



**ACADEMY
OF GIVERS**

For Impact

Event & Fair 2023

Recommendations and
Outcomes Report



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Introduction

On the 28th March 2023, the Academy of Givers organised the For Impact Event and Fair, with the main objectives of improving Corporate Responsibility and Giving Efforts, while connecting Businesses with NGOs.

The event saw a healthy mix of businesses and NGOs come together to share ideas and listen to leaders within the fields of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance), Voluntary Organisations, Purpose and Giving, with the intention of collectively finding ways of creating greater positive impact within society.

The event featured inspiring talks, panel discussions, workshops, and themed discussions on several topics, such as the importance of supporting culture to safeguarding Malta's ecological footprint. At the same time, an Impact Fair and an NGO Pitch Fest showcased some of Malta's most inspiring NGOs and the work they do.

The aim of this report is to gather key points, outcomes and recommendations from the event, so that the Academy of Givers and other stakeholders can understand the Academy's role in improving the giving sector, businesses can work towards being a force of good and effectively supporting NGOs, while the NGO sector can have a voice and understand how to effectively work in partnership with businesses.

One of the overarching themes is that – in all sectors and between all players – there needs to be collaboration. We should also not forget about the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how the main aim of what we do as organisations and companies should be to work towards the SDGs and work towards filling the gaps in Malta.



Recommendations for Businesses

The new role

Businesses have great potential to significantly improve the social and environmental conditions of a country and of the world. We need to understand this new role of businesses and the ways they can – and should – be contributing to solving current issues. While ESG is on everyone's minds and a means to start working towards being accountable and having a positive impact, our actions cannot only be tied to a regulatory approach. Businesses need to understand their purpose and the legacy they wish to leave behind.

1 Purpose

1. Businesses need to understand what their companies can do to solve social and environmental issues, as well as how to be of service and to contribute to positive impact. As Will Gardner remarked in his speech, "Corporate values should be highly linked to the purpose of the business" and, in this view, profit should be considered a means to an end, as the fuel of purpose.
2. However, 'Purpose' poses the concern of how we define it. As Dr Max Ganado shared, it is no longer clear how different entities should participate in society. "If you're a business, you're not sure whether your old traditional goals remain valid because suddenly everybody's telling you, you need to be doing social good". So how can we contribute to social impact without confusing the different entities?
3. The purpose chosen will drive all decision-making processes, all the while motivating employees to take action, using the power of a certain narration. Employees are best engaged when they feel a sense of purpose in what they do. Employees want to know that their work matters and that they're part of something bigger than themselves. They want to understand how their work contributes to the company's overall goals and objectives, how they can be part of the purpose. An important part of this process of effective employee engagement is to make sure that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are aligned with the values and goals of the organisation, and that they reflect the pillars a business has chosen for itself. To achieve employee engagement, employees need to be involved from the starting point: involving the staff when planning your CSR / Giving Strategy will make it more meaningful to them, especially when finding activities where there's a two-way learning process between staff and the NGOs.

The starting point is our drive, vision and passion. These are the elements that will help make a difference.

The main goal is sustainability: meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations, taking responsibility for the negative impacts of businesses, while thinking about how to make a positive one.

"Being purpose-driven differentiates your business in how you serve and what you stand for, it unifies and mobilizes your employees and other stakeholders, and it can be the catalyst for positive change in a world that needs businesses to be part of the solution," as Will Gardner concluded.



4. In short, Purpose-driven Businesses have the below characteristics:
 - » Purpose as the compass that drives all decision making.
 - » Are Sustainable.
 - » Are Participative – Employees don't just join, they join in.

5. Steps towards developing your purpose and giving journey:
 - » Find your purpose – lead with that.
 - » Create a strategy with clear outcomes.
 - » Be clear on what you wish to achieve from your 'giving'.
 - » Ensure that your 'giving' is part of your purpose, related to your business and leads to the empowerment of who's in need.
 - » Have your employees and customers as part of the driving force for your 'giving'.
 - » Measure and continue to improve.
 - » Share and inspire others to give and give well.

