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What's Next for Philanthropy in the 2020s
Edge Overview: **Catalyzing Leverage**

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About this Document

This document is a companion piece to the Monitor Institute by Deloitte's ***Seeing Philanthropy in a New Light*** report. It was created as part of the field-wide "What's Next for Philanthropy in the 2020s" initiative, supported by **Deloitte Tax LLP**, the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**, the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**, the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation**, and the **McConnell Foundation**. The initiative engaged more than 200 philanthropy executives, professionals, donors, board members, experts, and grantees in a dialogue about the current state of philanthropic practice and where it might be headed in the coming years. To learn more about What's Next for Philanthropy in the 2020s, visit **www.futureofphilanthropy.org**.

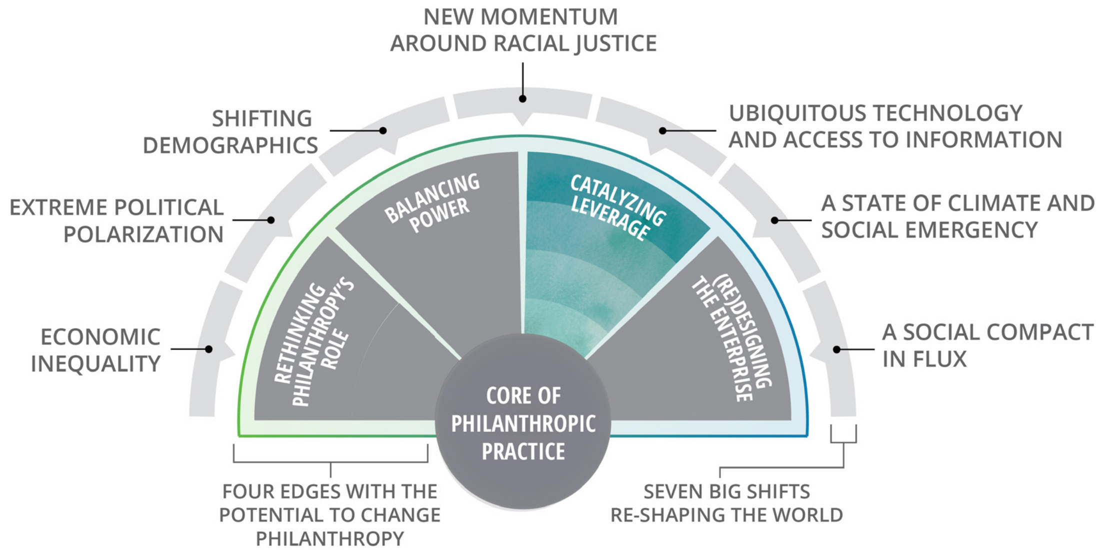
IN THE MONITOR Institute by Deloitte's ***Seeing Philanthropy in a New Light*** report, we explore how the world around philanthropy is changing, driven by a range of powerful social, economic, and political trends and forces. While foundations and donors have significant freedom to ignore many of these changes, certain "Big Shifts" around the field have proven to be inescapable.

Alongside these Big Shifts—and in many cases, in response to them—people and organizations are continuously experimenting with new ideas and strategies at the edges of the field. Most of these new approaches remain small and marginal to the mainstream core of philanthropic practice. But the "Edges" that are particularly well aligned with the Big Shifts show an outsized potential to sway and reshape the core over time. They can ride the momentum of the Big Shifts to grow in a way that will allow them to influence (or even overtake) the practices of the core over time.

Our aim is to identify promising Edges that, if scaled, could begin to challenge or change some of the core practices of the field that are no longer a good fit for today's philanthropic context. These are spaces for innovation where the Big Shifts are forcing philanthropic leaders to adjust their approaches and strategies. What these Edges will look like in the future isn't entirely clear yet, but there is an opportunity for funders, both individually and collectively, to investigate, experiment with, and invest in the potential of these promising areas of activity.

This document highlights one of these Edges: **Catalyzing Leverage**. It examines the new practices that are emerging, identifying intriguing "bright spots" emerging in the field and outlining the key implications and trade-offs that underlie the different approaches.

