Paul Hamlyn Foundation India

India Programme
Strategic Plan
2023–33

phf

Paul Hamlyn was an entrepreneurial publisher and philanthropist, committed to offering new opportunities and experiences for people in need.

During his lifetime, and because of his experiences, he had a strong interest in social justice, challenging prejudice and opening up the arts and education to everyone, particularly young people.

In 1987 he established the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for general charitable purposes.

Since then, the Foundation has continuously supported charitable activities in the UK and in India, enabling people, especially children and young people, to enjoy a better quality of life.

Paul died in August 2001, but his magnificent bequest enables us to be independent and bold in honouring his beliefs and aims.

Executive summary

The India programme strategy outlines the guiding principles of the Foundation's work over the next 10 years.

The strategy is built on the belief that with suitable guidance, communities can think through their own development challenges, find progressive solutions and build an equitable relationship with the rest of society.

We will support non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in designing and implementing innovative social development initiatives that are co-created with communities and underpinned by empathy, mindfulness and respect for equity, inclusion and diversity.

Development challenges are complex and responding to them requires thoughtful analysis. We want to support NGOs not only in carrying out their chosen roles but also in evolving as conscious, confident organisations that can sustain their work effectively. We will therefore strive to form effective funding partnerships founded on equity and trust.

The India programme will continue to be run through a process of open grants and operate in our existing priority geographical areas.

Development action must be understood within the sociocultural environment in which it takes place. We are committed to upholding the dignity of the Constitution of India at all times and will act in accordance with the fundamental values laid down in its preamble.

In this document, we aim to provide a clear, open and detailed outline of our strategy, which we hope will enable effective partnerships to emerge.

Contents

Introduction

This strategic plan sets out the aims of the Foundation's India programme for the next 10 years (2023–33).

We plan to achieve these aims mainly through funding the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). We will also commission and/or carry out research, evaluation and communication to increase the value of our grant-making and make the best use of the skills and experience of our trustees, advisors, consultants and staff.

This strategy outlines what we want to achieve through our funds during this period, our current and future grant schemes, and other activities we plan to undertake. It also provides us with a framework for managing our resources and communicating the context of our aims to trustees, staff, advisors, committee members and external organisations.

Key terms **in bold** are explained in the Glossary on .

Background

Our mission

The Foundation has funded development work in India since 1992 and has operated under a strategic plan since 2007.

We use an **open grants** approach to support a variety of projects proposed to us by NGOs via our website.

Through the grant-making process, we have helped NGOs enhance the rigour and professionalism of their work in areas such as financial management and governance, clarify their philosophy and define their goals. We have also encouraged them to adopt community-led transformation processes which actively involve those who will benefit from interventions in designing projects and measuring outcomes.

We aim to be an effective and independent funder, using all our resources to create opportunities and support social change.

We partner with inspiring organisations to place people facing disadvantage at the heart of leading change and designing solutions to overcome inequality.

We ensure that in all the programmes we fund, communities have a central role in assessing problems and planning, designing and implementing solutions. We want to empower communities to understand and gain control over their own challenges so that all solutions are grounded in fairness, inclusivity and dignity.

Our values

Guided by the values of our founder, Paul Hamlyn, we work to create opportunities for people to realise their potential.

Trust

We believe that trust is at the heart of all relationships and collaboration.

Trust helps us to form balanced and equitable relationships with the organisations we fund. We build and maintain trust by delivering on our commitments and striving to be consistent and resilient over the long-term.

Collaboration and connection

We believe in the power of working together to achieve a greater impact.

By collaborating with others, we can multiply our gains and build communities that share a common interest.

Openness

Openness is key to building trust and enabling collaboration.

We are committed to sharing all we know. We welcome feedback and will change the way we work if it is undermining the quality of the relationships we want to create.

Thoughtfulness

Every decision we take has an impact on someone, so we strive to think about others with kindness.

We want to be attentive and careful in exercising judgement and to create the time and space for deep conversations and learning. Being flexible and responsive to the needs of those we fund is critical if we are to demonstrate a thoughtful approach.

Best practice and innovation

We strive to demonstrate best practice and find better ways to do things.

We ensure our procedures are effective and light-touch. We value our unique opportunity to contribute to society and foster new thinking and approaches for social development action. We help organisations develop and sustain their work by paying particular attention to long-term issues.

While we work in partnership with the government and other organisations, we are prepared to question established modes of thought and address issues which others may find challenging.