2 ESG

1. Working with others and being aligned in values is fundamental. ESG has become an instrument of comparison, an instrument of accountability and a tool to ensure that the impact a business is having on the three dimensions of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) is being measured correctly.

Impact measurement is paramount for a business to avoid risk of greenwashing. "Impact" can be defined as a series of changes that happen in people's lives, on the environment surrounding us, as well as on our planet. It refers to the outcomes and consequences of our actions, be they positive or negative. A business measures its impact to better understand whether its

activities are having a positive or negative impact.

2. Keep in mind that ESG is a vast ecosystem, and every actor has a different agenda, therefore the meaning of ESG is quite different with respect to the intrinsic differences of each organisation.
3. The concept of ESG itself is also subject to constant challenges, as Miles Webber explained:

- » There is competition in the world of ESG, and everyone uses a different set of measures. There is a tendency toward greenwashing.
- » Inflation, which comes together with the energy crisis, is one major impediment.
- » The divisiveness that exists in the dimension of ESG challenges its effectiveness.

4. To make a true commitment to ESG one needs to understand what ESG actually is and to have a proper plan with measurable outcomes.

It is all about investing in material relationships that have to be relevant and authentic to who you are as a business. Taking on ESG is the only way to attract the best talent and to satisfy growing consumer demand. Even those businesses who are now reluctant to embrace ESG from a 'purpose' perspective will have to adopt an ESG approach due to growing regulatory and reporting demands.

5. "While the E evolves, make the S work"; Miles Webber shared, encouraging businesses to make measurable Social Impact:

- » Move away from CSR and charitable giving and do something that is related to your business, empowers and that is measurable.
- » Never lose sight of 'why' you do 'S', and make it relevant and authentic to your business, your customers and your employees, and engage them in the delivery.
- » Measure everything and focus on outcomes.



3 Giving Effectively

1. Philanthropy should go beyond just giving, it should be a strategic and well-defined action.
2. Giving well means having a "more than money" approach, using your strength and resources actively to do good. Businesses need to be looking at how they can give effectively to ensure long-term change and impact and ensuring that their giving really makes a difference.
3. The focus of giving should be on developing a long-term strategy so that the action doesn't just easily come to an end. Cleaning beaches and painting walls are good methods of giving, but not enough to make a real, long-lasting change.
4. Businesses need to understand the needs of the people they wish to support to actually have an impact. And they need to be constantly measuring their impact to understand the scope of the change they are making in the world.
5. Find partners to try and create a community with. As he eloquently said, "We are the sum of the people that surround us, together we can create much more";
6. Create a strategy;
7. Engage: as a business or as an NGO, engagement is everything. If you are a business, you need to engage with your employees. We also need to engage with the customers, and as an NGO you need to engage with the wider community;
8. Improve constantly. Staying still makes you lose your impact;
9. Inspire: create a community of givers by involving other businesses and individuals. It's not about making money; it's about improving the future.

Mark Weingard presented seven steps for an effective way of giving:

1. Make the decision that you as an organisation want to make a difference;
2. Find your mission;
3. Why are you giving?
4. What do you want to achieve?
5. How do you think change will happen?
6. What are the resources you have?
7. How will you assess your progress?

In short, for businesses that are at the beginning of their philanthropic journey, there are a few things to keep into consideration:



