
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOCIAL GOOD

RETHINKING PPPs

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Acknowledgments

At the Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society (CAPS), we believe in maximizing private resources for doing good. The fast-paced economic growth across Asia has not benefitted all equally. Across the region, social needs are not being fully met and we are facing crises of great complexity and magnitude from the fallout of Covid-19 to climate change. Many governments recognize that they cannot address these on their own.

Governments and the private sector are coming together in various ways to address these challenges. We call these public-private partnerships for social good, and they are on the rise in Asia. This study is a comparative and action-based analysis of what these partnerships look like, and what makes them successful. Through a probe of the various models and mechanisms of notable PPPs for social good in Asia, we distill the strategies that can be employed to effect greater social and environmental change.

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We are sincerely grateful to the 50 individuals (listed in Appendix II) who agreed to be interviewed and for sharing their valuable insights, perspectives and stories. Their voices were pivotal in understanding the 20 unique examples of PPPs for social good, from 11 economies, showcased in this report. They include:

Bangladesh: Community-Based Urban Solid Waste Management Program

Cambodia: Better Factories Cambodia

China: Alibaba Rural Taobao Program; Lao Niu Inner Mongolia Shengle International Ecological Demonstration Zone; Tencent Education's online learning platform

India: Arghyam; Educate Girls Development Impact Bond; EkStep Foundation; Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation

Indonesia: Restorasi Ekosistem Riau

Japan: Social Impact Bonds

Malaysia: Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme

Pakistan: Adopt-A-School Program

Philippines: Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation; Zuellig Family Foundation's Health Leadership and Governance Program

Taiwan¹: Digital Accountability Project

Thailand: Bangkok canal infrastructure development projects; CONNEXT ED Foundation; Happy & Healthy Bike Lane; Pracharath Rak Samakkee

¹ "Taiwan" refers to Taiwan, China.

Executive summary

Asia is facing a formidable decade ahead. From the fallout of Covid-19 to climate change, governments are tasked with meeting a multitude of needs. They are recognizing that they cannot do it alone. The United Nations and leading international institutions have acknowledged and emphasized the value of partnerships in sustainable development—of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 17 solely focuses on partnerships.¹

Governments and the private sector are coming together in various ways to address these challenges. We call these **public-private partnerships (PPPs) for social good**, and they are on the rise in Asia. Around 80% of top Asian business leaders in our network said their company was already engaging in PPPs for social good, and 88% believe they will become even more common in the next five years.ⁱⁱ For good reason, too. When executed well, PPPs for social good can be win-win-win scenarios for government, companies and society.

To find out more, we conducted 50 in-depth interviews with people engaged in public-private partnerships for social good, including business leaders, partnership managers and policymakers. Our insights are based on these interviews, secondary sources on these partnerships, and a comprehensive literature review on public-private partnerships. We have analyzed 20 PPPs for social good from 11 Asian economies, spanning a broad range of sectors including education, water, economic development, disaster relief and more.

In the **Introduction, we discuss why PPPs for social good are rising**, and what they look like. PPPs for social good are rising across Asia for five main reasons. One, a rising recognition by governments that they alone cannot meet all needs. Two, greater confidence by the private sector in contributing to social service delivery. Three, a direct or indirect ask from government. Four, increased motivation by business leaders and

PPPs for social good are a win-win-win



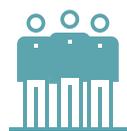
GOVERNMENT

- Improved reach and quality of services
- Enhanced state capacity
- Access to private sector expertise and technology



COMPANIES

- Enhanced social capital with government
- Enhanced social capital with communities
- Opportunity to innovate
- Expanded customer base



COMMUNITY

- Greater access to social services
- Improved development outcomes
- Enhanced local capacity
- Contextual solutions

ⁱⁱ Based on CAPS surveys of ultra-high-net-worth business leaders from 10 Asian economies in 2019 and 2020.

philanthropists to do good. And finally, the uniquely Asian importance of *guanxi*.

As these partnerships proliferate across the region, they are taking different forms and approaches. At their core, they are collaborative and unlock the synergies of the public and private sectors, with the social sector sometimes involved as a third pillar. Since these partnerships form to address an unsolved issue, they often don't follow a pre-existing blueprint and require innovation and learning along the way. PPPs for social good are also fluid and contextual. Their design and implementation are largely molded by local context. They also have varying time horizons. Some are one-off pilot programs testing innovative solutions before they can be scaled. Others are long-term, and yet others are open-ended with no clear exit plan for partners.

In some PPPs, companies partnered directly with government or leveraged their corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm. In others, the founder's personal or family foundation represented the private sector. Some PPPs are underpinned by formal agreements with government, others are informal partnerships. Some PPPs use a separate implementing organization while others work with existing social sector partners to implement their vision.

In **Part 1, we present strategies that create successful and impactful PPPs** for social good. The first of these is building trust. Trust reduces uncertainty and creates space for an efficient and effective partnership. Relationships are key in building this trust. Second, aligning incentives towards a shared goal. When each partner can see a clear reason for and benefit of their participation, the partnership is more likely to be sustainable. Third, having a clear, simple vision. A clear vision can be a PPP's north star, guiding the project and helping sharpen focus on areas with the greatest impact.

The fourth strategy for success is ensuring transparency and accountability. This is key to ascertaining that PPPs for social good are serving their public interest objectives and retaining the trust of their stakeholders. We see three channels through which Asian PPPs are fulfilling this mandate: by creating a board of governance, establishing a separate implementing organization to manage partners, and measuring impact and reporting.

Fifth, having champions. Passionate and committed individuals can catalyze a PPP, open doors and bring other

partners on board. Champions can exist at multiple levels of a project and help propel it forward. And, finally, the sixth strategy is being nimble. Nimbleness is not just an attitude or openness to change. Nimbleness means being a learning organization: one that incorporates continuous learning into its processes and strategies. A nimble PPP can respond more quickly to headwinds and tailwinds.

These strategies enable PPPs for social good to achieve greater impact. But to ensure this impact is long-lasting, we look at **financial and impact sustainability in Part 2**, followed by a **call to keep an eye on risks in Part 3**.

A successful PPP for social good benefits government, companies and communities. For government, these partnerships can be an opportunity to innovate and create system change while leveraging private capital and expertise. The private sector gets to play a role in building thriving communities and use its expertise and resources to resolve a social or environmental challenge. Together, the public and private sectors can achieve impact at greater speed and scale. For the community, convergence between these two sectors means improved outcomes in health, education, environmental preservation, livelihoods and more.

We find that working collaboratively across sectors helps play to the strengths of each. Combining the comparative advantages of the public and private sectors creates a sum greater than its parts. It is our hope that this study will provide greater understanding of this dynamic space, and guide companies and philanthropists in their collaborative approaches to delivering social good across the region.

Introduction

Synergies for social good

The term public-private partnership (PPP) was coined in the 1970s and has traditionally been used to describe large infrastructure projects, where a private company, or a consortium of companies, would build a port, a road, a bridge or an airport.² Over time, this term has expanded to include a wider range of activities and projects where the private sector is working with government.³ Increasingly, it is being used to explain and often justify private-sector financial support for government provision of public and social services.⁴ Across Asia, we have observed a rise in the call for such partnerships as a means to pay for a host of social sector activities. In fact, 80% of top Asian business leaders in our network said their company was already engaging in “public-private partnerships for social good.”ⁱⁱⁱ 88% believe these PPPs for social good will

become even more common in the next five years.^{iv}

What is a public-private partnership for social good? While the specifics vary, PPPs for social good are created when the private sector and government agree to work together to address a social or environmental challenge in their country. The contours of the partnership differ widely but the fundamental equation of working together towards a social outcome remains the same.^v What incentivizes a company to participate when the financial return of traditional PPPs does not exist? Are there strategies that play to the strengths of each partner and amplify their contributions? Which governance mechanisms best contribute to sustainability and impact? What happens to a PPP when a government changes hands? How do private partners in a PPP for social good engineer a successful exit?

To answer these questions and get a clearer picture of the particularly Asian tendency for the private sector to work collegially with government, we decided to take an in-depth look at 20 PPPs for social good from 11 Asian economies. We believed that by understanding the ingredients that make up a successful partnership for social good, we could identify trends, see patterns of what to do and what not to do to create an impactful partnership. And we weren't wrong. Our research shows that while each PPP for social good is a unique and complex endeavor, those that succeed share certain characteristics and strategies. This report shares our findings on what these are.

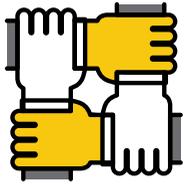
As PPPs for social good become more mainstream, we hope that our study demonstrates effective, evidence-based strategies for companies and philanthropists to work in tandem with governments to solve Asia's challenges.



ⁱⁱⁱ Based on a CAPS survey of ultra-high-net-worth business leaders from 7 Asian economies in December 2019.

^{iv} Based on a CAPS survey of ultra-high-net-worth business leaders from 10 Asian economies in December 2020.

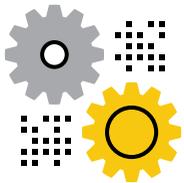
^v When used alone, the term “social” throughout this report includes both social and environmental issues.



20 Public-private partnerships for social good



11 Economies



9 Sectors

WHY SPOTLIGHT PPPS FOR SOCIAL GOOD?

Asia is no stranger to collaborations between sectors. From India to Japan, a tapestry of social welfare initiatives has long existed between businesses and governments.^{vi,5} A confluence of trends has driven the proliferation of PPPs for social good in Asia. These are:

1. A rising recognition that government alone cannot meet all needs. No one sector can. While Asia has experienced robust economic growth in recent decades, it continues to face a multitude of challenges. Asia still hosts half of the world's poor.⁶ It is facing the existential threat of climate change as it grapples with aging populations and rising inequality. Add to this the continuing fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic, which is expected to push an additional 38 million Asians into poverty.⁷

Solving these problems requires more resources than are available in the public purse. Many Asian economies, including the wealthiest, are looking to PPPs for social good as an efficient way of financing and delivering social services. In China, the government achieved its ambitious policy goal of eradicating extreme poverty with help from the private sector.^{vii,8} In India, the government collaborated with the private sector to generate large-scale employment, including through programs like Startup India to nurture a strong ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship.^{viii,9} In Korea, the Seoul Metropolitan Government brought in private capital via social impact bonds to improve child welfare indicators.^{ix,10}

“My theory has always been that you have to work very closely with the state for scale, and you have to work wherever possible with the private sector and markets to maximize public good.”

– Rohini Nilekani,
EkStep Foundation and Arghyam

2. Greater confidence that the private sector can directly contribute to social service delivery. While the state can provide legitimacy and scale, the private sector can bring a market approach that introduces efficiency and innovation to social welfare. Asian companies recognize this, as evidenced by an increasing confidence in their ability to deliver social services. A quarter (26%) of top Asian business leaders in our network believe that PPPs for social good are

^{vi} In India for instance, the Tatas have played a central role in the development and growth of Jamshedpur—home to one of Asia's earliest steel plants—since it began producing steel here in 1912. The civic administration of the city is run by Jamshedpur Utilities and Services Company Limited or JUSCO, a “private municipal corporation,” a collaboration between the government and Tata Steel Limited. JUSCO has been responsible for providing public amenities including water supply, electricity, roads and waste management. Post-World War II society in Japan “expected Japanese firms to bear a benevolent responsibility towards those with whom they had direct relations—not only their employees, subsidiaries, business partners and customers, but also the *kyōka-machi* (company town) and attendant shopkeepers and service providers who survived on the spending of its employees.” (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2005, p.7).

^{vii} In its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) set the ambitious goal to eradicate poverty in China by the end of 2020.

