Snapshot: Covid-19 & grantmaking going forward in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong
Objectives and key questions:

Main objectives:

- To support Firetree Philanthropy (who commissioned this,) as they reflected on different Covid-19 philanthropic responses and look forward to 2021. This is part of Firetree's continued learning work. This snapshot was conducted by Just Cause.

- As a resource to help inform conversations among Singapore and Hong Kong-based funders looking to reflect on response(s) to Covid-19 and/or adapt their grantmaking practices in 2021 (and beyond).

Key questions:

- How have private and corporate funders in Singapore and Hong Kong adapted their grantmaking in response to Covid-19 and how have non-profits experienced different funder responses?

- What are the needs and challenges for effective grant partnerships going forward?
The most common advice from non-profits to funders to better support non-profits going into 2021 is:

1) engage non-profits in conversations about needs, challenges and opportunities
2) continue to be responsive to change; and
3) offer unrestricted, longer-term funding

At a glance: one-page summary of key insights across the whole snapshot:

Beyond the type of support, defining features of helpful funder responses were: speed, clarity, authenticity and ongoing responsiveness. So, how funders behaved was important, as well as what they did.

Going forward, non-profits most wish funders would continue to provide additional funds (especially so for larger non-profits) and unrestricted funding (especially so for smaller non-profits).

While non-profits’ top challenges for 2021 relate to managing existing grant partnerships (managing funder expectations and understanding whether their current funding was secure), funders’ top challenges relate to finding new partners.

The most common advice from non-profits to funders to better support non-profits going into 2021 is:

- 80% of funders surveyed reported allowing project timelines and goals to shift and provided additional funds to grantees, far fewer (41%) unrestricted their funding. Smaller non-profits and those with local boards were less likely to experience increased flexibility from their funders.

Key Questions:

How did the funders we engaged with adapt their grantmaking in response to Covid-19?

And how did the non-profits we engaged with experience different funder responses?

What did those non-profits and funders say are the needs and challenges for effective grant partnerships going forward?
Scope of this project:

✓ In scope

A snapshot focussed principally upon private and corporate funders* based in Hong Kong and Singapore (including: private trusts & foundations, family offices, CSR and corporate foundations) with a portfolio including Southeast Asia and Hong Kong

Data and insights from non-profit and funder perspectives, drawn from selected interviews and dipstick surveys

Aggregate insights shared via a small, online discussion with funders, a slide deck and shared publicly via a series of simple blog posts

✗ Out of scope

All grant funders in Asia and individual philanthropists

Academic research with in-depth analysis

Producing a detailed, public-facing written report

*See definitions slide. Where another type of organisation was engaged with as part of the interview process for this snapshot, it was for wider contextual understanding and/or because they had been mentioned repeatedly by other interviews as having relevant insights for this
Methodology and limitations:

**Methodology**: A mix of non-profit and funder perspectives drawn from short surveys and selected interviews:

### Funders and intermediaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funders surveyed* (anonymous)</th>
<th>Non-profits surveyed* (anonymous)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Funders surveyed**
  - 47% SG based / 41% HK
  - 56% private / 32% corporate

- **1 hour interviews (anonymised)**:
  - 8 funders based in HK & SG with a track record of flexibility with their non-profit partners
  - 2 intermediaries with a strong understanding of the philanthropic landscape in Asia

- **Non-profits surveyed**
  - 18% SG / 18% HK + other countries in Southeast Asia
  - 56% smaller / 44% medium-large

- **1 hour interviews (anonymised)**
  - Covering a range of non-profits by type & size across 5+ countries*
  - A focus on organisations with strong capabilities and a track record of partnerships with funders

**Limitations**: This snapshot focuses on specific profiles of funders and non-profits, which may not be representative of the sector more broadly. It was conducted in a short timeframe in December 2020 with small sample sizes and respondents ‘opted-in.’ This deck is designed to simply share anonymised data / insights from the rapid snapshot in the hope that this might be useful for others in prompting reflection, rather than to be robust academic research with in-depth analysis -so please keep these limitations in mind when reading it.

