



Grounded in Tradition: Next-Generation Philanthropy and Unique Opportunities for Saudi Giving

Roundtable Discussion

Monday, 17th February 2025

09:00 AM to 12:00 PM

The Chalhoub Group Offices, Riyadh, KSA

The Governance in Philanthropy Program at the Pearl Initiative (PI), in collaboration with The Zovighian Partnership (ZP), convened a distinguished group of philanthropic, family business, government, and civil society leaders for an in-depth discussion on next-generation philanthropy. The session focused on our latest research findings, particularly the intersection of personal versus family giving and the role of legacy-building in shaping future philanthropic efforts.

The roundtable served as a critical platform to engage key stakeholders in Saudi Arabia's philanthropic ecosystem, facilitating knowledge exchange, strategic networking, and insights into the way forward. Discussions highlighted the importance of contextualized research, the role of data in decision-making, and the need for stronger regional fundraising efforts.

Key Takeaways from the Roundtable Discussion:

1. Strengthening Thought Leadership and Data-Driven Decision-Making

- The event successfully positioned the Pearl Initiative as a thought leader in philanthropy, governance, transparency, and evidence-based decision making.
- Participants emphasized the need for more structured guidance on integrating governance frameworks into next-gen philanthropy.
- A key gap was identified, i.e., the lack of contextualised and unbiased data for the region. While research exists, it often serves the interests of those producing it rather than benefiting the philanthropic community. The PI & ZP research was recognized as an exception, designed specifically to serve the needs of donors and institutions in the region.
- Attendees expressed a strong appetite for research-driven insights to guide their philanthropic decisions.

2. Independent Giving Versus Family Institutional Philanthropy and Motivations to Give

- According to PI & ZP research, 80% of respondents engage in giving individually, with a lack of engagement in family foundations emerging as a cause for concern. This trend distances donors from collaborative giving and strategic philanthropy.



- Participants highlighted the need to encourage family philanthropy structures to harness collective impact and long-term strategic giving.

3. Creating a Safe Space for Leadership Dialogue

- The roundtable provided a confidential setting where leaders openly shared challenges and risks they encounter in their philanthropic efforts.
- Concerns around balancing personal values with family legacy in giving were discussed, with an emphasis on intergenerational alignment.
- The importance of succession planning was a central theme. With discussions highlighting the need for pre-planning for both for-profit and nonprofit activities to ensure long-term sustainability.

4. Strengthening Community and Social Capital

- The event reinforced the value of collaboration by demonstrating how PI and ZP's network can help bridge gaps between donors, policymakers, and social impact organisations.
- Participants highlighted the need for a more interconnected philanthropic ecosystem in Saudi Arabia, fostering peer learning, and shared best practices.
- Fundraising was identified as a challenge in the region. There remains a strong focus on giving to Western institutions rather than reinvesting in local communities and homegrown efforts.

5. Evolving Priorities in Next-Gen Philanthropy

- The discussion highlighted a shift in next-gen philanthropy toward empowerment over financial giving. It alluded to the lack of accessible and structured volunteering opportunities for youth, despite their growing interest in contributing beyond monetary donations. Participants emphasized the need for more engagement channels to involve the youth in philanthropy.
- Exposing third and fourth generations to philanthropy and social impact from an early age was identified as a critical factor in shaping long-term values and priorities.
- Participants emphasized the role of structured mentorship and early engagement programs to cultivate a strong culture of philanthropy within family enterprises.
- The shifting priorities of next-gen givers away from traditional sectors like healthcare and education were also discussed, highlighting a growing focus on impact-driven initiatives, innovation, and sustainable development.



6. Cultural Values Driving Philanthropy

- The event featured a conversation with HRH Princess Nourah Bint Mohammed Al Faisal on historical giving in Saudi Arabia, the motivations behind her philanthropic efforts, and her vision for the future of the ecosystem.
- Participants reflected on how deeply rooted cultural and religious values continue to shape philanthropy, emphasizing the importance of aligning giving strategies with local traditions.

7. Commitment to Continued Engagement in Saudi Arabia

- Several attendees committed to participating in future PI-led discussions and programmes in Saudi Arabia.
- There was a strong interest in developing a more structured engagement framework to deepen collaboration in Saudi philanthropic entities.