^{viii} “Launched on January 16, 2016, the Startup India Initiative has rolled out several programs with the objective of supporting entrepreneurs, building a robust startup ecosystem and transforming India into a country of job creators instead of job seekers. These programs are managed by a dedicated Startup India Team, which reports to the Department for Industrial Policy and Promotion (DPIIT).” (Startup India, 2021).

^{ix} “Korea” refers to the Republic of Korea.

rising because companies are realizing they can contribute in a meaningful way.^x And more than half (55%) believe that business acumen and management expertise are their greatest value-add to PPPs for social good.^{xi}



55% of Asian business leaders believe that corporate management expertise is their greatest value-add to PPPs for social good

As governments tackle increasingly complex social, economic and environmental challenges, the private sector brings two additional comparative advantages to the table. One, domain knowledge and innovative technologies. For example, APRIL Group—one of the leading producers of fiber, pulp and paper in Indonesia—already had extensive experience in managing restoration and conservation projects.¹¹ This positioned it well to answer the government’s call to restore peat swamp forests. In India, Nandan Nilekani’s experience in creating the infrastructure for the world’s largest biometric program, *Aadhaar*, generated lessons that were applied by **EkStep Foundation** to create a digital education platform to enhance access to learning for millions of children in state schools.¹²

“We want the government and the community to look at the private sector not just as a donor, not just the source of funds, but also to harness our core competencies, the expertise of our sector.”

– Veronica Gabaldon,
Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation

Two, leaner and less bureaucratic setups allow the private sector to pilot and fund innovative solutions in social service delivery. We saw this with private sector engagement in Japan’s first **social impact bond** and in the world’s first development impact bond in education in India.^{xii}

“Whenever we want to create change, we recognize it cannot be done in all 10,000 schools at once. There has to be a pilot, a sample first, to see if it works. Once we find out whether it is viable, and learn from mistakes, then we replicate and spread it.”

– Dato’ Noor Rezan,
Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme

3. An ask from government, whether direct or indirect. In Asia, the government is almost always at the table in a way that is not mirrored in the West. The private sector prefers to work in tandem with government.¹⁴ As a result, companies pay close attention to government messaging. When the public sector asks for support, whether through a direct ask or indirect signaling, companies respond.

Among the PPPs for social good we studied, the **Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)** was born out of an executive order from the government that called upon the private sector to help recovery efforts after three devastating typhoons in 2009. In Thailand, when the government called for the establishment of public-private partnerships to help boost the economy under its *Pracharath* initiative, 24 businesses stepped up.¹⁵ Two of the Thai PPPs we looked at, **Pracharath Rak Samakkee** and **CONNEXT ED Foundation**, were born out of this call for *pracha* (people) and *rath* (state) to work together.^{xiii}

^x Based on a CAPS survey of ultra-high-net-worth business leaders from 10 Asian economies in December 2020.

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} For more information, please refer to the PPPs summaries section.

^{xiii} The *Pracharath* initiative was launched by the Thai Government in September 2015 and calls for collaboration between the public sector, private sector and civil society to develop and bring about quality, human capital for Thailand.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT IN PPPs FOR SOCIAL GOOD

“We want to do good and to give back to communities. The government wants to as well. So working with government in a public-private partnership is the best option if one wants to make an impact at scale.”

– Sheetal Mehta, Mahindra Group

“Government has to play a big role in this, because when we meet with these thousands of school principals, government is who brings them together. The Ministry of Education has that convening power.”

– Suphachai Chearavanont, True Corporation

“The government is the right hand and the business community is the left hand. The problem can only be tackled if both hands work together.”¹³

– Jack Ma, Alibaba

“We realized that instead of us spending billions of dollars to create a trusted brand, why don’t we partner with somebody who already has that trust and branding—and that’s government.”

– Shankar Maruwada, EkStep Foundation

“As a Foundation, we always aim to develop a product or a new model that can be scaled up. And when you want to scale, you’re really looking at government.”

– Ernesto Garilao,
Zuellig Family Foundation

“When it comes to public services, when it comes to issues of rule of law, when it comes to many things, you do have to work very closely with the state because they have the maximum resources, the maximum mandate, and they have the maximum ability to scale.”

– Rohini Nilekani, Arghyam
and EkStep Foundation

In China, the government’s push for e-commerce development as an instrument for poverty reduction helped inspire private sector initiatives such as the **Alibaba Rural Taobao Program**, which develops e-commerce ecosystems in rural areas.

4. Increased motivation by business leaders and philanthropists to do good. In many PPPs for social good, we observe the significance of an individual leader’s

commitment and determination to solve a social or environmental problem. The private sector drivers of **EkStep Foundation, Adopt-A-School Program, CONNEXT ED Foundation, and Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme** are all motivated by a passion for educating their country’s children.

Personal conviction is also driving PPPs for social good in environmental conservation and water management—two areas that are often under-championed in philanthropy.

“I have been interested in education for a long, long time. It was probably 13 years ago [when I started giving back], and believe the best way is through education and the younger generation. That’s where we can really make an impact for a more peaceful and prosperous society.”

– Suphachai Chearavanont,
True Corporation

China Mengniu Dairy founder, Niu Gengsheng, was born in Inner Mongolia to an impoverished family and witnessed first-hand the region’s environmental degradation.¹⁶ He is now committed, through his family foundation, to a long-term PPP for social good working towards the reforestation of Inner Mongolia. One of India’s leading female

philanthropists, Rohini Nilekani has engaged in a number of PPPs for social good including in water sustainability and education. At the heart of these initiatives lies her deep personal belief in the importance of bringing together society, government, and markets (*‘samaaj, sarkaar and bazaar’*) to help achieve long-term change at scale.

5. The uniquely Asian importance of *guanxi*. The Chinese concept of *guanxi* refers to having personal trust and a multifaceted, long-term relationship with someone.¹⁷ It is a way of fostering

goodwill. *Guanxi* is particularly important in Asia where business has traditionally been conducted on the basis of good relations.¹⁸ From the perspective of a business, *guanxi*, or goodwill with a large external network of both government and supply chain players, can be a valuable and hard-to-duplicate resource. It can be a competitive advantage due

WIN-WIN-WIN

What are the implications of these trends? They mean that PPPs for social good are on the rise and are becoming a more prominent vehicle for doing good. When executed well, PPPs for social good can be a win-win-win scenario for government, businesses and society.

Take government first. Governments are beginning to recognize that with limited state capacity and funds, tying up with the private sector can crowd in more capital and resources. There is also a growing understanding that the private sector is well placed to contribute innovation and industry expertise. Through PPPs for social good, governments gain access to this innovative capacity and private capital to solve social issues. This ultimately helps them to fulfill their mandate to meet the social and environmental needs of their constituents.

For the private sector, there are both tangible and intangible benefits. Working in tandem with government on a social issue creates space to cultivate a stronger

relationship and build social capital—an asset for businesses in Asia. PPPs for social good also build social capital with communities, enhance businesses’ reputation and boost brand perception. Sometimes, they can also benefit a company’s bottom line through access to a wider consumer base. As one of our interviewees put it, “There is a good business case to do good.”^{xiv}

For communities, convergence between private and government sectors means an increased likelihood of improved outcomes in health, education, environmental conditions, livelihoods and more. Half of the 20 partnerships we studied have made room for participatory approaches and involved community stakeholders and their inputs into programming. Several of these partnerships also focused on enhancing local capacity, knowledge sharing, uplifting community champions and local leadership. Not only does engaging the local community ensure the sustainability of impact, but it also ensures that solutions are tailored to their needs.

^{xiv} Rene ‘Butch’ Meily, President of the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF).

to the network effects and economic opportunities it brings, especially in Asian contexts where trust is supplemented by personal connections. Some studies have found positive correlations between *guanxi*, reduced transaction costs, improved efficiencies and performance.¹⁹

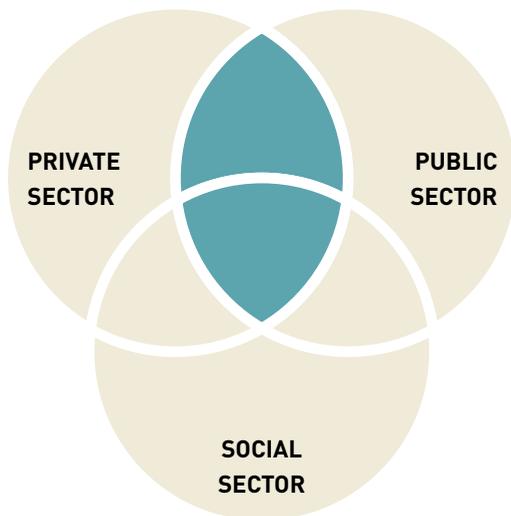
For companies, engaging with the government through PPPs for social good can serve as a strategic vehicle for earning *guanxi* that can extend beyond the partnership. This social capital with government also opens the door for expanding or initiating future social and environmental projects together. As we will see in the next section on “Strategies for Success,” existing relationships between parties can reduce uncertainty and can pave the way for effective future partnerships.

WHAT DO PPPS FOR SOCIAL GOOD LOOK LIKE?

The term “public-private partnership” has expanded over the years to mean different things to different people.^{xv} As we just outlined, public-private partnerships for social good are becoming more common. They will continue to grow as the lines between the mandates of the public, private and social sectors blur.

These PPPs for social good may sound like the new

PPPs for social good in Asia



“The first two years were really developmental for us because we realized there was so much local contextualization required...We learned that 60% of the recipe has standard ingredients but 40% has to be customized based on local context.”

– Shahnaz Al-Sadat,
LeapEd Services

kid on the block, but they share some characteristics with traditional infrastructure-style PPPs. In other ways, they are different. At their core, PPPs for social good are collaborative. They sit at the nexus of the private and public sectors, with the social sector often involved as a third pillar. They harness the competencies of these different partners to solve complex societal challenges and create shared value for all. And yet, due to their complex and innovative nature, they are each unique in the ways they ebb and flow to meet transforming needs.

We observed that Asian PPPs for social good tend to share these characteristics:

PPPs for social good take on complex social or environmental issues. Unlike a traditional PPP’s procurement-style contractual nature, there is often no pre-existing blueprint. Their mandates are influenced by societal, cultural and environmental factors and often require innovation. For example, restoring the biodiversity of a forest the size of London involves many more moving parts than a contract to build a bridge. Enhancing the capacity of mayors as public health champions requires more innovation and soft skills than building a hospital. Fulfilling such ambitious mandates take trial and error, measuring impact, and incorporating learnings along the way.

^{xv} We considered a variety of academic and non-academic sources from around the world to help guide our understanding of public-private partnerships. We reviewed the definitions of a range of organizations and governments, including: Accenture; the Asian Development Bank (ADB); Deloitte; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); Efficiency Unit, Government of Hong Kong SAR; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); International Financial Corporation (IFC); Public Private Partnership Unit, Prime Minister’s Department, Malaysia; Department of Economic Affairs, Government of India; World Bank; and the United Nations. We also consulted a range of academic literature on the topic.

PPPs for social good are fluid and contextual. No two social or environmental solutions are the same. Their design, implementation, and success are largely molded by the local context, the level of government engagement, and the offerings of the private sector partners. All 20 examples we examined are distinct from each other, from their genesis to their success. They were crafted with the local needs of each geographical and socioeconomic context in mind. This also makes these partnerships more fluid in their implementation as they respond to changing needs or external shocks. Being nimble allows these PPPs for social good to learn, augment and ultimately create greater impact along the way.

PPPs for social good have varying time horizons.

Some are one-off projects, such as pilot programs testing innovative solutions before they can be scaled. The two social and development impact bonds we cover illustrate this—both took three years to complete.

