



## *“Diaspora Giving: An Agent of Change in Asia-Pacific Communities?”*

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### 1. Diaspora Philanthropy Program of APPC

“Diaspora Giving: An Agent of Change in Asia-Pacific Communities?” seeks to uncover the relationship between diaspora giving and the development of their communities of origin, particularly through the use of strategic philanthropy and volunteerism to build and strengthen ties with one’s homeland.

APPC will embark on this program through a two-pronged approach: a regional and national research initiative on diaspora philanthropy to the Asia-Pacific, with key countries of China, India, the Philippines, Pakistan, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Indonesia; and either a regional conference or several country level discussions bringing together different players in the field of diaspora philanthropy.

The regional and national research aims to:

- Characterize diaspora philanthropy in the region, with a focus on practices leading to social development and change in migrants’ communities of origin
- Identify best practices and mechanisms of strategic philanthropy by diaspora groups and how these efforts have led to social development and change. Cases will focus on organizations or activities that demonstrate unique use of channels and facilitators for strategic philanthropy, enduring partnerships with communities of origin, social investing and volunteerism.
- Analyze the countries’ regulatory environments vis-à-vis its degree of conduciveness in encouraging diaspora giving
- Develop action recommendations to further the practice of strategic philanthropy by the diaspora

The regional conference scheduled on May 2008 will look at the potential of diaspora giving as a change agent in their communities of origin. It hopes to build on this potential by bringing together different stakeholders to identify ways to help diaspora giving become more transformative in practice. These include governments, civil society, the media, associations of diaspora communities, philanthropy support organizations and other organizations providing conduits for diaspora giving. The conference and the discussions will also examine best practices of diaspora giving, mechanisms and the

enabling environments for diaspora philanthropy in order to deepen information on the nature and extent of transformative giving by the diaspora to the Asia-Pacific region. This hopes ultimately to identify gap areas and initiatives necessary to support and sustain effective and transformative diaspora giving to the region.

## **2. Why diaspora giving?**

Transnational migration is an increasing trend with an ever-broadening impact. Alongside official reports on remittances, on which many developing countries' economies rely quite heavily, are reports of significant charitable giving by diaspora communities. However, these are noted more by anecdotal incidence than actual quantitative data.

From literature available on diaspora philanthropy, it is marked by strong personal, cultural and community ties. Traditionally, diaspora giving has been characterized by its ad hoc nature, with most donations benefiting programs related to education, local infrastructure and calamity responses. To support this growing practice of diaspora giving, a number of foundations have established mechanisms and institutions solely dedicated to transmitting the contributions of diaspora communities to programs and projects in their home communities. These intermediaries provide trustworthy and convenient conduits for donations by the diaspora while serving as sources of reliable information on legitimate local causes in need of funding.

Recent studies, however, suggest that a growing number of diaspora communities are beginning to develop a preference for a more strategic practice of philanthropy. This type of giving, also called "philanthropic social investing" is becoming an emerging driver of development in the diasporas' communities of origin. Reports from India, Pakistan and the Philippines, indicate that some diaspora groups have explored ways to fund longer term projects such as microfinance schemes, entrepreneurial ventures and business start ups.

The potential for diaspora philanthropy to have a substantial impact on the development of the Asia-Pacific region cannot be underemphasized. The top three migrant sending countries - China, India and the Philippines - are all located in Asia. The movement towards strategic philanthropy reflects a possible role for diaspora giving as instruments of social development and change in their communities of origin, as they begin to fund more long-term projects and actively seek ways to increase their participation and engage their home communities.

## **3. What we hope to achieve**

**3.1 Map existing information on diaspora philanthropy in Asia through a regional overview as well as reports on the following countries: China, India, the Philippines, Pakistan, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Indonesia.**

3.1.1 Characterize diaspora philanthropy in each country with information on the diaspora as well as amounts, beneficiaries and channels of giving.

3.1.2 Identify best practice cases of strategic philanthropy by the diaspora, in terms of channels and facilitators, continued partnerships between diaspora community and community of origin, models of strategic philanthropy and volunteerism, as well as examine how these efforts have facilitated sustainable social development and change in migrants' communities of origin

3.1.3 Examine the enabling environment for diaspora giving in each country in terms of government support, its legal and fiscal framework, and civic sector support

### **3.2 Enable organizations and individuals that have effectively engaged the diaspora for grants and have encouraged strategic philanthropy to:**

3.2.1 Share best practices

3.2.2 Discuss potentials, issues and challenges of diaspora philanthropy, particularly the regulatory environment, tracking, monitoring and accountability

3.2.3 Provide action recommendations to address issues

### **3.3 Identify key actions for different stakeholders to encourage diaspora philanthropy for sustainable social development and change**

3.3.1 Catalyze an ongoing discussion on the potential/ways that the diaspora contributes significantly to social development and change in their home communities. These discussions may lead to their development of best practice cases as resources for other organizations desiring to promote diaspora giving.

3.3.2 Convene significant players, including governments to develop a consensus on ways that migrant giving can be promoted in different societies into a sustainable and transformative practice. Action steps include local plans for implementation and the development of national networks of key players to implement and monitor these action plans

3.3.3 Build an active regional network of committed advocates, policymakers, philanthropy support groups and practitioners to exchange experiences, information and provide each other assistance while monitoring agreements developed and reached during the conference and country level discussions.

## **4. About APPC**

The Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium is a 12-year-old network of grant making philanthropic institutions and organizations that support the growth and development of philanthropy in the region. APPC is incorporated under the Companies Registry of Hong Kong, SAR China. The secretariat operates from Manila, Philippines.

APPC's Board of Directors currently consists of 17 members from Australia, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States. The Board of Directors is led by a chair and two vice chairs, with a 5-person Executive Committee providing operation direction to APPC.

Funding for APPC's programs has come from private and corporate foundations in Australia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

APPC's mission is to increase the quality and quantity of philanthropy for Asia by strengthening the institutional infrastructure and improving the operating environment for the philanthropy sector. To achieve its mission, APPC serves as a catalyst, convener and network builder.

APPC's efforts have focused primarily at the level of policy development, human resource development, and increasing public understanding of the potential role of philanthropy in addressing significant national problems. More specifically, it has worked on four areas:

- Improving the legal, regulatory and fiscal framework for philanthropy and the nonprofit sector;
- Increasing public awareness of and support for philanthropy and the nonprofit sector;
- Facilitating resource mobilization in and to Asia, and
- Contributing to the development of organizational and human resources for philanthropy.

APPC's biannual conferences are agenda-setting exercises designed to allow participating societies to give their inputs and learnings about the conference theme. As of November 2005, APPC has held three biannual conferences: ***Philanthropy in Disasters: TSUNAMI and After*** (Phuket, Thailand); ***Governance, Organizational Effectiveness and the Nonprofit Sector*** (Manila, September 2003) and ***Strengthening Philanthropy in the Asia Pacific: An Agenda for Action*** (Bali, July 2001).

These conferences have allowed APPC to deepen its relationships with key actors in philanthropic and nonprofit sectors, to better understand the issues that arise from specific societal contexts, to support local initiatives to address some of the gaps and to implement regional responses to the needs identified.

## 5. Planning Committee Members

### Committee Chair

Priya Viswanath CEO, *Charities Aid Foundation, India*

### Committee Members

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