend to work within their own agenda, there are noteworthy examples of roles and efforts that Asian foundations have played in the international agenda.

For example, the Indonesian government launched a technical exercise to identify SDG targets included in the current Indonesian Middle Term Development Plan (108 targets are already included). Indonesian foundations like the Tanoto Foundation, together with the government agency Provincial Development Planning Agency (BAPPEDA), support the localization of SDGs

in Riau Province through mainstreaming, acceleration, and policy support at the sub-national level. Their stated goals include developing an inclusive SDG governance structure and data system, in addition to a provincial SDG roadmap for Riau (UNDP, 2016).

India has also formally adopted the SDGs, becoming the first country with partnerships between the private and public sector to drive the development agenda (Times of India, 2016). Indian foundations like the Mansur Ali Foundation and Haselfre Foundation have voluntarily registered their projects and commitments with the Part-

nership of SGD platform (United Nation Partnerships for SDGs Platform, 2016).

#### 4.4.4 International Cooperation

The international cooperation of Asian foundations can be grouped into two main categories: knowledge sharing and programme collaboration.

##### 4.4.4.1 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing includes events, platforms, and/or exchanges that promote the sharing of expertise or experience. Foundations in China host and conduct exchanges with international organizations to facilitate such knowledge sharing. The Narada Foundation, for example, has hosted various international foundations, including the Eurasia Foundation and Ford Foundation. Typically, foundations share information regarding their programmes and experience in carrying out projects in specific parts of China in order to aid mutual learning (Narada Foundation, 2013).

Foundations also embark on overseas learning trips with international organisations. For example, the China Association for Non-profit Organization has sent representatives from the Huaman Charity Foundation and Narada Foundation on weeklong exchanges with European foundations (Peng, 2015)

Another form of international cooperation can be seen in the engagement of speakers from international organizations for forums or conferences. China Green Growth Forum, co-hosted by Energy Foundation China and Resources for

the Future, invited the chief economist of World Bank's Sustainable Development Network to share her knowledge with participants (Energy Foundation China, 2014).

In India, Dasra launched Philanthropy Forum UK at Welcome Trust in London in 2015, which focused on the theme of empowering adolescent girls in India. The forum brought over 90 leaders from foundations, academia, non-profit organizations, and impact investment firms to share perspectives and drive collaboration (Dasra, 2016). Sponsored by Kiawah Trust and USAID, the event was produced in partnership with the Charities Aid Foundation and the Philanthropy Workshop (Dasra, 2016).

##### 4.4.4.2 Programme Collaboration

Collaboration between foundations is a form of collective impact philanthropy, whereby each foundation brings their resources and experience to enhance a given programme or project. In China, the Narada Foundation has collaborated with the British Embassy's Cultural and Education Sector for a Social Investment Platform (Narada Foundation, 2015) to target social entrepreneurship. Narada has also worked with Thomson Reuters Foundation for TrustLaw Connect, a free legal service for grassroots organizations and social enterprises (Narada Foundation, 2013).

In India, Tata Trust has collaborated with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria with the India Health fund, a financing platform designed to leverage and pool private sector resources and expertise to address key health challenges in India (Dybul, 2016).

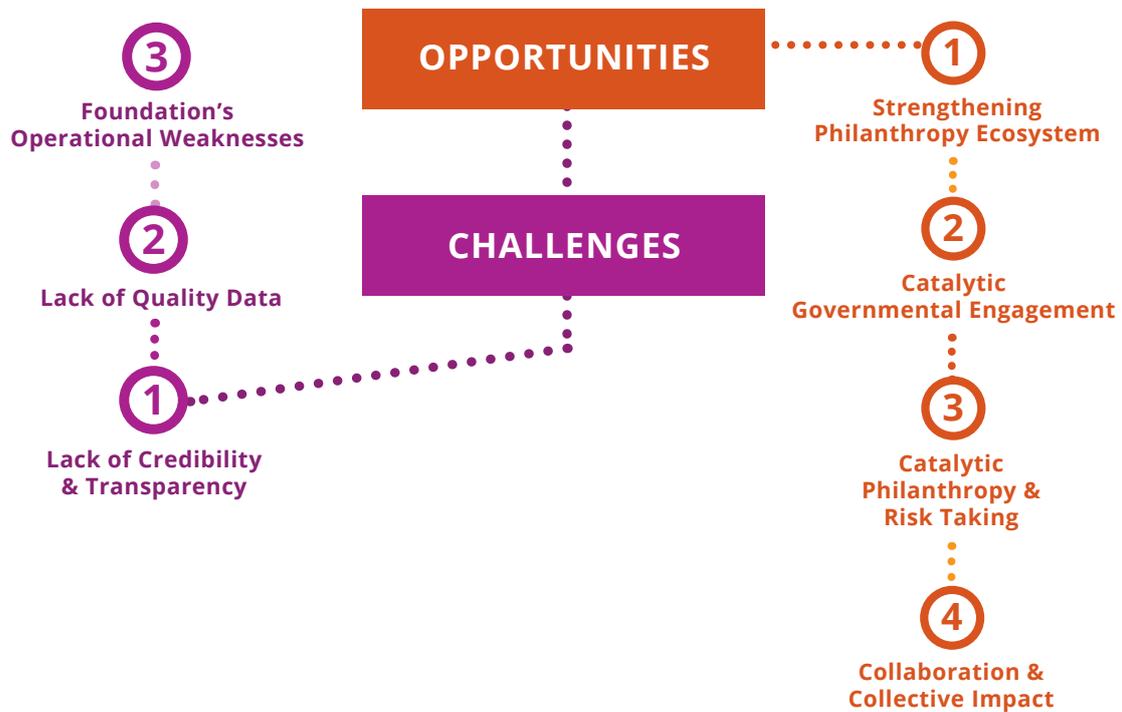
# 5

## Discussion

The breadth and depth of philanthropic activities in Asia continue to expand. However, this growth is slow compared to the growth of wealth in general (Chia, 2015). In this section, we discuss the challenges foundations must overcome

and the opportunities they must seize before the full potential of philanthropy in Asia can be realized. Our specific recommendations follow this discussion.