Other PPPs for social good are long-term. Entrenched social and environmental issues take time to tackle: a project to transform 1,000 villages in India requires a longer commitment than building a single digital platform. Most of the PPPs for social good we examined were long-term, ranging from 3 to 60 years in duration. A few PPPs for social good are open-ended: the project is ongoing and there is no set exit point for the partners.

PPPs for social good have many different formulations.

When it comes to government partners, some PPPs involve the central government and others the municipal or provincial governments. Some companies partner directly with government. Others partner through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) arms or corporate foundations and yet others leverage their founder's personal or family foundations. Of the 80% of Asian business leaders we polled whose companies were already engaging in public-private partnerships for social good, the majority (78%) said these PPPs were conducted

80% of Asian business leaders say their companies are already engaged in PPPs for social good

78% of these PPPs leverage CSR partnerships with government

TYPES OF PPPS FOR SOCIAL GOOD IN ASIA

The 20 PPPs for social good we observed can be organized into six broad groups by purpose. **Service delivery** PPPs leverage the private sector to help provide and enhance access to or the quality of public services, such as education and health services.

Economic development PPPs are collaborative efforts to reduce poverty and promote growth, for example through e-commerce and social enterprise initiatives, or those that improve livelihoods. **Behavioral change and policy** PPPs focus on advocating and monitoring policies to change harmful practices (such as exploitative groundwater practices) or enact beneficial ones (such as labor rights). **Infrastructure** PPPs in the social arena often build digital platforms or knowledge portals to enhance online learning or improve social infrastructure such as water systems. **Environmental** PPPs focus on conservation, biodiversity restoration, and more. **Capacity building** PPPs focus on developing the skills and systems of governments and communities to empower them with the tools, knowledge or competencies to effect greater change, whether in water management or disaster resilience. Some PPPs for social good straddle more than one category.

through CSR partnerships with the government.^{xvi}

Some PPPs have formal memoranda of understanding (MOUs) defining roles, responsibilities and risk allocation. Or contracts, as in the case of impact bonds. However, in Asia informal agreements are not uncommon. We also observed loosely bound coalitions of stakeholders, such as **Arghyam** in India, which is setting up a collaborative network convening multiple entities working in the water sector. Such PPPs for social good are bound by relationships and trust between stakeholders.

Some PPPs for social good bind partners via a separate implementing organization—often a nonprofit—that also delineates the governance and structure of the joint venture. Other PPPs work with existing social sector partners to implement their vision.

^{xvi} Based on a CAPS survey of ultra-high-net-worth business leaders from 7 Asian economies in December 2019.

WHICH STRATEGIES MAXIMIZE IMPACT?

Despite their varying characteristics, the PPPs for social good in our report exhibit similar traits that make them impactful. We discuss these in the next section.

As you'll see, trust is really important for impactful PPPs. In Asia, trust is the oil that keeps the engine of collaboration running. PPPs for social good in Asia are also adept at identifying what the "win" is for each partner, building further commitment on top of trust. Successful PPPs also have a clear vision, which serves both as a guiding force as well as a yardstick to measure progress.

Other strategies for success include instituting transparency and accountability mechanisms to mitigate risk. Many impactful PPPs have one or more champions opening doors and driving success. Leveraging relationships across the aisle helps garner endorsements and approvals for new programs. And finally, successful PPPs exhibit nimbleness: allowing course correction and adapting to changing needs.

Looking ahead, greater social and political pressure on businesses to do more will be a defining feature of a post-Covid world. At the same time, it augurs well to align with government ambitions and priorities. Through PPPs for social good, businesses can fulfill their role in society by working alongside government to meet needs, building shared value for all.

PPP summaries

We examined 20 public-private partnerships for social good for this study, spanning 11 economies and 9 sectors.^{xvii} This section presents summaries of each PPP, to be used as reference while reading this report.

Bangladesh – Community-Based Urban Solid Waste Management Program

In the early 1990's Bangladesh's urban population generated on average 14,000 tons of waste per day. Efficient and environmentally friendly disposal of this waste had become one of the most pressing environmental issues, especially in the capital city of Dhaka. In 1995, Waste Concern Group, a social enterprise established by two urban planners, initiated a pilot project for community-based, decentralized composting in Dhaka. The success of the project resulted in Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) appointing Waste Concern as a sub-implementing agency for the project "Community-Based Urban Solid Waste Management in Dhaka" in 1998. This public-private partnership, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), replicated the model in four other Dhaka neighborhoods. The PPP led to not only better waste management, but also greater job opportunities, improved livelihoods and reduced carbon emissions. The model has been replicated in other parts of the country and in more than 20 economies in Asia and Africa. Read more about Waste Concern at <https://wasteconcern.org/>.

Cambodia – Better Factories Cambodia (BFC)

Better Factories Cambodia stemmed from a United States-Cambodia bilateral trade agreement that provided market access in return for improving working conditions in the garment sector. The public-private partnership was created in 2001 between the Government of Cambodia, multinational apparel firms, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Finance Corporation

(IFC), the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC), and trade unions. After the expiration of the trade agreement in 2004, BFC evolved into a self-financing initiative managed by the ILO, as requested by the Government of Cambodia, trade unions, and private sector employers. The partnership provides independent factory assessments, tailored training for workers and managers, factory advisory services and public disclosure of working conditions at the factories. BFC's unique and collaborative approach has inspired the establishment of the Better Work program covering 1,700 factories in nine countries. Read more about Better Factories Cambodia at <https://betterwork.org/where-we-work/cambodia/>.

China – Alibaba Rural Taobao Program

Despite having one of the fastest-growing e-commerce markets in the world, China is facing uneven growth between provinces, and between urban and rural areas. The Alibaba Rural Taobao Program was established to help develop e-commerce in rural parts of China, aligning with the government's overarching goal of poverty alleviation. The program aims to improve livelihoods by bringing consumer goods to rural areas and agricultural products to urban areas. It also promotes entrepreneurship and new sources of rural employment by establishing "incubators" at the village level, as well as providing targeted support such as training and financial services to foster inclusive growth. The rapid expansion and success of these Taobao Villages and Taobao Towns show how e-commerce can be a critical development tool in rural areas. Aligned incentives between government and the private sector have brought about a number of initiatives like this that have played a significant role in helping the country achieve its ambitious poverty alleviation goal in early 2021. Read more about the Alibaba Rural Taobao Program at <https://www.alizila.com/taobao-villages-driving-inclusive-growth-rural-china/>.

^{xvii} The nine sectors are: education, water and sanitation, health, cybersecurity and transparency, environmental conservation, disaster resilience and recovery, labor rights, rural and economic development, and waste management.

China – Lao Niu Inner Mongolia Shengle International Ecological Demonstration Zone²⁰

Inner Mongolia suffers from severe soil erosion and desertification. The Inner Mongolia Lao Niu Foundation (“Lao Niu Foundation”) was established in 2004 by Niu Gengsheng, founder of the China Mengniu Dairy Company, to work primarily on environment and education. The Inner Mongolia Shengle International Ecological Demonstration Zone is an ecological restoration and protection project in Horinger County, Inner Mongolia. Initiated by the Lao Niu Foundation, this public-private partnership brings together nonprofits (The Nature Conservancy and China Green Carbon Foundation), government (the Inner Mongolia Forestry Department), and local communities to improve biodiversity conservation, replant trees and shrubs, and enhance livelihoods. To date, the project has turned around 600,000 hectares of barren land into green lands and continues to improve the livelihoods of local communities

through agriculture, sustainable grazing management, and other cooperative initiatives. The project has received national and international recognition by becoming the first carbon sequestration project in Inner Mongolia under the registration of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Read more about the Lao Niu Foundation at <http://en.lfund.org/index.php?s=/Index/index.html>.

China – Tencent Education’s online learning platform

Covid-19 led to school closures the world over, and China was no exception. With millions of children suddenly needing access to online learning, Tencent Education jumped into action. Within 48 hours it adapted its existing online learning platform (Tencent Classroom) to support regional education bureaus and schools to ensure continuity in learning. The platform met the immediate needs of the schools by introducing functions such as



All photographs in this report are stock photos (unless otherwise indicated).

rapid course launching, audio and video streaming, homework submission and student registration. To date, Tencent Education has served education authorities in more than 30 provinces and municipalities and enabled online learning for over 100 million students across China. Read more about Tencent Education at <https://www.tencent.com/en-us/business/smart-education.html>.

India – Arghyam

India faces a severe shortage of water, due to multiple reasons, such as: over-exploitation, geogenic contamination, pollution, delayed monsoons, a lack of proper infrastructure and climate change. Arghyam's approach puts the focus on enabling communities, frontline workers and civil society actors to access and act upon appropriate knowledge and data that can help them achieve water security in a decentralized way, at scale. Arghyam works closely with governments to embed participation and scale thinking in their programs and leverages digital tools to reach more people, faster and more effectively. Arghyam is a public charitable foundation established by Indian philanthropist Rohini Nilekani to support sustainable water and sanitation solutions in India. Arghyam began its journey as a grant-making organization and has supported over 100 partners on 140 projects across thematic interventions and has directly impacted 5 million people. Read more about Arghyam at <http://arghyam.org>.

India – EkStep Foundation

With the world's second-largest population, India faces the enormous challenge of scaling quality primary education to the magnitude of millions. In 2015, Nandan Nilekani, Rohini Nilekani, and Shankar Maruwada co-founded EkStep Foundation to enhance access to learning opportunities for 200 million children in India in 5 years. EkStep brings partners together via its digital Sunbird platform, an open-source, configurable, modular learning management infrastructure designed for scale. EkStep is the technology partner of the Government of India's national teacher platform DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) and has layered this platform onto the Sunbird base. EkStep also works closely with government officials, teachers, and NGOs on capacity building, enabling multiple stakeholders to contribute to this ecosystem of change. Separately, EkStep has also established and seeded the Societal Platform, a community working to co-create

digital public goods and digital infrastructure to catalyze solutions to social issues. Read more about EkStep Foundation at <https://ekstep.org/>.

India – Educate Girls Development Impact Bond (DIB)

A wide gender gap in education persists in India. This gap is especially prominent in Rajasthan, where in 2011 the female literacy rate was just 52% compared to 79% for men and well below the national literacy rate of 65% for women.^{20,21} Educate Girls, a nonprofit working in girls' education in India since 2007, pioneered the world's first development impact bond (DIB) in education to evidence the merit of scaling their approach. The pay-for-success model tied payments to the achievement of specific social outcomes, namely school enrollment and learning outcomes. The three-year pilot involved Educate Girls, UBS Optimus Foundation, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Instiglio, IDinsight, and the Government of Rajasthan. The DIB successfully met the outcome targets, resulting in the risk investor (UBS Optimus Foundation) being paid the principal with a return of 15% by the outcome payer (Children's Investment Fund Foundation). The learnings from this model were scaled to the other public schools Educate Girls works with, ultimately enhancing the government's return on investment in education. Read more about the DIB at www.educategirls.ngo/dib.aspx.

India – Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation (MVSTF)

The Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation (MVSTF) is an initiative of the Government of Maharashtra to transform 1,000 villages facing social, economic, livelihood, connectivity and infrastructural challenges, in collaboration with the private sector. This public-private partnership is aimed at creating sustainable change in rural India across 16 thematic areas aligned with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. MVSTF started in 2017 with 11 districts, 140 *Gram Panchayats* (village-level governing bodies) and 280 villages and has expanded to 25 districts, 484 *Gram Panchayats*, and 905 villages at present. The village integrated development program has been implemented in partnership with over 20 of India's leading companies and philanthropic entities, who provide both financial and development support. MVSTF is also the implementing agency for the Chief Minister's Rural Development Fellowship program,

which places young men and women as Chief Minister's Fellows across districts. The Fellows are an integral part of the identified villages' programmatic success and act as champions and nodal agents to drive the program and convene stakeholders. Read more about MVSTF at <https://www.mvstf.org/en>.