SHIFTS AND EDGES CHANGING THE CORE OF PHILANTHROPIC PRACTICE



Catalyzing Leverage

"FUNDERS WANT TO know how to make '1+1=3'," shared Jim Pitofsky, Managing Director of Strategic Alliances at the John Templeton Foundation. This sentiment has been echoed over and over by leaders across the field: Philanthropy is an important part of creating social impact, but funders can have an even greater impact by fostering dialogue; finding common ground for partnerships; and creating alliances with others, both inside and outside of the social sector.

Organized philanthropy's assets are typically dwarfed by other players: Individual donors give almost four times as much as institutional funders, and the combined assets of both pale in comparison to that of the government and, even more so, the private sector.

So a growing number of funders have begun to recognize that they can have a greater impact by catalyzing leverage—mobilizing the assets of other stakeholders to better match the scale and scope of the problems they're seeking to address. They're moving from a traditional focus on "assets under management" to instead think about what Tony Mestres, the former President and CEO of the Seattle Foundation, has termed "assets under influence." These funders are reorganizing their work to intentionally sway the outsized resources of other philanthropic funders, private sector companies, and government funding flows.

There are a variety of ways that funders are trying to catalyze leverage. Some of the most prominent include:

- **Unlocking and guiding capital:** Funders are testing ways to unlock dollars and influence donors to give more, give smarter, and give together.
- **Aligning action:** Funders are coordinating their activity and combining efforts in new ways.
- **Influencing and partnering with business:** As companies are articulating a greater sense of "purpose" and embedding it in their work, they are creating new openings for philanthropy to support or align efforts based on common interests.
- **Redirecting government funding flows:** Funders are trying to achieve social goals by tapping into and influencing the allocation of local, state, and federal government dollars.

Many of these practices may not seem like uncharted territory, as funders have long been pondering ways to collaborate together or with the other sectors. However, today's increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, whether at the local or national level, call for a range of viewpoints, a diverse set of skills and resources, and coordinated efforts. No one organization has the assets or reach to solve them alone. And we are beginning to see new angles and new energy emerging around many of these old approaches as funders look for ways to increase their impact and amplify their own efforts.

Edge Practice 1: Unlocking and guiding capital

One way to catalyze leverage is by simply getting more dollars to support philanthropic causes. Strong markets and rising economic inequality have resulted in vast individual fortunes, as well as large numbers of "mass-affluent" donors. Their resources have the potential to be used for philanthropic purposes, but many leaders remain concerned that a great deal of capital for social impact remains sitting on the sidelines. The share of Americans making any charitable donation has declined from 65% in 2008 to 56% in 2014, and experts predict additional downward pressure on philanthropic giving, as changes in US tax laws will likely result in fewer people itemizing their deductions over time.

UNLOCKING MORE CAPITAL

To promote more giving, a growing number of efforts are focused on trying to unlock philanthropic capital by encouraging new giving from donors both large and small.

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At one end of the spectrum, the Giving Pledge calls upon many of the world's wealthiest individuals to make a public commitment to increase their charitable contributions. Starting with 40 donors in 2010, the Giving Pledge is expected to grow to include more than 200 people committing upward of $600B by 2022.[3] Other efforts focus on givers of more modest means. In 2009, the Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) started North Texas Giving Day, an online giving event aimed at enlarging the spirit of local giving. This initiative has consistently grown each year since, from raising $4 million from 6,500 donors in 2009 to almost $80 million from more than 100,000 donors over two events in 2020.[4] These types of efforts aim to unlock greater charitable contributions to a wide range of causes, building community capacity and strength.

GUIDING NEW PHILANTHROPIC CAPITAL

For donors looking for more direction and coordination, recent years have seen significant growth in the number of intermediaries that are playing an important role in unlocking philanthropic dollars and guiding capital. Groups such as Blue Meridian Partners, New Profit, and Co-Impact provide value to donors and to the field by pulling resources off the sidelines, aggregating funds for greater impact, and targeting areas in need of greater investment. Co-Impact, for example, aggregates capital from individual donors, institutional foundations, and corporate funders and puts their dollars toward systems change efforts in international development settings. Olivia Leland, Founder and CEO of Co-Impact, describes the gap in the social sector that intermediaries can fill. She says, "There are few effective mechanisms to match leaders looking to solve social issues at scale with the philanthropists interested in providing the right size and kinds of capital, and the partners needed to succeed. Consequently, these two types of powerful assets remain relatively disconnected, causing both to fall short of their full potential for impact."[5] Successful intermediaries help to create a flywheel that aggregates donor capital, guides it to impactful efforts, and, over time, can create a stronger social impact funding ecosystem.

