

The **Meaning** and **Practice** of **Philanthropy** in **Uganda.**

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The Meaning and Practice of Philanthropy in Uganda
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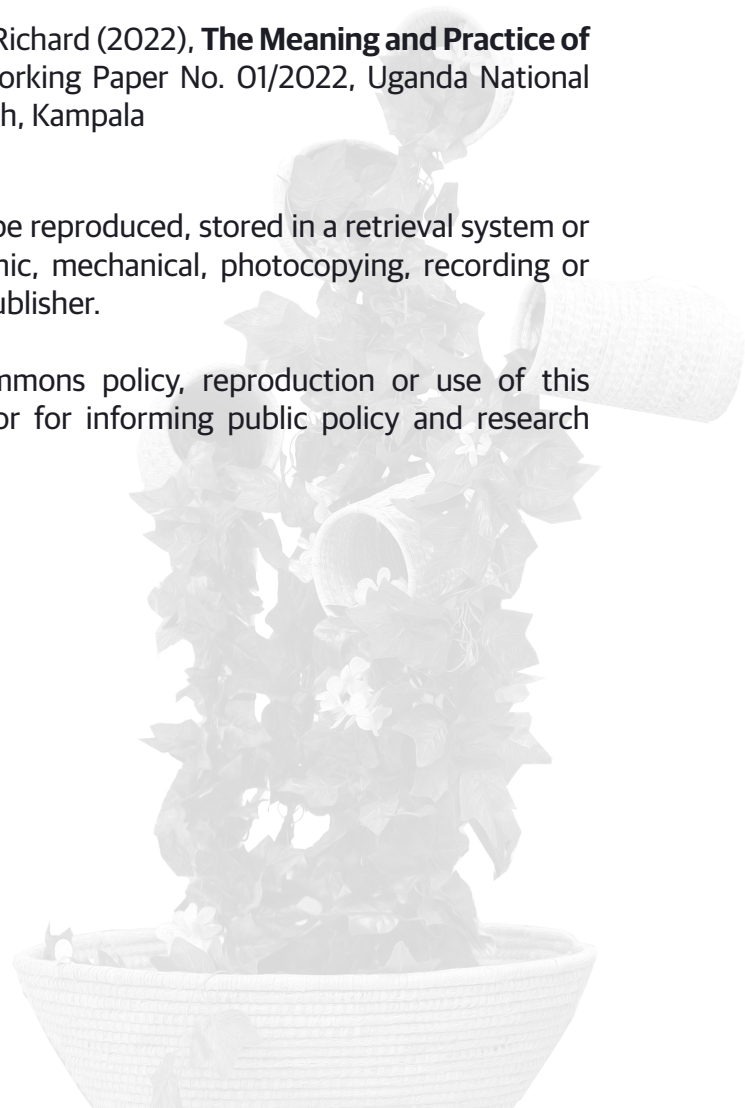


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01 *Contextual Background*

This is a 'Sense-making'¹ Paper on the meaning and practice of philanthropy in Uganda. It is the first paper in a series of five Policy Positions Papers that will be produced as part of the policy knowledge products for the Giving for Change Alliance Programme (in Uganda Philanthropy for Development). Giving for Change Alliance Programme is a Multi-Annual Program for the period 2021-2025.

The papers are produced by the Uganda National NGO Forum which is the National Anchor Institution for the international consortium of the Giving for Change Alliance Programme. The Giving for Change Alliance Programme's vision is to transform how "development is done" by focusing specifically on the recognition and importance of domestic resources in increasing local ownership, unlocking agency and strengthening communities' ability to claim entitlements from different actors, especially government. To be able to make meaningful progress on the above vision, UNNGOF commissioned five policy positions papers focusing on specific dimensions of philanthropy.

This first paper focuses on interrogating the 'meaning and practice' of philanthropy in Uganda. This paper will therefore briefly present a historical evolution of the term 'philanthropy' and associated terms as well as identify key policy entry points that can support the practice of philanthropy at community and national level. The paper will discuss broadly the practice of philanthropy and the opportunities that exist in creating philanthropy as an empowering practice at community level.

The paper uses several sources that include; a desk review of secondary literature, targeted key informant interviews with practitioners in the field and data collected from attendees during two large virtual conferences; the African Philanthropy Conference 2021 and the East African Philanthropy Conference 2021 which together brought together over 2000 participants online over the duration of three days for each conference. The author of this paper attended all sessions, took notes and spoke to a selected number of participants as well as participating in breakaway group sessions.



02 **Rationale** *for a Policy Paper on Meaning and Practice of Philanthropy.*

The term 'philanthropy' evokes different meanings, ideas and even images when it is mentioned or used. In its contemporary popular use, it evokes deceptive images of an influential - very rich individual, mostly from a developed country, who is able to give several millions of dollars to poor communities in a developing country. In this sense, the term has been firmly appropriated by those with lots of money, living in developed countries (either alive or dead) and very rich. This dominant image is problematic.

As we shall show in this paper, many people in developing countries engage with practice of philanthropy - albeit known by different names. The concern is that in some instances these actors are in a 'near apologetic' stance, seeing their actions as not worthy of mention as acts of philanthropy. This dominant appropriation of the term philanthropy by the rich and marginalization of philanthropy by ordinary community members is an issue that needs to be debunked.

In some parts of Africa, this deceptive understanding of philanthropy has made it possible for those who have become high net worth individuals (HNWI) to try and mirror the western notion of philanthropy by either giving to causes that give them global acclaim or practicing philanthropy in Africa in ways that are predominantly western. For example, the rise in the number of philanthropy foundations across the continent that look very similar in structure and philosophy to western foundations is growing rapidly. On the other hand, this formulation makes local giving and generosity invisible, unrecognized and sometimes apologetic. It frames communities in Africa as people going around with a begging bowl as those in other parts of the world drop in whatever little they have. It frames the development discourse in very unequal and disempowering terms.

In light of this challenging dynamic, relating to the meaning and practice of philanthropy, it is imperative that conceptual clarity is achieved. The dominant narrative that philanthropy is a western practice must be debunked. This has to be done empirically through research and practically through appropriate domestic policies that assign philanthropy in Africa its rightful place at the national and community level.

Discussions on any form of philanthropy in Uganda must engage with this hegemonic discourse that represents philanthropy as an exclusive practice by the rich. This will be pursued through an exercise that affords clarity to the term philanthropy. Advocacy that builds a body of knowledge and policy practice will be undertaken. This will ultimately lead to policies that support community philanthropy - an important variable in the development agenda of Uganda.



03 *Evolution* of the term *Philanthropy*

To understand the meaning and practice of philanthropy in its western epistemological formulation requires a return to the etymology of the term 'philanthrôpía'. The term 'philanthrôpía' - that later gave us the term 'philanthropy' can be traced back to a Greek word whose origins literally mean "love for mankind (or humankind)."² In its original form, the term was used by Greek philosophers like Plutarch in ways that associated philanthrôpía to 'being civilized' or a 'superior being'.³ In this formulation the practice of philanthrôpía was very much about the practice of civilization by public figures in the ancient Greek communities.⁴ Philanthrôpía was therefore very much related to the high class and those who were interested in raising their profile in society.