Equality and diversity

We treat people with fairness and dignity and show respect for diversity.

We recognise that India is a diverse country, which, through its people, is seeking to build on its rich cultural heritage while embracing modernity. We value India's plurality and diversity and work to uphold the dignity of its people.

We ensure that the programmes we fund respect and adhere to the values of the Constitution of India, including:

- justice (social, economic and political)

- liberty (of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship)

- equality (of status and of opportunity)

- fraternity (assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation).

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Strategic aims

We have identified four main aims and two secondary aims for our work in India over the next 10 years.

Our four main aims are to:

1. encourage NGOs to take on **community-centric** development programmes

2. enable communities to take charge of their own development and improve their lives

3. encourage development funding to address **systemic change**

4. enhance the capacity of organisations and people who facilitate the above aims.

To support these main aims, we have also identified two further aims:

5. enhance knowledge and learning about development action

6. develop PHF itself as an exemplar foundation.

Key shifts from the previous strategy

Our proposed strategy has evolved from the previous one but also introduces several new areas of focus.

In line with our previous strategy, we will emphasise support for communities facing the greatest disadvantage. We will prioritise ideas that complement the long-term plans of the organisations we fund and that promote accountability and transparency within those organisations. We will maintain the existing geographical priority areas for our work (see page 24).

We will continue to fund development projects through a process of open grants – that is, by supporting projects which are led by an organisation's own convictions rather than by any specific themes or agendas we have set. We want to fund organisations that can clearly demonstrate what they hope to achieve, how they will bring about change and how this will help build a more secure and resilient community.

Emerging challenges

In the decade since the last strategy was published, our context has undergone complex social and economic changes which have had a corresponding impact on the role of social development organisations.

Urbanisation

Throughout India, urban centres are facing new challenges which are affecting the lives of many young people, especially men. This change has been driven by various push and pull factors, including those related to work, housing, missing entitlements and lifestyle.

Employment

Even though the advent of the gig economy has brought new job opportunities, unemployment has still risen. This is perhaps related to the gap between young people's aspirations and their capacity to achieve them. Livelihoods emerging from natural resources have become less important, as agriculture has become less profitable and access to resources such as forests more difficult. Meanwhile, new ideas related to social entrepreneurship have begun to create a space.

Growing economic and social inequalities

Growing economic inequality has worsened social inequality and discrimination. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** funding coming into the sector is also changing the nature of interventions. CSR funding seeks quick impact, emphasising the end rather than the means. This is affecting the 'process-led' approaches that social development organisations tend to follow.

Changes to the funding ecosystem

Economic development has brought about new types of philanthropy. These have begun to contribute to social development initiatives alongside traditional funders and provide potential spaces for collaboration.

Public perception of the social development sector

There has been a big change in the way that broader society perceives the social development sector in India. How to improve this perception is an emerging concern.

Covid

The Covid pandemic has also had a significant impact on social development processes and created new challenges.

Our response to these challenges

It is crucial that we develop our strategy in a way that builds on our past strengths while responding effectively to new challenges. We will do this by:

- placing greater emphasis on knowledge creation, particularly relating to community-centric development, problem assessment, design, planning and implementation

- enhancing human and institutional capacities within the development sector

- identifying and prioritising communities classified as **Denotified Tribes** and **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups**

- maintaining a light-touch approach to grant management but providing more support to help organisations go deeper and become more holistic in their work

- more proactively bringing larger-scale organisations into the programme portfolio, while maintaining our emphasis on funding "**value in itself**" work carried out by small and medium organisations

- prioritising issues facing young people, particularly those from rural areas

- addressing issues that have emerged in a post-Covid world, especially those affecting children and young people

- making more concerted and planned efforts to approach other donors for collaborative action.

It is crucial that we develop our strategy in a way that builds on our past strengths while responding effectively to new challenges.

We believe social development has a critical role to play in evolving development thinking and ensuring that communities facing extreme disadvantage receive the services, support and encouragement they need.

Our strategic aims explained

1. Encourage NGOs to take on community-centric development programmes

We understand social development processes from a community perspective. Through the projects we fund, we want to make communities more aware of their challenges, provide them with the means of addressing them and put them in a position of strength to deal with their futures.

India-based NGOs have been, and will remain, the sole mechanism for our funding. We expect that the projects we fund will be community-centric and designed in accordance with a strong framework of values and ethics.

