



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

GoPhilanthropic Foundation Engage in Solutions...

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” — Benjamin Franklin

The interplay between the terms "involvement and learning" reflect an important cornerstone at GoPhilanthropic Foundation. We believe that positive growth and change depend upon a constant devotion to learning and that truly effective philanthropy requires genuine involvement. Evidence of a commitment to these values is seen each and every day within our work, on the front lines alongside our partners and within our own community of donors who are an integral part of the amazing progress we see each year with our partner programs.



OUR VISION AND MISSION

GoPhilanthropic Foundation's vision is to create a shared responsibility in solving global issues through partnership and to help empower small grassroots organizations to stand on their own. We provide financial grants and organizational support to a carefully vetted group of small grassroots organizations around the world providing effective, creative and sustainable solutions to global issues. All our partner NGO's have education and empowerment at the core. Located in India, Nepal, SE Asia and Africa, they range from shelters for vulnerable children to sponsorship programs, to empowerment and health care programs in rural villages.



HOW FAR THEY HAVE COME...

Over the past four years we have seen our partner non-profits grow from fragile organizations, at times driven solely on the passion of a single individual with a desire to help those who are less fortunate, to robust organizations committed to a defined strategy, process and policies. During these tender years of development, GoPhilanthropic Foundation continues to see the benefits of offering financial grants coupled with support for capacity building in areas of needed development. Through a careful process of listening, facilitating, and empowering, as opposed to “serving and solving,” our portfolio is steadily graduating from **core partnerships**, where our staff is actively involved in fundraising and organizational development, to **standing strong**— programs that have successfully matured and are less reliant on our support. This beautiful cycle nurtures a program's own individual internal strength and independence and reinforces the value of our investment in their work. As more programs move to “terra firma,” we look to identify **new discoveries**, other small organizations showing a unique combination of passion to help others alongside a desire to learn.



INPUT FROM OUR COMMUNITY OF DONORS

When we refined our vision statement two years ago, we committed to actually **living it**. For us, creating a platform for “shared responsibility in solving global issues” meant not only being completely transparent with our donor community but also inclusive. The strength of our work is born out of the collective care, thought and generosity

within our community. We continue to gain constructive and insightful input from our members—both informally throughout the year and at various GoPhil events.

In February, forty of our members gathered from all over the country and abroad in Los Angeles for an annual strategic planning meeting and evening fundraiser. Frank and honest discussions about our growth plan forced us to take a hard look at our own sustainability and a need for further focus on developing our own team--that for better or worse, had become almost too lean. The ideas that emerged from the meetings laid the foundation for the decision to hire local “Liaison Managers” within our regions allowing us a much more frequent and real-time connection with our partners and a more solid foundation in which to broaden our work. The evening fundraising dinner generated over \$75,000 in donations, another huge show of support for GoPhilanthropic’s global work.



TAKING OUR OWN ADVICE - WE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD

“Are you stretching yourselves too thin?”

“Do you have trouble saying ‘no’?”

“Do you have practices and policies in place that you live out on a day to day basis?”

These are the types of questions we ask our partner programs on a regular basis. Their answers are important indicators as to why they might be struggling or thriving. As a non-profit ourselves, we are learning that we, too, could benefit from asking ourselves some of the same difficult questions. The result of doing so? A definite need to take a bit of the advice we have giving out over the years.

“We can’t save the world...” Focusing on what we know and with people who want to GROW

So often we are asked—How do you select the programs that you fund? To be completely honest, we lose sleep over these basic questions. The sad truth is that we would love to help all of the worthy programs we identify—yet there is the reality of potentially stretching ourselves too thin, something we know gets a program in hot water quickly. As we considered extending our support to other regions, we were forced to draw lines, to make decisions about exactly what types of programs we would choose to take on.

Expansion could mean connection to a broader range of social or human rights or environmental issues, or it could mean forging relationships with programs similar to those in our current portfolio. Luckily, we had input from our devoted community members, who helped highlight that our strength as an organization came from our expertise in working alongside community-based programs devoted to Education and Empowerment. We concluded that for the time being, doing more of what we already do well, i.e. deepening our commitment to that particular expertise, was the smartest way forward.

Learning to say “no”

This is painful, no matter what the circumstance—yet critical to staying true to our mission and program focus. We had taken the first step towards creating a partnership with Here is Life, working in the Mathare slums of Nairobi with children infected with HIV/AIDS. After months of communications, we had to painfully accept that we lacked the expertise in the medical arena to most effectively add value. Knowing your limitations is as important as knowing your strengths. This has also, at times, meant saying "no" to a donor who is passionate about funding something that might not be a priority at that time or may require extra resources to facilitate. While it is never comfortable to say "no", doing so allows us more time and energy for the areas where we thrive the most.

