

# PARTNERING FOR PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT

Developing the strategy and institutional capacity required to maximise Foundations' impact through partnerships and systems leadership



In collaboration with

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Zurich employee volunteers from around the world working hand-in-hand with community members in Khajuwa (Nepal), as part of Z Zurich Foundation's school-building initiative, in collaboration with buildOn.

Photograph: Manon Parmentier

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# Forewords

*'Years of Foundation engagement with the charitable sector has developed an "us and them" mindset – we provide funds and they provide a service to the community. It's time to break that paradigm and develop more meaningful and impactful relationships.'*

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The Covid-19 pandemic has shown just how interconnected the world has become and how fragile our systems are. Couple this with the continuing impact of climate change and conflict and food insecurity and the challenge of dealing with emergencies becomes

very complicated. In these circumstances, the important question becomes how can we each play our part in tackling the challenges? Working with just one of these issues is complicated enough and the lessons we have learnt at the Z Zurich Foundation is that we need to harness expertise and experience from across many different sectors to really make a difference.

This is not easy.

Building partnerships for the future rests on a shared vision from all partners and a level of trust that enables power to be distributed and shared effectively. In this way, partnerships can harness not just the financial resources of the Foundation, but often a wider range of skills and experience. It truly can deliver innovation and synergy.

This report showcases the experience of Foundations in the partnership journey and some key tools that can help them and their charitable partners really engage.

**David Nash**



*'I know that our aspiration and ambition is only as good as our ability to partner for them to be realised.'*

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The Johnson & Johnson Foundation has been proud to take part in this important body of work. In this publication, I see the embodiment of our aspiration to fight fragmentation and verticalisation of funding in the field of development and global health.



Our contribution to this report demonstrates our desire to contribute to a living laboratory to find the best partnering pathways towards transformation and systemic change. This reports findings provide needed insights into different partnering models and the tools for Foundations like ourselves to learn to best nurture partnerships and maximise collective impact.

Having lived through various stages and models of partnering at the J&J Foundation, I have had the privilege to co-create, facilitate and manage partnerships across the biggest (and smallest) organisations – I came to the realisation that funding social change and improvement of health are not enough.

Innovation in how we partner and how we convene an ecosystem is needed if we are to drive the leaps necessary for transformational change. The existing tools, methods and governance models are currently too limited for Foundations to be able to learn and work towards a collective action and impact model.

The new Covid-19 era may urge Foundations to be firefighting. However, now more than ever we need to be forward-looking and deliberate in the ways we partner for Foundations to contribute meaningfully to transforming our collective future.

**Marion Birnstill**



# Executive summary

**The launch of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 marked a fundamental shift in the approach to international development. Intrinsic to the SDGs is the understanding that no goal can be achieved without all sectors of society playing their essential roles, and without collaboration within and across sectors at unprecedented scale.**

Within the overall system, Foundations have a hugely important and unique role: as partners, as funders, as drivers of innovation, and as system leaders: catalysts for collective action.

## DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Amidst this changing landscape of international development, and the system shock of Covid-19, Foundations have reported a range of drivers behind a shift towards more collaborative approaches. These include:

- **Inefficient impact:** Foundations undertaking more transactional, short term, hands-off approaches with their grantees are finding their grant-making is inefficient and having insufficient impact;
- **Unexploited synergies:** Foundations have found that within their portfolio of grantees, there is an overlap of mission, of approach and even of activities and believe there are major synergies among their grantees that could be built on to deliver more together;
- **Desire for transformational impact:** Foundations are looking to have more transformational impact and see the limits of grant making to individual organisations, or even consortia of NGOs.

## COLLABORATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY... AND A CHALLENGE

Foundation boards and staff teams have been grappling with the opportunities and challenges of working more collaboratively – both in their relationships with grantees and in supporting or catalysing new multi-stakeholder action. Many have gone through significant experimentation and a steep learning curve to understand the different ways they can and should use partnerships to deliver their missions more effectively and transformationally. Many are still struggling both in terms of their partnering strategy and in the practicalities of how to deliver well.

Seeing multiple Foundations grappling with the same issues and questions, The Partnering Initiative's (TPI) *Partnering for Philanthropic Impact Programme*,

launched in March 2020, set out to investigate how Foundations are seeking to increase their impact through more ambitious and more effective partnering approaches, and to develop a clear framework to help make sense of the different models. Further, it set out to build and share understanding within the sector of the institutional cultural shift, processes and capacities required within a Foundation and its partners in order to deliver those approaches.

**Taken together, those two elements should help Foundations to be as strategic as possible in their partnering: i) by understanding which partnership models can deliver their desired impact, and ii) to understand what they need to put in place to make them work.**

This report draws on a year of inquiry, in collaboration with Johnson & Johnson (J&J) Foundation and Z Zurich Foundation. Both Foundations have gone through a journey increasing their impact through collaboration and are keen to share their learning, and continue to learn from others in the sector. This report draws on their experiences, insights from a number of other Foundations, and TPI's 17 years of experience supporting organisations to partner effectively.

## FOUR KEY MODELS FOR FOUNDATION PARTNERING

TPI's inquiry has identified four core partnering models through which Foundations are choosing to increase their impact:

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### 1. Trusted Partner

Move beyond short-term project funding to become genuine partners with key grantees to improve efficiency and impact

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### 2. Connector

Actively broker collaboration among grantees to build on synergies and deliver more together

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### 3. Supporter

Support others' multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) towards more transformational development


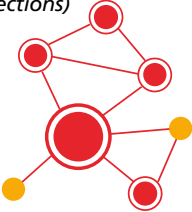
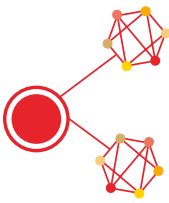
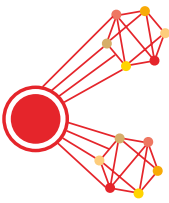
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### 4. Systems Leader

Actively engage stakeholders and drive development of MSPs for system transformation in key priority areas

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The models and examples are expanded in the spectrum graphic below. Appendices 1-4 of the report sets out each of the models in detail, and the implications in terms of the organisational capacities Foundations may need to invest in.

1 TRUSTED PARTNER	2 CONNECTOR	3 SUPPORTER	4 SYSTEMS LEADER
<p>Move beyond project funding to become genuine partners with key grantees</p> 	<p>Actively broker collaborations among grantees (and between grantees and other Foundation connections)</p> 	<p>Support others' multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) that contribute to key Foundation priorities</p> 	<p>Engage stakeholders and drive development of MSPs for system transformation</p> 
<b>Strategic objective</b>			
<p>To increase efficiency and influence; to maximise the impact of the partner organisations and/or collectively deliver greater impact towards shared Foundation and partner mission objectives.</p>	<p>To support grantees to collectively deliver more than the sum of individual bi-lateral grant arrangements; and/or to multiply the impact of grantees through leveraging the Foundation's own network.</p>	<p>To utilise multi-stakeholder partnerships to more effectively, efficiently, innovatively or transformationally deliver the Foundation's mission.</p>	<p>To directly foster multi-stakeholder action that can 'move the needle' and deliver transformational change on a major/complex issue that is currently under served.</p>
<b>Approach</b>			
<p><b>Invest</b> through longer-term funding and building capacity. <b>Influence</b> the design of partner organisation activities (and be influenced by them). <b>Engage in more collective action</b> that provides non-financial resources (including technical expertise, connections and influence).</p>	<p><b>Create an active space</b> and actively broker collaboration among grantees, as well as with other actors within the Foundation's sphere of influence (potentially including other funders) wherever additional value can be created.</p>	<p><b>Use novel processes</b> to call for proposals and/or effectively assess new and existing multi-stakeholder partnerships for funding, support and engagement.</p>	<p><b>Provide leadership</b>, direction and impetus, engage key stakeholders, and broker a new partnership initiative (or multiple initiatives through a platform) towards delivering a specific agenda; fund/support this effort over time, potentially with other funders. Foundations may potentially also host such initiatives.</p>
<b>Examples</b>			
<p>● <b>John Lewis Foundation</b> Strives to provide longer-term funding options and flexibility to grantee partners, combined with informal connections to partners with complementary capabilities. <i>'We expect multi-year projects to evolve, and six-monthly reports to include any requests for changes. Our Board increasingly recognises that the project you start off with is not usually the project you finish with.'</i> Miranda Spottiswoode, John Lewis Foundation</p>	<p>● <b>Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation</b> Connects marine conservation organisations in British Columbia. The Foundation created an independent facilitator position to set up a network of organisations to work together and maximise their impact. In engaging the organisations in the creation of the job description and recruitment, they laid the groundwork necessary for results.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><small>1. Bartczak, Lori, (2015), <i>Building Collaboration From the Inside Out</i></small></p>	<p>● <b>Partnering For Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G)</b> Accelerates, funds and recognises innovative public-private partnerships driving green growth, focusing on breakthrough solutions in five Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) sectors: food and agriculture (SDG2), clean water (SDG6), clean energy (SDG7), sustainable cities (SDG11) and circular economy (SDG12). P4G mobilises networks and other support to allow the partnerships it works with to secure commercial commitments and achieve measurable impact.<sup>2</sup></p> <p><small>2. See P4G Partnerships</small></p>	<p>● <b>J&amp;J Foundation</b> Co-created with the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Kenya and convening partners AMREF and Aga Khan University School of Nursing and Midwifery, two collective impact platforms in Kenya to move towards the goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2022. The J&amp;J Foundation has been recognized by MOH for their role in delivering the Community Health Strategy through an inclusive and collaborative approach. ● <b>Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (the Alliance)</b><sup>3</sup> The Z Zurich Foundation brings together nine partner organisations, including the Foundation and its corporate parent, Zurich Insurance Group.</p> <p><small>3. See Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance</small></p>

Foundations are invited to use these models, which are not mutually exclusive and can be blended in a portfolio approach, to:

- engage team members, senior leaders and decision-makers in mapping where the organisation is currently operating, and in setting partnering strategy and ambitions for the future;
- facilitate open and positive discussions with grantee partners about existing and new ways of working together; and
- consider what internal resources, investments and organisational shifts may be required by the Foundation and its partners to build capacity to implement the models effectively.

## A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PARTNERING

TPI proposes five key areas that Foundations should consider when developing a strategic approach to partnering:

### 1. Know what you seek to achieve

Identify what impact you are seeking, the clear added value that you hope partnering can create, so you can use the appropriate partnering model(s);

### 2. Think beyond money

Identify the full range of resources you have to offer as a partner, beyond grant funding;

### 3. Check you are 'fit for partnering'

Understand the degree to which you are currently institutionally set up to be 'fit for partnering' and invest in organisational optimisation;

### 4. Understand power dynamics

Understand existing power relationships and how they may need to change, and be prepared to take grantee partners with you on the journey; and

### 5. Keep track of how it is working

Work with partners to collectively design and develop monitoring and impact measurement systems for your collaborations.

## BECOMING FIT FOR PARTNERING

Our research has demonstrated that Foundations are experiencing a variety of challenges and issues when shifting towards partnering approaches. They are finding that new models cannot be delivered effectively with business-as-usual approaches to grant-making. Partnering requires conscious investment in the way Foundations are set up and operating in order to optimise impact. TPI's well-established Fit for Partnering framework can be used to set an institutional capacity baseline and identify areas where organisational change is required:

- 1 leadership and strategy:** any strategic approach (particularly if it requires significant changes to the way a Foundation works) requires the buy-in and championing of the board and executive director; further, the approach needs to be embedded into the organisational strategy and cascaded through the organisation;
- 2 systems and processes:** for organisations to partner or support partnering, they need an optimised set of systems and processes, from adapted calls for proposals and assessment of potential partnership opportunities through to tailored monitoring and evaluation procedures, as well as potentially different forms of legal agreements, accountability requirements etc.;
- 3 staff capacity:** partnership working (whether as a partner, and particularly for facilitating partnerships) requires its own set of professional skills and competencies;
- 4 organisational culture and grantee relationships:** a collaborative culture is a fundamental ingredient to support partnering aspirations and in a positive (or otherwise) experience for partners; and
- 5 appropriate grant mechanisms:** utilising partnership approaches in general requires longer-term and more flexible funding arrangements than traditional grant giving. Committing long-term funds can be a challenge for certain Foundations, for example, corporate Foundations reliant on the annual profits of their corporate parent.



