Reimagining Aid: Building Partnerships for a New Era of Development

A collaborative learning and design convening exploring how partnership ecosystems, market systems, collective action, and strategic innovation can drive sustainable development outcomes in a rapidly shifting global landscape.

July 23–24, 2025 • Kathmandu, Nepal • 2-day format

PURPOSE & FRAMING

The development landscape is undergoing a fundamental shift. As traditional bilateral aid models face mounting pressure, organizations across South Asia and beyond must adapt, building new forms of collaboration, accessing private capital, and designing more locally driven, market-connected pathways to impact. This convening is designed not as a training event, but as a foundation for a collaborative platform: part knowledge exchange, part partnership lab, part ecosystem-building session. Participants will leave with new relationships, practical tools, and a concrete action agenda.

It is also intentionally designed as a retreat. Alongside workshops and collaborative design sessions, participants will have opportunities to step away from day-to-day pressures through curated reflection and wellness experiences. Nature walks, facilitated wellbeing and emotional resilience sessions, singing bowl therapy, and other immersive activities are being incorporated into the experience to create space for reflection, connection, creativity, and renewal. Additional details will be shared soon.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS WILL GAIN

Practical PSE frameworks adapted for a post-big aid world	Working knowledge of blended & catalytic finance approaches	AI tools and strategies for development practitioners
Mapped ecosystem and identified partnership opportunities	Foundation for a Nepal community of practice	Concrete commitments and a shared next-step action agenda

In addition, participants can expect space to Reflect, Recharge & Reimagine

- Time away from day-to-day operational pressures
- Guided reflection and wellbeing experiences
- Deeper peer exchange and relationship-building
- Fresh perspectives on leadership, collaboration, and the future of development

CONVENING DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Peer learning over lecture	Action-oriented outputs throughout	Global and local case studies integrated
Curated cross-sector participant mix	Relationship-building built into structure	Outputs that outlast the room

DAY 1 (Thursday) — JULY 23 New Realities, New Possibilities

Time	Session
10:00–10:30 30 min	ARRIVAL **Welcome & Orientation** *Pre poll: If your largest donor disappeared tomorrow, would your organization know what to do next?* • Brief welcome and overview of the workshop journey • Participant introductions (name, organization, one challenge keeping them awake at night) • Individual reflection: "What question, opportunity, or challenge brought you here?" • Participants write expectations, questions, and hoped-for outcomes on cards or flipcharts • Facilitators cluster themes and revisit them throughout the workshop
10:30–11:30 60 min	**OPENING PLENARY** **The New Development Equation: What is Changing—and What Does it Mean?** Rather than beginning with answers, the workshop begins with a shared exploration of the forces reshaping development, philanthropy, markets, and partnerships around the world. Through a combination of framing inputs, peer discussion, and collective reflection, participants will examine how shifts in aid architecture, local ownership, private capital, technology, geopolitics, and evolving expectations around impact are changing the environment in which organizations operate. Together, participants will explore questions such as: • What is changing globally, regionally, and in Nepal? • How are organizations being affected by shifts in donor priorities and funding models? • What capabilities, partnerships, and business models may become increasingly important in the years ahead? • Where are the risks—and where are the opportunities? • What assumptions about development, funding, and organizational sustainability may need to be rethought? The session will begin with brief framing remarks from GIC and Aadyanta followed by facilitated small-group discussions and participant reflections designed to surface diverse perspectives from across sectors. Rather than presenting a single narrative, the goal is to build a shared understanding of the changing landscape and establish a common foundation for the conversations that follow over the next two days. **Session Elements:** landscape scanning • aid transition • local ownership • emerging development models • peer dialogue • sense-making • opportunity identification

