WINGS
STRATEGIC PLAN
2018–2022
Worldwide Initiatives 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. WINGS members are supporting a total of around 100,000 philanthropic entities.
This paper sets out WINGS’ strategic priorities for 2018-2022. These priorities stem in large part from an analysis by WINGS of trends both in the world generally and in philanthropy in particular. At the same time WINGS remains fully committed to the ongoing activities that are part of its core mission, as detailed below.

The paper sets out WINGS’ strategic priorities in broad terms. It should be seen as an evolving document and will be adjusted over the five years in the light of experience and feedback.

Before embarking on a strategic planning exercise, WINGS conducted an in-depth analysis of the current context of philanthropy. Research papers were commissioned, such as the Landscape of Global Philanthropy report; a members’ survey was conducted; a strategy task team was formed; meetings were held with different actors in the field, including funders of the philanthropy support ecosystem and representatives of support organizations – WINGSForum 2017 played a particularly important role in that regard; and conversations and interviews were held with a wide array of actors within the field.

This investigative effort has highlighted the complexity and diversity of the field of philanthropy across the globe. It was essential for our understanding of the current state of the philanthropy support ecosystem and of philanthropy as a field. It has greatly informed WINGS’ strategic planning efforts, the aim being for WINGS to be as relevant as possible and to achieve the greatest impact it can in this new context.

This paper starts by setting out the key findings of this investigation – which constitutes the context within which WINGS is operating. It goes on to present WINGS’ vision – for the field of philanthropy, for the field of philanthropy support, and for WINGS itself – followed by WINGS’ mission and values. Finally, it sets out WINGS’ strategic objectives for the next five years.

**What is the philanthropy support ecosystem?**

WINGS uses the terms ‘philanthropy support ecosystem’, ‘philanthropy development ecosystem’ and ‘philanthropy infrastructure’, but we are increasingly using the first two as they convey better the complexity and diversity of the sector as well as its dynamic and proactive role as an agent of change. This ecosystem is made up of the organizations and individuals who together help to create the conditions for a favourable environment for philanthropy to achieve its potential, overcoming the challenges it faces and taking advantage of the opportunities within the field. These are the philanthropy developers, enablers and accelerators – including philanthropy networks and support organizations, those that fund them, and a whole range of advisers and experts distributed across the entire field who together build philanthropy’s capacity to sustain a responsive, resilient civil society and so to achieve sustainable development and social change.

WINGS provides an international platform for philanthropy developers to come together as a proper global philanthropy support ecosystem.
Who are the philanthropy developers, enablers and accelerators?

All those who contribute to the development of philanthropy growth, quality and diversity. The lines connecting actors are simplified for this graphic; in reality they would be more dense and interconnected and vary by locale.
The following findings are of particular importance to the work of WINGS and to its new strategic plan...

External global trends

- Globalization of politics and a struggle for ideas and for minds
- Increasing inequalities and disparities in wealth
- Rise of middle classes in countries with emerging economies
- Crisis of low levels of trust in intermediaries and in institutions
- Demand for immediacy: people want instant access to information, things to be done immediately
- Growing need to respond to emergency situations: climate and natural disasters, migrations, etc
- Acute feeling of global crisis and systems failing

Changing framework of civil society and philanthropy

- Shrinking civic space: a growing number of governments are taking steps to curtail civil society activities, either by formal restriction or by informal harassment
- Fast growth of institutional and non-institutional philanthropy in emerging markets, particularly the latter
- Increasing number of foundations everywhere, especially in Europe
- At the same time, a trend for the wealthy to give without setting up a foundation; increasing hybridity in organizational forms of philanthropy, going beyond the traditional foundation structure; and a blurring of lines between the for-profit and non-profit sectors
- Growing influence of the private sector, as seen in the growth of social enterprise, the increasing role of corporate giving, and the influence of entrepreneurs-turned-philanthropists
- Less tangible division between government, business and civil society, opening opportunities for new ways to address complex issues
- Global aspirations for inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral collaboration towards sustainable development, as shown by the SDGs framework and a growing number of collaborative initiatives (joint funds, etc)
- Increasing interest by foundations in other ways of using their assets, either in the form of impact, social or socially responsible investing, or using non-monetary assets such as expertise, reputation or convening power
- Increasing pressure for greater impact so philanthropy is more able to tackle the big problems of the world
- Increasing youth participation in philanthropy, accelerated by the start of a massive wealth transfer between baby-boomers and the next generation and in turn accelerating changes in philanthropy (influence of business approaches, greater involvement, search for impact, use of non-traditional philanthropic vehicles, effective altruism, etc)
- Individual giving greater than institutional giving almost everywhere
- New methods of giving made possible by technological advances: online giving, giving by SMS, crowdfunding, etc
- Growth of forms of solidarity for the common good, and a search for immediate returns, eg development of crowdfunding
- Disruptive technologies opening new opportunities and new challenges: blockchain and radical transparency versus data security, artificial intelligence applied to philanthropy versus emotional and personal drivers, etc

