ADVANCING PHILANTHROPY THROUGH COLLECTIVE GIVING: SEATTLE INVITATIONAL TRAVEL EXCHANGE—SPRING 2013

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The goal for the pilot project of Global Women—Partners in Philanthropy is to introduce the model of collective giving in China and develop opportunities for philanthropic donor education. The model of collective giving allows women from all levels of wealth to participate in meeting the challenges of their time in a manner that is locally based, targeted, sustainable and replicable. The social needs in China are growing and the wealth of women in China is increasing. As the benefit of philanthropic activity becomes apparent, this new model of collective giving by women donors can generate new assets for communities in China. Initial work confirmed there is keen interest in the model. It further confirmed that there are partner opportunities for a pilot project launching a ‘Made in China’ version of the Washington Women’s Foundation (WWF) model of collective giving. Finally it demonstrated there are opportunities for an education initiative that would provide practical management education and training for NGO and foundation leaders and practitioners. Our recent China site visit identified a number of specific and viable candidates for collective giving foundation pilots and continued to reinforce the need and opportunity for donor education programs.

The candidate partners for pilot collective giving foundations have the requisite organization structure to establish and implement such a fund, but are deterred from moving forward independently due to several common constraints: (1) lack of knowledge or experience in managing member-based organizations, (2) lack of know how in cultivating and building a donor base, (3) lack of knowledge in how to train and build the capacity of effective donors, and (4) lack of access to an extensive network of education and training resources.

SEATTLE INVITATIONAL TRAVEL EXCHANGE SPRING 2013

Getting a collective giving organization started in China is inhibited by the absence of local models. Without models, engagement is also hindered. As a fundamental premise of the collective giving model, member engagement enhances learning and has the effect of inspiring further engagement, making it a virtuous circle. For these reasons, GWPP concluded the ideal way to launch the pilot foundations is to bring representatives of leading partner candidates to Seattle for a first-hand and in-depth introduction to collective giving organizations and the non-profits they support.
The core of the program are meetings with Washington Women’s Foundation and several other models of collective giving organizations in order to provide direct exposure to all aspects of setting up and operating a collective giving foundation including: organization and administration, financial management, member engagement and donor education, grant making and evaluation. In addition, participants will meet with selected grant recipient NPOs to gain their perspective on the grant process and experience the strategic benefits of grants.

The week-long Seattle Invitational will take place April 21-28, 2013. There will be 15 to 18 participants from China representing 7 organizations that are actively preparing to launch and/or promote a foundation. Several academicians specializing in philanthropy and civil society studies have also been invited. Given both the breadth and strength of the philanthropic and non-profit community in the greater Seattle area, Seattle is proposed as the only destination for the visit.

The program includes meetings with the following organizations:

- Washington Women’s Foundation, the original model.
- Other collective giving organizations, including Social Venture Partners, a collective giving foundation where members also volunteer expertise to help build organizational capacity and Pangea, an informal, international giving circle.
- NPOs and other organizations that are the beneficiaries of foundation grants and other philanthropy. Organizations would be selected to reflect the interests of the Chinese participants.

In addition, the group will meet with representatives of a robust array of philanthropic support organizations, including Philanthropy Northwest, the Seattle Foundation, and United Way. Finally, the group would meet with a range of local philanthropists, including representatives from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other smaller family and individual foundations.

An executive management seminar and roundtable discussion with the University of Washington Evans School of Public Affairs will follow these meetings. With new learning and insight, the participants will discuss training, education and GWPP support needed to build organizational capacity and management skills necessary to establish collective giving foundations in China.

To complete the week, GWPP Directors will meet with each organization individually to develop an action plan for the pilot project in China.