



H&S Davidson Trust

# INCREASING IMPACT IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Summary Research Report

June 2022



**WOMEN  
OWNED**



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# Foreword - by Hugh Davidson, Chair, H & S Davidson Trust

The International Development sector has already entered a period of major change. Who needs to change most? Major funders in the Global North. International organizations, local and national governments, INGO's – many of whom continue to have colonial attitudes to International Development.

Encouragingly, this Survey suggests, on an illustrative sample, that there is strong majority support among funders for significant transfer of decision making from the Global North, to local organizations in the Global South. For example, 83% of those interviewed in the Global North, a majority of them funders, agreed with the statement "Too many funders develop strategies & campaigns in offices in Global North, rather than starting on the front line, by understanding local communities in the Global South."

The purpose of this Survey, to be enhanced by an organized program to involve the ideas and experiences of those involved in the International Development sector, was twofold: to identify how to raise the impact of International Development, and, in the process, to help H & S Davidson Trust (HSDT) develop a new 10 year strategy. The latter purpose has already been largely achieved (see Appendix 5 – "New HSDT Funding Strategy"). HSDT definitely needed to change and is actively doing so.

HSDT is a smallish & little known family Trust, established in 2004, run by its volunteer unpaid

Trustees. Our partners in this program are Jigsaw Research, winner of multiple awards for market research; Alliance magazine (itself a not for profit entity, also dedicated to improving the effectiveness & efficiency of the International Development sector); and Barry Knight, highly experienced writer, activist, and innovator in the sector, as author of the Literature Review and ongoing consultant for this program.

The original program purpose was to understand how scaling worked, barriers to scaling and how to overcome them. This stemmed from the Trustees' observation, during extensive fieldwork in many countries, that successful programs – their own and others – were not often scaled up.

It was therefore decided, based on Barry Knight's extensive Literature Review, and the results of the 44 wide ranging in depth individual interviews ( Qualitative Stage), to widen the scope of the subsequent Quantitative Survey, to include areas with higher potential for change such as equal voices, shifting the power, collaboration & knowledge sharing.

The research Survey is the first step in our program for change. Following its emphasis on the importance of collaboration, we plan a process of consultation in which participants in the field actively shape follow – up actions from the research, through an open & inclusive co – creation process, generating a snowball effect. We will also re-engage with those interviewed at the Quali

stage, respondents to the Quanti Survey, and others wishing to be involved.

A commentary on feedback received will be produced. It is hoped to build a small group of activists, and this may develop into a steering group. There will be a series of articles in Alliance magazine, setting out opportunities for engagement, leading to a draft set of practical implementation proposals, to be considered at a follow-up Conference organized with Alliance in February 2023.

In line with this approach, it would be most helpful if you could disseminate this Survey by passing it on to people likely to be interested, and we would much welcome any comments or suggestions on how best to implement the key avenues for change. I hope you will join us in helping activate this journey of change.

Many thanks to Sue Van Meeteren, Luke Perry, and their colleagues at Jigsaw Research; to Barry Knight; and to my colleagues in the H&S Davidson Trust Team – Sandra, Bruce, and Ian Davidson, and Anne and Nigel Worne, for their valuable contributions to this program. And to those who were good enough to participate effectively in the Qualitative and Quantitative parts of the Survey."

Hugh Davidson, June 2022



# Purpose and structure of the research

# This report summarises the findings from research conducted on behalf of H&S Davidson Trust

Objectives of the research were to assess:

1

**What are the biggest challenges facing the International Development sector that limit impact and effectiveness?**

2

**What are the different initiatives, solutions and changes that are most likely to have a positive impact?**

Research was funded by the H&S Davidson Trust



H&S Davidson Trust

H&S Davidson Trust (HSDT) is a self-funding family Trust, run entirely by volunteers.

Trustees have expertise in Vision & Values, Strategy, Marketing, Measurement, Engineering, Climate Change, and IT.

They have no axe to grind or political/personal agenda. HSDT's main objective in funding this Survey was to identify high impact actions which would both increase effectiveness, and command sufficient support among funders and implementers in Global North and South to make necessary changes feasible for the sector.

See Appendix 3&4 for a summary of HSDT and its Trustees, and Appendix 5 for the strategic changes it is making as a result of this Survey. It focuses on four opportunity areas – Equal Voices , Funding, Scaling and Collaboration.

# Research was conducted in 3 stages:



## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the developments, policies, concepts and narratives that have shaped and influenced International Development since 1945.

To inform and provide context for stages 2 and 3 empirical research.

***Conducted by Barry Knight***



## 2. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

In depth interviews with 44 participants drawn from a range of organisations including funders, implementers, intermediaries, academics, consultants and authors, from \*Global North and Global South.

To explore issues and challenges and potential opportunities and actions for improving effectiveness in the sector.

***Conducted by Jigsaw Research***



## 3. QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Online survey completed by 346 participants spread across 43 countries:

- \*Global North (n=228), Global South (n=118)
- \*Funders (188), implementers (123), other roles (35)
- Female (125), male (200), other/no answer (21)

To provide an indicative measure of opinions in International Development sector and priorities for action.

***Conducted by Jigsaw Research***

\* Throughout this report, there are references to participants coming from Global North and Global South and for being involved in Funding or Implementing – whilst we recognise that this is a far from perfect basis for analysis, it does allow us to draw out some significant differences of opinion from a limited sample base. Definitions in Appendix 1. Limited sample size means quantitative findings should be treated as indicative rather than representative of the whole sector.



## Summary of literature review –

Bringing Success to Scale - Looking at the History of International Development

# Bringing Success to Scale - Looking at the History of International Development

The literature study examined the history of international development, paying particular attention to 'scaling up' successful local projects designed to reduce poverty among women.

Efforts to bring successful results to scale have, for the most part, fallen on stony ground. Rather than consolidating gains and developing assets further, donors shift from one 'magic solution' to another with no reliable mechanism to learn from their failures. Unevaluated fashion determines the 'next big thing' until it disappoints and is quietly dropped only to be replaced with the 'next big thing'.

At heart, the problem has structural roots. Public and private funders have almost always driven change from the top-down without involving the communities they want to help. In so doing, well-meaning initiatives have reinforced the very inequalities they were designed to change.

Alternatives to top-down approaches have been ever-present. From the 'Third World Community Development Movement' of the 1950s, to the 'Associational Revolution' of the 1990s, through to current efforts to '#ShiftThePower', such initiatives find it difficult to take root because they threaten the hegemony of elite organisations and interests. Despite being out of step with what civil society wants and needs, together with a powerful feminist critique of the dominant approach to women's empowerment, funders continue their ineffective approach.

These considerations led to a more nuanced goal for the study. While still taking into account the issue of scale, and most particularly understanding that there are times when 'big is best' and others when 'small is beautiful', the study decided to address the wider challenges to effectiveness in the field.

The study was conducted in the time of Covid-19. The pandemic has exposed the full extent of the weaknesses of the system. As INGOs and funders have withdrawn in many countries of the Global South, community organizations have stepped up and taken leadership positions.

There is now demand from people in the Global South that public aid and private philanthropy decolonizes its ways of working so that local people play a leading part in shaping their societies.

The global turbulence wrought by the poly-crisis (the pandemic, the climate emergency, populism, inequality, racism, persistent violent conflict and the threat of world war) require a collective metamorphosis in the behaviour of humanity. The challenge is to organize, mobilize and engage people to reignite a sense of shared purpose and possibility to build new leadership for our societies.

