

GIVING AS A FAMILY



DASRA, meaning ‘enlightened giving’ in Sanskrit, is a pioneering strategic philanthropic organization that aims to transform India, where a billion people thrive with dignity and equity. Since its inception in 1999, Dasra has accelerated social change by driving collaborative action through powerful partnerships among a trust-based network of stakeholders (corporates, foundations, families, non-profits, social businesses, government and media). Over the years, Dasra has deepened social impact in focused fields that include adolescents, urban sanitation and governance and has built social capital by leading a strategic philanthropy movement in the country.

ROCKEFELLER PHILANTHROPY ADVISORS is a nonprofit that partners with individuals, families, and institutions to help make philanthropy more thoughtful and effective. Since 2002, we have facilitated more than \$3 billion in grantmaking worldwide, establishing ourselves as one of the world’s largest and most trusted philanthropic service organizations. We advise established and aspiring philanthropists, foundations, and corporations; manage innovative, early-stage nonprofits; and share insight and learning with our clients, our community, and the sector, translating the motivations of innovative leaders and pioneers into action. By continuing to build on lessons learned over more than a century, our goal is to help define the next generation of philanthropy and to foster a worldwide culture of giving.

Dasra acknowledges the kind support of **SAMPRADAAN** (1996-2015), whose pioneering mission was to encourage organised, informed, effective and regular giving of time, talent and other resources to meet important societal needs; secure and maintain an environment conducive to philanthropy by increasing awareness and appreciation of its role by people, corporations, and the state; and improve philanthropic practice by offering professional inputs.



Giving can create, strengthen and define relationships. But because philanthropy is often a deeply personal act, many donors may feel reluctant to talk about their motivations and convictions—even with their families. However, [to share your philanthropic journey with loved ones is to share one of life's most fulfilling activities with them.](#)

People have many motivations for engaging their family in philanthropy and [the journey can be shared with any number of family members](#), including your spouse, children, cousins or extended family. There are also different ways of engaging your family based on the interests and motivations of those involved.

However, [there is always room for multiple approaches in philanthropy](#) and it is possible some donors may not be at a stage to share the journey with their family members. For instance, some family members may have a different approach towards philanthropy or the next generation may be too young to get involved.

This brief guide sets out [key considerations for donors who would like to give as a family](#), and poses guiding questions to help donors examine how they might approach this particular form of partnership.

An adaptation of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors Philanthropy Guides, *Talking to your Family About Philanthropy* and *Giving as a Couple*, this guide brings you lessons and stories from Indian philanthropy. Should you decide to learn more, WWW.DASRA.ORG and WWW.ROCKPA.ORG have additional references, resources and information that can assist as you create your own route to strategic giving.

WHY GIVE AS A FAMILY?

Identifying motivations behind why you want to share the journey with your family members is the first step to giving effectively as a family.

Here is a list of categories—not exhaustive by any means—to help you begin to think about your own motivations:

CONTINUE LEGACY Those motivated by legacy seek to influence the future. Having their families involved in philanthropy allows them to feel a sense of security about the continuation of the institution of giving within the family.

IMPART VALUES TO NEXT GEN Many philanthropists are motivated to create a family culture of public service and pass on values such as generosity and humility to the next generation.

“I think we should involve our children young to make them aware of the privilege with which they live and the reality of what’s outside.”

RISHAD PREMJI, WIPRO | AZIM PREMJI FOUNDATION

STRENGTHEN FAMILY TIES Philanthropy usually reflects genuine commitment and values, and when family members understand such heartfelt goals, relationships have the opportunity to grow. Philanthropy is an emotionally and intellectually stimulating experience, and to share that with your family can be deeply meaningful.

BROADEN PHILANTHROPIC VISION Donors are also motivated by their vision to expand the range of their giving plan by capitalizing on each individual's perspective, talent and funds even as they unite around the shared values.

"I think it's good if families bounce ideas off each other. You get a good mix of left brain and right brain inputs from across the family, and that's valuable because eventually philanthropy is about the head and the heart."

