WHAT MAKES A STRONG ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT TO
philanthropy?

WINGS
WORLDWIDE INITIATIVES
FOR GRANTMAKER SUPPORT

ABOUT WINGS

Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaker Support (WINGS)
is a network of about 100 philanthropy associations and
support organizations in 40 countries around the world whose
purpose is to strengthen, promote and provide leadership on
the development of philanthropy and social investment.

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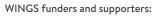
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FOREWORD

The stakes over the development of a sound and strong system to support and develop philanthropy have never been higher: the rapid growth of emerging markets has deepened social ills and inequalities while bringing new potential philanthropic actors to the field. In too many parts of the globe, restrictions have impaired the work of civil society organizations while making their existence that much more essential. The scale, severity and complexity of problems call for an increased collaboration among funders. With the global challenges and the SDGs ahead, it is becoming critical to leverage domestic resources and unlock the huge potential that lies in private resources for social good.

But growing philanthropy, giving and private social investment requires to invest in the support ecosystem, or infrastructure, that accelerates its growth and can catalyze its impact: data to build transparency and inform decisions, advocacy for an enabling environment, campaigns to grow a culture of giving, technology that links donors and recipients, advice and capacity building to make better use of existing resources, space for donors mediation and coordination, standards that build trust within society.

Yet this philanthropy support ecosystem is still unevenly developed. Where it is most developed it faces sustainability and duplication challenges, while in other parts of the world, especially in emerging market economies, there are big gaps and some crucial functions that could multiply philanthropy's impact that are not yet fulfilled. Everywhere, the infrastructure looks more like a "mushroom field" than an articulated and strongly interconnected ecosystem. This is because the infrastructure – whose work and outcomes remain widely intangible and long term – is too rarely addressed by funders as a strategic investment that can provide return, or even simply considered as a proper field that needs to be built.

At a time when philanthropy is globally growing in volumes and diversity of forms, it is important to raise the question at a strategic level and provide the tools for funders and civil society actors to develop, and sometimes reshape, the infrastructure that they need to address growing social challenges.

THIS PAPER IS INTENDING TO PROVIDE:

▶ a common language and understanding of this field and its growing complexity

▶ a picture of organizations, functions and activities that constitute the infrastructure

▶ a few key messages to guide the reflections of funders, philanthropy support leaders and other actors, in developing their infrastructure and turning it into a proper ecosytem.

THIS IS HOW WE COULD SUMMARIZE THE KEY MESSAGES OF THIS PAPER:

▶ infrastructure is crucial to develop philanthropy both quantitatively and qualitatively. It is not only serving donors but also generating new resources and leading donors towards the best use of these resources;

▶ there is no single recipe: building a philanthropy support ecosystem has to be locally driven and based on the needs of philanthropy and civil society actors in their specific context;

▶ even where it is more developed, the infrastructure is not yet articulated as a proper ecosystem and faces challenges;

▶ this calls for a new paradigm of collaboration within the field and a strategic approach of those who are supporting its development to ensure its full efficiency and sustainability.

As the global network of enablers, developers and supporters of philanthropy, giving and private social investment, WINGS is committed to continuously engage with its members and partners to improve, sometimes reinvent, the field and fulfill its unique potential in catalyzing and guiding philanthropic development across the world.

More than a publication, this paper is a step in a long-term process of reflection and action that will hopefully contribute to developing a strong and interconnected global ecosystem of support to philanthropy that draws on learnings from the past and builds on the tremendous opportunities that lie in the future.

Benjamin Bellegy
WINGS Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

THIS PAPER INTRODUCES A SET OF IDEAS DESIGNED TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE CRITICAL ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF PHILANTHROPY, GIVING AND SOCIAL INVESTMENT ACROSS THE WORLD. THE PAPER WILL BE USED TO CONSULT WITH THE FIELD OF PHILANTHROPY TO DEVELOP A RATIONALLY CONSTRUCTED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT, WHICH WE ARE CALLING A PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM.

There are three reasons why such a development is necessary. The first is that philanthropy needs to become more organized so that it may take better care of its own interests. The growth of philanthropy across the world means that there are now greater opportunities but also greater threats, evidenced by the **closing space** for civil society across the world. A well-organized global field is necessary to reduce risks from outside interference.

The second factor is that the development of philanthropy in emerging markets has exposed the imbalances in the geographical distribution of support services, with 80 per cent of expenditure on philanthropy support expended in the United States. This is even more relevant at a time when the **Anglo-American model of philanthropy is inappropriate in emerging market economies**.

