

# The Bellagio Initiative

The Future of Philanthropy and Development in  
the Pursuit of Human Wellbeing

## Commissioned Paper

### Transformative Innovations in African Philanthropy

Bhekinkosi Moyo  
TrustAfrica, Dakar, Senegal

November 2011

Copyright is jointly held by the three Bellagio Initiative partners: Institute of Development Studies (IDS), the Resource Alliance and the Rockefeller Foundation.

**IDS** is a leading global charity for research, teaching and information on international development. Its vision is a world in which poverty does not exist, social justice prevails and economic growth is focused on improving human wellbeing. IDS believes that research knowledge can drive the change that must happen in order for this vision to be realised.

**The Resource Alliance** has a vision of a strong and sustainable civil society. It aims to achieve this through building skills and knowledge, and promoting excellence. To help organisations increase their fundraising capabilities, the Resource Alliance provides a range of services and resources, including conferences, international and regional workshops, accredited in-depth courses in fundraising and communications, tailor-made training and mentoring, research, publications, newsletters and award programmes.

**The Rockefeller Foundation** has a mission to promote the wellbeing of people throughout the world. It has remained unchanged since its founding in 1913. Its vision is that this century will be one in which globalisation's benefits are more widely shared and its challenges are more easily weathered. To realise this vision, the Foundation seeks to achieve two fundamental goals in its work:

1. It seeks to build resilience that enhances individual, community and institutional capacity to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of acute crises and chronic stresses.
2. It seeks to promote growth with equity so that poor and vulnerable people have more access to opportunities that improve their lives.

In order to achieve these goals, the Foundation provides much of its support through time-bound initiatives that have defined objectives and strategies for impact.



For further information on the Bellagio Initiative:  
E-mail: [contact@thebellagioinitiative.org](mailto:contact@thebellagioinitiative.org)  
Web: [www.bellagioinitiative.org](http://www.bellagioinitiative.org)

# Transformative innovations in African philanthropy

Bhekinkosi Moyo,<sup>1</sup> TrustAfrica, Dakar, Senegal

## Introduction

This is a discussion of philanthropy in Africa in its many manifestations and how it seeks to address the promotion of wellbeing. Philanthropy and development are not new phenomena in Africa. Neither are they divorced from the questions of human wellbeing. For its part, philanthropy is intrinsically embedded in the life cycle of birth, life and death of many, if not all Africans (Moyo 2010). At any one given time, one is either a philanthropist or a recipient of one kind or another of benevolence. Though not a common or even user-friendly concept in Africa, philanthropy is a phenomenon perhaps best captured by the notions of ‘solidarity and reciprocity’ among Africans and some of the features that accompany relational building. As a result, therefore, culture and relation-building are central attributes in defining what philanthropy in the African context looks like. By the same token, an African’s dance with the contested and contradictory trajectories of developmental processes goes a long way back to pre-colonial times. Since then, Africans and their continent have been a laboratory for trials and errors in development frameworks. Africa might continue being the testing ground for more trials if no deliberative action is taken to reverse the trend. Till today the development question has not been settled. Any attempts to settle it have normally resulted in the abandonment of the African culture in pursuit of an externally carved solution. In this theatre of trials and tribulations, philanthropy – local and external – has not been a neutral spectator. As Douglas White (2010) writes, ‘philanthropy commands a lot of money and it plays a major role in the financial success of charities (*op.cit.*: 62). One might add that because it commands a lot of money and influence, philanthropy is never a neutral actor in any setting. There are motivations and intentions for philanthropy. At times this has been for the good of humanity but at times this has been to the detriment of human progress. Indeed, donors or, rather, philanthropists give for particular reasons, and they are all motivated by different things; giving back to their communities; driven by political, social and religious beliefs or because they have been asked to give. But overall, philanthropy or when reduced to a narrower meaning – charity – ‘serves and has always served an important strategic social function by mediating between the needs of the disadvantaged and the resources of the privileged’ (O’Halloran 2007: 30).

