Sym**Asia**



Newsletter SymAsia Philanthropy Advisory

Welcome to our April 2022 Issue	
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Webinar Summary: Philanthropy and Mental Health in a Pandemic Era

Philanthropic Capital as Risk Capital: Mingxin Foundation





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CEO's Message

These are uncertain and unsettling times. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine crisis, rapid global warming and increasing wealth gap, what does a peaceful, stable, and more equal world look like? How can philanthropy continue to level the playing field, improve lives and strengthen societies in a world buffeted by so many challenges? And how can we do it better?

These are questions that philanthropists all over the world are asking. As philanthropy seeks a new equilibrium, we at SymAsia Foundation are honored to be on the frontlines to support the essential work of our donors in uplifting the least privileged and the most downtrodden.

We are thrilled also to see that philanthropy, once a "good to have", is now becoming "mission critical" among clients. An increasing number now seek to create social impact not just through donating private wealth but also by making impact integral to their business operations. At the same time, besides providing funding, they are also volunteering expertise and networks. Our white paper being published later this year will examine this trend in greater depth.

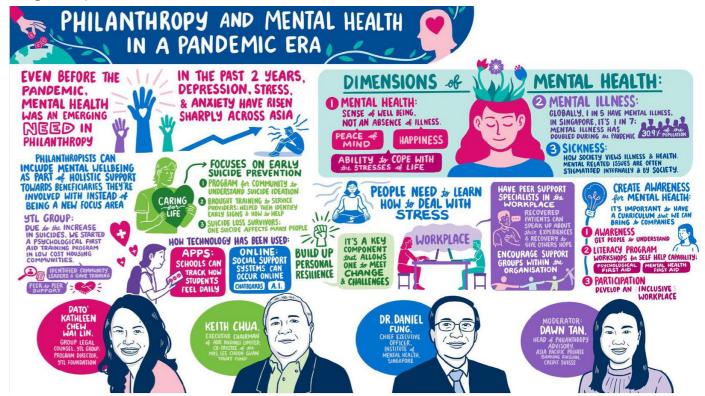
Together with our donors, SymAsia hopes to explore new ways of doing good through technology, innovative social financing, evidence-based philanthropy, and emboldening our next generation of givers. With our newly renewed Institute of a Public Character (IPC) status in Singapore, we are committed to creating connections and collaborations to further enable our donors to engage for good.

Last but not least, we are bringing back our flagship event – the Philanthropists Forum – in August this year. We look forward to welcoming you in person to the event; stay tuned for more details. Meanwhile, let's continue to do good well, together.

With best wishes.

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High Impact Webinar Series



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Our third installment of the Credit Suisse High Impact webinar series last October focused on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental wellbeing of individuals around the world.

The stress caused by the pandemic has hit three groups particularly hard: the young who may not have experience in dealing with stress, working adults who may have to care for children and parents, and the elderly who are exposed to both physical as well as emotional dangers.

Dato' Kathleen Chew Wai Lin, Program Director of Malaysia's YTL Foundation, spoke about how the philanthropic organization she oversees expanded its focus to the growing concern of mental health among youths during this period. Keith Chua, Founding Chairman of Caring for Life (CFL), touched on the issue of suicide prevention, noting that it was an issue that was still not addressed openly. Established in April 2020, CFL is a charity that focuses on early suicide prevention. Dr. Daniel Fung, CEO of the Institute of Mental Health in Singapore, highlighted that the rising number of mental health patients was putting a strain on the healthcare system. He advised that people suffering from stress or mental health problems could acquire skill sets, such as mental health literacy, to help them cope better.

The speakers also discussed the need for employers to be more tolerant of those suffering from mental health issues. In particular, Dr. Fung said workplaces should not differentiate between physical and mental illnesses.

How you can make a difference

Find the right partners

If you plan to direct your philanthropic efforts towards mental health issues, make sure you find partners on the ground with the right expertise to help you on this journey.

Provide the tools to cope

Countries like Singapore do not have enough mental health professionals to help the growing number of people suffering from mental health problems. Philanthropists can support capacity and capability-building programs to equip social service organizations and persons in distress.

Educate employers

While there is greater awareness of mental health issues today, stigmatization still occurs, especially in the workplace. There is a need for more education in this area so that employers no longer differentiate between staff with physical and mental illness.

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In conversation with Mingxin Foundation



What is the Foundation's view of philanthropic capital as risk capital?

Mingxin Foundation: There is no difference in supporting a for-profit startup and a not-for-profit startup. Both play an important role of accomplishing its mission towards its vision. The only difference is the non-profit organization has a social cause.

For example, our Foundation will be providing seed capital to a new non-profit startup, BapaHebat SG Limited (aka AwesomeDads SG). It is one of the few organizations in Singapore that focuses on a man's role as a father and the fathering journey. We believe this area needs more focus as fathering is more than just parenting. BapaHebat SG will provide a platform for fathers to learn, network, share and build their own community of support on their journeys to be better fathers. Besides doing preventive work by increasing awareness and engagement, BapaHebat SG Limited is also doing corrective work such as reintegration programs for fathers in prisons and halfway houses.

Why has the Foundation chosen to commit to multi-year grants?

Mingxin Foundation: As with any startup that requires seed funding, it can take 3-5 years until the startup is fully functioning. With multi-year grants, we believe that it helps to take some pressure off the non-profit organization in terms of fundraising and allows it to concentrate on getting the organization up and running to deliver on its social mission and goals.

How does the Foundation decide on the causes and organizations to support? Did it evolve over the years?

Mingxin Foundation: It started with a personal interest of supporting the Arts and Nature. However, when COVID-19 hit, we saw that there were many families whose breadwinners had lost their jobs and this impacted their children's education. This was the turning point and we pivoted to supporting educational programs for families-in-need, such as BabaHebat, as well as through bursaries and scholarships.

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