Foundations interested in providing comments on the ideas set out in this report, to participate or be kept informed on the next stage of the programme, or to learn more about the Fit for Partnering approach, are warmly invited to contact: [info@tpiglobal.org](mailto:info@tpiglobal.org).

# Introduction

The launch of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 marked a fundamental shift in the approach to international development. Intrinsic to the SDGs is the understanding that no goal can be achieved without all sectors of society playing their essential roles, and without collaboration within and across sectors at unprecedented scale to achieve far more transformational development. Within the overall system, Foundations have a hugely important and unique role: as partners, as funders, as drivers of innovation and as catalysts for collective action.

The philanthropic response to the Covid-19 pandemic has shown the game-changing role that Foundations can play in addressing our world's greatest challenges and the diverse contributions they can make to international development, at speed, if required. From the launch of community-based rapid-response funds to the development of diagnostics and vaccines, philanthropy is helping to flatten the curve and address the inequalities that the crisis will exacerbate over the long term.

While the financial resources Foundations provide continue to be their core asset, many Foundations appreciate the wider range of resources they can bring to the table and are reconsidering their role and their approach. A major trend is to look beyond traditional grant-giving towards the utilisation of partnering approaches that can significantly increase their impact and achieve the SDGs by encouraging innovation, effectiveness, and efficiency. This can be achieved with collective action by grantees delivering 'traditional' development, or by unleashing the power of multi-stakeholder collaboration which can, in turn, deliver system transformation.

# The Partnering for Philanthropic Impact Programme

TPI's *Partnering for Philanthropic Impact Programme* was launched in March 2020 in collaboration with Pioneer Members Z Zurich Foundation and the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) Foundation, together with an interested group of international Foundations (non-financial supporters known as 'Friends of the Programme'). The programme sought to:

- Investigate how Foundations are seeking to increase their impact through more ambitious and more effective partnering approaches; and
- build understanding of the institutional cultural shift, processes and capacities required within a Foundation and its partners to be able to deliver those approaches.

The programme explored the often challenging journeys that both J&J Foundation and Z Zurich Foundations have taken as they developed increasingly sophisticated and ambitious partnering models to support long-term change, and unearthed a rich seam of knowledge based on their experiences. It also undertook deep-dive 'fit for partnering' analyses of both organisations, 'looking under the bonnet' to understand each organisation's leadership, strategy, systems and processes, staff competencies and organisational culture, and the positive or negative effect on its *institutional* capacity for partnering.

The Partnering for Philanthropic Initiative is now entering a second phase. We look forward to expanding our work with Foundations, helping them to strengthen their own institutional capacity for partnership. We also look forward to sharing stories, learnings, and tips through interviews and blogs, revealing how partnering is enabling Foundations to achieve greater impact. And we look forward to creating virtual peer-to-peer learning and sharing opportunities around the topic of Partnering for Philanthropic Impact. We welcome you to contact TPI to learn more about the programme and to explore ways in which you can participate.



# The Partnering Initiative

The Partnering Initiative (TPI) is the leading independent, global not-for-profit agency dedicated to unleashing the power of partnership for a prosperous and sustainable future. TPI was founded in 2003 around a passionate belief that only through collaboration among business, Foundations, governments, non-governmental organisations (NGO) and the UN can we tackle the greatest environmental, development and business sustainability challenges, and make the systemic shifts necessary to drive societal change.

TPI's approach is to simultaneously develop the latest theory of effective collaboration alongside implementing major programmes to drive the practice of partnership. It works at multiple levels: inputting into international policy, supporting the development of platforms for collaboration, developing guidance and directly supporting partnerships and building both organisational and individual capacity to partner.

TPI has worked with a range of Foundations over the years to strengthen their approach to multi-stakeholder partnering, including directly with J&J Foundation, Z Zurich Foundation, Vodafone Foundation, Shell Foundation, and the UN Foundation, as well as through projects funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

TPI has extensive experience working with UN agencies, international NGOs and multi-national companies, both to develop their partnering strategies and to build their institutional capacity to partner effectively. It was in seeing many parallels between their experiences and those of the Foundations we were working with that gave rise to the *Partnering for Philanthropic Impact* initiative.



# About this report

This report shares early findings from *Partnering for Philanthropic Impact*, drawing on a year of inquiry in collaboration with J&J Foundation and Z Zurich Foundation, combined with TPI's 17 years of experience of supporting Foundations' and donors' partnering ambitions.

The report sets out a new framework for Foundations wishing to undertake partnering approaches to maximise their impact. It also provides a clear set of recommendations for the institutional changes and capacity development required for Foundations to become institutionally 'fit for partnering' and to effectively deliver the new approaches.<sup>4</sup>

This is the first phase in our peer learning programme, and we invite Foundations to test, share and build on these techniques in their own work, strengthening partnering practices across the sector.

## Methodology

TPI's existing, well-established *Fit for Partnering* framework and methodology (set out in Appendix 6) was adapted for use with Foundations to examine both the strategic opportunity for increased partnering to deliver Foundations' objectives more effectively, and the degree to which Foundations are institutionally optimised to deliver effective collaboration in terms of leadership and strategy, systems and processes, skills, support and partnering culture.

The Fit for Partnering methodology was applied to two Foundations, J&J Foundation and Z Zurich Foundation, with interviews and surveys completed by a cross-section of staff members and by a sample of grantee partners.

This deep dive into the operations of two corporate Foundations with two different structures, operating in different sectors and with different partnering models, provided a range of insights of relevance to the wider sector. These insights, combined with TPI's experience in supporting the theory and practice of effective partnerships across sectors, were supplemented with a series of conversations with independent and corporate Foundations, to inform the models presented here.

4. Please note, Foundations which partner with other funders – and the challenges and opportunities therein – is outside the scope of this inquiry and is a topic well covered elsewhere.



**Discussing Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) results with the community**  
*Photograph: Madhab Uprety, Practical Action*

# Key insights

## Drivers for change

Amidst a significantly changing landscape of international development, as well as the system shock of Covid-19, Foundations have reported a range of drivers behind a shift towards more collaborative approaches. These include:

- 1 Unoptimised working:** Foundations undertaking more transactional, short term, hands-off approaches with their grantees are finding that their grant-making does not have an efficient impact for several reasons, including:
  - when developing specific grant objectives and criteria and assessing those applications, Foundations not deeply connected with specific contexts (for example, through trusted partners working directly in those contexts) may not have the most complete picture of what grant-funded interventions are likely to be most critical and effective;
  - each year, the Foundation must spend a considerable amount of effort managing and accessing grant applications and undertaking due diligence on potential grantees; the urgent response required by Covid-19 has demonstrated how pre-existing trusted relationships can underpin rapid decision-making;
  - where an NGO's mission, connections, expertise and capacity are not well aligned with the grant objectives, the NGO will be unable to build on internal synergies or deliver as effectively towards those objectives; (usually short-term) project funding is not sufficient to entice NGOs to build specific capacity or realign their approaches in ways that would more directly deliver the Foundation's mission; and
  - the NGO and Foundation must both spend considerable effort on accountability and reporting, including sometimes requiring the NGO to adjust its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) or financial accounting to a specific Foundation need – again, investing in the optimisation not worth the effort for short-term funding.
- 2 Unexploited synergies:** Foundations have found that within their portfolio of grantees, there is an overlap of mission, of approach and even of activities (whether in the same geography) and, from an external perspective, believe there are major synergies among their grantees that could be built on, allowing them to deliver more together, 'if only they would work with each other'.
- 3 Desire for transformational impact:** Foundations are appreciating the limitation of grant making to individual organisations, or even consortia of NGOs, in terms of its long-term impact. Only through 'all of society' approaches (multi-stakeholder partnerships - MSPs) that can bring to bear the resources from business, government, civil society, academia etc. can we tackle underlying causes and transform systems to the permanent benefit of all.

Any strategic shift in response to these drivers for change has implications across several dimensions including a Foundation's internal systems and processes, its staff capacities and mindset, its leadership, and its operational culture and 'ways of working'.

## Partnerships must focus on value creation

Given the time and challenges involved in partnering, the primary driver for working through partnership must be that by combining resources, we can deliver far more than we could alone: i.e., the partnership must be able to deliver more than the sum of its constituent parts. Additionally, every partnership must create net value for each partner, otherwise there is no incentive for their continued involvement. Partnerships formed where insufficient consideration has been given to these basic premises result in partnership designs that fail to create enough value to merit the effort.

As Foundations look to adopt more partnering approaches, they must ensure that such efforts genuinely will create additional value for all. This can only be assured by going through proper development processes collectively with partners to co-create and co-design each collaboration.

## Traditional versus transformational development

In this report, we distinguish two forms of development: traditional and transformational.

**Traditional development** approaches require an ongoing flow of external resources to continue to improve people's lives (e.g. funding for healthcare provision, education etc.) or to preserve the environment (e.g. funding national protected parks). Typically this would be delivered through grants to NGOs, the UN or directly to communities.

**Transformational development**, by contrast, aims to transform the unsustainable (in economic, human, or natural resource usage terms) situation into a sustainable (or at least more sustainable), ongoing situation (for example, creating new sustainable value chains; low-cost, commercially-viable primary health care provision; or national protected parks that are self-sufficient through tourist income). In other words, it attempts to tackle the underlying causes and leave behind a self-sustaining, resilient legacy where little or no ongoing external inputs are necessary. Transformational development almost always requires mandates and resources from across several societal actors.

**Both types are necessary and important.** Not all development could or should be transformational in nature. In humanitarian or fragile situations, transformational development may not be apt or even possible. Elsewhere, the immediate need can be too great and too urgent to wait for what is a longer-term solution. Certainly the 'leave no one behind' agenda running through the SDGs will often require more traditional action to support the most deprived or vulnerable in the immediate term.

### **Partnerships have the potential to create additional value towards both types of development**

Collaboration with or among grantees can help traditional development to be done better, be more effective and innovative, be realised at greater scale, exploit synergies, and draw on the latest thinking and technologies and thus, to deliver more.

To deliver more transformational development, however, will almost always require multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) with a range of societal actors.

**J&J Foundation** (previously the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust, founded 2007) is funded by the J&J family of companies through J&J Global Community Impact and J&J Operating Companies in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), and focuses its work on delivering long-term impact to those working on the front lines of care.

The Foundation is managed by a board of directors consisting of 14 senior J&J leaders from across the enterprise. The directors are responsible for overseeing the affairs of the Foundation and ensuring that it delivers on its mandate. The day-to-day operations of the Foundation are managed by the EMEA Global Community Impact (GCI) team, which has personal responsibilities for specific strategic areas.

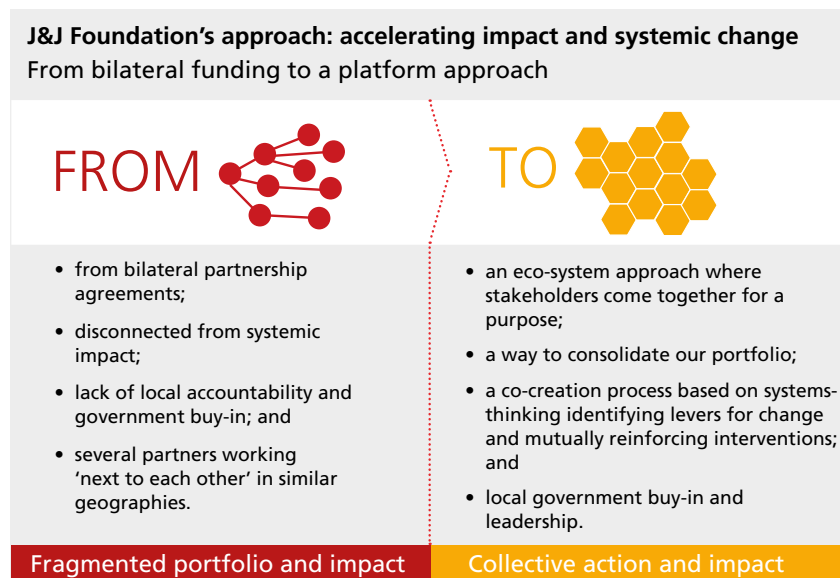
The EMEA GCI team is supported by a wider network of J&J professionals who operate at the local country level and provide support and advice to the Foundation on matters related to corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The collective resources brought by an MSP can create levers that together can deliver system change, including: policy, regulation, taxation, infrastructure development (public sector); technological innovation, market-based approaches to achieve scale, supply chain influence (business); capacity development (NGOs, government); influence to deliver behaviour change (civil society, government, business).

