

Exploratory Mapping of the Philanthropy Support Ecosystem in Guatemala

WINGS



2024

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

Philanthropy can be a powerful force for social change. Supportive ecosystems are needed to empower philanthropic actors' ability to create positive, lasting transformations and reach their full potential.



Philanthropy support ecosystems (PSEs) play a crucial role in advancing effective giving and social impact. Interconnected and robust PSEs play a vital role in fostering resilient, locally-driven solutions. Philanthropy support ecosystems have the potential to amplify voices, advocate for policy change and lead to better frameworks for supporting civil society. When PSEs operate in the shadows, lack adequate resources or are fragmented, the growth of a strong and resilient civil society becomes more difficult.

Mapping philanthropy support ecosystems (PSEs) is intrinsic to WINGS' core mission to ensure philanthropic actors around the world have the support, knowledge, networks and enabling environment they need to grow and create transformative change. In 2023, based on an analysis of potential opportunities for collaboration following the democratic renewal in Guatemala, WINGS and partners (private foundations, international donors and local actors) started an exploratory mapping of the landscape of philanthropic players, the relationships connecting them, and the gaps and opportunities to build a collective roadmap to strengthen the field.

Despite being an upper-middle-income country and the largest economy in Central America, Guatemala grapples with significant development challenges. Its poverty and inequality rates remain among the highest in the Latin American and Caribbean region (LAC). These challenges persist due to a substantial underserved population that

is predominantly rural and Indigenous, often employed in the informal sector ([World Bank](#)).

On the other hand, civil society in Guatemala has historically faced restrictions to operate and grow. Controversial and restrictive legislation targeting non-governmental organisations (NGOs) took effect in July 2021, giving such organisations until February 2022 to register or face dissolution ([Freedom House](#)).

The findings of this exploratory mapping confirm that the ecosystem of support for philanthropy in Guatemala is practically nonexistent. Infrastructure or support organisations are scarce, there is no investment in the ecosystem, and there are no collaborations that maximise the potential of philanthropy. The following report contains not only the findings but also includes an initial roadmap that was co-created with a steering committee of local partners and which will help to engage stakeholders and expand the initiative's scope to build the PSE in Guatemala.

Looking beyond these findings, a significant opportunity lies in creating a supportive ecosystem led by local champions and in collaboration with those who aspire to strengthen local capacities and improve the living conditions of the population. WINGS is committed to supporting local leadership in the process of strengthening the ecosystem and invites stakeholders from the national and international philanthropic sectors, as well as key players in international cooperation, to collaborate. Together, we can unlock the full potential of philanthropy in Guatemala.

The findings of the exploratory mapping confirm that the ecosystem of support for philanthropy in Guatemala is practically non-existent.



Conceptual framework

- CONCEPTS
- METHODOLOGY
- STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

The foundations of the exploratory mapping are WINGS Taxonomy¹, and an adaptable methodology to map philanthropy support ecosystems². The tool to assess the strengths of the philanthropy support ecosystem³ served as a guide to analyse the findings and co-create an initial roadmap with local partners.



1 WINGS (2021) [Understanding the Meaning of Terms: Definitions and Taxonomy](#)

2 WINGS (2021) [How to Build the Philanthropy Support Ecosystem \(PSE\) Working it out Together: Engaging Philanthropy Actors in Mapping and Strengthening their own Ecosystem](#)

3 WINGS (2021) [How to Assess the Strengths of the Philanthropy Support Ecosystem \(PSE\)](#)

Concepts

Philanthropy is the practice of giving time, money, experience, skills and/or talent, all with the altruistic goal of improving human well-being. It includes individual giving by everyday donors and high-net-worth individuals, or institutional giving through corporations, foundations, and other specialised institutions.

Philanthropy support ecosystems (PSEs) are communities of organisations whose functions, activities, and interactions enable the development of philanthropy by

nurturing its capacity, capabilities, connections, and credibility. These philanthropy support organisations (PSOs) provide various services to support and strengthen philanthropy in a region or around an issue.

Philanthropy Support Organisations (PSOs) are entities that provide various services to support and strengthen philanthropy and grassroots development in a region or around an issue.

Philanthropy is the practice of giving with the goal of improving human well-being.