4 Supporting NGOs and Working Towards Social Impact

1. When supporting Voluntary Organisations, a business needs – first and foremost – to understand the social and environmental context in which they operate and understand the existing gaps within the community that need to be addressed.
2. Also, understand the needs and challenges of NGOs, and assess if a business has the expertise and resources necessary to support them in their activities.
3. Supporting NGOs effectively means going beyond project-based and one-time giving; but investing in their operations, building their capacity, and empowering them to grow and have more impact. This will give NGOs the opportunity to build a structure to support future projects and have long-term impact.
4. To generate systematic change, businesses need to be looking at long-term impact. Opening your giving to a wider area will still have a positive impact, however small projects that might not continue in the long run will eventually cease to create change. The sustainable and long-term projects, on the other hand, will be effective in creating systematic change and be more impactful.
5. Businesses need to support the small organisations who work at grassroots level within small communities. To allow them to continue working, it is of greatest importance to support salaries. Possibly, through endowment funds to help them grow and become sustainable.
6. NGOs need to follow regulations which puts a huge strain on the entities. Therefore, businesses need to invest in their staff and their operations, providing the support, mentoring or consultancy that will help them with their compliance too, along with all the professional services that are needed and the skills that the volunteers might not have.
7. Businesses also need to create mechanisms within their structures and strategies to be able to reach down and lift people up, so to empower the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our communities.
8. While financial support is needed, businesses should also be contributing to NGOs causes through in-kind support, sharing expertise and by raising awareness. As Dr Roberta Lepre shared, businesses shouldn't just react to NGOs offering immediate support, but should create long-term strategies and focus on their giving journey, by:
 - » Supporting new programmes.
 - » Investing in organisations.
 - » Taking risks.
9. Lastly, it is important that businesses understand the SDGs and where Malta is performing and not performing well. They should be aware of their internal impact and direct the focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Recommendations for Businesses



5 Other Recommendations

1. Creating a Foundation is not always the answer to create social impact, especially if you're not combining the right skills for the right purpose. A better idea would be for companies to create partnerships with NGOs and provide the skills that the organisation and their team don't have.
2. Create two-way partnerships: VOs can help the businesses reach their purpose while the businesses can help the VOs with the right skills to achieve their objectives.
3. Companies should stand up with NGOs for causes they also believe in or policies that they disagree with. This will confer more visibility to the cause.
4. By operating businesses differently, a positive impact can be created through their products and services. Therefore, businesses should redesign products and services to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - » An example could be having more accessible services, insurance and loans, green loans, or products that don't have a negative social and environmental impact.

Recommendations for Academy of Givers

The role

The Academy of Givers has an important role to play as enablers, bringing together the different stakeholders, equipping them with the right tools and resources to do things well and effectively. It also plays a much-needed role in connecting the business and NGO sectors together, to collaborate and create long-term partnerships for systematic change.

Some recommendations on what the Academy of Givers could also provide / work towards:

1. Define Impact and all the different terms connected to it, to help stakeholders better understand the wider concept of Giving effectively.
2. Ensuring that the business and social sectors don't run in parallel, without much knowledge of each other.
3. Creating an endowment fund for smaller NGOs which find it harder to get funding.
4. Map out the sector, helping to unravel the misunderstandings and confusion linked to Social Impact and who's role it is. Also help everyone understand what is happening around us, so individuals, organisations and businesses can navigate through the gaps and needs that need to be addressed.
5. Help in matching and connecting businesses and NGOs. To do that, the Academy needs to help align companies with causes, so that they too can align with NGOs, and stand up and be counted for something they don't feel is right.
6. Should also focus on getting smaller and medium-sized businesses to understand purpose, alignment of values, value of giving.
7. Involving youths and students to be part of these discussions and part of improving impact in Malta.



Recommendations for NGOs

How can we create a unified purpose between NGOs and Businesses?

1. Need to collaborate and work together, moving away from fragmentation and having a more strategic approach.
2. By having a strategy, we can determine the gaps, what is needed and who to partner with to solve the issues.
3. There are different committees related to social issues, family issues, environmental etc. Citizens and NGOs, have a right to set the agenda of those committees, so it could be put forward to Government.
4. NGOs need to understand how to approach businesses and how to create partnerships.
5. Networking is essential for better impact. NGOs need to improve their networking, which will work as a bridge to unify NGOs and businesses.



What is the NGOs Role in Improving Impact?

1. As organisations, NGOs need to understand their social impact and be able to measure it.
2. Organisations need to have a long- term strategy too, no matter what size they are. The more an organisation can communicate their long-term plans, the more support and partners they will get.
3. NGOs play a big part in helping people regain their wellbeing, to notice gaps in a system and advocate for change.
4. NGOs also need to ensure that they have a positive impact on their staff and stakeholders.
5. Different entities working in the same field / sector should come and work together.
6. NGOs are collaborating more, and this aspect should get more visibility.