**Figure 10**  
*Opportunities and Challenges*



## 5.1 Challenges

### 5.1.1 Lack of Credibility & Transparency

In Asia, the lack of transparency and access to the operational and financial aspects of CSOs has contributed to a poor public perception of CSOs (Anand & Hayling, 2014). In India, for example, the perceived lack of credibility and trustworthiness of NPOs has resulted in the underfunding of CSOs (Bain & Company, 2015). Many Asian Foundations operate their own programmes instead of making grants due to this lack of trust in CSOs and the inability to find CSOs that have the size, focus, or effectiveness that could meet the philanthropists' goals (Jansons, 2014).

Credibility and transparency challenges have discouraged philanthropy. Improvements in governance and accountability to stakeholders, including donors, could address these credibility shortcomings. Specifically, the disclosure of information relevant to philanthropic decision making and monitoring could, in principle, improve access. However, the quality of information, especially if this is voluntary self-disclosure set against an unregulated landscape, could pose a similar challenge. Is there a need for intermediation in these instances when the "market" for philanthropic funds fails?<sup>3</sup> Credible intermediaries with no vested interest in philanthropic or business processes are needed even more in countries with weaker institutional governance. Sub-optimal solutions to these moral hazard problems could include the use of an operating foundation as the philanthropic vehicle.

### 5.1.2 Lack of Quality Data

Lack of quality data from CSOs and foundations poses a major challenge for philanthropy. The lack of a data-sharing mechanism exacerbates the challenges of collaboration because foundations are unaware of others working on the same issues (UNDP, 2015b). The cost of information and information sharing is higher when the market is more opaque.

Further, the information needs of philanthropists and philanthropic organisations have yet to be established. The challenge of quality data to support philanthropy is complex, with no single or straightforward solution. The first step in addressing this issue is to determine if there is a case for investment in the production of quality data in the first place and, if so, what information should be captured and shared. Some questions that can help us better understand the diversity and richness of philanthropic practices include:

- Is the purported challenge resulting from a lack of quality data real?
- Do philanthropists need data before a philanthropic decision can be made? If so, what type and how much information is needed? Do specific types of philanthropy have different data needs?
- Is it plausible that more recent innovations in philanthropy, like strategic philanthropy that is motivated to drive systemic change on issues like climate change, result in new data needs?
- How much will the "market" pay for such data production?

<sup>3</sup> In this "market", there is an exchange of philanthropic monies, resources, talents, and time for the expected "production" of social good and services or desired social outcomes and impact.

- Is there genuine demand for quality data when information carries real costs?
- Is it plausible that philanthropy motivated by personal experience, personal affiliation, and/or prestige and status has a relatively smaller need for quality data?
- Is it plausible that philanthropy that is motivated by a desire to give back to society, family and personal values, and religion may find its location regardless of the outcomes and impact of giving?
- And, is it plausible that some social problems are simply too complex and remain simply cases for check writing?

Different solutions to this data challenge may be available in different countries. As philanthropic roots run deep in Asian countries, the data challenge has been resolved partially and endogenously within each country's socio-economic and political frames. Anecdotal accounts point to the use of affiliations and social networks, "coffee monies", co-investing, engaged philanthropy, board representation, etc. Therefore, perhaps the real question is not whether a lack of quality data is a challenge, but whether purported improvements in the production, access, and sharing of such data can be justified by incremental costs and whether the relevant stakeholders would be willing to foot the bill.

### 5.1.3 Foundation's Operational Weaknesses

A foundation's operational model presents another challenge to philanthropy. Foundations

often lack long-term strategies for their activities. Their programmes may not be needs-based but are perhaps driven by the founder's personal interest or history (British Council, 2013). This operational model limits effective philanthropy, as donations may not be allocated to the most pressing needs. In Myanmar and India, for example, foundations operate their own programmes and inevitably cut off funding for smaller CSOs (UBS, 2011) or reinforce cross sector non-cooperation (Jansons, 2014).

Another operational weakness in Asian foundations is the difficulty of attracting and retaining talent. This can be exacerbated by government policies. In China, regulations on foundations limit the administrative costs of foundations, including salaries and payments, to less than 10% of annual expenditure (UNDP, 2015a). This affects foundations' ability to build capacity and attract and retain talent. The low administrative costs of Asian philanthropies also reflect under investment in professionalization and institutionalization, which can in turn lead to less efficient grant allocations, informal grant decision-making processes, opportunities for corruption, and disruption to grant making when leaders leave, retire, or pass away (UBS, 2011).

## 5.2 Opportunities

### 5.2.1 Strengthening the Philanthropy Ecosystem

Philanthropy in Asia is not yet well institutionalized or professionalized. However, the operational challenges outlined above can be

reframed as opportunities for sectoral development. Many Asian foundations focus on traditional giving, typically more charity-oriented and community-based (Kobayashi, 2013). This is further challenged by limited government policies and laws and the small size of the professional grant making networks.

The philanthropy ecosystem in Asia can be strengthened with the growth of philanthropic intermediaries and network partners. In Singapore, the growth of philanthropic intermediaries that provide grant administration, basic due diligence, and reporting for philanthropists has boosted the professionalism of the philanthropy sector. To fully develop the potential of philanthropy in Asia, more or stronger intermediary organizations that coordinate grant making and capacity building services for Asian philanthropy and CSOs may be needed (Kobayashi, 2013).

There have been increasing efforts within Asia to develop networks that facilitate cross sector collaborations and the sharing of information, e.g., the Asia Venture Philanthropy Network and large scale conferences and events like Dasra Philanthropy Week. Dasra Philanthropy Week is an annual event in India that brings together corporations, foundations, and philanthropists to build awareness and spark collaborations to solve India's critical development issues. Through panel discussions, workshops, and keynote speeches, participants gain understanding of strategic philanthropy, sector specific funding landscapes, and the best practices of fellow funders (Dasra, 2016b).

