

# Statement by Philanthropic Actors Supporting Education at the Transforming Education Summit

## PHILANTHROPY'S CONTRIBUTION TO TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

Philanthropic actors have been investing in strengthening education systems for many years. Between 2016 and 2019, total global philanthropic funding for education was USD 4.5 billion (Source: OECD, 2021). Cross-border philanthropic giving represented the eighth largest source of financing for education towards developing countries, on par with some of the most prominent ODA providers. Domestic philanthropy from developing countries is increasingly playing a key role in the area of education: education-related giving from domestic donors is higher than in any other sector and represented 52% of total philanthropic funding for education over 2016-19, surpassing giving by international foundations.

However, philanthropy's support for education can also go beyond providing financing and to support diverse stakeholder efforts across all TES Action Tracks, including on *inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools; learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development; teachers, teaching and the teaching profession; and digital learning and transformation*. Because philanthropic actors may not be bound by the same constraints as others, they can engage over the long-term, or be the first funder of new approaches, or broker relationships at the intersection of the private and public sectors in a way that traditional aid actors cannot. Philanthropy has a strong convening power at the local and global level, and can contribute to transforming education through:

**Encouraging and leveraging innovation** - Many philanthropic actors can support bold ideas and, with early-stage financing and technical support, help to build 'test, learn, adapt' approaches. By co-investing with ODA donors, some philanthropic actors are also helping shape initiatives at a much larger scale than they would reach on their own.

**Supporting a culture of evidence in education** - Philanthropy can fill significant research financing gaps, support the strengthening of government monitoring systems or support networks of local actors to generate and use research on effective approaches to improving education outcomes.

**Advocating for change** - Philanthropic actors can support advocacy to shift norms and practice in education, through global policy campaigns and local activists, media, teachers, students and others. Philanthropy has already added a strong voice behind important agendas including the need to increase investment in early childhood education and foundational learning\*, importance of education to climate change, girls' education, making a compelling case to the wider world to prioritise education.

**Using a range of modalities to enable local actors to work on solutions to their own defined problems** - Whether this means supporting local actors to work with governments or to strengthen feedback loops and accountability in national education systems, philanthropy can support grassroots, sub-national and national level civil society and other actors.

**Strategic support behind government priorities** - Domestic philanthropy, especially, can provide not only financing but useful networks and advice that supports governments to pursue their own priorities. There are growing examples of collaboratives supporting investments in education, where philanthropic actors, high-net-worth individuals and private companies pool their knowledge, expertise, relationships and resources to support government priorities.

\*Foundational learning meaning the range of skills that all children need to be able to continue learning: cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural.

## THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY COMMUNITY

Philanthropy can have a critical role in transforming education for the future. We, signatories from education philanthropy, come together as a collective here to state our commitment to supporting global efforts to change business as usual in education. But we recognise that going forward, transforming education systems will require rethinking some of the ways in which the education philanthropy community contributes individually and collectively and convincing others to join us. Building on our discussions at philanthropy's joint side event at TES,

We join forces to make the most of our diverse approaches and unite around a common ambition to transform education. We commit to:

- **Listening and learning from education stakeholders:** We will approach our contribution with a mind to listening to what education systems and education actors (including children and youth) need and hope we can help.
- **Consolidating and expanding the knowledge base:** We will invest further in rigorous organisational learning, producing robust evidence on the effectiveness of interventions, applying high standards to evaluations and creating incentives and capacities for learning. We will strengthen and diversify our engagement at the local, national and global level to support fit-for-purpose evidence relevant to specific contexts that can be useful to learners, teachers, parents, communities and governments. We will enable understanding of the root problems and support use of evidence in implementing change that works.
- **Improving the efficiency and alignment of our support:** We will make efforts to avoid fragmentation and to further support local actors. We will enhance our information-sharing efforts to identify financing gaps, avoid duplication, explore synergies with other education actors and funders, and enable more transparent reporting on our investments. We will work with other sectors to identify opportunities for efficient cross-sector investment, and support efficient coordination between private and public financing and governance of education. We will make co-ordinated efforts to mobilise more resources and distribute them more equitably and efficiently across contexts.
- **Building sound partnerships within and beyond the education philanthropy community:** There is a strong case and need to invest in education, and exciting momentum to build upon. We will use our convening power at the local and global level and our networks to strengthen collaboration with each other and with philanthropies in other sectors to align our strategic engagement. We will strengthen and diversify local, national and global partnerships that support context-specific solutions, and value the leadership and driving force that local and national stakeholders play.

We encourage our education partners in the international development community to:

- **Work closely with philanthropies and fund alongside them to ensure the advancement of SDG 4,** including in follow-up actions to TES and collaboration within the renewed Global Cooperation Mechanism for education.
- **Capitalise on the contribution of philanthropy** to sustainable development going forward.