Recommendations on Framework

Definition

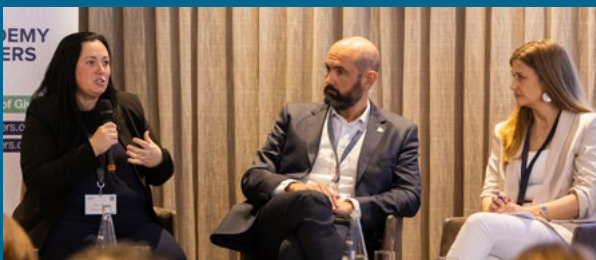
Frameworks for Impact help us work towards achieving our goals and having even more impact. While there are a number of different frameworks, it is important that these are defined and that – as a nation – we understand the main frameworks we should be using for impact.

With regards to frameworks in Malta, it's extremely important to understand what's working in the public space, in the third sector, and in business, but also what's not working.

Recommendations

1. For impact to work there is need for a long-term strategy and to create frameworks for impact that reach all the levels of society. Prof. Tanya Sammut-Bonnici spoke about the need to adopt an elevator approach: creating frameworks for impact that go all the way down to all levels of society, particularly in areas where there are blind spots, and pull people up continuously.
2. We shouldn't just be relying on NGOs to do all the work. Businesses can work in tandem with NGOs and create partnerships to lift people up together. The NGOs know the social and environmental sector well and the issues within them, while businesses have the resources and can provide opportunities to empower people.
3. Law is usually a door-opener, but without a clear strategy there might be confusion. Confusion stops us from acting and creates misunderstandings, therefore frameworks help create clear purposes and avoid confusion and misunderstandings, to actually create an impact.
4. Keep in mind is the dominating role of politics – not only when it comes to Vos and their action – and work around it.
5. We should go past the division between for- and not-for profit, realizing that there is only one economy.
 - » Needs could be similar, so it is better to focus on opening services or schemes, which are traditionally for one sector and have more consistency in all sectors.
 - » Including social enterprises once they come into force.
6. For organisations and businesses to understand their internal impact and align themselves with good practices, they can use frameworks like the below:
 - » ISO 26,000 on social responsibility
 - » BCorp
 - » UN Global Compact
7. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should also be used as a framework to reach objectives. When creating our giving journey and becoming more sustainable, the SDGs should act as the basis:
 - » By understanding where Malta is doing well or lacking among these goals, so that organisations and businesses can work towards improving the areas.
 - » By giving where our country needs it most.





Mapping out the Impact Sector – Workshop

Definition

“The Impact Sector,” – as Alex Vella from Tides Rising explained, “encapsulates any individual or organisation that has a direct objective or as a collateral to make people healthier, make people smarter, make people safer, improve the environment or help to empower people.”

1. There is a shared awareness of the fact that environmental, social and cultural issues seem to be slowly but steadily deteriorating in Malta.
2. The major problems in the Impact Sector are:
 - » Lack of education
 - » Unnecessary bureaucracy
 - » Lack of political willingness
 - » Short-sighted planning.
3. The key steps to improve the Impact Sector in Malta are:
 - » A more holistic education, required across all demographics, all schools and learning institutions. This would hopefully result in more awareness and sensitivity to social, cultural and environmental topics, leading to increased engagement.
 - » A more practical approach, specifically collaboration between different actors and a mindful and critical attitude.
4. Credit is given when due:
 - » Many organisations are already significantly doing so much in the Impact Sector.
 - » The Academy of Givers is a great way to foster the collaboration between and across sectors, to have the impact needed and the scale and speed to make change happen.



Recommendations from Thematic Discussions

The main points emerging from the themed discussions were:

1. No one should be left behind.
2. There is a need to identify the most vulnerable and ensure that these people and groups are lifted up.

