

# 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 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 goes beyond providing financing and 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 foundations can provide support without the constraints of political cycles, they can engage over the long-term, be the first funder of new approaches, and broker relationships at the intersection of the private and public sectors in a way that traditional aid actors cannot. Philanthropy has been contributing to transforming education through:

### Encouraging and leveraging innovation -

Philanthropies use a range of modalities to enable local actors to work on solutions to their own defined problems. Many philanthropic actors support bold ideas and, with financing and technical support, help to build a 'test, learn, adapt' approach that strengthens feedback loops and accountability in in-country education systems. 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.

### Applying and enabling a culture of evidence in education -

Philanthropy is filling significant research financing gaps and enabling networks of local actors to generate and use research on effective approaches to improving education. Some philanthropic actors are strengthening government monitoring systems and sharing reliable data on student learning outcomes into the public sphere, strengthening accountability in education. Others support teachers and grassroots activists to apply data and share learning.

### Advocating for change -

Philanthropic actors advocate in support of shifting norms, debate and practice in education, by conducting global policy campaigns and supporting local activists, media and students. Philanthropy has added a strong voice behind important agendas including the importance of education to climate change, girls' education, early childhood education and foundational literacy and numeracy, making a compelling case to the wider world to prioritise education.

### Strategic support behind government priorities -

Domestic philanthropy, especially, provides not only financing but useful networks and advice that enables governments to pursue their priorities. In addition, 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.

## THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY COMMUNITY

Philanthropy has a critical role to play in transforming education, given its unique set of influential relationships, expertise, networks and approaches that can help unlock some of the barriers to education progress and contribute to transforming education. In the past years, philanthropic actors have been implementing a myriad of strategies to innovate, test and learn on what works in education across the five TES Action Tracks. For the first time, education philanthropy comes together as a collective to state our commitment to supporting global efforts to change business as usual in education. Going forward, transforming education systems will require rethinking the way that the education philanthropy community contributes collectively, and reshaping international co-operation mechanisms more generally. 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:

- **Consolidating and expanding the knowledge base** - We will invest further in rigorous organisational learning, producing robust evidence on the effectiveness of interventions, applying high quality 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 produce fit-for-purpose evidence relevant to specific contexts that can be useful to learners, teachers, parents, communities and governments. We will enable a culture of evidence in education to address and enable understanding of the root causes.
- **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 data sharing efforts to identify financing gaps, avoid duplication, explore synergies with other funders, inform the broader public, and enable more transparent reporting on our investments. We will work with other sectors to identify opportunities for efficient cross-sector investment, and support the 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** - We will strengthen collaboration with each other and with philanthropies in other sectors to align our advice, recommendations and 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 to ensure the advancement of SDG 4**, including in follow-up actions to TES and collaboration within the renewed Global Cooperation Mechanism for education.
- **Systematically involve philanthropy as a key stakeholder in international co-operation** for sustainable development going forward.