Barry Knight (revised June 2022)





## Overall Conclusions (based on research)

# Conclusions

*“The priority now is to rethink international development in every dimension.*

*New systems and mindsets are needed to meet the future”*

NGO, Global North



There is strong consensus across the sector - Global North and South, funders and implementers - concerning:

- Challenges facing the sector
- Changes needed to mindsets, systems and behaviours
- Priorities for action



Key challenges facing the sector are:

- Strategies and campaigns that are designed with insufficient understanding of the needs of local communities
- Need to decolonise and decentralise the sector
- Need to review and change the role of International NGOs
- Need to build stronger relationships and improve collaboration



There is a high degree of optimism across the sector around the potential positive impact of implementing changes and action that could:

- Ensure equal voice for local communities in all decision making
- Encourage more unrestricted and longer term funding
- Incentivise collaboration and partnerships and reduce competition for funding

**The Covid pandemic has accelerated and forced some of the themes referred to in this report – such as increased localisation – and has exposed the fragility of many communities.**

# Overall Conclusions by Hugh Davidson

The Survey has identified a number of practical opportunities for increasing the impact of International Development, with strong support for change among both funders and implementers, and those in both Global North and Global South.

This is hopeful, since while change is difficult to achieve in the International Development sector, the conditions for achieving it now seem to be present.

The most promising areas for change include a move to Equal Voices; designing and developing programs with local groups in the Global South on the front line, rather than in expensive offices in the Global North; unrestricted funding; and much greater collaboration, partnership, and knowledge sharing.

Scaling appears to be a lower priority for change since it generates mixed views and does not present a clear path to implementation. The future of INGOs is linked to the topics in the previous paragraph. Conclusions relating to the actionable areas identified by the Survey are as follows:

## 1. MOVE TO EQUAL VOICES

81% agreed with Statement: ***“The movement to decolonize the aid industry & philanthropy is a prerequisite of progress towards equality in the world”***, including 78% of funders. Key ingredients in this were equal voices in decisions on programs; co-designing solutions; constructing strategies; and upfront consultation.

Linked to this, there was strong support for moving the location of decision making to the Global South – 85% of all interviewees agreed with: ***“Too many funders develop strategies & campaigns in offices in Global North, rather than starting on the front line, by understanding needs of local communities in the Global South”***. And 87% agreed that co-designing solutions around community needs first would be likely to have an extremely or very positive impact.

## 2. IMPROVE COLLABORATION & KNOWLEDGE SHARING

A huge 93% agreed: ***“International Development is too siloed, & needs to be better at both horizontal & vertical integration”***. And 79% agreed ***“Quality & spread of Knowledge Management in ID sector is poor, with enormous wastage. Knowledge is dispersed across many different players”***.

Factors driving this seem to include significant turnover of people & job rotation; silos & fragmentation; too much competition, too little cooperation; and the time limited project system, which 78% of interviewees said was ineffective & unsustainable. It encourages a mindset of “Get funds, do project, move on”, so much knowledge is left behind. Result is constant re-invention of the wheel, & repetition of the same mistakes is built into the system. The sector appears to recognize this since 82% agreed that: ***“insufficient priority is given to building relationships, improving collaboration, and working in co-partnership with other organizations”***.

# Overall Conclusions by Hugh Davidson (cont'd)

## 3. INGOs NEED TO CHANGE THEIR ROLE

78% agreed: ***“Large international NGOs should change their role, with program decision makers located on front line in Global South, and focus on fund raising and advocacy in Global North”***. A few are already doing this and others are considering it. As an INGO executive observed: *“INGOs need to take on the long term work of moving decision making to country offices”*.

Other opportunities for INGOs, through their local country offices, include training and capacity building of local NGOs & community foundations, some of which they already work with, since there appears to be a gap to be filled: 82% of interviewees in the Global South said that ***“increased support for local NGOs with preparing proposals, designing metrics, & governance”*** would have an extremely or very positive impact.

## 4. MORE UNRESTRICTED FUNDING

This question was not asked directly, but there was majority support for a related question: 70 % agreed that a ***“campaign to educate governments and target donors on fewer restrictions on funding & benefits of moving towards unrestricted funding”*** would be likely to have an extremely or very positive impact. Framing the details of how this could be implemented is addressed in the next brief Section on ***“Avenues for Increasing Impact”***.

## SUMMARY

While the Survey is illustrative rather than representative, and would benefit by being extended to a larger global sample, the magnitude of support for change in specific areas adds to its credibility. This offers promise that the change needed can be implemented over time. In the fragmented ID sector, joining up the pieces can have a dynamic impact, and ripple effects can become waves. But it is not a quick fix and we recognise will take time & patience.

Hugh Davidson, June 2022



## Avenues for Increasing Impact

Conclusions of survey sponsor – H&S Davidson Trust

# Avenues for increasing impact of International Development Sector - By Hugh Davidson

In the spirit of collaboration, our Team is keen to hear from others with new or different perspectives, and to disseminate these and the Survey widely. We view the Survey as a platform to stimulate co-creation, welcoming all contributions, and sharing information and ideas as a lead-in to our February 2023 Global Conference, organized with Alliance magazine. We have no axes to grind, or fixed agendas, except the desire to help improve the impact of International Development.

The Survey appears to have identified a number of opportunities for effective change which, on an illustrative basis, command broad support across the International Development sector. This is a complex and fragmented sector, segmented by type of organisation, activity area, location, and area of expertise. It is easier to identify opportunities in this context, than to get sector agreement to practical solutions which capitalize on the opportunities.

Here are some questions and ideas, offered with some humility, for you to consider and add to.

## 1. MOVE TO EQUAL VOICES

Essential practical moves include shifting power from funders in the Global North to local people on the front line in the Global South, in line with the #ShiftThePower movement. This is already happening, though slowly. The biggest spenders on International Development are national governments and multi-country organizations like the EU, World Bank, IMF, and the UN.

The currency of governments is votes and some countries are becoming more right wing, prescriptive and hostile to minorities or those with little voice. What are the best levers for encouraging major funders to change? How can collaboration and partnership be used to increase the power of local organizations – community foundations, local NGOs, activists, even local government itself?

One first step could be to focus on establishing it is best practice to initiate & design every new program in the location it is designed to benefit, giving a strong voice to people living on the front line. How could this be best progressed?

## 2. IMPROVE COLLABORATION & KNOWLEDGE SHARING

A big reason for the poor quality of knowledge management is the fragmentation of the sector, where information is dispersed across many different players. Do the latter define where they will compete, as in funding, and how they will cooperate more with others? Can the Sector move away from time limited projects? Can measurement be done on a more continuous basis, so that ongoing improvement is energised, rather than at the start and finish of projects? Can open publication and sharing of knowledge become the norm and how?

# Avenues for increasing impact of International Development Sector - By Hugh Davidson

## 3. INGO's NEED TO CHANGE THEIR ROLE

INGO's are both funders and implementers. Should they confine their role in future to fund raising and advocacy in their home countries? Should they change from funding time limited projects to funding local organizations in the Global South? If so, how do INGO's change the prescriptive attitudes & preference for time limited projects among their own major funders such as governments and international organizations? If they can't do that, should they reduce the percent of funding drawn from these major donors? How can they shift the power & the expertise from country headquarters in the Global North to countries and local organizations in the Global South? In doing this, how best can they use their skills to build capacity & transfer decision making to local organizations in the global South?

## 4. MORE UNRESTRICTED FUNDING

The word 'unrestricted' may be misleading, since it implies that funders are expected to say : "Here is the money. Spend it in the way you think will be most effective". This would seem difficult for Governments, exposed to a sometimes hostile media, or for Foundations whose Trustees face increasing regulation.

