

## Post 2015 SDGs and International Diaspora Giving

Host: Ted Hart

Guests: Heather Grady – Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Alexander Dixon – The Diaspora Investment Alliance

**Announcer:** Welcome to the *CAF America Radio Network*, a production of the Charities Aid Foundation of America. As the leader in global giving, CAF America offers more than 20 years of experience and expertise to corporations, foundations, and individuals who wish to give internationally and with enhanced due diligence in the United States. Through its industry-leading grants management programs and philanthropic advisory services, CAF America helps donors amplify their impact.

This show is dedicated to these donors and the charities they support. CAF America is uniquely positioned to serve as the bridge between these important partners and transforms vision into meaningful action. Guests on the *CAF America Radio Network* are leaders in their field who share tips for success and stories that inspire. Our host is Ted Hart, the CEO of the Charities Aid Foundation of America. is a live call-in show. Add your voice by calling 914-338-0855. After the show, you can find all of our podcasts at [cafamerica.org](http://cafamerica.org). Don't forget to dial 914-338-0855. Now, welcome the host of the *CAF America Radio Network*, Ted Hart.

**Ted Hart:** Welcome to this latest edition of the *CAF America Radio Network*. Thank you so much for joining us. We've got a very important show for you today. The two guests that we have are experts in their field. Specifically today, we're going to be talking about the post-Sustainable Development Goals and the international diaspora giving program. We're going to start off the show today with Heather Grady. Heather is vice president at Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

We will be discussing her role and the importance of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals in international grantmaking and the role the philanthropy plays in civil society. Heather has been tackling community level and policy challenges firsthand in East Asia, Africa, and the Middle East during two decades of development and human rights work. It's my pleasure to welcome here live on the *CAF America Radio Network* Heather Grady. Heather, great to have you with us.

**Heather Grady:** Thank you very much, Ted. Pleased to be here. Very happy to be with you today.

**Ted:** These topics are just so massive. I mean, truly, literally global scale. For those who are listening today who may not be as familiar with the lingo, can we start off with what are the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs?

**Heather:** Sure. Let me just take a step back and talk about what preceded them and, in fact, the period that we're still in. We're working on something right now, the world is, called the Millennium Development Goals. These really grew out of the *Millennium Declaration*, a very important document that was agreed to by all the world's governments in the year 2000 as this

century changed. The *Millennium Declaration* had very high hopes and aspirations for what would happen this century.

In the subsequent months, staff at the UN and within governments realized that they needed to take this lofty declaration and turn it into something a little bit more practical and actionable and came up with eight Millennium Development Goals so known as the MDGs. Now, those are 15-year goals and they're coming to an end obviously this year. It's 2015.

Over the last, say, five years or so, really starting in 2010, 2011, governments and UN agencies, civil society organizations, and even business began talking about what should succeed the MDGs. Really, that was the beginning of talk about that. Some people thought it should be MDG Plus because the MDGs weren't reached. We have not had such a significant reduction in poverty around the world.

We haven't met goals on areas like infant mortality or education, but others said, "No, let's link in economic and environmental goals." Really, the genesis of the SDGs was saying, "How can we make sure that very important interlinked goals, social goals like health and education, environmental goals like protecting forests and attacking climate change, and economic goals like ensuring prosperity for all, that they were brought together?"

There's been a process over the last few years led by the United Nations and governments, but very much with participation of others to really create these goals. We have 17 of them and the final one is on partnership. They do cross these three areas and I'll talk a bit more about that, but there's a couple of very important things. First of all, they include concepts like tackling inequality and improving governance, and also they're universal. I think a lot of people haven't appreciated this, but every country in the world will be expected to contribute to achieving sustainable development for their own people and for people across the world. Thanks.

**Ted:** When you mentioned their 17 goals and post-2015, so moving beyond the MDGs, is the general sense of building this new set of goals and the MDGs were not all met that a lot was learned and this is the next generation or because we didn't meet those goals, we need to rethink the process?

**Heather:** Well, I think it's really a combination of both. Certainly, the Millennium Development Goals, some of them were met and some weren't. There's also variations across countries. There are issues that have come in. For example, the data collected at the beginning of the MDGs. It's not necessarily comparable across countries. Some countries began later than others. It's a bit of a fraught process to measure exactly how much progress has been made. Undeniably, there are lessons learned.

One of the most important ones is that when there are goals that are created at a global level and really signed onto by all governments and shared by others in society, it's a focal point for action for really achieving impact on people's lives. We saw this in goals, for example, on HIV/AIDS or on tackling hunger. It galvanized the global and national community to work

together in new ways. That was an important lesson learned in terms of creating the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

One of the lessons learned in terms of improvement was the MDGs really became something that was discussed mostly inside the UN. If you ask the average person on the streets of the United States or Australia or perhaps Kenya or elsewhere, a lot of them wouldn't know what was meant by the Millennium Development Goals. The process, millions of people literally have participated in online surveys.

