



CONFRONTING ORTHODOXIES: EVOLVING MINDSETS

The 2023 Global Philanthropy Forum conference focused on evolving mindsets and confronting orthodoxies in philanthropy. The program sought to engage in conversations that are needed, but not often conducted in a public forum, looking to provide roadmaps for funders to embed topics like accountability, localization and justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in their global work.

Over the 2.5 days, 220 people were in attendance from 31 countries -- a truly global conversation. 100% of participants surveyed after the event stated that they met someone that they wouldn't have met had they not attended GPF this year.

We give thanks to the over 80 speakers who provided the insights that we've summarized below. You can review the full agenda [here](#).

The conference was conducted under Chatham House Rules and participants pledged to abide by a no-pitch agreement. Comments below are not attributed.

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2023

We are now in a moment where partnerships between global philanthropy and local communities have the power to build cross border collaboration.

- We need to fund the areas that have been funded in the past, but also look at fields and countries that have received less funding in order to reach the most vulnerable and effect change.

More needs to be done to address climate change, which cuts across all issues. Development and climate change must now be seen to be intertwined.

- Biggest opportunity for philanthropy is in addressing the damages of climate and investing in projects that have no market returns.
- Building from a climate lens means baking in resilience and positive externalities into every project.

Philanthropists are starting to make big bet investments to try and match large-scale global problems with large-scale funding, to achieve a tipping point. What makes this model work?

- Philanthropists need to take bold risks and have “Big Bet” energy: be disruptive, be risky, take a leap of faith and provide seed capital.
- Solutions should incorporate a “Year Zero” for strategic planning and systems alignment before deployment.
- Philanthropists must build trust with communities and be willing to take risks and fail in order to drive innovation.
- Big bets need to accelerate more agency at the local level, empowering local actors and bringing them into the decision-making process.





Government collaboration will be important to achieving scaled solutions.

- If you're not able to scale, what you're doing may be useful, but it won't be relevant.
- Government is an important aspect of how we construct the idea of supporting local populations. Working with governments, however, requires different partnership strategies and project pacing.
- Many of the challenges philanthropy is addressing today are systems-level problems, which means systems-level thinking is needed to identify solutions—often at scale.

At the same time, philanthropy must sharpen the focus on co-creation with local communities.

- Solutions should focus first on restoring agency, dignity and ownership to affected communities to empower them.
- Flexible, unrestricted funding enables innovation and responsiveness to community needs versus top-down directives.
- “How/why are we financing projects: are we funding recruiting contractors to implement our vision based on outside vision or are we investing in local partners to make the change they want to see in their own communities.”



The world is changing, and the next generation will work differently. Philanthropy needs to adjust accordingly.

- To capture attention and educate new audiences, philanthropy needs to reach out to younger people through the platforms and voices that they are already relating with, and not discount influencers as irrelevant.
- Your best messengers may be hiding in plain sight.
- Money is not the answer to the problem, empathy is. Teach younger audiences that charity is not a sacrifice, volunteering is not a burden. Philanthropy is its own reward.





Global
Philanthropy
Forum

evolving mindsets: confronting orthodoxies

We need to embrace a world of learning. Philanthropy must make mistakes, learn and course correct.

- Philanthropy is the ultimate risk capital. Don't be afraid to embrace innovation and technical solutions that are on the cutting edge and maybe not proven yet.
- Design models that focus on agency, dignity and choice.
- Trust your experts and give them the resources they need to execute their project (and some latitude to fail so that they can reassess and adjust as needed.)

When we do make mistakes, we need to embrace accountability.

- Philanthropy needs to acknowledge power dynamics and mistakes and continuously improve.
- Build channels for open communication and direct feedback from staff, grantees and communities.
- Ask questions like: who is setting the priority, who can access those conversations, who decides where funding goes, who can change that decision and who can express their disappointment.

When we succeed, it will be a paradigm shift.

- Impact is not just a number, it's fluid and can be redefined as you go along.
- Find a way to position yourself as part of the ecosystem.
- Philanthropy that works is unrestricted funding given over time.



GPF gratefully acknowledges the supporters and partners who made this year's event possible.