More recently, the Myanmar Foundation Network, set up by British Council Myanmar, brings

together private foundations in Myanmar. The network aims to promote effective collaboration among private foundations, governments, and other development stakeholders (Mi Mi Myo Win, personal communication, July 21, 2016).

The Rockefeller Foundation is also interested in supporting the development of Asian philanthropy by bringing their experience as a global philanthropic organization into the region and working with emerging and innovative Asian philanthropic ventures and platforms. (Ashvin Dayal, personal communication, July 1, 2016).

Finally, to strengthen the ecosystem, there is further need for foundations to assist the CSO sector in building capability through capacity building and investment. With a stronger CSO sector, foundations would be better able to leverage their philanthropic dollars for greater on the ground impact.

## 5.2.2 Catalytic Governmental Engagement

In Asia, especially its emerging economies, governments can catalyse philanthropic growth by enacting policies that do not unduly impede philanthropic activities and instead encourage ground-up initiatives from people who genuinely want to do good. Catalytic government engagement may also spur philanthropic giving in the region.

Governments can also institute supportive policies to boost philanthropy. In Singapore, for example, donations to specific charities are eligible for a personal tax deduction of 250 percent. This has increased participation in philanthropy and large-scale donations in recent years (Anand & Hayling, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Based on exchange rate (1 USD = 66.2025 Indian Rupees) from Oanda on 31st Dec 2015.

In India, the Companies Act was revised in April 2014 to mandate that businesses with annual revenues of more than \$151 million (10 billion rupees)<sup>4</sup>, net worths of more than \$76 million (5 billion rupees), or net profits of more than \$755,000 (\$50 million rupees) must donate 2% of their profits to charities, while also formulating clear and transparent CSR policies (Passey, 2016). Several sources estimate that this change created between \$2.5 billion and \$3.3 billion in corporate philanthropy (Bain & Company, 2015).

In China, corporate philanthropy is one of the largest sources of charitable donations for

social organisations, despite only receiving a 12% of tax deduction in return (UNDP, 2015a). With the new 2016 Charity Law, tax benefits are given for donations by individuals, businesses, and organisations to charitable activities. Corporations may carry over the amount of donations that exceed the annual ceiling for tax deductions for one year into the calculation of taxable income over the next three years (China Daily, 2016).

However, not all countries in Asia have supportive government policies. Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand offer very limited tax benefits for individual charitable giving, due

#### LIEN FOUNDATION

The Lien Foundation is a family foundation in Singapore known for its catalytic philanthropy. Lee Poh Wah, the CEO of the foundation explained that being small relative to the government expenditure in the social and health sector, the foundation looks for things that the government cannot do or are not thinking of doing in the next couple of years. He says "Our projects are experimental in nature. We can take more risks than the government. It is safe to fail as we see failure as an acceptable cost of innovation. We try to be a bit more imaginative, intuitive and flexible in our approaches to solving social issues" (Lee Poh Wah, personal communication, July 15, 2016).

The foundation has been successful in catalysing a few programmes that led to nationwide adoption. For example, Mission: I'mPossible is a community-based programme that bring specialist care into the classes of mainstream preschools to serve children with mild learning disorders (Lien Foundation, 2010). The programme was eventually funded by the Singapore Government on a nationwide scale, demonstrating how private philanthropy can pioneer innovative ideas that later become mainstream (Tan, 2016a). The Lien Foundation continues to catalyse social innovations through research partnerships and engaging operational non-profit organisations (John et al., 2013).

to the belief that wealthy individuals and corporations are not paying their fair share of taxes (Anand & Hayling, 2014). There are opportunities for more supportive government policies that facilitate setting up of foundations and other social purpose organisations. More importantly, governments that catalyse crowding in, as opposed to crowding out, philanthropic activities for the creation of social good, are more likely to lead the country in addressing social challenges. This strategy offers the potential for great political pay-off .

### 5.2.3 Catalytic Philanthropy and Risk Taking

Asian foundations can look beyond traditional philanthropy to embrace strategic philanthropy with a greater appetite for risk taking. These can provide risk capital for innovative social experiments that have the potential to solve complex development issues in Asia.

Catalytic philanthropy tends to take a long-term view and places a premium on collaboration. It experiments with a radical theory of change that is supported by research and evidenced by results. If successful, the programme may be scaled up with the facilitation of the government (John et al., 2013). A foundation that adopts catalytic philanthropy tends to take more risks and invest in ideas that may not have an immediate impact but have the potential to create long-term, structural changes (UNDP, 2015a).

### 5.2.4 Collaboration and Collective Impact

There is tremendous potential for the impact of Asian foundations to increase exponentially through collaboration. Currently, collaboration among foundations in Asia is rather limited. The Myanmar-based foundations interviewed for this report tend to work independently. Despite some collaborations between the foundations in China and Singapore, they tend to be few and far in between. The Rockefeller Foundation also notes that there seems to be a gap in collaboration and learning across the region, even among foundations in ASEAN, where countries are relatively closer politically and economically than in South Asia (Ashvin Dayal, personal communication, July 1, 2016).

Foundations have indicated interest in collaboration, but find it difficult to actually find partner foundations (Fritz Kling, personal communication, July 12, 2016). Nevertheless, there seems to be a positive trend toward more collaboration with non-profit organisations and international non-governmental organisations in recent years (Yu Wai Maung, personal communication, July 22, 2016).

The B.K. Kee Foundation observes that collaboration can prevent duplicative work. Foundations that co-invest and complement one another's strengths can realize bigger impact. Foundations that create a better environment for collaboration and partnership engender economies of scale and collective impact (UNDP, 2015a). Underlying such optimism is the trust that must be first built into these partnerships such that collaborating organisations embrace credibility and trustworthiness as essential values.

# 6

## Conclusion

While philanthropic roots run deep in Asia, institutionalised philanthropy in the form of family or corporate foundations is a recent phenomenon and so remains in nascent stages for many countries in Asia. This phenomenon is catalysed by many ultra HNWI and HNWI starting to think about engaging in philanthropy after making tremendous wealth alongside the economic success of Asian economies.

