

Best Practices in Strategic Philanthropy

## Institutional Philanthropy in the Arab World: Exploring Mediums in Strategic Giving

Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> February

14:00 to 16:00 Gulf Standard Time

In the past decade, there has been an exponential growth in institutional and organised philanthropy in the Gulf and wider Arab region; particularly through corporate giving arms and the private sector. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has long-since been recognised as the primary structure in which corporate funds are donated. However, through rapidly emerging innovative giving vehicles, a variety of philanthropic structures are now being leveraged to move private capital, such as through venture philanthropy and donor-advised funds. Trends in giving circles and collectives amongst philanthropists are now also quickly seeping into institutional giving.

The movement of private wealth has a vital role to play in bridging social needs and public sector resourcing, though impact can often be deflated as a result of structural and budgetary rigidity in traditional corporate giving. In this growing ecosystem, it is pertinent to keep abreast of the wide spectrum of responsible and strategic philanthropic investment options that result in measurable and optimised social good.

Through convening thought leaders in the institutional philanthropy space, this panel discussion will explore the importance of leveraging pioneering modes of giving and will support in identifying the positive implications of adopting these practices within the Gulf region.

The event was the Governance in Philanthropy's first hybrid-model, where participants joined in-person at Circle Member, talabat's offices spaces, with over 20 attendees joining virtually as well.

### Key Takeaways

- The discussion outlined the role of the for-profit model and how it can be beneficial and productive in philanthropic endeavours, by re-funnelling profits back into social impact work.
- Panellists outlined the role of philanthropy in closing and funding gaps in the social ecosystem and in public resource shortcomings.
- Methods in maximising strategic impact include learning from shortcomings, past failures, and challenges. By giving, even in smaller scales, there are key outcomes that will demonstrate themselves as to how giving can happen on a high-impact level in the future.
- It is vital to focus on collaborative philanthropy and giving through encouraging deeper engagement with community-focused and organisations that are on-ground.
- There are numerous vehicles in which institutional philanthropy can take place, including through giving arms of corporate entities.
- Using multi-stakeholder approaches is vital to gain perspective on effective philanthropy, including through collaborating with peers and other networks in the space.



- Collaborative philanthropy works most effectively by bringing in expertise of systems, mechanisms, and best practices for scale from donors, and community needs understanding from grantees.
- Institutional philanthropy has the benefit of being able to invest and pilot high-impact social investments/initiatives that can scale and/or be exited out of the grant to continue their community work following the funding.
- It is increasingly important to ensure that giving arms of corporate entities are leveraging their own resources and profit-making arm in order to give more effectively and not reinvent the wheel. This will also allow for ease in scaling operations by capitalising on the organisation's readily available stakeholders.
- Aspects of philanthropy that engage and synergise with the government tend to be more streamlined and pave way for both policy and for other organisations to find ease in the regulatory environment.
  - The government should be seen as the largest public organisation in any context and well-designed programmes that fit in with public agendas can be easily replicated if there is buy-in.