Indonesia – Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER)

The peat swamp forests on Kampar Peninsula and Padang Island in Indonesia are some of the most fragile forest ecosystems on Earth. Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER) is a long term, multi-stakeholder project aimed at restoring and conserving these ecologically important peat forest areas. RER was established by APRIL Group, one of the largest pulp and paper manufacturing companies in Indonesia, in 2013 as a multi-year commitment to protecting, assessing, restoring, and managing 130,095 hectares of peatland forest. This program operates through an ecosystem restoration concession (ERC): a forest management license introduced by Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2004, to help restore forest areas in the country. An ERC grants land for a period of 60 years to a company, enabling private and public sector organizations to come together to share their combined resources in the cause of forest restoration. APRIL Group collaborates with nonprofit organizations and local communities, with the support of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, to not only protect and restore the land and biodiversity, but also to build the capacity of local communities to live off the land sustainably. Read more about RER at www.rekoforest.org.

Japan – Social Impact Bonds (SIB)

In Japan, the government is facing an acute budget challenge: social spending already makes up a third of the total spend of Japan's budget, and an aging society and other challenges are expected to cause this spending to balloon. The Nippon Foundation started pitching the social impact bond (SIB) pay-for-success model to local mayors as a solution and launched three pilots in 2015 as proofs of concept. Based on government partnership with the private sector, social impact bonds bring in private capital to pilot new social service delivery interventions that government only pays for if the intervention is successful. More government interest was garnered upon the success of these pilots, and in 2017, Japan's first real SIB was launched in Kobe City, focusing on diabetes prevention.

Kobe City government was the outcome payer, the Nippon Foundation's Social Innovation and Investment Foundation (SIIF) provided the risk capital, and Sumitomo Mitsui Bank and other individual investors joined as upfront investors. Read more about the SIB at www.siif.or.jp/en/.

Malaysia – Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme (TSP)

In 2010, the Ministry of Education entered into a partnership with Yayasan AMIR, a foundation established by the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund Khazanah Nasional Berhad, aimed at improving the quality of learning and teaching in selected government schools. The Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme is designed to focus on the holistic development of schoolchildren and improve student outcomes by training and empowering school leadership, teachers, students, and the community. Selected schools undergo a comprehensive and sustainable five-year transformation program. While the schools remain under full government management and funding, Yayasan AMIR, through its service provider, LeadEd Services, provides capacity-building activities for school leaders and teachers and supports the schools to utilize their autonomies effectively. Leveraging the success and learning of TSP 1.0, TSP 2.0 was launched in 2019 incorporating an enhanced, bespoke approach catered to each school's needs and closely involving state and district education departments to ensure sustainability beyond completion of the program and intensified intervention to just 3 years. As of 2019, 90 Trust Schools covering approximately 5,700 teachers and 67,900 students had been or were part of the program. Read more about the Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme at <https://www.yayasanamir.org.my/trust-schools>.

Pakistan – Adopt-A-School Program

A historic lack of focus on building capacity in public education led some tiers of government to explore alternative sources of capital and resources to improve dilapidated schools. The adopt-a-school model was implemented in Pakistan in the mid-1990s in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab. The model facilitates the private sector and civil society to adopt government-run schools and undertake educational improvements for children. In Punjab, the model was spearheaded by CARE Foundation, Pakistan's largest educational nonprofit established by Seema Aziz, founder and managing



director of Sefam Group of Companies. The foundation transforms adopted schools by providing trained staff, missing facilities and most importantly by incorporating the CARE education system. As a result, the academic quality improved and student enrollment increased manifold. From the initial 10 schools in 1998, CARE Foundation is now managing 888 schools throughout Pakistan, serving more than 300,000 students in public schools. Read more about the Adopt-A-School Program at <https://carepakistan.org/> and <https://www.sef.org.pk/sef-adopt-a-school-program/>.

Philippines – Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)

The Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone economies in the world, experiencing almost all forms of disasters including typhoons, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and other emergencies related to armed conflicts. In 2009, the national government issued Executive Order No. 838 that called upon the private sector to aid disaster-stricken communities after three consecutive and devastating typhoons. From this, the

Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) was formed as the country's major private sector vehicle and coordinator for disaster preparedness, management, recovery, and rehabilitation. Led by some of the Philippines' top businesses, PDRF addresses key gaps in disaster risk management and complements the government in areas where it is restricted by limited capacity, budgetary constraints, or other challenges. PDRF is currently comprised of 61 member companies who commit to providing funding, in-kind donations, and services in disaster response and recovery areas that align with their respective core expertise. PDRF works closely with the public, private, and social sectors at the local, provincial, and national levels to ensure efficient mobilization of recovery and relief efforts and to facilitate preparedness and resilience. Read more about PDRF at www.pdrf.org.

Philippines – Zuellig Family Foundation's Health Leadership and Governance Program

In 1992, the provision of healthcare in the Philippines was devolved to the provincial, municipal, and city levels. This led to a fragmented healthcare system across three different levels

of government, and as a result, the quality of basic health services generally deteriorated, and accessibility varied. In 2013, the Zuellig Family Foundation—the independent foundation of the family at the helm of Zuellig Pharma—entered into a partnership with the Department of Health to roll out the foundation’s existing public health leadership program across the country. The Health Leadership and Governance Program is based on the Foundation’s approach of improving health outcomes by building the capacity of public health officers. Under the program, local health leaders such as mayors and local chief executives are selected to undergo Zuellig’s leadership formation program with technical and resource support from the Department of Health. Read more about the Health Leadership and Governance Program at www.zuelligfoundation.org.

Taiwan – Digital Accountability Project

There has been a rise in online disinformation globally, with social media platforms being the primary battleground. In Taiwan, the government collaborated with LINE—the country’s most popular messaging service—to create a public-private partnership model that leveraged both nongovernmental organizations and the tech industry to curb the spread of disinformation. This PPP was launched in 2019 and is known as the Digital Accountability Project (DAP). DAP incorporates fact-checking directly into the LINE app, giving the public the tools to become more critical consumers of media and information. The most important component of the effort is the message verification and fact-checking platform which allows users to submit links or statements for analysis and verification by four third-party, nongovernmental organizations. Since its inception, the bot has received over 230,000 user submissions with users reporting an estimated 41,000 messages. Read more about the Digital Accountability Project at <https://linecorp.com/zh-hant/pr/news/zh-hant/2019/2791> (in Chinese).

Thailand – Bangkok canal infrastructure development projects

Once known as the “Venice of the East”, Bangkok’s sprawling network of canals has fallen into disrepair over the past few decades, resulting in polluted waters and obstruction of water draining abilities. The canal system infrastructure development project along the Lad Phrao and Bang Sue canals is an ongoing multi-stakeholder effort to revitalize the canals in Bangkok. The project

took on a more formal nature when a master plan was formulated with backing from the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The canal revitalization project includes water-based improvements, forming a modern network of waterways to reduce commuting time for residents, improving flood control and water quality, as well as shoreline developments to enrich green urban spaces and drive commercial opportunities. Driven in part by the personal passion of Dr. Pongporn Sudbanthad, the projects bring together a multitude of stakeholders including government, companies and communities.

Thailand – CONNEXT ED Foundation

CONNEXT ED Foundation is a public-private partnership that aims to elevate the quality of education in Thailand by improving learning capabilities and confidence in both teachers and students as well as community participation. The initiative evolved out of the Thai Government’s *Pracharath* scheme which calls for collaboration between the public sector, private sector and civil society to bring about equality and develop human capital for Thailand.²³ CONNEXT ED was formed by 12 leading companies, under the leadership of True Corporation’s Chairman Suphachai Chearavanont with the strong support of the Ministry of Education, and has since expanded to 44 companies. Each company supervises a cohort of public schools and provides support based on its core competencies. True Corporation, for example, focuses on digital education while participating banks focus on programs related to finance, saving and budgeting. Other focal elements of the program include the provision of training to teachers and principals; developing a child-centric curriculum to shift from passive to active learning; and building good morals, life and career skills needed for the 21st century. CONNEXT ED under True Corporation also invests in schools’ digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet, hardware (computers and laptops) and software (online learning content). It also develops talent in information and communication technologies (ICT) via educational technology leaders working at schools full-time to provide ICT training to principals, teachers, students and communities to enable them to apply ICT in their own learning, teaching, and careers. The program has reached 18% of the schools under the supervision of the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) via this PPP. This amounts to an estimated 5,567 schools. Read more about CONNEXT ED Foundation at <https://connected.org/foundation/>.

Thailand – Happy & Healthy Bike Lane

Bangkok has one of the lowest per capita ratios of public green space among Asia's big cities.²⁴ The Happy & Healthy Bike Lane represents one initiative to increase the city's public green space. The cycle track follows the circumference of Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, expanding upon an existing bike lane that was built by state-owned enterprise Airports of Thailand (AOT). AOT transferred ownership of around 70 acres of this land surrounding the airport to Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) as part of the project to revamp the cycle track. Siam Commercial Bank's CSR arm spearheaded the refurbishment and expansion, in partnership with other companies who have committed 10 years of funding to the project. The cycle track is a public-private partnership that is jointly managed by SCB and AOT, and aims to promote awareness of the benefits of exercise and wellbeing among the public. Additional facilities were added to the cycle track, including a running track, kids track, rest areas, restaurants, retail outlets and bike rental facilities. Read more about the Happy & Healthy Bike Lane at www.scb.co.th/en/about-us/news/nov-2018/opening-happy-and-healthy-bike-lane.html.

Thailand – Pracharath Rak Samakkee

In 2017, under the *Pracharath* scheme (see: CONNEXT ED Foundation), the Thai government assigned Thapana Sirivadhanabhakdi, President and CEO of Thai Beverage Public Company Limited, as head of the private sector

working group to encourage local economic development. The working group established a network of social enterprises under the name Prachrath Rak Samakkee (PRS) to generate social and economic returns in each of the country's 76 provinces. The social enterprises facilitate collaboration among all five sectors of Thai society: the public sector, the private sector, civil society, academia and the people. PRS Social Enterprise (Thailand) Company Limited was established as a coordinating entity among various sectors and social enterprises across the provinces. Since the start of the project more than 20 large private companies have joined the initiative, investing in and working on various projects with government and civil society groups. To date, the PRS network has initiated 1,161 projects covering 85,964 households and has generated a total revenue of more than 1.2 billion baht (US\$ 39.6 million). *The Hospital Food Safety Project* is a good example of the types of projects under PRS. In 2017, an MOU was signed between six parties to source and deliver safe and organic produce to public hospitals in Thailand. This involves finding safe organic produce farms, organizing farmer groups, collecting produce, and delivering it to participating hospitals. Almost three years after signing the MOU, 34 provinces within the Pracharath Rak Samakkee network are delivering safe agricultural produce to 42 hospitals across Thailand. Read more about Pracharath Rak Samakkee at <https://prsthailand.com/en/home>.



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Part 1

Strategies for success

Just as there are many paths up a mountain, there is no singular route to forming PPPs for social good. But our conversations with founders, senior leadership and stakeholders have given us insight into strategies that can enable PPPs to succeed and thrive. We distilled several common threads that could light the path to success: a clear vision, trust and mutual respect and effective governance and conflict resolution. Careful and strategic selection of partners, and champions that drive the partnerships through thick and thin, are instrumental for success.