**Trends within the philanthropy support ecosystem**

- Philanthropy infrastructure growing slowly but steadily
- A major discrepancy between the Global North and South, with 80% of investment in the support ecosystem in North America alone, and insufficient development in other parts of the world. In addition, there are signs of donor fatigue in the USA and Europe, largely stemming from the piecemeal way the support ecosystem has been created and the resulting lack of coherence
- Sustainability challenges faced by a vast majority of philanthropy support organizations
- Philanthropy support ecosystems diversifying to include organizations that promote individual giving, eg donation platforms, #GivingTuesday, fundraisers’ associations. This is a response to growing middle-class giving, digital developments, and the vision of the next generation
- The private sector playing an increasingly important role in the philanthropy support ecosystem, eg banks developing donor advised funds, and consulting firms developing advisory services
- A growing trend towards more collaboration and better connections among organizations, in a field that thinks of itself increasingly as an ecosystem as opposed to a series of independent silos
- Recognition of the importance of evaluation of impact: philanthropy support organizations need to understand their impact in order to continue building the field strategically
- A trend for support organizations to move from a service model to a thought leader model, in particular among foundation associations
Our Vision
Global philanthropy encompasses all forms of allocation of private resources for the common good. Philanthropy is not defined by a single model or a single culture of giving. At its heart, it means the love of humanity. It is a full part of the broader civil society. Foundations and funds, whether they are corporate, independent, family or community-based, whether they are endowed or not, whether they are grantmaking or operating; individual donations and collective solidarity mechanisms, whether donations are in cash, in kind or in time; social investments, whether they are tailored financing, organizational support or impact management; all contribute to the diversity, liveliness and collective impact of what we call philanthropy.

Philanthropy is constantly evolving. Technological developments, the changing needs of society, dialogue between different cultures of giving, and the influence of other sectors all play a part. This permanent evolution and disruption ensures the relevance of philanthropic efforts and may be greatly enhanced by an efficient and sustainable support ecosystem.

The contribution of philanthropy is key to facing global challenges. To harness its potential, philanthropy actors should focus not only on mitigating social symptoms but also on embracing a systems-change approach for greater impact.

Philanthropists and their institutions should work in collaboration to address the broad spectrum of the most pressing social issues. They should become champions and leaders in taking risks, being brave, and respecting diversity.

Philanthropy should be self-critical in order to constantly improve its practices. It should value learning and exchange as a way to achieve this, and embrace high standards of transparency and accountability towards all stakeholders, and primarily towards the communities it supports.
Vision for the field of philanthropy support

**Philanthropy's support system should be reinforced to meet the changing context.** As philanthropy grows in importance and diversity of forms, and extends into new areas of the globe, we need to ensure that there is an adequate support system to enable it to take advantage of opportunities and to protect against threats.

**We need to adopt a view of philanthropy support that reflects the growing complexity of the field of philanthropy.** It is not only about supporting foundations with paid staff; rather, it is about responding to the changing field, as outlined above. Funders of infrastructure, fundraisers' associations, other organizations that make it their business to promote giving, teaching and research institutions, impact measurement specialists and many others will all be part of the support system.

**We should think of it as an ecosystem rather than a number of organizations working in silos.** It is an ecosystem that captures and embraces all forms of philanthropy, with multiple connections and collaborations in all directions, with strengths distributed across the entire field; one that minimizes duplication and unnecessary competition and focuses on achieving societal goals; one that is connected to other ecosystems that constitute civil society as a whole.

**The philanthropy support ecosystem globally should have a more even geographical distribution.** A better-developed infrastructure would fill the gap that now hinders the potential of domestic philanthropy in the Global South and East to play its full role in addressing growing inequalities.

