



# Why this is such an exciting time to be a philanthropist



*Vahe Vartanian talks to Sianne Haldane and Darshita Gillies of global impact platform Maanch about their experience of altruistic giving and why - despite huge challenges to the global community – there’s no better time than now to be a philanthropist.*

**Vahe:** Nice to see you both on this video call - our new way of connecting! Sianne, when we last saw each other you were working at Cancer Research UK, developing their venture philanthropy model. How did you and Darshita start working together?

**Sianne:** Yes - It’s been a bit of a whirlwind! I did a lot of work in the ‘philanthropic ecosystem’, sharing my knowledge with private client advisers and family offices.

I spoke at a number of events, highlighting the importance of enabling individuals,

families and private foundations to give more strategically to projects that both align with their vision and also make a wider impact. Darshi and I met at one of these events and just clicked. We met again afterwards, and I was bowled over by her vision for Maanch; how it seeks to harness the power of technology to mobilise philanthropic and investment capital towards attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to deliver a more sustainable future for all.

**Darshita:** Achieving these Goals can seem like an impossible task. So, when I started Maanch, I knew the only way we would succeed in this mission was by bringing together experienced and passionate people. Sianne’s skill, professionalism and unwavering commitment towards impact were exactly what we needed.

**Vahe:** Investors often struggle when it comes to measuring their total impact. How can your platform help with that - and how did you come up with the idea?

**Darshita:** Globally, we’ve seen a shift towards people seeking both sustainability and impact across all industries. Impact investors want the assurance of knowing that their returns come not by exploitation or extraction but by creating value to society and the environment. While philanthropists want to find and fund high-impact projects that both align to their personal interests and create genuine impact. So how do we measure both value and impact in a way that is accepted internationally?

In my view, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide the answer here, giving us both a ‘to-do’ list for a sustainable future and an objective and systemic framework for measuring progress towards it.

*So, with clear Goals agreed by 193 countries, the real challenge is how we bring together 7 billion people to deliver this global commitment. That’s what Maanch seeks to facilitate by being the world’s first platform to engage wealth owners, intermediaries and beneficiaries in a way that is secure, data driven, scalable and, above all, totally transparent on impact.*

At Maanch, we’ve decoded the complexity of the SDGs framework and other well recognised impact methodologies, so our measurements are super-relevant.

We also auto-generate impact scorecards for each project to eliminate subjectivity and allow for true comparability. This provides insights into specifically how and where value was created, and how it contributes towards global sustainability. So basically, we join up all the dots to create a clear and meaningful picture.

With impact properly measured and understood, we then demystify it for our stakeholders. Investors and philanthropists can look at impact from an individual portfolio or

legacy perspective, or from an organisational, country or global perspective; whatever is most relevant to them - with no jargon; and no need for a PhD!

This is something we’d be delighted to discuss further with family offices and other wealth advisors, especially those who want to offer their clients a whole new level of meaningful engagement.

**Vahe:** How have you adapted what you’re doing in light of the current crisis?

**Darshita:** First, we have used our technology to create a real-time Coronavirus Dashboard that maps projects run by registered charities and social enterprises who are tackling the pandemic and who have also passed our rigorous due diligence checks. This shows what is being funded as well as areas of unmet need. Donors also have access to a personalised version of the dashboard, so they can see the impact they have personally made. ([maanch.com/outreach/covid-19/dashboard](http://maanch.com/outreach/covid-19/dashboard))

Alongside this, we’ve established a Global Coronavirus Response Fund to support projects by verified organisations who are working to address the crisis and build a more resilient future. We are aiming to raise £15 million this year to enable this. And this is crucial, because responding to COVID-19 and making progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals is not an either/or scenario; we must do both. We therefore invite equally ambitious philanthropists, foundations and businesses to join us in reaching this target. ([maanch.com/outreach/covid-19](http://maanch.com/outreach/covid-19))

**Vahe:** Why do you think now is the time to get involved in philanthropy?

**Sianne:** The coronavirus crisis has had a devastating impact on many businesses, charities and others carrying out vital services, so meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 is even more of a challenge. Approaches that champion co-creation and collaboration are needed more than ever.

On the positive side, we are seeing a lot more empathy and compassion. There have been some amazing examples of philanthropy, from Twitter-founder Jack Dorsey donating a billion dollars to Captain Tom Moore walking around his garden in support of the NHS. I hope that this spirit of goodwill and solidarity continues.

**Darshita:** The world as we once knew it has already changed. This means we have a unique window of opportunity to reset and create a future where all people can thrive.

This crisis has put pressure on all the fault lines and philanthropy as was conducted in the past is not fit for future. In engaging with the challenges and questions philanthropists worldwide are asking, a blueprint for a more impactful and collaborative philanthropy is emerging. If Maanch can provide a stepping stone to that future by bringing together the fragmented philanthropic community and providing clarity through and beyond this crisis, every sleepless night, every risk taken and every algorithm we’ve sweated over will have been worth it.

But most of all, the philanthropy ecosystem can alter our future trajectory by engaging in a strategic collective way forward together. And that’s makes an exciting time for us all!

## About the contributors

Sianne Haldane is a dual qualified South African Attorney and Solicitor of England and Wales and Director of Impact at Maanch. She sits on the STEP Global Philanthropy Advisors steering Group Committee and is also a Trustee of Mosaic Education.

Darshita Gillies is a Philanthropist, Impact Investor, and CEO and Founder of Maanch, awarded Start Up of the Year 2019 in the India Inc. UK/India Awards. Born in Mumbai into India’s lowest social class, she describes her life as a journey ‘from the bottom 1%, to the top 1% - for the 100%’. Besides from leading Maanch, Darshita serves on Boards of ‘for profit’ and ‘not-for-profit’ organisations and advises various government bodies and corporations on blockchain.

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