*Funder surveys were produced in English & Chinese. Non-profit surveys were produced in English, Chinese, Thai & Khmer. Smaller non-profits interviewees that are not funded by Firetree received a small payment for their time. For more detailed survey profiles, please see the appendix.
Key insights (part 1 of 2)

How did the private and corporate donors in Hong Kong and Singapore we engaged with adapt their grant-making in response to Covid-19?

How have the non-profits we engaged with experienced different funder responses?
100% of funders surveyed reported allowing grantee project timelines and goals to shift; >80% reported providing additional funds to grantees; far fewer (41%) reported unrestricting their funding.

Smaller non-profits and those with fully local boards reported being much less likely to experience additional or unrestricted funding.

Defining features of helpful funder Covid-19 responses were: speed, clarity, authenticity and ongoing responsiveness.
In 2020, many private and corporate funders we spoke to mobilised additional funds, invested in capability building and adapted their practices to respond rapidly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency relief &amp; matching funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common themes from funder interviews</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We did PPE and food in HK - a real, urgent problem because of the economic consequences of the pandemic”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In HK, social enterprises had cash flow problems - we set up a revolving loan fund to support 6 SEs together with other donors”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fellowship Program ...leveraging on communication &amp; networking amongst NGOs to help them address issues in a more timely manner”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investments in capability building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selected funder interview quotes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“...training on fundraising, impact management, marketing to help get through the rest of the year”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We walked around the rental flats at the start of circuit breaker to find out who are the volunteer groups that are active on the ground that need support”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adapting grantmaking processes for rapid response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“We had for the first time an open application for emergency finances. There was a speedy response by trustees &amp; a quick vetting process to provide NGOs with timely support”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“...3-5 day turnaround with the board giving approvals via WhatsApp”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our funder survey suggests that, while all funders reported allowing project timelines and goals to shift and many provided additional funds, far fewer unrestricted funding:

What actions did your organisation take with your portfolio of grantees in response to Covid-19? (%. All funder survey respondents (n=32) that took this action with some, most or all of grantees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allowed goals or timelines to shift</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased size of grants or provided supplemental grants</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided additional funding outside of your org's priorities/focus</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduced grantees to other sources of funding</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated payment schedules</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted restricted funds to unrestricted funding</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrew or deferred payments</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased size of grants</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightened restrictions</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Self-reported actions from funders and respondents selected from a list of potential actions. For a definition of unrestricted funding and tightened restrictions, please see the appendix.
This is broadly in line with what non-profit survey respondents said they experienced from their funders, with some differences:

Thinking about your funders that are trusts and foundations, what actions did they take in response to Covid-19? (%). All non-profit survey respondents n=45 that experienced this action from some, most or all of funders)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allowed goals or timelines to shift</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased size of grants or provided supplemental grants</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided additional funding outside of their priorities or focus</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduced us to other sources of funding</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted restricted funds to unrestricted funding</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased size of current grants</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated payment schedules</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrew or deferred payments</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightened restrictions</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Overall reported trend is broadly in line with funder responses, but with a higher proportion reporting greater restrictions and lower proportion reporting greater flexibility compared to the funder survey – please see the note box though.

Note:
Please note this is not a direct crossover with funder survey respondents from the previous slide i.e. while some non-profits surveyed are funded by some of the funders surveyed, this is not a direct match and there are non-profit respondents not funded by any of the funders surveyed. It therefore just reflects the broad experience of the non-profits surveyed. Respondents selected from a list of potential actions.
Our survey found corporate foundations and CSR appeared more likely to increase and unrestrict funding compared to private foundations, trusts and family offices:

What actions did your organisation take with your portfolio of grantees in response to Covid-19? (% corporate vs private funder survey respondents that took this action with some, most or all of grantees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Description</th>
<th>Private funders</th>
<th>Corporate funders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased size of grants or provided supplemental grants</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided additional funding outside of your org’s priorities/focus</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted restricted funds to unrestricted funding</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corporate foundations and CSR appeared more likely to provide additional / supplemental funding and unrestrict funding, compared to private foundations, trusts and family offices.

