

## Session Notes

**Session:** Leaping Forward in Technology for Social Good (June 7, 2:00pm)

**Session Reporter:** Tay Yan Ling

**Moderator:** Tris Lumley, Director of Innovation & Development, New Philanthropy Capital

**Speakers:**

- Alvin Li, CEO & Co-founder, Givo
- Sarah Cerreta, Regional Manager – APAC, Google.org
- Melisa Irene, Associate, East Ventures
- Kobe Azriel, Board Member and Vice President of Technology, Pass it Forward

**Key Takeaways:**

- There are synergies between the technology sector and the social sector, with potential roles that technology can play in the social space. There is a need for the social sector to leverage more on technology in order to maximise social impact.
- Insights into roles venture philanthropy (VP) can play in creating valuable partnerships between the technology and social sectors, especially with the role data plays in this space.
- Choosing which technology to use based on the different options may be overwhelming, but need to only focus on the core needs of the organisation.
- Important to understand one's needs rather than investing in technology for the sake of investing in technology. Also, important to make sure that one has in-house technical capabilities to utilise the technology to its fullest.
- How do we think about the infrastructure behind the technological tools, especially in particular to Google, where the infrastructure could be slow → Sarah: This is an area where Google constantly seeks to improve. Engineers are aware of issues and are putting in a lot of effort to create what is necessary. Alvin: Blockchain will be a game changer to the infrastructure.
- Technology is an enabler, but not a complete solution to a problem.
- Technology enables one to scale one's impact, measure social impact more quickly and more efficiently, and brings about equality.
- VPs and funders need to be supportive and actively drive the adoption of technology. In addition, the social purpose organisations (SPOs) must have the right in-house technical expertise and must understand one's needs before investing in technology.

**Sarah Cerreta**

- Google.org focuses on supporting non-profit innovators with funding, tools and engineering expertise.
- Criteria for innovators—(i) bold and innovative ideas, (ii) address inequalities, (iii) Work like engineers, i.e. breaking the problem down into small units, and (iv) open source platform. Aside from funding, Google.org also provides tech expertise.
- Technology and data can be used to reduce social inequalities, e.g. improving education exposure, etc.
- Google.org provides free toolkits such as Google Maps to SPOs in order for them to drive technology and innovation.

**Kobe Azriel**

- Pass it Forward provides a multi-dimensional platform to connect givers and requesters.
- With their technology, it is possible to equalize the playing field by bringing people together in already available online and offline relationships to form large-scale collaborations. This helps to create positive layers of collective global action.

- The technology and data can also act as a marketing tool and equalize marketing capabilities across large and small organisations. It provides a more timely and cost effective way of measuring impact.
- The bottleneck to the adoption of technology could be demands from the funders. Funders do not want SPOs to spend excessive money on investing in expertise. We need funders who encourage and push SPOs to use technology.

#### **Alvin Li**

- Givo is an app where one can easily view charities to donate to. One can also share one's giving with one's friends and families.
- Givo's technology enables the social aspect of "giving" to be amplified. By sharing one's charity with friends and family, this may have a positive influence on others and encourage further giving. In addition, the activity can be tracked easily. Charities can make use of this data to understand how to better influence people. Givo can be a data management portal for charities. To summarise, Givo enables charities to leverage on social and technology platform to scale up.
- The bottlenecks to using technology is the lack of in-house expertise. Many SPOs do not have the necessary technological capabilities to leverage on the technology tools out there. Their funders are not supportive of investment in such capabilities to drive long-term growth, but are rather more interested in meeting social KPIs.
- Blockchain will be a revolutionary change to how technology can influence the social sector, both in the form of technology itself and the underlying infrastructure.

#### **Melissa Irene**

- East Ventures have invested in many organisations that have delivered substantial social impact. In particular, they were one of the earliest investors to invest in early-stage start-ups in Indonesia.
- Technology provides a more timely and cost effective solution to measuring social impact.
- Technology also provides more data to SPOs. This helps to equalise the playing field and enables them to be able to capture more value.