

MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Growing Australian
philanthropic investment in
international development



NOVEMBER 2023

NOBLE AMBITION

World Vision



AN INVITATION FOR AUSTRALIAN PHILANTHROPY

from World Vision Australia

Australians are known for supporting others. Through fire, floods or famine, when faced with a problem, we roll up our sleeves within communities, as a country, to make things right. At World Vision Australia, we see first-hand the incredible generosity of Australians and apply this to create hope and opportunity for children and communities all over the world.

Even in its darkest corners, where the impacts of a changing climate, extreme poverty, disease and conflict expose children and families to intolerable suffering and injustice, we see that when good people come together, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

It is also true that across the globe we are seeing persistent problems surrounding poverty and inequality that are not going away. Meanwhile, in the next ten years we will feel the impacts of climate change on an unprecedented scale. In our highly connected world, pressures on one fragile state can have serious consequences across the globe. This breeds a complex mix of challenges. At the heart of which is the understanding that the world is not equal.

While wealth and income flourish at the very top, in 2020, the effects of COVID-19 saw global poverty increase for the first time in 25 years.¹ While poverty reduction resumed in 2021, albeit only at pre-pandemic levels, projections in 2022 suggested the rate of reduction would further stall due to the war in Ukraine and growth slowdown in China. But there is always hope. And always good people who want to do more.

This paper seeks to understand the current state of Australian philanthropic investment in international development and how we, as Australians, can best respond to this need.

As Australia's largest INGO, we are reflecting on how we can change. There is more to do and we can do better. We extend the same invitation to you and the sector to consider your response to what we have found. By partnering with philanthropists, the corporate sector, government and the Australian community we hope to bring hope and opportunity to millions of vulnerable people.

Now is the time to unleash the full potential of Australian idealism on the world.

"I believe in equity for all. Unfortunately, the pie was not divided equally. The way governments operate is not equal. It's not lost on me that I was a girl born in this country who had access to education, food on the table, a loving family and no immediate threat of war to rip my life apart. Meanwhile, across the globe, children are born every second into situations that are markedly different to that, through no fault of their own. For me, it's not about fairness. It's about equity. There has to be a base level that we can get everyone to. Making sure people have access to basic human rights. And they just don't."

Tania Austin, Founder, DECJUBA Foundation

¹ World Bank. Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course



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FOREWORD

After 25 years working across the world’s most challenging regions, I have witnessed the great power of philanthropy to bring about significant change. And I believe that Australia, as a country, has the power to help solve some of the world’s biggest problems if we can make the most of the incredible opportunities that Australian philanthropy presents. Not just small, isolated wins, but lasting and large scale change.

Australians are already extremely generous in their support of international causes. From everyday Australians who partner with World Vision to lift millions of children and families out of poverty each year; to the philanthropists driven to tackle pressing global issues such as climate change. We are making a difference. But we need to do more.

As a sector, we are facing significant challenges. Across the globe, persistent problems surrounding poverty, inequality, conflict and climate are increasing in size and scope. Despite the ongoing loyalty and generosity of the Australian public, it is becoming increasingly difficult to raise money through mass market (retail) fundraising. The evolving nature of both wealth and philanthropy in Australia, including the significance of income streams such as major gifts and bequests, is prompting sector-wide change.

At World Vision Australia, we are witnessing these changes ourselves, with overall growth of the philanthropy portfolio across all three measures: revenue raised through high net worth philanthropy; numbers of high net worth donors; and average major gift size. Between 2020 and 2022, total revenue from our high net worth portfolio increased by 16%; the number of major gifts over \$100,000 increased by 63%; and the average size of a major gift doubled. For this growth to continue, we need to better understand what is both challenging and enabling this area of giving.

As Australia’s largest INGO, we are taking responsibility in seeking to understand how the international development sector can adapt to these changing conditions and influence a new era of philanthropy in Australia.

But let’s be clear. This is not about increasing support for one organisation or one cause over another.

Our focus is to understand how we, as a sector, can channel the generosity of donors to contribute to growing the overall amount of giving in Australia so that everybody benefits from a stronger giving culture. This white paper aims to explore and contribute to our collective knowledge and ambition around some of the key issues.

Leadership is important. Ambition is important. World Vision Australia has committed to 100 per cent giving at Board level to drive a culture of philanthropy within our own organisation from the top. We are also extremely grateful for business leaders and philanthropists like Tania Austin from DECJUBA Foundation, and Steve Killelea from The Charitable Foundation, who are committing funds and lending their voices to build momentum for change.

Thank you to our generous collaborators for your valuable input to this white paper. I hope that by tackling these issues the international development sector can act to achieve unimagined collective impact.

Daniel Wordsworth
CEO, World Vision Australia

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia may be one of the world's wealthiest nations, but despite reporting \$13.4 billion in charitable donations in 2021², our overall giving record is low in terms of percentage of GDP compared to other countries.³ Data shows that almost half of top income earners in 2018/19 did not report any tax-deductible donations or gifts at all,⁴ leading many to believe that the true potential of philanthropy in Australia is unrealised.

When it comes to international aid specifically, Australians are generous compared to our peers in the UK and US. Of every dollar raised in Australia, 14 cents goes to support international causes, compared to 12 cents in the UK and under 6 cents in the US.⁵ In terms of structured giving (PAFs, PuAFs and other trusts) 9.4% is directed to grants and donations for use outside Australia compared to 90.6% for use in Australia.⁶

However, at 75 per cent of total income⁷, the international sector is far more reliant on income from donations compared to other causes.⁸ A significant proportion of this income from donations is generated through mass market/retail fundraising, which has been an extremely effective fundraising model for international non-government organisations (INGOs) for many years. However, sustainability challenges, combined with evidence from the sector, highlight an urgent need for change.

One such challenge is the prioritisation of international causes amongst high net worth individuals. While international aid was amongst top three causes supported by mass market donors in 2020, high net worth individuals prioritised universities, arts and culture, and health and medical research in their giving.⁹ As major gifts and bequests become an increasingly important income stream, it is important to understand the motivations behind this prioritisation by high net worth individuals.

The Australian Government and sector bodies, including Philanthropy Australia, have committed to double giving in Australia and increase its scale and impact. After decades of benefiting from mass giving, the international development sector is also seeking to adapt to changing conditions and diversify its income stream. While the potential is enormous, the shift required, from transactional to relationship-based fundraising, to grow this new segment brings its own inherent challenges. And for the millions of people around the world affected by poverty and other global crises, there is much at stake.

Australia's largest INGO with almost 60 years' experience in the sector, World Vision Australia, has partnered with Noble Ambition, an Australian leader in fundraising strategy and capacity building, to explore these challenges in consultation with international development sector peers and individuals who demonstrate significant leadership and ambition in this area.

By asking *'How can we grow Australian philanthropic investment in international development to achieve greater scale and impact?'* our goal has been to learn more about the sector and explore how to leverage the significant philanthropic ambition and growth in major gifts fundraising in Australia.

