



# **The Status of and Trends in Private Philanthropy In the Southern Hemisphere**

A Discussion Paper for the Executive Session on the Future of Philanthropy  
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The Executive Session on the Future of Philanthropy has thus far focused almost entirely on the United States. To the extent that philanthropy has a future beyond this country and to the extent that US philanthropists are engaged in or concerned about philanthropy beyond their own borders, it will be useful for the group also to look at what is already happening in other parts of the world.

The Synergos Institute has been engaged in studying and promoting philanthropy in the Southern Hemisphere for the past twelve years through surveys, case studies and workshops and through actively engaging with groups trying to build foundations and, more recently, associations of foundations or philanthropy support organizations. While we have followed the evolution of philanthropy in Central Europe, we have not actively worked there. This paper draws on our research and work in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Our sense, though, is that most common trends extend to that area of the world as well.

When we began this work, there was essentially no existing research on Southern philanthropy. Since that time, considerable interest has grown in several universities, primarily in the US. Lester Salomon's research at Johns Hopkins on the nonprofit sector in a variety of countries stands out,<sup>1</sup> as does the work of Kathleen McCarthy at the CUNY Philanthropy Program<sup>2</sup>, which brings in fellows doing research on philanthropy in their own countries. Elsewhere, the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium (APPC)<sup>3</sup> has funded some research on philanthropy in Asia, and the Indian Center on Philanthropy<sup>4</sup> has done some research on philanthropy in that country.

The Synergos Institute has surveyed the state of institutional philanthropy in Southeast Asia (Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and preliminary surveys in Malaysia and Singapore), and Latin America (Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico) and has conducted a preliminary survey in Southern Africa. These surveys map the current universe of grantmaking foundations (private, corporate and community) and, in addition to an analytic section, provide a directory of organizations (see Appendix for a complete list of these publications). The term "civil society resource organizations" (CSROs) has been used to refer to grantmaking foundations in Southeast Asia and Southern Africa. We have also, through our work in a number of countries in these regions, met extensively with private philanthropists and corporate foundation officers to listen to their thinking and observe their work.

## **An Overview of Findings**

While the development of a philanthropic sector in Africa, Asia and Latin America is very much a work in progress, there is no question that institutionalized private philanthropy is a growing and increasingly significant reality. In every country there exists a culturally specific concept and term for what we call philanthropy. Interestingly, though, this concept has historically been more developed in poor communities, both rural and urban, than among

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<sup>1</sup> For the publications of the Center for Civil Society Studies, Johns Hopkins University, see [www.jhu.edu/~ccss/pubs/cnpwork](http://www.jhu.edu/~ccss/pubs/cnpwork).

<sup>2</sup> For the publications of the Center for the Study of Philanthropy, CUNY see [www.philanthropy.org](http://www.philanthropy.org).

<sup>3</sup> For information on APPC go to their website at [www.asiafoundation.org/events/news](http://www.asiafoundation.org/events/news).

<sup>4</sup> For information on the Indian Center for Philanthropy check their website at [www.indev.nic.in/icp](http://www.indev.nic.in/icp).

the elite in Mexico it is known by the Indian word *tequio*; in Ecuador, the indigenous term *minga* is used while in Zimbabwe, the Ndebele word is *qoqeleta*. These terms generally encompass a broader meaning than just giving money – as does philanthropy. The meanings vary slightly from mutual self-help to community action for the good of the whole. Because they are terms used by the very poor, the actions refer to things like constructing a building for community use or helping a family with the harvest. The intent, however, is very much the same as philanthropy: love of humanity.

In other countries philanthropy was primarily of a charitable nature and religion based. “The Buddhist temple was the locus for philanthropy both in terms of giving and receiving. As community members gave to its temples, the temple also returned a great portion of the donations to the community via services like education, health, food and refuge for the aged, the poor, the handicapped, the marginalized or anyone else that lacked care, sustenance and protection from his/her own family” (See Juree, p.2; this giving amounts to an estimated \$300 million a year).

To the extent that in these countries elites have been involved in philanthropy, it has, until recently, and with a few notable exceptions, been with a charitable orientation: supporting the orphanage founded by a good-hearted society lady or a hospital for the poor. Alternatively, there has been some support by elites for certain kinds of cultural institutions such as the modern art museum or the symphony orchestra or ballet. It has often been the wives of wealthy individuals, most of whom until recently inherited their wealth through the family business, who occupied themselves with charitable activities, bringing in their husbands’ money and, where necessary, his connections.