BUILDING TRUST

Trust lies at the heart of public-private partnerships for social good in Asia. And trust in Asia is multifaceted. In addition to “trust from the head” (trusting someone because of their professional competence), doing business in Asia also often requires “trust from the heart” (trusting someone because of an existing relationship).²⁵ This trust reduces uncertainty and creates space for an efficient and effective partnership. It helps bring parties to the table, facilitates processes and generally greases the wheels of the partnership.

Relationships build trust. Whether formal or informal, pre-existing, or painstakingly built over time, relationships and trust mattered at every stage and all levels of the 20 partnerships we studied.

20/20

PPPs found that trust and relationships mattered at every stage and all levels

Existing relationships help a partnership hit the ground running. They help skip the courting phase required to establish trust. In India, the existing trust between nonprofit Educate Girls and the state government of Rajasthan was key to getting the **Educate Girls Development Impact Bond (DIB)** underway. Educate Girls

already had a track record of working with the Rajasthan government on education. Alison Bukhari explained, “We were already seen as a trusted partner because the government had observed us deploying best practices while working with children in the region. Getting this [DIB] off the ground would have been much harder if we didn’t have that track record.” In the Philippines, when Guillermo ‘Bill’ Luz, Chief Resilience Officer of **Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)**, called on companies to lend support in the aftermath of super typhoon Haiyan in 2013, PDRF’s backing by the Chairmen of Ayala Corporation and PLDT—two of the Philippines’ biggest conglomerates—helped convince other CEOs to pledge support.

Though useful, existing relationships are not a precondition for a PPP’s success. Relationships can be built, and trust secured, over time. The **Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme** in Malaysia worked hard to get the Ministry of Education on board. “[It] did not happen overnight and required many, many alignment meetings and persistence,” according to Shahnaz Al-Sadat, Chairperson of LeapEd Services, the PPP’s service provider. Indian philanthropist Rohini Nilekani, who spearheaded **Arghyam** and **EkStep Foundation**, underscored that when it comes to gaining trust, “There are no shortcuts.” In these and other cases, persistent efforts at building relationships and trust paid off and helped establish successful public-private partnerships.

Trust is the glue that holds a PPP for social good together. Trust among private sector partners, between private sector and government, between social sector organizations and PPP partners, and between the PPP and the community. According to Dr. Pongporn Sudbanthad, initiator of and key consultant for **Bangkok’s canal infrastructure development projects**, “The work hinges on building trust, through ongoing activities involving the community, academics, local and central governments, and other stakeholders.”²⁶ Dr. Sudbanthad’s multi-sector efforts paid off when the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration invited him to help draft the master plan to revive Bangkok’s canals five years ago.

“We started by focusing on the demand side of the problem. Why are families not sending girls to school? The persistent cultural stigma around educating girls was a critical hurdle to overcome. We worked both in and with communities to mobilize families to change this. It was hard. But we persisted—and made progress.”

– Safeena Husain, *Educate Girls*²⁷

Community buy-in is especially vital for successful project implementation—and this buy-in largely rests on trust. Many of our interviewees said they invested considerable resources and effort to identify and work with community leaders or organizations who could foster trust between project implementers and beneficiaries. **The Health Leadership and Governance Program** in the Philippines is one example. “Without community buy-in, the program has no legs; it will end once we leave. So the community is very much a fundamental stakeholder in the whole project,” emphasized David Zuellig, Trustee of the Zuellig Family Foundation.

In Indonesia, APRIL Group recognized that conserving peat forests via **Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER)** requires a holistic approach. For restoration to have legs, RER empowers communities inhabiting the land to use forest resources sustainably.²⁸ “Managing a forest is more than managing the forest, it is about managing the people,” said Nyoman Iswarayoga of RER. “So we are working on the ground with local communities and land managers, building up relationships and capacities with those who can play a role in doing something good for this landscape.” RER works closely with communities to develop sustainable fishing and farming methods. It also runs eco-education programs and supports improvements to public infrastructure and facilities such

as mosques, roads, schools and community halls.

Investing in community pays off in more ways than one, as **Pracharath Rak Samakkee (PRS)** found. One of the most established public-private partnerships under the Thai government’s *Pracharath* umbrella, PRS aims to establish local social enterprises in every province. Established by one of Thailand’s biggest conglomerates, Thai Beverage, PRS brings together local government, companies and communities to support these social enterprises.^{xviii} Interestingly, they found that those social enterprises with existing relationships with the community were more likely to prosper.

ALIGNING INCENTIVES TOWARDS A SHARED GOAL

Relationships and trust can bring partners to the table, but having incentives to stay at the table cements their commitment. If each partner can see a clear reason and benefit for their participation, the partnership is more likely to sustain.

Take the **Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)** which brings together top companies in the Philippines, many of whom are direct or indirect competitors. What compels executives of competing companies to join forces? Incentives that align towards a shared goal. At one level, they rally around the joint vision of resilience and recovery for their country, battered far too often by natural disasters. But the incentives run deeper.

Member companies gain access to advanced information

“The government’s role was critical in building trust. When government said they endorsed CONNEXT ED Foundation’s programs...it created trust between us and the schools.”

– Suphachai Chearavanont, *True Corporation*

^{xviii} Each social enterprise receives ฿4 million (approximately US\$129,000) through PRS. Of this, ฿1 million (approximately US\$32,000) comes from Thai Beverage, ฿400,000 (approximately US\$13,000) is invested by Bangkok Bank, and the rest comes from local businesses or communities.

and data on impending natural disasters from PDRF's Emergency Operations Center. This gives them crucial extra time to prepare just before a typhoon or earthquake hits. It's great risk management: in the short term, being forewarned means being forearmed. In the long term, it helps these companies put in place continuity plans and build more resilient supply chains. All of these lead to one important benefit: a stronger bottom line. It is no wonder that over 61 private companies support PDRF, which has become a critical pillar of the country's disaster preparedness, management, recovery and rehabilitation strategy.

Clear and aligned incentives are also what makes **Better Factories Cambodia (BFC)** tick. But this was not always the case. The program evolved out of a trade agreement between Cambodia and the United States that provided market access in return for improving working conditions in the Cambodian garment sector. At the time, "The incentives were clear," explained Jill Tucker, BFC's Chief Technical Officer from 2011-2014. "The Cambodian government wanted to export more of its products. The International Labour Organization wanted to improve working conditions. And the factory owners wanted more business." But when the agreement expired, incentive alignment started to unravel.

BFC had the daunting task of re-negotiating between a diverse group of stakeholders. Ultimately, external pressure from international apparel brands—the factories' clients—whose consumers were demanding ethical supply chains helped. As did the government's desire to be seen as doing the right thing. It was again in everyone's interest to invest in improved working conditions.

"The incentives were clear: the Cambodian government wanted to export more of its products. The International Labour Organization wanted to improve working conditions. And the factory owners wanted more business."

– Jill Tucker, formerly of
Better Factories Cambodia

LET'S WORK WITH GOVERNMENT—BUT WHICH PART OF GOVERNMENT?

In a PPP for social good, government can lend unparalleled convening power, legitimacy and scale. But understanding which level(s) of government to engage with, and how, is essential.

When initiating the **Health Leadership and Governance Program**, the Zuellig Family Foundation targeted local government units as partners. "It is local leadership that moves the system," explained Ernesto Garilao, Chairperson and President of the Foundation. "If you really want to address the health needs of the poor, you have to work with local governments, because the poor go to their health services."

Sometimes, engagement with government needs to be multi-pronged. For example, in India the issue of water management cuts across multiple government departments. In the absence of a dedicated department on water, **Arghyam** focused on identifying opportunity

windows across government. By analyzing politicians' messaging for their constituencies and studying government budgets to identify policy priorities, Arghyam was able to pinpoint which government entities could align on water management.

Having top-level government endorsement does not mean automatic cascading of support to other levels. This is where having buy-in at multiple levels within the government hierarchy can be helpful. While the **Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme** received top-level endorsement early on, "In Malaysia the Ministry of Education is very top-down and there are so many different divisions," said Dato' Noor Rezan, former Deputy-Director General of the Ministry of Education. "You have to get them all on board. That was a very, very important lesson we learned in the first year of Yayasan AMIR."

When the government of the District of Lahore approached CARE Foundation, set up by the founder of the Sefam Group, to adopt and manage some of its underperforming schools as part of the **Adopt-A-School Program**, it was a win-win arrangement for all. Public schools in Punjab, Pakistan, were in dire need of intervention. Many not only lacked mathematics and science teachers but also basic amenities like toilets, lighting and furniture. Meanwhile, CARE Foundation had 10 years of experience in setting up privately run schools from scratch. These schools had been demonstrably successful in improving attendance, enrollment and learning outcomes. But founder Seema Aziz knew there were limits to what the Foundation could achieve on its own. Government was required to help scale up her efforts: “In my heart, I know that only a government can do education for all. No private organization can ever provide education for all, it needs government infrastructure.” So when the government approached CARE Foundation to take part in the Adopt-A-School Program, it was a case of aligned incentives.

HAVING A CLEAR, SIMPLE VISION

A clear vision can be a PPP’s north star. Addressing social problems is complex. Issues in healthcare, poverty, education, environment and more are multidimensional. This is precisely why a clear vision, expressed simply, can be a guiding light. All of the PPPs we studied had clarity of vision. They took on big, complex issues. But keeping their vision clear and simple sharpened focus on areas with the greatest potential for impact.

The **Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme** was launched to improve accessibility of quality education in Malaysian public schools. Shahnaz Al-Sadat realized early on that: “We cannot try and transform everything because then we would end up not doing much. We decided to narrow it down to select key levers.” Ms. Al-

“Both leadership and clarity really help.”

– Tongjai Thanachanan,
Pracharath Rak Samakkee

Sadat and her team focused on what they felt would yield the highest return on investment: building an enabling learning environment for students. They honed in on training and empowering the school leadership team and teachers. A decade in, the PPP’s success is clear, with student performance improving by 50-68%.²⁹ The program has also grown eight-fold to include 83 schools across 12 states in Malaysia.³⁰

20/20 PPPs for social good had clarity of vision

Keeping it simple is the mantra embodied in **EkStep Foundation’s** strategy. To fulfill its ambitious vision of equal learning opportunities for 200 million children in India, the foundation needed to find its niche within a crowded education ecosystem. Shankar Maruwada, the CEO and co-founder of the Foundation shared, “We decided not to try to solve every problem at the same time.” Instead, they focused on technology-enabled solutions which allowed them to reach millions of children in government schools.

“We wanted to keep it as clean and as simple as possible.”

– Alison Bukhari,
Educate Girls

A more digestible focus area can also help gain buy-in from stakeholders, even if the vision is expansive. The Zuellig Family Foundation has an ambitious vision: reforming the Philippines’ healthcare system and achieving better health outcomes for all Filipinos. To garner buy-in from mayors and local health officials who they wanted to train, the **Health Leadership and Governance Program** zoomed in on one subset of public health. “We started with the simply stated goal of mitigating maternal and infant mortality, even though our training covered general health,” said Ernesto Garilao, President of the Foundation.

ENSURING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Providing social services necessitates making accountability a top priority. The stakes are high, and transparency and accountability are key to ensuring that PPPs for social good are serving their public interest objectives, and retaining the trust of their stakeholders.

Many of our interviewees stressed the importance of transparency and accountability. Tan Sri Dato' Azman Mokhtar, former CEO of Khazanah Nasional Berhad, pointed to accountability as a crucial factor for the success of a PPP. "Whether for-profit or nonprofit, PPPs carry the risk of corruption, cronyism, and clientelism," he explained. "To prevent this a robust accountability infrastructure is essential." Suphachai Chearavanont, Chairman of True Corporation and founding member of CONNEXT ED Foundation, explained, "In this case, accountability is about transparency, it is about information on how schools perform. That has to be measured and made public."