Methodology

Mapping the field usually involves a combination of desk research, interviews with local experts and bringing local stakeholders together (online or in-person) to leverage their collective knowledge and insight in order to:

- Identify key actors that make up the ecosystem and understand their relationships.
- Reinforce existing partnerships and/or surface new areas of collaboration by bringing local stakeholders together and engaging them in setting a collective

vision and agenda (ideally, through the process, initiating collaborations between unusual allies).

- Identify key strengths to lean into and gaps to fill as a sector, and engage local funders and philanthropists in addressing them by allocating more resources to local ecosystem building.
- Build a collective and self-owned roadmap and a light mechanism to ensure follow-up beyond the duration of the project.

The scope of the exploratory mapping in Guatemala



The scope of the exploratory mapping and methodology was adjusted as gaps in knowledge and the quantity and capacity of infrastructure organisations were identified. Thus, the objectives of the exploratory mapping were:

- Develop actionable knowledge about the ecosystem that supports the development of philanthropy in Guatemala, including gaps and opportunities.
- Facilitate collaborations to strengthen the philanthropy support ecosystem.
- Build a roadmap that informs the actions that various philanthropic actors will implement to strengthen the ecosystem.

The methods

Due to the exploratory nature of the mapping, data collection and analysis were based on qualitative methods that complemented desk research to gather detailed insight from participants and their perceptions and facilitate contextual analysis. The following are the data collection tools used in the process.

- Hybrid interviews/surveys. This method was adopted for the exploratory mapping to get detailed information about behaviours, experiences, or opinions about the state of the PSE in Guatemala in a more interactive and in-depth manner.
- Unstructured Interviews at already established events such as Central America Donors Forum 2023 and WINGS Forum.
- Workshops. Due to their interactive and participatory nature, WINGS delivered two workshops with philanthropy support organisations, non-profit organisations, foundations and international organisations.
- Desk research to gather information and data from existing sources. WINGS carried out preliminary desk research to identify potential partners for the exploratory mapping, and once the initiative started, in-depth desk research was conducted.

Key aspects of the process

- WINGS brought together a group of international donors and local allies by creating a Steering Committee, a consultative and advisory body to provide strategic guidance for WINGS to ensure that the methodology, activities and results contribute to the achievement of the project's objectives.

- For about a year, more than 90 leaders from a wide spectrum of organisations⁴ were approached and engaged. All of them work directly or indirectly to strengthen civil society and promote grassroots development. Individual and collective reflections nurtured the mapping of the philanthropy support ecosystem.
- Due to the exploratory nature of the mapping and the initial findings indicating an underdeveloped sector, it was decided that an in-depth analysis of the ecosystem and actors should not be carried out at this stage.

4 Civil society and grassroots organisations, international and domestic foundations, International non-governmental organisations -INGOs-, as well as regional and domestic philanthropy support organisations

**More than 90 leaders
from a wide spectrum
of organisations
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and engaged in the
mapping exercise.**



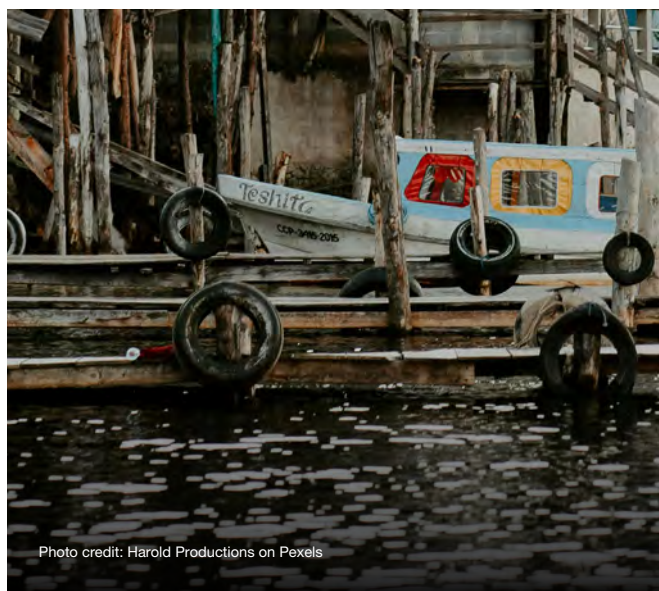
Stakeholders involved

At the national level, WINGS identified three existing types of Philanthropy Support Organisations (PSOs) in Guatemala, specifically:

- PSOs that focus on philanthropy,
- PSOs that enable philanthropy as a subset of their main functions,
- Funders of the support ecosystem.