There was little geographic variation between funders - segmenting by Singapore vs Hong Kong-based funders revealed very similar response levels between the two.

Note: Respondents selected from a list of potential actions. Please see appendix for how private and corporate funders were defined.
From the non-profit perspective, we found smaller organisations were much less likely to experience additional funding outside of current grants or unrestricted funding:

Thinking about your funders that are foundations and trusts, what actions did they take in response to Covid-19? (% by size of organisation)

- **Increased size of current grants**
  - Medium-Larger: 67%
  - Smaller: 67%

- **Provided additional funding outside of current grant**
  - Medium-Larger: 61%
  - Smaller: 33%

- **Converted restricted funding to unrestricted**
  - Medium-Larger: 42%
  - Smaller: 33%

Note: Respondents selected from a list of potential actions

'Smaller': defined for the purposes of this as non-profit organisations with less than or equal to 20 FTE

'Medium-larger': defined for the purposes of this as non-profit organisations with more than 20 FTE
Non-profit organisations with a fully local board also reported being much less likely to experience increased size of current grants, additional or unrestricted funding:

Thinking about your funders that are foundations and trusts, what actions did they take in response to Covid-19? (% by level of local/foreign representation on boards)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Some foreign board rep</th>
<th>Fully local board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased size of current grants</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided additional funding outside of current grant</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted restricted funding to unrestricted</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Fully local board': for the purposes of this, defined as non-profit organisations where 100% of the board is from the countries/communities where they work.

'Some foreign board rep': for the purposes of this, defined as non-profit organisations where not all the board is from the countries/communities where they work.

Please note; non-profits defined this for themselves, so different non-profits may have defined local/foreign slightly differently (see definition slide for more details.)

Note: Respondents selected from a list of potential actions.
This matched what we heard in our interviews about locally-led, grassroots organisations struggling to access funds:

Selected quotes from non-profit, funder and intermediary interviews

“Very local grassroots organisations are suffering.”

“For local funders] it’s based on their connection to local communities &... Chairman, in difficult times you help your friends.”

 “[Funders] don’t know who are the local grassroots organisations most in need...they’re not listed in HKCSS...”

“Some local non-profits deliberately hire 1 or 2 foreign staff to do the grant paperwork and make connections to donors.”

“Cambodians are not good at selling themselves, there’s a culture difference. How can donors know about our work if we always listen?”

“What is the final goal- is it to empower the local community & people who have limited opportunities? If they switch the focus [to funding local grassroots organisations], it could make a huge impact for locals to do things themselves. There’s a double impact in supporting local grassroots organisations - supporting beneficiaries in the community and supporting NGO staff to be stronger”

“Local organisations, including my own, our background is usually in social work so there may be no willingness or capacity to do networking for fundraising. Our strength is in advocacy & direct services.”

Source: Non-profit, funder and intermediary interviews
When we asked “what Covid-19 response from funders was helpful and what was not?”, what we heard was not just what was done by funders, but how it was done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>“Speed meant we launched an unconditional cash transfer programme in weeks, it took the EU programme over 6 months to launch something similar.”</td>
<td>“It’s a bit late in the day, 2 months after COVID, to say it’s OK to move budget lines.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>“[Our donors] offered emotional support, encouragement &amp; genuine care…when donors stand by you, it’s very motivating.”</td>
<td>“With some donors it felt like their outreach and flexibility was a check the box exercise…they did it cause they had to.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>“The donor came forward and we agreed a set time extension in order to achieve the project objectives.”</td>
<td>“When a donor says, “we can flex the KPIs, but please try to meet them” - what does that mean?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing adaptability</td>
<td>“We’re now making deep investments in building crowdfunding and digital capabilities…we need our donors to support us with these longer term changes too.”</td>
<td>“We’re still in the eye of the storm [when it comes to Covid]…we need our donors to continue to be flexible as we respond.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Non-profit interviews
Key insights (part 2 of 2)

What are the needs and challenges for grant partnerships going forward?
Key insights at a glance: summary of key insights for this section:

What did the non-profits and funders we engaged with say are the needs, and challenges for effective grant partnerships going forward?