How can unrestricted funding be made more palatable to major funders? Are international organizations like the World Bank and the UN best placed to take the lead on this? Can more be done to develop "Less Restricted Funding" ? For example, 67% of interviewees agreed that placing more emphasis on due diligence and building trust would have a significant impact.

How far could activities like co-designing solutions around community needs first, and increasing support for local NGOs in preparing proposals & designing metrics, help build trust? They commanded strong support among interviewees in both the Global North & South. Can the frequency and detail of reporting be dramatically reduced? Could two page Reports focusing on activities, impact and cost become the norm? Why not – in my experience most Reports provide too much detail, so detracting from focus on the essentials.

## 5. SCALING: IS THERE A CLEAR WAY FORWARD FOR THE SECTOR?

Based on Barry Knight's Literature Review and responses to the Survey, the answer seems to be "Not Yet". Barry's Review of the history of scaling since 1945 traces why it has failed to make a major impact so far, and the Survey confirms that there appears to be little consensus on a clear way forward. What do you think? Would greater collaboration and better management of information – likely future trends in the Sector - make a difference to scaling?

## SUMMARY

I hope that others with more talent and knowledge than me, especially those living and working on the front line in the Global South, will find the best way to turn the opportunities identified in this Survey into more effective impact in the field.

Hugh Davidson, June 2022



## RESEARCH FINDINGS: Challenges & Opportunities for International Development



# There is strong consensus about the key challenges and opportunities facing the sector...

... especially concerning the need to rebalance relationships between Global North and South

There is widespread agreement that reform is needed, especially change that can lead to:

- Local communities having an equal voice in decision making
- A greater understanding of the needs of local communities
- A change in the focus of INGOs

“

*Local organisations should be the lead, rather than large INGOs based in the Global North*  
INGO, Global North

*The priority is to shift the power to local organisations – small grassroots organisations not local offshoots of larger INGOs and work with them to develop internal systems and processes*  
Funder, Global North

*True power lies in devolving money, discourse and decision making power*  
Consultant, Global South

*Need to enable beneficiaries to design programs to suit their needs and devolve as much of the process to the geographical region where the impact is required*  
Funder, Global North

”

## % agreeing with each statement

International Development system needs reform, with local people having equal voice to funders in Global North in making decisions

84

Too many funders develop strategies and campaigns in offices in Global North, rather than starting on the front line by understanding needs of local communities in Global South

85

The movement to decolonize aid industry and philanthropy is a prerequisite of progress towards equality in the World

81

Large international NGOs should change their role, with program decision-makers located on front line in Global South, and focus on fundraising and advocacy in Global North

78

# The need to rebalance relationships was especially voiced by Implementers and those in the Global South

But was also strongly supported by those in the Global North and funders

“

*There should be more power in the hands of local community organizations with INGOs as flexible donors, not implementers*  
Implementer, Global South

*Decolonising the aid funding will have the greatest impact. Too much power to make decisions, allocate resources sits in the Global North and erases local knowledge and expertise*  
NGO, Global South

”

The suggestion that International NGOs should change their role was supported across the sector – including by INGOs themselves

“

*Need to challenge INGOs to re-think what roles sit in the North. INGOs need to take on the long-term work of moving decision making to country offices*  
INGO, Global North

*We need to help INGO's to rethink their role and give more discretion, voice and power to the local delivery team*  
Funder Global North

”

## % agreeing with each statement

■ Global North  
■ Global South

Too many funders develop strategies and campaigns in Global North, rather than starting on the front line by understanding needs of local communities in Global South

83

89

The movement to decolonize aid industry and philanthropy is a pre-requisite of progress towards equality in the World

78

87

Large international NGOs should change their role, with program decision-makers located on front line in Global South, and focus on fundraising and advocacy in Global North

77

83

■ Funders  
■ Implementers

Too many funders develop strategies and campaigns in Global North, rather than starting on the front line by understanding needs of local communities in Global South

83

89

The movement to decolonize aid industry and philanthropy is a pre-requisite of progress towards equality in the World

77

87

Large international NGOs should change their role, with program decision-makers located on front line in Global South, and focus on fundraising and advocacy in Global North

78

78

# Collaboration and knowledge sharing are vital for improving effectiveness

The importance of building trust and collaboration was strongly voiced throughout this research study

“

*We need to build stronger relationships, built on trust, mutual respect and collaboration*  
NGO, Global North

*Collaboration and co-operation across the sector will create synergies and reduce repetition in solving common problems*  
NGO, Global South

*Need to build trust and respectful relationships that create equity of perspectives, expertise and opinions*  
Consultant, Global North

”

Almost everyone felt that the sector is too siloed, and needs to transform how it approaches communications and knowledge sharing. There is not enough focus on building relationships or improving collaboration, which results in a sector that is too internally focused. Furthermore, the voice of people on the front line is often faint or absent in most decision making.

## % agreeing with each statement

International Development sector is too siloed and needs to be much better at both horizontal and vertical integration

93

Insufficient priority given to building relationships, improving collaboration and working in partnership with other organisations

82

Quality & spread of Knowledge Management in ID sector is poor, with enormous wastage. Knowledge is dispersed across many different players

79

Time-limited Project system is often ineffective, unsustainable

78

It would be better for funders to support scaling of existing successful projects, rather than fund new initiatives

46

# More priority needs to be given to building relationships and improving collaboration, especially by Governments

Different audiences across the sector agree that building relationships should be prioritised

“

*We need close collaboration among international funders, with INGOs, local NGOs and especially local Government – and we need to share lessons learnt.*

NGO, Global South

*A priority is increase the ability to access and use knowledge across and within organisations*

Govt, Global North

*We need to cultivate different relational cultures, moving away from models based on competition and resource scarcity to one based on shared resources, solidarity and equity*

CSO, Global North

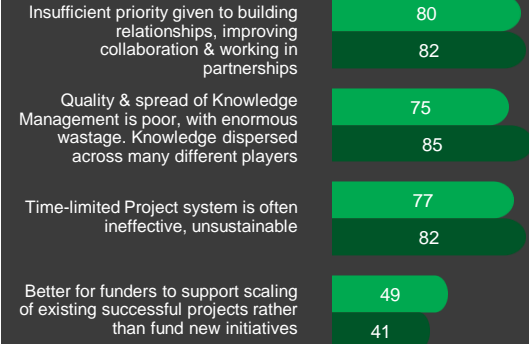
”

The need to prioritise building relationships and collaboration was less strongly expressed by Government participants where 59% agreed with this statement – a majority nonetheless.

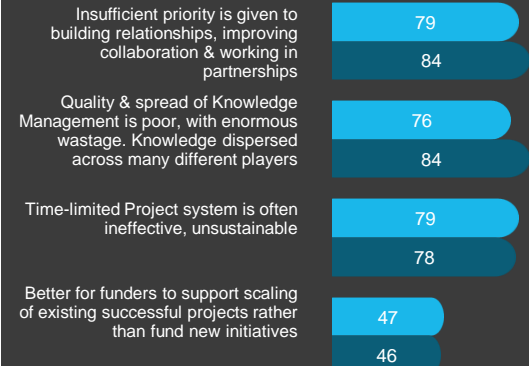
A similar proportion of Government participants (60%) agreed that time-limited projects were often ineffective – still a majority but far less than other audiences.