Foundations are in a particularly strong position when it comes to supporting or catalysing MSPs. For example:

- they can assume a high degree of risk in supporting innovative, radical, or ambitious approaches;
- they are often well set up to capture learning;
- they can build relationships with and support multiple actors within a system;
- they are collaborating ever more effectively with one another,<sup>5</sup> increasing the scale and scope of possible system interventions; and
- in some cases they can commit over a longer timeframe than more traditional donors.

*In the case of J&J Foundation, a major strategic shift from a 'bilateral' to a 'platform' approach has been adopted in recent years, emphasising co-creation and systems-thinking for transformational change. This approach, taking a highly active, convening role, is a demonstration of systems leadership in action.*



5. Co-Impact, the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, Grantmakers for Effective Organisations and ACF's Funder's Collaborative Hub in the UK are all innovative examples of Foundations collaborating with one another to increase effectiveness and impact.



**A mothers2mothers Mentor Mother shares a moment with her clients in Soshanguve, South Africa. Mentor Mothers are women openly living with HIV who deliver health services and education to other women, children, and families in their community.**

*Photograph: J&J Foundation*

# New models of collaborative approaches

While some Foundations have already made major shifts towards new collaborative approaches and are beginning to have real success, many are at an earlier stage: they are either still recognising drivers for change and seeking to determine their response, or are in the process of testing out new models.

In some cases, our inquiry found a disconnect between the strategic aspiration to work 'in partnership' with grantees, and the implementation of that approach in practice. For example, some Foundations may call grantees 'partners' but, to grantee partners, the designation may feel like more of a communications device than a genuine shift, since a conventional relationship of donor-grantee, and therefore an imbalance of power remains.<sup>6</sup>

Many Foundations have taken steps towards thinking through what 'working in partnership' means in practice. They are considering how to maximise the additional value created through it, and how to adjust the nature of the relationship.

Several Foundations, including a large private Foundation to which we spoke, are actively seeking to curate a portfolio approach, moving away from multiple, small, transactional grants to a smaller number of strategic, impact-focused relationships.

Other smaller Foundations can see the value of partnership approaches but struggle to see how their current model could adapt, having only fairly recently moved to routinely measuring impact rather than money donated for activities.

Some Foundations are particularly interested in partnering as a way of scaling impact. For example, we spoke to one small corporate Foundation with a limited grant pot (£300k year). It was interested in partnership working with grantees primarily to extend the impact of its grant pot but, to date, lack of capacity means that only small iterations are made and its strategic aims lack clarity. Instead, the work proceeds largely through local connections and the energy of key individuals to support Foundation-funded projects.

With the diversity of Foundation contexts, aims and resources in mind, the framework spectrum on the following page (developed from the experiences and examples we collated) helps Foundations to identify four types of partnering approaches according to the strategic added-value – the additional impact – they wish to deliver.

6. See [blue avocado](#)

## FOUR PARTNERING MODELS

### 1. Trusted Partner

Move beyond short-term project funding to become genuine partners with key grantees to improve efficiency and impact

### 2. Connector

Actively broker collaboration among grantees to build on synergies and deliver more together

### 3. Supporter

Support others' multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) towards more transformational development

### 4. Systems Leader

Actively engage stakeholders and drive development of MSPs for system transformation in key priority areas

The first two partnering models ('Trusted Partner' and 'Connector') help Foundations to be more efficient and more effective in the 'traditional development impact' they aim to deliver, with grants to support traditional development actors: NGOs, the UN, communities, academia etc.. The second two models – ('Supporter' and 'Systems Leader') help Foundations to deliver more transformational development by supporting or driving new MSPs involving multiple societal actors combining their resources.

Boundaries within the spectrum are not hard and fast and partnering approaches may span multiple types. Further, most Foundations will choose to use a range of different approaches to achieve their goals, and will curate a mixed portfolio of models.

Foundations are invited to use these models to:

- engage team members, senior leaders and decision-makers in thinking about where the organisation is currently operating, and to assist in setting a partnering strategy and ambitions for the future;
- facilitate open and positive discussions with grantee partners about existing and new ways of working together; and
- consider what internal resources, investments and organisational shifts may be required by the Foundation and its partners to put each model into practice.

## LINKS

DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF EACH OF THE MODELS, ARE IN APPENDICES 1-4, STARTING ON P27

CASE STUDIES OF FOUNDATIONS ON P36.

More effective/efficient 'traditional' development

More transformational development

1

**TRUSTED PARTNER**

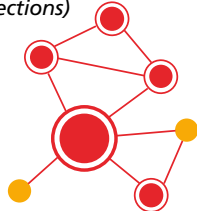
Move beyond project funding to become genuine partners with key grantees



2

**CONNECTOR**

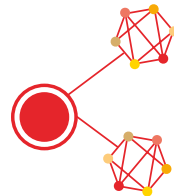
Actively broker collaborations among grantees (and between grantees and other Foundation connections)



3

**SUPPORTER**

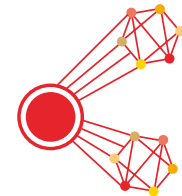
Support others' multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) that contribute to key Foundation priorities



4

**SYSTEMS LEADER**

Engage stakeholders and drive development of MSPs around key Foundation priorities



**Strategic objective**

To increase efficiency and influence; to maximise the impact of the partner organisations and/or collectively deliver greater impact towards shared Foundation and partner mission objectives.

To support grantees to collectively deliver more than the sum of individual bi-lateral grant arrangements; and/or to multiply the impact of grantees through leveraging the Foundation's own network.

To utilise multi-stakeholder partnerships to more effectively, efficiently, innovatively or transformationally deliver the Foundation's mission.

To directly foster multi-stakeholder action that can 'move the needle' and deliver transformational change on a major/complex issue that is currently under served.

**Approach**

**Invest** through longer-term funding and building capacity.  
**Influence** the design of partner organisation activities (and be influenced by them).  
**Engage in more collective action** that provides non-financial resources (including technical expertise, connections and influence).

**Create an active space** and actively broker collaboration among grantees, as well as with other actors within the Foundation's sphere of influence (potentially including other funders) wherever additional value can be created.

**Use novel processes** to call for proposals and/or effectively assess new and existing multi-stakeholder partnerships for funding, support and engagement.

**Provide leadership**, direction and impetus, engage key stakeholders, and broker a new partnership initiative (or multiple initiatives through a platform) towards delivering a specific agenda; fund/support this effort over time, potentially with others. Foundations may potentially also host such initiatives.

**Examples**

● **John Lewis Foundation**  
Strives to provide longer-term funding options and flexibility to grantee partners, combined with informal connections to partners with complementary capabilities.  
*'We expect multi-year projects to evolve, and six-monthly reports to include any requests for changes. Our Board increasingly recognises that the project you start off with is not usually the project you finish with.'*  
Miranda Spottiswoode, John Lewis Foundation

● **Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation**  
Connects marine conservation organisations in British Columbia.  
The Foundation created an independent facilitator position to set up a network of organisations to work together and maximise their impact. In engaging the organisations in the creation of the job description and recruitment, they laid the groundwork necessary for results.<sup>7</sup>

● **Partnering For Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G)**  
Accelerates, funds and recognises innovative public-private partnerships driving green growth, focusing on breakthrough solutions in five Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) sectors: food and agriculture (SDG2), clean water (SDG6), clean energy (SDG7), sustainable cities (SDG11) and circular economy (SDG12).  
P4G mobilises networks and other support to allow the partnerships it works with to secure commercial commitments and achieve measurable impact.<sup>8</sup>

● **J&J Foundation**  
Co-created with the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Kenya and convening partners AMREF and Aga Khan University School of Nursing and Midwifery, two collective impact platforms in Kenya to move towards the goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2022. The J&J Foundation has been recognized by MOH for their role in delivering the Community Health Strategy through an inclusive and collaborative approach.  
● **Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (the Alliance)**<sup>9</sup>  
The Z Zurich Foundation brings together nine partner organisations, including the Foundation and its corporate parent, Zurich Insurance Group.

7. Bartczak, Lori, (2015), *Building Collaboration From the Inside Out*

8. See P4G Partnerships

9. See See Zurich Flood Resilience

\* More detailed guides for Foundations in the process of considering each of the four models can be found in Appendices 1-4.



# Developing a strategic approach to partnering

## OVERVIEW

How can a Foundation define which model or other approach might be most relevant? It could be helpful to start with a few questions. Any organisation engaging in partnership, whether as a funder, active partner, implementer or even evaluator, should be able to answer the following:

- what are the expected strategic benefits of a stronger partnering approach?
- besides funding, what resources can Foundations bring to partnering?
- how do we need to change the way in which we (and our grantees) think and work, and what must we put in place to enable and support a partnering approach?

Answering these questions can help to uncover the strategic objectives that can be achieved through partnering. In this section, we propose five key steps Foundations will find helpful to work through when developing a strategic approach to partnering, using the models in the table above to aid thinking.

## PARTNERSHIP VALUE CREATION

**Q** How does working together mean that we can deliver significantly more?

Collaborative Advantage is the extra power, alchemy or 'magic' that allows a group of actors to collectively deliver more than the sum of their input parts i.e.  $1+1>>2$ . It is the intrinsic reason why a partnership approach can deliver solutions and impact beyond that of a single actor, or actors working independently.

**Q** What specific extra impact will we be able to achieve?

The Partnership Difference ( $\Delta P$ ) is the additional impact a partnership delivers compared with single actor approaches, as a result of the Collaborative Advantage.

## 1

### Know what you want to achieve

*Identify what you want to achieve, the clear added value that you hope partnering can create, and thus the appropriate partnering model(s) to use.*

Effective partnering is based on clarity over how a partnership can deliver more than the sum of its parts (the 'collaborative advantage') and thus what additional impact can be created through collective working (the 'partnership difference').

Each Foundation can think through its mission objectives and map how the different partnering models (see infographic left) could deliver added-value towards their achievement.

### Key questions to ask

**1. Trusted Partner:** would using longer term funding result in simpler processes, less paperwork, and greater efficient? Would it result in grantees aligning and delivering more towards the Foundation's goals? Would other Foundation resources, for example, capacity building and technical assistance be helpful to a grantee or potentially distracting or interfering for those that are already well capacitated? What benefits might accrue from bringing to bear a Foundation's social or political capital, for example providing access to high-level platforms?

**2. Connector:** what added-value could be created through grantees working together, including exploiting synergies to create efficiencies; knowledge exchange and development of common approaches; or creating a critical mass of action, e.g. around advocacy? What additional connections to other Foundation stakeholders (including for corporate Foundations, access to the business itself) could create value?

**3. Supporter:** could existing MSPs – with Foundation engagement – contribute towards the Foundation's goals more effectively? This may include through their potential for innovative solutions from a combination of complementary, diverse public, private and civil society resources; the development of system-wide standards; more holistic approaches across traditional silos (e.g. across environment and development); collective delivery at greater scale. Are there MSPs with the ambition and potential to deliver transformational development?

**4. Systems Leader:** are there areas where MSPs are needed to deliver the above benefits, but the MSPs do not yet exist? Are there challenging, systemic problems that can only be solved through multi-stakeholder action and your Foundation could provide leadership and vision and support their creation?

## 2 Think beyond money

*Identify the full range of resources, beyond grant funding that you have to offer as a partner.*

Partnering involves a creative combination of resources to deliver beyond that which individual organisations can deliver alone. Foundations can bring much more than money to partnerships. Resources include brokering and convening power; access to, and social capital within, networks, connections, and high-level platforms; political capital and influence; capacity building and technical assistance; and, sometimes in the case of corporate Foundations, the resources, capabilities, and networks of the corporate parent.