In aggregate, non-profits we surveyed most wish funders would continue to provide additional funds and unrestricted funding, but less than half of funders we surveyed intend to do that in 2021.

Smaller non-profits appear to value unrestricted funding over additional funding, whereas larger non-profits appear to value additional funding over unrestricted funding.

While non-profits’ top challenges for 2021 relate to managing existing grant partnerships (i.e. managing funder expectations and understanding whether their current funding was secure), funders’ top challenges relate to finding new ones.

The most common advice from non-profits to funders about how to better support non-profits going forward:
1) engage non-profits in conversations about needs, challenges and opportunities
2) continue to be responsive to change; and
3) offer unrestricted, longer-term funding.
Looking forward, most funder respondents report that they intend to continue allowing goals to shift, far fewer intend to continue to provide additional funds:

**What actions did you take in response to Covid-19 vs. what do you intend to maintain with your portfolio of grantees in 2021?**  
(%, All funder survey respondents n=32)

- **Allow goals or timelines to shift**: 100% taken, 94% intend to continue
- **Provide additional funding outside of your org’s priorities/focus**: 81% taken, 44% intend to continue
- **Increase size of current grants or provide supplemental grants**: 81% taken, 47% intend to continue
- **Convert restricted funds to unrestricted funding**: 41% taken, 31% intend to continue

**Note**: Respondents selected from a list of potential actions

**Action taken in response to Covid in 2020**  
Most funders intend to continue to allow project goals and timelines to shift

**Action intend to maintain in 2021**  
There is a sharp drop in the proportion of funders offering additional or supplemental funding in 2021, compared to 2020

Even though far fewer unrestricted funding, most funders who did unrestricted funding plan to continue
Looking forward from the non-profit perspective, most non-profits wish funders would continue to provide additional types of funding and unrestricted funding, perhaps unsurprisingly:

Thinking about your funders that are trusts and foundations, what actions taken in response to Covid-19 do you most wish that they maintain in 2021? (select top 3)
(% of all non-profit survey respondents n=45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase size of grants or provide supplemental grants</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide additional funding outside of their core priorities/focus</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convert restricted funds to unrestricted funding</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce us to other sources of funding</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow goals or timelines to shift</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerate payment schedules</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents selected from a list of potential actions.
There was some variation in survey responses across geographies in terms of which practices non-profits most wish funders would maintain in 2021:

Thinking about your funders that are foundations and trusts, what actions taken in response to Covid-19 do you most wish that they maintain in 2021? (select top 3)
(by where the organisation is based)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Increase size of grants or provide supplemental grants</th>
<th>Convert restricted funds to unrestricted</th>
<th>Provide additional funding outside of funder’s core priorities or focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall average</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- More Cambodia-based non-profits appeared to prioritise additional funding outside of their funder’s core priorities or focus, compared to non-profits from other countries.
- Fewer Hong Kong-based non-profits appeared to prioritise increasing the size of grants, compared to non-profits from other countries.

Note: Non-profit respondents selected top 3 from a list of actions.
Our survey found smaller non-profits appear to value unrestricted funding more vs. larger organisations, which appear to value larger amounts:

Thinking about your funders that are foundations and trusts, what actions taken in response to Covid-19 do you most wish that they maintain in 2021? (select top 3)

**Smaller non-profits** defined as <=20 FTE  
(rank as a % of small non-profit respondents, n= 25)

01. Convert restricted grant funds to unrestricted funding (76%)
02. Provide additional funding outside of their core priorities or focus (68%)
03. Increase size of current grants or provide supplemental grants (64%)

**Medium/larger non-profits** defined as > 20 FTE  
(rank as a % of medium/large non-profit respondents, n= 20)

01. Increase size of current grants or provide supplemental grants (85%)
02. Provide additional funding outside of their core priorities or focus (65%)
03. Convert restricted grant funds to unrestricted funding (45%)