## % agreeing with each statement

■ Global North  
■ Global South



■ Funders  
■ Implementers



Survey participants were asked about the potential effectiveness of different initiatives:



## Opportunities for increasing impact: Equal Voices

# Almost unanimous agreement that listening to the local community and co-designing solutions would have a very positive impact

## Localisation and decentralisation were consistently advocated

- Research participants expressed a need to bring power and decision making as close as possible to the community where they are trying to make an impact
- Strong belief that grassroots community based philanthropy is often the most appropriate approach
- Some also advocated devolving funding and financial management
- Some suggested developing “shared services support” to manage the financial and business administration activities that smaller, local NGOs do not have the capacity to handle on their own

“

*The top priority is develop an authentic, listening mindset among funders – and to transfer resources and decision-making to local communities and organisations. Fast and at scale.* Funder, Global North

*People respond to people. Hearing the voices of the women we are supporting engages the funders and also helps them understand – much more powerful than us telling their stories”* NGO, Global South

## Amplifying the ‘voice of the community’ was seen as a powerful catalyst

- This would mean ensuring the voices of the local community were central, not only to decision making, but also in any communications, advocacy and campaigning activities
- This is seen as a good principle in its own right – person-centred development, that puts the views of the local community first and ensures their voices are heard, their needs understood and any solutions are designed around this
- Making local voices central to all communications was also felt to make politicians and Governments take notice.

## % saying solution is likely to have an extremely or very positive impact

Co-designing solutions around 'community needs first' - to ensure equal voice for community in decision making

87

Channeling and amplifying the voice of community into advocacy & campaigning with funders and governments

79

Increased support for local NGOs with preparing proposals, designing metrics, governance

78

Devolving financial management to local NGOs at point of implementation, within an agreed budget

64

Introduction of shared support services to enable NGOs to outsource generic operations (e.g., IT, HR) and compliance burdens

61

# Global South and Implementers most strongly support initiatives to drive equal voices

**Especially in relation to co-designing solutions, channelling & amplifying the voice of community, devolving financial management to local NGOs and the introduction of shared services**

Whilst there was almost universal consensus about the positive impact of greater consultation with local communities and co-designing solutions, Implementers were much more likely than Funders to anticipate an extremely positive impact from:

- Devolving financial management to local NGOs
- Introducing shared support services to handle the financial and business admin operations that smaller, local NGOs do not have the capacity to handle on their own

“

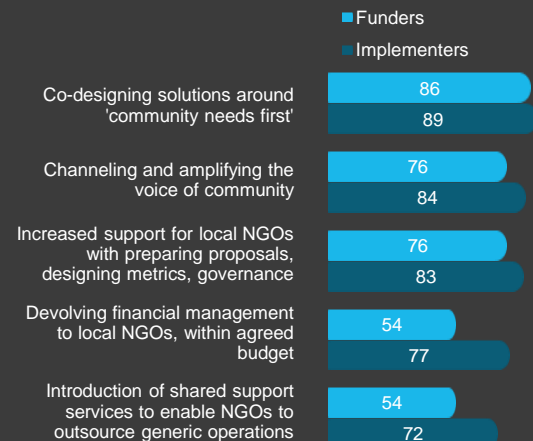
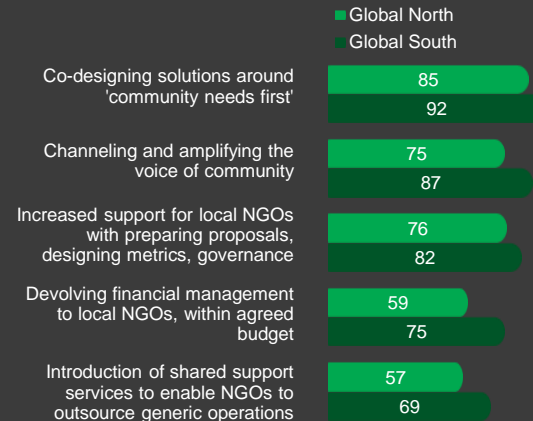
*The priority is to give local organisations the power to make decisions, allocate resources, localise grant processes. Trust us to know the best way to allocate funds and manage budgets*  
NGO, Global South

*Smaller organisations can be over-burdened with the demands of compliance and technology and human resources. These are areas where they need to support – so they can share the cost with other organisations and don't have to try and take on these additional skills*  
CSO, Global South

*Localisation is a big mantra but I don't know how well it is put into place. There is a big policy shift but the implementation is limited*  
Government, Global North

”

*% saying solution is likely to have an extremely or very positive impact*



Survey participants were asked about the potential effectiveness of different initiatives:



## Opportunities for increasing impact: Funding



# Encouraging funders to move towards unrestricted funding will have the most positive impact

## Funding shapes and drives ‘what gets done’ in the field

Different funder philosophies were clear:

- Some want to fund own projects and initiatives – tend to want tight control of how money is spent and expect short-term impact (1-2yrs)
- Others want to fund continuation or expansion of existing campaigns – tend to make longer term commitment to funding (5yrs+), and allow more flexibility

## ‘Restricted’ funding seen as a potential barrier to effectiveness

- Public and governmental organisations can be most likely to favour a restricted funding approach

Restricted funding drives risk aversion and conservatism

- Limits creativity and encourages a mindset of “stick to what you have done previously, do as you’re told, don’t take risks”
- Imposes a prohibitive compliance burden – smaller NGOs less able to cope with additional layers of bureaucracy and registration required
- Can exclude smaller organisations from funding due to compliance burden

The apparent contradiction between funding a business investment and funding development was highlighted:



*In the business world people understand you need to understand the sector and you need to take a long term view. A business investor says ‘I am here to partner with you to allow you to take risks, to be on your board, to bring all my networks and capital to bear, and allow you to do whatever it takes to let that profit grow’.*

*What is still shocking to us is that those same individuals who have built up their capital that way are still very hesitant to give that level of commitment to the Not for Profit organisations they support. Funders don’t have that same patience with these NGOs and nor that flexibility and trust that they would give a business entrepreneur.* Consultant Global South

## % saying solution is likely to have an extremely or very positive impact

Campaign to educate governments & target donors on fewer restrictions on funding & benefits of moving towards more unrestricted funding

70

Cultivating investment mindset among funders e.g. encourage them to offer the same freedoms to apply funds which any business would expect investors to accept

67

Funders placing more emphasis on due diligence and building trust at beginning, to lower need for controls going forward

67

Creating National Funds administered by locals for locals

60

# Funders themselves strongly agreed that fewer restrictions on funding and longer term commitments would have a very positive impact

“Unrestricted funding is the preferred approach and philosophy – you have to do a lot of work upfront and due diligence to understand the model, the organisation, and to come to trust them, and think that we can’t spend the money any better than they can, and if that is not the case then you shouldn’t fund them at all. Funder, Global North

Several solutions to providing more sustainable, less restricted funding were put forward by participants in this research:

## Co-funding

A blended approach with multiple funders, which can reduce risks for both funders and implementers

## Local funding

Local funders more likely to make long-term commitments and have a real understanding of local community needs

## National Funds

A central fund for each country – managed by locals able to advise and support local NGOs

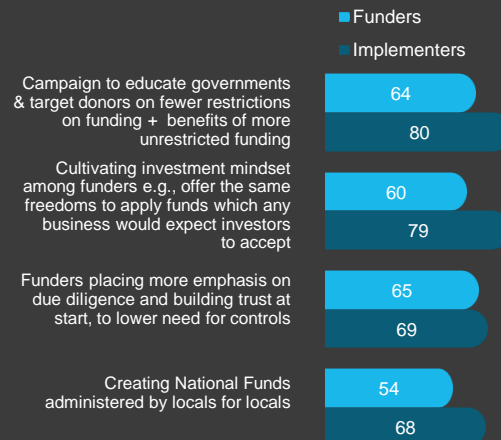
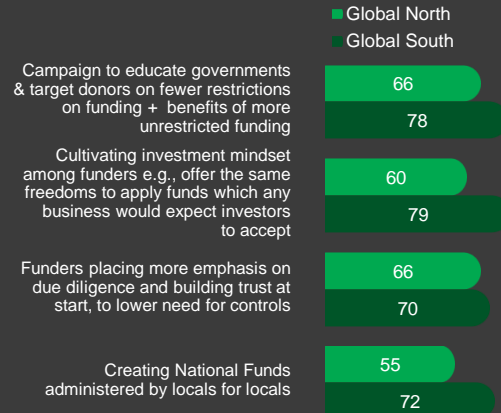
## Funding Organisations