Our analysis of fundraising data in Australia has found that reporting is opaque and hard to compare. The featured case studies aim to highlight various motivations and models of giving and help to raise the profile, legitimacy and impact of philanthropic investment in the sector. Amongst our findings we call for more transparency in how we collect, report and share benchmarking data so that we can more effectively measure and track philanthropy and fundraising progress in the future. Ultimately, we hope to build on the sector's existing community of supporters, led by everyday Australians and mass giving, to encourage big, bold and ambitious philanthropic leadership in international development.

Key findings

Our discussions with philanthropists, sector representatives and peers have enabled us to consolidate the experiences of many individuals and organisations currently operating in the sector into four key findings:

1. The success of retail fundraising for INGOs has created adverse consequences for high net worth philanthropy in international development.
2. International development is complex and effective communication is often an issue.
3. The limited number of mega gifts, high profile fundraising campaigns and role models on both sides is limiting the potential for giving to international development.
4. There is significant energy, ambition and activity across the sector to be optimistic about future growth in philanthropy.

Shifting the dial on the most pressing global issues requires leadership and cooperation across the sector. The suggested actions outlined at the end of this white paper are designed to inspire both reflection and conversation, and provide a useful tool to facilitate increased impact among INGOs, philanthropists, governing bodies and other stakeholders. The sector has the opportunity to come together to set and achieve ambitious goals and grow strategic fundraising and philanthropy in international development for the benefit of communities around the world.



2. [Australian Charities Report 9th Edition 2023](#)

3. Australia is at 0.81 per cent of GDP, compared with 1.84 per cent in New Zealand and 2.1 per cent in the United States. [Philanthropy Australia, A Strategy to Double Giving by 2030: Philanthropy Australia's submission to the Productivity Commission May 2023](#)

4. [Centre for Social Impact, High Net Wealth Giving in Australia, August 2022](#)

5. [JB Were The Support Report: The changing shape of giving and the significant implications for recipients April 2018](#)

6. [Australian Charities Report 9th Edition 2023](#)

7. [JB Were The Cause Report 20 years of evolution in the not for profit sector 2016](#)

8. This compares to income from donations in higher education at 2-3% and research at 15%. [JB Were The Cause Report 20 years of evolution in the not for profit sector 2016](#)

9. [JB Were The Support Report: The changing shape of giving and the significant implications for recipients April 2018](#)

2. RESEARCH APPROACH

To address our core research question, ‘How can we grow Australian philanthropic investment in international development to achieve greater scale and impact?’, World Vision Australia and Noble Ambition met with international development sector peers and philanthropists active in international development. These conversations, accompanied by a review of current data and sector insights, led us to identify common challenges for the sector. The sections on hurdles and opportunities capture these in detail. We have also included five case studies profiling individuals who have either demonstrated significant commitment to or are developing ambitious strategy and aspirations in this space. A full list of references and interviews is provided.

Representing sector perspectives

Fundraising and philanthropy in international development is a topic of enormous complexity involving many stakeholders including recipients, donors, philanthropists, sector bodies and governments in Australia and overseas. The sector is also characterised by an inherent level of opaqueness not dissimilar to other charitable sectors. An absence of cohesive philanthropy/

fundraising data, a culture of donors reticent to be public about their giving and a legacy of ineffective communications and engagement from INGOs has challenged many across the sector. We have tried to include different sector perspectives and acknowledge there will be gaps in our assessment and findings.

Overwhelmingly our conversations revealed a common willingness to understand the key issues and advance the sector and its impact. There was a consensus that while giving in Australia has not yet reached its full potential, there is appetite and ambition to do better.

Suggesting a way forward

Combining the networks and experience of Australia’s largest INGO in World Vision Australia and an industry leader in fundraising strategy in Noble Ambition has enabled us to gather unique insights from donors, philanthropists and sector peers to inform an action plan for how the sector may come together to help grow Australian philanthropic investment in international development. We offer this action plan as a resource to use as part of your own toolkit. We hope it is a valuable contribution to the sector.

Definitions

Major gift: Across the charitable sector, individual organisations self-define what constitutes a major gift. For this paper, philanthropic investment is defined as major gifts of approximately \$25,000/pa which can be made as a direct gift or through structured vehicles such as private ancillary funds (PAFs), Public ancillary funds (PuAFs) and trusts. It excludes retail/mass giving.

Philanthropic investment to international development: Gifts made to causes that promote sustainable and transformational development overseas.

High net worth: Wealthy Individuals within Australia are generally deemed to be those with net investible assets (NIA) over \$1 million (or net of over \$2.5 million including the family home) and earning more than \$250,000 per annum.

INGOs: International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which refer to non-profit institutions (including religious organisations).

3. UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET

High net worth and philanthropic giving in Australia

The current outlook for Australian philanthropy is optimistic. Philanthropy Australia has set an ambitious goal to double structured giving from \$2.5 billion in 2020 to \$5 billion in 2030.¹⁰ This confidence is buoyed by many factors, including unprecedented intergenerational wealth transfer in coming decades, projected growth in structured giving and vast scope for high income earners to give more.

Australians donated \$13.4 billion to charities in 2021.¹¹ However, when we look holistically at giving in Australia, despite the vast wealth among Australia’s top income earners, they give, on average, a smaller percentage of tax deductible income than lower income earners.¹² While total wealth for the top 200 Australians, as reported in the AFR Top 200 Rich List, grew from \$195.9 billion to \$555 billion from 2015 to 2021, an increase of 183%, ATO data indicates that almost half of top income earners in 2018–2019 did not report any tax-deductible donations or gifts at all.¹³

This potential for increased giving among the very wealthy sits alongside other trends that will impact philanthropy in Australia, including INGOs:

- International development in Australia has traditionally relied on mass and retail giving to generate significant revenue to support its programs; however, mass giving is in decline and it is increasingly difficult and costly for charities to raise funds through mass campaigns.
- Australia is expecting an unprecedented \$2.6 trillion wealth transfer from 2021 to 2040, \$1.1 trillion of which will transfer over the next ten years.¹⁴
- Structured giving through Private Ancillary Funds (PAFs), Public Ancillary Funds (PuAFs), charitable trusts and bequests has increased.¹⁵
- Both the significant and changing nature of wealth in Australia presents opportunities for the charitable sector at large, and international development particularly, to generate more balanced income streams that rely less on mass fundraising and focus more on bequests and major gift fundraising.

“There is clear scope for Australia’s wealthiest to increase their giving rate, particularly when their wealth continues to grow so strongly. This could have a profound effect on the Australian charitable sector.”