Note: Respondents selected from a list of potential actions
Comparing which practices funders intend to maintain and which practices non-profits most wished they did, reveals some clear differences:

What actions did you take in response to Covid-19 vs do you intend to maintain with your portfolio of grantees in 2021? (% All funder respondents n=32) vs Thinking about your funders that are foundations and trusts, what actions taken in response to Covid-19 do you most wish that they maintain in 2021? (select top 3, % of all non-profit respondents, n=45)

Increasing size of existing funding, providing additional funding outside of a funders core priorities and unrestricting funding were the changes most non-profits wished were maintained in 2021, but less than half of funder respondents report intending to maintain these.

Almost all funders report intending to continue to allow project goals and timelines to shift, but less than half of non-profits selected this as a top wish.

Note: Non-profit respondents selected top 3 wishes from a list of potential actions. Funder respondents selected all applicable actions from a parallel list. As before, there is not a direct crossover between funder respondents and non-profit respondents – i.e. non-profit respondents are not necessarily funded by funder respondents. The graph shows top 6 results.
Going in to 2021, top challenges reported by non-profits we surveyed relate to managing relationships with existing funders:

When it comes to managing partnerships with foundations and trusts, what do you foresee as your top three challenges for 2021? (select top 3) (% of all non-profit respondents n=45)

- Understanding whether our grant-funding is secure: 51%
- Managing expectations/relationships with our funders as we adapt our programmes: 51%
- Finding reliable, accessible information and networks to identify new grant-funders: 38%
- Finding new grant-funders given travel and safe distancing restrictions: 36%
- Building trust with new grant-funders given travel and safe distancing restrictions: 33%
- Finding grant-funders for advocacy and social justice work and networks: 31%
- Finding grant-funders to help us adapt our programmes: 27%
- Working with grant-funders to identify suitable employee engagement opportunities for them: 16%
- Finding opportunities for collaboration and learning with other non-profits and/or funders: 7%

Selected non-profit interview quotes

- “It’s better to have a core group of good partners instead of many partners if in the long term, you want them to grow & achieve big things in the community.”
- “With the time it takes to establish relationships, it’s better to channel resources to existing ones and double down.”

Note: Non-profit respondents selected top 3 challenges from a list.

Managing expectations and relationships with funders and understanding whether their funding is secure were the two most commonly cited challenges for non-profits going into 2021.

These challenges related to managing existing relationships with funders featured more highly than finding new funding sources, although this clearly does feature.
Comparing top responses from non-profits and funders, shows that while non-profits’ top challenges relate to managing existing partnerships, funders’ relate to finding new ones:

Non-profits
When it comes to managing partnerships with foundations and trusts, what do you foresee as your top three challenges for 2021? (select top 3) (% of all non-profit respondents n=45, showing top 3 cited responses only)

01 Managing expectations as we adapt our progs (51%)
02 Understanding whether our funding is secure (51%)
03 Finding info and networks to identify new funders (38%)

Funders
When it comes to managing partnerships with grantees, what do you foresee as your top three challenges for 2021? (select top 3) (% of all funder respondents n=32, showing top 3 cited responses only)

01 Building trust with new grantees (47%)
02 Finding new grantees (44%)
03 Adapting to changes in our grant partners’ progs (41%)
A more detailed comparison between non-profit and funder survey responses, highlights some important commonalities and distinctions in challenges:

### Top challenges in managing partnerships for all surveyed non-profits and all surveyed funders in 2021 (select top 3)

(Funder respondents n=32 vs non-profit respondents n=45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Non-profits</th>
<th>Funders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding if funding is secure / Managing grantee expectations when uncertain over our own budget/priorities</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing expectations / adapting to changes in programmes</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding reliable, accessible information and networks to identify new grantees/funders</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding new grantees / funders</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust with new grantees/funders</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding ways to support/fund advocacy and social justice work and networks</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding new grantees/funders who have/fund Covid resilient programmes</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding opportunities for collaboration and learning with other non-profits</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to changes/managing changes to programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents selected top 3 challenges from a list of potential challenges. Funder respondents selected all applicable actions from a parallel list. Included above are the main challenges - i.e. ones which represented more than 20% for funders and/or non-profits.