Hence from time immemorial, philanthropy as understood to mean the ‘love for humanity’ has always been practised by Africans in their different and unique contexts. Understood mainly as giving or helping – or even better, more encapsulated as solidarity and reciprocity – this entailed collective or individual efforts towards a social or public good. This conception of good was not divorced from questions of welfare, well-living or wellbeing – understood today more in terms of sustainable and people-driven and inclusive development. However, due to analytical influence and frameworks primarily from the West, philanthropy in Africa or, to be more specific, African philanthropy, has sometimes been wrongly and maliciously defined as indigenous or informal. Yet

---

<sup>1</sup> Bhekinkosi Moyo writes on civil society, philanthropy and questions around Africa’s economic and political governance. He recently edited a volume of eighteen chapters on the shrinking public sphere in Africa in a collection called (*Dis*) *Enabling the Public Sphere: Civil Society Regulation in Africa* – with a foreword by Graca Machel. His other edited book was published in 2007 focusing on *Africa in Global Power Play*. He is based at TrustAfrica, Dakar-Senegal. Bheki can be contacted at moyo@trustafrica.org

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. The bifurcation between informal and formal misses the central point about African societies: that one is an extension of the other. In other words, rather than talking of informal and formal forms of philanthropy, it is much better and conceptually appropriate to talk about horizontal and vertical forms of philanthropy (inadequate as this framework might be) – what other scholars of philanthropy have called 'philanthropy of community' and 'philanthropy for community'. The first has as its foundation the African philosophies, while the second is externally induced. Conceptually it is dangerous to define African philanthropy as informal or indigenous as this relegates everything 'African' to the informal realm because at the centre of the African's identity is this aspect of solidarity, reciprocity, giving or helping for a social good. The other reason why it is inappropriate to do so is because it relegates African philanthropy to the periphery of the mainstream or recognised modus operandum yet African philanthropy is actually at the centre of the universal meaning or even practice of world traditions of philanthropy. In fact, African philanthropy is foundational to an African's upbringing or life as a whole. This is more eloquently described in the Zulu saying: *Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (You are because I am). And as explained by Marcel Mauss (reproduced in Feierman 1998):

The pattern of symmetrical and reciprocal rights is not difficult to understand if we realise that it is first and foremost a pattern of spiritual bonds between things which are to some extent parts of persons, and persons and groups that behave in some measure as if they were things.

In other words, one's existence is intrinsically linked to that of others. In most African societies, one is defined as poor only if that person does not have relatives or people he or she calls relatives – social or biological – and not because one lacks money. It is in this context that today's philanthropic expressions and manifestations, particularly in Africa, need to be understood as they intersect with development and questions of wellbeing. Menkhoff (2010) could have been writing about an African society when he said:

Philanthropic givers can range from the widow with two mites and the man in the street dropping spare change into a tin can thrust at him, to multibillionaires like George Soros and Bill Gates.

(Menkhoff 2010: 138)

This paper discusses these intersections between philanthropic innovations and partnerships, wellbeing and development in Africa. It has four sections. The first gives a general background to the concept of wellbeing as it relates to questions of development. The second gives a snapshot of the landscape of philanthropic practice in Africa, paying attention to philosophies underpinning giving, helping, reciprocity and solidarity. It locates this discussion in the new forms and trends of philanthropy that have taken place over the last decade in Africa and in how these have devised innovative strategies for addressing wellbeing. These include such strategic innovations as impact investing, leveraging, strategic grant-making, peer learning, online giving, collaborations and advocacy among others in an attempt to interface and interact with key development actors in the continent. The third discusses some of the existing collaborations and partnerships that philanthropic institutions have developed with themselves and other development actors. The fourth section pulls everything together to identify new forms of knowledge that are emerging out of these innovations, collaborations and partnerships. It also identifies implications for policy options on questions of wellbeing, philanthropy and development in Africa. And finally it talks about the implications for the twenty-first century agenda for promoting wellbeing.

The examples that are given throughout the paper are illustrative as this paper cannot realistically cover all philanthropic institutions and practice in Africa. So, for example, even though the corporate sector plays a major role in development, this paper does not discuss corporate philanthropy, save for a short discussion on impact investment.