Centre for Social Impact, High Net Wealth Giving in Australia

10. [A Blueprint to Grow Structured Giving, Philanthropy Australia, April 2021](#)

11. [JB Were The Support Report: The changing shape of giving and the significant implications for recipients April 2018](#)

12. [Centre for Social Impact, High Net Wealth Giving in Australia, August 2022](#)

13. [Centre for Social Impact, High Net Wealth Giving in Australia, August 2022](#)

14. [A Blueprint to Grow Structured Giving, Philanthropy Australia, April 2021](#)

15. [Philanthropy Australia, Giving Trends and Opportunities](#)

Giving to international development among high net worth individuals and philanthropy

While mass donors give to international development as one of their top three causes, when we move into structured giving and significant philanthropy, we see a shift to health and medical research, universities, and arts and culture in the top three giving preferences.¹⁶ We have sought to understand why this is the case; and how the international development sector can respond to this.

Despite this tendency, there are a number of committed philanthropists giving to international development within the Australian Financial Review (AFR) Philanthropy 50 list who have maintained or increased their giving level in recent years. The number of donors in the top 50 bracket giving to international development has increased from one in 2017 to five in 2023. We can also see a similar uptick in general giving over that period (refer to Table 1). The upward trend is supported by direct evidence in growth in World Vision’s structured giving¹⁷ and high net worth giving portfolios, plus select public examples of high profile donations in this space.¹⁸

Table 1: AFR Philanthropy 50 – Listing of those who give to international aid and their total philanthropic giving to all causes, 2017–2023¹⁹

Publication Year	Name	Total Giving (all causes)
2017	The Charitable Foundation	\$3.8m
2018	The Charitable Foundation	\$4m
	Jaam Foundation	\$3.4m
2019	The Charitable Foundation	\$4m
	Noel & Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation	\$4m
2020	The Charitable Foundation	\$4.3m
	Noel & Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation	\$4.6m
2021	Planet Wheeler Foundation	\$11.1m
	Noel & Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation	\$4.9m
	The Charitable Foundation	\$4.1m
2022	Judith Neilson Foundation & charitable trusts	\$20.6m
	Planet Wheeler Foundation	\$9.3m
	Noel & Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation	\$4.8m
2023	Cliff Obrecht and Melanie Perkins	\$15m
	Planet Wheeler Foundation	\$9m
	Phillips Foundation	\$5m
	Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation	\$5m
	The Charitable Foundation	\$5m

16. JB Were, *The evolution of philanthropy 2020*
17. Between 2020 and 2022, total revenue from World Vision Australia's high net worth portfolio increased by 16%; the number of major gifts over \$100,000 increased by 63%; and the average size of a major gift doubled.
18. See case studies on Canva Foundation, DECJUBA Foundation and Judith Neilson Foundation
19. *Australian Financial Review Magazine, Philanthropy issue, 2023*. Source data from AFR Philanthropy 50 lists published between 2017–2023. Note: this is a summary of donors whose cause areas recorded in the list include international aid or international development. The total giving column contains the total giving reported including for causes other than international aid or development.

Given that Australia is experiencing the largest intergenerational wealth transfer in its history and there is significant scope for high net worth individuals to give more, it is critical for the sector to better understand what is both challenging and enabling this area of giving.

To expand our collective understanding, World Vision Australia and Noble Ambition have sought answers to these questions:

- What are the greatest hurdles to overcome in growing Australian philanthropic investment in international development?
- What are the greatest opportunities for growing philanthropic investment in international development?
- What can we learn from leaders in this space and how can their experience inspire others to reach similar levels of ambition?
- What role could key stakeholders within the sector play to help grow significant philanthropic investment in international development?
- What actions can we recommend to encourage this to happen?



4. UNDERSTANDING THE ECOSYSTEM

Key stakeholders

Many stakeholders make up the international development fundraising and philanthropy ecosystem in Australia including different sizes and scale of INGOs, funding bodies (including government) and sector bodies. Each stakeholder plays an important role in delivering services and programs, growing the impact and scale of philanthropy and fundraising, and ensuring that the sector upholds agreed standards and codes of practice.

We have identified a select few stakeholders below to illustrate both the sector's complexity and potential for collaboration between philanthropy and recipients including INGOs. The scaffolding already exists to align more closely around a shared vision for growth and impact of philanthropy. With many respected bodies and individual networks, the sector has huge assets to leverage further.



Key stakeholders in Australian international development sector



Sector bodies

- Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) – peak body for Australian INGOs, sets benchmark for good practice (codes and standards), leads development of policy and practice, supports members, collates data
- Philanthropy Australia – national peak body for philanthropy in Australia
- Australian International Development Network (AIDN) – a stakeholder group of Philanthropy Australia formed to help facilitate 'more and better' international development
- Fundraising Institute of Australia – national peak body representing professional fundraising in Australia



Government

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – among its priorities is working with international partners and other countries to tackle global challenges and increase trade and investment opportunities overseas
- Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) – partnership between the Australian Government and Australian NGOs to support local partners to deliver projects in around 50 countries each year



Donors

- Mass (general public) donors
- High net worth individuals
- Structured giving vehicles – including foundations and trusts, PAFs, etc



Recipients

- INGOs
- Intermediaries – structures set up to link donors with charitable organisations and causes that operate overseas
- Direct to organisations operating overseas
- DIY – individuals who set up their own INGO using their own approach
- INGO Founders – individuals who see an opportunity to directly set up operations overseas

Models of giving

The charitable sector in Australia is cluttered and competitive across almost every subsector, however, with its many potential recipients and ways to give, international development can seem particularly complex. AIDN has gathered information on the giving platforms available for Australians wanting to invest internationally. This resource is available on their website.²⁰

²⁰ AIDN, Pathways to Global Giving, March 2022



CASE STUDY

Steve Killelea, The Charitable Foundation

20-year learning curve in international development philanthropy

Global philanthropist and thought leader Steve Killelea is the Founder and Executive Chairman of The Charitable Foundation and the Institute for Economics and Peace. He has combined a successful career in technology with thirty years of philanthropic leadership focused on peace and sustainable development. His experience demonstrates the many powerful ways philanthropy can have an impact in international development.

Like many philanthropists, Steve's journey to support international development is rooted in a deeply personal experience. Seeing the effects of poverty first-hand during a surfing trip in Indonesia, he knew he wanted to direct his attention to help the world's poorest people.

On starting his foundation in 2001, he travelled to the field to visit projects with World Vision. After seeing development in action, Steve was

hooked. He has since partnered with many organisations through The Charitable Foundation and Institute for Economics and Peace, giving close to \$100 million to support practical projects to help eradicate poverty and conflict through humanitarian relief and development assistance.

As head of the global think tank, Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), Steve also publishes in-depth, world-class research used by governments and businesses around the world to encourage deeper understanding of how societies operate and help shift them towards greater peace. Steve's 20+ years' experience working with large INGOs, including World Vision, has also highlighted some of the challenges for philanthropists working in this space. Steve recalls being frustrated by internal resistance to more bespoke reporting and having limited input to projects he wanted to fund.

Steve acknowledges that in his more recent interactions with INGOs, he has observed greater stewardship and more willingness to tailor programs to his needs and interests. He still sees enormous opportunity for more Australians to consider how the world's great challenges – such as climate adaption, renewable energy, gender empowerment, global hunger and migration – can be addressed through greater philanthropic investment in international development.