Understanding whether their funding is secure is a top challenge for non-profits, but very few funders report this as an issue.

Adapting to changes/managing changes to programmes is common across both funders and non-profits.

Finding opportunities for collaboration and learning is a key challenge for non-profits, much less so for funders.
We asked non-profits their advice to funders to help them better support non-profits in the future; the most common advice focused on engaging in conversations:

What is the one piece of advice you would give to your funders that are foundations and trusts to help them better support non-profits in the future? (Coded responses from free text response, % of all non-profit respondents who mentioned this response, n=45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice</th>
<th>% of non-profit respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversations with non-profits about needs, challenges and opportunities</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater/continued responsiveness to changes</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted funding</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer-term support (incl multi-year grants)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less focus on KPIs/template reporting</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core capacity support</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More funding or introduction to other funders</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The advice to funders with most mentions centred around deepening relationships, followed by responsiveness to change and unrestricted funding.

More funding does feature, but only as the 7th most common response from non-profits. So again, it’s not just ‘what’ is done but also ‘how,’ with communication as a central theme.

Note: Respondents provided free text response.
Here is what the non-profits we surveyed said about their advice to funders to help them better support non-profits in the future... (1 of 2:)

Advice to funders that are foundations and trusts to help them better support non-profits in the future
(top 4 common themes from non-profit survey + selected quotes from non-profit interviews and survey)

### Conversations about needs, challenges and opportunities

- "Focus on brief 30-45 minute phone calls with your grantees where you actively discuss the opportunities that the organization sees."
- "Engage them in conversations about their strategic vision and how they want to grow."
- "Just give us a call and find out how we’re doing."
- "Engage with non-profits to understand operational challenges and flex the project guidelines and goals in line with the social mission of the funder."

### Greater / continued responsiveness to changes

- "Because COVID-19 is so unpredictable it has been very difficult for us to know what we will be able to do, and when we will be able to do it. We have appreciated funders who have been willing to let us adjust our goals and plans."
- "Once trust has been fully established, keep the same flexibility and openness as shown during COVID-19."
- "Provide long-term strategic support that is flexible to the changing situation and needs."
- "Funders should help the non-profits to survive by allowing goals or timelines of current grants to shift and letting them convert the current funds to need-based plans in order to respond to the need."
Here is what non-profits we surveyed said about their advice to funders to help them better support non-profits in the future...

Advice to funders that are foundations and trusts to help them better support non-profits in the future
(top 4 common themes from non-profit survey + selected quotes from non-profit interviews and survey)

**Unrestricted funding**

“I think that 2020 shows you what type of organizations you are supporting. If you are impressed with how they are responding, you should probably consider trusting them more going forward. This means you should probably consider unrestricting your grants and changing reporting.”

“Unrestricted funding is essential to any non-profit and is the foundation of our work.”

“Trust their non-profit partners. Give them the flexibility to spend on what is needed most—even if that is staff costs.”

**Longer term support**

“It will be great if they could provide multiple-year funding even though it is a small amount rather than the large amount but only one year.”

“Provide more multi-year grants. 3 years would be a good time frame. Saves time for both the grantee and the funder in terms of the application and the due diligence process, but also allows for a deep check-in every 3 years.”

“If funders can stick with their non-profit partners to ensure continuity, then we will have a more professional industry & not always creating new orgs that will need to invest in infrastructure.”

“[My advice]...to not believe that they should not fund beyond 3 years because it will cause dependency on them...as soon as they stop, we will spend a lot of time, work and energy to seek another partner...Long term, trusted relationships with key donors helps us to make lasting mind set changes in the communities. It takes a lot of time do do this!”

*Please see definitions slide for how we define unrestricted funding.*
Thank you

Please note, as Just Cause agreed with interviewees, we have not included a list of the funders and non-profits interviewed in this deck.