Philanthrôpía and Emergence of Charity

This formulation of philanthrôpía was resisted and during the Roman Catholic Middle Ages, the term philanthrôpía was superseded and the use of the term 'charity' was introduced by the church. The argument used at the time was that 'charity' embodied a better description of the religious idea of; 'charity, generosity and selfless love which are valued elements of salvation and escape from purgatory'.⁵ What the ancient Greek formulation had promoted was an idea that created discrimination and assigned philanthrôpía only to the rich and civilized - which was an important endeavor for the Greek Enlightenment⁶ and Hellenization⁷ projects.

While the Catholic Church introduced the use of the term charity in place of philanthropy, there was also an additional belief attached to charity: that there was a degree of epic reciprocity in charity. The rich gave and in return the poor - who were at the time thought of as being close to Christ prayed for the souls of the rich.⁸ As an exercise in transactional religion, it was a common practice in the later Middle Ages for wealthy individuals to try to reduce their time and sufferings in purgatory⁹ by paying for chantries¹⁰ where prayers would be offered.

Abrahamic Religions and Philanthropy

We can therefore see from the broad-brush historical narrative above that even at this time, the term philanthropy was travelling through a rough conceptual epoch. It should be noted that while the terms philanthrôpía and later charity that were used at that time were predominantly Christian, they were instrumental in shaping the practice of giving in all the Abrahamic religions - Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The literature of these religions indicates that the idea of charity and benevolence to the poor is one of the foundations of these faiths. In Judaism, charity is also called tzedakah and is tempered by the requirement of compassion and empathy of the giver. Tzedakah is a complex system based on a hierarchy of needs.¹¹ As the Jews say, in Judaism, giving to the poor is not viewed as a generous, magnanimous act; it is simply an act of justice and

righteousness, the performance of a duty, giving the poor their due."¹² In Islam, philanthropy and charity is one of the five pillars of the religion. In the Islamic religion, each year Muslims are required to pay Zakat, or "poor dues"- which is compulsory giving. Zakat is based on the following three ideas: All money used must be lawfully earned, all wealth after personal and family necessity belongs to Allah and should be shared among the less fortunate, and all philanthropy should be done for the sake of Allah alone, not for recognition or benefits such as tax breaks.¹³

While philanthropic giving has continued to date as a large part of the practice of Abrahamic religions, the idea did suffer significant resistance in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in Europe.¹⁴ With the rise on poverty and vagabondage amidst economic expansion in Europe , the attitudes of the rich towards the poor changed. Attitudes turned from being compassionate to being harsh. A school of thought emerged that argued that poor people were not close to Christ as had been propagated in earlier years. Influential leaders started arguing that poor people were idle, licentious and dangerous!¹⁵ Historians attribute this change in attitude to the changing economic conditions of the times.

Europe at the time had several hundreds of communities living in poverty and charity was no longer linked to gifts but more to relief for the poor. Additionally, local leaders and social activists from a Protestant tradition that questioned many of the Catholic ideas of the time argued that charity was encouraging laziness and exacerbating bad behavior of the poor. Yet this argument was being made at a time when charity was still a cornerstone in the practice of Catholicism. These new critiques celebrated the virtues of hard work as the 'true' Christian virtues and indeed relegated charity to a lower rung in the ladder of progressive society.¹⁶

Reclaiming Philanthropy from Charity.

This opposition to charity also led to the new formulation and distinction in the practice of philanthropy. Scholars and researchers trace the emergence of modern philanthropy to the stance taken by the French elite organization, *Société Philanthropique de Paris*, which was instrumental in the development of the idea of modern philanthropy and philanthropists.¹⁷ *Société Philanthropique de Paris* (Philanthropy Society of Paris) criticized faith-based philanthropy and built a tradition of mobilizing and giving money and gifts to causes that included initiatives like orphanages and prisons. They also ensured that this type of giving was different and distinct from the giving that happened in churches. They argued that their giving was driven by those who had 'love for humankind' without focusing on the religious beliefs of either the giver or recipient. This was an effort to return to the modified Greek formulation of philanthropy.

The idea of *Société Philanthropique de Paris* then spread to several other parts of Europe and America, and it is argued that they were instrumental in defining the modern practice of philanthropy. This period of philanthropy also saw the growth in indiscriminate giving to a diversity of causes in communities. This led to debates about the value of indiscriminate giving and institutional giving that is not controlled or regulated by the state. As one social democrat of the time wrote:

The attitude of philanthropists to those they set out to help was to 'treat them as things to be amused, educated, restricted, lectured, advised; to have everything except fair play'. We were working out our own salvation, and there was no need for the 'canting sympathy and foolish patronage' of philanthropists.

The writer concluded that;

the state alone, could tackle the problems that beset a late 19th and early 20th Century City: unemployment; homelessness; poverty especially in childhood and old age; environmental degradation and ill health¹⁸

Even with philanthropy having distinguished itself from charity, the criticism continued about the way it was practiced. As the quote above shows there were those that seemed to be quite weary about indiscriminate giving and philanthropy that is not controlled by the state. As the quote illustrates, there were also those that deemed the actions of philanthropists as serving their own benefits and viewed philanthropy as patronizing and exploitative.

Tensions in Institutional Philanthropy

Another feature of the late 15th century were those who discouraged indiscriminate giving especially to beggars and argued that all these people need to be placed in institutions so that philanthropy focuses on giving to institutions where the needy should be collected. Today, we have examples of countries that have taken aggressive steps against giving to beggars. In Ethiopia it is outlawed to hand money to a beggar during a traffic jam – hence discouraging indiscriminate giving. This type of giving is blamed for the increase in the number of beggars in the urban centers. In Uganda the same debate continues relating to children and women with babies mostly from the Karamoja region of Uganda who are beggars in the city.¹⁹

To return to the history, the resistance against indiscriminate street giving led to the growth of institutions like orphanages or institutions of persons with disabilities. Literature documents 'troublesome' children who were taken into Canada and Australia under schemes defended as 'philanthropic abduction'.²⁰ The era of institutionalization of suffering²¹ was also an era of institutionalization of philanthropy. This led to the spread of orphanages, disabled people homes and other such institutions. These kinds of institutions were also expanded during the colonial period. In Uganda the Kamparingisa Rehabilitation Home was opened in 1952 (before independent Uganda) as a detention center for 'troublesome boys'.²² In many ways institutionalization has continued in many parts of the world but has been divorced from mainstream philanthropy, although there are many philanthropists that give to such centers.