This study offers insight into the motivations for giving in Asia. These motivations tend to be enmeshed with strong communal, familial, and religious structures. Catalysed by entrepreneurship and new wealth, a new generation of philanthropists with proven business acumen set out to address some of the most pressing social challenges of their times.

Thus, institutionalised philanthropy represents the concrete commitment of these philanthropists to address some of the developmental and structural gaps left by governments, businesses, and the people sector.

This study also develops our understanding of the characteristics and *modus operandi* of Asian foundations. Asian foundations tend to be characterised by familial bonds. Many are operating foundations that are set up in response to the structural weaknesses of the people sector itself. The top philanthropic focus is education in emerging economies, as education underpins well-trying theory of

change. Foundations run with an entrepreneur slant may be in a unique position to take on more risk and bypass bureaucracies, responding faster and with greater innovation to developmental challenges.

Currently, many of these foundations work in silos, as they are not actively engaged with the government, people sector, or other development stakeholders. Collaboration and cooperation with other foundations and partners are also limited. More effort is needed to engage foundations in the development agenda in a way that augments existing efforts. There is also a need to move away from merely creating network opportunities at conferences and events to sharing knowledge, insights, and best practices, and launching projects for collaborative partnerships.

The opaque CSO and philanthropy sector in Asia limits our research to the public domain and anecdotal insights from interviews. Time and budget also constrained the study to a few selected countries in Asia. Besides greater funding to make available initiatives and research that increases transparency and understanding, foundations can also give more access to researchers. This would better allow future research to delve into the different engagement and collaborative models that foundations adopt with CSOs and other partners in the philanthropy ecosystem.

# 7

## Excursus: Country Profiles

### 7.1 China

<b>Population</b>	<b>1.371 billion<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>GDP per Capita</b>	<b>\$7,924<sup>5</sup></b> <i>(current USD)</i>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Income Inequality</b>	<b>42.16<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Number of HNWI</b>	<b>890,000<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Ranking in Giving Index</b>	<b>140<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Philanthropic Freedom Score</b>	<b>2.7<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>2015</b>



#### HUDSON INSTITUTE, 2015. THE INDEX OF PHILANTHROPIC FREEDOM 2015

“While the government has shown a growing willingness to permit small reforms, China’s philanthropic environment still has one of the study’s lowest scores, ranked at 52 out of 64. At present, the greatest barrier to Chinese groups is the country’s byzantine regulatory environment. Due to extensive documentation requirements, complex regulations, and the uncertain legal standing of CSOs in Chinese law, registration usually takes between one and three months and requires

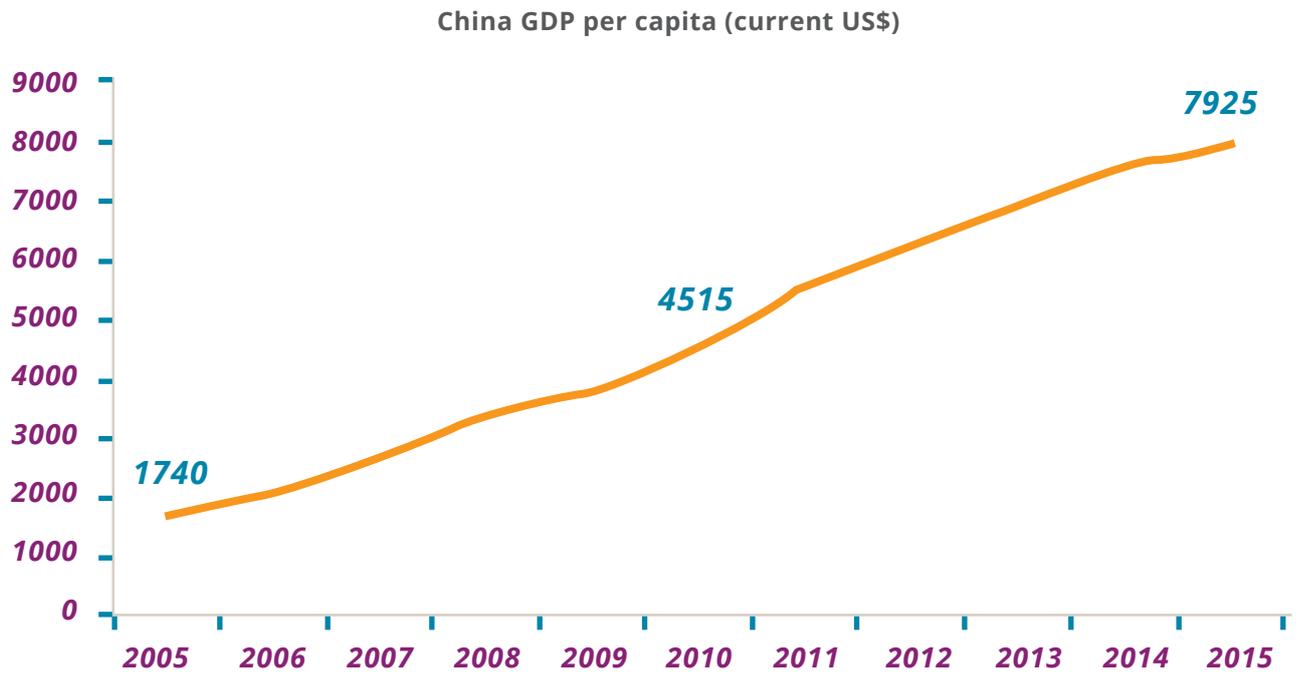
extensive documentation. The process is also expensive, and with fees averaging between approximately \$8,000 and \$48,000, costs substantially more than the average annual salary of a private sector worker. This regulatory environment is not onerous throughout all of China, however. Some provinces, most notably Zhejiang and Canton, deserve credit for instituting a series of local level reforms designed to address these and other issues.”

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank. (2016). *World Development Indicators*.