**Support organizations should accelerate their transition towards a stronger leadership/advocacy model.** In view of the deterioration of regulatory environments, political challenges, and the fast-evolving needs of philanthropists, the field needs champions and thought leaders that can foresee the common future for philanthropy and defend it from external threats. This role is also about launching critical and thought-provoking discussions, asking sensitive and important questions, and offering alternatives to existing patterns where necessary. Support organizations ought to influence the field as well as recording and analysing changes. This increased thought-leadership role should not in any way undermine the importance of services.

**The development of philanthropy should be a strategic priority for funders.** This applies not just to philanthropic funders but to the broader range of development and aid actors working towards the SDGs. Supporting philanthropy development is not just a good-citizen's contribution for institutional philanthropic institutions but a strategic investment for all funders which provides a return in terms of the sustainability and impact of their work, risk mitigation and other key issues.
Who we are

Vision

WINGS as a membership organization represents the transition from top-down/expert-led models to a democratic, distributed peer-learning model that creates and shares knowledge in a horizontal manner.

Within the ecosystem it works to promote, WINGS will seek to empower its members in particular, and the field of philanthropy support in general, through better interconnections and synergies, collectively created knowledge, impact evaluation and data about the field, transparency and good governance, collaboration, and development of common practice.

In addition to connecting the field and responding strategically to its needs, WINGS will strive to usher in a new era by gaining more visibility and reach for philanthropy support organizations. It will strengthen its own voice and capacity to advocate by expanding its scope to represent all the actors involved in the promotion of philanthropy, including individual giving and social investment.

Mission

WINGS will work to catalyse, accelerate, connect and influence the field of philanthropy support in order to promote and develop philanthropy and contribute to a more effective and diverse civil society.

It will pursue this mission through activities such as: producing and disseminating knowledge and data about the field of philanthropy in order to build the capacity of philanthropy actors, new and old; nurturing an interconnected network by promoting knowledge dissemination, joint projects, and regular exchange among WINGS members; expanding and diversifying the WINGS network to reflect the contemporary ecosystem; and building alliances with other civil society networks and key actors in the field such as the academic community, development actors, the private sector and funders interested in strategically engaging with the field of philanthropy.

Within its mission, WINGS will guarantee that all philanthropy support organizations, and in particular the members of the network:

1. Have access to the information, intelligence and research they need to plan and conduct their core work, including information on trends and ways to adapt to a fast-changing environment
2. Have access to resources on planning, data, grantmaking, law, evaluation, technology, finance and other operational matters
3. Have access to peers at national, regional and international levels for learning and sharing
4. Can take part in thematic or affinity groups relevant to their work
5. Can contribute to a joint programme of advocacy on issues that affect the sector
6. Can use WINGS communications and knowledge channels to gain visibility and influence
Values

In working towards its mission, WINGS will always strive to be:

- Oriented towards systems change as opposed to institutional logics
- Defending and promoting the key role of civil society, including philanthropy, as a key element of a democratic, sustainable and healthy society
- Cross-sectoral, believing in the intersection of different sectors and actors and in the engagement of philanthropy with the broader society beyond its own circles
- Open, committed to sharing data and making the power of knowledge accessible to all
- Diverse and inclusive of all forms of philanthropic expression and all sorts of actors making a significant public contribution to the development of philanthropy. As a global network it is very important for WINGS to ensure a sound geographic diversity in programmes, governance and membership
- Accountable, transparent and self-critical, implementing high standards of governance, reporting and accountability for itself, its members and the broader field, and willing to address key issues such as power and transparency
- Acknowledging power imbalances between different actors, eg between governments and civil society/philanthropy on enabling environment issues, between philanthropy and those it supports, and within philanthropy itself, as expressed in the #ShiftThePower narrative
- Demonstrating thought leadership, identifying trends, challenging philanthropic actors, being brave and innovative when it comes to best serving civil society, social change and sustainable development

Organizational principles

In all its operations, WINGS will aim to be:

Connected and collaborative: as a membership association, WINGS represents a democratic, distributed peer learning model and a commitment to create and share knowledge horizontally

Flexible and lean: as a global network, WINGS works towards the development of those it serves. It seeks to develop on the peripheries rather than at the centre, guided by principles of leaness for itself and flexibility to adapt to a constantly changing field
Based on the above analysis, as well as an internal analysis of WINGS’ current strengths, capabilities and potential, WINGS has developed a strategic plan for 2018-2022 based on the following four priorities:

1. Making the case for philanthropy development
2. Fostering an enabling environment for philanthropy, locally and globally
3. Strengthening the philanthropy support ecosystem where it is most needed
4. Expanding and diversifying the WINGS network to reflect the contemporary ecosystem of support to philanthropy
1. Making the case for philanthropy development

The context:
The shifts in civil society and philanthropy outlined above demonstrate the potential for philanthropy to play a much greater role globally in building more resilient, sustainable and democratic societies. The challenge is to unlock this potential. This is what the philanthropy support ecosystem is all about. If this potential is to be unlocked, action needs to be taken to raise awareness of the strategic importance of the field of philanthropy development.