Identifying and engaging stakeholders in Guatemala was challenging, which was a sign of the philanthropy support ecosystem's weakness. In addition, domestic corporate, family, and community philanthropy, international philanthropy, and INGOs were engaged.

Data collection involved 89 actors who participated in workshops, unstructured interviews, and hybrid interviews/surveys.



The philanthropy support ecosystem in Guatemala

The exploratory mapping results were analysed following the 4Cs methodology (Capacities, Capabilities, Connections, and Credibility)⁵ which seeks to identify the perceptions of the contribution of Philanthropy Support Organisations and the philanthropy support ecosystem to the development of philanthropy. Due to the exploratory nature of the mapping, the 4Cs methodology was adapted to provide initial recommendations for action to build the ecosystem.



5 WINGS (2021) [How to Assess the Strengths of the Philanthropy Support Ecosystem \(PSE\)](#)

Below are the findings from the exploratory mapping, supplemented by analysis from a group of three philanthropic support organisations in Guatemala.

Capacities refer to generating financial, human, and infrastructure resources to develop philanthropy. For the exploratory mapping findings, the analysis is focused on the 'density' indicator: a) Number and type of philanthropy support organisations by function served, b) Number and diversity of funders investing in PSE, and c) Number of funders investing in the PSO.

Results of the mapping:

The scale of PSOs available in Guatemala is very low. As of 2020, according to official data, there are 1,394 NGOs, 12,601 civil associations, and 796 foundations legally registered⁶. During the exploratory mapping, just four Philanthropy Support Organisations were identified. There is no organisation that brings together foundations at the national or sub-regional level.

In terms of the type of PSOs, organisations identified that they fulfil more than one role in the ecosystem directly or indirectly:

- PSOs that focus solely on philanthropy, whose main purpose is to support the development and effectiveness of the philanthropy and giving field,
- Nonprofit entities that promote a culture of giving and/or a favourable environment for philanthropy and civil society,
- Academic institutions and researchers whose efforts to strengthen knowledge about philanthropy,
- Professional support organisations supporting the professionalisation of the sector and also providing advice for international philanthropy,

- Community foundations indirectly supporting the growth of community philanthropy,
- Funders of the support ecosystem who fund the support ecosystem and/or provide support services themselves,
- Funders of the infrastructure who have an interest in investing resources (non-financial and financial) to support the development of the ecosystem in Guatemala.

Analysis :

What would be the main challenges to increasing domestic Philanthropy Support Organisations that provide services to philanthropy?

What could be the cause of the lack of investment in the PSE?

- There are few infrastructure organisations, but there are no interactions or relationships. The challenge then is to build the ecosystem, identify good practices, learn and adapt.
- Lack of trust. Although it is a common characteristic of societies with complex economic, political, and social contexts, distrust is related to the scarcity of resources in the sector of philanthropy and social organisations, which generates situations of competition and fear of sharing information.
- Another challenge is incentives, specifically financial resources. Collaborations tend to emerge and work if financial resources are available.
- In the Guatemalan context, USAID is playing a dual role as a convener and funder in the nascent ecosystem, having the potential to leverage its assets to support PSE building.
- The absence of an ecosystem vision and a lack of trust are key causes of the lack of investment in the PSE.

⁶ Rolland, A. (2020, June 10) History and current context of philanthropy in Guatemala. [Blog Lilly Family School of Philanthropy](#)

Capabilities refer to building skills, knowledge and expertise. For the analysis of the findings, this area was focused on the indicator ‘Knowledge and data generation in the PSE’: a) Number of PSO knowledge-sharing platforms available within the PSE, b) Presence of indices/benchmarks/tools that can be used by philanthropy.

Results of the mapping:

Local PSOs have a significant opportunity to develop more tailored and effective tools, leveraging their understanding of the philanthropic sector (filling the knowledge gap). Desk research and one-on-one conversations helped to characterise the production of knowledge and data available on domestic philanthropy.