"Australia is quite an insular society. The limited media bandwidth for international news means that development issues are not front and centre in people's minds. A personal connection to the people helped is often the reason why philanthropists give so it's about creating that direct link or experience for people to feel connected to international issues."

Steve Killelea is an example of Australian philanthropic giving to international development

spanning many years and different methods. His experience of testing, learning and developing ways of giving – from direct programmatic support to seeking to understand and invest in systemic change through his work with IEP – provides valuable insights for the sector.

"Money goes so much further overseas. When you are dealing with people who really do have the worst conditions in the world, you get the greatest return on investment, often more than ten times. Bringing attention to international issues, and demonstrating the economic argument for someone living in Australia, is critical if we are to grow philanthropy in this space."

Steve Killelea, Founder and Executive Chairmain, The Charitable Foundation



5. KEY HURDLES

A focus of our research was to understand what barriers stand in the way to growing Australian philanthropic investment in international development so that we may be able to identify opportunities to overcome these challenges. Across several conversations with philanthropists, industry peers and other sector stakeholders, this is what we heard.

Complexity and scale – ‘Problems are too big to fix’

International development involves working with people affected by generational poverty, geo-political conflict, systemic inequality, natural disasters and the effects of climate change. The complexity and enormity of these problems discourages some donors who prefer to fund ‘solutions’ that will ‘fix’ a problem for good.

Structural limitations – ‘It’s too difficult to give’

Australia’s taxation and regulatory framework contains necessary rules around how funds can be directed overseas, which has created the perception that it is difficult to support international projects through structured giving.

Asymmetry of information – ‘I don’t have sufficient details to commit’

The complex nature of international development, combined with physical, socio-economic and geo-political distance, means Australian philanthropists may feel they do not have access to sufficient information to make informed funding decisions. Donors typically have ‘further to travel’ in their understanding of relevant factors and details. Meanwhile, INGO reporting is deeply complex and difficult to condense and communicate effectively to funders.

Disintermediation – ‘I’d prefer to cut out the middle layer’

Working with international projects often requires more people across different organisations and governments to make things happen. Many philanthropists prefer to feel close to the programs and projects they support. Reducing the number of intermediaries creates the impression of being able to have more immediate local impact and achieve better return on investment.

“The more structured and strategic donors become, the more localised and disintermediated they want to be. The question becomes, how do you close the distance between the donors’ experience and the local issues, and help them build a direct relationship with local leaders and organisations?”

Simon Lewis, Co-Founder and Chair, Australian International Development Network (AIDN)

Trust deficit – ‘How do I know the money will actually get there?’

Working internationally among different governance systems and nation states requires additional layers of due diligence. While INGOs have successfully used trust-based philanthropy to grow their base of support through mass giving for many decades in Australia, different strategies are needed to build trust and effectively engage with the philanthropic market.

Limited transparency – ‘I need more data before I invest’

The ability to demonstrate impact is a cornerstone of philanthropy. However, being able to track outcomes is intrinsically more difficult in international aid. In situations where even basic services like water and electricity may not exist, it may take longer to gather quality data to quantify the impact of philanthropic investment. Moreover, philanthropists have found INGOs to be less effective at sharing this information.

Not good at major gifts – ‘INGOs are best at mass fundraising’

The success of mass giving campaigns has cultivated both internal systems and donor perceptions that international giving is a retail product and not a serious philanthropic opportunity. With fundraising in INGOs significantly geared towards retail fundraising, there is a perceived limited professionalism among INGOs and their ability to co-design programs with philanthropists as partners in the areas they want to support.

Smaller equals more impact – ‘I can do more working directly’

While a significant portion of wealthy individuals and families in Australia have created wealth through large business and markets, philanthropy

can often be accompanied by a preference for funding smaller organisations. Larger charities have attracted scepticism around perceived higher overheads and administration costs. Smaller local organisations, however, often lack the resources to administer and distribute funds, which reinforces the perception that giving to international causes is difficult and problematic at scale.

We know from World Vision’s more than 60 years’ experience in the sector, and from our discussions with sector peers, that many of these perceived challenges can be overcome. Hurdles should not deter donors from investing in international development. Nor should INGOs hesitate to invest in major gifts fundraising. Understanding the issues helps both sides navigate challenges together to realise the opportunities ahead.

“Sometimes international issues just seem so big. We think ‘where do we start?’ It’s no different to any other project. We sit down and we talk. We ask what are you working on, what will be the impact of that, how can we be a part of that? Some of the big problems, they’re just big boxes. World hunger. Climate. It’s how you break them up into chunks that people can get their head around.”

Tania Austin, Founder, DECJUBA Foundation





CASE STUDY

Mark Cubit, Cubit Family Foundation

Learning from a funder's experiences

Mark Cubit has an extensive track record with international giving. He has set up and managed foundations and intermediaries providing funds to over 200 NGOs in 32 countries. He also co-founded the Australian International Development Network (AIDN) in 2018. What has helped or hindered the good work being undertaken by established charities in the international development from a funder's perspective?

Mark Cubit's current responsibilities with Partners For Equity, Cubit Family Foundation, Ripple Foundation, Planet Wheeler Foundation, Who Gives a Crap Foundation and as Chair of The School of St Jude means he has worked with INGOs of all sizes. He says there were many occasions where grant funding was marred by a lack of professionalism, poor communication and limited stewardship by INGO partners.

"Many of my negative experiences with INGOs are nudging 10 years old, but I was left with the impression that even significant funding can fall off the table and not count in larger organisations. The service levels were absolutely atrocious – and that is from a six-figure funder who only required contact twice a year."

Compared to direct funding or in-country models, lack of certainty around people and programming in larger INGOs has also posed challenges for Mark over the years.

"9 out of 10 founders will still be there in a decade and their organisation will still be doing a version of what it set out to do at the beginning. In contrast, the perception is that staff turnover in INGOs means that you might have to deal with three different people over eight years. This is not unreasonable from the individual staffer's

career perspective but fails to compete with the 'founder model'. There is also the perception that large INGOs might change strategic direction depending on big funding flows."

Trust is another major issue in international development. Mark says that while more and more people are seeing with their own eyes what their money can do, reassuring investors that they can trust partners working overseas is an ongoing priority.

"There are so many things in the field that can't be measured, and the sector is too diverse to

be able to measure impact on a sector-wide basis. What it really comes down to is investing in people, relationships and strategy."

While international development fundraising is changing, becoming increasingly strategic, for some funders a negative experience can have lasting impact. Mark's experiences illustrate that unless there is strategic and effective major gifts fundraising in place, the international development sector will not realise its full potential in investment from high net worth individuals who value partnerships, consistency and professionalism.



6. KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Our discussions revealed some key opportunities that may have unique influence over the future growth of international development philanthropy in Australia.

Strong base in retail giving – ‘Growing the power of everyday philanthropists’

The Australian public already gives generously to international causes through mass market campaigns (eg child sponsorship programs). As wealth increases, there is a significant opportunity to extend the contribution of Australia’s ‘everyday philanthropists’ in terms of funding amount, scale and impact. This will require careful stewardship and engagement from INGOs so that donors do not move away from international development causes as they become more significant and experienced in their giving.

