



**New Pathways of Philanthropy -
Reinventing how we do good during bad times**
Insights from the Temasek Trust Conversation 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered our way of life through the course of 2020. To accommodate safety regulations, this year's Temasek Trust Conversation was held virtually for the first time on 3rd November. Part of a multi-year conversation series, this year's edition continued to centre around the theme of "New Pathways of Philanthropy". The event brought together speakers to discuss the innovative ways in which new pathways of philanthropy have been forged to address the multi-faceted challenges COVID-19 has brought to our society. This crisis has had the effect of unifying the community as a whole towards a common and immediate purpose driving us to emerge stronger from this crisis. Given the sheer scale and complexity of the issues we face today, the power of collaborative philanthropy has come into focus. The health, economic, and social impacts of COVID-19 will outpace every donated dollar, unless we approach doing good with flexibility and openness. The creative pathways shared by panellists of the event, forged to combat the impact of COVID-19, are insights into the various opportunities for philanthropy that are available to us.

Programme:

Foreword

Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for National Development and Minister-in-charge for Social Services Integration

Fireside Chat on Collaborative Philanthropy

- Mr Dilhan Pillay Sandrasegara, Executive Director and CEO, Temasek International Pte Ltd
- Hosted by Mr Warren Fernandez, Editor-in-Chief, The Straits Times & English/Malay/Tamil Media Group, SPH

Behind-the-scenes: Collaboration in Extraordinary Times

- Mr Tan Chong Meng, Group CEO, PSA International Pte Ltd

Panel on Creative Trends in Philanthropy

- Ms Tham Loke Kheng, CEO, Mediacorp
- Ms Marija Ralic, Google.org Lead, Google APAC
- Mr Lai Chang Wen, CEO and Co-Founder, Ninja Van Singapore
- Mr Aloysius Tan, Co-Founder, Vintage Radio SG; Co-Founder and Managing Director, RADIOactive Pte Ltd
- Hosted by Mr Martin Tan, Executive Director, The Majority Trust Ltd

Giving in Times of Crisis

Foreword

“This conversation comes at the right time. We are deep in a crisis - it’s a period of immense challenge, but also a time of opportunity.”

Mr Desmond Lee, Minister of National Development and Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration

Mr Desmond Lee, Minister of National Development and Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration, opened the conversation by sharing the immense challenges COVID-19 has brought to our shores, as well as the heart-warming ways in which individuals and community groups alike have come together to help one another. He noted that while more than \$100 million has been donated to the Community Chest, Sayang Sayang Fund and Giving.sg towards COVID-19-related causes, the giving landscape continues to be uneven and unmet needs continue to exist. For instance, two-thirds of Singapore’s social service agencies reported a decrease in cash donations and in volunteer numbers. While support for COVID-19 related causes has been strong, social service agencies struggle to fund their core programmes, which support their beneficiaries in the longer term.

- Working towards integrated support

The challenges brought about by an uneven giving landscape are expected to continue for a period of time. Social and healthcare needs are expected to grow in scale and complexity beyond COVID-19, and the need to evolve giving trends will continue to become more pressing. There is a clear need for public spending, philanthropic giving and volunteerism to work in closer coordination, so as to drive better outcomes and more extensive impact. A holistic ecosystem of support is required to effectively assist vulnerable communities and ensure stronger collective impact. This support in turn has to be integrated across three important spheres - social, health and community – wherein corporate partners’ giving and volunteerism can be weaved into the community sphere.

- Looking into new ways of giving

Mr Desmond Lee reiterated this year’s theme of reinventing how to do good during bad times, and provided recommendations for organisations to address key gaps in the current landscape.

A major gap is the tendency for donors to support pilot programmes or to give only on an ad hoc basis. Continuous support for recurrent programmes are difficult to secure, yet financial sustainability is necessary for social service agencies to maintain service delivery. It would be worthwhile to cultivate a culture of regular giving - giving small sums over a sustained period of

time. Organisations can also look beyond monetary donations and foster long-term relationships with social service agencies instead, providing a sustainable, inclusive and collaborative form of giving.

The tendency for donors to prefer funding programmes that directly support beneficiaries is another significant gap we are faced with today. This gap has become more apparent in recent times, as donors have been seen to avoid investing in the capabilities of the agencies that are delivering social services. These agencies then struggle with providing services effectively and efficiently, as they face inadequate support for capability and infrastructure development. Communities, corporates, and donors are thus encouraged to contribute to the strengthening of social service agencies, so as to improve their capacity to create more effective solutions to meet social needs on the ground. Corporates are further encouraged to collaborate with social service agencies, so as to develop more creative and innovative ways of giving. New forms of giving, such as social impact bonds and social impact investing, could better track social impact and sustain social outcomes. These new approaches would help us continue to identify the gaps that need to be filled, as well as the ideal ways in which to do so.