In the UK, the Lloyds Bank Foundation has found that the organisational support it offers is as valuable to partners as financial support, and it has used this learning to develop its Covid-19 support:

*'We are often told by the charities that we partner with, that the organisational development support has been more valued and instrumental than the grant itself. We think that this is where our strength lies, and we have a team of highly capable Regional Managers who can support organisations to recognise their priorities and pair them up with external support. This might take the form of learning cohorts, a bank mentor, a local consultant, or a specialist across a diverse subject base like fundraising, marketing, financial resilience etc..'<sup>7</sup>*

### How you fund is important

When it comes to funding as an essential resource, *how* the Foundation gives money is important: short-term (i.e. less than a year or two) project funding tends to result in transactional relationships, whereas longer-term funding (including core funding) incentivises the grantee to invest in development, capacity building and innovation and, potentially, to better align future programmes alongside Foundation goals. It also gives confidence to grantees to 'speak truth to power' and become a critical friend to Foundations, resulting in better programming.

### Foundations as visionary leaders

Confident Foundations can bring a further quality, essential for delivering wider impact and change: **vision and leadership**. This is the ability to take up an issue and collectively develop a compelling vision for its solution; to confidently take a stand, literally put your money where your mouth is, and inspire and engage others to come together and commit to collectively deliver the vision. This is more than simply convening power. It is an essential quality of systems leadership and requires a complex mix of organisational reputation and commitment, trust and relationships built, and personal collective leadership characteristics.

### Exploring the 'acceptable interface' between corporate Foundations and their corporate hosts

Corporate Foundations receive funding from corporate parents. There are often legal and other firewalls between the activities of the two entities. This is as it should be: a Foundation is pursuing a charitable purpose while the business is pursuing a commercial purpose. The two types of entity have fundamentally different motivations, and respond to different sets of stakeholders.

However, links clearly do exist between the Foundations and the companies, for example, when the Foundation makes the case for investment from the business. Also, many corporate Foundations create employee

engagement opportunities for staff from the corporate parent. And in the case of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, the company itself is one of the alliance partners, alongside the Foundation and a range of NGOs and other stakeholders. But in general, the area of overlap between corporate Foundations and their business hosts is not a straightforward area to navigate:

*'Our focus is on the value of partnership working in and of itself. This is both working with other grant makers, and in how the Foundation manages relationships with partners we fund. Leveraging of money is great, but it is only really meaningful if we are doing so in an exchange that goes both ways. We are now thinking, if we are setting a much longer-term ambition, driven by*

*purpose, how do we navigate the "dance around the corporate parent"?'  
[Foundation quote]*

From a partnering perspective, it makes sense to have open and frank communications between different types of stakeholder, and we see great scope for sharing lessons about how to make the most of the 'acceptable interface' between corporate Foundations and their parents. This might take the form of mapping strategic overlaps, according to (for example) theme, geography or resource type, always respecting the legal firewall between the two types of entity. Anti-trust guidance could be drawn upon to ensure that there is no opportunity for unfair commercial advantage from such a mapping exercise.

<sup>7</sup> See [Lloyds Bank Foundation](#)

## COMMON 'GRANT+' RESOURCES FOUNDATIONS CAN BRING

- **Provision of staff skills, in-kind support, secondment:** there are many ways in which Foundations can provide skilled staff to support the work of a grantee partner. This includes staff secondments, or volunteering on grantee projects; Foundation staff sitting on the board of grantees; or Foundations providing dedicated relationship management to grantees on a range of programmatic dimensions including communications and technological support. This could in some instances also work the other way around, with large grantees seconding staff to Foundations.
- **Networking, brokering and convening:** Foundations often have significant networks of grantees doing complementary work in different contexts but who are not connected with one another. A lot of value can be created by brokering these connections, and some Foundations arrange annual grantee partner conferences to enable and facilitate this process. It is not clear whether Foundations ever collaborate with one another to undertake this on a joint basis.
- **Access to high-level platforms:** Foundations often have access to senior government leaders and other decision-makers, which enables grantees to advocate to audiences they would not otherwise be able to reach. Smaller organisations can gain recognition and 'punch above their weight' through association with both the Foundation and other partners of the Foundation. In Mexico, for example, the presence of the Zurich business added extra weight to advocacy around resilience work funded by the Z Zurich Foundation.
- **Strengthening internal systems:** sometimes grantee partners are required to upgrade their financial systems and processes in order to receive financial support from a Foundation. Extra funding is sometimes provided to grantees to enable support and funding to do this. There are other internal systems and processes that can be developed, where grantees clearly indicate the value of doing so, including monitoring and evaluation systems, planning and knowledge management.
- **Ability to fund riskier projects:** some of the most promising, untested initiatives are overlooked by other funders looking for guaranteed impact within a set timeframe. Grantee partners working on innovative or more experimental programmes value highly a Foundation's ability to tolerate and understand this risk. This was highlighted by J&J's grantee partners, and also championed by Julian Corner at the Lankelly Chase Foundation, particularly when attempting to bring about systemic change: *'Legitimising uncertainty is a gift that funders can give along with their money'*.<sup>8</sup>
- **Connections to corporate parents (where relevant):** Corporate Foundations are in a very strong position to leverage all kinds of resources from their corporate parents including expertise, data, technology, supply chain access, other business relationships, entrepreneurial know-how, legal and financial expertise, and more,<sup>9</sup> although forging these connections must respect the legal firewall that separates the charitable entity from the commercial entity (see discussion on page 18).

8. See [New Philanthropy Capital \(NPC\) 'New Philanthropy Capital \(NPC\) 'Let's embrace uncertainty to tackle systemic problems'](#).

9. The mining industry provides a source of inspiration for novel forms of corporate Foundation, see [Establishing Foundations to Deliver Community Investment](#).

### 3 Check you are 'fit for partnering'

*Understand the extent to which you are currently set up as an institution to be 'fit for partnering' and invest in organisational optimisation as required.*

There are five key areas a high-performing Foundation needs to ensure are fully optimised to partner effectively:

- 1 leadership and strategy:** any strategic approach (particularly if it requires significant changes to the way a Foundation works) requires the buy-in and championing of the board and executive director; further, the approach needs to be embedded into the organisational strategy and cascaded through the organisation;
- 2 systems and processes:** for organisations to partner or support partnering, they need an optimised set of systems and processes, from adapted calls for proposals and assessment of potential partnership opportunities through to tailored monitoring and evaluation procedures, as well as potentially different forms of legal agreements, accountability requirements etc.;
- 3 staff capacity:** partnership working (whether as a partner, and particularly for facilitating partnerships) requires its own set of professional skills and competencies;
- 4 organisational culture and grantee relationships:** a collaborative culture is a fundamental ingredient to support partnering aspirations and in a positive (or otherwise) experience for partners. More than one interviewee described the need for Foundations to be *'less egotistical, to take a step back and not be so assertive'*; and
- 5 appropriate grant mechanisms:** utilising partnership approaches in general requires longer-term and more flexible funding arrangements than traditional grant giving. Committing long-term funds can be a challenge for certain Foundations, for example, corporate Foundations reliant on the annual profits of their corporate parent.

Understanding how 'fit' your Foundation is to partner can be achieved through a survey and interviews, both internally and externally with partners (for which a neutral external facilitator is recommended). Organisations (and in particular, their culture) do not change overnight. Making a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the current state provides a baseline against which a Foundation can develop a continuous improvement approach to improve its partnering effectiveness.

In carrying out Fit for Partnering assessments with the Z Zurich Foundation and J&J Foundation, we noted ways of working that particularly enabled strong collaboration. Many Z Zurich Foundation staff demonstrated an instinctive feel for supporting and strengthening grantee partners. For example, locally-based staff from the Foundation worked with one local grantee partner to encourage them (and provided the funding for) a rigorous, independent assessment of the grantee's programme. The grantee described the support from the Foundation as 'life-changing' in that it changed their whole approach to programming. This in turn has sharpened the 'pitch' that the grantee has been able to use for its work when approaching other funders.

*'Our organisation has worked in partnership with Foundations, donors and funders previously, but our work with the Z Zurich Foundation is far more collaborative, on a daily basis, than any other project we have delivered.*

*We operate as a team, not as donor and grantee.'* (PARTNER)

*'We have a mindset of continuous improvement; it's very present, it's a priority and a lot has been done around it.'* (INTERNAL FOUNDATION)

#### LINKS

FOR FULL INFORMATION ON THE FIT FOR PARTNERING FRAMEWORK, AND AN EXAMPLE ANALYSIS, GO TO APPENDIX 6, P42

### 3

Check you are 'fit for partnering'

*'I'm consistently impressed by Z Zurich Foundation's willingness to go through a cleansing and re-evaluate itself; this allows partnerships to evolve.'* (PARTNER)

Similarly, J&J Foundation was widely considered to be a collaborative and knowledgeable partner, open to new ideas, flexible, respectful and approachable. This was a particularly strong finding in comparison to similar Fit for Partnering surveys TPI has carried out over the years. A picture emerges of long-standing, strong, open, trust-based relationships between Foundation and grantees.

*'J&J has often gone above and beyond financial contribution and given pro-bono support. The extra support didn't come with conditions. We have pushed back a bit on some offers, but J&J understand when offered support is not appropriate.'* (PARTNER)

*'J&J is very open and adaptable. I have worked on corporate partnerships where the "pound of flesh" is really demanded. It is not like that with J&J at all.'* (PARTNER)

*'I feel like I can call and have a chat about something. J&J are really amazing partners, collaborative but without interfering, not trying to drive their own agenda – and give valuable feedback. Very helpful...open to different ways of doing things'.* (PARTNER)

The cultivation of an open, collaborative culture that reflects the values a Foundation seeks to espouse through external partnerships is a win-win for the Foundation, the partners and for the communities and causes they serve.

### 4

#### Understand power dynamics

***Understand where power lies in relationships and be prepared to take grantee partners on a journey.***

Effective partnering requires careful attention to the balance of power. By default, Foundations are often the most powerful partner in a collaboration because of the financial resources they bring to the table. This can create distortions and challenges, including an unwillingness by grantees to criticise the Foundation for fear of losing future financial support, and sub-optimal programme design created in accordance with funding requirements rather than contextual need.

Where Foundations have an existing relationship with grantees, that power differential may be baked into the relationship in a way that the Foundation, in particular, may not even notice. Moving from transactional towards becoming a 'Trusted Partner' or towards multiple partner collective action, requires a change in the nature of the relationship, and grantees are likely to need to be guided along that journey. For example, in many cases, grantees may be quite happy with the existing relationship, with the Foundation funding their programmes in a hands-off way. They may resist any change to the *status quo*, fearing a loss of critical income or pressure to work outside of their comfort zone, for example, in collaboration with other organisations with which there is competition or rivalry.

Strong engagement and communication are essential to help make partnering a shared journey. While the Foundation can confidently set out its strategic vision, the route to get there can, at least in part, be co-developed with grantees. The process will help grantees to understand (and themselves develop the case for) more collaborative approaches, and the collective process will result in far stronger ownership of the end approach.



**David Nash recounts Z Zurich Foundation's shift to 'giving up power' and developing a shared vision with Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance Partners:**

**I** Zurich always intended to start locally, before moving globally. When we launched the first phase, we pulled together two NGO partners and two academic partners and connected them to the risk engineering function at Zurich, bringing the private sector perspective. We had two partners on the ground; Practical Action, a small, agile NGO with a reputation for innovation, and Red Cross, a large, global organisation, bringing the opportunity for scale.

Zurich, as the partnership driver, assumed a synergy that perhaps wasn't there initially, the friction costs of trying to push people into this agenda, with Zurich sitting at the centre, was not working. It did not lead to natural collaboration. In some cases, it meant the Alliance achieved less than the sum of its parts rather than more.

Our relationships initially were more based on bilateral agreements with each partner; the Foundation held the reins on everything. The vision was owned by

Zurich, and it held a view of the role of each of the partners, then contracted with each of the organisations to play that specific role.

Zurich's initial assumption was that what the individual organisations were doing would be interesting enough for other members of the Alliance to learn from, to take inspiration. But in reality, partners tended more to keep themselves to themselves. Each organisation used their own reporting templates, which made it hard for us to collate and get an idea of the overall direction and progress of the Alliance. This Individual approach or mindset was very difficult to break because of how the Alliance had been set up. In that respect, some of the challenges encountered were inevitable. The challenges encountered led to an independent review.

We started by learning lessons from what had been done to date. A key lesson was that we needed to align strategically with partners from the start. We spent six or seven months speaking to existing partners, as well as people on the periphery of the Alliance. We asked how the overall Alliance's vision played into each individual partner's strategy.