Giving Beyond our Shores

1. Partnerships are essential in the field of international cooperation for development. This is valid for the relationship between Maltese non-profits and their counterparts in the communities abroad, as well as between the Maltese non-profits and the businesses that want to support through their CSR.
2. The essential elements of partnerships include clear communication, trust, transparency, accountability, and predictability (which includes medium- to long-term commitments on all sides).
3. Given that Maltese non-profits in this field are usually supporting and working with communities that are facing extreme poverty, basic needs, lack of infrastructure, human rights abuses etc, the overriding principle of the partnerships is the need as identified by the community.
4. It is also essential that any support and cooperation provided to the community constitutes an investment in the capacities of the individuals that make up that community, as this will increase sustainability of the initiative.

Collaboration in the Health Sector

1. Networking is essential for better impact. NGOs need to improve their networking, which will work as a bridge to unify NGOs and businesses.
2. More youth activism will improve quality of life, so it's important to empower young people to get out of their eco-chambers.
3. Volunteering is also an important tool to give back to the community.
4. Health needs ongoing funding, especially services for chronic diseases.
5. Small NGOs need to get together to improve funding policies. Merging could also be a good strategy to survive, avoiding duplicates and pooling together strategies and resources.
6. Ongoing funding is crucial to support professional services.
7. To ensure that, NGOs need to be roped in initial stages when policies are being developed.
8. NGOs need to fight stigmas and taboos and speak up.

Arts and Culture: the importance of the private sector supporting culture

1. Art creates awareness on the environment and on human rights and it is the real attraction of a country.
2. Problem:
 - » The business community does not seem to understand the importance of supporting and providing patronage (artist support) for culture. Without support for the creation of art, a country experiences brain drains, and lack of interest in investment - as well as suffers in terms of quality of life. It also helps the community understand issues which are not easy to explain in normal ways of communication.
 - » There is only attention from businesses for the quantitative aspect of art and not for the quality when they channel investments in the sector.
 - » Investments from business are mainly in-kind, while cash is difficult.
3. Suggestions:
 - » There is a need to better understand what the impact of contemporary art is; it's not only a transactional process (creating an art object and buying it) but there are more societal, economic impacts at play.
 - » Investments don't need to be cash only.
 - » Patronage has various forms: buying from artists, attending performances, sponsoring and advertising, collaborations, providing a space to showcase art.
 - » There needs to be a sustainable partnership between the art sector and businesses. Good networking opportunities are also important.



Youth Discussion:

1. Issues in education:
 - » Lack of incentives for students to continue education.
 - » Sense of demotivation by certain lecturers.
2. Solutions:
 - » Education needs a more holistic approach and to be skills-based: Critical thinking, creativity, public speaking, debating, financial literacy.
 - » The education system needs to be totally revamped from early years onwards. The curriculum is what matters, and this needs to be changed.
 - » We need to look at what's working outside of Malta and implement it here.

Animal Welfare: The Local Scene

1. Animal NGOs and now the Government are falling into the trap of getting pulled between needing to stop the source of the issue and getting distracted with the immediate symptoms.
2. Solutions:
 - » To approach the problem from all sides.
 - » Education is needed to respect animals, to take care of them if you own them.
 - » Tightening regulations and pushing for enforcement of offenses committed against the Animal Welfare Act.



Environment: Safeguarding Malta's Nature Footprint

1. We should stop thinking of nature as something we can just take from; we have to give something back too.
2. The problem is that most of the investments now are only for economic development, while there needs to be understanding of the challenges and concerns related to infrastructure.
3. Pricing is another issue.
4. Today, NGOs manage and lead the issues related to the environment and sustainability, but the discussion should be at the political level. It is also important to be supported by public opinion: NGOs exist because there is a society which engages and understands. NGOs can protest but if society is not accepting and understanding the motivations and the stand the NGOs are taking, their impact will be limited. The political element should come from the community.
5. There are several policies that we as companies, NGOs, and the public need to follow, but are unreasonable, so we should stand up and protect our rights. Government will not do anything unless we raise our voices.
6. A Net-zero doesn't exist unless you build it.
7. Our model of planning is based on the UK's model, the philosophy which is being applied behind permission is that you cannot build where you want. Planning process is nationalised, for the benefit of the community. It's not that one has the right to build 5 floors, what's important is the benefit of the community.