ROHINI NILEKANI, ARGHYAM



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PLANNING THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR FAMILY

In most philanthropic families in India, giving is not only a conscious legacy, it is the subject of everyday conversation. But for many, conversations about strategic philanthropy are sporadic and sometimes challenging. For still others—emerging philanthropists—the conversations may not have happened at all. For these families, it's fair to ask, *'how do I begin having this conversation?'*

Before broaching the subject with their family, donors should take time to be clear with themselves about the purpose of the conversation.

Let's look at three major reasons to talk with your family about strategic philanthropy. These reasons play a very practical—some would say critically important—role in how you engage your family members in philanthropy.

TO INFORM

A donor may want to share the details of a philanthropy initiative with the family and explain their motivations for supporting the program. By sharing these details and decisions about giving, donors help family members understand what they value, what motivates them and how they make decisions. Philanthropic commitments will have a bearing on the family's resources and may have implications for its members.

TO INSPIRE

Donors who wish to inspire family members to engage in philanthropy may choose to tell the story of their giving as an example. They may focus on how they got involved, what they learned, and why it's so meaningful and rewarding. Donors may want to provide seed funding or matching resources so that family members can develop their own independent philanthropic inspirations and paths.

TO INVOLVE

Donors who may want to involve family members in their philanthropy initiatives will need to explain their goals as well as engage family members by listening and aligning to their values, causes, approaches and decisions. Donors sometimes decide to create a family giving plan. But no matter the vehicle, the process necessitates conversation and active listening. Engaging family members in philanthropy, formally or informally, can be an important part of a giving strategy.

There is never an ideal time to start the conversation, but what we do know is that putting off the discussion generally makes it harder. Donors can make their families more comfortable by taking into consideration their family's unique circumstances such as who will be part of this conversation; what dynamics

will likely surface; and how those dynamics might affect philanthropic decisions.

In this sense, initiating a conversation requires time and patience to listen and talk. Numerous donors find that having the discussion and the ensuing philanthropy brings them closer as a family.

"In our home, dinner table conversations often revolved around issues that my husband and I have both been involved in, and I think our children have sort of absorbed these conversations over the years since they were very young. It's nice to see that our daughter has been volunteering from a very young age and as she has grown older, she is even more involved and interested in this area. More recently, she has chosen to study impact investment and is doing a 10 week internship with Omidyar Philanthropies."

RATI FORBES, FORBES MARSHALL | FORBES MARSHALL FOUNDATION

The next section of the guide will go into greater detail of when to engage your family in your philanthropic journey, how to communicate your decisions to them, and what are the key aspects you should consider while engaging your family in strategic philanthropy, depending upon your reasons.



INFORMING YOUR FAMILY ABOUT YOUR PHILANTHROPY

Here are a few examples of critical junctures to inform your family about your philanthropy:

- Deciding to donate a substantial proportion of one's wealth for philanthropic activities, which may have implications for inheritance. This type of decision needs to be communicated thoughtfully and carefully.
- Taking on an issue that will publically associate the family name with the cause.
- Dramatically altering a well-established pattern of giving. For example, the donor may have decided to focus resources on one major issue rather than a wide variety of nonprofits.
- Wanting to make sure family members are aware of how philanthropy should be carried out in the future.

If your goal is to inform the family of your philanthropy then it is critical to explain how you have reached your decisions and why you feel the time is right to engage your family. Invite comments and reactions. Clarify who the decision—maker(s) will be to avoid creating false expectations. Anticipate and acknowledge possible reactions of your family members.

“We went to a family business conference and they suggested we talk to our children about our philanthropy in a more formal manner, and not just as a dinner conversation. We then invited our children to our family council and had a presentation on how it all started and what we’re doing in philanthropy currently. After that, we noticed a big change in how they view giving.”

MEHER PUDUMJEE, THERMAX LTD. | THERMAX FOUNDATION



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INSPIRING YOUR FAMILY TO CONSIDER PHILANTHROPY

Here are a few examples of critical junctures to inspire your family to consider philanthropy:

- Deciding that philanthropy will now be a full-time commitment. If so, explain specifically what that will mean. Will you be going to a foundation office? Will you be working independently, with family members, with staff, with expert advisors?
- Deciding to make a significant donation with a naming opportunity , thus prominently attaching the family name to a well-known organization or place. If you are explaining a major grant or naming opportunity, provide some background about the organization so family members can ask questions.