There have been thousands of consultations across the world and meetings to talk about what should go into these goals. It's very different in terms of process and content. Now, where we are with the 17 goals today is that they're pretty much agreed. There was something called a "zero draft outcome" document that talks about the goals, but there's still a lot of discussion about what will be the targets within each of the goals and what will be the indicators.

There's still quite an active dialogue going on. Again, I think that the process of bringing different people, different kinds of organizations into this, taking it outside the halls of the United Nations is really something that distinguishes this time. From 2015 to 2030, the coming 15 years, there will be a very different process in terms of these goals.

**Ted:** That sounds like a lot of lessons learned in terms of how can goals then be attained. It's one thing to say that we have the new post-2015 SDGs and there is maybe a growing consensus among a larger number of players. How do you then meet those goals and have more accomplished at the end of that report period than before? It sounds that that's part of the learning process as well.

**Heather:** Yes. I think there's no question that it's going to be a challenge to meet these goals. Again, there's another difference. I mentioned the universality. In the past, the Millennium Development Goals, a lot of the focus was from governments that give official development assistance or aid to countries that are receiving it. That was where the MDGs really came into play.

In this case, we're talking about every country in the world getting an understanding of what the SDGs are and then making commitments. If we applied that to the US, for example, we would say that the US government departments that deal with health, with education, with urban development, and so on. Each of these departments will have to think about what does this mean to me.

If we are really supposed to reduce maternal mortality rates in the United States, how do I have to turn that from policy into practice? I think there is a big hill to climb in terms of achieving. Again, I think the value of such goals is that it focuses a lot of different actors on how to collaborate more effectively together, and so that brings new opportunities.

I'll talk a little bit more about this later, but there are ways that many of us are looking at how to bring different actors together to collaborate on these goals just at the point where they're getting in their final decision phases and getting launched. For example, we've created

something a few of us in the United Nations Development Programme. The Foundation Center and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors have been working with a number of other organizations, some foundations.

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Mastercard Foundation, the WINGS global network, and then, of course, other partners like CAF and many others around the world trying to build up a discourse and eventually a practice on how to make sure we implement these goals effectively. This post-2015 partnership platform on philanthropy that we've created is trying to show the proof of concept of if we created a platform where different actors could work together, does this enable us to make progress on the goals faster and deeper. Well, we think it's beginning to work.

**Ted:** Well, we really applaud you and the leadership that you and your organization have provided and what can be very complex solutions to very complex problems. You and I were at the United Nations together back in April where this was discussed among a lot of other topics. You were talking about partnerships. You were talking about a variety of different players.

Maybe a whole host of new players that were maybe not as engaged with the MDGs as they would like to be engaged with the new Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, we're talking about philanthropists and the role of philanthropy. Can we talk a little bit about what happened at the UN in April when we were there together and how you see that playing a significant role going forward with the SDGs?

**Heather:** Yes. If I think of the two sectors that have been less engaged in the MDGs but are increasingly getting interested in the Sustainable Development Goals, it's really philanthropy and then the whole social investment sector, impact investors, and others who are thinking about how to use financial investment for social and/or environmental good.

The meeting in April was in a way a preparation for two meetings. One is the financing for development meeting that's taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the middle of July. The second is the actual post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals summit. It's taking place in New York from September 25th to 27th. What philanthropy is doing now is saying our grantees are increasingly engaging in the SDGs way beyond the way they engaged in the MDGs.

They're saying that our grantees are our key to us, but we as a philanthropy sector can also use our voice to amplify what our grantees are saying, to share and what our grantees are doing, to make sure that we're creating an enabling environment so that philanthropy can play a bigger role in these global and national frameworks. I think one of the real challenges for philanthropy is we always pride ourselves on being very independent, being innovative.

We have patient capital. We have risk capital. We don't necessarily want to fall in line with what governments or the UN is telling us to do. What that requires really is us thinking about different kinds of accountability mechanisms for ourselves. Governments are obligated to their taxpayers. They have annual and multi-year planning. For philanthropy, we believe we can be very responsive to immediate needs or to very, very long-term social change.

I think philanthropy getting engaged in the SDGs is a great opportunity for deeper achievement of the goals sooner, but also a way for philanthropy to reflect how can we do better if we understand the local and national context for the grantmaking we're doing. I've really seen this over the years. The grantmaking, that could be better if there were a greater awareness of what the policies are in place that we have to think about as we're doing our grants.

I think it would be really useful to have philanthropy seeing what each of us are doing together on a particular goal area. If you look at any particular country, I'll go back to this platform. Our four pilot countries for this are Kenya and Ghana in Africa, Colombia, and Indonesia. In each of these countries, we've had launch events where we're bringing together different foundations and individual philanthropists with the UN and with government and saying, "We're all working on similar areas."

Many foundations working on education, many working on health, many working on climate change. We're not really creating the synergies that we could because there isn't one place where we're sharing the information, the lessons learned or even sharing what we're doing our grantmaking about. Just to go back to how philanthropy has been, a bit left out of the tent, but it's really moving into it.