# Development and wellbeing in Africa

## On development

Africa has come of age. It is a continent that was once described by *The Economist* as 'Hopeless Africa'. This was due to incessant and protracted conflicts – most of which still persist today. A number of African countries are still under the scourge of civil conflicts. Increasingly, conflicts are also caused by the dramatic changes in the climate, making climate change the most popular Achilles heel for many African countries. In addition, Africa continues to record the highest levels of human rights abuses. The paradox is that while many countries in Africa have democratised and adopted pluralism and multiparty systems, their political elites pay lip service to the culture of democracy. Political instability remains a threat to the wellbeing of African citizens – more often exacerbated by electoral politics and resource scrambles. This has had ramifications for economic performance. But even those countries that have performed well, recording such growth rates as 6 per cent or so over the last decade, have not translated their growth into tangible effects on the wellbeing of their citizens. Inequality still remains very high and the number of poor people has increased exponentially. One of the ticking bombs in Africa is the phenomenon of unemployable graduates and the increasing number of helpless youths. This raises serious questions not just about the question of the sustainability of the growth rates that Africa continues to register but also the model of development that Africa adopted.

In the African political sphere, governance deficits are threatening the gains made so far, especially in the economic performance of such countries as Botswana, Liberia, Namibia, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia among others. The increasing repression of human rights advocates, the deterioration of the rule of law and the general decline in governance standards and adherence to principles of democratic culture are some of the fundamental negatives that are reversing the gains made particularly over the last years. The state is still fragile, corruption is endemic and basic freedoms are eroded daily in Africa. Clearly this has serious implications for the overall wellbeing of citizens. Their ability to choose values that they subscribe to is highly compromised by this state of affairs. This disconnect between citizens and their rulers has led over the last year (2010) to serious protests, particularly in North Africa for basic rights, accountability and decent conditions of living. Further, the poor governance system in Africa has also contributed to Africa being the least peaceful region in the world.

These developmental challenges confronting Africa have implications for social development and efforts to alleviate poverty. There is a widening gap between the poor and the rich across Africa. Access to health, education, water and sanitation remain pressing social issues across Africa. This is further compounded by the always volatile food prices. As a matter of fact, the whole of Africa is currently food security-risky and most countries are vulnerable to climate change. This has repercussions for the promotion of wellbeing and what role each development actor assumes. It also puts into sharper focus the kind of strategies and innovations that are needed to respond adequately to the threats to wellbeing in the twenty-first century. These fault lines in the social and cultural spheres – such as social ills, illiteracy, poverty, social injustice and inequities among others – are widening with great speed. All these are threats to wellbeing as expounded in

Amartya Sen's Capability Approach framework, which defines it as 'the ability to live well across all spheres of life' (Clark 2005: 1340). This approach refers to both 'mental and material aspects of development in addition to many other substantive freedoms which are not covered by the limited notions of utility and opulence that once defined wellbeing' (*op.cit.*).

At the same time, however, there is a serious movement in Africa that no longer sees Africa as the hopeless continent but rather a continent of hope. Writing for the *Africa Progress Report*, Kofi Annan said:

What was termed the hopeless continent ten years ago has now unquestionably become the continent of hope. Hope that strong growth rates will translate into jobs, incomes and irreversible human development gains: that the continent's enormous wealth will be used to foster equitable and inclusive growth and generate opportunities for all; that economic transformation and social progress will drive further improvements in democratic governance and accountability as the middle classes grow and demand more of their politicians and service providers; and hope that rulers who abuse their power to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and of democratic processes are, at last, seeing the writing on the wall.

(Annan 2011: 6)

Today Africa is increasingly being defined as the 'Land of Opportunities'. For example a recent illustration by the Journal Report of the *Wall Street Journal* (19 September 2011), showed the map of Africa from Cape to Cairo with all kinds of opportunities that investors can reap if they come to Africa. The map had more opportunities than risks – in many ways confirming what is increasingly becoming the norm, that Africa is the next frontier for investments and development. According to the IMF, Africa is poised to grow in 2012 by 5.8 per cent.