It was more "this is where we are headed – how do you think your organisation would best contribute?", rather than the previous centralised approach of Zurich assigning roles to partners. This immediately ensured partners had a vested interest from the start.

A big benefit now, for us, is that management capacity has been added to the programme across the organisations. Zurich and the Foundation are now Alliance partner members in the same way that other organisations are partner members. The new governance structure for the Alliance gives Zurich an equal voice with others, which was initially difficult for the other members to appreciate. The answer is yes, we want to give up power and share that with you! It is important to continue to cultivate that trust between partners. The operational structure is now shared too. One organisation leads the advocacy efforts, one leads on knowledge management, Zurich is part of each group as a contributor. There is an accountability line above all of this on the funding piece, however, this is separated from strategic and operational involvement, which is delegated to the Alliance members.'

**Above: Alliance team members visit the pristine upstream area of the river in Chiapas, Mexico**

# 4

Understand power dynamics

Foundations can also help to equalise power by demonstrably valuing the non-financial resources that grantee partners bring to the table, from social capital to technical capacity. In addition, the Foundation and grantees can acknowledge that achieving long-lasting change depends on each of the partners contributing according to their unique ability. For the Foundation, this might be by providing funding. For the grantees this may be by leveraging their deep community networks and local relationships, for example.

Issues around power, and the importance of collective processes, are all the more important when developing multiple stakeholder partnerships, in which many organisations may be bringing resources to the table, or aligning their programmes, without expectation of receiving a grant from the Foundation. Again, valuing all resources and, where possible, having multiple funders, not a single Foundation, can mitigate against power imbalances.

One way to assess the power balance in the relationship is to review the way in which Foundations disburse grants and other forms of financial support. Some indicative differences in approaches are set out in the table below:

Project-based grant-making	Grant-making to build partnering relationships
Short term or single-year funding;	Multiple year funding;
M&E designed by Foundations;	M&E co-created between Foundations and grantees (see 'Impact measurement', below);
Value is understood in terms of how the partnership helps achieve the Foundation's strategic objectives;	Value is understood in terms of how the partnership achieves the strategic objectives of each of the organisations in the partnership (see 'Partnership value creation', above);
Funding is granted to achieve programmatic deliverables outlined in the grant proposal;	Funding is granted to achieve jointly agreed programmatic deliverables plus core organisational strengthening;
Focus on pre-determined results;	Focus on adaptive planning, and learning at multiple levels;
Quality of outcomes is defined based on size of grant;	Quality of outcomes based on trust;
The Foundation focuses on the size of its portfolio;	The Foundation focuses on size of impact;
Foundation defines its contribution to the partnership solely or mainly in terms of providing financial support; and	The Foundation recognises and communicates the full range of strategic resources it provides grantees, including funds (see above); and
Grantees can feel obliged to conform to funder's agenda.	Partners feel secure in saying 'no' to requests without risking funding for subsequent years.

**The Z Zurich Foundation** evolved from the Zurich Vita Jubilee Foundation, which was set up in 1972, Zurich Insurance Group's centenary year. In 2008, it was renamed and received an injection of capital and a strategic direction. The first long-term grants came from this process. In 2013, it honed its approach into the two broad strands in place today: the global flood resilience programme and a local grants programme. As of 2019, grants now support 25 local programmes. In 2019 Z Zurich Foundation disbursed CHF16.1 million (91% on programmes). Its focus areas are climate resilience, mental wellbeing and social equity.

The Z Zurich Foundation has a relatively lean staff structure to support its work. Local programmes are delivered by business units, using funding from the Foundation, which then identify local charitable partners. An exception to this is the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, which is a global multiple stakeholder partnership that has undertaken work across 20 countries, to date.

## 5 Keep track of how it is working

### *Collectively design and develop monitoring and impact measurement systems for the partnership.*

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Impact assessment becomes a multiple dimensional endeavour in the context of programmes that involve diverse partners in delivery. TPI encourages the design of a monitoring system which is co-created by partners and begins right at the start of a partnership process, focusing on measuring not just progress and outcomes, but also on the added value of the partnership approach (see 'Value creation' box, page 17) as well as the added value to partner organisations.

We would also encourage the use of regular partnership 'health checks' focussing not on impact, but on the quality of the relationship, the level of commitment of the partners and how effectively and efficiently the partnership is operating. This allows any issues and challenges to be raised early and facilitate course correction, before they cause real problems.

To support impact assessment for partnering, we see various promising 'network assessment' tools which are designed to measure stronger connections between elements rather than quantifying the growth of these elements; and focusing on contribution rather than attribution.<sup>10</sup> We also note the growing number of 'systems' approaches to assess the impact of complex change processes, and note 'Blue Marble Evaluation' as one particularly promising approach.<sup>11</sup>

When there is a strong and trusting relationship between Foundations and their partners, impact assessment can be more flexible and adaptable. In emergency situations, trust becomes central in the reporting and impact assessment process. For example, during the initial phase of the Covid-19 crisis, we heard from several Foundations which had proactively reached out to their longest-standing and most Trusted Partner organisations to inquire about what they needed most (whether in terms of financial support, or some of the other forms of support), and made those resources available.

The only reporting requirement in these cases was that, at the end of a given period, NGO partners informed the Foundation how they had used the resources and what they had learned. This may appear to be an exceptional example due to an extraordinary period of global disruption, but what if it was the approach that Foundations intentionally sought to cultivate? How might trust be drawn on to simplify and streamline impact assessment, shifting towards a shared learning process that could inform stronger programmatic approaches in the future?

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10. The US-based [Grantmakers for Effective Organisations \(GEO\)](#) has produced a useful overview guide on [measuring network effectiveness](#).

11. [Blue Marble Evaluation](#) is being applied with the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, a collaboration of Foundations seeking to transform food systems.



# Join us



**We invite you to join us in our mission to strengthen partnering practice for philanthropic impact across the sector.**

This report draws on a year of *Partnering for Philanthropic Impact* inquiry in collaboration with J&J Foundation and Z Zurich Foundation. These early insights, combined with TPI's experience in supporting the theory and practice of effective partnerships across sectors, inform the models presented here.

This is only the first step. We need your help to test the models in practice in your organisation and to build a shared understanding of effective partnering across philanthropy.

This report serves as a call to action for Foundations to think strategically about how partnering can help them maximise their impact, and hence the best model to deliver it. In order to do so, Foundations must be systematic about understanding the extent to which they are institutionally set up to deliver different partnering models, then investing in their own organisational capacities to deliver with excellence.

We are keen to support Foundations, and learn from them as they partner more strategically and support ongoing knowledge exchange through the *Partnering for Philanthropic Impact* programme.

We will continue to run our tailored Fit for Partnering assessments for Foundations during 2021–2, adding to the body of knowledge set out in this report and shared during the next phase of the programme.

We will be actively engaging with existing networks of Foundations, both formal and informal, to share the models set out in this report and to connect with related work that is underway. We are also interested in engaging directly with partnerships which are either involved with or supported by Foundations which are providing valuable learning, and sharpening the ideas and approaches set out in this report.

*Foundations or grantee partners interested in providing comments on the ideas set out in this report, in contributing to or being kept informed on the next stage of the programme, or in undertaking a Fit for Partnering assessment to set a baseline for their own organisation, are warmly invited to get in touch with TPI at: [info@tpiglobal.org](mailto:info@tpiglobal.org).*



**Brigades and armed forces in action during floods – Piura, Polvorine**  
*Photograph: Practical Action*

# 1 TRUSTED PARTNER MODEL

**Summary:** move beyond project funding to genuinely partner with grantee organisations.

**Strategic objective:** to influence and maximise the impact of the partner organisation's work, and/or collectively deliver greater impact, towards shared Foundation and partner mission objectives.

**Approach:**

- **Influence** the design of partner organisation activities (and be influenced by them);
- **Support** through longer-term funding beyond individual projects;
- **Build capacity** to deliver existing programmes more effectively;
- **Engage in more collective action** by bringing non-financial Foundation resources (including technical expertise, connections and influence) to the table.



## KEY QUESTIONS

### GOALS

- What are we hoping to achieve and what specific additional value towards our strategic objectives will be created by changing the relationship?

### RESOURCES

- What resources can we bring to the table beyond funding and how would these resources help the grantees to deliver more?
- If technical assistance is an important element, are we confident the technical assistance we provide is superior / complementary to what the NGO already has, and would it be welcomed rather than resisted?

### MAKING THE SHIFT

- What steps as a Foundation do we need to take to build the culture and systems needed to become a Trusted Partner?
- To what extent is the necessary mindset in place or might it need to be developed?
- Are we willing to invest in the necessary process to transform the relationship from grantee to partner?
- Are we willing to support grantees to strengthen their systems as needed?



## FIT FOR PARTNERING

### STRATEGY

- Understanding and embracing the benefits of moving from being a grant-maker to being a Trusted Partner.

### CAPACITY AND SYSTEMS

- Understanding what it means in practice to move from being a grant-giver to being a partner;
- The role of relationship manager may need to be significantly upgraded, with more time assigned to working closely with the grantee and collectively identifying opportunities to strengthen grantee systems and processes; and
- May need to adjust internal systems in order to move funding around and add additional funding where programmes adjust and iterate, in order to maintain the focus on achieving outcomes and impact as opposed to a focus on producing outputs.

### BALANCE OF POWER

- Understanding the concerns grantees may have (e.g. perception of interference or 'meddling', potentially having to be more transparent than they are used to and opening up vulnerabilities; fear of loss of funding or loss of control of how the funding is used; Foundations providing 'technical assistance' that might replace an NGO's own added value or 'get in the way');
- Understanding power dynamics, how power may need to shift to become true partners, and understanding the subsequent need to invest the time and effort required to build trust and quality of the relationship; and
- Moving from being in the powerful position of decision-maker and grant administrator to one of partner requires a shift in mindset, as well as a set of partnering skills and competencies.

## TRUSTED PARTNER MODEL



### APPROACH AND PROCESS

#### RESOURCES

- Gain clarity on what resources the Foundation can bring to the table, beyond funding (see above section for some ideas and prompts).

#### FIT FOR PARTNERING

- Consultation with grantees to openly discuss the potential to move to more of a partnership relationship, assessing together the positives and negatives of the approach, and what non-financial resources from the Foundation would be considered valuable by the grantee; arrange for a neutral party to have these discussions with the grantee, on a confidential basis, so grantees do not say simply what they think the Foundation wants to hear;
- Internally within the Foundation, understand what it would mean in practice (changes in systems and processes, decision-making etc.);
- Similarly, with grantees, discuss what it would mean in practice, how to make it work to ensure it adds value and is not negative;
- Develop new partnering agreements or memorandum of understanding (MoU), as needed; and
- Undertake a process with grantees to transform the relationship over time, being reflective and drawing out learning as you go.

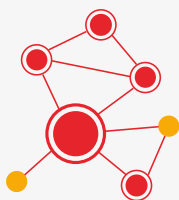
#### IS IT WORKING?

- Undertake regular 'health checks' to keep the partnership as effective as possible.
- **What it looks like when working well:** does not feel like a burden; is supportive not diversionary.
- **What it looks like when not working well:** lots of extra bureaucracy; lack of clarity on ways to measure progress and assess risks; diminished trust, suspicion or resistance from grantees.

#### IN PRACTICE

The Backbone Fund is an invitation-only fund for partners of the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation**, which supports organisations to resource essential activities as part of a wider response that backs civil society and its leaders. The fund is unrestricted and makes a lasting commitment of up to five years to each organisation. It will enable those involved to resource their core services, fund essential posts and ensure that there is funding that can be relied upon for a significant period of time, free of political cycles. While this type of core funding is not unusual between Foundations and their grantees, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's clear focus on the importance of this element, outside core support as part of its programme grants, and the long term and flexible nature of the funding support is reflective of a strategic partnering relationship.

## 2 CONNECTOR MODEL



**Summary:** actively broker collaboration among grantees and other connections.

**Strategic objective:** to support grantees to collectively deliver more than the sum of individual bi-lateral grant arrangements; to multiply the impact of grantees by leveraging the Foundation's own network.

**Approach:** create an active space and actively broker collaboration among grantees, as well as with other actors within the Foundation's sphere of influence (potentially including funders), wherever additional value can be created.



### KEY QUESTIONS

#### GOALS

- What broader societal value can be created by connecting grantee partners to one another? What value to the Foundation, and to grantees themselves?