Our colleagues at the Foundation Center have created a new website called [sdgfunders.org](http://sdgfunders.org) and it will be launched in September this year at the week of the summit, but people can go ahead and sign up already. That will really be the kind of place where philanthropy can gather over the internet and share and exchange information both between themselves and with governments in the UN system.

**Ted:** You mentioned the independence of philanthropists and the historical, very individual approach that many philanthropist take to the projects that they get involved with. What do you think is the perfect ecosystem that would include an invite and engage philanthropist with all the other players or is there a little bit of oil and water here?

**Heather:** [chuckles] Well, I think the perfect ecosystem is one where every sector maintains its comparative strengths and advantages, but where there is more coordination and interaction, collaboration, and cooperation. I think there's often mistrust. We see that right now in a number of countries where the philanthropy sector is coming a bit under fire just as civil society is. I think that one of the opportunities with the Sustainable Development Goals is to say this is something that all sectors of society can get on board with.

For example, we had a meeting in Colombia. One of the cross-cutting issues we tackled there was peacebuilding and making sure that the conflict doesn't re-erupt in the way that it's in and so that people are suffering less from those long-term stresses in society. The foundation sector, the government at the national and city level, civil society partners and business, everyone was aligned in terms of needing to work on peacebuilding.

Now, that's a great way forward for different sectors to work together, even though the foundations will be doing things a bit differently from government. I think another example is

that philanthropy and foundations are often in the lead when it comes to piloting and experimenting with new ideas. We might think of some development activities now that have become quite mainstream. I often think of microfinance.

Back in the 1970s and '80s is really when individuals like Muhammad Yunus and Fazle Abed from BRAC, they were working on microfinance in Bangladesh. There were others working on this in Africa and South America. It was really foundations to put in the first seed money. The Ford Foundation or the Rockefeller Foundation or others putting in seed money to experiment with, "Is this an idea that could really scale up?"

If you look now, that was taken from the foundation sector very much into the mainstream of development assistance. We could think of other areas like coastal-based resource management, natural resource management, or even areas like legal aid support or more recently tackling climate-change in cities, how to make cities sustainable and more resilient to climate change.

All of these were ideas that germinated within foundations and with their grantees originally but have now become mainstream. I think the ecosystem is one where different sectors learn from each other and leverage each other's strengths. Again, I just want to say that foundations, ourselves, we don't necessarily have a huge amount of money to spend. Collectively, it's a lot, but it's rather fragmented.

If we're working in an area like education or climate change or environment, the amount of official development aid that's going in is far greater. If we can leverage what the ODA is doing, I think that's another great opportunity. What it requires is building trust and a lot more communication and information and active collaboration platforms for that really to happen.

**Ted:** For our listeners today who are typically grant makers or those who are interested or representing philanthropic support, one of the models that they might consider in funding international projects of the sort that would be in support of the SDGs might be a sequencing rather than necessarily going through the process of formal partnerships, which as you mentioned earlier, the independent streak of philanthropists might serve bristle at the notion of being controlled in some way by other forces.

Perhaps a sequencing, as you said, of being that testimony or the trial money or doing some of the advance work that there may be very positive and regular roles that could be designed of where philanthropy might be best suited.

**Heather:** I think you're right. At Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, we manage a number of donor collaboratives. I think a lot of organizations like ours do that. Of course, many of your listeners will be a part of donor collaborative. Probably what's the most difficult thing to do and it can have very high impact, but it's more difficult, is when there's one project or program that a number of institutions create together and then implement together.

What is sometimes a bit easier is for a number of foundations, and I would include here working with business, working with civil society, working with UN agencies and governments,

to have a shared goal or shared aims or ideally-shared objectives that are to some extent measurable and then contribute different both financing and perhaps non-funding assets contribute to that shared goal. That, I think, is a very good way in.

For example, there may be a foundation that wants to work on education in a certain country, but they don't want to pull their funds. The first step is really understanding, what's the national education policy? What are my peers in the foundation world contributing to? Who are their grantees? Where are the gaps in the system? Where can we actually have systemic change? There aren't enough resources going to it.

I think it's that kind of analysis and that kind of action that is really going to get us where we need to be in terms of achieving these goals over the next decade and a half. That may be the best way in. Again, in order to do that, one has to understand where to go and get the information because none of us want to have really high transaction costs in going forward with our work.

**Ted:** Our discussion today is centered around the Sustainable Development Goals and the launch of those goals and what this might mean to bringing true change to very important challenges facing our planet. What are the next steps in the ratification of the SDGs? When do they become official? What should philanthropists know in terms of their involvement?

**Heather:** In terms of next steps for the SDGs, there will be this meeting in Ethiopia in July talking about the financing of the goals. No matter what happens there, there will certainly be a summit in September, again, in New York from the 25th to the 27th. That will be a very energizing event, I think. What I've heard is that there will be more heads of state in government and probably royalty. I believe the pope is set to be there. A lot of the more world leaders and we've seen at one place at one time for quite a while. Perhaps ever.