- **Limited comprehensive guides:** Unlike countries like the United States, Guatemala lacks comprehensive guides on philanthropy resources and policies.
- **Research on domestic philanthropy:** Domestic knowledge about philanthropy and its ecosystem is almost non-existent, highlighting the relevance of supporting data and knowledge production.
- **Fragmented data repositories:** Data repositories in Guatemala are largely fragmented. While platforms like datos.gob.gt provides some datasets, they are not comprehensive and do not include a specific focus on philanthropy.

Analysis:

From a philanthropy or PSO perspective, how does the lack of data about the sector affect the decision-making process to define your areas of work, funding, etc?

What type of data and knowledge would be useful for your organisation and the philanthropic sector?

What may be the reasons behind the low knowledge production?

- Participants emphasised the need for data to collaborate. To explore collaborations, it is necessary to know who is who and what their agendas are. There may be interest in collaborating, but it will not be possible to move forward without a vision of common themes and interests.
- A challenge regarding the collection and analysis of information is that organisations (foundations and civil society) are not interested in sharing their data.
- Organisations such as Pionero Philanthropy or El Directorio, which work with data from the social sector, face the challenge of sustainability of their work due to the limited availability of resources for this purpose. There is little funding for data/knowledge production.
- Regarding the reasons behind the low production of knowledge, the participants agreed on two: i) Lack of resources for PSOs who carry out this work. ii) Lack of trust which relates to the challenges of creating the ecosystem.

Connections refer to building relationships. The analysis focused on the variable ‘relationship and transactions within the PSE’: a) the number of partnerships/collaborations/collectives within the PSE and b) the number of cross-entity partnerships.

Results of the mapping:

Domestic philanthropy is dispersed and works in silos, and there are rarely collaborations between foundations, and between them and other players such as international donors, civil society organisations, and the Guatemalan government. During the exploratory mapping process, four collaborations were identified: two between the private sector and foundations focused on nutrition and children, one collaboration between foundations focused on education, and one constant collaboration between foundations and the Ministry of Education.

Analysis

Are there experiences of collaboration between national philanthropy and PSOs that you would like to share with the group?

From a broader perspective, could you share three characteristics of how philanthropic actors collaborate with civil society, governments, and the private sector?

- Collaboration experiences are solely of international cooperation through INGOs, i.e. USAID through RTI, a key player in generating these initiatives.
- In the realm of collaborations between philanthropy and civil society organisations, philanthropy often takes on an implementing role, benefiting civil society and grassroots organisations through its initiatives. Although specific data on donations from domestic philanthropy to civil society organisations in Guatemala is lacking, Philanthropy Support Organisations (PSOs) have highlighted that domestic foundations primarily act as implementers. This underscores the significant role of international philanthropy and cooperation as the main sources of funding for civil society organisations.
- Collaborations between Guatemalan foundations and international philanthropy are not common despite having the potential to maximise impact on civil society. According to The 2017 Central America Philanthropy Guide (Seattle International Foundation, 2017), international foundations awarded

approximately 360 grants to 116 Guatemalan organisations, with various organisations receiving multiple grants.

- Relationships and collaborations between philanthropies in Guatemala tend to revolve around a specific topic (education, health care, among others). These collaborations are scarce and do not have a long-term strategy, depending on the availability of resources.
- Regarding collaboration with the private sector, these relationships are rare. There have been experiences around specific topics.
- Although there is a shared interest in generating a common good around a topic or population, financial resources motivate collaborations, and whoever has the resources dictates the agenda.

Credibility refers to building reputation, recognition and influence. The analysis focused on the indicator ‘transparency of philanthropy and PSO services’: The number of foundations sharing details of relevant material developed as part of projects or otherwise with other PSE stakeholders.

Results of the mapping:

Philanthropy is not seen as a key partner of broader civil society and international organisations. There is a lack of credibility focused on certain types of philanthropy, such as corporate and family philanthropy.

Philanthropy often takes on an implementing role, benefiting civil society and grassroots organisations through its initiatives.



Analysis

What would be the reasons behind the lack of trust in philanthropy?

How do you think this affects the growth potential of the sector?

What would be the actions that would help build trust?