...rather than projects. Ensuring longer term commitment and more flexible funding

A trusting and collaborative relationship between funders and implementors was felt to be a prerequisite for more flexible, less restrictive funding. Key to building trust was a need to be transparent about mistakes, learn from mistakes and tolerate mistakes

“Funders should share their failure stories and still have faith in local NGOs. You’re not allowed to fail in international development and to be able to learn from it and get better – it is a privilege to be able to fail. Smaller organisations aren’t allowed the same privilege – it’s not a level playing field. Funder, Global North

## % saying solution is likely to have an extremely or very positive impact



Survey participants were asked about the potential effectiveness of different initiatives:



Opportunities for increasing impact:  
Scaling for effectiveness

# Broad consensus on the actions required to maximise the impact and effectiveness of any initiative/program

...especially the need for upfront consultation

## Concept of “scaling” can be problematic

- In the private sector “scaling” means growth. In the development sector growth is not the objective of many campaigns
- Scaling can be a positive objective when interpreted as achieving sustainability and maximising impact.
- It can mean replication of a successful initiative in another location or country
- The word “scale” can be substituted by impact

## Maximising impact requires key ingredients

- Extensive consultation up front, with the local community, to ensure the root causes of a challenge are fully understood and to agree potential solutions
- Establishing what successful impact looks like – to ensure all stakeholders are aligned on desired outcomes and hence what is measured
- Planning for sustainability and scaling from the start, so that potential partners and scalars are involved from the design onwards
- Sharing learnings widely across the sector

“

*The project mindset and restricted funding go hand in hand. Lay out what you did, show me how you did it, and maybe we can go onto another project. It is just designed for failure. You must have the notion of continuity from the beginning.* Intermediary/Consultant Global North

*Scale can be outreach, it can be going deeper into the communities, it can even be sustainable leadership and succession planning, and it can even be exiting the community, so we are very open as to what scale looks like depending upon the solution or intervention that you are backing, things can be very different.* Consultant, Global South

## % saying solution is likely to have an extremely or very positive impact

Greater focus on upfront consultation to ensure root causes of problem are fully understood before designing a solution

87

Planning for scaling & sustainability at beginning of any initiative, identifying and involving potential scalars at the start

66

Establishing what successful impact looks like - to ensure clarity on desired outcomes and measurement

65

Funders and Practitioners building “Best Practice” playbooks on most effective scaling strategies, to be shared widely across whole sector

48

# Defining what successful impact looks like was particularly a focus for Global South and Implementers

**They anticipated a positive impact in relation to upfront consultation, planning for scaling & sustainability at beginning and establishing what a successful impact looks like**

“

*It's essential to get agreement about the root causes and what you are setting out to address and what you are going to measure. When it comes to sex trafficking, the answer is not to put more guards on the borders, it's about improving the economics of local communities.*

NGO Global South

*We need to measure impact, not overheads and ratios. There is this challenge with demanding evidence of impact but not being willing to divert any funding to pay for that.*

”

Partners to deliver scaling need to be involved from the start. The Government was often the scaler of choice and organisations were adapting their goals to align with Government goals and metrics. But Governments were also identified as the most challenging to work with due to changing priorities, changing personnel and large scale bureaucracy.

“

*We should be identifying root causes and seeking to identify sustainable solutions that can be scaled up and embedded within government and the private sector.*

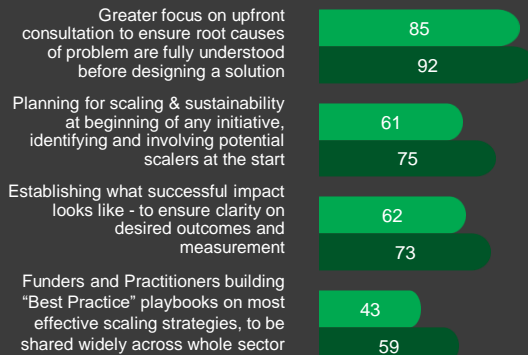
*For social services...if you want impact at scale it has to be the Government. But foundations do not like working with them. The strongest campaigns are self-sustaining with local NGOs working in partnership and long terms co-funding*

*Consultant, Global North*

”

% saying solution is likely to have an extremely or very positive impact

■ Global North  
■ Global South



■ Funders  
■ Implementers



Survey participants were asked about the potential effectiveness of different initiatives:



## Opportunities for increasing impact: Collaboration

# Collaboration is considered so important, there was strong support for funding to incentivize the formation of strategic alliances and partnerships

“

*Collaboration, relationships, trust. Those are the priorities. Sometimes I feel they are the only priorities. Everything stems from personal connections* NGO, Global South

”

The need to build greater collaboration and trust was felt to be important across multiple relationships:

Between funders and their local partners

Between different funders – to encourage co-funding

Between local NGOs and organisations – to encourage partnerships & communities of practice and to reduce competition

“

*Need to move away from models based on competition and resource scarcity to one based on shared resources, solidarity, equity.* Funder Global North

*Every single NGO will say they have the best solution and that can't be the case, so we need to be honest where we have the best in class or not, so we can collaborate with others, and working out what is the best way so we all crowd in around that. Where are they best in class and where are they not* NGO Global South

*Some funders now insist on local organisations working in partnership as a condition of funding.* Consultant Global North

”

*% saying solution is likely to have an extremely or very positive impact*

Greater priority given to building direct connections and relationships between funders and community partners

78

Using funding to incentivise collaboration via strategic alliances & partnerships, rather than increasing competition for funding between NGOs

76

More collaboration amongst locals NGOs and organisations to create communities of practice around a given challenge

76

Increasing shared understanding in Sector through consistency in terminology, using simpler language and offering common measurement metrics

51

Enabling collaboration by technology eg a "LinkedIn" for the Social Sector to raise profile of local organisations and allow funders and potential partners to connect directly

40



Call to action: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 to  
February 2023 Global Conference



# Call to action: September 2022 – Feb 2023 Global Conference by Hugh Davidson

We hope you have found this Survey useful, and would value your help in adding views and ideas, especially on how to turn the findings into actions.

It would also be really helpful if you could disseminate this Survey more widely to colleagues and contacts, and encourage others to participate in our campaign for change.

We think the Survey demonstrates strong consensus for effective actions and changes in attitudes among both funders and implementers, and people in Global South and Global North.

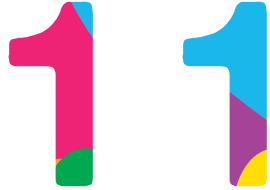
We would like to collaborate with others to co-create the necessary change in the six months leading up to our February 2023 London Global Conference and beyond.

The Survey is therefore only the start of this process for change which would benefit from your support and involvement.

Co-working with others over the next few months to continually improve and activate the Survey's findings, and collaborating with others interested in change, collating blogs, views, and ideas from you and others, we will co-create a supplementary Report, focusing on actions for change, to be presented to the London Global Conference in February 2023. Key topic areas for change include Equal Voices, #ShiftThePower, Collaboration, and Scaling, but contributions on any other topics are welcome, especially those designed to enhance the prospects of women and girls.