The reason so many world leaders are going is because this is seen as a very momentous occasion. Not everyone thinks this way, but I often think back to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. That's a powerful document. Again, we have not achieved all of those rights, but it's a set of organizing principles for the world to work together to think about shared responsibilities and what we can do together as different parts of a whole to really create a better future for people and for the planet.

I think that summit in September is a great opportunity to do that. For anyone who's interested and won't be able to be there, there will certainly be a lot of communications about it. Really, I would say, the goals come into play in January 2016 and that's when we all have to roll up our sleeves and turn to implementation. There will be a lot of things happening at national level. Again, if I think back to the example of Colombia, that is one of many countries that has set up a national commission on the SDGs.

For the first time ever, they're including philanthropy with a formal seat at the table, which is fantastic. That's happening in a lot of countries. We see the same in the other platform countries we've chosen in Kenya and Indonesia. A much bigger role for philanthropy, which I

think gives us a tremendous opportunity, that if we do it well, it can really translate into a greater impact for all the people on whose behalf we work.

**Ted:** Well, you really have been a leading voice in not only bringing philanthropy to the table but also helping other players and those who might be involved as partnerships to understand the true nature of philanthropy, including the independent streak that you mentioned earlier. For all the philanthropists that are listening today, what specifically would you like them to be thinking about in advance of this 2016 launch when they are putting their plans together for international grantmaking?

**Heather:** Well, our partner UNDP has offices around the world. Probably in most of the countries where listeners are doing grantmaking. I know it's a fair criticism to say in the past, all the multilateral institutions, the UN agencies, the World Bank, the IMF, and so on where may have seemed like closed doors and windows. I think that's really changed in the last several years. Certainly, all of those institutions are now engaging more with other stakeholders.

I would say if you're grantmaking in a specific country, do stop into the UN to get some information. They have amazing data sets. The UNDP can, in turn, facilitate introductions to any UN agencies. Whether it's UNICEF that work so much on behalf of children or UN-Habitat, which works on cities and human settlements, I think finding out the resources that exist is key. Looking at our website or the website of the Foundation Center, checking out this portal [sdgfunders.org](http://sdgfunders.org) will be important.

I think most of us, we check in with our peers, call a few people we know or perhaps use Google in order to get information about who might be the best grantees for our work. I think if we do it a bit more systematically and with reference, we finally have a framework. We can check it back against these goals. If we're funding an education, we should say, "What is that government doing? What's their national plan on education? How can we support them in that?"

If we believe there are groups that are left out, how do we make sure that we draw that to the attention of the government? I think we're trying to make it easier for foundations and philanthropists to engage in this. I'm really convinced that by the time the goals kick in in January, we will have a pretty good infrastructure setup to do this.

**Ted:** Well, again, we applaud you for that. Of course, our listeners can also contact CAF America in terms of putting together their philanthropy and targeting it around the world for tax effective and regulatory compliance grants outside of the United States. We were really very honored to have you involved with the International Grantmaking Symposium right at the end of April. Part of the topics there were in the context of the SDGs. What do you think were the biggest takeaway from that gathering? That was a partnership that CAF America brought together with Johns Hopkins SAIS.

**Heather:** Yes. That was a great event and I really commend CAF America for doing that. I think effective grantmaking is not simple or easy. I think we're all learning more about it all the time. I



think doing it internationally is even more challenging than doing it domestically. I guess my biggest takeaway from that event, I was impressed by the diversity of people in the room. Private foundations, families, corporate foundations, and then some advisors.

I think what was interesting is that there was a lot of interest in working on the SDG framework. Also, I think people, no matter which sector they were from, they could really see the benefit of understanding the SDGs and using that as a bit more context-setting for whatever kind of international grantmaking they were doing. I was a little surprised and very pleased by the resonance it seemed to have across your participants.

**Ted:** Of course, you were a big hit and just added a great deal of very thoughtful energy to the entire gathering as did our next guest. Heather, if you got a second, I'd like to see if we might bring in our next guest and just have you to spend a couple of minutes together because I know you need to leave. Do you have a couple of more minutes?

**Heather:** Yes, I do. Sure.

**Ted:** Okay. Terrific. It is my pleasure here to welcome to the show Alexander Dixon, who is the senior director of the Diaspora Investment Alliance. He'll be discussing the current state of diaspora giving internationally and the crucial role that diaspora giving plays in international philanthropy. He most recently served as the senior advisor to USAID, which he assisted USAID's missions and private investors with investment structuring and negotiations related to Power Africa.

Welcome here to the *CAF America Radio Network*, Alex Dixon. You also were at the International Grantmaking Symposium, which is why I wanted you and Heather to have a minute together, so welcome. Alex, are you there? There you are. Okay.