The third is that the numerical growth of philanthropy has been accompanied by a concomitant growth in the complexity of institutions such that hybridity is fast becoming the norm. It follows that the services of generalist support organizations (e.g. associations of donors) need to be supplemented with a range of specialist and bespoke services.

These three factors call for an "ecosystem" approach to the support of philanthropy. This entails seeing individual organizations, actions and behaviour as part of a field that is interconnected, rather than merely the sum of discrete actions. This approach derives from the work of Ross Ashby, an early cyberneticist, who in the 1950s came up with the **Law of Requisite Variety**. This states that to deal properly with the diversity of problems the world throws at you, you need to have a repertoire of responses that is at least as nuanced as the problems you face.

At the WINGS Funders' Meeting held in Mexico City in February 2017, it was agreed that a strategic approach to develop the infrastructure was required. This paper sets out an approach to this. Starting with what infrastructure is and why it is important, it then gives insights into the present system of support and then makes suggestions about how this could be improved using the lens of an ecosystem.

01 WHAT IS PHILANTHROPY
AND GIVING INFRASTRUCTURE?

In most fields of work, debate over the need for a robust system of support that facilitates and enhances the effectiveness of the work would simply never occur. For example, city planners would never question the need for roads, bridges, tunnels, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, and telecommunications that are essential to the development of the city's economy.

However, the relevance and importance of infrastructure is not well understood in philanthropy. The 2014 WINGS report *Infrastructure in Focus: A Global Picture of Organizations Serving Philanthropy* was the first serious attempt to define infrastructure in the context of philanthropic work and to explain why it matters.

The report defined infrastructure as organizations that "provide a necessary support system for amplifying philanthropy's effectiveness". It identified three main types of organization that deliver such support:

▶ ————————
MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION:

(which subsumes those with the title "association of donors" and "association of grantmakers"): a formal organization with a membership structure and a core staff that delivers services to the members and engages the members in the governance of their affairs

▶ ————————
PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATION:

a formally organized body that has professional staff delivering services to a range of philanthropies but without requiring membership

▶ ————————
NETWORK:

a peer-to-peer organization without necessarily having a formal membership structure or a professional staff to service it, that relies heavily on mutual learning and exchange.

The follow up report, published in 2017, Infrastructure in Focus: *Infrastructure in Focus: A New Global Picture of Organizations Serving Philanthropy* widened the scope to include academic institutions that support philanthropy though teaching and research.

A more comprehensive description of the types of organizations that support philanthropy is given by Pushpa Sundar in her book, *Giving with a thousand hands*[1]. She identifies several categories of organization necessary for such a system of support.

[1] Sundar, P. (2017) Giving with a thousand hands, Oxford University Press

▶ Research organizations

▶ Motivational organizations, engaged in creating a culture of giving

▶ Advocacy organizations, for securing from government an enabling environment for philanthropy, as well as policies to enhance social sector work

▶ Clearing House of Information - organizations which collect and disseminate information relevant to philanthropic organizations

▶ Organizations to improve the credibility as well as capacity of NGOs, since that is one of the biggest constraints to giving

▶ Networks or associations of donors, including a national body as well as regional associations which would also play a convening role for peer exchanges as well as a donor education role

▶ An independent regulatory body, which would oversee not only foundations and trusts but also NGOs, on the lines of the Charities Commission of Britain: a quasi-judicial independent body to adjudicate on legal problems of the philanthropic sector, and ensure discipline and accountability to it.

Both Pushpa Sundar's list and Filiz Bikmen's diagram are helpful in different ways and show that there is not a single "right way" of supporting philanthropy, since context matters so that what exists in one place may not be needed in another.

At the same time, both approaches, which are fine as far as they go, are fundamentally incomplete. What's missing is that neither shows how organizations might cooperate with one another to produce a joined-up system of support for philanthropy. This, we conclude later in this paper, is essential if we are to develop more effective support for philanthropy.

A MORE EMPIRICALLY-BASED ILLUSTRATION OF
THE MAIN ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT
OF PHILANTHROPY IN THE ARAB REGION HAS BEEN PRODUCED
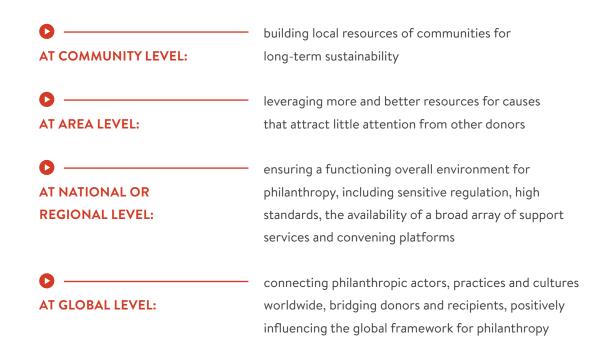BY FILIZ BIKMEN FOR THE JOHN D. GERHART CENTER.