Time	Session
11:30–12:45 75 min	**WORKSHOP SESSION 1** **From Aid to Partnership: Understanding Private Sector Engagement and Shared Value** As development challenges become more complex and traditional funding models evolve, organizations are increasingly being asked to work differently. Businesses, investors, entrepreneurs, financial institutions, technology companies, and market actors are playing an increasingly important role in shaping development outcomes—creating both new opportunities and new expectations for collaboration. This session explores the evolution of private sector engagement (PSE) and partnership-driven development, examining why organizations around the world are moving beyond traditional project-based approaches toward models grounded in shared value, market systems thinking, and cross-sector collaboration. Participants will explore: • What private sector engagement is—and what it is not • The evolution from aid-driven to partnership-driven development • Different models of engaging the private sector • Shared value versus philanthropy, CSR, sponsorship, and procurement • Why businesses engage—and what they seek from partnerships • How market systems approaches complement traditional development programming • Common misconceptions and pitfalls in partnership development Through facilitated discussion and practical exercises, participants will begin identifying the assets, relationships, capabilities, and influence their own organizations bring—and how these can be leveraged to create stronger partnerships and more sustainable impact. **Session Elements:** private sector engagement fundamentals • shared value • market systems thinking • partnership models • stakeholder incentives • asset mapping • partnership readiness
12:45-14:00	**LUNCH** **Hosted Lunch & Informal Networking** Structured seating designed to encourage cross-sector connection between development and private sector participants.
14:00–15:30 90 min	**WORKSHOP SESSION 2** **Pathways to Partnership: A Step-by-Step Process for Getting to "Yes"** Partnerships rarely succeed because of a proposal alone. They succeed when organizations understand each other's incentives, constraints, risks, expectations, and definitions of success—and find ways to align them around a shared opportunity. They are most successful when partners come together with openness, honesty, and authenticity. This highly interactive session introduces a practical partnership development pathway, exploring the stages through which successful partnerships are often built: identifying opportunities, understanding stakeholder motivations, building relationships, co-creating solutions, structuring agreements, and moving from intent to implementation. Participants will be introduced to a set of guiding questions that can be used at each stage of the partnership journey:

Time	Session
	• Who needs to be at the table? • What does each actor care about? • What assets, capabilities, and resources does each partner bring? • What risks or concerns might they have? • Where do interests align—and where might they conflict? • What would make participation worthwhile for each stakeholder? Participants will then move into a facilitated role-play and negotiation exercise. Working through a hypothetical development challenge, small groups will assume the roles of different actors—such as government, donor agencies, NGOs, private companies, investors, foundations, and community representatives—and negotiate a potential partnership. The exercise is designed to help participants experience partnership development from multiple perspectives, better understand stakeholder incentives, and practice navigating the trade-offs, tensions, and opportunities that often emerge during partnership formation. The session concludes with reflection and peer feedback focused on practical lessons participants can apply to real-world partnership opportunities within their own organizations. **Session Elements:** partnership pathway • stakeholder incentives • shared value • partnership canvas • role-play negotiation • co-creation • stakeholder alignment • peer learning • partnership design
15:30–16:15 45 min	**Mapping the Future: Actors, Opportunities & Emerging Trends** This interactive synthesis session moves beyond traditional stakeholder mapping to explore the broader forces reshaping development, markets, and partnerships. Participants will collectively map key actors, relationships, gaps, and potential connectors across Nepal's' development and innovation ecosystem, while also identifying the major trends likely to influence development practice over the coming decade. Working in small groups, participants will explore one or two key questions before sharing insights with the broader group: • Which actors are becoming increasingly important in shaping development outcomes? • Where are the strongest opportunities for cross-sector collaboration? • What capabilities are organizations likely to need in the future? • How are shifts in aid, philanthropy, private capital, technology, and policy changing the landscape? • What emerging trends—from AI and digital public infrastructure to climate finance, blended capital, demographic change, and new partnership models—should organizations be paying attention to today? Outputs from the session will help identify priority opportunity areas, partnership pathways, and future-focused capabilities that feed directly into Day 2's Partnership Lab and action planning sessions.

Time	Session
	The session will conclude with a brief "signals from the future" reflection, setting the stage for an informal evening conversation with invited practitioners and experts working at the frontier of areas such as AI, innovation, digital transformation, and emerging development models.
16:15–16:30 15 min	**BREAK** **Refresh & Regroup**
16:30–17:30 60 min	**DAY 1 CLOSE** **Emotional Resilience Session:** A facilitated session focused on building emotional resilience, managing stress, and strengthening personal wellbeing to navigate adaptive leadership and professional challenges.
17:45-20:30 p.m.	**NETWORKING DIALOGUE & DINNER: Staying Relevant in the Age of AI** *A candid conversation, followed by dinner, with leading AI practitioners on what artificial intelligence may mean for development organizations, communities, markets, and partnerships over the next decade.* This creates an informal space to understand and explore how AI is reshaping the future of work, service delivery, decision-making, fundraising, knowledge management, entrepreneurship, and systems change—and what development leaders should be paying attention to now. **Discussion prompts:** ● What changes are already underway that development organizations may be underestimating? ● How might AI reshape livelihoods, jobs, and economic inclusion? ● What opportunities exist for NGOs, governments, businesses, and communities? ● What are the risks, ethical considerations, and unintended consequences? ● If you were leading a development organization today, what would you start doing differently?