This situation is changing quite dramatically, in some countries more than others. India, The Philippines, South Africa, Brazil and Mexico are all examples where a more institutionalized, more development (hereafter referred to as strategic) as opposed to charity-oriented philanthropic ethos is emerging, among many wealthy individuals and corporations.

We attribute this change in the overall ethos to a number of different factors. It is hard to say which of these is the most important, but certainly high on the list is the growing extent to which the gap between rich and poor is making life untenable or, at least disagreeable, for rich and poor alike.

In Brazil, for example, the fact that people had to surround themselves with bodyguards day and night and were still having their watches and rings stolen while in their car or on the street or increasingly having to contend with a member of their family being kidnapped had an impact. It made many wealthy individuals and corporate leaders realize that they had to do something much more significant and way beyond charity to address the problems in their country. This has led in Brazil to the emergence of a group of strong and innovative corporate foundations such as the ABRINQ Foundation.

**Profile: ABRINQ Foundation**

The ABRINQ Foundation for Children’s Rights was created in 1990 by businesspeople from the toy industry in Brazil. Concerned about increased violence against children and youth and extreme rights violations, ABRINQ’s founders gathered around the goal of working to promote the rights of children and youth at risk in Brazil. The foundation aims to achieve this by mobilizing civil society and government to make children and youth a priority, and by promoting and disseminating successful experiences, policies and actions that can be replicated.

In South Africa, the struggle to overthrow apartheid made white elites realize that they were going to have to deal with social injustice in a very different – and more collaborative – way. In The Philippines and Mexico, strong business and philanthropic leadership from the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) and the Centro Mexicano para la Filantropía (CEMEFI – Mexican Center for Philanthropy) engaged and educated individuals and corporations in more strategic philanthropic initiatives.

A second trend affecting the growth of strategic philanthropy in many countries of the southern hemisphere has been the increasing possibility for partnership and dialogue across different sectors and, to a lesser degree, levels of society. After the confrontational decades of the 1960s and '70s, a belief in partnership approaches began to emerge in the United States. It was not until the late '80s that this same trend started to take hold in southern hemisphere countries (and it has been far slower in some than others). This was perhaps partly inspired by the sense of desperation caused by the effects of the growing gap between rich and poor mentioned above. It was probably also facilitated because civil society organizations (NGOs, church groups, labor unions, community organizations, etc.) began to play a more prominent role in many countries. In The Philippines, for example, the overthrow of the Marcos regime by groups organized by NGOs and in South Africa the role of civil society in ending apartheid brought the relevance and potential power of civil society to everyone's attention. This phenomenon may also be attributed to growing numbers of "cross-over" individuals (or couples) with one foot in government or business and another in the civil society, capable of bringing different groups together.

A third trend, which has played an important role in some countries, is the emergence of community foundations. These foundations have roots that are close to the needs of people in poor communities and the ability to involve multiple donors. The process of bringing people from diverse backgrounds onto the boards of these foundations and exposing them to community development issues needing philanthropic support, has educated a previously uneducated segment of the population about ways in which their financial support could make a difference in conjunction with the time and effort of people in communities. It has

<b>Growth in Numbers of Foundations</b>					
	<b>Number of Foundations 1980</b>	<b>Number of Foundations 2000</b>	<b>% with Endowment in 2000</b>	<b>Type of Foundation</b>	
				<b>Private</b>	<b>Corporate</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	16	31	16,1%	38,7%	61,3%
<b>Ecuador</b>	6	21	60%	71%	29%
<b>Mexico</b>	25	74	64%	77%	23%
<b>Philippines</b>	22	56	41%	64%	36%
<b>Indonesia</b>	9	25	32%	84%	16%
<b>Thailand</b>	6	28	N/A	70,4%	29.6%

Private foundations include those founded by religious groups or leaders, government department or agencies and civil society or NGO leaders. Data is from research by Synergos, in conjunction with partner organizations in each country; the Mexico study is in draft form – numbers are not final.

also had the side effect of helping the staff and directors of these new foundations to learn management and financial skills that had traditionally been missing in the NGO world.

As we will describe later in this paper, these community foundations not only represent a new trend within southern countries; they also constitute a new model of organized philanthropy: one generally not originated by a single donor and not exclusively devoted to giving away money. They are meeting the need for a range of services to support and strengthen civil society. In addition to channeling grants and technical assistance to civil society organizations, they convene groups to identify solutions to a range of social problems at the local and national levels. At the outset they all may receive significant external funds but over time their capacity to mobilize local funds increases.