It should be noted that contemporary use of the term philanthropy in Africa has significantly been influenced by the history above. The history indicates that there has never been a single point in time when the term philanthropy sat comfortably and did not face any critique. It is a term that has evolved, it has been used at various points in history to mean different things and also to fit different circumstances. In the mediaeval times when religiosity was rife, it served as a religious vehicle. When times changed and poverty became widespread the term changed to charity. When society wanted to make a distinction between charity and philanthropy – a new movement of philanthropist that promoted institutional philanthropy grew.

The shift from institutional philanthropy in detention homes was followed by a civilizing project where the rich decided not to promote detention centers. The phenomena of giving large donations to universities, libraries in cities, museums and public leisure parks took root. This came to be known as 'scientific philanthropy'. This was a philanthropy that focuses on the root causes of a problem rather than the structural issues from a scientific point of view. Philanthropists in America were fundamentally influenced by this approach.

A key proponent of this perspective was Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie is famed to have divided his life in two – in the first phase he wanted to be the richest man and in the second phase of his life he gave all his wealth away in philanthropic endeavors. His letter – '*The Gospel of Wealth*'²³ became a seminal blueprint in understanding philanthropy around the world and was in many ways a pacesetter in what American philanthropy is all about till today. In his work Carnegie argued that the wealthy people were morally obligated to give their money back to others in society – giving to good causes²⁴ or what others have called Giving to Public Good. This idea has been quite dominant in the western conception and application of philanthropy for many decades and still lives on today.

The Emergence of Philanthrocapitalists

A new form of philanthropy has closely followed on the heels of the 'gospel of wealth' idea and that is – philanthrocapitalism²⁵. The key features of this type of philanthropy is that it is associated with donors who made their fortune at a relatively young age through the IT and finance industries. These Philanthrocapitalist have started foundations which they manage and direct. These include personalities like; Bill Gates and Mark Elliot Zuckerberg. The modern philanthrocapitalist are considered quite influential globally and are successful capitalists. Bill Gates is the owner of one of the biggest tech companies (Microsoft) and Zuckberg (Facebook).

We have also witnessed other initiatives by these philanthropists. One influential one is the new umbrella - Giving Pledge - championed by personalities Warren Buffet and Bill Gates to build a movement of philanthropists who commit to giving the majority of their wealth to philanthropy or charitable causes, either during their lifetimes or in their wills²⁶. The success of the philanthrocapitalists has even led to the thinking that they are better placed to tackle and solve the world problems than governments and NGOs. Today we see their influence in the United Nations community and even in the tackling of the global pandemic – Covid 19. Another important feature is the valorization of the philanthrocapitalist's business acumen as personalities that have the aptitudes, skills, contacts, drive, and other features which made them successful in business, and apply them to philanthropy. Some enthusiasts refer to these philanthrocapitalist as:

hyper-agents: individuals who have the abilities, persona or contacts to leverage large amounts of political or financial support for a cause, 'individuals who can do what it would otherwise take a social movement to do'.²⁷

From the discussion it is clear that the concept of philanthropy continues on a long and audacious journey. However, authors have also argued that presenting and positing philanthropy as the approach that will solve humanity's problems is deceptive since philanthropy has existed for over two centuries and yet the world's problems have continued to also exist. Further there is also the critique that sometimes the story may be *about* philanthropy and not *about* the societal structural issues that it intends to address.²⁸

The question that is being asked currently is; to what extent is philanthropy diverting attention and resources away from the failings of contemporary manifestation of capitalism?²⁹ These kinds of alternative critiques are going to be important as we rethink the future, scope and character of philanthropy.





04 African Philanthropy and the Spirit of Ubuntu

Several African authors in the last two decades or so, have spent significant time debunking the hegemonic discourse of western philanthropy as one that is an exclusively western notion. They argue that this articulation does not define accurately the reality of other parts of the world.³⁰ The key argument being that philanthropy is a culturally rooted concept that is about pro-social behavior and can cover a myriad of behaviors.

African authors have also argued that philanthropy is embedded in the life system of the African and African lives are in themselves an encapsulation of the diversity of philanthropic gestures from helping relatives, to contributing to weddings, to giving to religious functions and most of all giving time to each other.³¹ This expanded conceptualization of philanthropy to include new forms of philanthropy that include community-led philanthropy is what has led authors to ask the question - *is there is a unique 'African Philanthropy' or do we only have Philanthropy with African Characteristics?*³² It looks like this is a debate not yet settled but one that needs to be interrogated through further systematic research at country and continental level. Nevertheless, this is a pertinent question to ask.

In Uganda, like other African countries, philanthropy defies some of the standard definitions. While standard definitions emphasize giving of 'time, talent and treasure' outside the family and for altruistic or public service purposes with no expectation of benefit, in many parts of Africa this classification may not always stand. For example, giving to members of the extended family seems a predominant type of giving and all the related forms of giving that include mutual funds and other types of giving community giving. For example, analysis of the "Generosity During the Time of COVID" reports that were developed by CivSource documented some interesting kinds of giving that demonstrate the blurred boundaries of philanthropy in Uganda. Below are a couple of examples from the collections:

Hilary Nuwamanya a 24-year-old man decided to walk to health centers to collect the life-saving drugs for people living with HIV/AIDS in his community (Bunamwaya, Wakiso District), after hearing the stories of distress from several people. Another person notices his act and offers him a bicycle to use during this time. As the report says; 'his commitment to volunteerism soars through every word; he has chosen to do this at no cost. "Government forgot us, we had to find a way to look after each other."³³

In another location in Eastern Uganda:

Patrick Waisana, a volunteer at Busolwe Hospital (Butalega District) rode his bicycle daily to take ARVs and anti-TB drugs to patients who were due for a refill but couldn't access healthcare centers because of the travel ban. The thoughtful Waisana rode over 50km, expecting no pay. Kirabo Brian, a young man who works in Busolwe affirmed that indeed Waisana was one of a kind.³⁴

From these two stories, selected randomly, from various examples of people who gave their time and effortlessly supported each other in times of need – each of them speaks to a community spirit that lives within and beyond each one of us. That is the spirit that moves in communities and makes people take action to help each other selflessly. As Moyo (2011) puts it; 'African philanthropy is in fact the foundation on which an African's life and his or her development revolve. It is the foundation upon which modern institutions are built or from which they get their inspiration and identity'.³⁵

The stories above speak to the spirit that has been captured in many societies in Africa - that is the spirit of Ubuntu. For the Zulu it is expressed in the epistemological idea that says; umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu, literally meaning "a person is a person because of people or through other people". The same spirit is described by CivSource (2019) report on Giving for Public Good. The report quotes Uganda's languages that describe the act of giving as; in Baganda - "Obwa Sselunganda", in Iteso - "eitunganane" and in Lugbar Ba oa' baa si.³⁶ The spirit of Ubuntu engenders reciprocity and envelopes a communalism of interdependency, sharing, oneness, loving, giving, and a sense of a continuum of relationships.