- Making it a personal mission to raise awareness about a specific issue and becoming a highly visible advocate for the cause. If you are going to become a public spokesperson, or assume a higher profile, offer some specific examples of what that might entail, and why you hope this will be an effective philanthropic strategy.
- Creating philanthropic resources that family members will allocate individually. In this scenario it is important that you make sure that the family members get the information they need to proceed, including the legal structure, process, timing and awareness of any constraints.

If your goal is to inspire your family to consider strategic philanthropy then invite them to discuss motivating stories. Tell stories about your upbringing and experiences that illuminate your commitment and its meaning to you. Ask family members to share some of their experiences and enthusiasm, bearing in mind that younger generations have less life experience than you.

INSPIRED PHILANTHROPY

ASHOK BHANSALI, BHANSALI & CO. | BHANSALI TRUST

“My two brothers influenced me. My thinking, my approach towards life and money, was changed by them. This is how it all started. The family business grew, and we started giving more and more,” says Ashok Bhansali who is a living maxim of ‘inspired philanthropy’. Hailing from one of

the leading diamond companies in India, Bhansali, one of the founder trustees of the Bhansali Trust, has programs and social investments spanning sectors including health, education, tribal welfare, livelihoods, adolescent girls and mental health, in Gujarat and Bihar. His other Trust, TIDE (Tribal Integrated Development

and Education Trust), is supported by a group of like-minded friends, and works towards uplifting tribal populations in 16 states across India. However, it was his family, especially his brothers, who inspired him to begin his philanthropic journey. Ashok Bhansali come from a large family of 7 brothers and 3 sisters. His eldest brother left their small village and came to Bombay at the age of 16 to earn a living, and earned his first paycheck of approximately INR 100. Instead of sending all the money back home to help his family which was facing several hardships, Bhansali's brother decided to donate 20% of his income to the less fortunate. Similarly, Bhansali's other brother, Mahesh, committed 100% of his time and money towards working to help the less privileged.

Bhansali visited the projects that his brothers were working on and was deeply touched by what he saw. "When I started going to projects around the country, I saw people really suffering. I saw people dying for want of INR 500 and children going blind because they didn't get a Vitamin A capsule costing INR 2. Sitting in Bombay without getting directly involved, it's very difficult to understand what the ground reality is. And it's so different, you can't imagine

that." It was then that he realized the importance of the work his brothers were involved in and started his philanthropic journey in Gujarat, slowly expanding to other parts of India. "In Bihar, we work with the Musahars, or the rat-eating community. When they don't have enough to eat, they eat rats, even today! I was determined to do something about this. With my experience and my staff, within a year, we have seen results more promising than even I had expected."

Today apart from his monetary commitments, Bhansali also dedicates 12 days a month to philanthropy which he finds deeply satisfying. He reflected, "It gives me so much satisfaction, more than my diamond business gives me. Aspiring philanthropists should get involved, give their time, take help of experts, and finally be patient and work hard. We learned these lessons and have achieved something along the way."



INVOLVING YOUR FAMILY IN PHILANTHROPY

Here are a few examples of critical junctures to involve your family in philanthropy:

- Requesting that one or more family members help implement your philanthropic initiative.
- Initiating a giving vehicle to pool funds in which family members will be making joint decisions.
- Wanting to add family members to the board or decision-making body of a giving plan.
- Planning to pass the reins of a foundation (or other entity) to the next generation.

Involving family members in your philanthropic journey is a very exciting step and requires thoughtful discussions as a unit. To create an effective giving plan together, the family must start looking at key considerations such as:

MOTIVATIONS AND VALUES Why are we choosing to give as a family?

When choosing to give as a family, it is of utmost importance for members to align their motivations by contemplating what life experiences inspired them, individually, to give and whether this forms a common ground for giving.

Some other aspects to contemplate include: where and how do we think differently? Is legacy important to us? How would we like to be remembered? Our guide *'Your Philanthropy Roadmap'* goes into further detail on how donors can achieve clarity in this area.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES How will decisions be made?

When families come together to form a giving strategy, they may want to consider explicitly setting out just how their philanthropy will be directed and who will be the decision-maker. Developing clarity around the decision-making process is a critical aspect of laying the foundation of involving your family in philanthropy.