How to build a transparent and accountable PPP



We have observed three ways in which transparency and accountability measures have been built into PPPs for social good in Asia:

1. By establishing a **separate implementing organization** to manage partners and build trust.
2. By creating a **board of governance**.
3. By **measuring impact and reporting**.

1. Establishing a separate implementing organization

When we polled business leaders in our network on whether they would prefer to use an existing nonprofit to implement a PPP for social good or set up a new one, their answers were split 47% to 53%.^{xix} Our data supports this: we observed an almost clean split across the 20 cases we studied. Half used existing organizations as implementors, while 9 out of 20 set up a brand-new implementing organization, a "special purpose vehicle" for collaborative social service delivery.

9/20 PPPs established separate implementing organizations

Why set up a separate organization? It facilitates transparency and accountability while showcasing to the community at large the involvement of multiple stakeholders: government, private companies, nonprofits. A bespoke implementing organization can balance the interests of diverse stakeholders and give all parties a seat—and a voice—at the table. It formalizes the partnership and creates clear lines of accountability. A separate organization is also a separate legal entity, limiting the liabilities of project partners. This is especially important for companies whose shareholders would want their core businesses ringfenced from external liability.

In India, the **Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation** was created to bring together 20 private sector entities and philanthropic partners to manage Maharashtra's 1,000 Villages Integrated Development Program. The Foundation's three-tiered governance structure is a lattice with government and private sector partners represented at all levels.^{xx} Similarly, Thailand's **CONNEXT ED Foundation** was created to both implement the PPP and serve as a convener for 44 private sector partners and government officials. In the case of Malaysia's **Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme**, Yayasan AMIR—a nonprofit

^{xix} Based on a CAPS survey of ultra-high-net-worth business leaders from 10 Asian economies in December 2020.

^{xx} The top tier is comprised of senior leadership across all partners (Maharashtra's Chief Minister and CEOs of companies, among others). The middle tier includes heads of key government departments and the corporate social responsibility leads of companies. The third tier includes senior management of partner organizations as well as mission managers, district executives and nonprofit leaders.

established by the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund—oversees implementation. The International Labour Organization established **Better Factories Cambodia** to improve working conditions in Cambodia’s garment factories.^{xxi}



Conversely, **Waste Concern** is an example of an existing organization being leveraged as the implementor. It was tapped to implement a pilot program for community-based decentralized urban waste management in Dhaka, Bangladesh. By leveraging an existing organization, the PPP benefitted from Waste Concern’s knowledge and expertise in waste management and its established relationships with partnering organizations.

2. Creating a board of governance

Regardless of whether a separate implementing organization is created, an effective board holds a PPP accountable. It lends its expertise and provides strategic direction for management. It also sends a message of assurance to the public that the PPP is accountable, can be trusted and is in good hands. 13 out of 20 PPPs for social good we examined had a board.^{xxii}

Board composition also matters. A board representative of its stakeholders inspires public trust that the PPP is accountable to its constituents. We see this in the **Lao Niu Inner Mongolia Shengle International Ecological Demonstration Zone** project in China. All four partnering organizations—representing the public, private and nonprofit sectors—are represented on the Executive Board which is responsible for all major decision-making as well as providing support for overall project implementation.³¹ In Indonesia, **Restorasi Ekosistem Riau** established an advisory board that included both Indonesian and international third-party experts from the private sector, social sector and academia. In **Pracharath Rak Samakkee**, each social enterprise has a clear governance structure that includes a board of directors.

In lieu of a board, some PPPs incorporate nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) into their transparency and accountability mechanisms. Take Taiwan’s **Digital Accountability Project** established by the government.^{xxiii} It uses a tripartite arrangement that leverages NGOs and the technology industry to curb the spread of disinformation.³² While an in-built bot does much of the heavy lifting in collating user submissions of suspicious content, it was a team of NGOs that evaluated new and unverified statements to combat disinformation. The independence of these NGOs in fact-checking remains crucial to the project’s legitimacy and bolsters public acceptance of the project.

3. Measuring impact and reporting

Measuring the impact of a PPP for social good makes it accountable: it helps evaluate a project’s success and can serve as proof-of-concept for future PPPs. Making these reports publicly available enhances transparency, and confidence in the PPP’s ability to impact change. It can also serve as a basis for modifications, if any are needed.

Impact measurement also helps demonstrate a PPP’s value for money. Social and development impact bonds illustrate how. Being pay-for-success models at their core, impact measurement and reporting are built into their structure. This builds confidence by linking investments directly to impact. For example, the

^{xxi} Other examples include the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), Lao Niu Economic Restoration and Conservation Fund (LNERCF), Pracharath Rak Samakkee, Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER) and Happy & Healthy Bike Lane.

^{xxii} This number is based on our inference from the information available to us. Please regard this as a conservative estimate.

^{xxiii} “Taiwan” refers to Taiwan, China.

Educate Girls Development Impact Bond (DIB) received US\$270,000 in upfront capital with payment contingent on achieving agreed upon outcomes. An independent evaluator was tasked with assessing outcomes against two metrics: student enrollment and student learning outcomes. The bond ultimately surpassed both its target objectives. This provided evidence that the DIB model was worth replicating.

Measuring and reporting are useful even with partial success rates. We see this with Japan's first **social impact bond (SIB)**, spearheaded by the Social Innovation and Investment Foundation (SIIF), which focused on diabetes prevention in the city of Kobe.³³ Although it only successfully met two out of three outcomes, it was regarded as a success in being a proof-of-concept. Takeaways from the SIB are being propelled into the national government agenda through its inclusion into the Cabinet Office's working guidelines on pay-for-success models.

Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme's service provider, LeapEd Services, conducted an impact study to evaluate the program's achievements, limitations, and stakeholder perceptions of improvements.³⁴ By making this report and the data publicly available, the program has been able to reap the benefits of enhanced trust and support both from government and the school communities they serve.

HAVING CHAMPIONS

Public-private partnerships for social good in Asia often have one or more champions: individuals who are catalysts. Their passion and commitment to the PPP help open doors, bring other partners on board and propel the partnership forward. 17 out of 20 of the examples we studied had clearly identifiable champions. In the words of David Zuellig, Trustee of the Zuellig Family Foundation, PPPs for social good "require a person or persons to serve as a driving force. Identifying champions both within the Foundation and in government is vital to safeguarding the success of the partnership."

17/20 PPPs for social good had clear champions

Such advocates can exist at all levels of the project. Some help initiate the PPP, others step in at later stages, and yet others emerge as keen supporters and implementors who evolve into champions. Growing up in a poor household in India, education was the tool that empowered Safeena Husain. Her desire to see others have the same opportunity fueled her commitment to address the education gap for girls through the nonprofit Educate Girls. It also led her to develop the world's first development impact bond (DIB) in education: the **Educate Girls Development Impact Bond**. "Safeena's passion and commitment were the driving force behind the DIB. Her belief in the initiative is what brought organizations like UBS Optimus Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation on board, at a time when the DIB model was still new and niche," shared Alison Bukhari, UK Director of Educate Girls. The bond was devised to serve as a proof-of-concept and its success has led to other performance-based tools being leveraged for social good.

Thailand's **Happy & Healthy Bike Lane** project was born out of Siam Commercial Bank's CSR Committee Chairman, Vichit Suraphongchai's passion for cycling and exercise. He saw the potential of the dilapidated bike lane that circles the Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok and advocated for the bank to support its revitalization. In Thailand, **CONNEXT ED Foundation** has a strong champion in its Founder and Chairman of True Corporation, Suphachai Chearavanont. Mr. Chearavanont's passion and commitment to education has spanned decades. He believes that, "The best place to start contributing to society is with the younger generation—that's what can really make an impact and help build a strong, peaceful and prosperous society."

Also in Thailand, the Hospital Food Safety Project that supplies organic produce to public hospitals (under the umbrella of **Pracharath Rak Samakkee**) has a champion in Managing Director Tivaporn Srivarakul. As a farmer herself, Ms. Srivarakul understood that farmers did not have the resources to supply produce on credit, as required by many of the hospitals. So she proposed that Pracharath Rak Samakkee Kanchanaburi act as financial intermediary to provide advance payments to the farmers. This approach was then replicated across 34 other provinces.

Champions that commit for the long-term help sustain a PPP for social good. They often provide critical financial safeguards with personal contributions, as with China's

Lao Niu Inner Mongolia Shengle International Ecological Demonstration Zone, or with corporate contributions, such as True Corporation’s commitment to schools under its purview through the **CONNEXT ED Foundation**.

PPPs for social good can have multiple champions. Take the **Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme** in Malaysia. Shahnaz Al-Sadat, former Head of Human Capital at Khazanah Nasional Berhad (Malaysia’s sovereign wealth fund), felt that education in Malaysia was not meeting community needs. She advocated for it to become one of the focus areas of the fund, with support of then CEO, Tan Sri Dato’ Azman Mokhtar—another champion. Mr. Mokhtar, whose parents were both educators, advocated for the program within the company and was instrumental in securing initial funding. On the government side, Dato’ Noor Rezan Bapoo Hashim at the Ministry of Education was an enthusiastic supporter: “It was something I had been fighting for over the years.”

And finally, champions create champions. A champion’s advocacy can have a cascading effect by “identifying those who are already inspired and those who need to be inspired,” shared Jayamala Subramaniam, CEO of **Arghyam** in India. They not only propel the PPP forward, but inspire more advocates at multiple levels of the partnership.

“You need someone to drive a pulse. You need a champion for the vehicle...And that champion has to be able to build champions in their local communities.”

– David Zuellig,
Zuellig Family Foundation

BEING NIMBLE

Social needs, political leadership and organizations change constantly. These can be a boon or a barrier depending on how the PPP is able to respond. Nimbleness is not just an attitude or openness to change. Nimbleness means being a learning organization: one that incorporates continuous learning into its processes

and strategies.³⁶ Throughout our study many PPPs demonstrated the ability to pivot or regroup when circumstances changed.

A nimble PPP can respond to an evolving understanding of the problem it is trying to solve. We see this with the **Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)**. “We realized that we needed to reorganize and invest in prevention, mitigation and resilience, rather than constantly rebuilding in the aftermath of disasters,” said Bill Luz, Chief Resilience Officer. “When we take a hit, we need to be ready so we can bounce back quicker.” The Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, ranking ninth globally on the *WorldRiskIndex* in 2020.³⁷ PDRF recognized the critical importance of preparedness and resilience, and expanded its remit. The shift was reflected in the Foundation’s name: the “R” in PDRF changed from “Recovery” to “Resilience”.

“You have to be nimble and be able to make decisions very quickly.”

– Bill Luz,
Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation

Arghyam also adapted as its understanding of water management evolved. In the early days, “We identified the people doing good work in the area of water and just funded them,” explained Jayamala Subramaniam, CEO of Arghyam. As the complexity of water security became apparent, Arghyam pivoted from “funding projects to programs to partnerships.” More recently, Arghyam has shifted from addressing water scarcity directly to catalyzing and strengthening the capacity of the ecosystem itself. Leveraging digital technology, the organization now enables and strengthens ecosystem actors, including government, to take control and drive water management locally. This positions them to better achieve the kind of large-scale change they envisioned.

Development and social impact bonds bake nimbleness into the structure of the PPP. Only the outcome needs to be fixed from the outset, not the delivery method. This built-in flexibility creates room



for change and innovation. Two years in, learning outcomes of female schoolchildren were not meeting expectations in the **Educate Girls Development Impact Bond**. So they engaged pedagogy experts and pivoted to a curriculum more suited to children with learning difficulties. This was exactly what schoolgirls who had been left behind in the traditional schooling system needed. By the third year there was a huge improvement in learning outcomes, equivalent to achieving 160% of the target.³⁸

“We started with a mission to reach 200 million children in five years...when we go down a path, we ask ‘Will this get me to my destination?’ If not, you have to get off that path.”