05 **From Philanthropy** to Giving and Gifting

The idea of giving that goes beyond the household to also encompass the community is very prevalent in Uganda and many parts of Africa. This would therefore suggest a further expansion of the concept and well as exploring ways in which the concept of giving that is rooted in the African experience of philanthropy.³⁷ Authors like Fowler have argued that there is a need to make a distinction between 'giving' and 'gifting'. This distinction is driven by the assertion that giving usually falls into two major categories – giving that is transactional and giving that is relational. As Fowler et. al. (2019) says;

[...] a more substantive argument for use of gifting is that, from an ontological point of view, it is preferable because of its place in the evolution of the human behavioural repertoire that is cooperative rather than competitive. It is a type of transaction that co-determines the collaborative nature of the social order to be found within and across all societies. There is an implied 'altruistic' morality in gifting, analogous to modern philanthropy...³⁸

Given the foregoing, there has been an emergent advocacy for the need to remedy what is obviously a major error in assumptions that philanthropy serves the public good. The argument here is that bridging the African collective-good orientation of giving and helping and the public-good orientation of giving in the West requires a different theory or different concepts and well as a different policy stance. Hence advocacy for the use of the term "gifting" instead of "philanthropy" to capture a plurality of pro-social transactional practices around the world is an important policy agenda that should inform African philanthropy. It is also important to note that liberating the term philanthropy from its western conceptual strictures that hold it captive as a commercial endeavor is an important policy undertaking. In the next section we look at what the empirical evidence of global and local giving in Uganda says.



06 Empirical Evidence on Philanthropy in Uganda

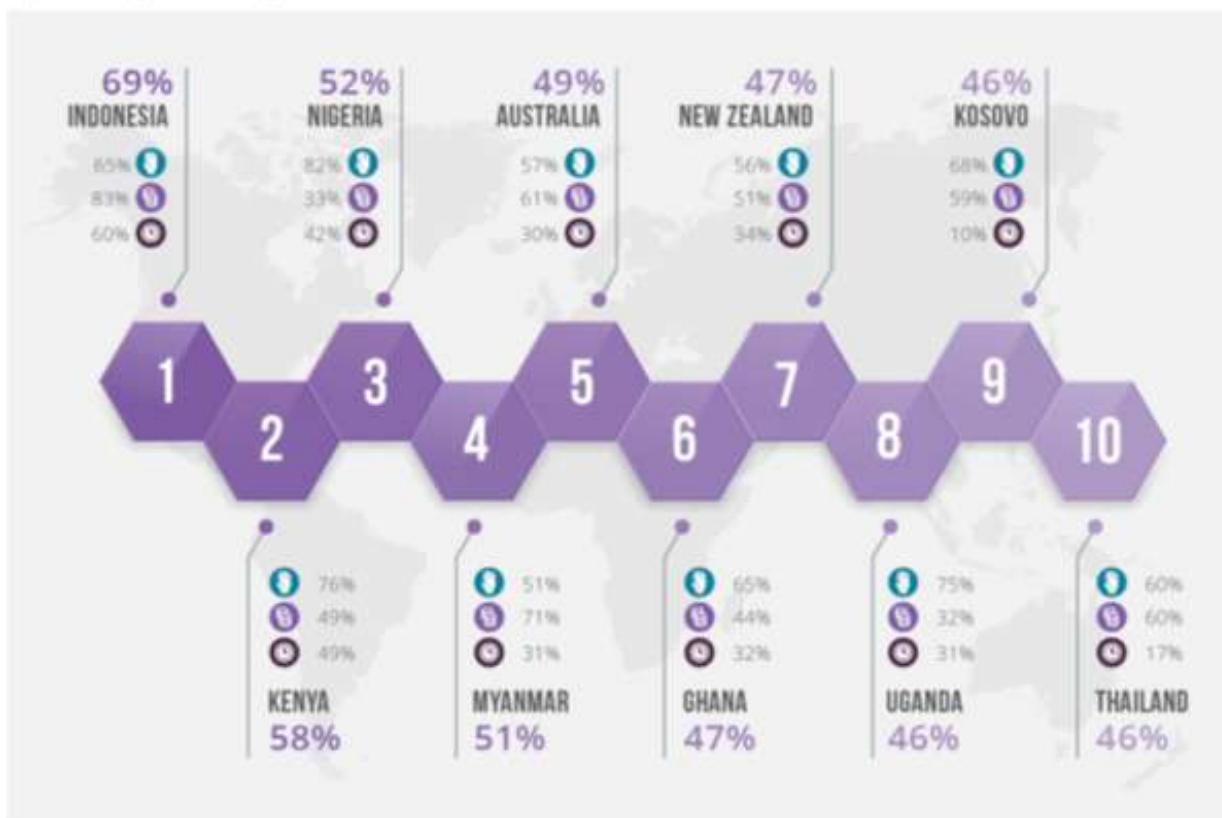
The World Giving Index annual report³⁹ published by the Charities Aid Foundation every year ranked Uganda as the 8th most generous country in the world.⁴⁰ The report is based on data collected over a period of 10 years and is the world's largest survey of charitable endeavors around the world. The 2021 World Giving Index report uncovering trends in people's charitable actions through times of economic crisis, economic recovery and geopolitical unrest. The three dimensions that the report covers include:

- Helped a stranger
- Donated money to a charity
- Volunteered time to an organization

Below is a figure that ranks the best countries globally.

The world's most generous countries

Figure 1: Highest scoring countries in 2020



Source: World Giving Index Report, 2021

As the figure above shows, in Africa four countries stood out. Kenya was the most generous country in Africa followed by Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda. On specific metrics Uganda ranked 7th with 75% of respondents reporting to have helped a stranger in the period under study. 32% of the respondents reported that they had donated money to a charity and 31% had volunteered their time.

These findings are clearly instructive for Uganda and other African countries. When these figures like these are read in juxtaposition to the poverty numbers in Uganda, it is clear that indeed the motivations for generosity are not a function of the level of wealth or poverty. For example, in 2019/20 the Uganda National Household Survey indicates that the number of Ugandans living below the poverty line in Uganda stands at 8.3 million people. On account of the effects of Covid-19, poverty rates have remained high across the country. But regardless of this reality Ugandans have continued to be generous.

While in years before the Covid pandemic, countries like the United States gave most, during the Covid pandemic we see new countries emerging as giving the most in crisis. The authors of the world giving index report concluded that, after ten years of surveying the charitable actions of over 100 countries, no one trait indicates a country's generosity.⁴² The top charitable countries represent different levels of wealth, cultures, religions, and geographies.

The authors of the World Giving Index are conducting (in 2021) in-depth studies in a sample of countries that are ranked most generous including Uganda. This in-depth research will go a long way in helping to understand the role of giving, the motivations behind generosity and other variables. However, CivSource (as mentioned earlier) has documented some of the giving in Uganda through studying and documenting the acts of generosity during the Covid 19 pandemic in Uganda.⁴³ The "Generosity During the Time of COVID" reports clearly highlighted the outpouring of generosity in Uganda. The reports may be the only authoritative collection of giving stories in Uganda during the 2020 COVID 19 lockdown and its aftermath. While the reports document and celebrate giving, they are also an important resource in providing the readers with insights into how to build a policy framework for philanthropy.