Learning to love “policy”

Policy is a word which may not sound very exciting but is critical for demonstrating true accountability of an organization. It forces us to 1—make decisions, 2—stick to them, 3- be accountable. Triple whammy.

As we approached the end of our fourth year as a non-profit, we knew we had had ample time to learn, make mistakes and define successful practices. It was high time to further develop what would be referred to internally as “The Policy Doc”. Over the course of the year, we hunkered down and refined a set a standard processes, policies and governance that we could rely upon in the future—maybe even ones that other small not-for-profit organizations like ours could learn from. But most importantly, we vowed to keep these policies alive— to embrace change when it is necessary and to welcome important shifts in how things are done.



SHARING, LEARNING AND NETWORKING

Expanding the web of Regional Alliances

With competition for charitable dollars so great, NGOs often feel isolated and vulnerable. For the past two years GoPhil has fostered the development of Regional Alliances so programs working in the same sectors and geographic areas could share resources and ideas, ultimately becoming less dependent upon the outside international funding community and more reliant on themselves and each other. After successfully gathering 22 grassroots leaders and change-makers in India for learning and exchange, we repeated the process in SouthEast Asia with our partner programs in a smaller group setting. Amazingly, the conversations didn't end with the meetings. Important Ideas have migrated to GoPhil Partner Facebook group where lively discussions take place on a regular basis.

Resource Learning Hub

Information shared during these network gatherings highlighted an ongoing need for crosslearning through the establishment of a central library or “Resource Learning Hub” where a series of templates and best practices guides are stored, used and customized based on need of each program. Topic areas include How best to structure a Sponsorship Program, Child Protection Policies, and Managing Volunteers and Donor Visits. We look forward to compiling these helpful tools and expanding our Resource Learning Hub in the coming months.

**“Life is about creating & living experiences that are worth sharing” -
Steve Jobs**



NEPAL EARTHQUAKE - WHEN THE UNIMAGINABLE OCCURS

When we decided to expand into Nepal this year, we had no idea what a profound and long-term connection we would be making with this region. On April 25th, 2015, a massive 7.8 earthquake struck, taking the lives of over 10,000 people and destroying the homes of hundreds of thousands. For the next hours, weeks and months tremors would shake this frail nation even further. The effects on an already dire combination of political, economical and human rights issues was almost beyond catastrophic. GoPhilanthropic Founder Lydia Dean was in Kathmandu vetting new programs at the time of the disaster and was fortunate enough to have forged some trusting partnerships with organizations reflecting that unique mix of ingenuity and trustworthiness—an invaluable combination in a corrupt arena.

GoPhil donors react immediately

Dealing with a massive natural emergency was a new situation for all of us at GoPhil, staff and donors alike, requiring swift reactions and critical decisions.

Amazingly, within 12 hours of the news, our donor community showed tremendous solidarity for a country in deep need and deep trust. Within weeks donation would exceed \$25,000—a sum far exceeding our expectations.

We realized in the very early stages that immediate relief (food, tents and medical support) to Nepali citizens required an infrastructure and experience beyond our means— a role better suited for organizations specifically equipped for the situation. We focused our efforts in two areas— (1) raising funds and (2) making sure those funds got directly into the hands of community-led and organized initiatives— free of corruption.

Since April, GoPhilanthropic has channeled its support in a variety of earthquake relief and rebuilding efforts, all focused on making sure that decisions are being made at the local level, by local people themselves.





GOPHILANTHROPIC TRAVEL

Continuing to connect and inspire

The ability to offer a personal, real-time access to our partner programs will always be a key differentiator for us. Instead of creating memories that might fade over time, the inspiration to become informed, active global citizens seems to magnify for those who travel with us. GoPhilanthropic Travel continues to work in synergy with the GoPhilanthropic Foundation, leading educational philanthropic trips to partner programs in Central America, Africa and Asia. As always, the journeys are rooted in the principles of *ethical travel* — a way of visiting that captures the beauty of humanity as well as celebrating its dignity.

AT THE END OF THE DAY...ITS ABOUT THE LITTLE MOMENTS

Bringing to life the difference GoPhilanthropic donors are making is not possible by simply listing finance graphs and impact stats, though we do do that.* Rather, it is through the collection of small but beautiful moments that take place during the year that truly reflect the importance of our work together. These messages and photos come into the inbox at seemingly random moments perhaps while we are immersed in more mundane tasks, yet they are a constant reminder of what matters at the end of the day and why together with you, we continue to invest in this wonderful work.

Once again - thank you to all of you who made this year's successes possible!



WCRC finally gains access to a building for a night shelter for women in Kolhapur, India



Leng's dream to provide shelter and education to girls from the mountains becomes a reality in Siem Reap, Cambodia



M-Lisada's farm project in Uganda begins to produce a sustainable source of food for their shelter for 150 children.

* Corresponding financials will be available after our filing date of November, 15, 2015.