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
(US/Global), Saneed (Arab Region),
Active Philanthropy (Europe) UBS,
Lombard Odier, Bardlays, Coutts

Social Venture Partners (Chapters),
New York Grantmakers Assoc.,
Southern California, Grantmakers
Assoc., Network of Arizona,
Community Foundations

Grantcraft, Grantmakers Across
Borders, Foundation Center, Global
Fund for Community Foundations,
Alliance Magazine ICNL

Philanthropy
Advisories and
Private Banks

Resource
Organizations
and Support
Programs

Local
Foundation
Networks/
Member
Associations

CUNY Center
on Phil. and Civil
Society, Gerhart
Center on
Phil, and Civic
Engagement,
Indiana Univ/Lily
Family School of
Philanthropy

ECO-SYSTEM OF
PHILANTHROPY
SUPPORT&SERVICE
ORGANIZATIONS
AND NETWORKS

University
Centers/
Fellowship
Programs

National
Foundation
Networks/
Member
Associations

TUSEV/Third
Sector, Foundation
of Turkey, Russian
Donors Forum,
German Assoc.
of Foundations,
Council on
Foundations (US),
Philanthropy
Roundtable (US)

Global
Foundation
Networks/
Member
Associations

Regional
Foundation
Networks/
Member
Associations

WINGS/ Worldwide Initiative
for Grantmaker, Support Global
Philanthropy Forum, Synergos
Global Philanthropy Circle

EFC/European Foundation
Center, AFF/Arab Foundations
Forum, African Grantmakers
Network, EVPA/European Venture
Philanthropy Assoc., Many state-
based US grantmaker associations.

02 WHY WE NEED A STRONG
INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PHILANTHROPY

As philanthropy grows in importance, and extends into new areas of the globe, it is important to ensure that there is an adequate support system to enable philanthropies to take advantage of opportunities and to protect against threats.

The need for a strong infrastructure is not only important in supporting existing philanthropic practices, but also in accelerating their growth and development. With the advent of the SDGs and the scale of problems to be addressed, it is becoming crucial to unlock the **huge potential of private resources for social good**. Philanthropy infrastructure is a necessary accelerator of this development: by building trust, transparency and capacity; by making sure resources are efficiently used and serve the needs of society; and by influencing regulations; and by building a culture of giving at different levels of society (corporations, families, communities, and high net worth individuals).

In a seminal article, Barry Gaberman who, as Senior Vice President of the Ford Foundation and one of the founders of WINGS, identified five key requirements of the "enabling environment for philanthropy": a legal environment that empowers rather than shackles; a tax structure that provides incentives, not penalties; an accountability system that builds public confidence in philanthropy and civil society; sufficient institutional capacity to implement effective activities; and enough resources to undertake these activities.[2]

Such a system that to support philanthropy needs to be built and strengthened at different levels:

AT COMMUNITY LEVEL: building local resources of communities for long-term sustainability

AT AREA LEVEL: leveraging more and better resources for causes that attract little attention from other donors

AT NATIONAL OR REGIONAL LEVEL: ensuring a functioning overall environment for philanthropy, including sensitive regulation, high standards, the availability of a broad array of support services and convening platforms

AT GLOBAL LEVEL: connecting philanthropic actors, practices and cultures worldwide, bridging donors and recipients, positively influencing the global framework for philanthropy

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[2] Gaberman, Barry (2004) 'Building the global infrastructure for philanthropy', Alliance Magazine, 1 April

Thus, any funder, whatever is its scope and thematic focus, whether it is an individual donor, a philanthropic foundation or a development aid agency, can aim to leverage its impact by developing philanthropy at different levels, through a strategic investment in the infrastructure.

What exactly is the value that philanthropy infrastructure brings to the field? At a **WINGS meeting held in Mexico in February 2017,** philanthropic funders identified the following benefits:

▶ **Space for mediation and exchanges**
(peer learning, affinity groups, synergies, dissemination of solutions and connections)

▶ **Increase in volume of philanthropy**
(stimulation of new philanthropies and culture of giving)

▶ **Building capacity**
(tools and knowledge, leadership development and succession planning)

▶ **Thought leadership**
(new thinking, reflection, innovation and challenge)

▶ **Enabling environment**
(collective voice and action at national, regional or global level)

▶ **Standards**
(trust and accountability)

Given these acknowledged benefits, it is incumbent upon the field to understand what parts of the world are being well-served through the presence of high-functioning support organizations and which ones are not, and to take steps to address inequities. The importance of such investments in the infrastructure for philanthropy can be illustrated by comparing two areas of the globe.