**Alex Dixon:** Yes, here I am. How are you doing?

**Ted:** Alex, you are with us. Great to have you.

**Alex:** Yes, I am.

**Ted:** You and Heather. Heather Grady is staying on for just a couple of minutes. The two of you were at the International Grantmaking Symposium co-hosted by CAF America and Johns Hopkins SAIS. Heather and I were just talking about some of the takeaways there. You were on a panel on the application of expenditure responsibility in emerging markets. I wondered if you wanted to, I know you could hear a bit of what Heather was saying, if you wanted to sort of weigh in on the advice for philanthropists in that area.

**Alex:** Oh definitely. I agree with her. It's definitely getting more complicated to basically carry out grants and do grants internationally, especially when you look at the expenditure recognition requirements and all the compliance. Actually, as she was making one of her comments, I've already done one of the things she has recommended. I was recently in Kenya

and I did reach out to the local UNDP office and to the officers working with them on the Sustainable Development Goals.

It was a great meeting for myself regarding the project they were looking to carry out in Kenya with basically doing US donor advice on there. We basically had some follow-up conversations. They were very helpful in helping us scope out in planning our execution on the ground with the funds. I definitely agree with her and have taken her advice before she even offered it.

**Ted:** There you go, Heather. Look, you're already having an impact here all the way in Kenya.

**Heather:** [chuckles] That's great.

**Ted:** Heather, is there anything else that you want to share or ask Alex before we go on to the second half of the show and talk about the diaspora giving program that Alex is heading up?

**Heather:** Yes. I just wanted to say one thing. I had the real privilege of speaking at the United Nations General Assembly a couple of weeks ago to a room full of government officials and some UN staff and a few of us from philanthropy. Actually, I think I was the only one from philanthropy, but many from civil society and business. I did make the point that I think people often don't understand what philanthropy is.

I think in the US, we think mostly of this model of relatively large private foundations or family foundations that are doing a lot of grantmaking. There's community philanthropy. There's corporate philanthropy. There's diaspora philanthropy and then social impact investing and online platforms for giving a lot of different ways. I think if you count in diaspora giving, it's enormous and extremely significant.

I think the opportunity to combine diaspora philanthropy with others of us that work in other types of philanthropy is pretty significant. I was very glad to meet Alex at that event and I certainly now have diaspora philanthropy more on my radar screen going forward.

**Ted:** Well, look, you've both influenced each other. Alex, it sounds like you're truly on the cutting edge. If Heather Grady says that's where you are, that's exactly where you are.

[laughter]

**Ted:** Heather Grady, vice president at Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. Thank you so much for joining us here on the *CAF America Radio Network*. You have offered so much information about the SDGs and really helped us, I think, growing our understanding this new atmosphere of collaboration among a lot of different parties and how that might happen maybe in a sequencing way. Heather, I hope you'll come back soon. We appreciate all your support of CAF America and the work that we do in the sector.

**Heather:** Thank you very much, Ted, and good luck on what you do. Bye-bye.

**Ted:** Great, thank you. Alex, I'm really very keen to jump right into helping our listeners today understand. What is the Diaspora Investment Alliance?

**Alex:** Sure. The Diaspora Investment Alliance, we're a program at the Aspen Institute. What we've been focused on and what we've been looking at is trying to figure out how we can catalyze diaspora's both philanthropic and investment dollars back into their country of origin. A big part of the work that we've done over the last year or so if you're going out talking with diaspora groups about what their interests are, how they're currently investing because everybody's doing something either philanthropically or actively investing about how they're doing it, and then what the roadblocks are.

We've been able to define some potential opportunities that we're currently looking to pilot this 2015-2016 in one of the big initiatives that we're pursuing with CAF. We're glad to have CAF or the partners basically setting up two donor-advised funds. One for the Philippines and one for Kenya.

**Ted:** Well, we are honored to be able to support and partner with you as you are putting this very important diaspora giving program together. As you just mentioned, you're piloting in the Philippines and Kenya. What's been the reaction so far from the US diaspora communities in the early going?

**Alex:** It's been very encouraging. The Filipino diaspora have been unique in that they previously had a vehicle in place to a US NGO that was collecting donations and dispersing them to local NGOs in the Philippines, but that organization stopped approximately three years ago accepting those donations. The Filipino diaspora, there's a lot of pent-up demand about who they can give to, how they can give. They were very much in a giving mode.

When the organization went away, they definitely fell low on the market. When we announced what we were doing, everyone was very excited. In the diaspora, there's over two million Filipinos in the US spread all across the US from various professions, from health to technology and everywhere. There was a lot of enthusiasm. We announced the event in Manila along with the commission for overseas Filipino, which is a government agency responsible for diaspora outreach within the Philippine government.

They were holding a global summit, which brought together all the Filipino diaspora groups from around the world. The most immediate question we got was that, "When are you going to come to the EU? When are you going to come to Australia? We want to do something similar to the effort that you're putting off for the US." I think, definitely, we can get the vehicle started again in the US. There's a lot of opportunity because the community definitely sees a need and definitely sees a desire.

**Ted:** Building off from what's already been done in the past, sometimes that can be a plus and sometimes it's a big hurdle for you to get over. Is it your general sense that this is like we've been waiting for the right vehicle to get this moving again?