Decisions concerning the following questions of operational structure need to be clarified: Will the family be giving together as a unit or individually? If giving together, how will the family decide on their philanthropic goals and approach? How will they decide on what organizations to support? Will

other family members be involved in the decision-making? Exactly how will they be involved? Do they have financial responsibility or an advisory role?

“We both bring such different skill sets. For example, Meher is good at finance. I hate finance. So if there’s anything related to figures, I say Meher, you look after it. I think I helped Meher to be a little more trusting and ready to take chances.”

ANU AGA, THERMAX FOUNDATION

TIME AND ENERGY How will the work be divided?

Depending on family and personal preferences, and other commitments, individuals often differ in how much time they can or want to devote to their philanthropic activities. If a family decides to jointly implement a philanthropic plan, what specifically is each person’s role?

Splitting up tasks can often be a simple process. Responsibilities can be divided according to inclination and talent. At times, family members may even be operating individually based on separate interests.

In short, giving as a family does not necessarily mean having to do everything in philanthropy together. Individual activities can even make the giving experience more vibrant as members have a chance to report back and learn from each other.

There is no single right or wrong answer here. But experienced philanthropists say that it is worthwhile to find clarity around

workload and roles, and then to schedule regular reviews of this understanding.

“If you have the money but not enough time, you simply team up with another family member who may have the time or the essential skills to carry a philanthropic project through.”

PUNEET DALMIA, DALMIA BHARAT GROUP | ASHOKA UNIVERSITY

MONEY How much should be set aside for philanthropy?

Families often benefit from taking time to reach clarity about their overall financial picture before they begin their joint philanthropy in earnest.

However, financial decisions about strategic philanthropy cannot be made in a vacuum and are usually part of a larger discussion including, among other things, inheritance for children, budgeting to take care of the family’s needs, investment strategy, whose money it is and who controls it. Aligning financial interests of family members can have a huge positive impact on the family’s philanthropic journey.

One enlightened approach is to develop separate individual funds, as well as a common pool of funds. That way family members can give together where there is agreement—say, education—and give independently where they have separate philanthropic interests—say, art museums and conflict resolution.

Deciding how much money should be used for philanthropy involves working out budgets not only for grants but for other costs as well. These can include setting up a giving vehicle such as a foundation and paying for professional advice. You could involve your personal advisors and private wealth managers to create a robust financial plan.

"Around the time our daughter was born, my wife, Archana, and I asked ourselves a life-changing question: 'How much is enough?' We soon came to the conclusion that we needed a finite amount of money to live the life we desired. So, we decided that if we could somewhat cap the lifestyle we wanted, we could start focusing more vigorously on social sector pursuits."

AMIT CHANDRA, BAIN CAPITAL

BALANCING INDIVIDUAL EXPECTATIONS AND INTERESTS What does success mean?

Which causes should we give to? Which organizations get grants? How much public recognition of a grant is appropriate? How should family members be involved in philanthropy?

Individuals see the world through different lenses and these varying views can be complementary, add perspective and refine success and impact criteria. Of course these same circumstances can also result in divergent views at times.

Yet, even in such situations, transparency and respectful discourse can be of great practical value. Treating differences

openly can start a process which can turn a perceived problem into a tool for approaching philanthropy in a more nuanced way, even if it may mean setting aside a small part to give individually.

Working to plan your philanthropy along with your family can be a deeply introspective experience. Our guide *'Your Philanthropy Roadmap'* provides insight to help you and your family carve your own path to strategic giving.

"As a family we sat down and tried to think about charity and philanthropy, and how we go about it. Do you centralize it and together pick up a couple of causes and then fund it or each one decides what's close to the heart and funds it? We discussed the pros and cons, and decided to create the 'Nadathur Foundation' as a vehicle which will support each individual in the causes or areas that he or she has chosen to make a difference."