First, let us take Europe. In the period of the "cold war" in Europe, there was no support for philanthropy across borders in Europe, but the formation of the European Foundation Centre (EFC) in 1989 changed that. In the succeeding years, the EFC has transformed the face of philanthropy across the continent. **According to its members**, the EFC has increased the visibility of the sector, increased public trust, and brought legitimacy to the work of philanthropy in Europe and more widely. With over 25 years of experience and over 200 member organizations, the EFC gives its members access to a wealth of knowledge and to long-term relationships with philanthropic peers and external actors. Building on relationships and dialogue with policymakers, the EFC helps members to engage with high-level decision-makers. The EFC has fostered joint projects which tackle many of today's greatest challenges across geographic borders.

By contrast, India, which has a long tradition of philanthropy, has no overall support organization for philanthropy. A study undertaken by **Caroline Hartnell for Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace (PSJP)** shows the difficulty of

getting to grips with philanthropy when there is no central body dedicated to supporting the collective work of the field. The study has spent much time working out who is doing what in the field and whether this fits together in any meaningful way. It appears the collaboration, both within the sector of philanthropy, and with the public and private sectors is low. Although there are 21 community foundations listed on the **Community Foundation Atlas**, these are "dots on the map" and do not represent a sector because no one brings them together as a group for joint learning. While there is much philanthropic activity in India, the field finds it difficult to advance together because there is so little sharing of work that much of it remains hidden from view. The need for a better infrastructure is one of the conclusions of Pushpa Sundar 's work. This view has been confirmed by leaders from the field at a workshop WINGS convened in Mumbai in February 2018. A process led by a diverse group of Indian organizations and facilitated by WINGS is now working towards a systemic articulation of the field at national level to close the gaps that have been identified.[3]

03 IMPACT
OF THE FIELD

Many concrete cases already illustrate how investing in infrastructure can deliver high return on investment.

To take some examples, **WINGS research on community philanthropy (2014)** revealed that countries that had a dedicated infrastructure organization had seen the creation of 9 new community foundations in 3 years compared to less than one in countries where it did not exist. For instance, in 10 years the Association for Community Relations in Romania has supported the development of community foundations throughout the country, which now reach 46% of the population.

In terms of growing the volume of philanthropy, initiatives like Giving Tuesday have made a striking contribution to generating resources for civil society and in building a culture of giving: in 2017, the campaign generated 2.5 million donations for a total of 300 million USD in 150 countries.

We could cite other examples, for instance looking at advocacy work that has allowed to create incentives for giving at national level. WINGS is gathering impact cases on an ongoing basis and is encouraging the field to increasingly assess its impact. Further research will be undertaken to document the impact of philanthropy developers and supporters.

[3] Sundar, P. op.cit.

04 STRATEGIC
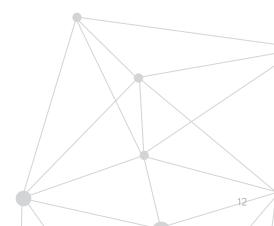## DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIELD

The funders' meeting in Mexico suggested that the work of infrastructure organizations – their activities and services – should be developed strategically. They suggested two dimensions to this. First, the development of the field should give priority to regions where the infrastructure is still emerging. Second, development should avoid duplication between organizations, enhancing synergies, and working with a results-oriented approach.

To strengthen the work would involve dealing with both the sense of vulnerability among infrastructure organizations and the uneven distribution of the field. The **WINGS 2017 Report A New Global Picture of Organizations Serving Philanthropy** shows that 72 per cent of those responding to the survey have problems of sustainability. The report also shows that resources are distributed unevenly with 80 per cent of resources being spent in North America. In comparison, Asia and MENA together only account for 5 per cent of the total. The root of the problem is that the system of infrastructure support has developed in an ad hoc and piecemeal way, so that there is little correlation between supply and need. **The consequence is that infrastructure is least available where it is most needed.**

05 GROWING
COMPLEXITY

No sooner do we turn to address the strategic question of how to develop a system of support for philanthropy than we come face to face with the problem of complexity. A quiet revolution has taken place in the sphere of philanthropy in the past few years that has a profound effect on the way that support services should be delivered. The changes affect both the demand-side and the supply-side of the relationship. On the demand-side, there has been an explosion of organizational forms and approaches taken by philanthropies. On the supply-side, a growing number of different kinds of organizations are delivering support to philanthropy.

