

THE PHILANTHROPY REFORM ALLIANCE (PRA)

MANIFESTO

Reimagining Philanthropy and Development Through Solidarity, Unlearning, and Practice Change

A CALL TO REFLECT · UNLEARN · REFRAME · TRANSFORM

THE MOMENT WE ARE IN

The gap between rhetoric and practice must concern us all.

Across philanthropy and development, commitments to equity, participation, localization, and inclusion are growing. And yet the systems through which resources, decisions, and opportunities flow remain fundamentally unchanged.

Global humanitarian needs continue to rise while funding gaps widen. The future we collectively seek cannot be achieved through language, frameworks, or commitments alone — it requires alignment between intent, incentives, and implementation.

The greatest obstacle to transforming philanthropy and development is not the absence of good intentions. It is our reluctance to question the assumptions, power dynamics, and practices that shape how philanthropy and development operate. Until we are willing to unlearn what no longer serves justice, equity, and locally led change, reform will remain incremental and the gap between our aspirations and our actions will persist.

We believe it is time to confront this reality with honesty, humility, and courage.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

- **Systems are made of people.** They are shaped by our choices, assumptions, practices, and relationships.
- **Systemic change begins with personal and institutional change.** To transform development, we must be willing to question how we work, what we protect, and what we need to unlearn.
- **Communities closest to challenges are closest to the solutions.** They must meaningfully influence priorities, resources, and the direction of change.
- **Philanthropy and development must be rooted in trust, solidarity, and collaboration.** Lasting change requires honest relationships, shared learning, and mutual accountability.
- **No single actor holds all the answers.** Transformation requires humility, courage, and the willingness to listen, learn, and act differently.

WHAT WE ARE UNLEARNING

Through a decolonial lens, we are committed to unlearning:

- Deficit narratives, Saviorism and Paternalistic aid models
 - Donor-centric accountability
 - Performative localization
 - Knowledge hierarchies and Extractive approaches
 - The myth of neutrality
 - Tokenistic participation and Transactional partnerships
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THE FUTURE WE ARE BUILDING

We are building a movement.

The future we seek cannot be created by one organization, funded by one donor, or led by one sector. It requires collective effort — a movement of practitioners, funders, activists, researchers, community leaders, and organizations who are committed to;

- Questioning inherited assumptions and challenging unequal systems
- Sharing power, resources, and decision-making
- Learning, unlearning, and changing practice
- Building relationships rooted in trust, solidarity, and mutual accountability
- Advancing locally led change and community leadership

OUR COMMITMENTS

We recognize that systems are made by people, and that unequal patterns are sustained through everyday choices, behaviors, incentives, and institutional cultures. In humility, we acknowledge that even well-intentioned actors, including ourselves, can reproduce the very systems we seek to change.

We commit to:

1. **Amplifying marginalized voices, knowledge, and leadership** by centering locally led solutions, community priorities, and movements for change.
2. **Challenging inequitable systems and practices** that concentrate resources, legitimacy, knowledge, and decision-making away from communities.
3. **Examining our own assumptions and behaviors** and actively shifting how we fund, partner, lead, listen, and engage.
4. **Fostering solidarity over dependency** by building relationships grounded in trust, reciprocity, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability.
5. **Creating space for collaborative unlearning** where we can surface hidden assumptions, name uncomfortable truths, and reframe how we work together.
6. **Cultivating new ways of working** rooted in justice, equity, dignity, courage, and locally led transformation.

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

The future of philanthropy and development will not be transformed by intention alone, but by the choices we make, the relationships we build, and the power we are willing to share.

We invite individuals, organizations, and institutions who share these commitments to join us as associates and partners in this journey of collaborative unlearning and systems change.

"The work begins with all of us. And it begins now."