– Shankar Maruwada,
EkStep Foundation

Nimbleness means being better prepared for external headwinds. When pandemic-driven school closures took millions of students in China out of classrooms in 2020, **Tencent Education** reacted quickly. Within just five days it had tweaked its online learning platform for school use. And fine-tuned it for easy navigation by less tech-savvy teachers and students. Tencent also created feedback loops to respond to emerging needs. When the need for a “raise hand” function was voiced, it was added to the platform within a couple of days. **CONNEXT ED Foundation** also had to adapt during the Covid-19 pandemic. It provided laptops to students during school closures, helping to sustain learning access for underprivileged students.

These strategies are useful tools to deploy during the genesis and implementation of a PPP for social good: they can help partners align efforts and goals, and collaborate to create powerful impact. But what happens over the long term or towards the later stages of a PPP for social good? A founder or partner may want to exit the partnership, and yet ensure that the benefits to the community are not suspended. Or it may be in the best interest of the community for government to take ownership. In the next section, we address the question of financial and impact sustainability of a PPP for social good and the ability of each partner to decouple.

Part 2

Sustainability

Sustainability is the million-dollar question—literally and figuratively—for PPPs for social good. Both in a financial sense (Can the PPP for social good sustain itself for its duration?), and in an impact sense (Can a PPP’s impact outlive its duration?). Impact sustainability is especially critical because many social and environmental issues require a long commitment horizon. No company can take on the costs of providing education or healthcare in perpetuity. So how can PPPs for social good be sustainable in both senses?

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Money matters. Securing funding was an oft-heard concern among many of the people we spoke to. In all 20 PPPs

for social good we analyzed, the private sector partner contributed financial capital. Some contributed more and some less. Some made long-term commitments with an “as long as it takes” attitude. Sometimes funding came directly from a company, and other times it came from a corporate foundation or the founder’s family foundation. But in all cases, funding commitments negotiated early on helped make the program viable.

Some business leaders and philanthropists have made long-term funding commitments to a PPP attached to a cause they are passionate about. Thapana Sirivadhanabhakdi, CEO of Thai Beverage, sees **Pracharath Rak Samakkee** as a long-term project and has committed to supporting it in perpetuity. Suphachai





Image: Knu-Erk Helle, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Chearavanont, Chairman of True Corporation, is committed to funding **CONNEX ED Foundation** in perpetuity. Seema Aziz, whose foundation supports the **Adopt-A-School Program**, has made an open-ended commitment to supporting her passion for education. Long-term funding commitments to **Arghyam and EkStep Foundation** from Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies have provided the financial latitude to innovate, pilot and institutionalize. Niu Gensheng, the visionary and benefactor behind the **Inner Mongolia Shengle International Ecological Demonstration Zone** project, has committed funding for the next 30 years.

Some PPPs monetize services and incorporate revenue streams into their business models. **Better Factories Cambodia** offers fee-generating services that cover some of their costs. **Waste Concern** generated revenue through charging fees for household waste collection and by selling compost created from this waste. The **Inner Mongolia Shengle International Ecological Demonstration Zone** project generates income through the sale of wood and non-wood products as well as through the sale of carbon credits.^{xxiv,39,40} These income sources will also help sustain long-term project outcomes as the tree plantation and all income generated from it will be fully owned by the local community after the 30-year project

term.⁴¹ **PDRF** has elements of a membership model. Its corporate contributors receive advance natural disaster warnings through PDRF's Emergency Operations Center, as well as training in business continuity management, supply chain resilience and other areas of disaster preparedness.

Some PPPs like **social impact bonds (SIB)** have innovated in their financing mechanism itself. In SIBs the private sector puts forward risk capital to pilot an innovative service. If the social outcomes are met, the government is the outcome payer, paying back the investor and then adapting and scaling the successful

solution to more communities. This diversification of risk attracts both private and public money to the table.

Some PPPs lean on government support or takeover for long-term financial sustainability. When the Ministry of Health stepped in to scale the **Zuellig Family Foundation's Health Leadership and Governance Program** nationwide, it also took on the costs of training local government units. In India, **EkStep Foundation** has put in place a transition plan to hand over the upkeep and maintenance of the national teacher platform and digital infrastructure it had built for government. In another few years, the government will have complete control and ownership of the platform.

IMPACT SUSTAINABILITY

How do you sustain impact for beneficiaries beyond the life of the PPP? A recurring theme among the leaders of PPPs that we spoke with was the importance of having an exit strategy, of "letting go" while ensuring impact lives on. We observed two ways impact could be sustained post-exit. One is building capacity, and the second is building a knowledge infrastructure.

Let's take capacity building first. This facilitates others to extend the work of the PPP, to replicate the model or simply to cultivate an expert knowledge base. Engaging others to build a community of practitioners helps

^{xxiv} As a project registered under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM), it can earn and trade Certified Emission Reduction (CER) credits. Carbon credits are earned through carbon sequestration—the process of absorption and storage of carbon dioxide in trees, plants and other crops—in the reforested area. One ton of carbon dioxide is equal to one carbon credit. Over the next 30 years, the project is expected to absorb 220,000 tons of carbon dioxide through its tree plantation, 160,000 of which have already been bought by Warner Disney.

sustain impact. Inviting others to inhabit the same space, encouraging collaboration and tinkering with established solutions can lead to finding even better ones.

Both Yayasan AMIR and the Zuellig Family Foundation were asked by government partners to expand their successful operational model into other regions. With limited internal capacity to scale, both private partners took to capacity building as a way to grow their reach and impact. The **Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme** trains government district officers to make the model more sustainable and scalable.⁴² Under the **Health Leadership and Governance Program**, the Zuellig Family Foundation partners with universities to build their capacity to deliver training directly to local government units.⁴³

In both cases, building capacity through training programs catalyzed expansion. Yayasan AMIR's sphere of influence has expanded to 83 schools from 10.⁴⁴ Around 40% of the Philippines' population has been exposed to the Foundation's Health Change Model.⁴⁵ Capacity building has trained others to be an extension of the PPP team, in turn extending impact to even more beneficiaries. Even if both private sector partners were to exit, the programs could endure.

“For us, sustainability was the first thing we thought about in coming up with the intervention design. Before we entered, we were already thinking: how do we exit?”

– Shahnaz Al-Sadat,
LeapEd Services

Capturing knowledge as institutional memory is also critical for impact sustainability. One of our interviewees, Arghyam's CEO Jayamala Subramaniam, eloquently describes this as “decoupling knowledge from the person.” Institutionalizing knowledge helps it flow across the sector. Several of the PPPs for social good we studied have invested in knowledge creation and transfer as a means to sustain impact beyond their lifecycle.

Arghyam offers an explicit example of institutionalizing

memory to sustain impact. They have developed the India Water Portal—a digital clearinghouse of data and knowledge about water—providing public access to information about water availability, quality and tools for managing it.⁴⁶ The portal has a very clear purpose: to prevent societal memory loss. As Rohini Nilekani puts it, “We are trying to develop a tech backbone for the water sector. For people to build their own ability to solve their local problems in water because these problems are very contextual. What works in Bihar may not work in Rajasthan. So we are using technology to build people's local knowledge and capacity. We leverage technology to ensure this knowledge is scaled, stored, retrievable, bite-sized, and atomized.”

Restorasi Ekosistem Riau's peatland research facility, the Eco-Research Camp, also captures and stores knowledge on restoring the degraded peat forest in Indonesia's Kampar Peninsula.⁴⁷ RER recognizes that landscape conservation requires a long-term commitment. The Eco-Research Camp institutionalizes expert knowledge, helping foster the capacity of others to conserve the world's stores of peat forests.⁴⁸

Finally, disseminating lessons learned by a PPP for social good also helps sustain impact. It means others do not have to reinvent the wheel to discover successful approaches or fail themselves to avoid pitfalls. Several PPP founders we spoke to were cognizant of this. The Nippon Foundation observed an institutional reluctance towards **social impact bonds (SIB)**, given the lack of proven examples in Japan. This led them to step in and finance several pilot SIBs themselves, documenting the process along the way so they could serve as proofs-of-concept for others. Similarly, the **Educate Girls Development Impact Bond** was diligent in capturing their experience in undertaking the world's first development impact bond in education. This was instrumental for others such as the Quality Education India Development Impact Bond, which is currently the world's largest DIB in education.

Thinking about sustainability systematically and purposefully can help maintain the project's success and impact in the long term. However, sustainability is one side of the coin. The other side, which is just as important, is resilience to risks. A recognition of headwinds that could threaten the partnership, its credibility or legitimacy, funding, ability to deliver, or even its existence is key. In the next section, we highlight a few significant risks that could befall PPPs for social good, and ways to mitigate their adverse effects.

Part 3

Risks

PPPs for social good are on the rise in Asia. And while this model can facilitate social innovation, promote scalability and address complex challenges, there are also risks that can hobble such initiatives.

For our study, we investigated 20 successful PPPs for social good. Many of these overcame challenges inherent in the nature of a partnership between the private sector and government. But as in many fields, much can be learned from adversity and even failure. What are some of the most common hazards facing PPPs for social good?

1. Shifting policy priorities. The most commonly cited challenge was that of government priorities shifting, often because of changes in political leadership. This could lead to waning interest in an existing PPP for social good. Many of our interviewees voiced concerns about political change, including the **Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation**, **CONNEX ED Foundation** and the **Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)**. For Tongjai Thanachanan, leading the **Pracharath Rak Samakkee** scheme in Thailand, newly elected officials could mean not so much an end to government support, but a priority downgrade. In fact, originally, 24 Thai companies were part of the *Pracharath* initiative, which began in 2015.^{xxv,49} Despite dwindling support, two partnerships have persisted; largely thanks to the commitment of Thai Beverage CEO Thapana Sirivadhanabhakdi and True Corporation Chairman Suphachai Chearavanont. Both are deeply committed to the *Pracharath* projects associated with their companies as discussed earlier in this report. As Mr. Chearavanont explained, his company helped set up a separate implementing organization (**CONNEX ED Foundation**) so that “despite any possible political change that could end the program, we would be able to continue our work.”

“Government policy priorities change: it’s not that they don’t support us anymore, but we may no longer be the top priority.”

– Tongjai Thanachanan,
Pracharath Rak Samakkee



As mentioned earlier, PPPs can also build a lattice of relationships within government and the private sector to withstand these shocks. **Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)** understands the predicament of political change all too well. It has endured changes in national leadership since its establishment in 2009, each with varying levels of enthusiasm and endorsement for PDRF. PDRF has deployed a number of risk mitigation measures, including working closely with the Office of Civil Defense, which is not affected by elections. Similarly, the **Zuellig Family Foundation** works with both the Ministry of Health and local government units.

^{xxv} The *Pracharath* initiative was launched in September 2015 as part of the government’s ฿136 billion (approximately US\$4 billion) stimulus package. A total of 24 businesses initially signed on to the initiative in 2015. In 2016, the government set up 12 steering committees, each of which was led by a minister and an executive from either the private sector or an industry association.

“When working with government you must be extremely patient because sometimes every two steps you take forward, you have to take one step back. Bureaucrats change, and often, priorities of the state change and budgets get shrunk. So you have to be patient and you have to remain committed to your intention to deploy this capital as philanthropists.”