<sup>6</sup> Capgemini. (2015). *Asia-Pacific Wealth Report 2015*.

<sup>7</sup> Charities Aid Foundation. (2016). *CAF World Giving Index 2016*.

<sup>8</sup> Hudson Institute. (2015). *The Index of Philanthropic Freedom 2015*.



Source: World Bank Development Indicators, United Nation Statistics Division

## Introduction

There are over 5,000 foundations registered in China, with a net asset value of 158 million (1.027 billion yuan) as of October 2016 (China Foundation Center, 2016).<sup>9</sup> Foundations in China are broadly classified as public or private. Public foundations can solicit donations from the public and tend to operate activities on their own, like the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. These public foundations are more akin to charities. Private foundations, on the other hand, cannot solicit donations and are usually funded by rich individuals or corporations, like the Dunhe Foundation or Narada Foundation. Early on, many private foundations operated their own charitable activities but more of these foundations have become grant giving, awarding grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) that operate on the ground. Most of the foundations in China give to national causes, with a minority giving internationally.

## Notable foundations and philanthropy intermediaries

### 7.1.1 Dunhe Foundation

Established in May 2012, the Dunhe Foundation is a regional private foundation (China Development Brief, 2015) and has been recognised as one of China's leading grant making foundation (Dunhe Foundation, 2015a). The mission of the Foundation is to perpetuate Chinese culture and foster harmony among people (Dunhe Foundation, 2016). This is done by focusing giving on three broad agendas: continuing Chinese

culture and knowledge, supporting the charity culture in China, and supporting specific charities in China (Dunhe Foundation, 2015b). The foundation exemplifies innovation, having transformed itself to better respond to the needs on the ground.

Early on, the foundation focused its grant making on education, health, and disaster relief. However, in 2015, it shifted to the preservation and continuation of Chinese culture and tradition after sensing the ground and realizing the gap of support for the cause.

The foundation takes a very proactive approach to awarding grants. Half of its grantees come from its own search and the other half come from an open call for applications. This proactive seeking allows grants to go to charities that would not otherwise meet its grant selection criteria.

The Dunhe Foundation also collaborates with other foundations to sponsor forums and meetings that encourage the sharing of ideas. The Foundation is one of the 17 founding members of the 2015 inaugural China Social Enterprise and Social Investment Forum (CSESIF) conference that touched on issues concerning social investment, global social enterprise policy, and rural development (AVPN, 2015). The Foundation also co-hosted the 2015 China Private Foundation Forum (Burton, 2014), which provides a platform for exchanges, communication, and cooperation between private foundations, government departments, academic institutions, the media, and public service organisations.

<sup>9</sup> Based on exchange rate (1 USD = 6.4917 yuan) from Oanda on 31st Dec 2015

### 7.1.2 Narada Foundation

Founded on 11 May 2007, the Narada Foundation is one of the most prominent and well-established private foundations in China. The foundation aims to develop the third sector with a mission to support civil society organisations (Narada Foundation, n.d.). Thus, Narada funds and supports other CSOs in China. It also gives grants to promote the development of excellent public welfare projects and foster social innovation by CSOs.

Narada's founders want to give back to society and strengthen the civil sector, viewed as the weakest of the three sectors in China compared to the long strong public sector (government) and the business sector, which strengthened after the economic transformation of China. The Narada foundation focuses on social problems stemming from China's economic transition and provides grants to outstanding programmes conducted by civil society organisations so as to foster social innovation and promote social equality and harmony (Peng Yanni, personal communication, July 27, 2016).

The Narada Foundation has a high engagement model with CSOs. It usually maintains high levels of engagement with its grantees after giving the grant. Narada does not typically work through intermediaries; instead, it encourages individual CSOs to directly apply for funding through its website (Peng Yanni, personal communication, July 27, 2016).

Foundations in China collaborate to pool funds and resources in order to scale a given project. As a reputable foundation in China, the Narada

Foundation also receives funding from other partner foundations, which trust it to manage and disburse their funding. This allows Narada to leverage the impact of its existing projects.

In terms of advocacy, the Narada Foundation lobbies for foundations to be grant making organisations, instead of operational foundations over the past few years. It has created peer-learning platforms like the China Private Foundation Forum and the China Donor Round Table, through which it advocates for the grant making model to both individuals and foundations. It has also given feedback on the charity law and has worked with the government to improve the law over the years (Peng Yanni, personal communication, July 27, 2016).

### 7.1.3 China Foundation Center

The China Foundation Center (CFC) is an important intermediary in China's philanthropic ecosystem. As an independent platform that consolidates information on foundations, it is the leading source of Chinese philanthropic foundation information for stakeholders in the social sector.

CFC provides a few services and products: Foundation Database Online, Charity Map, Market Data, and Philanthropic Advisory. One of their key information services is the China Foundation Transparency Index<sup>10</sup> (FTI), which ranks over 5,000 Chinese foundations against a comprehensive checklist of 41 transparency indicators. The foundations are grouped according to the level and quality of publicly disclosed information on their activities, finances, and governance.

<sup>10</sup> China Foundation Center. (n.d.). *China Foundation Transparency Index*

## 7.2 Myanmar

<b>Population</b>	<b>53,897,154<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>GDP per Capita</b>	<b>\$1,203<sup>5</sup></b> <i>(current USD)</i>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Ranking in Giving Index</b>	<b>1<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Philanthropic Freedom Score</b>	<b>2.4<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>2015</b>