Taking the demand-side of the philanthropy support equation first, the standard set of giving instruments found in many societies includes:

▶ **Endowed foundations:**

established instruments that have a reserve, endowment or other permanent assets that enable funds to be awarded for public benefit.

▶ **Crowdfunding:**

the EHarmony of the philanthropic world, where people can match their interests and passions with opportunities to give and invest, often regardless of the tax benefit or the personal return to the donor.

▶ **Giving circles and donor tournaments:**

where people join together for short or longer periods of time to assess options for giving and to collectively contribute to not for profit work.

▶ **Social enterprise and impact investment:**

driven by people willing to plan and execute business initiatives with shared returns for both economic and social benefit.

▶ **Place-based and community philanthropies:**

which are gaining strength across the world as structures for giving which enable people to set up sub funds and build legacies over time from modest incomes.

However, the world of philanthropy is not a stable system, and in the past few years, there has been much change. This gives rise to issues of definition of what is "in" and what is "out". A key text here is Lester Salamon's *New frontiers of philanthropy: A guide to the new tools and new actors that are reshaping global philanthropy and social investing*[4]. Salamon points out that in recent years there has been "... a massive explosion in the instruments and institutions being deployed to mobilize private resources. Where earlier such support was limited to charitable gifts, a bewildering array of new instruments and institutions has surfaced – loans, loan guarantees, private equity, barter arrangements, social stock exchanges, bonds, secondary markets, investment funds, and many more." This adds to the staple agencies of philanthropy (including foundations, giving circles, community funds, giving days and other forms). The great trend therefore is towards hybridity among philanthropic organizations. We are seeing an explosion of different types that don't fit into established categories. For example, the EFC has coined the phrase "institutional philanthropy" because of the irregular nature of the field. They point out that the cultural norms of the US (for example, family foundations, corporate foundations, and community foundations) do not apply in Europe and have adopted an empirical approach using a "spectrum of philanthropy".

[4] Salamon, L. M. (2014) New frontiers of philanthropy: A guide to the new tools and new actors that are reshaping global philanthropy and social investing. Oxford University Press, USA.

There is a second important trend at work in philanthropy that affects the current exercise. In many parts of the world, and especially in the Global South, there is a strong and understandable desire to frame issues in accord with local culture, rather than following an Anglo-American paradigm. Halima Mahomed writes:

> **"** The traditional narrative on philanthropy, globally, has by and large tended to be dominated by some core assertions or assumptions: (i) that philanthropy is about the rich giving to the poor, (ii) that this philanthropy happens primarily through formal institutions, (iii) that philanthropy is equated with money and (iv) that the poor do not really give, but only receive, and when they do, it's ad hoc and small amounts, so it is not really recognized as meaningful.
>
> The reality on the African continent is very different, but in the absence of an organized philanthropy voice, very little research on the nature of African philanthropy and the non-resonance of the terminology of "philanthropy" on the continent - in many local languages, there is no literal translation for the term philanthropy; instead giving is understood in relation to deeply ingrained cultural traditions, practices and ways of living - this global discourse was transferred and applied to how we understand philanthropy on the African continent.[5] **"**

It follows from these comments **that the set of relevant organizations and practices that comprise the demand side of philanthropy support must be defined with some care and be driven by local choices of what matters.** Supporting philanthropy driven by values of Ubuntu – a traditional solidarity system – will be very different from an ecosystem driven by Caritas (though they will have some points in common and it will be critical to work from those common points if we are to have universal coverage).

Turning now to the supply side, changes are afoot here too, as new actors begin to perform functions typically offered by grantmaker associations. For instance, some national associations of fundraisers are very active in advocating for an enabling environment for philanthropy and giving in general. In Brazil, ABCR is leading the Giving Tuesday campaign and implementing public campaigns to influence policy and public opinion about the act of giving and how it should be developed and enabled.

A further example of supply-side evolution is in the field of community philanthropy. The Global Summit of Community Philanthropy held in Johannesburg in 2016 highlighted the growth of community philanthropy, especially in regions where it had no history. In the US and other historical places for this field, community foundations are now bridging donors and communities across continents. By their very mission, community foundations and other forms of community philanthropy, are clearly organizations serving the development of philanthropy. It is striking that the Kenya Community Development Foundation is a WINGS member and will be one of the main partners for WINGSForum 2020.