Homelessness and Poverty

1. 85,000 persons or 16.9% are at risk of poverty in Malta.
2. 103,000 persons or 20.5% are at risk of social exclusion in Malta.
3. Lack of:
 - » Health Services
 - » Social Services
 - » Education Services
4. Consequences:
 - » Domestic Violence
 - » Separations
 - » Older generations (pensions/solitude)
 - » Persons with Disability (employment/relationship/access)
 - » Persons with addiction (family/stigma/mental & physical health/finances/occupation)
 - » Mental Health (stigma/family/finances/occupation)
 - » Prostitution (fear/violence/health)
 - » Prisoners (stigma/mental health/social and financial)
 - » Homelessness (stigma/loneliness/financial) Illiteracy (stigma/isolation)
5. Possible way forward is influencing policies through a protocol jointly written with the government.



Conclusion

One of the recommendations was that we need to define impact and the different terms. At the Academy of Givers, we believe that impact is a significant and positive change that solves or at least addresses social injustice and challenges, including environmental challenges. Different entities and individuals all play different roles to achieve impact.

Impact can be seen as the attribution of an organisation's activities to broader and longer-term outcome. Businesses or organisations achieve these goals through conscious and deliberate efforts or activities in their operations and administrations. When referring to impact we should focus on long-term systematic change; a model that focuses on the root cause of a problem to create long-lasting change.

To achieve the goal of making a positive impact, between all sectors and between all players there needs to be collaboration. On the business side, there is great potential in significantly improving the social and environmental conditions in the world. To effectively do so, they need to understand their purpose and the legacy they wish to leave behind, and not limit themselves to just follow a regulatory approach, such as ESG. The first step is for businesses to find a "purpose", which is a value or a cause that is close to the business' heart and that will be the drive of not only decision-making processes (big and small), but also that will motivate employees to take an active role in this process of change.

"Being purpose-driven differentiates your business in how you serve and what you stand for, it unifies and mobilizes your employees and other stakeholders, and it can be the catalyst for positive change in a world that needs businesses to be part of the solution," as Will Gardner eloquently said.

The Academy of Givers believes that to have a positive, long-term impact, businesses need to learn to "give effectively". This means creating a strategic and well-defined action that goes beyond just financial support. Philanthropy is using your strength and resources actively to do good.



Conclusion

Businesses can make an impact and give effectively not only by acting themselves, but also through collaborating with the Voluntary Sector. To effectively support Voluntary Organisations, businesses need to understand the needs and challenges of NGOs and assess if they possess expertise and resources necessary to support them in their activities, going beyond project-based and one-time giving. Investing in their operations, in their salaries, building their capacity and empowering them to grow and have more impact will give NGOs the opportunity to build a structure to support future projects. Moreover, businesses need to create mechanisms within their own structures and strategies to be able to empower the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our communities.

Ultimately, it is important to create a two-way partnership: VOs can help the businesses reach their purpose while the businesses can help the VOs with the right skills to achieve their objectives, while together they can solve pressing issues by creating systematic long-term change. The Academy of Givers has an important role in this, being an enabler that will bring together the different stakeholders, equipping them with the right tools and resources to do things well and effectively, connecting the business and NGO sectors together. NGOs need to understand their social impact and be able to measure it. They also need to create a long-term strategy for action, to determine the gaps and needs in society and be able to address them more effectively.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should also be used as a framework to reach objectives and should be a basis when creating our giving journey and working towards sustainability. Using SDGs as a reference, businesses and VOs can better understand where Malta is doing well or lacking, so to work towards improvement by giving where our country needs it most.

Indeed, environmental, social and cultural issues seem to be slowly but steadily deteriorating in Malta, and the impact sector can and should turn the situation upside down. As a starting point, what is needed is more holistic education, to generate awareness and sensitivity to social, cultural, and environmental topics, leading to an increased engagement among all demographics, as well as a more practical approach, specifically collaboration between different actors and critical attitude.

What emerged most during the day of the For Impact Event and Fair is the need to identify the most vulnerable and ensure that these people are supported and lifted, through partnerships and networking between businesses and NGOs, as well as through volunteering and a collaboration with government entities.

Thank you
for your ongoing support

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