Intersection of issues – ‘Greatest need, greatest opportunity’

International development responds to issues and supports positive change across the full spectrum of challenges facing humanity. From combating existential threats such as climate change and global food security to promoting inclusion and equity of women and other minorities, the sector is often working at ‘ground zero’ to shift the dial on social, environmental and economic issues. Therefore, the sector should be able to communicate clearly how donor interests in one area can be meaningfully matched to international development priorities to help more people with greater impact.

“As a sector we need to be able to gauge the temperature of the times and frame our points of relevance around that. So when high net worth people are saying they want to get on board with climate change, they can clearly see the intersection between climate change and poverty, or climate change and gender, and how community empowerment can enable meaningful change.”

Marc Purcell, CEO, Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)

Influence of Next Gen philanthropists – ‘More connected, more at stake’

While every nonprofit organisation and charitable sector in Australia sees Next Gen as a significant opportunity, the relevance for international development lies in how younger philanthropists experience and connect with the world. Younger philanthropists tend to be more global in their personal experience and business interactions. There is also more at stake for younger generations who will live longer with and be more profoundly affected by issues such as climate change.

“Younger philanthropists see the world differently. Globally connected from day dot, they operate businesses and generate wealth across borders. Conflict, wherever it occurs, influences them directly. As we travel more again, people are seeing just how lucky we are in this country. And that comes back to where does my dollar make a difference? Where can I have the most impact? We will see an uptick in support for international development with NextGen but they need to be carefully stewarded because every not-for-profit is stewarding those NextGen; and they have plenty of options in where they can deploy their monies and skills.”

Catriona Fay, Managing Partner, Community, Social and ESG Investment, Perpetual Private

Growth in mega gifts and multi-year fundraising campaigns – ‘Giving to international development is what we do’

When we look to higher education, the arts and medical research there is an increasing number of high profile mega gifts and multi-million dollar campaigns. The University of Sydney’s \$1 billion INSPIRED campaign, the University of Melbourne’s \$250 million gift from Geoffrey and Anna Cumming to medical research and the Fox family pledge of \$100 million to National Gallery of Victoria are recent examples. That extraordinary level of giving, both in terms of financial investment and sector ambition, is rarely stated publicly in international development. The sector needs to be engaging with donors at the highest levels, and be willing to publicise large gifts when they occur, to inspire more people to get involved.

Growth in data-driven decision making – ‘We want to see where money goes further’

Donors want to know how their giving will make a difference. While research and due diligence have always been core tenants of effective philanthropy, philanthropists are increasingly focused on applying science and data when selecting which organisations and programs will enable them to have the most impact. The sector needs to be better at providing this evidence and communicating need and impact in ways that high net worth donors find most compelling. International development is a highly sophisticated, data-driven sector. It is not that there isn’t sufficient information to share. There is often too much. INGOs must be more effective at consolidating dense information and making it accessible to a philanthropic audience keen to see impact demonstrated.





CASE STUDY

Canva Foundation

NextGen giving and global citizenship

In 2021, Canva co-founders Melanie Perkins and Cliff Obrecht pledged to donate the majority of their equity (30% of Canva) to do good in the world through the Canva Foundation. The pledge, one of Australia's largest commitment of funds by a living donor, was made all the more significant by their age (early 30s) and intentionally global focus.

The desire to leave a lasting, positive impact on the world has been part of Melanie Perkins and Cliff Obrecht's 'Two-Step' plan for Canva since the beginning. In 2019, Canva joined the global initiative Pledge 1%. Then, in 2021, as the business was valued at US\$40 billion, the couple went public with their plan to give away most of their 30% personal share in Canva. Announcing the decision to the Canva community, Melanie Perkins said:

"We have this wildly optimistic belief that there is enough money, goodwill, and good intentions in the world to solve most of the world's problems, and we want to spend our lifetime working towards that... Something that moves us deeply is inequality. There are 711 million people who live in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 a day, which means they have to make unfathomable decisions between basic human needs, for themselves and their families. It's an issue that we have wanted to contribute towards for many years."²¹

In its first year, the Foundation made grants totalling \$14.68 million²², most of which (US\$10 million) went to GiveDirectly, a nonprofit direct cash transfer program to people living in extreme poverty in rural Malawi, with a further US\$20 million pledged in a second phase.²³

Cliff Obrecht has spoken publicly about the Foundation's steep learning curve, the complexity of global poverty and how much work goes into giving money away, while re-stating Canva's goal to scale giving and impact as quickly as possible.²⁴

The Foundation is intentionally evidence and data-driven, using the same ethos that built Canva in their philanthropic approach, as Robyn King, Head of Social Impact at Canva explains: "We're a product business, so we embrace a similar mindset in our approach - we start small, learn from our mistakes, constantly iterate and evolve, and scale our impact from there. We still have so much to learn, and we're just at the start of our journey."

Canva hopes to inspire other companies to join their mission to 'Be a Force For Good'. Their culture of philanthropy, which is informed by their global business (Canva operates in 190 countries and 100+ languages) and entrepreneurial slant, epitomises how many NextGen philanthropists see giving to international causes through a global business lens.

"Philanthropy can be traditional and conservative in many ways. Doing good in the world is embedded into our culture and is an integral part of our journey. It's just another part of how we run our company. We're motivated by a deeper mission surrounding Canva, our 'simple' two-step plan: to build one of the world's most valuable companies, and to do the most good we can. As the value of Canva grows, so too does our ability to have a positive impact on the world."

Robyn King, Head of Social Impact, Canva

Canva's commitment to support international development has shown extraordinary leadership and ambition in the past two years – and this is just the beginning. The sector has so much to gain as Canva continues its journey as one of the most influential role models and advocates for NextGen giving and international development philanthropy in Australia.



21. [Canva newsroom, September 2021](#)

22. [Australian Financial Review, 'We want to be accountable': Canva on its struggle to give money away, February 2023](#)

23. [Canva newsroom, May 2023](#)

24. [Australian Financial Review, 'We want to be accountable': Canva on its struggle to give money away, February 2023](#)

7. KEY FINDINGS

In consolidating what we heard in our discussions with philanthropists, sector representatives and peers, we offer four key findings that encapsulate the key hurdles, opportunities and experiences of those operating in the sector.

1. **The success of retail fundraising for INGOs has created adverse consequences for high net worth philanthropic investment in international development**

The long standing, highly successful business model of transactional, mass fundraising within large INGOs has impacted their ability to grow major gifts and relationship-based fundraising and reinforced the perception among donors that international development is not a viable philanthropic investment.

“The reason international development organisations like World Vision are so successful at fundraising is the amount of emphasis put into mass marketing. The approach to marketing, using the emotional pull that comes with the child sponsorship, the monthly transactional approach, it is a different ecosystem to business. Working with high net worth individuals requires an economic argument and business rationale for why they would give. It’s quite a different sell.”