Fireside Chat on Collaborative Philanthropy

Mr Dilhan Pillay Sandrasegara, Executive Director and CEO of Temasek International Pte Ltd, discussed the importance of adopting approaches centred around collaborative philanthropy, in order to more effectively identify and address the varied needs of our community. Collaborative philanthropy is an active collaboration between partners to tackle a given issue, so as to design and implement solutions that are ideally scalable and sustainable. He highlighted the culture of giving clearly present in Singapore, citing a report from the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre which stated that 79% of Singaporeans had donated over \$2 billion to various charitable causes in 2018. Being a nation of philanthropists, shifting more consciously towards practising collaborative philanthropy is a natural progression, and would ensure that each contribution goes a step further to address the community's needs. This concept has proven to be particularly salient in 2020, given the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. What had started off as a healthcare crisis quickly became an economic crisis, and has now evolved to be a larger social and humanitarian crisis.

“In the context of COVID-19, no one is safe unless everyone is safe.”

Mr Dilhan Pillay Sandrasegara,
Executive Director and CEO,
Temasek International Pte Ltd

The crisis of a generation, COVID-19 has drawn attention to how interconnected our lives, communities, and worlds really are. Within Singapore alone, we are only able to truly thrive as businesses and individuals if society and its various communities thrive as well. Moreover, the interconnectedness of the world we live in today requires that our giving extends beyond our

borders. As such, it is critical now more than ever to actively adopt a collaborative approach in addressing the needs of the community within and beyond.

- **Elements of successful collaborative philanthropy**

Successful collaborations and partnerships with other organisations and institutions hinge on the existence of trust, reliability, and a sense of shared purpose. For any given problem and desired solution, one's organisation may not have all the skills and capabilities required for implementation, and this requires that existing competencies be augmented with others. Building effective partnerships is vital to doing so, and these partnerships are often grounded in a commonality of purpose. This alignment between organisations allows them to move forward in tandem and work towards a common goal. An effective and seamless collaboration is further centred around trust and reliability. Partners demonstrate their reliability and credibility when they deliver outcomes successfully and in a timely manner. Trust, on the other hand, takes time to build and is often predicated not only on what is said but also on what is done. When partners feel able to rely on the other parties involved to do their part, the desired outcomes can be smoothly achieved, and the impact effectively delivered.

Strong relationships and networks take years to build and often prove to be a multi-year investment due to the multiplier effect they bring. Having a solid network allows one to know who to trust, each potential partner's strengths and weaknesses, and how to best coordinate this to form an effective collaboration. One network will further have their own networks, and by extension their knowledge about their own partners. This is where the multiplier effect comes into play, as it would allow us to gain access to a growing range of potential partners, and thus widen the collaboration opportunities available to us. It is also crucial to note that networks change along with society's evolution over time, and maintaining strong and relevant networks and relationships requires a dynamic approach and active engagement.

As we move forward, technology will be a huge driver in all elements of society - in business, in social interactions, and even in the social sector. It is thus important to consider how technology can be leveraged as a force for social good, and as an enabler for humanity. Technological change will be a significant disruptor in the way things are done, which underscores the need for trust - trust in systems, trust in people operating the systems and trust in people devising the systems. While this change could pose significant challenges, it would also give rise to many opportunities when utilised thoughtfully and effectively.

- **Encouraging consistent giving**

Consistent giving in the form of recurrent donations are the most effective way to get a steady flow of funding that is needed by organisations to run their core community programmes for their respective beneficiaries. Generous giving is not about the specific amount, but about what each of us can afford to give. Many of us in Singapore have had the privilege of reaping various benefits from the system, and it would thus behove us to give back to society and assist those that may not have benefitted in the same ways. Giving on a regular basis within the limits of what we can afford is something that is achievable for us all. Individuals would be more encouraged to give

consistently when connected with a cause or purpose that they feel particularly strongly for. Technology is an enabler in this scenario, as it makes it much easier for us to identify and connect with such causes.

“Those of us who can give more should be prepared to give more. Both in terms of regular giving, but also in terms of giving an exceptional amount if one can afford to do so. I’m a firm believer in - to whom much is given, much is expected.”