Another interesting intermediary that is bridging the gap between individual and institutional funders is Gates Philanthropy Partners, a "sidecar" fund that lets donors give seamlessly to Gates Foundation grantees and initiatives. The program has grown from 138 to 5,120 donors between 2017 and 2020 and received more than $100M in donations in 2020 alone.[6] While managing these donations is certainly more work, it represents an interesting model for how institutional funders can better connect with individual donors and direct more resources to the important work of their grantees.

Additionally, giving circles—groups of people who pool individual donations and then work together to choose the recipients of their collective philanthropy—have seen explosive growth over the past two decades. There are now more than 2,000 giving circles in the United States, involving more than 150,000 individuals, and the first infrastructure group for giving circles, Philanthropy Together, was formed in 2020. These groups allow a diverse range of participants to connect, give, and learn about grantmaking and community issues.[7]

NEW KINDS OF CAPITAL FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

Beyond increasing charitable contributions, funders are also unlocking different kinds of capital for social change. Impact investing has grown from a nascent market to a more than $715B industry over the past decade as funders look to align their investments with their values and vision for impact.[8] The Global Impact Investing Network has been instrumental in promoting this growth and has helped elevate the importance of creating measurable social and environmental benefits alongside financial returns. The development of the impact investing space has also fueled new kinds of structures, from social impact bonds to B corporations, that are bringing new resources off the sideline. And other forms of giving, like crowdfunding for individuals, socially responsible consumer purchases, and political contributions are also altering the landscape of giving and creating new ways to unlock and guide capital toward social impact.

IMPLICATIONS AND TRADE-OFFS

Persistent wealth and economic inequality continues to create both increased need in communities and a growing number of people with large fortunes. Around the world, this is prompting larger conversations about society and wealth distribution and whether wealthy individuals should be *persuaded* to give more or *compelled*. This discussion manifests in different ways—in public debates about taxation and in philanthropic conversations about charitable policy and foundation payout rates. Some funders and experts, for example, are advocating for policies like the "Initiative to Accelerate Charitable Giving" that mandate or incentivize greater levels of giving.

But others are experimenting with more voluntary efforts to unlocking capital. By doing so, funders can help move resources off the sidelines and into important efforts that can benefit people and the planet. And as more donors enter philanthropy for the first time, intermediary and advisory organizations can help guide that capital to increase impact. Yet, some still wonder whether simply producing more philanthropy, on its own, is enough. As Kim Syman, a Managing Partner at New Profit, has asked, "What's the good of unlocking new dollars if they are just following existing dollars and perpetuating a broken system?" She suggests that funders take a step back and ask whether philanthropic dollars are fixing the root causes of society's challenges or just masking them with the veneer of benevolence.

Edge Practice 2: Aligning action

Catalyzing leverage goes beyond just dollars. Funders are collaborating in different ways to better leverage their relationships and resources to share knowledge, influence others, and bridge the divides of increasing polarization. While funder collaborations aren't new, many practitioners noted to us that after years of growth, philanthropic collaborations may finally be hitting their stride. As funders work on complex, interconnected issues across geographies, there has been more interest and effort to connect with others and make shared progress.

NETWORKS FOR LEARNING AND ACTION

One funder collaborative that helps to wrestle with complex issues across geographies is the Community Foundation Opportunity Network (CFON), a national leadership and action network of community foundations committed to increasing social and economic mobility. Many funders were working independently on issues related to education and economic opportunity. But ideas and approaches from one community weren't always being shared with others so, in 2016, a group of community foundations first came together to form the Network that adapted the strategic framework of the U.S. Partnership on Mobility for Poverty and the research of Raj Chetty to dramatically increase social and economic mobility.

CFON is designed to empower foundations and their partners on the ground to learn faster, develop new approaches, rapidly prototype those ideas, attract significant philanthropic investments, and scale innovations and strategies that produce results. To help increase impact, CFON facilitates "strategy action labs" where four to six foundations come together to learn and share experiences to make more concentrated progress on a given issues area identified within the strategic framework of the U.S. Partnership.