**Alex:** Definitely. What we've done to answer, to mitigate some of the risks as you pointed out that we are taking a lot of the actors and executives that were involved in the previous effort and we're involving them in this effort too. We're totally trying not to reinvent the wheel and make sure that we have the right stakeholders in place to make sure that we do have the most optimal offering that we can make. It's a seamless transition once the new mechanism is put in place.

**Ted:** Now, an effort of that sort takes a lot of partners and a lot of ingenuity and thinking. I know a lot of the thoughtful way that this being put together is the energy that you bring to the table. You also have partners with Aspen Institute and Rockefeller, CAF America. What are all those players and how are they involved and what's that going to mean to the long-term program?

**Alex:** Sure. Rockefeller was responsible for starting the initiative at Aspen last year and they provided our initial funding and basically funded the research phase of our effort. That was very critical to us because that allowed us to actually go out and have ground level conversation with the diaspora community and really understand what their issues were, where they saw opportunities and what were the potential hurdles from a legal and regulatory standpoint. With that information in hand, we were able to really craft and identify what the opportunities are and what we've found out so far from the response that we received. It's been over, 99% positive and that's just because of the groundwork that was laid early on doing the research, talking with the groups and so forth.

Rockefeller played a critical role in getting us off the ground and making sure that we had a solid offering and a solid understanding of the market. Aspen Institute, as you know, is a very diverse organization, we're one of 30 programs but definitely within Aspen, we have synergies with the Aspen network development entrepreneurs, your previous give Heather talked about social impact and impact investing and we've been working and leveraging the Andy network as well to figure out, how do we do impact investigate? How can we involve the diaspora and what are the opportunities.

We've been leveraging the resources within Aspen and trying to basically figure out how we cannot duplicate steps and then go from lessons learned. That's been a huge plus for us and then outside of the Aspen arena and outside of the Rockefeller arena, we've been able to identify critical best of breed providers and all the markets that we've been looking to go into, we're going to identify key partners in Kenya. We have Kenya Commercial Bank, which is the largest bank in Kenya. We have their foundation that's going to work with us.

In the Philippines, we have the Commission for Overseas Filipinos that we're looking to work and then we're starting to now start to pick up one or two private sector partners that have basically come in that are interested. It's definitely building momentum and it's like the good thing is no one told us that our idea has been crazy but everyone's been saying, "Hey, this is a unique idea and we think that it definitely has market readiness."

We've been pelted on a daily basis, on a monthly basis with new opportunities that have come in where people have been looking at organizations looking to engage the diaspora. What we think we've been able to do is define a means in a way to do that in a systematic fashion, along with providers like CAF America.

**Ted:** Well, we know we heard earlier that Heather Grady has declared you truly on the cutting edge and doing something extremely important. We know that part's true, but these things don't just come out of thin air, what are the trends and challenges of diaspora giving internationally?

**Alex:** I think the trends and challenges the diaspora definitely want to have control over where their money goes and how it's spent. One of the critical things is transparency and accountability and that's something that we've seen across the groups and that's one of the foremost criteria is that they're like, "Listen, we're willing to donate and it's great that we can get a tax incentives to do that but we don't want to see our money used or misused in a way that would be counter to what our goals are basically, or be used in a way that we wouldn't approve of. We want the most to go out to the program level as possible."

I think that transparency and accountability is one thing that diaspora demands, along with all big organizations demand the same things. I think is 100% alignment there. Then where we see maybe regional differences is that a lot of diaspora say, "Where I come from this particular region, this is where I want my donations to flow," but we actually look at the areas that they're interested in, it duplicates what all the other major organizations, and everyone else is interested in, which is education and health, that always comes through.

Then we have gender equality issues and so forth. I very much see the diaspora lining up with a lot of Sustainable Development Goals, lining up with a lot of the foundation priorities and what opportunity that we see, one of the things that we're trying to do point out is that the diaspora donations can be used to help leverage up and basically bring more dollars into existing efforts. As maybe program change or interest level change, the diaspora always going to have a connection to that community and they're always going to be involved in that community, no matter what.

That's the long-term nature of the diaspora, which I think can be leveraged by a lot of organizations which sometimes go through programmatic or focus changes.

**Ted:** One of the things that I'm particularly excited about, and thank you for choosing CAF America to be your partner in this area, is that those that are looking to support through this program, those who would be part of a diaspora funding mechanism, tend to have a very real connection to their homeland, or to the other part of the world that they're looking to support in that sense of community, is perhaps unique among those philanthropists than might be with others that are giving to a lot of really wonderful international programs. The energy and the sensitivity of this form of philanthropy is perhaps deeper than with others.

**Alex:** No, I think for sure, and Heather had mentioned about the different area, but communities financially social investing, and I definitely see the diaspora covering those different areas, and that they are involved in a community, they understand what the community issues are, their family members still live in the community.