Please make your voice heard in helping increase impact in International Development by sending your views to Barry Knight at [barryknight@cranehouse.uk](mailto:barryknight@cranehouse.uk), also letting us know if you would like an invite to the London Global Conference, which is free to all.

Hugh Davidson, June 2022



# Appendix

- 1. Survey sample (slides 35-37)
- 2. Acknowledgements (slide 38)
- 3. Survey sponsor and research partners (slide 39)
- 4. H&S Davidson Trustees (slide 40-41)
- 5. Changes to HSDT strategy as a direct result of the research (slide 42)
- 6. Access to full report: both literature review and empirical research (slide 43)

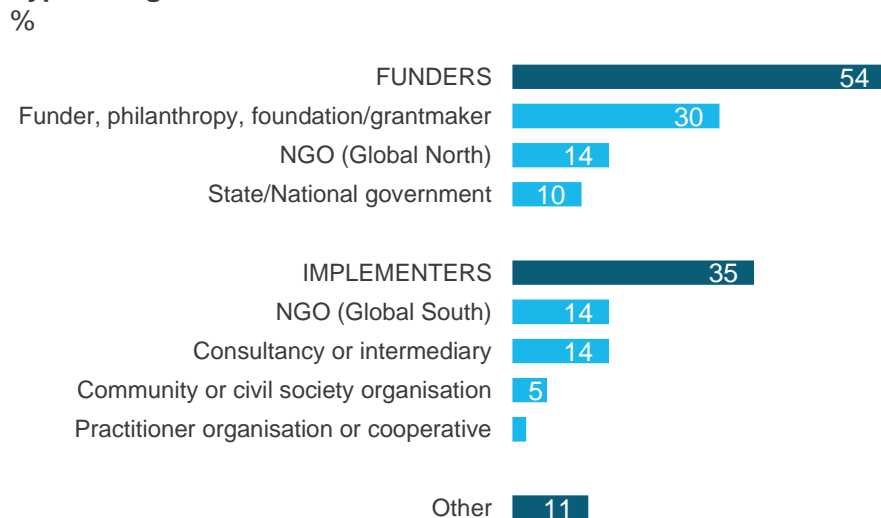
# APPENDIX 1: Profile of quantitative survey participants:

## 54% of our respondents were funders, 35% were implementers

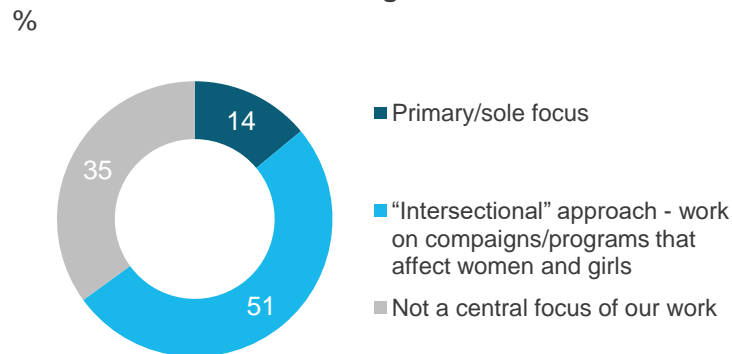
Funders defined as: any participant working in funding, philanthropy, foundation, or NGO based in Global North or State/National Government

Implementers defined as: any participant working for a community or civil society organisation, an NGO based in Global South, a practitioner organisation or co-operative or a consultancy or intermediary. Whilst recognising that these definitions are far from perfect, they do allow us to compare opinions between different types of organisations in the sector. Limited sample size does not allow for more granular analysis.

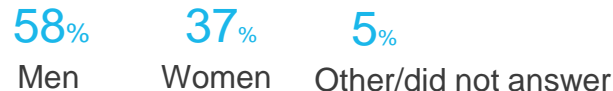
### Type of organisation



### How Women & Girls fit in organization's activities



### Gender of survey participants:

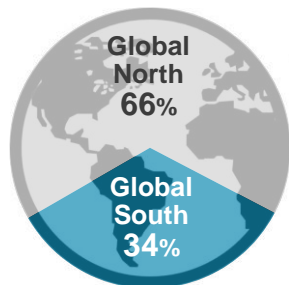


A1a\_V2. How would you best describe the organisation you work for? A9. What is your gender? Base: All answering shorter interview (n=302)

A5: Are Women & Girls the primary focus of your/your organisation's activities? Base: Total sample (n=346)

# APPENDIX 1: Survey participants came from 43 different countries

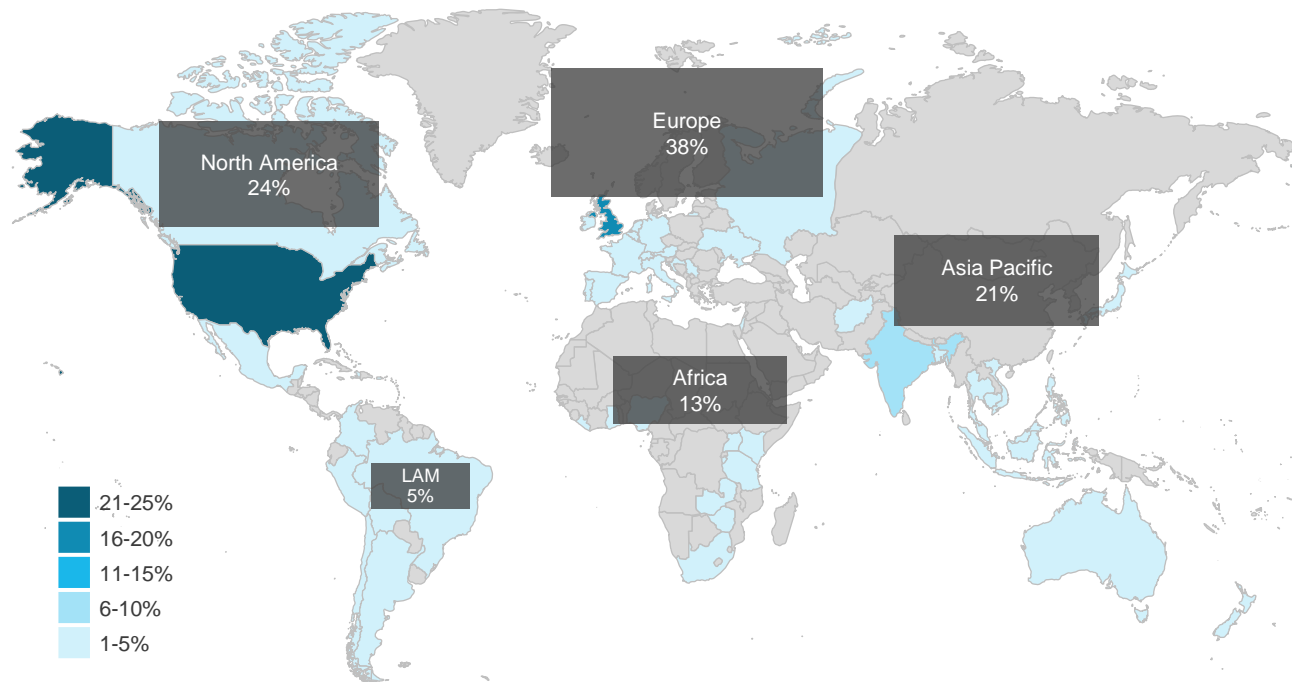
## Respondents' location %



Definition of Global North is anyone based in Europe, North America, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

Definition of Global South is anyone based in Africa, Asia & Pacific, South/Latin America, South/Central America and Middle East or Arab States (except countries listed under Global North).