Finally, in the past seven or eight years, as groups like The Council on Foundations or The European Foundation Centre have begun to take an interest in indigenous southern philanthropy, there has been more interaction among southern and northern philanthropists, both individual and institutional. This has exposed many potential southern philanthropists to options for involvement that had not previously been part of their culture. Because peers tend to influence peers, seeing that their northern counterparts were engaged beyond just charitable giving has often inspired southern philanthropists to go beyond their traditional philanthropy. The Kellogg, Mott and Ford Foundations have been particularly active in ensuring that such exchanges occur, both among wealthy individuals and foundation staff, to the extent that southern foundations have begun to professionalize.

### The Emergence of Institutionalized Philanthropy in the South

A few countries like Colombia, The Philippines, South Africa and India have a relatively long – if limited in size – history of organized philanthropy. But even in these countries, most charitable contributions, until about ten years ago, were made by individuals. There was also some assistance provided by multilateral or large national corporations and, more significantly, by overseas development assistance.

Fundación Carvajal in Colombia and Philippine Business for Social Progress, both more than twenty-five years old, are definitely the exceptions. Both sought from the outset to develop a clear strategic approach to supporting community development initiatives and building a strong professional staff.

#### **Profile: Philippine Business for Social Progress**

PBSP was established in December 1970 by 50 leaders of top Philippine corporations who saw the need for a mechanism that would deliver professional development assistance to the poorest of Filipinos. Today, PBSP is a corporate-led foundation whose membership (175 companies) has committed 1 percent of net income before taxes to social responsibility. Of this, 20 percent is administered by PBSP. PBSP has 166 staff. In its 30 years it has given over P1.6 billion in financial assistance and has a capital fund of P217M (approximately \$4.2 million). In addition to annual corporate contributions, it also raises matching funds from international organizations to fund a range of social development projects in poor countries and build the capacity of NGOs and people's organizations.

But with larger accumulations of individual fortunes<sup>5</sup> and the intra- and cross-cultural exposure mentioned in the last section, more southern donors have taken an interest in institutionalizing their giving. Some do this through contracting staff to allocate annual amounts effectively; others are considering or, in a few cases, actually endowing foundations.

The number of foundations in many countries has increased steadily in the last few decades. These include foundations created by individuals, by groups of individuals and corporations.

The origins of the funds vary widely and include personal contributions, earned income and donations from foreign individuals, foundations, corporations and governments.

Newly emerging associations of foundations are playing a key role in helping individuals and corporations professionalize their giving. The Group of Institutes, Foundations and Enterprises (GIFE) in Brazil, for example, has been particularly active in helping individuals and corporations

**Profile: Group of Institutes, Foundations and Enterprises**

In 1995, GIFE was legally established, by 25 institutions, as a non-profit organization. Its mission is to improve and disseminate the concepts and practices of using private resources to develop common welfare. GIFE comprises 64 foundations and businesses that together with their partners annually invest nearly \$300 million in social programs in Brazil.

institutionalize their philanthropy. Over the past five years, they have grown from 25 to 64 members. They provide these members with technical assistance on issues such as how to incorporate, how to set program guidelines, monitor effectiveness and train staff to be professionals in a field which essentially did not exist in Brazil ten years ago.

There is no question that effective and well-respected leadership has enabled some of these groups to advance more quickly than others. Manuel Arango's initial leadership of CEMEFI, together with competent professional support, helped kick-start a focus on philanthropy in Mexico. His own credibility as a philanthropist, business leader and peer of other elites, and his strategy of bringing in foreign (particularly US) philanthropists to speak about their experience attracted the interest and participation of many Mexicans.

## Challenges to the Development of Effective Institutionalized Philanthropy in the South

Despite an overall trend toward increasing the number and quality of philanthropic institutions in southern hemisphere countries, there is no doubt that there is wide variation, even among neighboring countries, in the manner and speed with which this trend is taking hold.

The culture and history of a given country or region impacts the ease and velocity of movement toward institutionalized philanthropy. In Ecuador, for example, where there are huge needs and plenty of wealthy people, it has been extremely difficult to get most of those with money to part with any of it. Even those board members of Fundación Esquel Ecuador

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<sup>5</sup> 1995 data from The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project shows that philanthropists in Brazil and Mexico make significant contributions (0.05, 0.17 and 0.39% of GDP respectively), as quoted in the Economist, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2001. The same article quotes Mr. Schervich of the Boston College Social Welfare Institute that increasing individual wealth in countries "as far afield as India and Latin America will fuel philanthropy."

(FEE), the country's most active and strategic foundation, mostly do not see it is their role to support the foundation financially.