Steve Killelea, Founder and Executive Chairman, The Charitable Foundation and the Institute for Economics and Peace

- While we know that the Australian public is more likely to include international causes as a priority in their giving portfolios than high net worth individuals and major forms of structured giving, it is only now becoming clearer all the ways in which this ongoing and well-publicised success in one market has potentially undermined success in another.
- The success of retail fundraising has created internal systems and procedures geared towards mass/retail fundraising. We have heard from philanthropists who have been frustrated that international development fundraising has lacked professionalism and donor-centric stewardship. Regardless of improved professionalism and sophistication of major gift fundraising within INGOs in the past decade, this perception broadly remains.
- For INGOs to actively grow this area of fundraising, strategic prioritisation and cultural change from leadership level (Board and CEO) down is required. Using similar methods of marketing, communication and reporting for philanthropic donors as for mass will not achieve significant growth in revenue or numbers of major gift donors.

“Heritage is like an anchor. It can make you feel steady in rough seas. But it can also hold you back from change. While certain INGOs have been very successful in tapping into the charitable DNA in our community, for some organisations, change now requires a deeper look into how to now attract the strategic philanthropist.”

Simon Lewis, Co-Founder and Chair, Australian International Development Network (AIDN)

- Working to understand how major gift donors want to engage will require a distinctly different relationship-based strategy. It will call on different skills, communication styles and reporting systems to build genuine relationships and shift from a transactional approach to building a valued community of advocates for the long term. Donor communities will need to

be open to engaging with INGOs to facilitate and embrace change.

- The more major gift donors we see effectively engaging with INGOs, the more likely it is that INGOs will be seen as an attractive area for philanthropic investment, not solely the domain of mass.



2. International development is complex and effective communication is often an issue

There is enormous complexity in international development that is challenging to both INGOs and donor communities on several fronts. Complexity often manifests itself as ineffective communication.

- Donors want to know how their contribution will make a difference – but communicating impact can be difficult. Gathering data for impact measures can be time consuming and challenging in countries where even basic services are lacking.
- International development often raises contentious topics, more so than other charitable causes. (*Should we get involved in other countries? What about corruption? Don't we have enough problems at home?*) Added

complexity in theories of change, variances between in-country programs and other geo-political considerations can frustrate donors who seek a clear and simple business case and the data to back it up.

- Engagement and community building among a sector that services different countries and different interest groups can be difficult.
- INGOs need to be better at communicating with high net worth donors across all areas of need and impact in ways that makes sense to donors and meets their information needs.
- Similarly, INGOs have a range of networks and experts with decades of front line experience who can offer invaluable resources to funders seeking to better understand the sector and the impact they can make. By leading with curiosity and openness, high net worth funders can benefit from this extensive expertise in seeking to build genuine partnerships.

“As a philanthropist becomes more prominent, their reputation matters more and more. They can become more cautious about choosing charitable partners to minimise the risk of criticism or reputational damage. Supporting international development can seem like a riskier option than supporting causes like tertiary education, the arts or medical research.”

International development sector peer

“Previous interest groups that tried to intersect between geography and thematic interests were always hit and miss. Someone was always excluded. There was always a reason for people not to take an interest.”

Simon Lewis, Co-Founder and Chair, Australian International Development Network (AIDN)

“It's really important to be able to succinctly articulate need. A lot of non-profits struggle with that. We always come back to the core questions: what are you trying to do and how can we help you with that?”

Tania Austin, Founder, DECJUBA Foundation

“It's important for all parties to be as open and clear as they can be from the start to identify areas of commonality, or alternatively, to realise as early as possible that there isn't strong alignment and it's best not to progress. It's like any relationship where honest communication is key. Sometimes, I don't think philanthropists understand and appreciate the amount of effort non-profits spend trying to fundraise. However, just as importantly, those of us raising funds need to invest time to clearly understand the funder, what their objectives are from the partnership and which internal stakeholders they may be managing. This ultimately positions the partnership for greater success in the future.”

Mark Harwood Chief Executive Officer, ygap





CASE STUDY

Tania Austin

Leadership, connection and relationship-building

Australian retailer and philanthropist Tania Austin founded the DECJUBA Foundation which aims to positively impact 25 million lives by 2025.²⁵ Her clear vision for philanthropy has evolved over the years to be firmly guided by principles of equity, connection and ambition.

DECJUBA Foundation was established in 2021 as the philanthropic arm of fashion brand DECJUBA. The Foundation partners with local and global charities on programs to transform lives and help those in need around five key areas: experience, empowerment, education, essentials and emergency relief.

Underpinning every program and partnership DECJUBA Foundation embarks on is Tania's desire to create meaningful, long-term, sustainable change. Connection is all-important.

"I've had the experience of handing over a donation and walking away and it was a soulless experience. We would prefer to be tied to a longer term project that we can support in multiple ways, not just financially but with skilled resources or our IP, and really contribute to something that makes a difference."

As a CEO and founder of one of Australia's biggest privately owned retail companies, Tania understands how important it is that leadership and genuine connection comes from the highest level within an organisation. She builds close relationships with the organisations she supports and cites many examples of how regular check-ins and clear communication at CEO level has laid the groundwork for deeper connection and more significant investment in various causes.

Tania has also been clear about her ambition to help tackle systemic inequality on a global scale and says that her decision to work with well-established and vetted charities is based on the relationships she has worked hard to develop.

"Big change needs to be in the right hands. Relationships are key. I am interested in working with organisations like World Vision who are looking at solutions for systemic problems, so we are not just constantly putting a band-aid on, and who will tell me straight – to actually effect change, we need to do this and here is the research."

Raising the profile of global issues is also high on DECJUBA Foundation's agenda.

"We do support domestic causes, but looking within our own community, own state, own country is quite a small tank. We become insular very quickly. Making people aware of international development issues is an important part of our program."

Tania Austin, Founder, DECJUBA Foundation

Tania Austin's philanthropy is as authentically warm as it is ambitious. She is a model of best practice in how to build trust and respect on both sides, clearly demonstrating the power of relationships to ultimately transform the level of giving and potential for impact among the international sector.



25. [Australian Financial Review, Why Tania Austin wouldn't retire, even after pocketing \\$50m, April 2023](#)

3. The limited number of mega gifts, high profile fundraising campaigns and role models on both sides are limiting the potential for giving to international development

There are few high profile, high net worth individuals who talk publicly and proactively about their commitment to giving to international causes. Notable exceptions are the Canva and Judith Neilson Foundations who are at early stages of philanthropic investment in this area. Contrast this to the arts, medical research and higher education, where visibility among peers and donor recognition is highly valued.

"The best way to grow philanthropic contributions to international giving in Australia is to tell exciting and interesting stories about those impacted. And then hopefully other people will want to do more of that kind of philanthropy too."