Mr Dilhan Pillay Sandrasegara,
Executive Director and CEO,
Temasek International Pte Ltd

Consistent giving allows for much-needed predictability. With the assured knowledge that these programmes can and will continue, institutions are then able to build better capabilities to ensure that each programme has the right people involved who are trained for the needed outcomes. Encouraging and securing consistent giving is a vital way of ensuring adequate and sustainable funding for programmes that are essential to various groups in society.

A Case Study: Collaboration in Extraordinary Times

The onset of COVID-19 brought much fear and uncertainty to Singapore and neighbouring countries. Amidst this uncertainty arose a necessity to pre-empt the possibility of a worsening of the domestic epidemiological situation, particularly as this could lead to excessive strain on our healthcare system. PSA International Group CEO, Mr Tan Chong Meng, provided a first-hand account on how agencies came together and lent their expertise to convert existing infrastructure into community care facilities. These included Surbana Jurong, SingEx, Certis, PSA International, ST Engineering, the Ministry of Health, Woodlands Health Campus, Parkway Pantai, Sheares Healthcare and Resorts World Sentosa.

All stakeholders involved had to race against time and the spread of the virus, and ensure effective and smooth collaboration amidst the mounting pressure. The Singapore Expo was selected to be the location for the setting up of community care facilities, but the fast and timely execution of this proved to be an immense challenge due to the commencement of the circuit breaker measures. In spite of this, all partners coordinated effectively with each other, due in no small part to their shared sense of purpose, trust in one another, and faith in the other’s reliability. The first hall was set up as a community care facility in a mere six days, and 8,400 beds were installed at the Singapore Expo over the five weeks that followed. COVID-19 facilities were further housed in floatels, cruises and Tanjong Pagar Terminal, all in all amounting to a combined capacity of 13,000 beds.

Smooth and effective collaboration during uncertain and high pressure circumstances is onerous at best, due to the complexities and questions that render the situation difficult to navigate. Particularly in the case of a novel situation such as this one, the needs and challenges that may be encountered along the way are not always easy to anticipate beforehand. As such, flexibility,

communication, and a strong commitment to the cause at hand are all crucial elements for partners to pivot together accordingly and bridge each gap that arises.

Panel on Creative Trends in Philanthropy

COVID-19 has been the crisis of our generation, and has both revealed pre-existing gaps in our systems and created new ones. People and organisations have responded in their own creative ways, pushing themselves to give more and above all, to give smarter. A growing trend in philanthropy has been the power of the collective, otherwise known as collaborative philanthropy, where people and groups come together to work towards a common good. This goes beyond a reallocation of resources to working towards enlarging the pie for all individuals in society. COVID-19 in particular has led to various social issues arising in Singapore, and has made more tangible the concern of societal fracture. This has thus raised the question of how we can best address the needs of our people, and invest in them and their futures. Panellists shared their own stories of how their respective organisations engaged in creative means of giving, be it on a small or large scale, to respond to a range of community needs.

“We have our small part to play in this overall equation.”

Mr Martin Tan, Executive Director,
The Majority Trust Ltd

- Adopting a multi-pronged approach

Google.org is the philanthropic arm of Google that supports social impact innovators and non-profit organisations so as to ensure that they can in turn continue helping marginalised communities. With a keen awareness of the strengths they have and the assets they have to offer, Google.org employs a three-pronged approach in its philanthropic work. They work to assist marginalised communities with various needs, and during COVID-19 have focused on healthcare, economic relief, and education. They conduct all of their work through the three prongs they have to offer, namely that of funding, technology, and volunteers. While funding support is provided through grants, technology is harnessed as an enabler to enhance the solutions designed and implemented. This is particularly the case as Google.org has identified a desire on the part of the social sector to learn how to better use the technology available to them, and by extension to create new technologies that suit their specific needs. By extension, Google.org harnesses the expertise of their staff members, who volunteer to participate by filling knowledge gaps in the social sector by lending organisations their skills and time.

This approach both leverages Google.org’s best assets, and provides a holistic framework that allows Google.org to flexibly collaborate with partners as and when necessary, to meet the specific needs of organisations on the ground.