One can only speculate as to the reasons for this here as in contrast to other South American countries. The fact that the country is highly divided along several axes (class, region, ethnicity) appears to lead people to retreat to their own enclaves. The fact that, until recently, the country has suffered no significant social unrest could have lulled the elites into the belief that they did not have to get involved because they were not threatened. A mutual distrust between wealthy elites and NGOs may have made the former feel there were no effective and trustworthy groups to support. And finally, a generalized culture of corruption, in which government officials regularly divert funds to their own use, wealthy people do not pay taxes and struggling NGOs have no system of accountability for their funds has created a cynical ethic of "watch out for number one" that works against collaboration and generosity. In the case of the Fundación Esquel, the fact that the foundation was created with the support of international ODA agencies and foundations and continues to rely heavily on them may have also acted as a disincentive to local philanthropic contributors, including board members

In Zimbabwe, social and political conflict has also impeded the development of any national movement toward organized philanthropy. And the growth of these difficulties in the past five or so years has caused even those individuals more inclined to participate to draw back.

There is no question that regulatory issues, like tax incentives, also affect philanthropic involvement. In countries where people by and large do not pay taxes, wealthy individuals are not eager for contributions to be publicized because they may expose wealth that is undeclared. And where taxes may be more regularly collected but there are no exemptions for philanthropic contributions, people unused to giving need to be motivated to start. In Thailand for example only 1% of civil society organizations have been granted tax exemption status.

For this reason, a number of local and US groups focus on changing the regulatory framework. For example the ICNL (International Center Not-for-Profit Law) has provided a valuable service by documenting not-for-profit-law, including tax regimes, in a range of countries, and advising country governments and The World Bank on ways of strengthening legislation.<sup>6</sup> In addition, organizations such as CEMEFI and GIFE are working with other organizations at the national level to design legislation that incorporates incentives for individuals and corporations to make philanthropic contributions.

In other countries traditional attitudes towards private philanthropy and mistrust between government and NGOs and corporations and NGOs has impeded the development of strategic philanthropy. In Thailand for example, apart from some corporations that set up their own foundations or engage in philanthropy through their public relations departments, most corporations have not addressed philanthropy in a systematic and proactive manner. Corporate giving programs are generally not professionally managed and only give in one or two areas like annual scholarships or awards. There is also an inherent mistrust of philanthropic activities carried out by well-paid professionals. Giving to projects sponsored by the royal family figures high in corporate and individual giving. It is seen as enhancing

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<sup>6</sup> For more information visit their website at [www.icnl.org](http://www.icnl.org).

one's prestige, status and position. Also important are gifts to disaster relief and social service delivery.

There's a tendency to mistrust NGOs, considered as militants and threatening to peace, order and harmony. In Thailand, this mutual mistrust has made it difficult for the public, business and civil society sectors to work together. In Indonesia, Suharto and his family absorbed most available corporate and private philanthropic dollars for their "foundations", and other independent groups found it extremely difficult to raise money domestically.

Poor relations across sectors, as mentioned in the case of Ecuador, also act as disincentives to philanthropic involvement. Unless mistrust and mutual hostility can be overcome, it is self-evident that nonprofit groups will not find donors and potential donors will not be willing to give support to existing groups.

Finally, to the extent that there are not many community or nonprofit groups in a country with the kinds of skills that enable them to be accountable, manage programs effectively and solicit funding successfully, the nonprofit sector is unlikely to attract the trust and support of private donors. Some overseas development assistance has focused on building these capacities, precisely with the idea that groups could then find alternative sources of support. In some countries like The Philippines and Mexico, many NGOs have gained these skills and, as a result, are able to raise more money.

**Profile: Philippine Council for NGO Certification**

PCNC is a private voluntary, non-stock, non-profit corporation, organized by six of the country's largest national networks of NGOs. It was created in response to a challenge by the Department of Finance (DOF) to the NGO community to establish a self-regulatory mechanism and body, which could certify the legitimacy, accountability, and transparency of NGOs, especially those receiving donations from individuals or corporations in the Philippines. The certification from PCNC serves as the basis for the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to grant donee institution status to NGOs that meet established minimum criteria. This arrangement represents a new model of partnership between government and the non-governmental sector.

## The Unique Role of Community Foundations in Enhancing Philanthropy in Southern Countries

The recent trend of building what we in the US would call community foundations is an important contribution to overcoming some of these impediments to strengthening philanthropy in the South. The money raised for all of these foundations does not even begin to add up to the endowment of The New York Community Trust (over \$2 billion) or even of somewhat smaller foundations. But, as mentioned earlier, it is not the money alone that makes these organizations a potent force in promoting philanthropy.