Specific objectives:

a. Reshape the narrative of philanthropy and philanthropy development and develop efficient communication tools for WINGS and the field. This will include engaging with the network on a rebranding exercise for WINGS
b. Strengthen the collective identity of philanthropy support organizations and the sense of participating in a sector - philanthropy development
c. Develop the organizational evaluation capacity of philanthropy support organizations, using the 4Cs framework, and document the impact of the field
d. Develop evidence-based research about the impact of philanthropy support; collect and keep track of best practices
e. Foster discussions and engage in dialogue with funders of the philanthropy support ecosystem. In addition WINGS hopes to expand and diversify the circle of those who are willing to support philanthropy development. The #LiftUpPhilanthropy campaign and WINGS’ guide for funders on Unlocking philanthropy’s potential: What funders can do to build strong philanthropy support ecosystems will be part of this effort

Outcomes:
If successful, WINGS will have contributed to raising the profile of the philanthropy support ecosystem as a key element in philanthropy’s contribution to achieving social change and sustainable development, and strengthening the fabric of civil society. New research and concrete case studies will demonstrate the impact of the field. There will be an increasing number of related articles and conversations, with the topic included on the agenda of philanthropy conferences. The planned rebranding of WINGS – its website, logo, name, communication channels, etc – will also be part of the ‘rebranding’ and new narrative for the field. All this will improve the understanding of the role played by support organizations and strengthen investment in development of philanthropy. In addition, there will be a common vision and language for the field of philanthropy development, and a stronger sense of collective identity and solidarity among philanthropy developers.
2. Fostering an enabling environment for philanthropy, locally and globally

The context:
As outlined above, threats to civic freedoms have multiplied and intensified in recent years, including significant restrictions both on philanthropy and on philanthropy support organizations, thus shrinking the space for civil society to develop.

Specific objectives:

a. Strengthen the capacity of WINGS members to address the challenges posed by the shrinking space for civil society in many parts of the world at the local, national and regional levels. Sharing information strategies, practices and lessons learned can be a powerful tool to strengthen organizational capacity

b. Contribute to a better understanding of trends and philanthropy support organizations' role in addressing current challenges

c. Contribute to raising the voice of philanthropic actors at the global level. Working in partnership with specialized organizations like CIVICUS and ICNL, among others, WINGS will help bring the perspective of the philanthropy sector to the global debate. Its ability to tap into the expertise and experience of its network, for instance through the enabling environment affinity group, will enhance the ability of WINGS to advocate for a more enabling environment – within the FATF debate, for example, or in dialogue with multilateral organizations such as the World Bank or the OECD

Outcomes:
In a few years, members of WINGS will see their technical capacity to address enabling environment issues increased. Successful approaches and key technical skills will be made accessible to the whole network. Members will be actively engaged in peer exchange on a regular basis and on common initiatives. Articulation of the philanthropy support ecosystem with other actors, in particular other branches of civil society, will be enhanced through strategic partnerships and joint activities.

Building on the expertise and diversity of its network, WINGS will have become a credible voice to make the case for philanthropic freedom at the global level, and an important player in the global arena on the issue of an enabling environment for civil society. It will have contributed to raising the role and presence of the philanthropic sector in dialogues in this area. It will thus have contributed to creating a more enabling environment for philanthropy, especially in places where it is most threatened.
3. Strengthening the philanthropy support ecosystem where it is most needed

The context:
In certain countries, where recent economic growth has created significant pockets of wealth while challenges to social justice are still quite daunting, philanthropy support organizations are either non-existent or not well connected with each other to form any sort of coherent system. As we have seen, the infrastructure gap between the Global North and South is extreme. Based on WINGS’ latest Global Picture of Organizations Serving Philanthropy report, North America accounts for 80% of expenditures on philanthropy infrastructure, while less than 4% goes to the entire Asian continent. WINGS will thus focus on guiding the development of a stronger philanthropy ecosystem in the Global South and East while ensuring the learnings and tools will benefit and involve the whole network.

