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Measuring philanthropic freedom across countries

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Abstract:

Introduction

Philanthropy persists across diverse global cultures, religions, and geography. However, much less is known about how the enabling environment influences the philanthropic landscape. In this paper, we investigate a newly developed index, the Index of Philanthropic Freedom. First, we examine the theoretical and contextual framework for studying cross-national differences in government and economic policies, legal and institutional factors, as well as religious and cultural influences that shape the philanthropic landscape. Second, we examine the relationship between the Index and other established measures of economic and political freedom. Finally, the paper explores in a comparative way, the extent of barriers and incentives for cross-border philanthropy. By studying the enabling environment for philanthropy, the paper contributes to knowledge of barriers and incentives to philanthropy across national contexts.

The study of the Index of Philanthropic Freedom was first conducted as a pilot by the Hudson Institute's Center for Global Development in 2013. In 2015, the first complete study was published and included 64 countries from various countries. The IPF assessed each country's philanthropic environment on a 1 to 5 scale grouping seven indicators into three factors: CSO Regulation, Domestic Tax Policy, and Cross Border Flows. An overall score per country emerged

by calculating the average sum of these three scores. The overall score was developed to obtain an international ranking system. Countries with the higher overall score ranked at the top of the scale.

The IPF relies on country experts who respond to a comprehensive questionnaire where they score each indicator and provide a narrative to justify each score. The methodology created by the CPG included one expert per country. Country expert scores and narratives are reviewed by CGP researchers, secondary reviewers, and the advisory board.

Philanthropic Freedom as a Construct

To determine if the IPF measures a construct that can be set apart from similar constructs, we examined the extent to which the 2015 IPF index is related with other nine global index scores from the same year assessing civil society freedoms: Worldwide Governance Indicators Project, CIVICUS Enabling Environment Index, Freedom in the World Index, Human Freedom Index, Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index, Index of Economic Freedom, Rules to Give By, and Economic Freedom of the World

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