We believe social development has a critical role to play in evolving development thinking and ensuring that communities facing extreme disadvantage receive the services, support and encouragement they need. NGOs are crucial in providing a support framework for such communities, sustaining democratic traditions and voicing concerns.

Defining our priorities

Communities vary widely in terms of their economic and social power, access to resources and history of injustice. We will prioritise working with those who face the greatest disadvantage and inequity.

We will continue to emphasise environmental awareness, local self-governance and **gender-transformative approaches**, i.e. approaches that engage people of all genders as agents of change in addressing gender-based inequalities.

In each of our three phases of grant-making, we will focus on enhancing the capacity of the organisation and the community it works with, taking into account the organisation's specific requirements.

Young people are important community stakeholders. Helping them express their concerns is an important part of our development planning and we will encourage NGOs to make this a priority.

Strengthening local governance

Encouraging community-centric approaches includes strengthening the means of governance that operate in particular contexts. These include the **Gram Panchayats** and other similar statutory bodies. We want NGOs to help communities understand and regain control over the institutions that affect their lives. For example, this may involve strengthening **Gram Sabha**-led decision-making or enhancing the functioning of school or forest management committees. We will also work to ensure diversity of representation in these institutions. We believe that sustainability emerges from community institutions founded on diversity, equity and inclusion.

We will continue to discourage initiatives that attempt to create alternative institutional structures to those that exist within the local governance system. If organisations propose the creation of such structures as innovations, we will ask them to justify this in their application.

Exploring different approaches

We are not restricted by specific approaches or styles of work. We believe that the context of a development project must always determine the most suitable approach to take.

We realise that development initiatives are rarely simple or linear. There will be multiple parameters to be addressed and dilemmas to be faced. Innovative approaches implemented in two different contexts may be counter-narratives of each other. We believe that it is important to provide space for different approaches to be tried and tested.

We accept that not all ideas will succeed. We view failure as an inherent part of the development journey with the potential to guide and strengthen innovation.

2. Enable communities to take charge of their own development and improve their lives

While traditional communities face challenges, they also have inherent strengths which modern development frameworks often overlook.

Acknowledging strengths and challenges

Communities may have close-knit social structures, progressive views and empathetic approaches to resource utilisation and sustainability. They are often extremely conscious of their relationship with the environment and possess traditional knowledge which is highly relevant to modern ways of living.

Yet traditional communities may also be characterised by inequality stemming from deep-rooted attitudes that may be caste-based, strongly patriarchal and not necessarily democratic. Due to the hegemony of the 'modern development paradigm', ideas like individualism, profit maximisation or wealth accumulation may have left such communities unanchored and facing even greater disadvantage than before.

Striving for long-term effectiveness

While we encourage NGOs to design community-centric programmes, we also support NGOs in working within community structures to address critical internal conflicts.

We believe that for initiatives to be effective in the long term, communities must be supported in finding their voice, engaging democratically in the issues they face, understanding their own concerns and finding solutions to address them. Solutions must adhere to the rule of law as guided by the Constitution of India.

Delivering services to communities facing disadvantage is crucial, but we see this as only the first step. We discourage programmes that aim only to deliver services without seeking to empower the community to develop itself.

Supporting leadership

We will fund initiatives that facilitate leadership-influenced change processes, whether those leaders are individuals within communities or community organisations. We recognise that communities need forward-looking leadership that can generate enthusiasm among the community and inspire them transform to their reality.

3. Encourage development funding to address systemic change

Social development challenges are complex, and while it may be simpler to address one element of a system, experience shows that changes resulting from such interventions are not usually sustained.

While all development initiatives are founded on a strong sense of purpose and significant effort, they do not necessarily all lead to sustained systemic change. Systemic change is a change process that impacts all the elements of a system and enables them to synchronise through a sequence of interventions.

Initiatives designed to bring about systemic change are slower, more painstaking and often more expensive than those that address only one element of a system. They require greater expertise and more direct engagement as they rely on a community's ability to appreciate the source of their own distress and become agents of change.

Promoting systemic change

Bringing about systemic change requires carefully designed interventions and sustained, long-term support. This is particularly important when addressing tricky and persistent development concerns such as caste-based inequality and other **intergenerational challenges**; the emerging mental health epidemic; or the stigma associated with disease. We encourage organisations to explore the idea of systems thinking for development as they plan their applications.