Indeed, Africa might be seen today as a new frontier for development, but so far this has 'not translated in progress being measured in tangible improvements to people's lives' (Africa Progress Panel 2011: 8). People's wellbeing has not improved. There currently exists a disconnect between economic performance and social progress. The growth rates are of low quality. These are not accompanied by the much needed 'structural transformation and diversification' to achieve wellbeing outcomes. Neither do they translate to equitable human development and public services (Africa Progress Panel 2011: 11). As the Africa Progress Report points out:

Driven by capital-intensive extractive sectors, the current type of economic growth has little positive impact on employment and income levels and virtually no effect on employment-intensive sectors such as agriculture. It is thus hardly surprising that, despite a decade of strong economic growth, poverty remains pervasive throughout the continent (*op.cit.*: 11).

To match economic performance and social progress it is therefore imperative that 'African leaders accelerate economic diversification and structural transformation' – failure of which growth will be meaningless. But it is also important to address the totality of a person or society's wellbeing from a political economy perspective. So critical is the political economy of Africa that it cannot be divorced from the interventions that have been made to address Africa's challenges as well as the different strategies that have been adopted to harness the opportunities that Africa presents today. Likewise the role that different development actors play in Africa to address equitable and inclusive development cannot be isolated from this political economy. It is here therefore that philanthropy finds itself so intricately interspaced with Africa's cultures, knowledges, institutions and normative frameworks that its discussion as it relates to wellbeing cannot happen outside the intricacies that exist between development and African philosophy. Our understanding of wellbeing therefore rests squarely on the African creed, 'I am because you are'.

## On wellbeing

While this paper is not dedicated towards defining 'wellbeing', it suffices to state that its definition has been contested over the years. There are different dimensions of human wellbeing comprising material and non-material assets, resources and experiences (Edwards 2011). On the one hand, there are some scholars, for example, who have narrowly seen it as referring to notions of utility (happiness, desires, and fulfilment) and opulence (income, commodity command). On the other hand, others like Amartya Sen have viewed wellbeing as much broader and more substantive. Sen remains the dominant scholar to have dedicated a much bigger framework to understanding wellbeing in his writings. His articulation of wellbeing is thus both a 'critique of the traditional notions of development that conflated wellbeing with opulence and utility' (Clark 2005: 1341) and a development of a framework that prioritises capabilities or what he terms 'substantive freedoms that people have reason to value'. In strengthening this framework, Deneulin and McGregor (2010) stretch the capability approach to include what they call 'the *telos* of living well together' – expanding the social conditions in which it is possible to live well in relation to others in society (*op.cit.*: 503). In other words, while Sen's wellbeing is individually oriented, these scholars see an intersection between individuals and societies. Hence, in their view, a much more nuanced capability framework is one that 'situates human beings and their wellbeing at the end concerns of economic and social processes' (*op.cit.*: 514). It is one that 'makes people subjects of their own lives'. This was well captured by the *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* when it stated that:

Current wellbeing has to do with both economic resources, such as income, and non-economic aspects of people's life (what they do and what they can do, how they feel, and the natural environment they live in).

In the African context as elsewhere the concept of wellbeing is not static. It is one that adapts to new contexts and their demands. Its dynamism is determined by the political, economic, cultural and social developments. This understanding and realisation mean that our view of philanthropy's role in this regard should be one that addresses different dimensions in different ways and over very different timeframes (Edwards 2011: 9). Michael Edwards synthesised this very well when he stated:

Some foundations value short-term improvements in material wellbeing over every other indicator, while others are preoccupied by long-term systems change. Some are prepared to trade off democratic participation in order to get things done, while for others 'getting things done' is the task of democracy itself. Some are happy to focus on extending the poor people's participation in the current structure of the economy, while others are want to transform it in order to address the future challenges of climate change and consumption... (2010: 10)

This is echoed by the Southern Africa Trust – a grant-maker based in South Africa focusing on regional frameworks to eradicate poverty – wellbeing should be approached and addressed from a multidimensional perspective involving the tackling of poverty of the whole person as opposed to a narrow focus on economic performances and incomes. Furthermore, wellbeing should be addressed systemically – targeting how societies are structured and how they relate to each other, including transforming power dynamics. And thirdly, addressing wellbeing should adopt a regional approach as opposed to statist frameworks that focus only on national development without taking into account how economic and social relations cut across the board.<sup>2</sup> The link between wellbeing, development and philanthropy is best nuanced by the values of solidarity,

---

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Neville Gabriel, Executive Director, Southern Africa Trust, Midrand, 12 October, 2011.

reciprocity and caring that African societies espouse. Below is a short discussion of the African philanthropic landscape and how it relates to the promotion of wellbeing.