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[5] Mahomed, H. (2012) 'Reframing African philanthropy', YouPhil, 3 December, available from http://www.youphil.com/en/article/05978-reframing- african-philanthropy

Finally, some funders are directly serving the development of philanthropy, and - as supporters of philanthropy infrastructure – are unquestionably part of the philanthropy development ecosystem. Recently, the Aga Khan Foundation, a strong supporter of philanthropy infrastructure worldwide, has been implementing infrastructure building programs itself and has developed its own expertise in this area. Other hybrid organizations, such as Fondation de France or King Baudouin Foundation have endowments and grantmaking programs, but are also key national infrastructure bodies, implementing research, hosting donor advised funds and playing an active advocacy role. In India, an organization like the Edelgive Foundation also wears two hats.
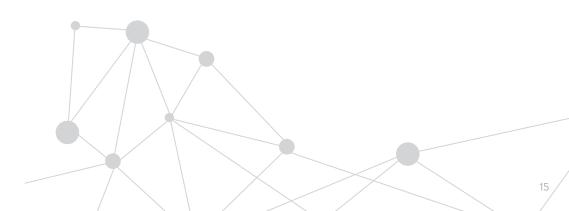
On the other hand, many associations of foundations and other WINGS members, such as Third Sector Foundation of Turkey -TUSEV or the Foundation for Civil Society in Tanzania, have grantmaking programs and support civil society organizations.

06 FIELD BASED THINKING

As such complexity grows - both on the demand side and on the supply side – it is important to think beyond the simple notion of individual organizations supporting individual foundations.

The next stage of development in the field implies thinking in a different kind of way – thinking through what the field needs and designing an ecosystem approach rather than fixing problems on a one-off basis. An ecosystems approach for supporting philanthropy would include all the relevant actors that have a bearing on the performance of the constituent parts of the system, including non-philanthropic actors.

So, what exactly is an ecosystem? This is a term borrowed from the science of the living environment. It consists of a community of organisms together with their physical environment. Ecosystems can be of different sizes and can be marine, aquatic, or terrestrial. Broad categories of terrestrial ecosystems are called biomes. In ecosystems, both matter and energy are conserved. Energy flows through the system—usually from light to heat—while matter is recycled. Ecosystems with higher biodiversity tend to be more stable with greater resistance and resilience in the face of disturbances, disruptive events. A particularly good introduction to ecosystems is given in a three-minute **TED talk by Eric Berlow**.

07 ADDED VALUE
OF AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

An ecosystem approach is required when problems are so complex that more than one organization is needed to address them. There is increasing recognition among philanthropies that they cannot address deep seated issues or tackle societal change on their own, and so increasingly recognize that they need to work together on this. There is a growing body of evidence from Ariadne[6], Foundation 3.0 and the ever-growing literature on philanthropic collaboration such as the work done by Collaborate[7]. Bush Foundation President Jen Ford Reedy gives a **TEDx talk on ecosystem philanthropy**. She highlights the potential pitfalls of quick-fix problem solving that disrupts an ecosystem versus the benefits of longer-term, creative approaches that can change an ecosystem.

Foundations for Peace provides an example of how philanthropy uses an ecosystem approach in building peace in areas of violent conflict. In such areas, there are at least three types of complexity involved.[8] First, a simple linear model of change between an intervention and a desired result is unlikely to work so that multiple actions are required at once. Second, there are many different people and organizations operating with different roles, attitudes and opinions, and some of these will be at loggerheads with one another. Third, there is no tried and tested answer that's worked before so that there is a need to use moral imagination to find new solutions.[9] To have any chance of success, peacebuilding will need to involve complex interventions to build constituencies for new ideas. Such work is beyond the scope of any single organization and requires working with multiple factors and many different competing interests.

This approach based on solving problems in the external world can equally well be applied to building the field of philanthropy itself.

08 WHAT DOES A PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT
ECOSYSTEM LOOK LIKE?

"Field-based thinking", as opposed to "organizational-based thinking", requires a paradigm of collaboration to achieve societal goals that are beyond the competence of any single organization to deliver. It follows that organizations delivering work need to frame their objectives and work programs based on the needs of the system, rather than narrow organizational goals. The work of any given organization should be based on their comparative advantage, an approach that will minimize duplication and unnecessary competition.

This will require models of organization based on sharing. This entails a holistic approach that includes following agreed upon values and principles, sharing data, reviewing common lessons learned, agreeing on common points

[6] http://www.ariadne-network.eu/wp- content/uploads/2015/03/Ariadne_2017Forecast.pdf | [7] Kippin, H. and Swinson Reid, R. (2016) A new funding ecology – A blueprint for action, London: Collaborate, Big Lottery Fund and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation | [8] Kahane, A. (2010) Power and love, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers | [9.] Lederach, J.P (2005) The moral imagination: The art and soul of peacebuilding, Oxford University Press

of advocacy, and engaging with civil society actors in an open and inclusive way. Communication strategies would stress the togetherness of the field and the desire to work together.