Most recently, the Community Foundation Opportunity Network has organized and launched the Network for Equity + Opportunity Nationwide (NEON), an aligned action network of leading community foundations committed to the goal of dismantling structural and systemic racism and achieving equity in social and economic mobility in their communities. These foundations have agreed on common metrics and specific strategies that they will address collectively. Based on the value of collective impact, NEON seeks to leverage national foundation and donor funding to scale evidence-based approaches to achieve this goal.

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These kinds of collaboratives have been valuable and enduring because they gather funders, promote the cross-pollination of ideas and tools, offer a space to coordinate action, and even serve as an invitation to others to join in important work. As challenges become more complex—across issues and geographies—collaborations of all sorts are poised to help funders make greater impact than they could alone.

NETWORKS OF NETWORKS (OF FOUNDATIONS, DONORS, AND COMMUNITY GROUPS)

Funder networks are also increasing in their scope and scale, working to bring together different actors all committed to a common goal. The Solidaire Network, a network of 250 wealthy, social justice–minded donors, helps to support grassroots movement-building organizations and emergency funds. Individual donors are the central core of Solitaire's network. Executive Director Rajasvini Bhansali explains Solidaire's efforts, stating, "What's unique about our donors is that they act as 'donor organizers'—working quickly to mobilize others to move critical resources to people and organizations on the front lines—and, in the process, transforming their relationship to power and wealth."[9] These donors don't just sign on to write a check. They also commit to grow resources and relationships in service of the network's goal of supporting long-term social movements.

Solidaire's network of donor organizers is only part of the equation. The fund's members are constantly scouting for and funding organizations, and that information can be shared rapidly. For example, many of its members wanted to make donations to initiatives supporting racial justice in the weeks after the killing of George Floyd. Solidaire initially drafted a spreadsheet with the contact information of organizations in the "Black liberation ecosystem" that its members had previously supported. But this spreadsheet was circulated rapidly because of the trust and credibility of the network. So Solidaire established the Black Liberation Pooled Fund, which amassed $800,000 in just a few months and later received multimillion-dollar commitments from large institutional foundations.[10] Emergent Fund, now its own social justice fund, brings together grassroots movement supporters and institutional funders to fund rapid-response efforts for BIPOC movement leaders. This network of networks (donor organizations, on-the-ground partners, institutional funders, and even other donor networks) represents an expansion of the traditional institutional funding collaborative.

COLLABORATING ACROSS LINES OF DIFFERENCE

While many collaborations focus on bringing together like-minded individuals and organizations, other funders are looking to align action in ways that start to bridge important social divides. To that end, many who hold opposing political ideologies are actively exploring partnerships around a shared set of interests. For example, the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, a "transpartisan" national security think tank advocating for US military restraint internationally, was established in 2019 with support from funders across the political aisle, particularly Charles Koch and George Soros. Despite deep political divides in the foreign policy arena, the founders of the Institute believed that there was political alignment on the issue of military interventions and knew that they needed to engage funders across the political aisle to establish credibility. Trita Parsi, Cofounder and Executive Vice President of the Quincy Institute, shared, "It was clear to us from the very outset that this would need to have the support of both the left and right, that this is not a perspective that only belongs to one specific political angle."[11] Other efforts to bridge across difference are emerging as well, as a number of funders recognize the growing challenges of political polarization and are looking for ways to find common ground.

IMPLICATIONS AND TRADE-OFFS

When done well, philanthropic networks allow funders to identify and engage more of the stakeholders that are essential to addressing an issue, to build shared understanding of complex problems, to mobilize resources that match the scale of the challenges, to work together to test a range of possible solutions, and to create feedback loops and systems for sharing that can facilitate collective learning and action.

This type of collaboration isn’t new, but networks today can be bigger and move faster, aided by advances in technology. And as philanthropic networks grow in size and scope, there is an opportunity for funders to align action in new ways and bring more resources, attention, and creativity to address pressing social issues. They can help established funders access new and diverse perspectives and leverage their knowledge and experience to guide the resources of their peers while allowing newer entrants to move into and learn about new spaces much more quickly and easily. Yet many funders struggle to fit collaboration into their already busy “day jobs.” Working collaboratively means giving up individual control; overcoming logistical barriers to working together; being patient with time-consuming group processes; and figuring out ways to manage conflicting priorities, timetables, cultures, and goals. Moreover, funders don’t “have” to collaborate. Because the field is voluntary and independent by nature, there’s no pressure that requires any one funder to respond to another, to learn, or to change course. As a result, what gets called collaboration in philanthropy can often just be the “Venn diagram” space where the interests of funders happen to overlap. Critics argue that the collaborative process doesn’t necessarily involve meaningful compromise, learning, or long-term behavior change by any of the stakeholders involved.Some have also questioned whether collaborative funds allow philanthropies to offload doing the internal work required to more effectively work with grantees on challenging issues. In the racial equity space, for example, several nonprofits noted how funders are able to support a pooled fund making grants to BIPOC leaders and movements without having to do more significant work on their own internal processes and practices.

