



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission for Social Development

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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and  
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to  
achieve sustainable development for all**

### **Statement submitted by Yayasan Wadah Titian Harapan, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## **Statement**

### **Introduction**

Globally, the development community and the United Nations have been grappling with the issues relating to poverty eradication and the dream of sustainable development for all people. A comprehensive solution to this issue that is applicable widely is still elusive as each community and country differs in many ways.

The Wadah Titian Harapan Foundation (WF) would like to share strategies and methodology as we have found to be effective and catalysing in its impact in the communities where we are active. We hope that our experience will prove useful to others in their battle against poverty in other communities and other parts of the world.

### **Overview**

Wadah is an Indonesian based international social foundation which started addressing the root causes of complex social problems in the slums of Indonesia in 2008, although the work of its founder dates back 25 years prior to its official establishment. WF utilises a highly-nuanced, flexible, custom-blend of education, health, economic growth initiatives, community unity building and infrastructure support assistance to help reduce poverty in the communities that it assists.

By being fully immersed in communities, WF ensures that each effort is initiated from the bottom-up by local community members. Individuals that already possess passion and dedication to work independently co-create in a manner that inherently has local ownership, with community buy-in. When WF joins, the effort is co-created with locals in keeping with their own cultural traditions and local priorities, ensuring complex social issues are being addressed simply, meaningfully and sustainably. This is how WF serves as a catalyst, increasingly empowering individuals and entire communities to transform further and faster.

We are proud that our model is at the forefront of what is now known as the emergent model: a philanthropic model discussed in academic circles including Stanford University's Nonprofit Management Institute. We have also blended social impact investing, supporting members of our communities through targeted support for small business enterprises.

As an article titled Strategic Philanthropy for a Complex World that appeared in Stanford's Social Innovation Review explained, "To solve today's most complex social problems, foundations need to shift from the prevailing model of strategic philanthropy that attempts to predict outcomes to an emergent model that better fits the realities of creating social change in a complex world. We have now come to the conclusion that if funders are to make greater progress in meeting society's urgent challenges, they must move beyond today's rigid and predictive model of strategy to a nuanced model of emergent strategy that better aligns with the complex nature of social progress."

Being immersed is necessary to properly understand what is truly needed, to co-create inside-out solutions, to guarantee there is local ownership and buy-in and

ultimately, to ensure solutions that are sustainable. However, being immersed isn't always enough to guarantee success. We believe that achieving optimal solutions often involves some amount of trial and error, with flexibility for refinement to adapt when obstacles are observed that need to be overcome to increase momentum.

### **No to Short-term Aid for Poverty Reduction**

We have found that using short-term, program-based charitable aid can be like using a band aid to cover a severe wound. Of course, band-aid can be helpful for protecting small, simple cuts from further injury while they heal. But everyone has experienced the unintended pain, damage and prolonged healing a too-small, hastily removed band aid can cause. Sadly, poorly used charitable aid often has similar unintended consequences.

While properly used temporary aid offers short-term protection, but without thoughtful long-term follow-up care, the impact of charitable aid is too often fleeting. In some instances when aid is prematurely ceased, original issues are typically still there, only angrier and more deeply scarred than ever before, leaving the recipient physically weaker, psychologically dependent and feeling spiritually betrayed and abandoned.

How does one inspire and encourage meaningful, lasting, sustainable change? The truth is there is no one size fits all protocol. If it were that easy, we would have done it. WF believes in taking the longer, more difficult but sustainable route.

WF is in for the long term, helping deep wounds heal from the inside-out. As WF's founder Anie Hashim Djojohadikusumo says, "Wadah's timing is God's timing, it's not pre-determined by anyone or a metric. Our community partners are family. We stay empowering them to transform their own lives so they can sustainably stand on their own."

That's why WF starts with the individual and strives to be the catalyst that empowers them to change and grow, so they too can serve as the catalyst for others to grow. Our efforts are achieving real, lasting, meaningful results transforming the lives of individuals and entire communities. We have seen it, time and time again, tear-filled raw testimony from village chiefs, mothers and children.

We have used the band-aid metaphor in order to make a point. Millions of people around the world and in the countries where we work remain hopelessly trapped in a never ending cycle of poverty. Global poverty mostly appears to be caused by world market forces and political and religious civil wars far out of community and individual control. This is further compounded by lack of electricity, clean water, and roads to market their goods as well as limited education and medical help. Without the basics needed to survive, community's lack the inspiration and motivation to pull themselves out of such a vicious cycle. WF believes in nurturing the human spirit and restoring human dignity and respect for all people in their communities. We have found that with this approach we see the emergence community leaders becoming advocates and promoters of our work. This is a very powerful force.

### **Wadah offers Inside-Up Empowerment vs. an Outside-In Hand-out**

Hand-outs often encourage dependence. It's a sad fact that is an unintended consequence of charitable aid. Our well-intended attempt to help by giving often encourages the recipient to do nothing, thus creating a cycle of expectation, entitlement and dependence. We believe that Wadah represents a fiscally sound philanthropic investment model with a proven track record of yielding a consistently strong, long-term meaningful social change. When it comes to achieving demonstrable social change, we are proud to say that Wadah is outperforming others using a strategic model.

### **Our Experience**

#### **The Wadah Effect, Increasing Momentum Generates a Multiplier Effect**

Wadah internally designed consultative and operated grass-roots programs sow's seeds of hope and succeeds because of community engagement at every stage. As the stories of our success spread across communities, villages and families have asked to be included in our projects. Thus, Wadah ignites desire and demand rather than relying on push-through economics like some other NGO's do.

Here are just a few examples of how Wadah's co-created programs increase momentum and serve as a catalyst that sparks further and faster transformation:

- In Penjarangan, North Jakarta, where Wadah sponsors a filled-to-capacity 121 student pre-school. Parents from outside the Wadah community are now clamoring to get their children into the program and trying to get additional satellite pre-school programs started because they have seen how much better the Wadah-schooled children are performing once they enter public elementary schools.
- Similarly, families within the Koa village in remote Eastern Indonesia, who did not initially choose to team-up and do the work required to get solar electricity in their homes, now want to join in and are willing to do work to become included in the program. In addition, six outside villages also want to participate. Wadah is now working to set up a training center in Nusa Tenggara Timur to help train more women in livelihoods training as well as solar electrification.

There are hundreds of such stories and thousands of individuals we have impacted in this manner. The space in this document being limited, we will only mention the above stories.

#### **The Spirit of Wadah, love, respect and dignity of the human spirit, The Wadah Effect: Transformation**

Wadah delivers it's work via volunteers, communities and its global network of advocates who are inspired by the Wadah model and not through monetary rewards. Therefore, Wadah is able to use every dollar we receive as contribution for the implementation of our projects.

Love, fosters hope and hope empowers people to dare to take action. With WF's patient support, action is practiced until it becomes a self-sustained habit, a

work ethic and that's when change and growth happen. This is the Wadah Effect. Wadah is the catalyst for transforming the lives of individuals, entire communities and the world around us.

To conclude, we would like to say that the Wadah model is based on an inclusive, consultative, comprehensive and long term engagement with our communities. That is why we believe we have been so successful.

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