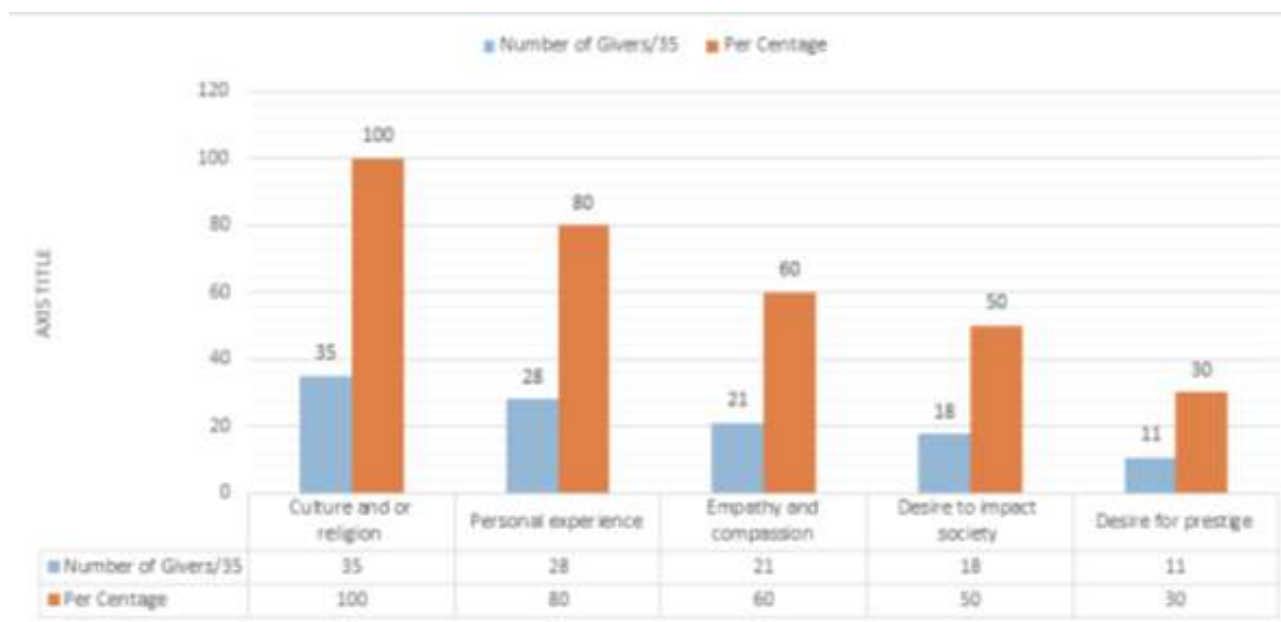
The reports present information and data on amounts of money given by individuals, institutions and communities to support philanthropic causes. From the findings in these reports it is clear that; for philanthropy to thrive in Uganda, it must be situated within a robust policy enabling environment. The stories in the reports for example present data on giving to the National COVID 19 Taskforce but do not show how what was given was used, the reports also present giving by corporate institutions and individuals but there is no known incentive available to encourage giving and ensure it is anchored in a framework of accountability. Another report⁴⁴ published by CivSource explored the landscape of giving for public good (GPG) in Uganda. The report focused on understanding the motivations of giving, the influences, changes and challenges in giving and experiences as well as the regulatory environment.

The findings indicated that individuals are driven to give to public good by different reasons. The top five reasons given included;

- Culture and religion
- Personal experience
- Empathy and compassion
- Desire to impact society
- Desire for prestige

The figure (Figure 2) below shows the results:

Figure 2: Motivations for Giving.



Source: CivSource 2020

In a country with high levels of poverty and other attendant social challenges, it is in order that a policy and conceptual dialogue on philanthropy happens. There is a need to collect empirical and anthropological evidence on the practice of philanthropy in Uganda. This will contribute greatly to the possibility of building a strong policy framework that facilitates all types of giving in Uganda.



07 *The Practice of Philanthropy*

In understanding how philanthropy is practiced, there are three main dimensions in the literature which are discernible.⁴⁵ These dimensions focus on the functional approach to philanthropy and integrate elements described in the history of philanthropy and develop them into distinct categories.

The first category is what is now known as the charity or service approach. This type of approach has its origins in religious or moral practice. While in the history we did indicate that at some point it had usurped the identity of all philanthropy, today this is a distinct practice. This is the practice employed by all religious organizations and some of the civil society organizations. This approach stresses help for the less fortunate through alms giving, tithing and its equivalents including other categories like Zakat among the Moslems.

The second category is the philanthropic or science approach which is distinguished from the charity approach as a practice. This usually focuses on addressing the causes rather than symptoms of social problems. One could categorize the Paris Society of Philanthropic approach discussed earlier as a typical example as well as the contemporary approaches by the philanthrocapitalist discussed earlier.

The third approach to philanthropy discernible in the literature is the venture philanthropy or entrepreneurial philanthropy approach. This type of philanthropic practice is fairly recent and has come in vogue with the rise of what Michael Edwards has called the 'Silicon Valley Consensus' philanthropists.⁴⁶ These are the billionaires of the new millennium that have made billions of dollars from the technology revolution.

Another type of categorization of the practice of philanthropy in the literature comes from the work of African Grantmakers focusing on the 'direction of giving'. In this categorization the practice of philanthropy is categorized in the following areas:

- One to One giving
- One to many giving
- Many to many
- Many to one

For the one to one practice of philanthropy, this is seen as the most common type of giving and one that is not even focused on in research on philanthropy. This is mostly because of the difficulty of documenting the myriad of practices that are performed on an everyday basis by individuals in numerous communities around the world.

The one-to-many practice is the most visible type of philanthropy practice and it is employed by High Network Individuals. It has become a dominant face of philanthropy and it is employed a lot by politicians and other rich individuals as well as civil society organizations. These could be organizations that give to a particular cause and raise resources intentionally to address that cause.

Many-to-many is also another type of practice that is prevalent at community level. This is usually characterized by several kinds giving that include efforts to mobilize resources from a larger group of individual givers towards a shared cause or objective that does not directly impact their immediate circle. During the Covid pandemic, this kind of giving was recorded in very many parts of Uganda with communities coming together to rescue each other.