#### FIT FOR PARTNERING

- How do we know that grantees want to connect with one another? What might their reservations or competitive considerations be for doing this, and how might these be offset?
- What internal knowledge management systems, skills and capacities are required in order to enable us to identify promising connections between grantees? What criteria can we develop to judge when there may be 'significant value' in connecting grantees to one another?

#### RESOURCES

- What other connections could we make between grantees and our stakeholders – can we connect them with other Foundations? Evaluation specialists? Members of our board?
- Is it working? What real examples do we already have of making connections between grantees and how do we know those connections were valuable?



### FIT FOR PARTNERING

#### CAPACITY

- Team members should have a sound understanding of partnership value-creation, facilitation and partnership brokering skills to support the development of grantee partnerships;

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Unless grantees are sensitively convened around issues based on their specific interests, the scope for grantees to partner and genuinely create additional value may be limited;
- There needs to be sufficient overlap of interest or geography for there even to be the potential for partnerships. It is important to appreciate that NGOs are operating in a space of intense competition and may not have much of an interest or capacity to devote to partnering; and
- It is particularly important to appreciate where and how value can be created. For NGOs doing similar things, collaborative advantage can come from weight of action (e.g. joint advocacy), standard-setting, action at scale, shared learning etc. For NGOs doing different things, collaborative advantage can come from innovation, or complementarity leading to complete solutions. Finding the rationale for NGOs to collaborate where they do similar things (and are often competitors) is, however, a major challenge and there needs to be considerable value gained by all for it to be worth the effort.<sup>12</sup>

12. TPI is currently engaged in a programme to learn from FCDO-supported consortia, which is highlighting the many challenges that arise when working in this way, as well as mitigating measures.

## CONNECTOR MODEL



## APPROACH AND PROCESS

Whether as part of a dedicated, formal partnership, or generally as part of a partnering way of working, Foundations can in principle do more to systematically strengthen partnering approaches among grantees, addressing some of these barriers in the process. However, this connection work requires buy-in from grantees, which may be reluctant to work more collaboratively for fear of individual funding streams being impacted, or which may lack the capacity to devote to these conversations. Suggested actions to develop this model include:

## RESOURCES

- Providing grants for the express purpose of allowing two or more grantee organisations to explore connections which would not otherwise be resourced or prioritised; and
- Hiring an independent facilitator, whose role is to make new connections between grantees and identify new opportunities.<sup>13</sup>

## FIT FOR PARTNERING

- Being flexible and willing to listen to grantee partners' feedback (for example, during major internal reorganisation) and, crucially, be seen to adjust their ways of working based on this feedback;
- Supporting the development of shared processes, tools or academic research resources, which can help with measuring impact; and
- Strengthening the internal partnering capacity of grantee partners.

## IS IT WORKING?

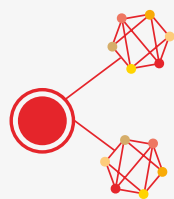
- **What it looks like when working well:** innovation and creativity sparked between grantees, which they bring back to the Foundation for further support. Once grantees have seen the value of this approach, they may even apply it to their own networks.
- **What it looks like when not working well:** lots of unstructured or speculative conversations that do not lead to specific partnerships.

<sup>13</sup>. See 'Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation' case study at the end of this document.

## IN PRACTICE

In the early 2010s, J&J facilitated a partnership between Freedom from Hunger (now Grameen Foundation) and the Microcredit Summit Campaign of the RESULTS Foundation by providing each with a small grant to explore how their respective initiatives could be combined into one, for greater impact. Ten years later, this is one of the partnerships that helped J&J to achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets in 2015. J&J has also actively supported global development alliances such as Survive & Thrive and Helping Babies Breathe, providing funding to organisations that acted as the secretariat as well as to individual implementing partner organisations.

## 3 SUPPORTER MODEL



**Summary:** financially (or otherwise) provide support to MSPs that can effectively contribute to the Foundation's mission.

**Strategic objective:** to deliver the Foundation's objectives more efficiently, effectively, innovatively or more transformationally through others' MSP action.

**Approach:** use novel processes to call for proposals, effectively assess, and help to optimise new and existing MSPs.



### KEY QUESTIONS

#### GOALS

- What type of impacts are we trying to achieve, and in what ways would MSPs be able to achieve them more effectively than traditional grant making?

#### FIT FOR PARTNERING

- What are our experiences to date in this area, what was effective and what less so?
- What are the investments we would need to make in order to make it happen and are we willing to make them?



### FIT FOR PARTNERING

#### CAPACITIES

- Full understanding and experience of MSPs; facilitation and partnership brokering skills to support the development of partnerships.

#### SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- Where Requests for Proposal (RFPs) are put out, asking for partnerships, there is a strong risk of organisations coming together for the sake of accessing the money rather than because their working together will genuinely create additional value. RFPs should therefore be highly prescriptive around the need for proposals to explicitly demonstrate how value would be created (through better traditional development or transformational development);
- Traditional grant-making RFPs, in which organisations put forward a proposal and a budget and are then funded or not, are not suited to partnerships. Partnerships can take considerable time and effort to develop before there is a well-thought-through fundable concept with full buy-in from all the partners. A partnership-supportive process is instead required to maximise the potential from partnerships; and
- Organisations (particularly smaller organisations) often do not have sufficient resources or budget to fully engage in partnership development processes and need support to do so.

#### RESOURCES

- An external neutral partnership facilitator that helps to guide the process can significantly decrease the time it takes and increase the quality of the partnership.

## SUPPORTER MODEL



## APPROACH AND PROCESS

## EXAMPLE RFP PROCESS

**Step 1:** call for initial ideas for partnerships (clearly demonstrating the added-value they would create) but which do not need the full details or for the partners to have fully committed to the idea;

**Step 2:** choose, say, ten promising ideas, and put a grant of \$10–20k towards partners' time and costs (and potentially an external partnership facilitator) to further develop the idea, engage additional partners as required, move along the partnership formation journey, and put together a detailed plan;

**Step 3:** choose the best five and directly support the development of the partnership (with funding and technical partnership facilitation support) to get it to full clarity, agreement from all partners on the contribution or commitment they are making to the partnership etc. and sign a partnership agreement; and

**Step 4:** fund those partnerships which clearly demonstrate potential for significant impact.

## BALANCE OF POWER

If a Foundation is funding multiple organisations in a partnership, they need to be extremely sensitive about how the Foundations' relationships with each partner and funding streams are managed. If they end up channelling the funding through one organisation (which they may choose to do for efficiency), they must be sensitive to the ensuing power dynamics that will be created in the relationship between the grantees.

## IS IT WORKING?

● **What it looks like when working well:** strong commitment and strong trust and relationships among the partners; good collective decision-making and collective action resulting in real value creation; ongoing review and iteration of approach; attracting support and funding from others;

● **What it looks like when not working well:** low level of trust; partners prefer to hive off their area of work and get funded for it rather than working collectively to deliver a bigger vision; infrequent interactions or interactions that may be negative towards the partnership approach; partnership delivers less than the sum of its parts.

## IN PRACTICE

**Bloomberg Philanthropies Road Safety Partnership:**

Bloomberg Philanthropies is working with the world's leading road safety organisations and co-ordinating with government and other stakeholders to 'achieve progress on road safety at local and national levels'.<sup>14</sup> In funding this cross-sector partnership, Bloomberg Philanthropies has helped to create the eco-system and supporting environment needed to develop and implement activities designed to achieve systemic change. In its first two years, the consortium 'developed programmes aimed at passing and implementing effective road safety laws and regulations, training of front-line workers, improving road infrastructure, incorporating sustainable transport and reduced emissions in urban planning, and supporting global advocacy on road safety.'<sup>15</sup> The second phase of the initiative (from 2015) aims to build on the progress achieved in Phase 1 through a call for proposals from low- and middle-income countries and cities which have shown commitment to improving road safety, detailing their plans to address road safety, improve road infrastructure and guarantee safer public transport. The initiative identified ten cities and five countries as participants in the programme and, in addition to grants, the partners benefit from direct support from the road safety organisations which make up the partnership.

**Partnering for Green Growth and the Global**

**Goals 2030 (P4G)** accelerates, funds and recognises innovative public-private partnerships driving green growth, through its innovation hub for partnerships. It focuses on breakthrough solutions in five SDG sectors: food and agriculture (SDG2), clean water (SDG6), clean energy (SDG7), sustainable cities (SDG11) and circular economy (SDG12).

**Co-Impact** is a collaboration of Foundations that funds partnerships for systems-level impact. Co-Impact has developed a detailed, action-focused handbook that sets out its approach to 'philanthropy for systems change'.<sup>16</sup>

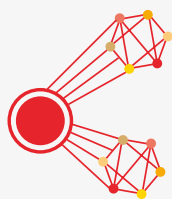
14. The consortium of partners includes the [Global Road Safety Partnership](#), [World Health Organization](#), [Johns Hopkins International School of Public Health](#), [World Bank Global Road Safety Facility](#), [Association of Safe International Road Travel](#), [Global New Car Assessment Program](#), [National Association of City Transport Officials](#), [The Union of North America](#) and the [World Resources Institute](#) (EMBARQ).

15. [Global Road Safety Partnership](#). 2014. Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Road Safety Programme 2010-2014 (Phase 1). [Online]. [Accessed 10th September 2020].

16. See [Co-Impact handbook](#).



## 4 SYSTEMS LEADER MODEL



**Summary:** act as systems leaders to actively drive the development of MSPs or Collective Impact programmes around key Foundation priorities.

**Strategic objective:** to foster, develop and engage with MSP action that can 'move the needle' on a major or complex issue.

**Approach:** provide systems leadership, direction and impetus, engage key stakeholders, and broker a new partnership initiative (or multiple initiatives through a platform) towards delivering a specific agenda; fund or support this effort over time, potentially with other funders. Foundations may potentially also host such initiatives.



### KEY QUESTIONS

#### GOAL

- What issue are we trying to address? What is the gap in the current landscape and why would partnerships be able to deliver the change we desire?
- Why would we take a systems leadership role in catalysing partnerships, rather than put out a call for proposals for others' partnerships?

#### RESOURCES

- What are the investments in the partnering infrastructure or collaborative eco-system that we would need to make in order to make this happen? Are we willing to make them?

#### FIT FOR PARTNERING

- Do we have the appetite, commitment, leadership, skills and patience to support interventions over the long term, without knowing in advance what will work?



### FIT FOR PARTNERING

#### CONSIDERATIONS

- Acting as a systems leaders requires a very different approach to traditional grant giving. It involves understanding a system, engaging and building relationships with multiple stakeholders, and collectively developing a vision around which key actors can coalesce and commit. If this phase is successful, the resultant MSP or MSPs will require long term commitment, supporting them over potentially many years.
- It is a far more public role, placing the Foundation front and centre, and so puts the Foundation's own reputation on the line.

#### LEADERSHIP

- The Systems Leader model is all about leadership and vision. It requires complete buy-in and championship from Executive and Board leadership, both because of the investment required, and because of the highly public role the Foundation will play;

#### SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- The systems and processes required are fundamentally different to traditional grant-giving, and will depend strongly on the level of ambition of the Foundation and the role the Foundation itself wishes to play. Any major MSP requires a 'backbone' organisation to provide ongoing support, coordination and programme management. This may potentially be undertaken by the Foundation, or it could be outsourced.
- In some cases, Foundations may take a 'platform' approach, building the infrastructure for an ongoing mechanism to engage key stakeholders and catalyse and support new partnerships over time.

## SYSTEMS LEADER MODEL



## FIT FOR PARTNERING (cont.)

## CULTURE

- Willingness to tolerate a high level of experimentation or enquiry-based approaches (rather than proven approaches); and

## SKILLS AND CAPACITY

- Systems leadership requires a range of different competencies and skills, including the practice of collaborative leadership, the ability to build coalitions, and an understanding of complex systems.



## APPROACH AND PROCESS

Systems Leadership approaches are not to be taken lightly. They require significant commitment, often over a long period of time, with considerable regard to process.

As a first step, a Foundation may undertake a broad landscape analysis to understand the underlying system and map the range of stakeholders.