## African philanthropy landscape

In its etymology, philanthropy has to do with the love of humanity, making the link between wellbeing and philanthropy natural. Yet the large philanthropic resources within and from outside Africa have not given birth to a reduction in inequality, dictatorships, poverty or social injustices. For the most part, some forms of philanthropy, especially the externally induced ones have remained very rigid, failing to adapt to the changing and complex demands of wellbeing. For its part, the various forms of philanthropy in Africa have responded differently based on philosophical or even ideological and religious underpinnings to giving and helping. It is therefore important that a short discussion of the philanthropic landscape in Africa is discussed here to provide both the framework and context for the subsequent sections on philanthropic innovations and collaborations in promoting wellbeing.

For many years, there has been a characterisation of the philanthropic landscape in Africa in general as that comprising both horizontal and vertical forms of philanthropy. Because the term 'philanthropy' is not that popular with people in the continent, and neither is it useful in capturing the different nuances of what exists, the emerging body of literature on philanthropy in Africa prefers to define philanthropy as 'help' or 'giving' (Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006) or solidarity – something that Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* call the philanthropy of community. Here, philanthropy refers to giving by many, particularly the marginalised or the poor, to other poor individuals of their community. More often this form of philanthropy has both cultural and linguistic underpinnings – hence usually taking on expressions such as cooperatives, rotation and savings clubs (normally called *stokvels* in South Africa), communal collective efforts and burial societies (Moyo 2010: 263).<sup>3</sup> Locating philanthropy in Africa within the reciprocity framework, Steven Feierman (1998) wrote that:

Sub-Saharan Africa in the centuries before colonial conquest, was a region where voluntary giving was, in a majority of cases, grounded in reciprocity, and yet where inequalities existed, where kindly help was as double edged as it is in the philanthropic West – a peculiar combination of caring and dominance, of generosity and property, of tangled rights in things and in people, all in a time and place where the strong would not let the weak go under, except sometimes.

(Feierman 1998: 4)

He went on to describe the various dimensions of this reciprocity, saying:

In many places, the model for generous giving was that of apparent caring for children, so that even strangers might be taken in and defined as children. This way of giving care to the poor grew out of a perceived need for numerous and fruitful descendants – a need partially grounded in the religion of the ancestors as practiced in many societies in Africa.

(Feierman 1998: 4)

Other forms of this reciprocal giving include traditional systems of cooperation, mutuality and solidarity. These remain active today across African societies, 'primarily in rural areas as well as

---

<sup>3</sup> For a very detailed discussion of philanthropy in Africa, see Moyo (2010, 2009a) in the *Encyclopaedia of Civil Society* and also in *Global Philanthropy*.



in informal economic settings'. Among these are rotating savings and credit associations – popularly known as *stokvels* in South Africa but found everywhere across Africa. More often a group of people come together and pool their resources for a later redistribution. Beyond the savings and credit elements is the central value of mutual assistance. Burial societies are another form of African solidarity which initially played the role of cultural and societal compliance with rituals associated with death especially for those who die far from their ancestral homes. Today these have incorporated a somewhat micro-insurance aspect to them; beyond the communal fundamentals of sending off the dead to the land of ancestors, burial societies now serve as financial backers for the bereaved. There are also other mechanisms for sharing labour-intensive ventures such as farming, house construction, harvesting or any other activity that might need mutual work-sharing. Known as *ilima* (coming together to help those without) among the Nguni-speaking people, this practice is widespread across Africa. Writing on cooperatives, Jurgen Schwettman, ILO Deputy Regional Director for Africa, said:

These ancient traditions have been adapted to modern times and applied to the conditions of the urban informal economy of many African countries. Modern examples include those female traders from West Africa who pool their resources to send one of them to China to buy merchandise in bulk for all of them, without any written agreement.