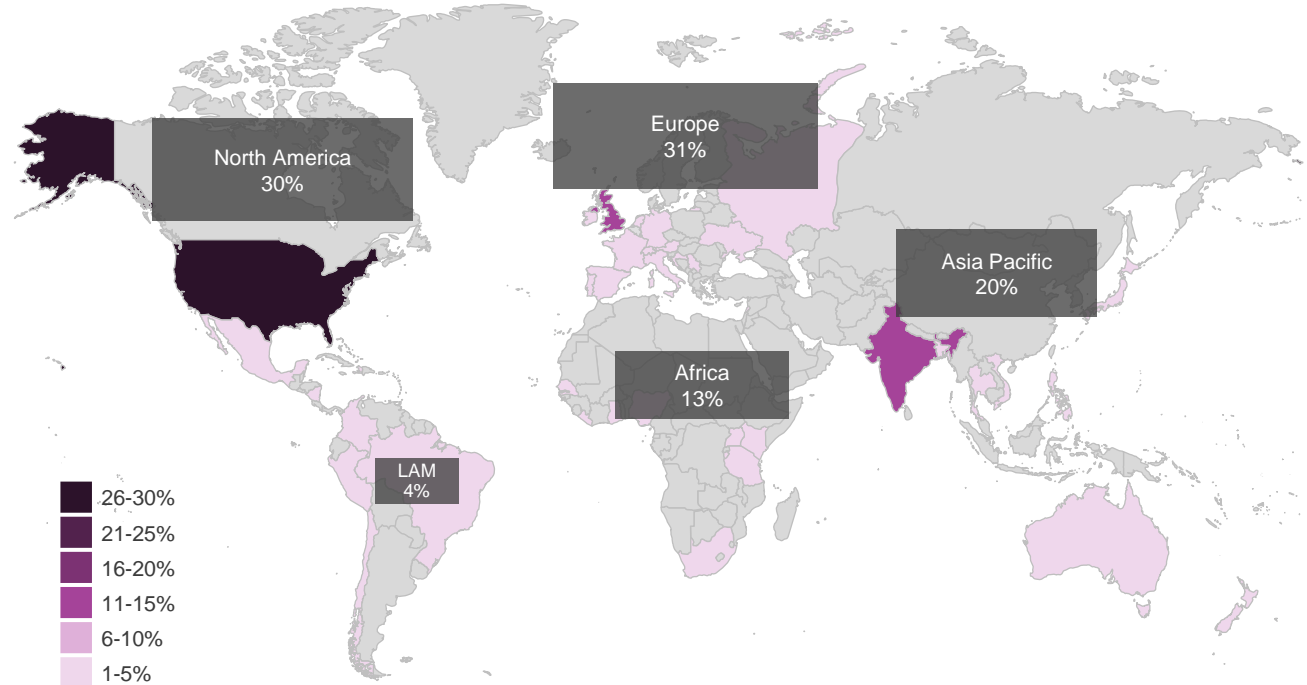
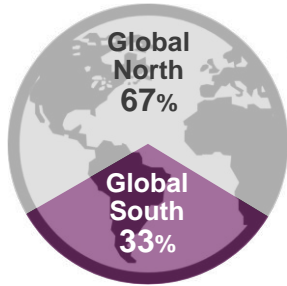
Whilst recognising that these definitions are far from perfect, they do allow us to compare opinions between different types of organisations in the sector. Limited sample size does not allow for more granular analysis.



A6. In which country are you personally based? Base: Total sample (n=346)

# APPENDIX 1: Two thirds of survey participants had their HQ in the Global North

## Organisations' headquarters %



A7. In which country is your organisation's headquarters?  
Base: Total sample, excluding Not Applicable (n=275)

## APPENDIX 2: Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to the 44 people who kindly gave their time to participate in the qualitative research, including:

Ingrid Srinath	Centre for Social Impact & Philanthropy - Ashoka University	Hope Chigudu	Open Democracy
Jenny Hodgson	Global Fund for Community Foundations	Degan Ali	Adeso
David Jacobstein	USAID	Florencia Roitstein	ELLAS: Women & Philanthropy
Shaheen Anam	Manusher Jonno Foundation	Olivia Leland	Co-Impact
Rita Thapa	TEWA	Nadya Hernández	WINGS
Michael Feigelson	van Leer Group	Barbara Nöst	ZGF
John Plastow	Oxfam	Jeffrey C Walker	Chairman of New Profit
Kevin Starr	Mulago foundation	Nanie Ratsifandrihamanana	WWF
Kathy Vizas	Spring Impact	Anuradha Rajan	Sawfindia, South Asia Women's Foundation
Lynne & Peter Smitham	Kiawah Trust	Lisa Houston & Ginger Norwood	Consultants & authors
Sylvia Brown	Smart Donors	Rahul Mehta	Bhupat & Jyoti Mehta Family Foundation
Clare Mathias	The Hummingbird Foundation	Sapphira Goradia	The Goradia Foundation
Deval Sanghavi & Anant Bhagwati	DASRA	Katherine Lorenz	Cynthia & George Mitchell Foundation
R.Evon Benson-Idahosa	Pathfinders Justice Initiative	Williams Abrams & Barbara Jackson	Trickle Up
Rose Caldwell	Plan International UK	English Sall	Sall Family Foundation
Girish Menon	STiR Education	Renee Kaplan & Jennifer Davis	The Philanthropy Workshop

# APPENDIX 3: Information about research sponsors and partners

## H&S Davidson Trust

H&S Davidson Trust (HSDT) is a self-funding family Trust, run entirely by volunteers.

Supporting this project were Hugh Davidson, Sandra Davidson, Bruce Davidson, Ian Davidson, Anne O'Beirne, Nigel Worne.

## Jigsaw Research

Jigsaw is an independent, strategic research agency conducting research across 200+ countries. Its clients include public/social organisations and governments and both local and multinational businesses. Jigsaw has been established for 23 years and has offices in the UK and the US.

Leading this project were Sue van Meeteren, Managing Director of Jigsaw and Luke Perry, Deputy Head of Qualitative Research. Both have 25+ years experience in research.

## Barry Knight

Barry Knight is a statistician and social scientist who has spent many years working in international development, researching the field, advising philanthropies and governments, while encouraging civil society activism. Currently, he writes for [Rethinking Poverty](#) and advises the [Global Fund for Community Foundations](#).

With thanks to Alliance Magazine and TPW for promoting and supporting this research

# APPENDIX 4: H&S Davidson Trust – the Trustees

## HUGH DAVIDSON, MBE

Hugh is an author, marketer & social entrepreneur.

Born to a family with strong social commitment. His Aunt Nessie spent four decades in India, Bangladesh, founding three schools, and knew Mother Teresa.

Hugh graduated from Cambridge University in Economics & Law, then qualified as barrister in top 1%. He joined Marketing Dept of Procter & Gamble (P & G), managing two major brands. Later, he was President of Canada & Europe for a market-leading international company, then Co-Founder of Oxford Strategic Marketing (OSM). He sold his majority share of OSM to management, used all proceeds to partly fund H & S Davidson Trust (HSDT). OSM now flourishing in third generation of employee ownership and is a B Company.

Business focus was always 'Customer First'. Among books were *"Even More Offensive Marketing"*, Finalist in *Financial Times* Global Business Book Awards in New York, and *"The Committed Enterprise - Making Vision and Values Work"*. For this he travelled 55,000 miles for one-hour interviews with 130 global CEOs & leaders in education, healthcare, business, police, the arts, and international development.