N.S. RAGHAVAN, INFOSYS | NADATHUR TRUST

SHARING A PHILANTHROPIC VISION

ZARINA & RONNIE SCREWVALA, UTV GROUP | SWADES FOUNDATION

Co-founders and partners Zarina & Ronnie Screwvala worked together to create UTV, one of India's leading entertainment and media company and are using the same magical partnership to invest in strategic philanthropy. Their philanthropic venture, Swades Foundation, has to date helped 2,000 villages in Maharashtra, improving the lives of 4,71,000 people. However, the journey to achieving this impact hasn't been easy. It has required Ronnie and Zarina to develop a deep understanding of not only the communities they decided to serve, but also of each other's ideas, working styles and expectations, to eventually find convergence and create a meaningful collaboration.

For Ronnie & Zarina, philanthropy has always been an important pursuit, but with full-time positions in UTV they weren't able to devote a large portion of their time to philanthropy. After divesting their UTV shares, Zarina felt restless and was searching for inspiration when she stumbled upon a quote in her philosophy

class: "When you let go of who you are, you become what you might be." This motivated her to dive deeper into philanthropy. Ronnie suggested she join their philanthropic venture, SHARE but for Zarina, SHARE was "not fun enough, not big enough, not crazy enough." It was Ronnie's idea of "lifting a million people out of poverty every five years" that proved to be exciting and ambitious enough for them to dive deeper into philanthropy together.

The Screwvalas believed in learning from existing models and set aside a year to conduct research. They toured the country, met philanthropists, visited villages and gained a deeper understanding of issues on the ground. These shared experiences were instrumental in shaping their philanthropic values such as adopting a 360 degree approach, focusing on rural India, developing community-oriented solutions, achieving scale through collaboration, and forming a clear exit strategy.

From recognizing their motivations and conceptualizing a vision, to

modelling and managing their own organization, Ronnie and Zarina's journey has been a deeply personal one, that they have walked together over many years. This process has of course highlighted some of the differences in their approaches. While Zarina is more sensitive and considerate of the human element, Ronnie is more result oriented. But despite their differences, the Screwvalas have found synergies as a couple, complementing each other and growing as individuals and givers.

As Ronnie puts it, "These complementary skills, which may sound like friction at the start, actually become very good challenging factors. I think as a family and as a couple there will always be strong differences in the thought process, but with the core of what we want to do—be fully involved, create impact, do it at scale, do the 360 degree model—there is complete synergy."

MOVING FORWARD

Being open about giving provides an opportunity for family members to learn about, and perhaps even appreciate and engage with, a donor's vision for a better world.

For parents and grandparents in particular, family philanthropy can represent an important continuum of past, present and future. A meaningful experience with loved ones can be shared in the here and now while a legacy of giving is built for future generations.

Professional advice may help in the process of thoughtful, effective philanthropy. But even the most experienced of advisors are dependent on donors to supply the inspiration, focus and goals of giving. That's where working with the family proves to be greatly enriching. By working together, family members bring different perspectives and help balance potential solutions. In the end, the most important part is getting started in a thoughtful way.

You might want to reflect on these points as you consider your next steps:

BUILD ON SHARED MOTIVATIONS & INTERESTS TO CREATE A FOCUS FOR GIVING Examining motivations and values, looking for philanthropic common ground is often the first step for families starting to give together—or attempting to take it to the next level.

COMMUNICATE COMMUNICATE COMMUNICATE Thoughtful, effective philanthropy usually involves families communicating with each other to build clarity around outcomes and to decide how philanthropic decisions will be made, especially when those decisions concern the structure and strategy of their giving.

LOOK AT THE BIG FINANCIAL PICTURE Decisions about how much money should be set aside for philanthropic projects can be a part of a larger financial discussion, including inheritance for children, how to budget to take care of the family's needs, investment strategy and conflict resolution strategy. New philanthropic endeavors can offer an opportunity to renew understanding of the big financial picture.

ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENT STYLES Open and respectful discourse should be used generously to make sure individual approaches are accommodated and to create consensus on what success should look like.

LISTEN, GIVE, GROW Two or even three perspectives on philanthropy are often better than one. Honor your intuition, your compassion, your observations and your analysis. But consider listening to your family's insights as well. A cup of coffee and a chat about 'changing the world' could be the beginning of something beautiful—as well as meaningful—in your relationship.

Dasra, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and Sampradaan would like to thank the philanthropists quoted in this book, who continue to embody the spirit of sharing their stories and inspiring others to engage in philanthropy. We also thank India Development Review (IDR) for their valuable content that we were able to leverage for this book.



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