

Understanding the Impact of Funding Practices in Southeast Asia

Introduction:

The purpose of this survey is to better understand how funders **in Southeast Asia** structure their grantmaking—through the use of unrestricted, restricted, one-year, and/or multi-year funding—and how these choices are shaped by organisational priorities, practices, and constraints.

There are **no right or wrong answers**. We are interested in learning from a **range of experiences and approaches**, including what works well and what is challenging.

Your participation is important. By sharing your perspectives, you are contributing to a clearer understanding of current grantmaking practices in Southeast Asia and how different funding structures affect grantee organisations. The findings will be shared publicly and are intended to support more informed conversations across the philanthropic ecosystem about how funding can be structured to maximize impact.

The survey should take approximately **10–15 minutes** to complete. All responses will be analyzed in aggregate with no identifiable data and treated confidentially.

Thank you for your participation.

Data consent added in SurveyMonkey

Initial Definitions

1. [Open-ended] How does your organisation define “unrestricted funding”? Please describe what types of flexibility it includes, and any limits or expectations that still apply.
2. [Open-ended] How does your organisation define “restricted funding”? Please describe the types of limitations or conditions that apply to how these funds can be used.
3. [Open-ended] How does your organisation define “multi-year funding”? Please describe what counts as a multi-year commitment and how funds are typically disbursed (e.g. annual tranches, milestone payments).

For purposes of this survey, the following definitions apply:

- **Unrestricted funding:** Funding provided to an organisation without any donor-imposed restrictions on purpose, activity or timing, allowing the organisation to use the money at its own discretion for its charitable mission.
- **Restricted funding:** Funding given under the condition that it be used only for a specific purpose. This can range from funding designated for a single project with defined budget line items, to funding earmarked for a broader program or area of an organisation’s work (for example, funds may be used flexibly to support an organisation’s education-related activities, but may not be put towards its healthcare work).
-
- **Multi-year funding:** Funding that is committed for at least two years, whether disbursed in tranches or upfront.

Unless otherwise specified, please answer all questions with reference to your organisation’s giving in Southeast Asia for the most recently completed fiscal year.

A. Funder Profile

A.1. What type of funder are you? (Select all that apply)

- High Net Worth Individual (HNWI)
- Family / private foundation
- Corporate foundation / CSR program
- Other (please specify): _____

A.2. Where do you fund social purpose organisations? (Select all that apply):

- Singapore
- Malaysia
- Indonesia
- Philippines
- Thailand
- Vietnam
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Brunei
- Timor-Leste
- Other regions outside Southeast Asia

A.3. Approximately how many years has your organization been actively providing grant funding?

- Less than 3 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years
- More than 10 years
- N/A – we do not currently provide grant funding

A.4. What is the approximate size of your annual giving budget by FY (in USD)?

- < \$1m
- \$1m – \$4.9m
- \$5m – \$9.9m
- \$10m – \$24.9m
- \$25m+
- Prefer not to disclose

A.5. What is the average annual size of your grants (regardless of the type of grant)?

- Under USD 25,000
- USD 25,000 – 49,999
- USD 50,000 – 99,999
- USD 100,000 – 249,999

- USD 250,000 or more
- Prefer not to disclose

A.6. In your latest completed financial year, approximately what percentage of your total grantmaking was: (0–100% each; should sum to approximately 100%)

As a reminder, for purposes of this survey, we define “**Unrestricted Funding**” as “funding provided to an organisation without any donor-imposed restrictions on purpose, activity or timing, allowing the organisation to use the money at its own discretion for its charitable mission.”

We define “**Restricted Funding**” as “funding given under the condition that it be used only for a specific purpose. This can range from funding designated for a single project with defined budget line items, to funding earmarked for a broader program or area of an organisation’s work (for example, funds may be used flexibly to support an organisation’s education-related activities, but may not be put towards its healthcare work).”

- One-year restricted support: ____%
- Multi-year restricted support: ____%
- One-year unrestricted support: ____%
- Multi-year unrestricted support: ____%
- Other (please specify): ____%

B. Impact of Multi-Year Funding (Restricted or Unrestricted)

Multi-year funding: Funding that is committed for at least two years, whether disbursed in tranches or upfront.

*The following questions refer to **all multi-year funding you provide**, whether restricted or unrestricted.*

B.1. In your experience, how has multi-year funding affected your grantee organisations in each of the following areas?