- Leveraging organisational strengths

Depending on the industry one is in, each business would have strengths that they can harness to design or contribute to a solution to a community problem. Mediacorp, for instance, plays a crucial role everyday simply by being the national media network. With unrivalled reach and visibility, Mediacorp took responsibility and ownership of their role in ensuring that everyone has access to accurate information, and was firmly committed to being a trusted source of news. Mediacorp further leveraged its ability to tell stories, so as to facilitate public education, lift spirits and foster a sense of community amidst isolation, and to raise awareness of causes that members of the public could contribute to. Being a partner of SG Enable, Mediacorp also shone a spotlight on the needs of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Singapore, as they have been disproportionately affected by the ramifications of COVID-19. Strong storytelling drives giving of various forms, as it inspires ground-up initiatives and individuals to come forward and take action where they can. Storytelling connects people and potential partners, and this collaboration drives greater impact as a result.

“I need to also underscore a point that this journey, for us, has also been one where we have received much as an organisation... The ability to live our purpose of creating content - to connect and inspire our communities - came alive.”

Ms Tham Loke Kheng, CEO, Mediacorp

Philanthropy may not be at the forefront of a business’s agenda, but times of crisis often challenge companies to consider how they might be able to give back to society if and when they are able to. The onus is then on the business to determine the best way of taking action, based on what they have to offer.

“As a business, we were doing well. It is important that we were doing well, because we need to be sustainable. Then, the question is: how do we do right and how do we do good?”

Mr Lai Chang Wen,
CEO and Co-Founder, Ninja Van Singapore

Ninja Van Singapore is one such corporate that saw the opportunity to do good at the right time, and acted on it in a swift and efficient manner. They saw that their strength lay in their nationwide network of doorstep delivery fleets, which had the potential to be very useful means of connecting people with one another during COVID-19 and the movement restrictions at the time. While they could have done some good on their own, they sought to amplify the good they had the capacity to do by collaboratively working with other partners. In so doing, they came up with the #SGPaySitForward initiative, which allowed individuals to easily send care packs to low-income households in need of assistance. By collaborating with both mainstream and social media partners, Ninja Van Singapore was able to engage the help of many individuals in Singapore, and by extension reach many more households in need of help.

- Using technology as an enabler

Philanthropy can often be further augmented via technology and what it has to offer. When harnessed thoughtfully, technology allows for much greater accessibility, both for the philanthropist and the beneficiary. Ninja Van Singapore and its #SGPaySitForward initiative, for instance, effectively harnessed technology to make giving much more accessible and tangible for individuals that wished to contribute in some way. Individuals had the option of simply going online to make a donation, with the full knowledge that this would go towards a care pack for a particular household. These individuals would further be informed when the household in question received their care pack, thereby closing the loop. This in turn proved to assist greatly with building trust with donors, and further helped the initiative gain traction.

“It’s our way of saying thank you. You’ve sacrificed, and you’ve built this nation, so this is something for you.”

Mr Aloysius Tan,
Co-Founder Vintage Radio SG; Co-Founder
and Managing Director, RADIOactive Pte Ltd

VintageRadio.SG, on the other hand, leveraged technology to allow for greater accessibility of the beneficiaries it was targeting. Via a phone application, VintageRadio.SG was founded to serve the mental wellness of seniors by providing curated music in four different languages to bring back nostalgic memories through songs, and to build a sense of community and belonging amidst isolating circumstances. In so doing, VintageRadio.SG further hoped to encourage seniors to go digital, so as to ensure they are not left behind as the country continues to move towards digitalisation. Exploring and understanding the opportunities that digital channels and technology have to offer would provide greater and smarter ways for organisations to both do right and do good.

Executive Summary

History has shown how often people from different walks of life often come together in times of need, to support each other through the various challenges that a crisis brings. The means through which we engage in philanthropy has to constantly be re-evaluated and reinvented to suit the circumstances and needs of the present. Temasek Trust Conversation 2020 engaged panellists in sharing a range of specific philanthropic actions they have undertaken to tackle the social issues the COVID-19 pandemic has brought upon our society. The ongoing crisis has brought to light the importance of novel and innovative solutions when addressing consistently evolving societal gaps. This calls for the forging of new pathways of philanthropy centred around the power of the collective, which involves effective collaboration between individual and organisational stakeholders. These partnerships, when built upon trust and the commonality of purpose, enable initiatives developed to tap into the expertise of each stakeholder to achieve

maximum efficacy and impact. With adversity comes opportunity – the opportunity to up and reinvent how to do good during bad times. The pandemic has been a driving force for us to consciously push the boundaries of doing good in our society, and to think critically on how we might continue to create new pathways of philanthropy for the better good. In the process, humanity wins.