We recognise the need for direct action to help communities overcome difficult circumstances and we will continue to support such initiatives. However, we will help organisations evolve their thinking so they can ensure their initiatives reap ongoing benefits, make communities more resilient and prevent situations from re-emerging.

Understanding intersectionality

This engagement with communities requires interventions to be based on an understanding of **intersectionality** – that is, the various intersecting factors that affect the lives of people in those communities. Such markers include race, caste, class, religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability and status. Viewing social problems through the prism of intersectionality may ensure more inclusive remedies and reveal opportunities for greater collaboration between and across social movements.

Working with other donors

Tackling these issues also needs coordinated action. We will come together with other donors to provide ongoing resources to well-functioning initiatives that have been designed with systemic change in mind. While we acknowledge that we are a small funder in India, we are committed to adding value where we can by sharing the data, knowledge and experiences that emerge from the work we fund. We do not claim to have all the answers, but we want to engage with other donors, exchange learning and insight, and explore solutions together.

4. Enhance the capacity of organisations and people who facilitate the above aims

We will ensure that with each partnership, we allocate an appropriate portion of our grant to building and enhancing the capacities of the team.

The organisations we fund are mostly small and medium NGOs who have chosen to take on difficult but meaningful work and may need support in formulating their development philosophy and approach. Their founders are extremely committed but may not necessarily have all the capacities to put their ideas into action.

Developing organisations

We support NGOs in organisational development and in setting up systems – for example, helping them strengthen their financial systems. Through our new strategy, we will also help enhance their governance while guiding them through processes of team and organisational development at appropriate stages of the grant cycle.

We aim to be a **relational donor**. We understand that organisations require appropriate financial and human resources to be able to undertake their work and we will help them access these resources as their initiatives require.

We will also support organisational development work, focusing on building the leadership capacities of first- and second-line leaders as well as encouraging organisations to have more women and people from communities they work with in leadership roles.

Looking beyond the grant cycle

We recognise the need for continuity throughout the grant cycle and beyond if organisations are to enhance their capacities and design and implement developmentally sound, community-centric programmes. We want to ensure they form well-developed teams, transparent and accountable financial systems, and robust, democratic governance systems. With these elements in place, organisations will be better equipped to sustain their activities and continue generating resources over the long term.

5. Enhance knowledge and learning about development action

We will build our learning and knowledge agenda and share experiences with the wider development community, including other NGOs doing similar work, students of development studies, development research institutions and policymakers.

Having funded more than 300 projects over the past 25 years, the Foundation has substantial experience to contribute to learning and knowledge creation.

We will encourage learning institutions to engage with the organisations we fund. We will also help organisations learn from ground-level experiences – for example, through partner seminars and cross-partner visits within and across regions. We believe this will help them strengthen their own perspectives, enhance the value of their work and develop as reflective organisations.

We recognise that this process may be difficult and that NGOs may be limited in their capacity to take on such initiatives. Engaging with learning institutions is also a new effort on our part. It may require innovative, exploratory approaches and the willingness to go beyond our established funding mechanisms.

6. Develop PHF itself as an exemplar foundation

As a Foundation, we are committed to setting and adhering to the highest standards of operations and management.

Our mission is to support credible organisations that demonstrate accountability, transparent governance, sensitivity to community-led development processes and a zero-tolerance policy towards corrupt practices.

We will do this by ensuring that:

- our grant-making reflects important values such as mindfulness, democratic decision-making, respect for diversity, equity and inclusion, and environmental awareness

- our interactions with organisations are conducted by people with lived experience of working on development initiatives who can offer appropriate technical support while demonstrating empathy and sensitivity to development needs

- our relationships with organisations are honest, transparent, open and equal, and based on faith, trust and a shared sense of hope

- the initiatives we fund are not only guided by impact-driven thinking but also support the cognitive and emotional elements of development

- we support grant proposals that have been developed in a participatory manner with communities and that place those communities at their centre

- we help organisations develop their strength, independence and sense of purpose, and position themselves effectively in relation to the target community and the external world

- we share our learning with other people and organisations in the sector

- we manage internal costs of operations at realistic and practical levels.

Our priority geographical areas

Regional imbalances are significant in India, and we will continue to prioritise support for those areas facing the greatest social and economic challenges.

The priority geographical areas for our work cover the central states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Telangana, Bihar and West Bengal, as well as the seven states of Northeast India.

