



Media Release

Leveraging on technology and development of coalitions key to tackling the challenges of the philanthropic sector in Asia

A study by SMU's Lien Centre for Social Innovation uncovers challenges and opportunities in the area of Asian philanthropy.

Singapore, 2 November 2020 (Monday) – Given the relatively nascent philanthropic ecosystem in Asia, this research found both opportunities and challenges in the philanthropic sector. The challenges related to the philanthropic sector should be delved into and mitigated before the opportunities in the sector can be effectively leveraged .

In an inaugural collaboration, the Lien Centre for Social Innovation at Singapore Management University was commissioned by the [Ford Foundation](#) to embark on research to explore the philanthropic landscape in Greater China, India and Indonesia. The report, titled “Giving and Receiving – A Study of Barriers and Enablers in Asian Philanthropy” is now available online and can be accessed [here](#).

The study collected data and perspectives from 30 philanthropic entities (PEs) from these countries to provide an overview of their local philanthropic landscape.

Important insights were gathered surrounding issues such as:

- (1) challenges and opportunities for philanthropy in the region
- (2) interest and readiness of PEs to address common regional problems
- (3) support and platforms that can effectively translate giving strategies into impact
- (4) interest and readiness of PEs to explore and engage in innovative ways

Key Findings:

1) Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges in philanthropic sector are persistent across Greater China, India and Indonesia. They include difficulties in establishing collaborations, structural barriers, a lack of professionalism and talent in the sector, and strategic spending. Opportunities in the sector include the potential for collaborations derived from a growth in the number of and mindset of philanthropic entities in the region.

2) Limited interest in addressing common regional problems

There is limited interest and readiness for PEs to come together and address common problems. This limited interest is a result of differing needs that exist between countries, as well as cultural and structural barriers.

3) Need for a facilitator to lead the forming of coalitions

One of the forms of support and platforms that they highlighted was the need to have a 'bridge' or facilitator to take the lead on actively encouraging collaborations between philanthropic entities within countries and in the region. More specifically, these coalitions should promote the the sharing of best practices and sharing of specialised knowledge with other relevant and interested parties.

The researchers concluded that it is imperative for coalition members to perceive mutual benefit, for it to be effective. In regional coalitions specifically, cultural exchanges can serve as a powerful approach to foster deeper awareness and trust between PEs in Asia.

4) Attitudes toward Impact investing

Impact investing was a key innovation of interest to PEs, with some expressing interest in exploring this area, and some who were already in the process of doing so. As stated in the report, **Jemmy Chayadi, Djarum Foundation, Indonesia** highlights, "It's definitely needed for us to understand how we measure our impact, how we measure what we do and whether what we do is maximised. The other way I see it is that sometimes the impact can be maximised when we start collaborating with others, when they have the other piece of the puzzle and we have one piece of the puzzle. When we start working together, the impact becomes bigger and we actually get the same value from these collaborations. I'd like to see more of that in the future because different organisations and foundations have different strengths."

Please refer to **Annex** for summary.

About [SMU Lien Centre for Social Innovation](#)

The Lien Centre for Social Innovation at the Singapore Management University is on a mission to drive social consciousness and enable partnership-driven innovation, because when socially conscious people work together, a vibrant, just and inclusive society becomes possible. Established in 2006, the Centre seeks to be a thought leader and catalyst for positive social change in Singapore, Asia and beyond. Offering thought leadership, translational research, and capacity-building programmes, it amplifies impact by giving voice, empowering and enabling socially conscious individuals and organisations to learn, ideate and collaborate..

About [Singapore Management University \(SMU\)](#)

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU's faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg

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