- The lack of trust is not only towards philanthropy but extends to the entire non-profit sector. This is due to political and economic connections that some organisations in the sector have had with governments or groups outside the law, resulting in a bad image for the sector and, consequently, a lack of trust.
- Another reason for mistrust between civil society organisations and philanthropy is the lack of support for issues relevant to communities in Guatemala, such as sexual and reproductive education, human rights, and democracy. Only one foundation directly supports these issues. In general, philanthropy in Guatemala is conservative.

- To build trust, it is important to show the impact that foundations and NGOs have and good practices in the sector. In the specific case of philanthropy, the need to involve key actors who hold credibility in the sector and who have the capacity to convene to generate spaces for dialogue is highlighted.

According to the perspective of participants, the following areas are more likely to achieve changes that benefit the strengthening of the ecosystem in the short or medium term:

- **Connections:** Create spaces for dialogue, networking, and knowledge exchanges with philanthropy, for which international actors and influential individuals in the sector are key. At the same time, to promote connections with local organisations, spaces for dialogue with civil society organisations must be managed.
- **Credibility:** It is implicit in the process of creating connections.
- **Capabilities:** There are opportunities to collaborate to produce data and analysis involving academia. This work will require dedicated financial resources.

To build trust, it is important to show the impact that foundations and NGOs have and good practices in the sector.



Co-creation of an initial roadmap to strengthen the philanthropy support ecosystem in Guatemala

Photo credit: Walter Cordero on Pexels

- **THE NORTH STAR: THE VISION OF THE PHILANTHROPY ECOSYSTEM IN GUATEMALA**
- **HOW CAN A TRANSFORMATIVE FUTURE FOR THE PHILANTHROPIC FIELD IN GUATEMALA BE ADVANCED?**
- **FIRST STEPS TO BUILD THE PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM IN GUATEMALA**

The co-creation of an initial locally led roadmap is the last phase of the first exploratory mapping of the philanthropy support ecosystem (PSE) in Guatemala. In August 2024, WINGS facilitated a session with three PSE organisations to lay the foundations for what can become a robust initiative with the involvement of more local actors in the future.

The session focused on deepening the gap analysis related to the exploratory mapping's findings, identifying opportunities, and proposing short—and medium-term actions to advance the construction of the ecosystem to support philanthropy in the country.

The North Star: The vision of the philanthropy ecosystem in Guatemala

Without sector-wide collaboration and a shared vision, stakeholders were invited to create a blueprint for the philanthropy support ecosystem by 2030. The aspiration is that this vision will evolve with increased participation from domestic organisations.

From the adaptation of methodologies⁷ of foresight or the creation of future scenarios, the group was invited to discuss four archetypes of scenarios:

- i) Continued growth
- ii) Collapse
- iii) Constraint/discipline
- iv) Transformation

The participants unanimously agreed to pursue a scenario of a **transformative future**:

By 2030, the philanthropy support ecosystem in Guatemala will be at a tipping point based on the trust and growth of supporting organisations. There will be more multi-stakeholder collaborations, the culture of giving will increase, and there will be more opportunities to maximise the impact of the philanthropic sector.

⁷ Futures platform (2024) [Scenario planning, Step by step guide](#)
International civil society centre (2024) [Toolkit for tomorrow: Anticipating civil society futures](#)



Photo credit: Fernanda Reyes

How can a transformative future for the philanthropic field in Guatemala be advanced?

The SWOT tool was applied to assess the internal and external factors that could affect progress towards the transformative future. The following are the Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Threats identified.

Opportunities

- The current government's openness to work with civil society is an opportunity to convene and promote dialogue.
- Start dialogues with organisations like WINGS.
- Reducing digital divides – promoting more information and data.
- More collaboration while addressing the resource availability challenge.
- Interest in new models, such as collaborative funds.
- Community philanthropy can be strengthened and play a key role in resource mobilisation.
- Make good practices of Guatemalan philanthropy visible in international spaces.
- Attract more philanthropy actors and generate more dialogue. Exchange good practices from the region.

Strengths

- Methodologies (PSO that focuses on generating methodologies to build trust in the non-profit sector).
- Trust-based philanthropy model (PSO that invests/is interested in investing in building the ecosystem).
- Influence, recognition, track record, and credibility (PSO that invests in/is interested in investing in building the ecosystem).
- Will, desire to collaborate (Group).
- Diversity, capacity to convene (Group).