It's a very real personal proposition to them, it's just not about this is the right thing to do, this is about something that we have to do and something that I want to see done, because you can't remove yourself and you can't identify with the problem, because one time you were in the community, you're representative the community, you understand what their problem is firsthand not to have a school that is running, not to have a proper health care system.

The issue that you say are very real to the diaspora and I think that translates back into when you look at what they're doing already, and how they're doing it, they're giving and they're basically donating their time and donating their money. What we're just trying to do is give them a better formalized channel to do that, and then also potentially the crowd in money from other organizations. One thing I think that might happen, one of the outcomes will be that a lot of big organizations will see where the diaspora are putting their money, like, "Well, I want to put my money into this community."

Well, let's see what the diaspora is doing. I think that give you a leading signal about what the needs of the community are, as whether those in diaspora we're actually concentrating, they're investing in their philanthropy.

**Ted:** It's like when you're in a new town, and you want good food, you go where the locals eating because they know where the food is. If you're giving in a part of the world that you're less familiar with knowing and understanding where the diaspora giving is going and what they're looking to support, may be a very smart strategy.

**Alex:** Exactly, and I think it gives a lot of silent intel about who the worthwhile organizations are, because I think the diaspora have also have a silent intelligence network to help identify, "Well, I'm giving money to this organization. Uncle Joe, or aunt Susie, go check out that organization just to make sure what they are doing." "Hey, if you want to volunteer, I've given some money, this organization, go volunteer down there."

I think it has a lot of benefit, we always talk about monitoring and evaluation, we talked about all these different things, I think the diaspora giving in their networks bring a different aspect and a new component to that. That'll be very interesting as it basically develops over the next decade or so.

**Ted:** The whole notion of crowdfunding and crowdsourcing is talked about almost anywhere you go, that's going to be a topic that's going to come up and and what's happened organically in diaspora giving is a perfect example of that, what you're looking to harness and provide tax receding and regulatory compliance aspect to this giving. It's just a natural extension of that, isn't it?

**Alex:** We look deeply at crowdfunding a lot of different models. What the diaspora told us kind of across the board was that, it's great that I can make a return, it's great that I can do this, but, I just want to do good. My number one thing is, I want to see good done in my community in something done at the ground level, the return and everything else was secondary to that. The idea of having a philanthropic vehicle that they can donate into where they can see the money being put to use is tremendous value in tremendous interest to them.

Also, it also provides a platform and one of the things that we want to do with this is create portals where NGOs information and be disseminated to the diaspora. The diaspora can also nominate and let other people in the community know about their projects that they're involved in directly. A lot of people will say, "Listen, I've been giving to the school or I have a scholarship fund that I've been funding for a number of years out of my pocket. I know it's a great organization, I've been supporting it."

I think it'll be a lot of natural generation of NGOs and projects that have come from the diaspora community, but have never been able to see the light of day because they've been small and very community-focused. We're hoping to give the diaspora platform not only for them to talk about what they've been doing philanthropic-wise, but also about the project that they've been supporting. Maybe that'll crowd in other money from other institutions as well.

**Ted:** Exactly. What does the partnership with CAF America specifically mean to the Diaspora Investment Alliance?

**Alex:** It means-- It's great for us. It's been one of our key, key, key-- I can't, harp on how critical has been for us to get up and operating to be with best of breed providers. CAF America provides us at best of breed provider. It gives us the confidence when we do sit down with diaspora groups and they say, "Hey, how are you going to make sure that this is legally compliant? How are you going to basically take care of the back office? How are you going to basically ensure that if we give you money that it's going to be done in such a fashion that is not misused, that has done in an efficient manner? I don't want to see a lot of my money eaten up and transaction fees."

We've been able to answer them wholeheartedly and even challenge them to go out and look at CAF America. We've looked at a lot of organizations and we believe that CAF America is a leading organization and when people come back they say, "Okay, maybe hadn't heard of CAF America, I heard how the charity is, foundation is. They come and say, "That's a great organization."

Even more importantly than that, for us, as I said early on, one of the big questions that we had when we announced this is, "Okay, well, when are you going to go to Canada or when you're going to go to the UK?" One of the things we've been able to answer is, well, with our partners will be able to grow and I think that's a huge advantage that CAF America has brought us to the table and that we don't have to go out and look for another provider, another relationship. We can work within our existing relationship as we plan to grow internationally.

**Ted:** Of course, what you're referring to there that we've discussed here on the radio program several times is that CAF America is part of the CAF Global Alliance with offices on six continents, and a subsidiary of CAF America is CAF Canada, which is now available for Canadians who wants to be able to receive a tax receipt and be regulatory-compliant with the CRA which is the Canadian Revenue Agency. Lots of opportunities for us to partner together and to work together.

I want to thank you again for your role in the International Grantmaking Symposium, we had a chance to talk to Heather Grady about that program and the partnership that CAF America put together with Johns Hopkins SAIS. What were your reflections on that day in terms of your own work, but also your takeaways from that symposium?