The outcomes towards which the development of an ecosystem should aspire have been clearly articulated through work undertaken by WINGS and **Dafne** on the 4Cs (building Capacity, Capability, Connections, Credibility). while developing an evaluation system for philanthropy. Specifically, these desired outcomes are:

▶ **1.** Increasing the volume of philanthropy

▶ **2.** Improving the sustainability of philanthropy

▶ **3.** Encouraging more strategic philanthropy

▶ **4.** Facilitating the adoption of professional practices

▶ **5.** Generating better knowledge of the scope and work of philanthropy

▶ **6.** Building skillsets needed to do effective philanthropic work

▶ **7.** Communicating effectively about the work of philanthropy

▶ **8.** Working more collaboratively with other organizations

▶ **9.** Improving the ability of philanthropy to influence policy (particularly in the service of creating an enabling environment for philanthropy)

▶ **10.** Generating public support and engagement for philanthropy

▶ **11.** Raising public awareness of the value and impact of philanthropy

▶ **12.** Encouraging greater transparency of philanthropic practices, particularly with respect to governance and financial accountability.

In delivering these desired outcomes, the types of organizations that deliver services – whether they are membership bodies, professional agencies, networks, university centres or hybrid entities – matter less than the functions required.

09 FUNCTIONS OF A
PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

Turning then to the functions that the support system for philanthropy must deliver to achieve the outcomes needed for philanthropy to thrive, an analysis of what WINGS members actually do reveals that there are five main types of functions needed:

01.

INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE:

This is the staple work of the field, undertaken by virtually every organization involved in philanthropy support. Nowadays, organizations have developed a variety of ways of sharing information, from websites, through to studies, through to blogs through to twitter. WINGS itself has invested heavily in the production of knowledge for the field and has brought together many different publications to benefit the field. There are magazines, such as Alliance and Stanford Innovation Review, that play a vital role in providing an independent forum for giving news and views about the sector.

02.

CONVENING:

A key role for all associations concerned with philanthropy is to bring the field together to share issues of common concern. This is done in several different ways, and includes annual general meetings or major convenings such at the Community Foundations of Canada conference that is held every two years. More modestly, but equally important, are the thematic convenings in which philanthropies come together to pursue specific interests (for example a group on poverty convened by the Association of Charitable Foundations in the UK, a group on migration convened by European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), or a group on science convened by the EFC. Some support organizations, such as Funders for LGBTQ Issues, International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) or Foundations for Peace, exist because more general support organizations do not have the specialist knowledge necessary to further such causes.

03.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT:

Some organizations have developed specialized technical functions that are necessary for the development of the field. Examples include the International Center for Not for Profit Law and the Foundation Center. Some functions, particularly those on strategic planning, evaluation, training are also performed by a wide range of organizations, some of which are organized on a for-profit basis.

04.

ADVOCACY:

A key role is to protect the interests of the sector and such motivation was paramount in the formation of the Council on Foundations in the US. The work entails persuading authorities to amend their policies and practices. Recently, the sector has been involved in a variety of initiatives to work on the enabling environment for philanthropy because of the increasing tendency for states to close the space available for civil society. Some support organizations advocate for change within the philanthropic sector and these develop acronyms include NCRP and PSJP.

05.

EDUCATION:

A key role is in professional education in matters connected to philanthropy: in topics such as grantmaking, programming, evaluation, and governance. This kind of work is conducted by a number of organizations, including academic institutions such as Erasmus Centre for Strategic Philanthropy, the Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society at the City University of New York (CUNY), the Johnson Center at Grand Valley State University, and will be undertaken by the Chair in African Philanthropy at Wits Business School Johannesburg.

There is growing recognition that the quality of support functions is more important than which organization delivers them. While the main driver of infrastructure growth in the 20th century lay in the principles of organizational development to deliver strong and competent organizations to deliver services, the 21st century model is based on field development that transfers strength and power to the edges of the field based on a networked approach. Organizations at the centre of networks should be nimble harnessing the power of technology to connect people together to find joint solutions rather than focusing simply on service delivery.