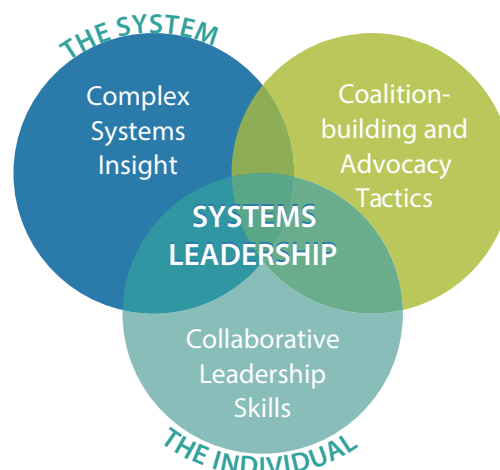
Following that, there would typically be a wide array of one-to-one consultations with stakeholders to gain information and socialise the idea of a partnership. A series of multi-stakeholder workshops would be used to build engagement and relationships, better understand the existing system, develop a collective vision for the future desired system, and appreciate the resources of all kinds that may be available.

A small group of stakeholders, supported by the Foundation, would typically take forward the development and design of a systems intervention, including creating a theory of transformation, assessing the feasibility of the approach, as well as continuing to engage and co-design with stakeholders.

Assuming it appears feasible, and key stakeholders are on board and committed through a partnering agreement, the necessary implementation structures would be created - including, typically, a backbone organisation that can provide support to the

## THE KEY ELEMENTS OF SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

- 1 The Individual:** The skills of **collaborative leadership** to enable learning, trust-building and empowered action among stakeholders who share a common goal
- 2 The Community:** The tactics of **coalition building and advocacy** to develop alignment and mobilize action among stakeholders in the system, both within and between organizations
- 3 The System:** An understanding of the **complex systems** shaping the challenge to be addressed



Lisa Dreier, David Nabarro and Jane Nelson: *Systems Leadership for Sustainable Development: Strategies for Achieving Systemic Change*; Harvard Kennedy School Corporate Responsibility Initiative, 2019

partnership, along with initial governance, financing and ongoing review mechanisms.

Foundations may choose to use a 'platforms' approach that can catalyse a number of collaborations towards the same overall goal.

## IS IT WORKING?

- **What it looks like when working well:** strong commitment from stakeholders and energetic exchanges of ideas and information; strong relationships built up across the partners and a culture of collective commitment, leadership and accountability towards a shared vision; additional funders see the benefit and also support the MSP;

- **What it looks like when not working well:** disengaged partners and stakeholders; no sense of collective ownership; backbone organisation, rather than the partners, do all the work.

## SYSTEMS LEADER MODEL

## IN PRACTICE

As part of a strategic shift from bilateral grant-making relationships towards its new 'platform' model, the **J&J Foundation** operates through collective impact platforms in Kenya and Jordan, with new platforms under exploration in Europe, Lebanon, and South Africa. There are a total of ten Impact Hubs globally delivering this operating model to address a specific region's high community health burdens, with a remit to promote collaboration. As well as supporting the direct set-up of these impact hubs, J&J plays a role in identifying and strengthening connections between the hubs.

*'Impact Hubs promote collaboration to facilitate best practice sharing across multiple hubs and are strategically positioned to leverage the knowledge and networks of core partners in the region, as well as the people and resources of locally-based Johnson & Johnson Operating Companies.'*<sup>17</sup>

**The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance** blends a 'Systems Leader' approach with a 'Supporter' approach. Its aims are to:

- support the generation of an additional \$1bn in flood resilience funding;
- encourage effective public policy in support of flood resilience;
- develop sound practice and policy support for flood resilience; and
- measurably enhance flood resilience in vulnerable communities across the world.

*'The Alliance brings together specialists in each of these areas, which will lead to improved community resilience towards flooding. This is a true collaboration. Rather than Zurich simply being a donor and providing the money for research to be conducted and community programmes to be implemented in isolation, we work together through a set of work streams, each led by one Alliance member organisation. Co-ordination across the work streams ensures they don't operate in silos. They are accountable to the Alliance management team – senior representatives from all member organisations.'*

(ZURICH INSURANCE GROUP)<sup>18</sup>

The Z Zurich Foundation has catalysed the Alliance and provides ongoing funding to support it, while also playing an active role as partner alongside its corporate parent, the Zurich Insurance Group and seven other organisations.<sup>19</sup> This is a proactive form of partnership support by a Foundation. Regular learning reviews are published, documenting how and where progress is being made, including how participation in the Alliance is changing the partner organisations' approach to flood resilience programming.<sup>20</sup>

17. See [Johnson & Johnson](#).

18. See [Flood Resilience Portal](#).

19. Non-Zurich affiliated partners are: [Concern Worldwide](#), the [International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies \(IFRC\)](#), [Mercy Corps](#), [Plan International and Practical Action](#) as well as research partners the [International Institute for Applied Systems and Analysis \(IIASA\)](#), the [London School of Economics \(LSE\)](#) and the [Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-International \(ISET\)](#).

20. See [Foundations for Change: Zurich Flood Alliance Phase II, Lessons from Year 1 \(2019\)](#).

## Snapshots of Foundation partnering

In compiling the background information for this report, TPI undertook desktop research into Foundations which emphasised 'partnering' as a key factor in their principles and approach. The result was a long list of partnering examples, and a similarly varied approach to the word 'partnering'.

The following examples include information on the different approaches of Foundations which appear to take a more strategic view of partnering, beyond a purely funding approach. We have looked at publicly

available information through a partnering lens, and this is our interpretation of a Foundation's goals, activities and approaches. With the exception of our pioneer members, J&J Foundation and Z Zurich Foundation, we have not, at this stage, reached out to the Foundations or partners in question. There is no doubt that each of these examples, and many more interesting collaborations, would yield invaluable additional information as part of a more comprehensive review.

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### Paul Hamlyn Foundation (Trusted Partner model)



Established in 1987

Independent Foundation

Focus is on the UK, supporting young people, the arts, and in health, education and other social development activities in India

2018/19 grants awarded – £37.5 million

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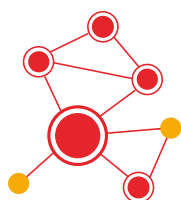
**Strategic approach to partnering:** the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Shared Ground Fund theory of change<sup>21</sup> advocates 'taking a "systems" approach to thinking about the complex change task we and our partners are engaged in', using transformation to avoid a system's most negative impacts rather than simply improving the existing framework. In identifying collaboration as an essential factor in fully understanding and engaging with all parts of the system to ensure positive change, the Foundation sees its role as a 'trusted partner' and an 'honest broker', seeking opportunities for partners to come together to mobilise around shared values and agendas, and providing grant-plus-support to the organisations it funds, providing non-monetary support in the shape of **expertise, influence, sharing practice or brokering relationships with others to strengthen their grantees financial health and longer-term strategic capability.**

**Core funding support:** in addition to providing this non-monetary assistance, the Foundation also operates The Backbone Fund, an invitation-only fund to partners of the Foundation, which enables organisations to resource essential activities as part of a wider response to backing civil society and its leaders. The fund is unrestricted and makes a lasting commitment of up to five years to each organisation. It will enable those involved to resource their core services, fund essential posts and ensure that there is funding that can be relied upon for a significant period of time, free of political cycles. While this type of core funding is not unusual between Foundations and their grantees, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's clear focus on the importance of this, outside core support as part of its programme grants, and the long-term and flexible nature of the funding support is reflective of a partnering relationship.

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21. Ahmad, S & Dorrans, S. (2017) Shared Ground Fund: Theory of Change, Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

In keeping with the Foundation's theory of change, in October 2019 it joined with six funders (City Bridge Trust, Esmee Fairburn Foundation, Lankelly Chase, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Tudor Trust) to form LocalMotion. The group has committed to funding an initial 18-month programme, and aims to 'use our collective experience and resources to support local people to address social, environmental and economic priorities, selected and driven locally and to derive as much learning as possible from that process'. The group will engage its local partners in the UK to find solutions to the social and environmental issues local to it. In collectively engaging with local partners, and actively seeking their input, the group hopes to 'avoid the risks associated with a funder-led, top-down approach, and to create a new approach in a more radical, joined-up way'.<sup>22</sup> It aims to co-design this approach and associated proposals with the communities it seeks to support. The group wants to answer two key questions: will local partners use their collective resources, experience and strengths better by working together and make a greater difference locally? Will this way of working work act as a mirror for current Foundation practice and will it prompt change?



### Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (Connector model)

Established in 2000

Family-led Foundation

Focus is on environmental conservation, science, patient care and the San Francisco Bay Area

2018 grants awarded – estimated \$330 million

While the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation is not the first or only Foundation to recognise the importance of building relationships and networks across the eco-system of its focus areas, it applied an interesting model in the field of marine conservation in British Columbia. To help create a network of organisations to work together and so maximise their impact, the Foundation created an independent facilitator position and in engaging the organisations themselves in the creation of the job description and search for the right type of person, the Foundation laid the groundwork necessary for this person to enable the organisations to create the kind of network necessary to see results. Lori Bartczak's 2015 report *Building Collaborations from the Inside Out*,<sup>23</sup> highlights this kind of creative decision making and focuses on relationship-building as part of the internal culture necessary for effective collaboration.

Bartczak also emphasises the Foundation's systemic approach to partnering, '**where the Foundation incorporates feedback from the field, stimulating collaborative conversations with grantees and partners that often germinate into grant ideas underneath the strategy**'.<sup>24</sup> In addition to giving rise to new ideas, this feedback and shared learning provides the Foundation with a deeper understanding of issues and the realities of changing circumstances, and the opportunity to re-assess its strategy and approach on a yearly basis. This is mirrored in the way it treats its grants – with a focus on shared learning, communication and flexibility, the Foundation and its partners are better able to maximise their combined impact.

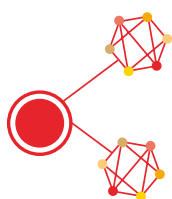
22. Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2020, accessed 10th September 2020.

23. Bartczak, Lori, (2015), *Building Collaboration From the Inside Out*.

24. Bartczak, Lori, (2015) page 36.

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's desire for long-term collaborative partnerships is also reflected in its practice of providing several year grants, enabling the Foundation to better support its partners with the costs and resources associated with collaboration, and to give them the time for the collaboration to find its feet. As Meaghan Calcari Campbell points out: 'If we're going to require collaboration, we have to be ready to financially support it.'<sup>25</sup>

The Foundation's understanding of the importance of collaboration, its desire to support its partners for the long term, its efforts to provide the environment necessary for strong communication and shared learning, and its systematic approach to incorporating this learning into the Foundation and its partners' activities are a strong example of good partnering practice by an established Foundation looking for success and impact through a more collaborative approach.



### **Bloomberg Philanthropies** (Supporter model)

Established in 2006

Family Foundation

Focus is on the environment, public health, the arts, government innovation and education

2018 grants awarded – \$767 million around the world

Given the broad reach of Bloomberg Philanthropies, working in 510 cities and 129 countries,<sup>26</sup> and its emphasis on the importance of engaging with strong partners, an analysis of the organisation's partnering approach across its programmes would constitute a report in itself. For the purposes of this report, we have chosen to focus on the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety which, over the last 12 years, has dedicated \$259 million to reduce road traffic fatalities and injuries in low- and middle-income countries.

The Bloomberg Philanthropies approach places partnerships at the centre of this initiative, working with the world's leading road safety organisations and co-ordinating with government and other stakeholders to achieve progress at local and national levels. The consortium of partners includes the Global Road Safety Partnership, World Health Organization, Johns Hopkins International School of Public Health, World Bank Global Road Safety Facility, Association of Safe International Road Travel, Global New Car Assessment Program, National Association of City Transport Officials, The Union of North America, and the World Resources Institute (EMBARQ). These partners bring a broad range of experience and expertise, including sustainable transport and urban design, mass transit and best practice in large cities, crash test programmes, independent safety ratings and the enhancement of post-crash trauma services, training of police and road safety actors, co-ordination and governmental planning and evaluation, utilisation of mass and social media, technical assistance and policy recommendation, and M&E.