They also include several culturally identifiable regions within other states, namely:

- the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra

- eastern and southeastern areas of Gujarat

- the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh

- the Mewar, Dang and Hadoti regions of Rajasthan.

In addition, we will support organisations working directly with **Denotified Tribes** and **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups**, wherever these may be located.

Key challenges facing communities

The challenges faced by communities in these areas stem from factors which include:

- the perpetuating caste system

- the exclusion of tribal communities

- highly patriarchal social structures

- poor infrastructure

- remoteness

- lack of social investment, particularly in sectors such as health and education.

Work in the priority geographical areas will support both rural and urban communities. We aim to work in the state capitals, as they are among the fastest-growing urban areas in each state, and in towns with a population of less than 1 million.

Levels of change

Bringing about sustainable long-term change in people's lives requires action of different types and at various levels.

We will deliver our aims mainly by supporting NGOs through open grant schemes. We may, at times, commission or carry out specific research, evaluation and communication. Very occasionally, we may establish and direct major initiatives.

We expect the work we support to have an impact at some of the following levels:

- **micro/meso level:** individuals and communities

- **meso/macro level:** larger-scale organisations

- **macro/meta level:** broader policy and practice.

We will provide support to organisations operating at all levels of change for a maximum period of seven years.

Micro-level activities

At the micro level, we will target our support at groups which face particular disadvantage, feel excluded, are living on the margins and/or are in clear distress.

We will provide funding support through NGOs. Initiatives will be designed to help communities change their lives and rebuild their identity by developing their collective strengths, enhancing and using their indigenous knowledge, and gaining improved access to services, entitlements and opportunities.

In extreme situations, we would also provide support by supplying inputs to help communities become more resilient and better prepared to take on their own living challenges.

The organisations we support for micro-level activities will be small to medium NGOs who have a direct implementation role with communities. They will be local to their area of work, will have a field presence and will already have implemented (or be implementing) initiatives in that area. They will probably have an annual outlay of less than Rs 1 crore (roughly equal to £100,000 GBP).

We will also require these NGOs to have a valid registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) as Trusts, Section 8 Companies or Societies.

They should also be registered under Section 80 (g) and Section 12 (a) of the Income Tax Act. Individuals and private companies will not be eligible for funding.

All micro grants are restricted to the priority geography areas outlined in this strategy.

Around 70 to 80 per cent of funding will be at this level.

Meso-/macro-level activities

At the meso/macro level, we will fund organisations that operate on a slightly larger scale and can view changes from a broader perspective. Initiatives at this level will bring together experiences from multiple smaller micro-level initiatives, compiling and consolidating their learning to help us address factors likely to improve the ecosystem.

We see these as organisations of learning that advocate policy change, argue for better implementation of existing policies and enhance the capacities of other NGOs.

They should have the requisite human and intellectual expertise to undertake these initiatives effectively. NGOs supported at this level must have proven credibility and a strong track record of making their voices and experiences heard by both the development sector and the government.

Organisations funded under this category could be located outside the geographical priority area.

Around 10 to 15 per cent of funding will be at this level.

Meta-level activities

We will also fund initiatives at the meta level. Such initiatives include those that provide a space for addressing issues relevant to development thinking or that take up discussions about the sector and its human resources. We want to collaborate with other organisations in the development sector to share their concerns and views and undertake joint programmes.

While we are conscious that the immediate outcomes of such initiatives may not be very clear, we expect them to have a demonstrable impact in the medium to long term.

Around 5 to 10 per cent of funding will be at this level.

Overarching criteria

Several important concerns apply to all the work we fund.

We will support initiatives intended to improve the overall wellbeing of communities, groups and individuals. We are theme-agnostic and are willing to fund initiatives that address immediate causes of vulnerability but which begin to look at the longer-term factors to be addressed.

NGOs must ensure that initiatives fit well with own long-term perspectives and reflect the reality of the communities they work with. Their planning should provide a clear justification for taking up such work and communities should be given a core role in developing ideas.

Save in exceptional cases, such as emergencies, we will avoid stepping into roles best fulfilled by national, state or municipal governments. We will therefore remain alert to potential overlap between the activities of the NGOs we support and those of relevant government agencies.

All the initiatives we fund should impact and be impacted by the following four overarching criteria:

1. Strengthening local self-governance

We believe local self-governance is imperative if communities are to take charge of their own development processes, resources and living systems. Initiatives should strengthen these institutions and aim to relinquish control as communities become stronger and more engaged.