However, we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank them for their time and insights. This deck will be shared with all of them.

If you have any questions from this slide deck or would like to share any learning from your own organisational experience / reflection on some of this, please do feel free to reach out to Nicky Wilkinson at Firetree Philanthropy (nw@firetree.org.)
Appendix I: Definitions & survey profiles
Definitions:

**Unrestricted funding:** for the purposes of this snapshot, unrestricted funding is understood as funding that a non-profit can decide to use for any purpose/expenses in the service of its mission, including general operating & core capacity support.

**Tightened restrictions (slide 9):** on current grants includes placing further restrictions on how the funding is spent and the reporting requirements for managing the grant.

**Funders:** when we refer to ‘funders’ in the deck, we are referring principally to the two main types of philanthropic funder we were interested to explore more on; ‘private funders’ and ‘corporate funders’ – see below.

**Private funders:** private family foundations, private trusts and family offices providing grant funding to non-profits

**Corporate funders:** corporate foundation and corporate social responsibility (CSR) providing grant funding to non-profits

**‘Fully local board’ (slide 13):** non-profit organisations where 100% of the board is from the countries or communities where the non-profit works. Please note, as per slide 13, ‘local’ was self-defined by the non-profits. So there may be some variation in this. For example, some respondents may have interpreted ‘local’ as board members from the communities they work in, others as from the countries they work in.

**‘Some foreign board representation’ (slide 13):** non-profit organisations where not all of the board members are from the countries or communities where the non-profit works. The same note as above applies to this definition in that non-profits self-defined ‘some foreign board representation.’
Non-profit: We are aware that this term can be used differently in different contexts. For the purposes of this snapshot, 'non-profits' are understood as legal entities (independent from government) that have a social mission and are governed by a board of trustees / directors. These legal entities have no shareholders and are not allowed by law (and by their governing charters) to distribute dividends and profits to directors, trustees or any other ultimate beneficiary.

This includes, for example, charities, societies and Institutions of Public Character (IPC’s) (in the Singapore context,) companies limited by guarantees, associations registered under the Societies Ordinance and Charitable Trusts (in the Hong Kong context,) non-stock, non-profit entities (in the Philippines context,) Yayasan’s (in the Indonesian context) and non-governmental organisations (NGO’s) (in the Cambodian context.)
Non-profit survey profile (n=45) and interviewee countries

**Organisation based**
- Singapore: 18%
- Hong Kong: 18%
- Philippines: 27%
- Cambodia: 24%
- Rest of Southeast Asia: 20%

**Primary funding sources (based on top 2 sources of funds)**
- International development / government: 51%
- Corporate foundations and CSR: 31%
- Private foundations and family offices: 38%
- Other: 7%

**Organisation size (based on FTE)**
- Smaller (56%)
- Medium-Larger (44%)

**Profile of board**
- Fully local (47%)
- Some foreign rep (53%)

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**Non-profit interviewees:**
Below is a list of the countries in which the interviewed non-profits are based and working:
- Cambodia – 3 non-profits based & working solely in Cambodia
- Indonesia – 1 non-profit based & working solely in Indonesia
- Singapore – 1 non-profit based & working solely in SG
- Singapore & Malaysia – 1 non-profit working across both countries, based in SG
- Philippines – 2 non-profits based & working solely in PH
- 1 non-profit working across 5 Southeast Asian countries

Thanks to the HK-based non-profits who shared their insights informally too.
Funder survey profile (n=32)

**Location of grantees**
- Philippines: 44%
- Hong Kong: 44%
- Singapore: 38%
- Cambodia: 31%
- Indonesia: 31%
- Thailand: 28%
- Vietnam: 25%
- Myanmar: 19%
- Malaysia: 19%
- Laos: 16%

**Organisation type**
- Private foundation / trust: 37%
- Corporate foundation: 16%
- Corporate CSR: 16%
- Other: 12%

**Organisation size (by FTE)**
- 1 FTE: 44%
- 2-5 FTE: 37%
- >5 FTE: 19%
- Other: 12%