In the many to one - this kind of practice looks at situations where multiple givers are mobilized in support of a cause or individual that directly affects or is linked to them. In the Covid 19 pandemic times this has also been a common practice. In Uganda the two types - many to many and many to one have been well documented in the generosity studies conducted during Covid 19 lockdown in 2020.⁴⁸

It is important to note that while this categorization can be defined on paper, it is not as clear cut and the boundaries between and among the various types of giving can be blurred. For example, in one-to-many giving, it is also possible to have one-to-one giving happening concurrently. This is indeed a common feature at community level. Figure 3 below presents data from a recent study conducted by the East African Philanthropy Network. The study was looking at institutional philanthropy and it established that grants are still the dominant type of philanthropic practice that several civil society organizations use in their activities. This type of practice stood at 35% and online donations came last at 5%. The figure below shows a summary of the results of this study.⁴⁹

Figure 3: Preferred Giving Practices



Source: East African Philanthropy Network (2021)

As discussed at the recent East African Philanthropy Forum, Africa is giving more to the world than it takes.⁵⁰ The practice of philanthropy and giving in Africa does not get well documented because of the systems in place for documenting as well as research in the area of philanthropy. By delineating the diversity of giving practices happening and research them empirically, practitioners in the sector will be able to demonstrate the role, place and impact of philanthropy in Africa.

Several speakers at the African Philanthropy Conference and the East African Conference in August and September 2021 respectively did make the point that Africans have always viewed philanthropy as a duty and a practice that defines the African worldview. A recent book on African proverbs on giving illustrates this with a collection of insightful proverbs on giving in Africa. A couple of examples will suffice:

This proverb from Tooro in western Uganda says;

'Never undermine/underestimate a friend who has given you little or much'

or the proverb from Bugisu that says:
'Things of a selfish person are eaten by insects.'

At the heart of these sayings is the idea that giving is to be appreciated and actually not giving can have negative consequences. In the discussions of the practice of philanthropy in this section we are able to demonstrate that there is a diversity of approaches to philanthropy. These approaches are not mutually exclusive but are reinforcing with several of them happening concurrently at community level. The key point being that in building a case for a policy on philanthropy, the diversity of approaches will have to be taken into consideration. This will help to develop an approach that is relevant and speaks to the reality and experience of communities where philanthropy practices happen. In the next section we focus more specifically on community philanthropy as a particular type of practice of philanthropy in Africa.



08 **Community philanthropy**

The Practice and Limits

In the formulation by the African Grant Makers Association, community-based philanthropy maps to the “many to one” model. In this case many members of a community come together and work towards tackling one need or problem. The problem could be at a community level. However, it should be noted that the definition of ‘one’ need and even ‘a community’ could vary.

Another definition of community philanthropy says that community philanthropy is the giving by individuals and local institutions of their goods or money along with the time and skills to promote the well-being of others and the betterment of the communities in which they live and work. This definition does draw particular attention to two key features. First, community philanthropy is a collective act, and second, it promotes the wellbeing and improvement in the lives and prospects of others.

While in traditional formulations community philanthropy could be referring to small communities in rural areas that pull resources together to deal with a specific need, we also see the emergence of larger community projects. In some situations the ‘community’ may not be a geographically bound space but an identity-based definition. In the urban areas some of the key informants I spoke to indicated that, ethnic community groups for example in the capital city or in the diaspora can come together as a ‘community’ to tackle a defined problem in a community.

For instance in the Generosity reports by CivSource there were findings relating to community philanthropy through diaspora groups. A case in point was in Karamoja:

Aware Uganda, in partnership with The Karamoja Community United Kingdom Foundation, has launched an appeal to support the vulnerable communities in Karamoja. The proceeds will go towards rebuilding the lives of the region's vulnerable women and children during and after the coronavirus. Prior to the fundraising drive, they committed to contributing Personal Protective Equipment across the Karamoja Region.⁵³

However, it should be noted that while 'community' may not be defined as geographical, this is an issue that needs further interrogation in the understanding of community philanthropy. The dominant use of the term 'community philanthropy' links it to the idea of a geographical scope categorized as a community where the philanthropic practice happens. Geography is therefore an important variable in understanding what constitutes community philanthropy. As shown in the case below; community philanthropy would typically fall in situations like this case in the generosity reports involving community members coming to the rescue of a woman whose husband had gone to the city. The narration is as follows:

Lorna Wanyenze's husband was supposed to travel back from his trip to Kampala, the President announced a national lockdown. With just a few weeks left until the birth of her baby, the very pregnant Lorna went into a state of panic. She was new to the trading center in Butiru Sub-County. She knew no one and was counting on her husband to be there for the birth of their son. As soon as her neighbours noticed that her husband was away, and would be stuck wherever he was, they started trickling into her small compound with help. "First they brought a bunch of matooke, and then avocado," she told of the giving that unfolded right before her eyes. "The next morning, I heard a knock at my door. About three or four women who had brought me more food and water."⁵⁴

The concept of community philanthropy offers a different way of looking at the assumptions and concepts that underlie the general understanding of organized philanthropy. Crucially, it offers a means of understanding 'community' from the perspective of localized help and its proper place in development thinking and practice. However, it is important that proponents of community philanthropy avoid romanticizing and further taxing the poor in the name of local resource mobilization. The idea is not to increase the burden on the poor nor to exploit their existing systems and strategies of help. The objective of exploring community philanthropy should be more about learning from what works organically and what is consistent with the values and norms of the communities involved.



09 *Philanthropy and Social justice*

Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation has written a pathbreaking book entitled; *From Generosity to Justice: A New Gospel of Wealth*. It is instructive and insightful that a new gospel of wealth is being written to interrogate and move away from the earlier ideas of Carnegie. The book lays out interesting insights as it brings together several thinkers and activists to speak about the transitional shift from generosity to justice. While the book is instructive, it is also restrictive in as far as it discusses philanthropy from a largely 'treasure based' conceptualization.

The examples do indicate interesting insights in terms of the ways in which the thinkers in the book approach the issues around philanthropy, it still speaks about a 'new gospel of wealth'. It may be time to completely divorce the thinking on philanthropy from discussions of wealth. This is because the conceptualization of wealth in purely monetized ways robs agency of the other forms of philanthropy (talent and time) which in many ways are used greatly by those who are excluded or disadvantaged by the global monetary system.

However, it should be noted that the transition from generosity to justice is a very welcome idea especially in African philanthropy. Philanthropy and its army of hegemonic practices has been discussed in many spaces as removed from the political realities of Africa. It will therefore be important that more work is done to see how philanthropy can move from being an exercise in giving without justice to an exercise in giving that promotes justice. Social justice philanthropy is therefore an area that is still growing but one that has to be built intentionally as it will play a major role in locating philanthropy at the heart of societal transformation – both social and politically. Social justice philanthropy is an ideal towards which we can strive.

While we should be aware that completely egalitarian societies are an utopia, we should bear in mind that building societies that are fairer in economic, social and political realms with opportunity for a more equitable distribution of power is an aspiration within reach.



10 Challenges *around Philanthropy*

The historical challenges of philanthropy notwithstanding, challenges are still abound in how philanthropy can be understood. The exploitation of the motivations of philanthropy through practices that pollute philanthropy with patronage systems is an issue to contend with. It is now clear from everyday experience that not all giving is altruistic. For instance, in the history of independent Africa, authors have documented various ways in which African communalism and giving has been exploited.