DAY 2 — FRIDAY, JULY 24 *From Ideas to Action*

6:30-7:30	**Optional: Nature Walk.** A guided outdoor walk designed for reflection and rejuvenation.
7:30-8:30	**Breakfast**
8:30–9:00 30 min	**OPENING** **Overnight Synthesis & Day 2 Framing** Facilitators present key themes and patterns from Day 1. Participants share one “overnight insight” in pairs. Sets the stage for the action-oriented work ahead.
9:00-10:30 90 min	**PANEL: REIMAGINING AID** **What It Takes to Create Lasting Impact in a Changing Development Landscape**

	What does it take to adapt and build effective cross-sector partnerships in a rapidly changing development landscape? In this honest, facilitated conversation, leaders from government, donors, INGOs, and the private sector will reflect on the shifts reshaping development, share candid stories of partnerships that succeeded—and those that fell short—and discuss how these experiences are changing the way they think about development and collaborations. Audience Q&A integrated throughout. **Session Elements: practitioner panel • lessons learned • forward looking insights**
10:30–12:00 90 min	**WORKSHOP SESSION 3** **Innovative Finance: Unlocking Capital in a Resource-Constrained World** Demystifying blended finance, catalytic capital, and innovative financing structures. How do organizations assess and communicate the value of non-financial assets such as data, relationships, land tenure, community trust? Practical frameworks for presenting your organization's value proposition to impact investors, DFIs, and corporate partners. Includes a live valuation exercise. **Session Elements:** blended finance • catalytic capital • DFIs • asset valuation • impact investors
12:00–13:30 90 min	**LUNCH & NETWORKING**
13:30-15:00 90 min	**DESIGN SESSION** **Partnership Lab: Co-Designing Collaboration Pathways** This session moves from reflection to action. Drawing on insights from Day 1—including partnership frameworks, ecosystem mapping, emerging trends, and opportunity areas—participants work in teams to explore real-world challenges and opportunities that could benefit from new forms of collaboration. Rather than beginning with organizations or funding sources, groups begin by identifying a meaningful challenge, opportunity, or emerging trend that requires collective action. Participants will be divided into small breakout groups, with each group exploring one or two key dimensions of partnership design. Through a facilitated design process, groups will examine questions such as: • What challenge or opportunity are we trying to address? • Why does it matter now? • Which actors need to be involved? • What incentives, assets, and capabilities does each partner bring? • What value is created for each stakeholder? • What partnership model might be most appropriate? • What resources, financing, or enabling conditions would be required? • What would a realistic first step look like?

	Groups will then report back to the broader plenary, allowing participants to compare approaches, identify common themes, challenge assumptions, and build on one another's ideas. Participants are encouraged to draw on the diversity of perspectives represented in the room—including development organizations, private sector actors, investors, entrepreneurs, and ecosystem builders—to design collaboration pathways that are both ambitious and practical. Each group will present a brief "opportunity pitch" outlining the challenge, partnership architecture, value proposition, and next steps. Facilitators and participants will provide feedback focused on feasibility, alignment, and potential for scale. The goal is not to produce a perfect project design, but to help participants practice a new way of thinking—starting with opportunities, systems, and shared value rather than organizational mandates or funding mechanisms. **Session Elements:** opportunity design • partnership architecture • cross-sector collaboration • shared value creation • stakeholder alignment • systems thinking • action planning • opportunity pitching
15:00-16:15 75 min	**COLLECTIVE ACTION** **Toward a Nepal Community of Practice: What Do We Want to Build Together?** Facilitated conversation about sustaining and deepening this network beyond the convening. What would a Nepal centre of excellence for partnership-driven development look like? Who anchors it, how does it operate, and what does success look like in 12 months? Participants collectively draft a statement of intent and identify 2–3 concrete next steps. **Session Elements:** community of practice • Nepal CoP • center of excellence • sustainability
16:15 onwards	**Closing** **Optional Singing Bowl Therapy**