### HUDSON INSTITUTE, 2015. THE INDEX OF PHILANTHROPIC FREEDOM 2015

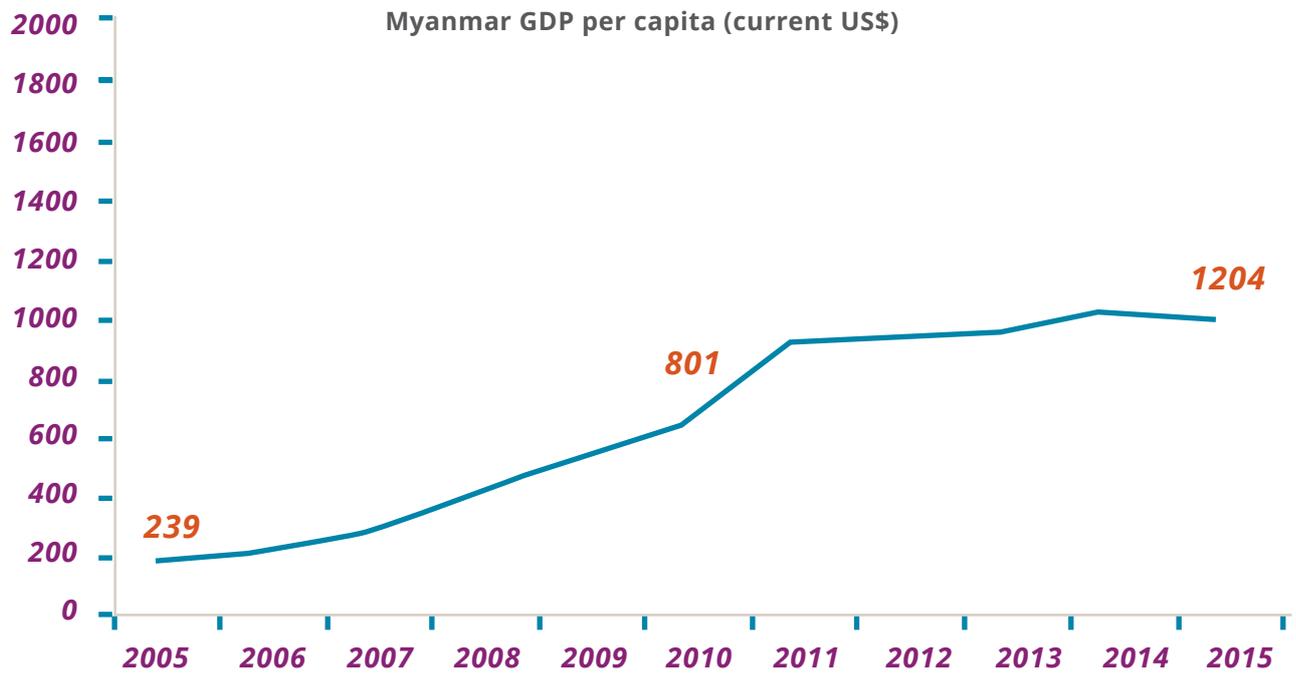
“One of the lowest scoring countries in both the region and the overall study, Myanmar’s philanthropic environment has seen modest improvements. Notably, in 2014 the country approved significant revisions to the Association Registration Law. These revisions have liberalized the country’s regulations for CSOs by lifting the ban on unregistered organizations, easing geographical limitations on activities, and simplifying the registration process for CSOs. As a result,

CSOs can now register within 60 days at a cost of between \$100 and \$500. The reforms were also complemented by the passage of the Revised Revenue Law in 2014, which introduced tax-deductible donations for both domestic and international donors.”

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank. (2016). *World Development Indicators*.

<sup>7</sup> Charities Aid Foundation. (2016). *CAF World Giving Index 2016*.

<sup>8</sup> Hudson Institute. (2015). *The Index of Philanthropic Freedom 2015*.



Source: World Bank Development Indicators, United Nation Statistics Division

## Introduction

Philanthropy in Myanmar is just beginning, as the country emerges from the economic sanction imposed by the US in Sept 2015 and begins to take momentous steps toward democracy. Currently, there are an estimated 20 to 30 foundations registered in Myanmar. These foundations tend to run their own programmes. They also tend to be corporate foundations of private companies, with philanthropic efforts driven by the founder family. Giving is largely confined to within Myanmar's borders, with little collaboration between foundations.

## Notable foundations and philanthropy intermediaries

### 7.2.1 B.K. Kee Foundation

B.K. Kee Foundation was established in 2005 in the US by Dr. Lay Khin Kay, a former physician from Myanmar, to focus humanitarian support on communities with few resources. Dr. Kay founded the foundation in honour of her mother, Kee Beng Kung (B.K. Kee), who passed away in 1980 (B.K. Kee Foundation, 2016a). Dr Kay enlisted the assistance of Stan Sze, a native of Myanmar, now a lawyer in the United States, to drive the work of the Foundation. B.K. Kee is a small family foundation with four local staff and leverages on volunteers. One of the foundation's aims is to bring greater awareness in the West to the plight of people in Myanmar in order to address some of the people's greatest needs. According to Stan, it was possibly one of only two foundations that received license from the US government to provide aid directly in Myanmar

during the early days of US-imposed economic sanctions (Stan Sze, personal communication, July 22, 2016).

B.K. Kee's mission is to provide humanitarian aid, primarily in health and education, to all people of Myanmar (B.K. Kee Foundation, 2016b). B.K. Kee advances its mission by partnering with community-based organizations, international non-governmental organizations, and the Myanmar Ministry of Health, and by building the capacity of locals to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programmes (Stan Sze, personal communication, July 22, 2016).

B.K. Kee funds five to six small and strategic grants per year, targeting grassroots and community-based organisations whose beneficiaries reside in Myanmar. It usually gives operating grants that allow the various organisations to hire staff and build capacity (B.K. Kee Foundation, 2016b). Stan believes in nurturing and leveraging the organisations that it works with. As a small foundation, it does not have the capital to create a big impact on its own, instead seeking to be a platform to take risks and catalyse change (Stan Sze, personal communication, July 22, 2016).

### 7.2.2 Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation

Founded in 2008 and legally registered in 2014, the Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation helps victims of Cyclone Nargis. It is the social initiative arm of KBZ Bank and the KBZ Group of Companies. As the main financier, KBZ Bank has allocated

over \$103 million in charitable giving, corporate sponsorships, and community development projects (KBZ Bank, n.d.). The foundation draws on its parent company's capabilities to achieve goals, like arranging chartered flights to deliver logistics for humanitarian aid. Brighter Future Myanmar is recognized to be the leading philanthropic organisation in Myanmar, even receiving the "Best Philanthropic Organisation in Myanmar" award in 2015 for its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives (KBZ Bank, n.d.).