10 VISUAL REPRESENTATION

Putting together the outcomes for philanthropy support and the functions of infrastructure, we can show a visual representation of a systems approach as follows:

▶ ─────────────────────

INFRASTRUCTURE IS COMPOSED OF ASSOCIATIONS OF PHILANTHROPY, PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS, NETWORKS, ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PHILANTHROPY

HOW INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS IN PHILANTHROPY

FUNCTIONS OF INFRASTRUCTURE

OUTCOMES FOR PHILANTHROPY

- technical support
- information and intelligence
- convening
- advocacy
- education

SUPPORT OF PHILANTHROPY

- capacity
  - • volume of philanthropy
  - • sustainability of philanthropy
  - • strategic philanthropy
- capability
  - • professionalism
  - • knowledge of philanthropy
  - • skills
- connections
  - • communications
  - • collaboration
  - • influence
- credibility
  - • public support and engagement
  - • awareness raising
  - • transparency

Such a perspective will produce a more cost-effective philanthropy support sector and enable individual organizations to play to their strengths while collaborating with other organizations over diverse geographies.

One example of how such field building is being undertaken is the Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy (GACP). This is a multi-donor and multi-stakeholder collaborative engaged in a series of joint research and learning activities aimed at advancing the practice of community philanthropy and at influencing international development actors to better understand, support and promote community philanthropy's role in achieving more lasting development outcomes. The concept of community philanthropy has not tended to have been part of the mainstream development discourse and the GACP seeks to rectify this by demonstrating why it matters and how donors can appreciate, support and harness its potential more effectively. In the past three years, GACP has supported a summit on community philanthropy that has led to a campaign to #ShiftThePower in international development. GACP is now working on a toolkit to demonstrate how donors can do this based on pooled experience from donors of very different kinds.

11 TOWARDS A PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

The infrastructure of philanthropy will need to think about how it develops an ecosystem approach. The infrastructure supporting philanthropy already has some characteristics of an ecosystem since there are already some signs of good connections and collaborations among support organizations. In preparing for WINGS 2017 Report A New Global Picture of Organizations Serving Philanthropy, WINGS sent out a questionnaire to all members asking them to identify working partnerships with other WINGS members. This revealed that some organizations had strategies that depended on working closely with other WINGS members.

RESULTS FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN MEMBERS OF WINGS THAT FILLED OUT THE SURVEY ARE SHOWN IN THE FOLLOWING FIGURE.

Social Network Analysis reveals that the network of organizations has a density of 0.38. This is calculated by dividing the number of actual partnerships by the number of potential partnerships. The result means that the organizations in Latin America are already involved in a significant number of partnerships, and yet there is the possibility of increasing the density still further (since the scale runs from 0 to 1).

To develop this approach further will be an important role of leading organizations in the field from now on. WINGS, Dafne, the EFC, the Council on Foundations, CAF, the Africa Philanthropy Network, IVPC, the Global Fund for Community Foundations and the Foundation Center already understand that this is central to their work. WINGS will analyze its database further to draw up a global map of interconnections between philanthropy support organizations.

A discussion of the mechanisms by which cooperation between support organizations may be advanced is beyond the scope of this paper. But a robust literature on collaboration exists, which has been helpfully summarized by **Sandra Jacobs**, CEO of the Bennelong Foundation.

The implications of this paper are that an ecosystem approach will require a different kind of support structure. A successful ecosystem relies less on precise organizational forms and more on relationships – with interstitial action between organizations with porous boundaries through a culture of sharing, experimentation and joint learning. The organizational forms matter less than the power of technical reach to deliver services to support an increasingly diverse and irregular sector.

The new model of infrastructure could perhaps be based on a set of standards that the field needs and demands (as opposed to what the support organizations decide that they will provide). Such standards might be framed in the following way. Each philanthropic initiative:

> ▶ **1.** Has access to the information, intelligence and research it needs to plan and conduct its core work

> ▶ **2.** Can access one-to-one technical assistance on planning, grantmaking, law, evaluation, technology, finance and other operational matters

> ▶ **3.** Has access to peers at national level for learning, sharing

> ▶ **4.** Can take part in thematic or affinity groups relevant to its work

> ▶ **5.** Can contribute to a joint program of advocacy on issues that affect the sector

The future needs to be planned. WINGS has a crucial role in ushering in a new age of fairer and more equitable services to philanthropy that respond to tomorrow's challenges, rather than those of yesterday.

For this change to happen, the supply side - and WINGS network in first place – needs to work towards more articulation and interconnectedness, engage in collective discussions and concrete collaboration. On the demand side, more funders - not only private philanthropic actors but the broader donor community, including bi- and multilateral development and aid institutions - will have to consider this support ecosystem as a strategic investment. WINGS is committed to taking this agenda forward both on the demand and supply side.