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Edge Practice 3: Influencing and partnering with business

In recent years, the private sector has begun discussing social and environmental "purpose" less as a feel-good aspiration and more as a strategic imperative. As BlackRock CEO Larry Fink notes, "Without a sense of purpose, no company, either public or private, can achieve its full potential." And corporations are increasingly talking the talk of social impact. In a 2019 survey of business CEOs, respondents ranked societal impact (related to diversity, income inequality, and environment) as the top factor they used to measure success of their company's annual performance.[13]

While philanthropic funders have real questions about how much of this talk will turn into action, it is clear that companies are facing growing pressure from employees, consumers, investors, and regulators around questions of purpose and social impact. And these growing pressures are creating new opportunities for mutual benefit between funders and businesses.

PARTNERING WITH COMPANIES

Funders and businesses haven't historically been the closest of allies. As one foundation leader told us, "Companies don't really want anything that foundations have to offer." Business leaders know they can't access philanthropic financial resources, and their corporate social responsibility work typically centers on nonprofits, not foundations. Meanwhile, many funders philosophically see companies as part of the problem—not part of the solution. They note that even "high-road" companies operate in broken systems and that a funder's limited resources are categorically better spent changing these systems than partnering with companies to better operate within them.

As companies are growing more open to conversation about their purpose and impact though, some funders are increasingly approaching relationships with companies not by telling them what to do, but by proactively looking for places where interests overlap.

One area that seems particularly fruitful is around workforce issues, where funders are looking to create opportunities for workers facing structural barriers to employment while employers are looking for new sources of talent and thinking through ways to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within their organizations. In addition to funding training programs that increase the "supply" of trained workers, The James Irvine Foundation is engaging directly with companies to increase the "demand" for workers as well. For example, Irvine partnered with the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF) to understand hiring and training challenges facing Hollywood studios and convene industry executives on opportunities for greater coordination; this resulted in the launch of the EIF Careers Program, a platform for aspiring workers from underrepresented backgrounds to find entry-level employment in the Los Angeles television and film industry and receive ongoing support as they advance in the industry.[14] Beyond funding training programs, Irvine and EIF took a novel approach by partnering with employers who wanted to solve a systemic industry challenge around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

INFLUENCING INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Funders can also work with the private sector to change industry standards that influence the behavior of a much larger number of businesses and companies. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation, for example, have invested heavily in developing standards, ratings, and certifications programs in the global seafood industry. Recognizing growing consumer interest in sustainable and just business practices, these programs have pushed business to adopt practices that promote ocean conservation, disincentivize the capture of endangered fish, help buyers identify compliant fisheries and merchants, and establish human rights expectations in fisheries across the globe. Owing in part to these efforts, standards programs focused on sustainability now cover 47% of the world's seafood production.[15]

IMPLICATIONS AND TRADE-OFFS

The allure for funders of engaging with businesses is simple: creating sustainable change at scale. Because of the enormous size of businesses' workforces, direct sales, supply chains, and procurement, seemingly small changes—like fast food giants shifting their supplier requirements or grocers promoting organic produce—can have massive, cascading impacts on social and environmental goals. And if shifts in these corporate practices are reinforced by market incentives, they don't necessarily require continued philanthropic subsidy over time.

But getting past historical barriers to collaboration can be much more complicated for funders and businesses. Many foundations and their staff have to work through deeply ingrained attitudes about the private sector and are mistrustful of corporations and their commitment to achieving social and environmental goals (rather than the public relations benefits that accompany working toward them).