Simon Freeman, CEO, Judith Neilson Foundation

- As evidenced by these other sectors, high profile major gift campaigns can build donor confidence around the sector's ambition to raise significant gifts, ability to distribute significant funds and demonstrate impact on a large scale. International development doesn't yet have the examples of high profile, large scale public gifts to draw on, nor multi-million dollar fundraising campaigns to drive the scale of ambition.
- Building a 'culture of giving' includes increasing the visibility of philanthropy by discussing it openly. Donors are often influenced by their peers. Recent announcements by Canva and Judith Neilson are incredibly exciting and herald a new level of ambition and impact ahead for the sector. While other high net worth donors are active in the sector, their activity has been less public, which may be limiting the role high net worth philanthropy can play in terms of growing the ambition, scale and impact.

"We must normalise giving as just something Australians do. There is huge potential to both increase the sophistication with which we fundraise and to encourage high net worth individuals to be more strategic in their philanthropy. When you create a stronger giving culture because people are being asked, those with greater wealth will start to give more. There is a huge opportunity to invite high net worth individuals to engage with international issues on a personal level to inspire more people to get involved."

Jack Heath, CEO, Philanthropy Australia

- The public announcement of a mega gifts is the tip of the iceberg for complex, multi-year, multi-million dollar fundraising campaigns, which require considerable investment, resourcing and strategic thinking to pull off. INGO Boards and Executive leaders should take appropriate strategic action to build revenue sources and be confident about their investment in major gift fundraising.
- More transparency and consistency in data is also key if the sector is to build more confidence among donors and track its progress in this area. Aside from AFR data, there are limited points of reference for people to understand who is raising what, who is giving and at what level. The sector could share information in appropriate ways to help build more accurate benchmarking data. For example, in higher education, most leading Australian universities opt-in to sharing data through the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) benchmarking survey. This shows a generosity and openness within the sector to sharing de-identified data information in appropriate ways and offers an existing and successful self-reporting model the international development sector could learn from. Higher education is a great case study of the impact of strategy and investment in major gifts fundraising in the past 15 years which has delivered billion dollar campaigns and hundreds of millions in mega gifts.

"We all need to ask ourselves how we can be part of changing the world. I've become more comfortable talking about my giving because I can see the benefits. People tend to make decisions based on what other people are doing. It would be great if [through DECJUBA Foundation] we got more people on board with the idea that change is up to everyone."

Tania Austin, Founder, DECJUBA Foundation



4. *There is significant energy, ambition and activity across the sector to be optimistic about future growth in philanthropy*

Across all our conversations with the sector, there was a consensus that while there is still enormous need in the international development sector, and Australia has not in any way reached its potential capacity to help, there is a growing interest, ambition and opportunity to do better.

- Several factors are converging to create an environment that is ripe for change – greater awareness of the enormous need represented by international causes, the increasing presence of great wealth in Australia, rising ambition among philanthropy and the growing number of people willing to share their rich experience in the sector. There are green shoots everywhere.
- We also recognise and value the many people (in INGOs, philanthropists, sector bodies and government) who have already invested their time, energy, intellect and resources over many years to advance the international development sector in Australia.

“When making giving decisions a lot of high net worth individuals will look at the sector overall rather than at what one organisation is doing. The international development sector can achieve more by talking collectively about the cause and showing the impact of work that you do. I think it will be up to the biggest players, those who have been there a long time, to take the lead on encouraging more high net worth to engage with international causes.”

John McLeod, Philanthropic Services Consultant, JBWere Ltd

- As they are joined by more and more people seeking to build on this collective ambition for a more dynamic and thriving international development sector, there is genuine optimism about the future.

“When you start mobilising people who have a sensibility and interest in international development, it releases a lot of enthusiasm, engagement and support. In building up the AIDN network, we have tapped into that deep passion; international funders have been waiting to find their tribe in the giving community; AIDN is focused on amplifying their voices and effectiveness, and multiplying their numbers,”

Simon Lewis, Co-Founder and Chair, Australian International Development Network (AIDN)

- International development is building momentum backed by the growing movement of everyday philanthropists who already support the sector through retail giving and have the potential to make more transformational gifts to international development in the future.
- We are also optimistic about Next Gen philanthropists and development professionals who will view the world in a different way and will apply their perspectives and resources to lead significant change.

“There’s an opportunity for philanthropists to take risks and even small amounts of funding can be catalytic if they are addressing gaps in the funding ecosystem that others aren’t willing to support. Larger institutional donors are less likely to do this so adventurous philanthropists can be the ones to try new things with us, pilot a new approach, innovate and ultimately bring change and demonstrate success so that others can follow suit which wouldn’t occur otherwise without their courage.”

Mark Harwood Chief Executive Officer, ygap





CASE STUDY

Judith Neilson Foundation

Growing ambition in Australian international development philanthropy

Australian philanthropist Judith Neilson AM is known for her high profile projects supporting the arts, journalism and social issues. She is now poised to become one of Australia's largest ever philanthropic contributors to international development, bringing bold and visionary leadership to the sector.

Through the Judith Neilson Foundation, Judith Neilson intends to disperse around \$50 million a year in philanthropic grants – with a substantial proportion going to international development.

In Australia, the Foundation will focus on projects supporting women and girls, while taking a broader focus of supporting marginalised communities in Southern Africa. This plan reflects Judith's deeply personal connection to Africa and her responsibility as a global citizen. It also highlights the intersection of pressing social issues like girls' education and women's economic empowerment within the international development context.

Globally, social norms and systems of power continue to marginalise women. Bringing her public profile to projects focused on women's rights and gender equality in Southern Africa and Australia, Judith Neilson will help draw critical attention to the role of gender and intersectionality in broader development outcomes.

While the team works through fundamental questions around vision, strategy and operations, Judith Neilson Foundation CEO Simon Freeman is optimistic about the Foundation's partnership approach.

"We're looking to partner with groups in Australia and locally-led organisations overseas with similar mindsets and strategies and who want to achieve the same outcomes. We are taking a considered approach to figure out how we can take an active role, stay close to the programs and projects we want to support while not overburdening the process."

The Foundation's collaborative model hopes to deliver other synergistic benefits, including shared resources and due diligence, and the potential to invest in projects of greater scale and impact. Freeman also believes that Judith's signature approach – purposely bold and ambitious – will help to draw attention to the powerful impact Australia philanthropic investment can have in the international sector.

"We intend to be vocal and tell positive stories about what we are doing. This is an exciting time for the Foundation as we put the building blocks in place."

"It is important that words match deeds and we are hopeful that, in time, we might be positioned as a leader in this space. Growing the level of Australian philanthropic giving to the international sector, showing the enormous impact you can have overseas, will be a key part of our mission."

**Simon Freeman, CEO,
Judith Neilson Foundation**

The international development sector is fortunate to have one of Australia's boldest philanthropists in its corner, not only committing significant funding, but bringing unparalleled attention, ambition and gravitas to lead the way for change in international development philanthropy.