Specific objectives:

a. Support emerging organizations, with special attention to regions/countries where the support system is emerging. This will imply developing concrete tools, organizational models and guidelines, organizing international peer learning events to share best practices and learnings from different parts of the world, mentoring systems and other relevant activities. The guiding approach will be based on local needs and specificities and on international sharing of successes and failures.

b. Strengthen exchanges and interconnectedness between philanthropy support organizations at national/regional level. WINGS will focus interventions in pilot regions where a potential to strengthen the broad support ecosystem is identified. Using its global neutrality and convening power, WINGS will facilitate locally led processes which will include mapping of the ecosystem potential and gaps; national/regional convenings and creation of a roadmap; sustained exchanges and connections within the field; capacity building and joint actions involving the different actors in the support ecosystem.

c. Ensure that the developing ecosystems are not a replication of what exists elsewhere; rather, they will focus on the needs of the field in each specific context. This will mean curating honest discussions with philanthropy support organizations and with funders on how the support ecosystem should evolve or be developed in order to avoid duplications and be sustainable and diverse enough to respond to the needs.

d. Follow and document the development of infrastructure in the Global South and East, paying particular attention to innovations, best practices, and new forms of support to the field, using WINGS’ research capacity and enhanced communication channels.

Outcomes:
A few years from now, WINGS will have contributed to the establishment of new philanthropy support organizations in the Global South and East and strengthened the capacity of existing organizations. This will involve both sharing knowledge and best practices from different parts of the world and locally led processes to determine what there is and what is needed. Mapping existing support organizations will be an important first step, building on WINGS’ pilot mappings in Latin America and in India, together with regional/national convenings, creation of a roadmap, exchanges and training. The emphasis throughout will be on developing infrastructure that meets local needs. This will be reflected in an increase in WINGS membership in these regions, and by the greater presence of regional actors in all international forums.
4. Expanding and diversifying the WINGS network to reflect the contemporary ecosystem of support to philanthropy

The context:
As outlined above, WINGS recognizes that the field of philanthropy is expanding and diversifying. We have noted a trend for the wealthy to give without setting up a foundation, increasing hybridity in organizational forms of philanthropy, and a blurring of lines between the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Foundations and philanthropists are increasingly using their assets in ways other than grantmaking. Individual giving, including online giving, giving by SMS and crowdfunding, is growing in many countries. Younger people are increasingly participating in philanthropy. WINGS recognizes philanthropy as encompassing all these forms of allocation of private resources for the common good. The ongoing challenge is to ensure that the philanthropy development ecosystem is itself diverse enough to support the contemporary field of philanthropy.

Specific objectives:

a. Continue to document the changing field of philanthropy, building on the Global Landscape of Philanthropy report. WINGS has a key role to play in identifying trends and helping its members and other support organizations to navigate the fast-changing environment.

b. Promote a broader, more diverse field of philanthropy, recognizing that all the different forms – corporate philanthropy, venture philanthropy, community philanthropy, individual giving, crowdfunding, impact investing, etc – have their own added value and strengths and that all are needed to address the complex needs of societies.

c. Reach out more broadly to encourage organizations supporting all the different forms of philanthropy in all parts of the globe to become part of the WINGS network, and ensure that this broadening of membership is communicated widely.

Outcomes:
The idea of philanthropy as a broad field encompassing all sorts of private giving for public good will be increasingly understood and accepted. This will involve using all communication avenues open to WINGS, following its rebranding and the launch of a new website and development of new communication tools, including translating key publications into other languages. WINGS membership will have begun to include funders of infrastructure, social businesses, philanthropy media, fundraisers’ associations, impact investing advisers, etc, reflecting this diverse landscape. The geographic diversity of the WINGS network will continue to expand, ensuring that all philanthropic cultures and forms are actively benefiting from and contributing to our global community of philanthropy developers.
This strategy is conceived as an evolving framework, which will benefit from readjustments and from the feedback of the network on a regular basis. WINGS will monitor progress with these objectives, applying the 4Cs framework to its own work, and will implement a mid-term evaluation of its strategic plan.

This strategic plan will be supplemented by a more detailed document setting out the main actions, together with the timeline and resources for their implementation, which will serve to guide the WINGS team as they implement the strategic plan.