

Reflective Note

5th African Philanthropy Conference 2024

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

The recently convened [5th African Philanthropy Conference](#) themed: ‘The Next Frontiers of African Philanthropy’ held at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe organised by the [Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment](#) and [Trust Africa](#) was momentous with the presence of prominent African philanthropists H.E Graca Machel, Dr Tade Aina and Professor Gerry Salole.

African Philanthropy has always had a place in our society; giving and helping remain critical to our ethos of community sustainability. Without philanthropic attitudes and practices, our communities cannot be in harmony. African communities are historically embedded in the communal care, support, and nurturing.

The resilience of these diverse communities relies on strong traditions and cultural practices of communality, which draw indigenous knowledges of kindness, empathy and compassion for people and nature. [Professor Bhekinkosi Moyo](#) affirms by stating that ‘*culture and relational building are central attributes in defining what philanthropy in the African context looks like*’. However, what is African Philanthropy in 2024 and what innovations exist thereof?

Youth-led Philanthropy, Technology, and Inclusive Strategies

It is undeniable that youth development is centralised around organised mobilisation of resources to tackle socio-economic disparities in Africa. The systems of organising vary from collaboration on issue-driving, deliberate empowering and often, to protest against undemocratic ills such as corruption and unethical behaviours in society. Youth cannot organise with financial and non-financial resources; hence civil society donors have accommodated their funds to be advanced to youth-led organisations that drive societal change in their own communities.

The increased use of technology and social media to mobilise and organise youth for social impact has been exceptional. With an estimated 40% of youth aged between 15-24 years who can access the internet, a fair amount of them utilises it to communicate socio-political arrangements in their communities in efforts to eradicate poverty and improve governance systems. Would ethical artificial intelligence strengthen these efforts? According to Dr Abeba Birhane, ‘artificial intelligence has the potential for ‘good’ if used with caution, informed policy, and regulation with utmost technological accountability’.

While others believe, artificial intelligence may be overhyped, deceptive and overinflated, there is a possibility for its balanced harmony with philanthropy if it is inclusive, unbiased and solution driven. Youth-driven social impact initiatives rely on technological communication to mobilise and organise, to disseminate information and share economic opportunities but what happens to almost 60% of youth who are faced with a digital divide in Africa?

Philanthropy and a Just Society – Supporting Social Movements and Peacebuilding

Kenyan GenZ protesters are sending signals to the shifting of power while seeking sustainable change that secures their future. Social movements have a long history of justice-oriented impact varying from developmental to innovative practices in communities. Food security, access to public healthcare and dignified labour equity have been driven by social movements often with crowd funding or donor support to achieve a common goal. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation is exemplary in leadership capacity development support across Africa while the Tony Elumelu Foundation is exemplary in entrepreneurship development support across Africa, both these African philanthropists have associated their ‘giving and helping’, with

causes meaningful to their core beliefs of societal change. Since they have become international high-net worth individuals, their efforts to partners with rural communities for social justice remains fundamental to their call for an Africa that thrives and prospers.

African Philanthropy is altruistic and requires immense partnership between its people and its leaders in harmony with its nature. Indeed, most instance of African Philanthropy is evident in major gifts and donor funding, there still exists tremendous community driven efforts of day-to-day giving and helping as seen in township markets, funerals, farmlands, and places of worship. War torn and political unstable regions in Africa such as Somalia and Somaliland are priority for continental wide humanitarian aid which foresees stability as beneficial to all.

Philanthropy, Strategic Partnerships and Accountability

In observation, Dr Brian Kagoro's view that 'popular struggles born out of outrage may unwittingly create power/leadership vacuum with good intentions, with clarity about what they want and do not want while avoiding microwave change'. This purports to the reality that change is all facets of the African experience is most likely will be driven by philanthropic imagination and support as new systems of innovation disrupt old patterns of giving and helping, advancement and instant opportunities in mobilising and organising provide intense fundraising efforts to bring about community change.

Moreover, these rapid changes ought to be accountable to the protection of human rights, dignity, and justice. Intercontinental and interregional philanthropic private and public partnerships are gaining momentum in shaping and shifting power in order to usher a new era of Africanism that has the best interest of people and nature in heart beyond profit, oligarchy, and political-party centralism.

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Sincerely,
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