The need to attract more actors was highlighted to maximise and expand strengths, starting by mapping who has influence in the sector.

Weaknesses

- The embryonic state of the philanthropy support ecosystem - it must be built.
- Limited resources for the ecosystem, slowing the growth and influence of PSOs.
- Lack of trust.
- Lack of interest in generating information.
- Lack of flexible funds.

What kind of support do they need to overcome weaknesses?

- Local philanthropy: More support with resources and collaboration. It was emphasised that this would be viable in the long term.
- Philanthropy and international cooperation: Ability to influence and encourage local philanthropy and openness to dialogue about the ecosystem and the sector. Additionally, both are important sources of funds for the nonprofit sector.
- Support to make visible the need to strengthen the philanthropy support ecosystem, the visibility of PSOs, and the impact of foundations.
- Raise awareness about the importance of data and advance the creation of knowledge about the sector.

Threats

- Structural problems, low development index,
- Influence of the US administration in local politics and dependence on US resources,
- Economic contraction,
- Conservative international cooperation,
- Change of government in Guatemala,
- Conservative domestic philanthropy,
- Localisation - intermediary U.S. companies opening local offices in Guatemala.

The group highlighted that threats and weaknesses could be minimised based on the strengths listed, especially the willingness to build the philanthropy support ecosystem.

First steps to build the philanthropy support ecosystem in Guatemala

Acknowledging that more diversity and representation from the philanthropic sector is needed to develop an action plan, the SWOT analysis provided insights for creating an initial roadmap to lay the foundations for stronger initiatives.

Because this is the first time a roadmap has been built to create the philanthropy support ecosystem in Guatemala, which is in a nascent stage, the roadmap focused on short-term results.

The participating organisations highlighted that the first efforts to create/strengthen the ecosystem would need the support of international organisations such as WINGS, RedEAmerica, philanthropy and international cooperation agencies, especially USAID.

Following the prioritisation of action areas, the group emphasised actions to create/strengthen capabilities, connections, and credibility.

GOAL: CREATE A COMMUNITY OF PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS (PSOS) AND FOUNDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM (PSE)

ACTION AREA

	CAPABILITIES	CONNECTIONS	CREDIBILITY	PERIOD
Objective	• Generate knowledge about local philanthropy	• Add more actors to the initiative • Generate knowledge exchanges	• Generate trust between various actors starting with philanthropy and PSOs	12 months
Results	• Map existing data • Document local philanthropy practices	• The champion group to strengthen the ecosystem expands and has the support of philanthropy and international cooperation	• Cycle of conversations on the philanthropy support ecosystem • First Guatemalan philanthropy forum: exchange of knowledge with other actors in the region	

The participants reiterated that in the early stages, they require the support of international actors with legitimacy and influence, as well as resources, for the initiative to be sustainable.



Recommendations

For Guatemalan philanthropy support organisations:

- Leverage their assets and broader contributions to philanthropy.
- Be pioneers in strengthening the philanthropy support ecosystem and maximise the sector's impact in the Guatemalan society.
- Define roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the roadmap.
- Expand the conversation by involving more foundations and organisations that may be playing a role in the ecosystem.
- Explore the tools WINGS offers to build the ecosystem and identify other actions to maximise the momentum generated in this mapping.

For domestic funders

- Engage in the conversation about creating a philanthropy support ecosystem that will enable them to prosper and achieve their goals.
- Invest in creating the ecosystem and support philanthropy support organisations. This investment will enable them to achieve greater impact, make informed decisions, prevent redundancy, train their professionals, establish connections with peers and other sectors, and encourage improved giving practices.

For international donors and partners

- Provide financial and non-financial support for data mapping, documentation of good practices and generation of knowledge about the Guatemalan philanthropic sector.
- Bolster PSOs in convening expanded dialogues with philanthropy, civil society and other key players to create the ecosystem.

For WINGS

- Provide support for the implementation of the roadmap actions, taking advantage of WINGS' experience.
- Support local leaders in identifying good practices useful for the country's context.
- Be an ambassador for the initiative, disseminate and generate interest in local efforts to implement the roadmap.
- Make the WINGS platform available for knowledge exchanges with other experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean.



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ELEVATING PHILANTHROPY