2. Enhancing environmental consciousness and behaviour

With the adverse consequences of climate change looming large, initiatives must demonstrate awareness of their environmental impact and seek to improve the ecology of the areas where they are located. There is a strong link here with local self-governance, which we will be happy to explore. Essentially, actions should 'do no significant harm' to the local environment.

3. Gender-transformative processes

While work on gender relations has steadily evolved, initiatives should be gender-transformative – that is, rather than expecting women to assume sole responsibility for change, they should look to work with people of all genders as agents of change.

4. Team capacities

Social change is an interpersonal process which involves people coming together to think through challenges and requires high levels of expertise. Initiatives will often be aspirational and must not be limited by the existing capacities of the team. Teams should plan to develop themselves as they work with communities as part of the process of change.

Tackling emerging issues

Alongside these overarching concerns, we are alert to a range of emerging social issues. These include unrest among young people; governance systems that are beginning to become self-serving; underlying tensions between communities; and a re-emergence of oppressive societal structures that were beginning to fade. All of this is happening within a new and extremely powerful ecosystem created by social media.

We will remain conscious of this changing ecosystem and support organisations that are similarly aware of these changes. Through the work we fund, we hope to respond to such live issues in ways that promote peace and harmony. We see this ability to engage responsively and responsibly with such changes as a defining value for the social development sector.

Reviewing and supporting organisations

As a relational donor, we want all the initiatives we fund to achieve their objectives and will support organisations to review how their work is progressing.

The emphasis will be on self-assessment guided by discussions with experienced practitioners and based on the framework of values and ethics underpinning the project design.

We believe that a combination of review reports, personal visits and frequent interaction will help us and the organisations we fund decide together on the best course of action.

On reporting we will engage with partners as follows:

Financial and narrative reports

We will request biannual financial and narrative reports to help both organisations and our own team track the progress of initiatives. We hope to work with organisations to expand the scope of these documents so that they serve not only as progress reports but also as a way of sharing learning and experiences of implementing projects. We will provide feedback on these reports and assist with any mid-course corrections that may be necessary.

Independent reviews

Through a component included in the grant, we will encourage organisations to undergo an in-depth review conducted by an independent experienced professional or organisation. This will be done before the grant can be renewed for a second phase. There will be another independent review opportunity in the fifth or sixth year of the partnership (as necessary) before renewal for a third phase.

We believe such reviews are an important way for organisations to reflect on their work and plan future actions accordingly. Nevertheless, we understand the limitations that some organisations may face in developing and designing such reviews. We will therefore assist them in formulating the terms of reference and choosing appropriate reviewers.

Professional audits

We will support the cost of professional audits to assist organisations in ensuring accountability and transparency, and meeting sector standards in terms of their accounting and financial systems, compliance with regulations and governance.

Organisational development exercises

In consultation with organisations, we will cover the cost of organisational development exercises. We want to enable them to evolve and ensure they are in a strong position to receive financial support from other donors.

Personal visits

We will visit each of the organisations we fund at least once a year. If necessary, the number of visits can be increased by mutual agreement between the Foundation and the organisation.

Personal connections help build partnerships. To enable this to happen and to support the organisation in its work, we will make at least one visit to every organisation we fund each year.

Reviewing our strategy

Post-Covid initiatives

We will review this strategy at periodic intervals determined by the trustees in their meetings.

Reviews may take place after a certain amount of time has elapsed and/or be triggered by specific events occurring during the 10-year period with the potential to significantly affect people's way of life.

After undertaking a strategy review, the Foundation will make any adjustments required and communicate these via the website.

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on our work. While it has been a stressful time for all the organisations we fund, it has also resulted in some extremely relevant learning to inform our future work.

The competence, capacities and wellbeing of staff are key areas of concern. We will encourage organisations to ensure their employees receive suitable compensation, adequate health and accident insurance and access to systems of social security. We will collaborate with the organisations' other donors to help establish well-designed compensation plans.

The Covid livelihoods-related funding provided simple, positive ideas for funding small businesses. We plan to develop these ideas further and promote entrepreneurial thinking, particularly among young people.

The education support provided during the pandemic has also led many NGOs to move into or expand their work in the education space. Inspired by this experience, we will encourage organisations to consider the status of education in their project areas and explore ways of boosting state-funded school systems.

Emergency support

Natural disasters like floods, droughts and tropical cyclones have become regular occurrences.