– Rohini Nilekani,
Arghyam and EkStep Foundation

2. Lack of planning for financial and impact sustainability.

A PPP for social good is akin to a “cost center” for companies: they pay into it but derive no profit from it. For most companies, taking on a cost center for an indefinite period may not be possible. Unlike traditional PPPs where financial gains are built-in, PPPs for social good allow for more indirect benefits such as goodwill and *guanxi*, which are good enough to justify over the longer term. Not thinking through a PPP’s financing, or how impact can be sustained after the partnership ends, puts the entire project at risk. Many PPPs look to government to take over and scale a successful intervention, ensuring both an exit for the company and in sustaining impact. But this may not automatically come to pass unless it’s an explicit part of the plan.

We have found that successful PPPs for social good have financing plans in place at the very outset, whether the PPP is a three-year development impact bond or a 30-year commitment to reforestation. Some even monetize services and incorporate revenue streams to supplement income. Almost all private sector partners spoke of the importance of an exit strategy. But many were investing in capacity building of talent in the broader ecosystem, or were building digital stores of knowledge, to ensure that the partnership’s impact is not lost with its conclusion.

3. Unforeseen delays. Unexpected delays in regulatory approvals and coordination between multiple layers in government can add complexity to a PPP for social good. In India, it took **Arghyam** time to build workflow across the numerous government departments that oversee water. **Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER)** in Indonesia faced delays when it took nearly a year to secure an important license.

Nimble PPPs are better equipped to bypass bureaucratic headwinds—or work with them without the project getting derailed. Investing in building trust with government also helps. We see successful PPPs employ both these strategies across Asia.

Sometimes, however, a PPP needs not just regulatory approval but a change in policy. This is much harder to achieve with limited time. Government regulations in Japan, for example, do not make it easy for state bodies to act as “outcome payers” to private entities. This is holding back growth of the nascent market for **social impact bonds**, a pay-for-success PPP where the private sector invests capital to pilot a social innovation, to be reimbursed by government if the outcome is deemed a success. There are economy-wide benefits in facilitating an enabling regulatory environment for PPPs like these. Getting buy-in for the necessary policy change may be a secondary but important mission for them.

4. External shocks. Disasters—both natural and man-made—can impact a PPP’s financing and disrupt supply chains. They can also impact companies’ financial commitments to social responsibility projects. Signs of donor fatigue are becoming apparent for the **Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)**, which is reliant on private sector funding. Many businesses that support PDRF have made additional contributions to Covid-19 relief efforts, on top of commitments to other causes. While it is near impossible to fully guard against disasters, diversification of supply chains, mechanisms for financial sustainability, or having contingency funds can help mitigate some of the worst effects. Training of staff to handle emergencies and investing in digitalization to adopt blended approaches in social service delivery can also equip PPPs to face crises when they occur.

5. Corruption. This is the underbelly of the relationship between the private sector and government. Historically, the existence of “crony capitalism” was a reality in

Asia.^{50,51} One of the silver linings of the 1997 Asian financial crisis was the realization that certain forms of the cozy relationship between companies and the government were not only unsustainable, but detrimental to the long-term well-being of the country. This realization was coupled with Asian companies growing beyond their own borders and, therefore, beyond the ability of their own government to determine their economic viability. Over time, this meant a decrease in the types of financial arrangements that had been part of the economic fabric of Asia until that time.⁵²

Still, in Asia the government wields tremendous power and influence over the private sector. When the government comes knocking with an explicit “ask,” it is virtually impossible to say no. There is a risk that the resources earmarked for a PPP can be coopted for either private gain or something much more sinister. We saw this in the case of the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal, where cross-sector partnerships established to further economic development fell prey to fraud and embezzlement allegations.⁵³ Or in the case of now-jailed Park Geun-hye, former President of

Korea, who demanded payment for a friend’s fraudulent foundation from South Korea’s top companies.⁵⁴

While these examples represent the potential to bolster greed, the case of Myanmar is far worse. In Myanmar, the “Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine” was set up as a public-private partnership to bring humanitarian aid to conflict zones. However, a United Nations fact-finding mission alleged that several “crony companies” not only did not lend a hand in dealing with a humanitarian crisis, but also aided and abetted the government’s program of persecuting and expelling the Rohingya people.⁵⁵

Many Asian companies are large, multinational corporations—but there is still a power differential with government. If the government is coming to the table with mixed intentions, requests for cooperation can put the company in a no-win situation. In some cases, companies have been eager participants as well. It is important to better understand the dynamics at play and focus on the great majority of PPPs for social good that really are good, so we may move forward constructively.



Image: CIFOR, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Conclusion

Around the world, there is great interest in collaborating to tackle complex societal challenges which require a multi-stakeholder, multi-sector approach. In Asia, we see this manifesting as “public-private partnerships for social good.” While a social sector organization is often at the table, these public-private partnerships (PPPs) for social good hinge on a partnership between a company (or private foundation) and the government. This makes sense within the Asian context where donors—both individual and corporate—prefer to work aligned with government. PPPs for social good are a natural extension of this practice.

PPPs for social good are rising across Asia as governments recognize they cannot meet all needs alone and, directly or indirectly, solicit help from the private sector. At the same, the private sector has increasing confidence and desire to contribute resources, skills and expertise to tackle large scale social and environmental issues.

The immense impact that can result from joining the strengths of the private and public sector together is clear. The 20 PPPs for social good we examined for this study are impacting hundreds of millions of students and improving livelihoods for thousands of villages. The environmental PPPs featured are protecting natural land equivalent to the size of multiple states. From across Asia these partnerships are also enabling communities to reach higher standards in maternal health, nutrition and labor rights. And they’re equipping entire countries to be more resilient in the face of disease, disasters, and disinformation.

We highlighted a number of strategies that make PPPs for social good successful. The first is **building trust**. Trust is the oil that keeps the partnership wheels turning. Investing in building trust is almost natural in Asia, as the concept of *guanxi* shows. *Guanxi*, a Chinese word, is more complex than the English translation “relationships” conveys; it speaks to investment in a multifaceted, long-term relationship that builds and sustains trust. Second, successful PPPs recognize that **aligning incentives**

towards a shared goal is key. When each partner can see a clear reason for and benefit of their participation, the partnership is more likely to be sustainable. Third, having a **clear, simple vision** can be a PPP’s north star, guiding the project and helping sharpen focus on areas with the greatest impact. Fourth, ensuring **transparency and accountability** to ascertain that public interest objectives are being served. Fifth, having **champions**. Passionate and committed individuals can catalyze a PPP, open doors and bring other partners on board. And, finally, the sixth strategy is being nimble by becoming a learning organization: one that incorporates continuous learning into its processes and strategies. A **nimble** PPP can respond more quickly to headwinds and tailwinds.

Today, there is a great deal of experimentation with using business rigor and tools as part of the solution to meet community needs. We see this in the different forms and approaches public-private partnerships for social good are taking. What remains common across these PPPs is that, at their core, they are collaborative and unlock the comparative advantages of the public and private sectors. This creates a sum greater than its parts: together, the public and private sectors can achieve impact at greater speed and scale. We hope that this study not only deepens understanding of how this comes about, but also guides companies and philanthropists in their collaborative approaches to delivering social good across the region.

Appendix I

Research methodology



The findings in this report are based on a qualitative analysis of PPPs for social good in Asia through extensive literature review and in-depth interviews. Specifically, we:

Analyzed 20 examples of PPPs for social good. These examples were selected to present a diverse array of social innovations and partnership configurations among PPPs for social good in Asia. Spanning 11 economies, our examples cover nine sectors: education, water and sanitation, health, cybersecurity and transparency, environmental conservation, disaster resilience and recovery, labor rights, rural and economic development, and waste management.

Interviewed 50 experts and stakeholders.^{xxvi} We conducted in-depth interviews with business and nonprofit leaders, senior management of PPPs, and policymakers between July 2020 and January 2021. Additionally, we surveyed 40 ultra-high-net-worth business leaders (from 10 Asian economies) in our network.

Reviewed 110+ reports and articles. We undertook an extensive literature review of academic and non-academic reports and articles on public-private partnerships and related areas. For the 20 PPPs for social good covered in the report, we mined annual reports and other sources to complement our understanding and corroborate insights from the interviews.

^{xxvi} We conducted 50 interviews across 18 projects. Analysis of two projects (the Digital Accountability Project in Taiwan and the Alibaba Rural Taobao Program in China) is based on desk research.

Appendix II

List of interviewees

Bangladesh – Community-Based Urban Solid Waste Management Program

Dr. Habibur Rahman (Jagannath University)

Cambodia – Better Factories Cambodia (BFC)

Jill Tucker (ex-Better Factories Cambodia); Sara Park (Better Factories Cambodia); Sean Jung (GAP Inc.)

China – Lao Niu Inner Mongolia Shengle International Ecological Demonstration ZoneLan Keqi (Lao Niu Foundation)^{xxvii}**China – Tencent Education’s online learning platform**

Jason Chen (Tencent)

India – Arghyam

Rohini Nilekani (Arghyam); Jayamala V Subramaniam (Arghyam); Amrtha Kasturirangan (Arghyam); Manisha Shah (Arghyam); Anand Arkalgud (Socion Advisors)

India – Educate Girls Development Impact Bond (DIB)

Safeena Husain (Educate Girls); Alison Bukhari (Educate Girls)

India – EkStep Foundation

Shankar Maruwada (EkStep Foundation); Deepika Mogilishetty (EkStep Foundation)

India – Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation (MVSTF)

Sheetal Mehta (Mahindra Group); Jibby Mathew (Mahindra Group); Santosh Pathak (Tata Trusts); Daphne Vallado (Tata Trusts); Pranay Mane (Tata Trusts); Dilipsing Bayas (Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation); Pavneet Kaur (Indian Administrative Services); Mayuri Mahatale (Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation); Praveen Kumar Chadar (Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation); Yogita Ataram (Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation); Tejashri Kadu (Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation); Asaram Hatagale (Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation); Komal Adsad (Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation); Sangita Balode (Maharashtra Village Social Transformation Foundation)

Indonesia – Restorasi Ekosistem Riau (RER)

Nyoman Iswarayoga (Restorasi Ekosistem Riau)

Japan – Social Impact Bonds (SIB)

Nanako Kudo (Social Innovation and Investment Foundation)

Malaysia – Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme (TSP)

Tan Sri Dato’ Azman Mokhtar (ex-Khazanah Nasional Berhad); Dato’ Noor Rezan Bapoo Hashim (Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme, ex-Ministry of Education Malaysia); Shahnaz Al-Sadat (LeapEd Services); Raja Tan Sri Dato’ Seri Arshad bin Raja Tun Uda (Yayasan AMIR Trust Schools Programme)

^{xxvii} All findings related to this project are from published resources.

Pakistan – Adopt-A-School Program

Seema Aziz (CARE Foundation); Dr. Faisal Bari (Lahore University of Management Sciences)

Philippines – Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)

Rene ‘Butch’ Meily (Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation); Guillermo ‘Bill’ Luz (Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation); Veronica Gabaldon (Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation)

Philippines – Zuellig Family Foundation’s Health Leadership and Governance Program (HLGP)

David Zuellig (Zuellig Family Foundation); Ernesto D. Garilao (Zuellig Family Foundation); Austere A. Panadero (Zuellig Family Foundation)

Thailand – Bangkok canal infrastructure development projects

Dr. Pongporn Sudbanthad (Independent consultant)

Thailand – CONNEXT ED Foundation

Suphachai Chearavanont (True Corporation); Onchuma Meewongukote (True Corporation); Supasiri Leelapornpinit (True Corporation)

Thailand – Happy & Healthy Bike Lane

Dr. Vichit Suraphongchai (Siam Commercial Bank)

Thailand – Pracharath Rak Samakkee (PRS)

Tongjai Thanachanan (Thai Beverage); Tivaporn Srivarakul (Pracharath Rak Samakkee Kanchanaburi)

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