Perhaps the most important function these foundations play is their cross-sectoral, cross-level, cross-ideological convening power. In many divided societies like Mozambique or Ecuador, this is an extremely hard role to play. There is no question that, in these two countries, individual leadership was key to this convening power. Cornélio Marchán, a founder of the FEE, was a former Planning Minister who had also been chair of the national petroleum board. He was respected in civil society circles as well. He himself is a bridge across many gaps. To build a foundation with the capacity to reach across sectors, he put in place a board of trustees that truly spanned the societal divides. The foundation was founded



under a center-leftist government and could have failed when the next – center-right – government came in, except that the new Minister of the Interior, drawn from the business community, was a founding board member of FEE. Now, with the country seemingly about to fall apart, FEE is convening a series of national dialogues to try to find areas of agreement. This similar to the role FEE played during the Peru-Ecuador war, when it worked with a Peruvian partner to convene organizations and individuals to build a constituency for peace.

Similarly, Graça Machel, a founder of the Community Development Foundation of Mozambique (FDC), and by no means neutral as a founding member of the FRELIMO liberation movement in Mozambique, that later became the ruling party, had the wisdom to include on her board people with different views. The FDC initiated programs across the country, including particularly those where the opposition was in the majority – and which felt sorely under-served by the government. The FDC convenes Mozambicans and even Southern Africans around issues as varied as landmines, AIDS and micro enterprise.

Both foundations have played and continue to play important roles in the evolution of their countries' development. In the course of that, business people, elites, social activists, religious groups, government officials and others – people who would not otherwise have met – begin to know each other as individuals. Out of this exposure, trust inevitably begins to build.

The role that these and other community foundations are playing in providing technical assistance to NGOs and community groups on issues such as accounting, reporting, fundraising and program administration has been possibly of greater importance than the dollars allocated in grants. Through this work, nonprofit organizations become more effective, problems get solved in a more lasting way, and the credibility of the nonprofit sector grows, both in working with other sectors of society and donors.

Because these community foundations have a stake in strengthening philanthropy in their own countries – for that is ultimately where much of their support will come from – many of them have begun to explore how to change the regulatory framework to motivate individuals and corporations to make donations. As we were told by a leading Brazilian businessman, this is extremely useful, for when the business sector lobbies for changes in tax laws, it is seen as purely self-interested. The foundations and their associations were these exist, are able to muster a diverse and credible constituency to support change.

US foundations and ODA agencies have played an important role in supporting the development of community foundations, as well as environmental funds that share some common characteristics. Many of the community foundations founded in the past ten or so years were sponsored by one or another US foundation.

ODA agencies have also played a role in creating some independent foundations. For example, the United States Agency for International Development facilitated a debt swap that led to the establishment of the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), and the Swiss Government played a similar role in endowing the Foundation for a Sustainable Society, Inc. (FSSI), primarily an endowed loan-making institution that supports community-based enterprises.

In addition to the money provided by these US foundations, the exchange of experience on how to run a philanthropic institution has been invaluable to groups that were often the first

of their kind in their country. Southern groups intending to launch foundations have visited US community foundations and other foundations to see how they worked. Now that there is a critical mass of successful southern foundations, though, southern groups can also learn from other southern foundations with which they have more in common. To respond to this need Synergos started a Senior Fellows program that enable some of the best professionals in southern foundations to provide up to two weeks of technical assistance a year to other, younger groups. These exchanges have largely been funded by US foundations.

While many southern philanthropists – no different in this from many northern philanthropists – want to make their mark and gain recognition through their own private foundations, some are including in their philanthropic portfolios support for community foundations in their country. In Mexico, President Fox played a role in initiating community foundations while he was still Governor of the State of Guanajuato and is an advocate of community foundations throughout the country. This will undoubtedly inspire wealthy business and individuals to increase their support to the more than twenty community foundations in existence or being launched around that country.

#### **US Foundation Sponsorship for Community Foundations in Southern Countries**

The Rockefeller Foundation played a key role with FEE in Ecuador.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation with the FDC in Mozambique.

The Carnegie Corporation with the Western Region of Zimbabwe Community Foundation.

The Ford Foundation with Instituto Rio in Brazil.

The India Foundation with West African Rural Foundation and the Kenya Community Development Foundation.

The Craig and Susan McCaw Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have provided major support for both the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the FDC seeing these institutions as important and effective vehicles for improving health and education.

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