Scale:

1 = Strongly supports this area

2 = Somewhat supports this area

3 = No meaningful effect

4 = Somewhat constrains this area

5 = Strongly constrains this area

N/A = Not applicable (e.g. we do not provide multi-year grants, insufficient experience or too early to assess)

Categories:

- Ability to plan activities beyond a single year
- Ability to commit to multi-year staffing or longer-term contracts
- Ability to continue programs or services over time
- Ability to sustain or improve program quality over time
- Ability to withstand short-term funding shocks or delays
- Ability to make long-term strategic decisions
- Other [please specify]

B.2. [Open-ended] If your organisation typically provides grants with a one-year duration, what factors most influence this decision? [If your organisation does not provide one-year grants, please enter “N/A”].

B.3. What are the main constraints, if any, that limit your organisation’s ability to commit funding over multiple years (regardless of whether funding is restricted or unrestricted)? [Select up to 3]

- Annual budgeting or approval cycles
- Difficulty forecasting funding availability beyond one year
- Board or governance limits on multi-year commitments
- Desire to retain flexibility to reallocate funds annually
- Internal financial or liquidity constraints
- External economic or political uncertainty
- Regulatory or compliance considerations
- No significant constraints — we are able to make multi-year commitments
- Other (please specify): _____

C. **Details of Unrestricted Funding**

Unrestricted funding: Funding provided to an organisation without any donor-imposed restrictions on purpose, activity or timing, allowing the organisation to use the money at its own discretion for its charitable mission.

C.1. To approximately what percentage of your grantees do you provide unrestricted funding?

- <10%
- 10 – 24%
- 25–49%)
- 50–74%)
- 75%+
- Not sure

C.2. What is the typical duration of the unrestricted grants you provide (i.e. the total length of the funding commitment, even if disbursed in annual or periodic tranches)? *[Please select the option that best reflects your overall experience]*

- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4–5 years
- More than 5 years

C.3. Compared to your restricted grants, what is the typical size of the unrestricted grants you provide? *[Please select the option that best reflects your overall experience]*

- Smaller than restricted grants
- About the same size as restricted grants
- Larger than restricted grants
- N/A – we do not provide both restricted and unrestricted grants
- Prefer not to disclose

C.4. To what extent are each of the following factors motivations for offering unrestricted funding?

Scale:

1 = Not a motivation / minor motivation

2 = Moderate motivation

3 = Major / primary motivation

Categories:

- Confidence in grantee's internal systems, governance, and financial management
- Grantee's demonstrated track record of delivering results
- Strong mission alignment with grantee organisation
- Intention to strengthen grantee's overall organisational capacity
- Intention to reduce administrative burden for grantee
- Intention to reduce administrative burden for funder
- Desire to support innovation, learning or adaptation
- Desire to support higher-quality or more effective program delivery
- Alignment with principles of trust-based philanthropy
- Response to crisis, shock, or period of heightened uncertainty (e.g. public health emergency, humanitarian crisis, economic disruption)
- Recommendation from intermediary, advisor or peer funder
- Other [please specify]:

[Optional]: Please use the space below if you would like to further explain your responses above [open-ended]

C.5. In your experience, how has unrestricted funding affected your grantee organisations in each of the following areas?

1 = Strongly supports this area

2 = Somewhat supports this area

3 = No meaningful effect

4 = Somewhat constrains this area

5 = Strongly constrains this area

N/A = Not applicable (e.g. insufficient experience or too early to assess)

Categories:

- Ability to attract, retain and support leadership and staff
- Ability to cover core operating costs (rent, utilities, etc.) and maintain financial stability

- Ability to invest in organisational systems (finance, HR, MEL, technology)
- Ability to engage in longer-term strategic planning
- Ability to maintain or improve program quality
- Ability to expand, deepen, or sustain programs over time
- Ability to experiment, adapt or innovate in program delivery
- Ability to respond to changing community needs or external shocks
- Ability to engage in advocacy or systems-change work
- Other [please specify]:

[Optional]: Please use the space below if you would like to further explain your responses above [open-ended]

C.6. How does providing unrestricted funding typically affect your relationship with grantee organisations in the following areas? *(Please consider your experience across all grantees to whom you provide unrestricted funding)*

Scale:

1 = Strongly supports this area

2 = Somewhat supports this area

3 = No meaningful effect

4 = Somewhat constrains this area

5 = Strongly constrains this area

N/A = Not applicable (e.g. insufficient experience or too early to assess)

Categories:

- Ability to communicate openly and honestly with grantees
- Ability to discuss challenges, risks, or setbacks constructively
- Ability to engage grantees on broader organisational or strategic issues (beyond program metrics)
- Ability to set reporting and accountability expectations that feel proportionate
- Ability to maintain a balanced and constructive power dynamic with grantees
- Other [please specify]:

[Optional]: Please use the space below if you would like to further explain your responses above [open-ended]