Funders also need to manage concerns about the opportunity costs associated with working with employers. Most foundations would need to invest both in building internal capacity to work with for-profit companies (hiring people who are more familiar with businesses and their needs) and in creating the space for convening and partnering with businesses (which often don't have significant budgets available for exploring new potential social impact opportunities). Critics argue that funders effectively end up "subsidizing" businesses by investing heavily in areas where they feel companies should be taking the lead.

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Edge Practice 4: Redirecting government funding flows

The idea of funders partnering with government is as old as institutional philanthropy. Everyone knows the story of Andrew Carnegie's public libraries, where he essentially went to municipalities across the country, offering to build a library for their residents if the town would cover the ongoing costs of maintaining the libraries. And this notion of working together with government—of philanthropy serving as the "R&D wing" of the government—has remained pervasive through much of philanthropy's history. Given that, for most places and issues, government funding to social causes dwarfs that of private funders, government was naturally seen as a key lever for impact.

But in the 1960s, policymakers began to grow concerned about philanthropy unduly influencing government. The Tax Reform Act of 1969 limited political activities by foundations and had a chilling effect on the relationship between funders and the government for decades.

In recent years, however, funders have begun to lean back into policy and advocacy—with a clear understanding of both the legal limitations and the possibilities—because the sheer scale of resources and opportunities for impact are so high.

ENGAGING IN ADVOCACY TO UNLOCK RESOURCES

In Los Angeles, a consortium of 30 philanthropic funders—including the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, California Community Foundation, United Way of Greater Los Angeles, The California Endowment, Weingart Foundation, and many others—collaborated in an effort to influence government policies around homelessness and supportive housing. The funders supported nonprofits focused on homelessness, engaged housing developers, and built political support by raising public awareness through media campaigns and education about permanent solutions to homelessness.

This long-term investment by funders in organizations focused on permanent housing led to instrumental change in Los Angeles. Nonprofit organizations passed Proposition HHH in 2016 and Measure H in 2017, which called for building upwards of 10,000 permanent supportive housing and raising $3.5B in public sector revenue over ten years, respectively—in addition to other policy wins.[16]

BUILDING GOVERNMENT CAPACITY TO PROVIDE NEW SERVICES

In other cases, foundations are actually working on the other side of the coin, partnering to build the capacity of government to needed public services. Some funders are recognizing that without investing in the capacity of government, typically at the state and local levels, important social needs can slip through the cracks.

For example, the Raikes Foundation worked with the State of Washington to stand up its Office for Homeless Youth (OHY). The Foundation worked closely with youth activists to understand that youth homelessness was unique and needed dedicated representation and expertise in the state's government. To make this vision a reality, the Foundation funded research to understand the scale and scope of youth homelessness in the region, convenings to bring together stakeholders, pilots to test approaches, evaluations, and even short-term staffing for the newly-created OHY. The Foundation was clear from the start that it wouldn't fund long-term service delivery—seeing that as the role of the State—but that it would be a long-term partner on the issue and work in a coordinated way to support young homeless people in the state.

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In addition to supporting the OHY, the Foundation continues to fund youth activists, who help to voice their lived experience on issues of housing and homelessness and hold the Office accountable. While many funders would find it tense to work with government agencies and activists at the same time, the Raikes Foundation finds that each group (state, youth activists, and philanthropy) each have a common goal and complementary roles to play in shaping, influencing, and implementing important priorities.

IMPLICATIONS AND TRADE-OFFS

Working with government is a clear way to unlock more resources for important social issues. Doing so sometimes requires engaging in the political process in appropriate ways to influence government priorities and funding flows. Funders may also need to invest in government capacity to implement important changes. When it works, there is a complementarity between the role of government and the role of philanthropy that creates greater impact on a range of public and social issues.

But there are also tradeoffs and unintended consequences of these kinds of relationships between philanthropy and government. Some feel philanthropy may be taking too much of the lead. They see philanthropy providing services that governments ought to and are concerned that private funders are too powerful, as they can unduly influence major government processes. Others see the government as too powerful in terms of what social sector organizations get funded and to what extent. Howard Husock, Senior Executive Fellow at The Philanthropy Roundtable, notes that when government and philanthropy work together, philanthropy has become the "junior partner" in the relationship, as funders contort their giving to align to government priorities and fund the gaps that government grants to nonprofits don't cover. He says, "Philanthropy is best when it reflects the normative views of donors, rather than imposing those views through government action."

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