He has been involved in voluntary sector for many decades, first as Prison Visitor at Durham Prison, then as Chair of Trading and member of Council, at Save the Children UK, & has worked in 21 countries.

Since 2004 he has been full time unpaid volunteer, mainly through HSDT, involved with India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, & Ghana and Rushen Heritage Trust on Isle of Man, which he and Sandra co-founded.

## SANDRA DAVIDSON

Sandra was brought up in the North East of England and educated at Gateshead Grammar School.

Her first employer was Procter & Gamble, where she met Hugh.

After Hugh left P&G and the North East to be Marketing Manager at McVities, Sandra became PA to the Principal of Charles Trevelyan Technical College. Despite the distance, eventually marriage and sons followed.

Sandra enjoys creative writing, started up a Writers Group in Beaconsfield and has had stories published on BBC Radio and in magazines. She became a mature student at Oxford Brookes University gaining a degree in Publishing and English. She also edited and improved all of Hugh's many books and articles and over 3 years completed a biography of her mother Joyce, entitled 'Open House'.

Volunteering has always featured: in the North East - Samaritans, Hospital Visitor; in Oxford the School Reading Program, Cochrane Foundation, and now in Isle of Man, the local Save the Children shop, the Rushen Heritage Centre, and Inner Wheel.

She has accompanied Hugh on enlightening field trips to projects in Ghana, West Bengal, Odisha, North Bangladesh, Vietnam, Tanzania, Uganda, and China.

## IAN DAVIDSON

After a degree in Geography from Oxford University Ian began his career in Marketing in the food and travel industries, with General Mills and Thompson Holidays.

He then gained an MBA from INSEAD in France before working internationally in e-commerce based in Barcelona.

Next he set up an online market research firm in the UK specialising in multi-country panel research studies, and this has been continued by his former colleagues.

Now based in Australia, Ian is Co-Founder and CEO of GoFar, an Internet of Things start up that's focused on reducing vehicle emissions. It is an in-car device which, based on extensive research, significantly reduces both serious accidents and vehicle emissions.

Ian has travelled extensively in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and lived and worked in four countries – UK, France, Spain, and Australia. He is married with two children.



# APPENDIX 4: H&S Davidson Trust – the Trustees

## BRUCE DAVIDSON

Bruce Davidson is a Trustee of the Hugh and Sandra Davidson Trust (HSDT) and will be taking over as Chair in 2023. He has been involved directly in a number of the projects advanced by the Trust and undertaken project evaluation field trips with the Trust to Odisha in India.

He graduated with a degree in Transport Planning and Management (Hons) at Loughborough University and later gained an MSc with Distinction from Oxford Brookes University, in Environmental Assessment and Management.

Bruce has spent his whole career at Environmental Resources Management (ERM), a global sustainability consultancy working with the world's leading organizations on solutions to sustainability and environmental challenges, including climate change. Bruce is a Senior Partner at ERM and has been a partner since 2002.

His particular professional focus has been on the environmental design/management of new transport infrastructure projects. Many of these projects can contribute to reduced carbon emissions from travel and positive socio-economic outcomes. He has worked on transformational rail projects such as Crossrail (the Elizabeth Line) in London and High Speed 2, and has been involved in a wide variety of transport improvements in the UK and internationally, including rail, road, and airport projects.

Bruce lives in London with his wife and three boys.

## ANNE O'BEIRNE

Anne was born in County Roscommon in the west of Ireland and was educated in a co-educational convent.

She studied engineering at University College, Galway where she was President of the Student Union and represented the college in international debates. While at University she was very involved in social issues.

Anne worked in a variety of manufacturing roles in Ireland, the UK, the USA and Canada. Her speciality was change management in a zero defect environment in industries including automotive parts, electrical components, and CD's. Latterly she was Operations Director at Denby Pottery and was part of the management team that effected a leveraged buy-out of the business from the UK stock market into private ownership.

With her husband Nigel, she has worked with Save the Children in Kolkata, through the H&S Davidson Trust, on two programs, one aimed at improving the life chances of young women, and the other focused on enabling street children to enter state education and not drop out.

Anne was business representative on the Amber Valley Partnership in Derbyshire, an umbrella organisation for the district's voluntary sector and the main provider of support for local voluntary and community groups. Her specific focus was persuading young girls to consider a career in the male dominated technical sector.

## NIGEL WORNE

Nigel was born in Hertfordshire but spent his early years in Pakistan and East and West Africa where his father, who was in the British Army, was stationed.

He was educated at St Edwards School in Oxford and his early career in marketing took place in Canada with General Mills and Quaker Oats.

When he returned to the UK in the early seventies he worked in various consumer marketing roles including Beecham, Campbell's Soup and Ross Youngs.

Later in his career he held Managing Director roles with HP Foods, Caradon Bathrooms, Fox's Biscuits and Denby Pottery.

During this period he worked on a voluntary basis for St Anne's Shelter in Leeds which targeted the needs of homeless individuals, supporting them to live independently. He was Chairman of West Yorkshire and Humberside Business in the Arts.

He was invited to become a Trustee of the H&S Davidson Trust in 2012. With his wife Anne, he worked with Save the Children on two HSDT projects in Kolkata: one focused on rescuing female child domestic workers and the other creating education opportunities for children from the slum districts of the city enabling them to enrol in the state school system.

He is a non-executive director of Aquaspira, a Lancashire based manufacturer of composite steel reinforced plastic pipes and Deputy Chair of HSDT.

# Appendix 5: Changes to HSDT strategy as a direct result of the research

TOPIC/ISSUE	PREVIOUS APPROACH	NEW APPROACH
1. <b>Main Objective</b>	Double or treble income and empowerment of very poor women and their families	Could broaden within Women & Girls sector. Ideal but not essential to stay in sub sectors where we have prior experience.
2. <b>Type of Funding</b>	Time-limited projects; eg up to 5 or 6 years.	Fund local organisations rather than projects. Be prepared to fund people costs/capacity. Encourage local partnerships
3. <b>Main point of contact</b>	Oxfam or other INGOs based in UK.	Locally based organisations located on front line. Might use INGOs or intermediaries for due diligence.
4. <b>Design &amp; origin of all programs</b>	Mainly done in UK or by UK based people.	Designed with local organisations and people on the front line
5. <b>Mode of Operation</b>	Work with implementation partners like Oxfam. Alliance Magazine & Jigsaw Research.	Stay linked with current partners. Wherever possible, collaborate with like-minded funders, eg TPW Apoka Team.
6. <b>Restricted or unrestricted funding</b>	Agree brief. Focus on objectives, deliverables, measurement, and budget.	Same broad principles, but less restricted, lighter touch. More focus on initial due diligence on local organisations.
7. <b>Strategy on scaling</b>	Complete project, then seek scaler.	Identify potential scalers at outset, involve from beginning as partners.
8. <b>Funder knowledge/skills input</b>	More hands-on with forensic fieldwork. Many group discussions, work sessions on front line.	Less Trustee time availability in future, so less hands on. Offer skills where required in strategy, structure, marketing, operations, measurement, climate change.
9. <b>Method of Measurement</b>	Significant funding level. Fieldwork, Continuous measurement for improvement. Reports.	Less fieldwork. Fewer Reports. Half yearly zoom meetings - Trustees and implementers. - or when requested.

## Appendix 6: Full report

The full report, Increasing Impact in International Development, includes both the full literature report and the empirical research report

If you would like a copy of the full report, please email [svanmeeteren@jigsaw-research.co.uk](mailto:svanmeeteren@jigsaw-research.co.uk)