In Peter Ekeh's 1975 thesis of 'two publics in Africa', he argues that colonialism in Africa left two kinds of publics - a civic public and a primordial public. He submits that that while individuals pretend to uphold the virtues of the civic public (brought by colonialism) they also remain loyal to their primordial public (rooted in tradition). This clash of norms and interests according to Ekeh generate tendencies that have come to be known as tribalism and corruption with public officials stealing and looting and giving through philanthropic gestures as 'High Net Worth Individuals' to their clans and villages.

These instances and practices do point to the fact that giving is deeply embedded in the politics of patronage and while it can be wished away, we know that it is a reality that scholarship on philanthropy should engage with. Indeed, when the first Covid 19 lockdown happened in Uganda, the first people to start distributing food publicly were politicians who were interested in the 'political capital' that comes with giving. This led to a serious and brutal crackdown on politicians who were distributing food during the lockdown by the government security agencies. Giving will always have to contend with the politically strategic and perverse patron-client political economy relationships responsible for much of Africa's governance excesses.

The connection between giving and political calculation by politicians and state officials who donate part of their loot to constituents as a way of buying loyalty and patronage is something that has been variously documented in Uganda.⁵⁵ The discussion on the sometimes outright selfish and "dark" motivations of individuals as well as private and corporate foundations to engage in philanthropy further accentuates this view. Research needs to be done in this area as a way of opening doors to the broader questions of the politics of giving in Africa and provide an opportunity to bring into the conversation estranged epistemological standpoints on giving and politics in Africa.



11 *Policy Imperatives of Philanthropy*

So where do we go from here?

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that a major problem of our times is to formulate a public policy for philanthropy that will ensure freedom for voluntary action consistent with the need for public accountability. In this section we present some areas for engagement in terms of building a strong public policy ecosystem that supports the philanthropy infrastructure support organizations and the policy community in Uganda.

The following are key areas of possible policy advocacy and policy engagement:

a) Defining Philanthropy in Policy and Legislation:

As has been illustrated in this paper, the term philanthropy is not one that sits comfortably in any societal discourse. It is a fluid term. It is imbued with images that make it deceptive, yet it is also a powerful term that can encapsulate several important generosity gestures. It will therefore be important for a public policy discussion to be initiated so that philanthropy can arrive at a local definition or definitions and its definitional challenges discussed and negotiated.

This is very important in the Ugandan policy context especially in light of the ongoing debates around registration of non-profit and non-state organizations including NGOs, companies limited by guarantee and other such formations. The character, history and philosophy that underpins philanthropy as discussed in this paper will do well with a structured policy discussion that can arrive at clarity in terms of helping to 'give giving a name'.

b) Investing in philanthropy leadership development, innovation, and capacity-building efforts:

African philanthropy is a growing field of practice. It does therefore need a policy and regulatory framework coupled with a community of practitioners that play a diverse number of roles in the building of philanthropic practice in Uganda. Developing a robust national capacity development initiative that focuses on building knowledge about the diverse forms of meaning and practice in African philanthropy is critical.

Further investing in leadership development, innovation, and other capacity-building efforts is critical for the growth of the sector in terms of persons that give and also the growth of the sector in terms of the quality of giving practices that will embody African philanthropy. This capacity development will not only focus on practitioners but also regulators in government who play a crucial role in instituting an enabling environment for philanthropy at country level.

c) Developing a culture of local giving and local resource mobilization to escape the 'starvation cycle':

Philanthropy infrastructure support organizations are undergoing challenging times. While giving has expanded during the Covid 19 pandemic across Uganda and around the world, institutional giving has also dwindled. Many nonprofits are increasingly being asked by donors and governments to do more with less. The call for organizations to cut costs and build sustainable models may lead, at least in the short term, to exacerbating the "starvation cycle," in which funders only pay for program costs and not for administrative costs.

To overcome this starvation cycle will require innovations in local giving and local resource mobilization. The expansion of avenues of local giving and the building of strong financing models is critical. Developing capacity and influencing and expanding the 'generosity mindset' (a discussion we shall develop in another paper) will be critical for the growth of local resource mobilization and philanthropy as a whole.

d) Creating a Nexus between Local Economic Development and Community Philanthropy:

Uganda is a highly decentralized country. Uganda currently has 135 Local Governments. The Government is working on implementing an innovative National Local Economic Development Policy to support Local Governments to identify own investment opportunities that can generate revenue, create employment and make them less dependent on the central government.

While this is a welcome policy innovation, its success rests on the capabilities at community level. It will therefore be imperative that innovations that link these processes together are explored so that local economic development is augmented by community philanthropy.

e) Exploiting the potential of the Parish Development Model and Community Philanthropy:

The Government of Uganda is also rolling out the Parish Development Model from 2021. This model is a vehicle through which household incomes and the quality of life of Ugandans will be improved, where the Parish is developed as a wealth creating unit responsible for taking services closer to the people. The Parish will play a key role in the coordination, monitoring, supervision, reporting and oversight for Production, Marketing, Social Services and Financial and other services in their localities.

The Parish Model will lay emphasis on agro-industrialization initiatives. One of the key objectives of the Parish Development Model will be supporting initiatives focusing on mindset change. This is where the synergies between community philanthropy and parish development will have to be explored to ensure the best for citizens across Uganda.

f) Create learning communities and build robust knowledge production processes on philanthropy:

Patterns of giving, policy intervention strategies, structural issues, programmatic opportunities and constraints need to be constantly studied and understood. It will therefore be imperative that there are internal processes built that support learning from others and sharing what is learnt. There are over 135 Local Governments in Uganda and over 1000 parishes. It is important that note that as one community tries to accomplish something in one corner of the country, it is possible that there are other communities in another corner that will have already tested solutions to the same problem in another "greenhouse of democracy".

It is therefore critical that the philanthropy ecosystems operates as a true ecosystem - seeing and exploring the interdependence and opportunities for action so that communities desist from reinventing the wheel – or worse, trying out failed strategies. In the same breath, when something promising is invented, it needs to be publicized so that others can apply and adapt it.

g) Building Leadership Policies that are Gender Sensitive:

If leadership is critical in getting things done, then it will be critical to look for those who demonstrate both exceptional self-leadership and community leadership in promoting the agenda for community philanthropy. To develop a truly social-justice-rooted and gender sensitive approach to philanthropy will require envisaging a world that is just and free from patriarchy through processes that enable leaders to enable others to lead and building power with them instead of over them.

It is critical that promoters of community philanthropy align with the gender sensitive view that patriarchal ideology enables and legitimizes the structuring of every aspect of our lives by establishing the framework within which society defines and views women and men and constructs male supremacy. Through community philanthropy it will be important to promote intentional actions that focus on fighting patriarchy within the systems of philanthropic practice.



i) Philanthropy Resources should complement and not backfill:

Philanthropic resources at community and local level cannot match government resources shilling for shilling, nor can they make up for them as funds are cut back during budget cuts.