The foundation has five pillars of social commitment: disaster relief and recovery, women's health and empowerment, environmental conservation, education enhancement, and community development and engagement (KBZ Group, n.d.). In its early years, the foundation implemented its own programmes.

Brighter Future has recently also started to give grants to CSOs in 2015. For example, it gave a total of \$381,000 (MMK \$500 million)<sup>11</sup> to CSOs through the Kyaw Thu Parahita Network (Yu Wai Maung, personal communication, July 22, 2016). The network is broad and able to reach to CSOs addressing different social issues like elderly issues, funeral services, and domestic abuse (Yu Wai Maung, personal communication, 2016).

The main focus of the foundation continues to be its Water Project whereby it implements water distribution and management systems like water pumps, water taps, water tanks, and tube wells in order to provide clean drinking water. It has since built 181 tube-wells in towns and villages (KBZ Bank, 2016).

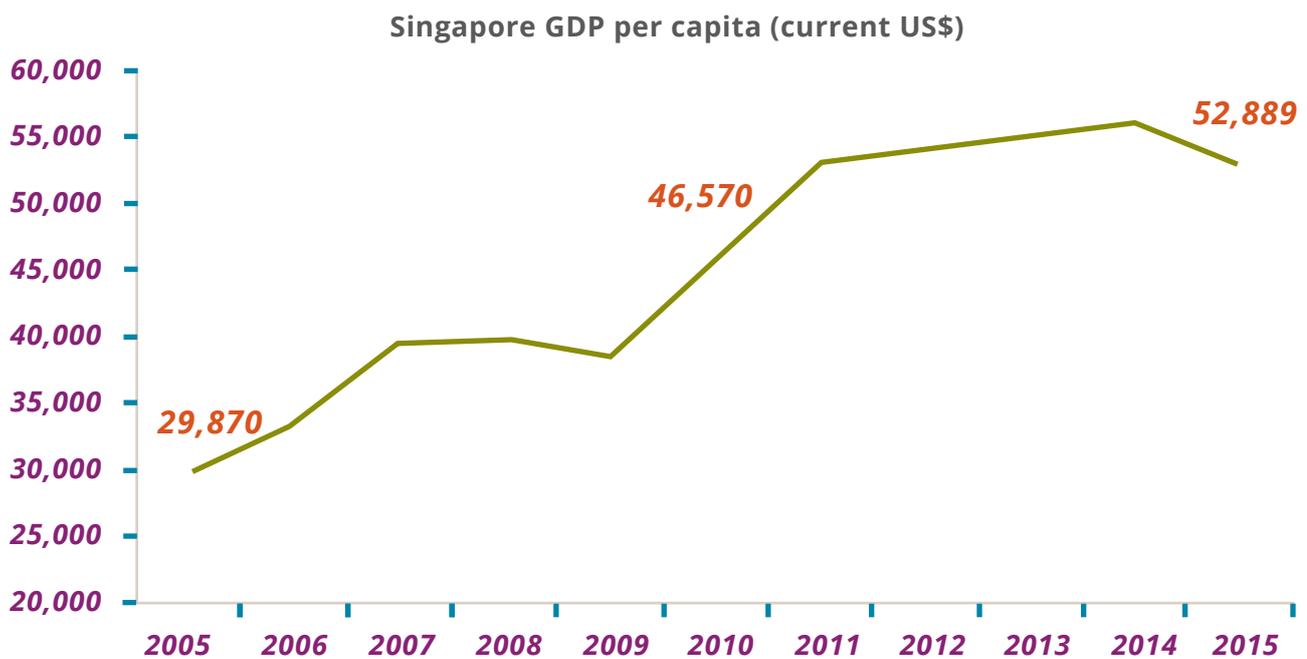
### 7.2.3 British Council Myanmar

The British Council in Myanmar has operated a variety of programmes since 1946. It runs programmes with partners in areas such as youth and social entrepreneurship, responsible business, equal opportunity and diversity, social inclusion, engagement, and active citizenship to support its overall goal of enacting positive social change and inclusive growth. With the support of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the British Council is currently working on a project that aims to bridge communication between private foundations, the government, and other development stakeholders in Myanmar. British Council Myanmar is in the process of forming The Myanmar Foundation Network to promote learning, collaboration, social innovation, and investment apart from traditional donations.

<sup>11</sup> Based on exchange rate (1 USD = 1312 Kyats) from Oanda on 31st Dec 2015.

### 7.3 Singapore

<b>Population</b>	<b>5,535,002<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>GDP per Capita</b>	<b>\$52,888<sup>5</sup></b> <i>(current USD)</i>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Income Inequality</b>	<b>48.2<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Number of HNWI</b>	<b>224,000<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Ranking in Giving Index</b>	<b>28<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>2016</b>



Source: World Bank Development Indicators, United Nation Statistics Division

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank. (2016). *World Development Indicators*.

<sup>6</sup> Capgemini. (2015). *Asia-Pacific Wealth Report 2015*.

<sup>7</sup> Charities Aid Foundation. (2016). *CAF World Giving Index 2016*.

## Introduction

There are more than 400 foundations and trusts registered in Singapore. Philanthropy in Singapore has grown rapidly, spurred by the emergence of philanthropic intermediaries like the Community Foundation of Singapore. In addition to massively wealthy individuals and families, other high net worth families and individuals can set up charitable trusts and sub-funds within the philanthropic intermediaries with a lower entry bar. Corporate foundations are also on the rise, with many companies increasingly setting up foundations run by professionals. Philanthropy in Singapore, for example, tends to be grant making and focuses its giving regionally. The philanthropic scene is getting vibrant with philanthropic intermediaries as well as research institutions, like the Asia Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy, focused on advancing knowledge and impactful practices in the sector, as well as institutions like National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre focused on promoting philanthropy.