We will be prepared to make an additional grant for disaster relief when an exceptional natural and/or other humanitarian disaster affects a geographical area where we have a partnership with an organisation.

Grants for rehabilitation following such disasters will be assessed separately. In some cases, a disaster may prevent an organisation from implementing the work we have funded it to carry out. With appropriate approvals, it may then be possible to designate the remaining funds for rehabilitation activities. In severe cases, we may propose a fresh grant to address rehabilitation.

In the event of a disaster happening in an area of India not covered by any of the organisations we fund, the Foundation's trustees in the UK always have the discretion to approve a special grant.

Collaborating with other donors

We will be active but cautious and selective in developing collaborations with other donors in India.

Such a collaboration will be guided partly by common interests and approaches but mainly by its potential to multiply the benefit to the organisation we fund. Where such conditions are met, we will be prepared to collaborate with other donors on issues and co-fund projects. However, we will avoid setting up 'funds' with other donors that aim to take a programme to scale.

Key areas of collaboration will include staff development, compensation and social security. We will reach out to other donors supporting the same organisations as us to help build suitable mechanisms for staff welfare and wellbeing.

We will be hesitant to provide funding to fill in gaps left by donors other than the government.

We will always ensure that the organisations we collaborate with recognise the overarching concerns of accountability, transparency and good governance, and that they reflect these in their functioning.

Programme budgets

Programme budgets will cover the cost of new grants as well as proposed knowledge creation and research agendas.

However, our underlying approach will be to fund based on the capacity rather than the desire to spend, thereby ensuring that all grants receive the necessary support and attention.

The India programme team

Our India programme team consists of two full-time members of staff together with independent consultants and a panel of chartered accountants.

The full-time team comprises a Director and an Administrator. They will be supported by part-time independent consultants who will connect with potential partners, undertake due diligence and assist with the fulfilment of the grant. In addition, a panel of chartered accountants will undertake audits for the organisations we fund.

We will ensure that the composition of our team is diverse in terms of gender and age and is representative of the area we work in.

We will also work on enhancing the capacities of the India team. We are committed to staying abreast of development challenges and sharpening our understanding of evolving processes and approaches.

Glossary

Community-centric: refers to social development processes that give communities a central role in assessing their own challenges and planning, designing and implementing solutions.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding: a funding process through which the corporate sector provides financial and other support to NGOs.

Denotified Tribes: Tribes labelled as criminal through a legislation by the British Colonial Government but who were denotified by the Indian Parliament post independence.

Gender-transformative approach: a methodology that engages people of all genders together as agents of change rather than placing the sole burden of responsibility on women to strive for equality (CGIAR Gender Impact Forum). A gender-transformative approach does not simply focus on the symptoms of gender-based equalities but also "addresses the causes […] and works to transform harmful gender roles, norms and power relations" (UNICEF).

Gram Panchayat: The executive body of the Gram Sabha made up of elected representatives from the Gram Sabha.

Gram Sabha: A general assembly of all the adults in a village who have crossed the age of 18 and are eligible to vote in the local elections.

Intergenerational challenges: extremely persistent social development issues that require long-term engagement. Examples of such issues are exclusion on account of caste or gender, trauma caused by adverse events and resource poverty. Tackling these issues typically calls for more than just economic solutions: it also involves challenging attitudes which are often deeply ingrained. Interventions therefore require an empathetic approach that addresses various elements of the system.

Intersectionality: a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to refer to the ways that markers of difference intersect to inform individual realities and lived experiences. Such markers include race, caste, class, religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability and status. Viewing social problems through the prism of intersectionality may ensure more inclusive remedies and reveal opportunities for greater collaboration between and across social movements.

Open grant: a process of grant-making whereby projects are led by the ideas and convictions of the grantee rather than by any specific themes or agendas set by the donor.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups: Tribal groups with extremely low development indices and stagnant populations have been classified by the Government of India into a special category called the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups.

Relational donor: our approach favours working alongside the people and groups we fund, acknowledging their expertise and welcoming their insights, and drawing on them to inform and develop the way we do things. We are flexible in our reporting requirements and aim to be led by the needs of our funded organisations.

Systemic change: change that impacts all the elements of a system and enables them to synchronise through a sequence of interventions.

'Value in itself' work: work addressing issues that may not lead to long-term strategic benefits but has immediate importance for a community at that point of time. The term is drawn from an Azim Premji Foundation funding category.