In funding this cross-sector partnership, Bloomberg Philanthropies has helped to create the eco-system and supporting environment needed to develop and implement activities designed to achieve systemic change. In its first two years alone, the consortium 'developed programmes aimed at passing and implementing effective road safety laws and regulations, training of front-line workers, improving road infrastructure, incorporating sustainable transport and

25. Bartczak, Lori, (2015) page 20.

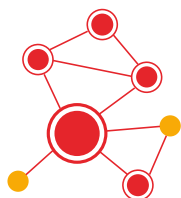
26. Bloomberg Philanthropies 2019 Annual Report.

reduced emissions in urban planning, and supporting global advocacy on road safety.<sup>27</sup>

The next two years addressed road safety management, using social media campaigns and the enforcement of best practice to strengthen the effects of existing laws, capacity building for traffic enforcement and working with local and national governments to identify and close loopholes in legislature.

This multiple-pronged, cross-sector approach in Phase 1 greatly strengthened the legislative and practical road safety frameworks necessary for wide-reaching change; 'more than 1.8 billion people have been covered by strengthened road safety laws, 65 million people have been exposed to hard-hitting media campaigns promoting road safety, close to 30,000 professionals have been trained on road safety tactics, and local governments have committed \$225 million towards infrastructure improvements that will make roads safer.'<sup>28</sup>

The second phase of the initiative (from 2015) builds on the progress achieved in Phase 1 with a call for proposals from low- and middle-income countries and cities which had shown commitment to improving road safety, detailing their plans to address road safety, improve road infrastructure and guarantee safer public transport. The initiative identified ten cities and five countries as participants in the programme and, in addition to monetary grants, the participants will benefit from direct support from the world-leading road safety organisations which make up the partnership.



### Z Zurich Foundation: Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (Systems Leader model)

Established in 2008

Corporate Foundation

Focus is on climate resilience, wellbeing and inclusion

2018 grants awarded – \$767 million around the world

The Z Zurich Foundation supports two approaches: local-level programming and a global multi-stakeholder alliance. The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance brings together nine partner organisations, including the Foundation and its corporate parent, Zurich Insurance Group, which has undertaken some work across 20 countries to date. Active community programmes featuring direct on-the-ground intervention are currently underway in nine countries.

The Alliance's model evolved from its initial Phase I approach, which was closer to a 'Trusted Partner' model (with Zurich at the centre of a series of bilateral relationships), to a second phase which combines elements of the 'Systems Leader' model: ***'Phase I felt like a group of organisations being funded to do things that were related to one another. In Phase II, it feels much more that we're collectively working to achieve a set of common goals.'***<sup>29</sup>

Launched in 2018, Phase II has seen the Alliance establishing governance systems and frameworks to support the development, measurement, and achievement

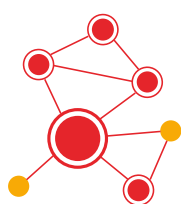
27. Global Road Safety Partnership, 2014. [Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Road Safety Programme 2010-2014 \(Phase 1\)](#). [Online]. [Accessed 10th September 2020].

28. World Resources Institute, 2014. [Bloomberg Philanthropies announces continued investment in road safety initiative](#). [Online]. [Accessed 10th September 2020].

29. See [Foundations for Change: Zurich Flood Alliance Phase II, Lessons from Year One](#) (2019).

of Alliance goals and to enable effective collaboration across nine very different partner organisations. Year one has also seen the development of the tools, guidance, training, and co-ordination mechanisms needed to support the application of the Alliance’s flood resilience measurement approach within a wide range of communities across multiple countries, which in turn will serve as the basis for development and implementation of flood resilience interventions.<sup>30</sup> More information on the lessons learned is available [here](#).

### J&J Foundation (Systems Leaders model)



Established in 2007 (formerly the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust)

Corporate Foundation, funded by the J&J Family of Companies through J&J Global Community Impact and J&J Operating Companies in EMEA

Focus is on building and strengthening a robust primary care health workforce

The Johnson & Johnson Foundation focuses its work through the Johnson & Johnson Center for Health Worker Innovation (CHWI).

J&J’s Center for Health Worker Innovation has been tasked with guiding a \$250 million, 10-year commitment to support one million nurses, midwives and community health workers, reaching 100 million people by 2030, and the more immediate \$50 million commitment to support frontline health workers battling Covid-19

The J&J Foundation and the Johnson & Johnson family of companies launched the Center for Health Worker Innovation in 2019 to address the health gap and moving towards universal health coverage (UHC) and with three clear goals: to reduce the healthworker coverage gap; increase quality of care through a thriving frontline health workforce; and to strengthen primary and community-based health systems.

Crucially, in launching the new Center, J&J has moved from a bilateral funding approach, with a largely fragmented portfolio, to a platform approach, seeking to achieve systems change through collective action and impact, for which there is a clear strategic rationale.<sup>31</sup>

#### J&J Foundation’s approach: accelerating impact and systemic change

From bilateral funding to a platform approach



- from bilateral partnership agreements;
- disconnected from systemic impact;
- lack of local accountability and government buy-in; and
- several partners working ‘next to each other’ in similar geographies.

Fragmented portfolio and impact



- an eco-system approach where stakeholders come together for a purpose;
- a way to consolidate our portfolio;
- a co-creation process based on systems-thinking identifying levers for change and mutually reinforcing interventions; and
- local government buy-in and leadership.

Collective action and impact

30. See Foundations for Change (2019).

31. 2019 in review GCI EMEA presentation extract.





**Doha: Refugee. Health Volunteer. Humanitarian.**

Twenty-four-year-old Doha Ibrahim Ammouri lives in Azraq refugee camp in Jordan with her husband and children. Originally from Syria, she had been looking forward to continuing her education when the war forced her to leave everything behind. Doha currently volunteers in the The International Rescue Committee's health clinic in Azraq camp. Even during the national lockdown, Doha and her colleagues have continued to provide essential medical care – safely.

'Health care is the most urgent need in Azraq camp because there is no alternative [to the clinic]' she says. 'I'm proud that we continue to provide services to the largest number of beneficiaries possible, despite the coronavirus pandemic or any other circumstances.'

What gives me strength is being able to provide services to people during this difficult time.'

*Photograph: J&J Foundation*

Collective impact platforms are operational in Kenya and Jordan, with new platforms and partnerships being explored in Europe, Lebanon, and South Africa. There are a total of ten Impact Hubs delivering the Center's operating model to address a specific region's high community health burdens, with a remit to promote collaboration:

*'Impact Hub teams work with national governments, implementers and other stakeholders to co-create local strategies and implement programming designed to deliver integrated high impact platforms for one or more prioritised areas of work. Impact Hubs also promote collaboration to facilitate best practice sharing across multiple hubs and are strategically positioned to leverage the knowledge and networks of core partners in the region, as well as the people and resources of locally-based Johnson & Johnson Operating Companies.'*

# Fit for Partnering approach

TPI's Fit for Partnering assessment uses a framework for analysis that has been developed and refined over several years through work with multiple organisations, from UN agencies to companies, NGOs and much smaller organisations.

The framework draws from several organisational analysis tools (including the McKinsey '7-S' framework<sup>36</sup>) adapted to focus on organisational ability to partner. It focuses on four key aspects of an organisation: leadership and strategy, systems and processes, skills and support, and culture, and the elements of each which will support effective partnering.








<p><b>1</b> <b>LEADERSHIP &amp; STRATEGY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearly defined vision and rationale for partnering;</li> <li>• unique value proposition of the organisation;</li> <li>• full partnering strategy, aligned with or integrated into organisational strategy;</li> <li>• commitment from board/ executive leadership;</li> <li>• sufficient budget committed; and</li> <li>• strategy and commitment fully communicated across, and accepted by the organisation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b> <b>SYSTEMS &amp; PROCESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partnering policy, principles and typology of partnership developed;</li> <li>• clearly defined internal rules and procedures across full lifecycle of partnerships;</li> <li>• systematic approach to mapping/ identifying potential partnerships;</li> <li>• cost and value assessment of potential partnerships; due diligence of partners;</li> <li>• tracking, monitoring, relationship and knowledge management system;</li> <li>• pro-partnering legal agreements; and</li> <li>• conducive HR policies/KPIs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b> <b>SKILLS &amp; SUPPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff have sufficient relationship and trust-building skills, understanding of other sectors, mindset and technical knowledge of effective partnerships;</li> <li>• staff have sufficient time allocated to fulfill their roles;</li> <li>• tools and guidelines for partnering available;</li> <li>• direct support available from experienced partnership brokers; and</li> <li>• mechanisms in place to capture and disseminate experiences of partnering (e.g. through a community of practice).</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 PARTNERING CULTURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a humility over what can be achieved alone and an inclination to reach out to work with others to achieve goals;</li> <li>• encouragement to risk trying out new approaches to achieve the mission, with an acceptance that with risk can come failure;</li> <li>• tenacity, drive and courage;</li> <li>• a commitment to enter into partnerships on the basis of equity, transparency and mutual benefit;</li> <li>• an ability to give up autonomy in decision-making and work for the benefit of the partnership as a whole; and</li> <li>• an innovative and creative approach to finding new solutions.</li> </ul>		

36. See [McKinsey 7-S Framework](#).

# Fit for Partnering sample dashboard

The example extract from a fictional Foundation's Fit for Partnering dashboard below shows how we intend to present future Fit for Partnering assessments, allowing organisations to benchmark more effectively against peers. Z Zurich and J&J's pioneer data, alongside

intelligence gathered from TPI's wider sector interviews and desk research, mean that we now have an emerging idea of where the partnering capability baseline lies across the sector. As organisations contribute to our research and develop their own approaches, this baseline will evolve.

Criterion	Current assessment	Key required actions for improvement
<b>LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY</b>		
<p><i>Summary finding: while there has been little formal codification of Foundation X's partnering approach to date, particularly regarding external partners; it has new leadership committed and supportive of effective partnering and has signified its intent to draft and publish a partnering vision and strategy in the coming 12 months. This has been well received by the staff, who are keen to contribute.</i></p>	Leadership committed to partnering.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prioritise the drafting of a partnering vision and strategy and ensure it is appropriately resourced.</li> </ul>
	Clear external communications exist relating to the Foundation's partnering approach.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• draft a 'Partnering with Us' document setting out why and how to partner with Foundation X.</li> </ul>
<b>SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES</b>		
<p><i>Summary finding: Foundation X is a sector leader in this area. Systems and processes are very efficient and clear, with clearly defined procedures across all elements of the partnering cycle. Grantee partners and staff alike are clear about requirements and payments are disbursed quickly and efficiently. The new Pegasus system allows grantee partners to provide feedback at every stage of their relationship with Foundation X. Legal agreements have been revised to better support partnering.</i></p>	Foundation has pro-partnering legal agreements.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include legal team in next scheduled partnership health check, to ensure documents keep pace with partnership evolution.</li> </ul>
	Foundation has a clear system for reviewing partnerships both in terms of value to the organisation and operational effectiveness or health of the partnership.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider publicising the learning using case studies and/or webinars for the sector.</li> </ul>
<b>STAFF COMPETENCIES AND GUIDANCE</b>		
<p><i>Summary finding: individual members of staff are excellent relationship managers but skillsets are largely based on a traditional grants management model and HR frameworks do not include partnering competency development. Members of staff are not routinely able to access partnering training and support.</i></p>	Organisational HR policies support partnering (e.g. targets, key performance indicators to incentivise staff, partnering skills as core competencies, active recruitment from other sectors).	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with the HR team to integrate partnering competencies into policies and frameworks (TPI's MUST have competencies can be used as a guide*).</li> </ul>
	Staff have sufficient relationship and trust-building skills, understanding of other sectors, mindset and technical knowledge of effective partnerships.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer access to partnering refresher courses as identified in individual development plans.</li> <li>• consider partnering mentor scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>CULTURE</b>		
<p><i>Summary finding: a significant majority of grantee partners stated that, while positive, they felt the relationship they had with Foundation X was somewhat transactional and had struggled to have open conversations about more strategic partnering approaches with the staff.</i></p>	Foundation willing to risk new approaches to achieve the mission, with an acceptance that with risk can come failure.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure the Foundation's openness to risk is included in the 'Partnering with Us' document and reinforced at partnership review meetings to encourage creative conversations with grantee partners.</li> </ul>

 Behind the sector curve, requires significant work     
  Sector leading practice; In a good position  
 In step with sector peers. Some gaps in capabilities     
  Insufficient information



Cover photographs  
from left to right:  
J&J Foundation;  
Practical Action;  
Z Zurich Foundation;  
J&J Foundation;  
René Arnold