8. ACTION PLAN

Through this research, World Vision Australia and Noble Ambition have been privileged to consult with a cross-section of philanthropists and international development colleagues to learn about their experiences with giving in the sector. We have also been able to draw on Noble Ambition’s significant depth of experience as a leader in fundraising strategy and capacity building to offer a way forward for INGOs, philanthropists, governing bodies and other stakeholders.

The following action plan is designed to inspire reflection and conversation, and provide a useful tool to facilitate increased impact. We see these as both potential solutions to hurdles and points of leverage for opportunities identified in this white paper.

Key Finding 1: The success of retail fundraising for INGOs has created adverse consequences for high net worth philanthropy in international development	
Commit at Board and Executive level to invest in the strategy and resources needed to grow more strategic and long-term income streams through philanthropy (including significant multi-million dollar, multi- year campaigns).	INGOs – Boards and Execs
Build capacity and professionalism in major gift fundraising strategy and engagement to support more trust-based relationships, improved service levels and more bespoke offerings to meet donor needs.	INGOs – fundraisers
Mobilise the enormous asset of everyday philanthropists within INGOs current retail/mass supporter base and focus on more effective management of the transition to structured, strategic giving.	INGOs
Key Finding 2: International development is complex and effective communication is often an issue.	
Foster genuine and long term connections and trust with donors and communicate more effectively regarding impact in ways that better meet donor needs.	INGOs
Be more open to engaging with the sector and INGOs to build strategic relationships and find ways to match giving objectives with needs on the ground and INGO fields of expertise.	Donor community
Key Finding 3: The limited number of mega gifts, high profile campaigns and role models on both sides are limiting the potential for giving to international development.	
Invest the required time, funds and human resources required to support more ambitious major gift fundraising and engagement strategies that present international development as a visible and viable philanthropic investment for high net worth donors.	INGOs
Build a ‘culture of giving’ that encourages donors to give and supports them to publicly share information about their giving to international development causes. This can include 100% giving at INGO board level.	INGOs, sector bodies, intermediaries
Be prepared to speak up about giving – including motivation and models of giving – to help raise the profile, legitimacy and impact of major gifts and structured philanthropy in international development.	Donors
Key Finding 4: There is significant energy, ambition and activity across the sector to be optimistic about future growth in philanthropy.	
Continue to develop the knowledge base and provide opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement and education around sector-wide issues.	Sector bodies, ACFID, AIDN, intermediaries
Engage across the sector to establish reliable baseline data that is regularly updated and shared to build greater transparency and benchmarking capacity within the sector.	INGOs, sector bodies

9. A WAY FORWARD

The international development sector is a sleeping giant in major gift philanthropy and fundraising in Australia. We strongly believe that our INGOs, the same organisations that have already been so successful at appealing to the idealism, hope and generosity of everyday Australians, must add to this with specific strategy, investment and approach designed to galvanise the support of high net worth individuals to give more. All the elements required for success – the urgent need, compelling vision, extraordinary leaders, emerging role models, generosity of spirit and ambition for impact – are gathering in place.

The challenge now is to bring all these elements together to position Australian international development philanthropy ten years from now as a market leader in this space, fundamentally transforming philanthropy in Australia in the process. Let us not understate what the sector can achieve if it harnesses this opportunity for growth in high net worth philanthropy alongside the enormous power of mass giving for the benefit of communities around the world.

For the millions of people across the globe who rely on this support to break the cycle of poverty in their community there is both so much to gain and everything at stake.



10. LIST OF INTERVIEWS

TANIA AUSTIN

Founder, DECJUBA Foundation

MARK CUBIT

Co-Founder, Cubit Family Foundation and Australian International Development Network (AIDN)

CATRIONA FAY

Managing Partner, Community, Social and ESG Investment, Perpetual Private

SIMON FREEMAN

CEO, Judith Neilson Foundation

MARK HARWOOD

CEO, ygap

JACK HEATH

CEO, Philanthropy Australia

STEVE KILLELEA

Founder and Executive Chairman, The Charitable Foundation and the Institute for Economics and Peace

ROBYN KING

Head of Social Impact, Canva Foundation

SIMON LEWIS

Co-Founder and Chair, Australian International Development Network (AIDN)

JOHN MCLEOD

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MARC PURCELL

CEO, Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)

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ALL IMAGES PROVIDED BY WORLD VISION AUSTRALIA.

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12. ABOUT THE AUTHORS



DANIEL WORDSWORTH

Chief Executive Officer, World Vision Australia

Tamworth-born Daniel Wordsworth became CEO of World Vision Australia in January 2021 after 25 years working in the world's conflict hotspots. Prior to joining World Vision Australia, Daniel spent 12 years as the CEO of US-based Alight (formerly known as the American Refugee Committee), providing healthcare, clean water, shelter, protection and economic opportunity to more than 2.5 million people in 15 countries each year.

Before this, Daniel spent 12 years with the Christian Children's Fund (CCF). During this time, he built the foundations of CCF's emergency response programs in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, India, Afghanistan and northern Uganda.

Daniel has lived and worked with the urban poor in Australia, Hong Kong, China, India, Vietnam and Thailand and has written numerous publications on children and poverty. He started his career in the Royal Australian Navy.

Daniel felt compelled and called to work with World Vision, an organisation dedicated to helping the world's poorest children and which has reached more than 200 million children worldwide. He is also greatly inspired by the strength of the organisation's faith-based mission.

To find out more about Daniel, visit [LinkedIn](#).



MELISSA SMITH

CEO & Founder, Noble Ambition

Melissa Smith is former Global Fundraiser of the Year (IFC, 2011) and Australian Fundraiser of the Year (FIA, 2011). She has facilitated over \$40 million in philanthropic giving across education, the arts and health, working with hundreds of donors in Australia, Asia and the United States.

Melissa has led four fundraising programs from start-up to established, from Powerhouse Museum and Sydney Opera House in the arts, to University of Technology, Sydney and RMIT University, in education.

Melissa established Noble Ambition in 2016 and has focused exclusively on working at Board and executive level to build the capability and confidence of Australia's for-purpose sector leadership, to drive multi-million dollar fundraising campaigns and achieve lasting social impact. In the years since, Melissa has worked with hundreds of for-purpose leaders and contributed thought leadership reports and podcasts to the sector.

Melissa sits on the board of Stella and is the Chair of its Fundraising Committee. She has a BA Hons (First Class, USyd), Masters of Management (UTS) and is a Churchill Fellow.

To find out more about Melissa, visit [LinkedIn](#).

ABOUT NOBLE AMBITION

Noble Ambition is an Australian leader in fundraising strategy and capacity building for Boards and CEOs. We work with organisational leadership, industry and government agencies in the for-purpose sector. Our client base is national, representative of the breadth of the for-purpose sector, from Australia's largest charities to high impact start-ups. Our noble ambition is to see transformational social impact through philanthropic investment in the for purpose sector, at scale. To achieve this, we deliver a range of strategy and capacity building services from complex campaign counsel and bespoke strategic advice to executive coaching and online fundraising leadership courses.

Read more at nobleambition.com.au



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