## Notable foundations and philanthropy intermediaries

### 7.3.1 Lien Foundation

The Lien Foundation was founded by Dr. Lien Ying Chow, who donated almost half of his wealth to set up the Foundation to help the deprived in society and whose passion for education and commitment to the community continues to guide the Foundation's work. The foundation supports and advocates early childhood education and eldercare in Singapore, and access to clean water & sanitation in developing countries. The Lien foundation goes beyond the tradition-

al role of donor-sponsor and champions Radical Philanthropy, where it values institutional capacity building and is inspired by innovation, collaboration and new research solutions. The foundation forges progressive partnerships with organisations, and invests with a long-term view, holding a preference to design and develop high impact projects (Lien Foundation, n.d.). An example of the foundation playing a catalytic role in social impact is Mission: I'mPossible (MIP), a community-based programme to bring specialist care to children with mild learning disorders into the classes of mainstream preschools (Lien Foundation, 2010). Its success was seen when the Singapore Government funded a nationwide scale-up, demonstrating how private philanthropy can catalyse innovative ideas that become mainstream (Tan, 2016b).

### 7.3.2 Lee Foundation

One of Singapore's oldest philanthropy foundations, the Lee Foundation was founded by business tycoon Lee Kong Chian in 1952. The family foundation has since given nearly \$707 million (\$1 billion SGD)<sup>12</sup> to charity, with tens of millions given annually to almost all sectors, including education, health, welfare, and religious groups (Tan, 2016c). Major gifts in recent years include \$106 million (\$150 million SGD) for Nanyang Technological University's medical school and \$18 million (\$25 million SGD) to building the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum. The Lee Foundation has gained recognition for its contributions and was the first recipient of the National Council of Social Services' Presidential Medallion for Social Philanthropy in 2011 (Koh, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Based on exchange rate (1 USD = 1.415 SGD) from Oanda on 31st Dec 2015.

### 7.3.3 Khoo Teck Puat Foundation

Khoo Teck Puat, once Singapore's richest man thanks to banking, hotels, and real estate, established the Khoo foundation in 1981 with an initial endowment of \$14 million (\$20 million SGD). Over the last decade, the foundation and the estate of the late Mr. Khoo have given more than \$254 million (\$360 million SGD) to charity. The foundation is especially active in the healthcare and education sectors. In recent years, it donated \$71 million (\$100 million SGD) to build the Khoo Teck Puat Hospital and \$57 million (\$80 million SGD) to fund medical research at the Duke-NUS Medical School (Tan, 2016c).

### 7.3.4 Community Foundation of Singapore

Founded in 2008, the Community Foundation of Singapore (CFS) is a philanthropic intermediary that provides strategic advice and assistance to donors so that they can grant money to charities and causes. It connects individual, families, and/or organization donors with suitable causes and helps set up and manage donor funds with high levels of governance and accountability. Using its community knowledge and grant making expertise, the foundation currently manages more than 80 donor funds, giving out grants of \$7 million (\$10 million SGD) yearly to support a wide range of community needs (Community Foundation of Singapore, 2016). A minimum of \$141,340 (\$200,000 SGD) is required to set up a donor fund with the foundation (Tan, 2016a). CFS supports and partners with 400 charitable organisations to receive grants from

donors in order to create impactful projects for the community (Community Foundation of Singapore, 2016).

### 7.3.5 Asia Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy (ACSEP)

The Asia Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy (ACSEP) is a research centre situated within the National University of Singapore Business School that aims to advance the understanding and impactful practice of social entrepreneurship and philanthropy throughout Asia by focusing on research and education (NUS Business School, 2016). Its goal is to be a resource and knowledge hub that connects those who have the ability and desire to do good with those in need. The centre also engages in collaborative efforts with academic institutions, government agencies, corporations, non-profit organisations, and social enterprises. The centre publishes and works on collaborative research on issues of interest to policy-makers, non-profit as well as for-profit leaders, grant makers, philanthropists, and practitioners. In addition, it emphasises and supports capability building through university courses, executive education, and practical learning experiences. Since 2015, ACSEP has hosted a yearly International Symposium on Social Entrepreneurship, where international scholars discuss the different issues concerning social enterprises across different landscapes (ACSEP, 2015).

### 7.3.6 National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)

The National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) is a non-profit organisation that aims to promote a culture of giving in Singapore by catalysing development in volunteerism and philanthropy. NVPC facilitates partnerships with non-profit organisations, corporations, public sector bodies, and individuals in order to build Singapore's giving ecosystem. NVPC also conducts research on giving motivations and behaviours, creates roadmaps and landscapes of the giving sector, and aspires to be the go-to-place for giving (NVPC, n.d.). The Knowledge Hub by NVPC is a one-stop online platform to plug into a community of practitioners who create and share their knowledge on volunteer practices (NVPC Knowledge Hub, 2014). NVPC also builds networks and grows communities to increase the impact of the giving space on a national level.

# Annex:

## Organisations Interviewed and Questions

### A. List of organisations interviewed for the study

#### *China*

- a) Huamin Foundation
- b) Dunhe Foundation
- c) Narada Foundation

#### *Myanmar*

- a) British Council
- b) Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation
- c) City Love Hope Foundation
- d) BK Kee Foundation
- e) DeBoer Foundation
- f) Partnership for Change

#### *Singapore*

- a) Lien Foundation
- b) MILK Fund

#### *United States*

- a) William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- b) Rockefeller Foundation

### B. List of sample questions

1. What are the activities of your foundation?  
How do you operate?
2. Are your grants operating grants (unrestricted) or project-based grants (restricted)?
3. Does your foundation mainly give grants or run your own programmes? What are your engagement models with your grantees or partners?
4. Does your foundation play an advocacy role?
5. Does your foundation work alongside an international agenda (e.g. sustainable development goals, climate change)?
6. Does your foundation have an influence in the national/international level?
7. Can you identify the turning points for philanthropy in your country? What are the future giving trends?
8. Lastly, based on your experience, what do you think are the challenges to and opportunities for giving in your country?

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