C.7. To what extent, if any, do the following challenges apply to your experience

providing unrestricted support?**Scale:**

1 = No / minor challenge

2 = Moderate challenge

3 = Major challenge

Categories:

- Difficulty monitoring or assessing grantee performance or impact
- Difficulty attributing outcomes to your organisation's funding
- Internal reporting, audit, or compliance requirements
- Board or leadership resistance to unrestricted funding
- Equity or fairness concerns across grantees (e.g. why some receive unrestricted support and others do not)
- Limited internal budget flexibility
- Difficulty explaining or justifying unrestricted funding to internal stakeholders
- Perceived reputational risk associated with unrestricted funding
- Perceived risk of misuse of funds or weak financial management by grantees
- Other [please specify]:

[Optional]: Please use the space below if you would like to further explain your responses above [open-ended]

D. Details of Restricted Funding

Restricted funding: Funding given under the condition that it be used only for a specific purpose. This can range from funding designated for a single project with defined budget line items, to funding earmarked for a broader program or area of an organisation's work (for example, funds may be used flexibly to support an organisation's education-related activities, but may not be put towards its healthcare work).

D.1. Which internal factors most influence your organisation's use of restricted funding? [Select up to 3]

- Requirement for project-specific metrics or deliverables
- Concerns about reputational risk
- Concerns about potential misuse of funds
- Limited internal capacity to identify, support and monitor grantee organisations
- Difficulty assessing grantee impact and/or attributing outcomes under unrestricted funding
- Early-stage or new grantee relationship (e.g. initial grants are typically restricted)
- Restricted funding is the established organisational practice or grantmaking model
- Other (please specify): _____

D.2. Which external factors most influence your organisation's use of restricted funding? *[Select up to 3]*

- Government or regulatory restrictions
- Expectations or requirements from co-funders
- Public or media scrutiny
- Sector norms or common practices in our country
- Lack of sufficiently strong or reliable grantee reporting
- Difficulty identifying trusted, high-performing grantee organisations
- Limited pipeline of organisations aligned with our philanthropic strategy
- Other (please specify): _____

D.3. How do you feel your organisation's provision of restricted funding typically affects your relationship with grantee organisations in the following areas?
(Please consider your overall experience across all grantees to whom you provide restricted funding)

Scale:

1 = Strongly supports this area

2 = Somewhat supports this area

3 = No meaningful effect

4 = Somewhat constrains this area

5 = Strongly constrains this area

N/A = Not applicable (e.g. insufficient experience or too early to assess)

Categories:

- Ability to communicate openly and honestly with grantees
- Ability to discuss challenges, risks, or setbacks constructively

- Ability to engage grantees on broader organisational or strategic issues (beyond program metrics)
- Ability to set reporting and accountability expectations that feel proportionate
- Ability to maintain a balanced and constructive power dynamic with grantees
- Other [please specify]:

[Optional]: Please use the space below if you would like to further explain your responses above [open-ended]

D.4. [Open-ended] What is your organisation's single biggest hesitation about providing unrestricted grants?

D.5. Which, if any, of the following would be most likely to influence you / your organisation to begin providing / provide more unrestricted funding? [Select up to 3]

- Stronger evidence that unrestricted funding improves organisational or programmatic outcomes
- Increased comfort or support from the board or senior leadership
- Greater internal flexibility in budgeting or capital allocation
- Stronger trust in grantee leadership and management
- Improved monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) frameworks for general operating support
- Shifts in peer funder practices or sector norms
- Changes in external constraints (e.g., regulatory, co-funder expectations)
- Other (please specify): _____
- Not applicable – we will not provide or increase our provision of unrestricted funding

E. Perspectives on Impact & Practice

E.1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the effectiveness of different funding approaches in improving nonprofit performance?

Funding approach	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Unrestricted funding is effective at improving nonprofit performance (e.g., helping nonprofits achieve their mission)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multi-year funding is effective at improving nonprofit performance (e.g., helping nonprofits achieve their mission)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

E.1.a. Please briefly explain the main reason(s) for your responses above [open ended]

E.2. Over the next 3 years, how do you expect the share of your funding allocated to each of the following to change?

Funding type	Decrease	Stay the same	Increase slightly	Increase significantly	Not sure
Unrestricted funding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multi-year funding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

E.3. Would you be open to a brief follow-up conversation about your funding practices? [Y/N]

Please provide your contact details below. This information will not be shared publicly and will be used **only** to follow up with clarifying questions or to share aggregated findings from the study.

- **Name:** _____
- **Organisation:** _____
- **Role / Title:** _____
- **Email address:** _____