In all cases where funds are mobilized, the key should be to identify high-impact opportunities and make investments that will leverage or increase the effectiveness of much larger sums of government funding. This will always mean that when resource mobilization is undertaken, philanthropy resources should not lead in any way to less government resources at community level.



End Notes



- 1 Sense-making is the process by which people give meaning to their collective experiences. It has been defined as "the ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing". See Weick, K., Sutcliffe, K. M. and Obstfeld, D. (2005). **Organizing and the process of sensemaking**, Organization Science, 16(4): 409-421.
- 2 Mary Ellen S. Capek and Molly Mead (2006) **A Effective Philanthropy: Organizational Success through Deep Diversity and Gender Equality**, MIT Press, Cambridge
- 3 See Hubert Martin, Jr. (1961) **The Concept of Philanthropy in Plutarch's Lives**, The American Journal of Philology, Vol. 82, No. 2 (Apr., 1961), pp. 164-175
- 4 Ibid, p. 168
- 5 See Wagner, David (2000) **What's Love Got To Do With It: A Critical Look At American Charity**, New Press, New York
- 6 Enlightenment is a European intellectual movement of the late 17th and 18th centuries emphasizing reason and individualism rather than tradition. It was heavily influenced by 17th-century philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, and Newton, and its prominent figures included Kant, Goethe, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Adam Smith.
- 7 Hellenization is the historical spread of ancient Greek culture, religion, and, to a lesser extent, language over foreign peoples conquered by Greeks or brought into their sphere of influence, particularly during the campaigns of Alexander the Great in the 4th Century BC
- 8 Lindemann, M, 2002, **Urban charity and the relief of the sick poor in Northern Germany, 1750-1850**, in Grell, O P, Cunningham, A and Jütte, R (eds) 2002, **Health care and poor relief in 18th and 19th century Northern Europe**, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp136-54
- 9 Purgatory is a place in (Catholic doctrine) or state of suffering inhabited by the souls of sinners who are expiating their sins before going to heaven.
- 10 A chantry is an ecclesiastical term that may have either of two related meanings: a) a chantry service, a Christian liturgy of prayers for the dead, which historically was an obiit, or a chantry chapel, a building on private land, or an area in a parish church or cathedral reserved for the performance of the "chantry duties".
- 11 <https://tzedakah.info/>
- 12 Ibid, <https://tzedakah.info/>
- 13 <https://www.muslimaid.org/>
- 14 Jütfe Robert (1981) **Poor Relief and Social Discipline in Sixteenth-Century Europe**, European Studies Review, Volume: 11 issue: 1, page(s): 25-52
- 15 Jones, C, (1982), **Charity and bienfaisance: The treatment of the poor in the Montpellier region 1740-1815**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- 16 Ibid, p.36
- 17 Duprat, Catherine (1993), *Le temps des philanthropes*, Paris: Éditions du C. T. H. S.
- 18 See Waters, C (1990), *British socialists and the politics of popular culture, 1884-1914*, Manchester University Press, Manchester
- 19 See Suam Nangiro's blog here
- 20 See Cunningham Hugh (2015) *Philanthropy and its critics: a history* in Behrooz Morvaridi (2015) **New Philanthropy and Social Justice: Debating and Conceptual and Policy Discourse**, Polity Press, Bristol, p.27
- 21 Rothman, D J, 1971, **The discovery of the asylum: social order and disorder in the new republic**, Little, Brown and Company Boston
- 22 See <https://mglsd.go.ug/kampiringisa-rehabilitation-center/>
- 23 Carnegie, Andrew (1889), **Gospel of wealth**, North American Review, CCCXCI
- 24 See Andrew Carnegie (2017) **The Gospel of Wealth** [first published in 1889], Carnegie Corporation, New York
- 25 Bishop, M and Green, M (2008) **Philanthro-capitalism: how the rich can save the world**, Bloomsbury Press, London
- 26 See <https://givingpledge.org/> for details of the Giving Pledge and the Billionaires involved
- 27 Ibid, p.48
- 28 See Pablo Fuentenebro (2020) **Will philanthropy save us all? Rethinking urban philanthropy in a time of crisis**, Geoforum, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.07.005>, p.3
- 29 See Hay, I., Muller, S (2014), **Questioning generosity in the golden age of philanthropy: Towards critical geographies of super-philanthropy**. Program Human Geography, 38 (5), 635-653

- 30 See for example; Moyo, Bhikinkosi (2005) **Setting the development agenda. U.S. foundations and the NPO sector in South Africa: A case study of Ford, Mott, Kellogg and Open Society Foundations.** Johannesburg, South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation
- 31 Fowler, Alan (2002) **NGOs as a moment in History:** Beyond aid to social entrepreneurship or civic innovation? *Third World Quarterly* 21 (4), 637–654.
- 32 Moyo, Bhikinkosi (2009a) **Philanthropy in Africa**, Pp. 1187–1192 in *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, edited by H. K. Anheier, S. Toepler, and R. List. New York: Springer
- 33 *Generosity Report Vol.1*, p.23
- 34 *Generosity Report Vol.1*, p.50
- 35 See Moyo, B. (2011) **Transformative Innovations in African Philanthropy**, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University, Brighton for The Bellagio Initiative. Accessed June 20, 2020. <http://www.bellagioinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Bellagio-Moyo.pdf>
- 36 CivSource Africa (2020) **Finding Philanthropy: Exploring the Practice of Giving for Public Good in Uganda**, CivSource Africa and Robert Bosch Stiftung, Kampala, p.11
- 37 Remarks by Professor. Bhikinkosi Moyo, Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investments at the East African Philanthropy Conference, August 2021
- 38 Alan Fowler and Jacob Mwathi Mati (2019) *African Gifting: Pluralising the Concept of Philanthropy*, International Society for Third-Sector Research and The Johns Hopkins University 2019
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- 40 Charities Aid Foundation (2020) **CAF World Giving Index 2020: A Global Pandemic Special Report**, CAF, London
- 41 *Ibid*, p.7
- 42 *Ibid*, p.4
- 43 The full reports can be accessed at <https://www.civsourceafrica.com/giving-reports>
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- 50 Presentation by Dr. Tendai Murisa, Founder & Executive Director, SVIO Institute at the East African Philanthropy Forum, September, 2021
- 51 Wilkinson-Maposa (2009) **The Poor Philanthropist III: A practice-relevant guide for community philanthropy**, United States Centre for Leadership and Public Values, Johannesburg
- 52 Interview with respondent from West African Civil Society Institute, August 2021
- 53 *Generosity Reports, Vol 2*, p.60
- 54 *Generosity Report, Vol.2*, p.50
- 55 See for example Alliance for Alliance for Finance Monitoring [ACFIM] (2021) **WHO WON THE CAMPAIGN SPENDING WAR IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2020?** Interrogating the influence of money on the outcome of elections, ACFIM, Kampala.

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