**Alex:** I found the symposium extremely informative, very, very much informative, it was very well put together. I commend you and your team for having the vision to put together such a format and also the courage because what I found about it, what I loved about it was that it actually went into detail. It was an Indian's conference, it wasn't like a chief's conference.

It was like how do you actually get the things done, and how do we basically talk about some of the practical issues which aren't sexy, which aren't very riveting, but which complicates everyone's daily lives about how do you actually do international grantmaking? What is the legal framework? What is the regulatory framework? What are the workarounds around it, what you need to be conscious of, because I think compared to a lot of conferences that you attend, everyone stays at 30,000 feet and talks about these ideas and abstract.

What I loved about the IGS it actually went down to ground level and board practitioners in and I walked away feeling, not only do I have a better understanding, but also have a better network of people.

When I do face this issue and when we basically do walk up on this issue, this is who I can go to, and this is basically how we can go about it because at the end of the day, we're going to be judged on execution by the diaspora. I felt great coming out of that conference, many of the issues that we identified that we're going to have from an administrative standpoint, we've talked about in an open forum and information exchange. I thought it was an incredible conference and very well put together from what we were looking to do and what we needed to get out of a conference at this stage.

**Ted:** Well, thank you for that and of course, we've benefited greatly by your involvement in the IGS. We've heard that comment from a lot of different participants and I think it's much part of the DNA of CAF America to sweat the details, to have the protocols in place and to protect the reputation and the regulatory compliant and the tax receding of our donors.

That from our perspective, we wouldn't be able to host something that didn't give people a very granular level of understanding how this is done because it's not impossible to be successful in international grantmaking, but it can be darnn complicated and getting it right and



making sure that all parties are protected and the outcomes are what the philanthropist has in mind, cakes more than wishful thinking.

**Alex:** Exactly and that's what I think in CAF America, I think we found a very valuable partner that help us make sure we get the details right, and have confidence when we stand in front of a group because for us, ultimately, they're going to remember that Alex Dixon and his team came and told us they were going to do XYZ. I want to be able to have the confidence when I leave the room, and when the money starts coming in, that is going to be handled in a way that's compliant in everything I said, can come true, and I feel very, very secure that that's going to happen working with CAF America.

Then just the resources in the network that you have to help us bring this vision to light because we are at this leading edge or this new edge of this diaspora giving within this whole Donor Advised fund pool. I think it's something new-- It's not something new, per se, what is we knew in the application that we're trying to put forward about using it to help aggregate diaspora philanthropy dollars in such a way that can be effective, can be a tipping point for other donations to come in.

Also can basically represent a sustainability portion because one thing that we see we look at a lot of the humanitarian disasters that happen the diaspora never stopped giving. We have to leave CNN, after it leaves kind of BBC the diaspora still involved giving their philanthropically making sure that their communities are taken care of.

**Ted:** That's a very important point, again as we mentioned before, and as Heather mentioned earlier, that long tale that these things are not simple fixes and certainly those who are part of the diaspora of whatever community. I'm going to quickly just share a quick reminder for folks, Alex, we only have a couple more minutes, when we come back I just want you to wrap up and make sure that everybody understands how the Diaspora Investment Alliance is going to roll out in the two test communities that you're starting out with and that's the Philippines and Kenya. We're just going to have a quick reminder here.

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**Ted:** We are back. We're back here live with Alex Dixon, senior director of the Diaspora Investment Alliance. Just a couple minutes, Alex, before the end of the show. Tell us how this is going to roll out.

**Alex:** Sure, by third quarter this year, we hope to basically start our launch activities, marketing activities for both the Kenyan and Philippine diaspora and what that would entail is us actually going out marketing to the groups, talking with the groups at congressional and district levels at the community-- through the community organizations, letting them or making them aware that this fund is going to be in place, this fund can be utilized by them and really go through a ground truth and exercise, falling up what we did last year and the research phase so that the

groups will know that, "Okay, come-- tax-- come into the year between December and in April, this is where I can give my philanthropic dollars to, and this is how it's going to be set up to do it."

That'll be phase one and then parallel to that we're going to be working with our local partners in the Philippines and in Kenya to start developing the portals for the local NGOs to come all into far as information making sure that the legal documents and other compliant document to put together. We're going to start thinking through and developing the actual system to collect that data, how it's going to be presented to standardization issues around that from a data standpoint.

The third quarters of kick-off point for the initial DAF marketing and parallel to that we're going to start the systems development work for the NGO portal and then basically you want to have a continuous marketing to the first quarter of 2016 in third quarter of 2015.

**Ted:** Alex, very quickly any of the philanthropist today who might want to get involved, how can they reach you?

**Alex:** Oh, sure. I mean, definitely give us a call at Aspen. My direct line is 202-736-2504 or they can reach us by email. My email is alexander.dixon@aspeninstitute.org and we'll love to-

**Ted:** That's going to be the end of it right there Alex Dixon, thank you for being our guest here on the CAF America radio network. We are right on time and we've got to end the show, thank you for everything, take care.

**Alex:** I know. Thank you, bye-bye.

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