(Schwettman 2011)

All these forms of philanthropy or solidarity (burial societies, *stokvels*, rotating savings clubs, cooperatives, etc.) are bound together by a certain form of social capital which acts as a social control mechanism. Regardless of the amount of money involved – large or small – members of these formations are protected by social capital as opposed to any written legal instrument. Working cooperatively is something inherent in their lives. According to ILO, Africa is home to more than 70 million members of cooperatives.

These cultural underpinnings provide the foundation upon which institutional philanthropy, another form of philanthropy in Africa – understood to mean private foundations, trusts, corporate foundations, family trusts, community chests and more recently community foundations – are built and formed. This form of philanthropy is understood as vertical in nature referring to giving or helping by the few to the many – usually by the rich or the High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) to the poor. This form of philanthropy should not be understood in isolation of that practised by the poor philanthropists. For doing so disempowers poor people by placing them under the mercy of the rich philanthropists. By so doing, the reading of the rich philanthropist in isolation of the poor takes away the agency of poor people and the very fact that poor people are philanthropists in their own right, and that they are subjects of their own lives as the capability framework provides. Research is increasingly showing that giving is not an exclusive domain of the wealthy (Everatt and Solanki 2005; Wilkinson-Maposa *et al.* 2006). In other words everyone is a philanthropist in his or her own right. Writing in *Global Philanthropy*, Tamzin Ractliffe (2010) said:

There is in South Africa and Africa broadly, a deep-rooted tradition of giving and mutual helping. It is perhaps these terms that are best able to describe the philanthropic activities of the large majority of the populace. Indeed 'giving' resonates much more strongly within South African society on a broad level, covering everyday acts of kindness as well as planned giving by ordinary people within and between communities.

(Ratcliffe 2010: 237)

The question that remains is whether vertical and horizontal philanthropy actually meet. Very seldom do these meet, and where they do, for example in South Africa where banks attempted to scale up *stokvels*, the defining features of horizontal philanthropy gave way to the vertical ones. The result was, of course, the fragmentation of the social capital in favour of more structured and

legal frameworks. This is an area that still needs attention: how to use horizontal forms of philanthropy as the foundation for the vertical expressions of modern-day philanthropy.

The point though is that, till recently, foundations were mainly those of an international nature, primarily American and European. These were not linked to the cultural and philosophical foundations of solidarity, giving and helping that Africans expound. Most focused on grant-making, mainly to civil society and the private sector, around such areas as development, governance, human rights, community development, HIV-AIDS, and peace and security among others. But they did not nuance their promotion of wellbeing or whatever it is they were addressing in ways that took into account the African approach and understanding of wellbeing. As addressed above, human wellbeing has many dimensions and only an approach that values cultural and social dynamics can adequately respond to the needs of the African setting. As new ways of giving develop in the philanthropic sector, mechanisms of connecting horizontal and vertical forms of philanthropy will be needed. Fortunately, there have been some changes in the continent as a result of this realisation. For example, a number of international donors have moved their resources to their African counterparts to handle and manage them in ways that are context-specific and sensitive. There has also been an upsurging emergence of African foundations right across the continent such as TrustAfrica, African Women Development Fund, Southern Africa Trust, Mo Ibrahim, Nelson Mandela, T.Y. Danjuma, Tony Elumelu, and Yossou N'Dor among many others. Some of these foundations have been created and supported by international foundations. However, a number of those receiving money from outside have very strong values and orientation towards what's good for the continent as opposed to just being delivery channels of Western actors or rivers through which any water flows. Of importance is that these African-rooted foundations have an understanding of the continent and this determines what money they take and how they shape and deliver their programmes.

Other foundations like T.Y. Danjuma and Tony Elumelu are African-founded and funded. These are established by the ultra-rich Africans, now popularly called the High Net Worth Individuals – most of whom made their money from such sectors as mining, financial services, construction and telecommunications. These include the likes of Mo Ibrahim, Tony Elumelu, T.Y. Danjuma, Tokyo Sexwale, Patrice Motsepe, and many others. The *2011 World Wealth Report* states that the population of the HNWI's increased exponentially in 2010 and this increase was also reflected in Africa. And according to a *Barclays Wealth Report* (2010), 'philanthropy among the high net worth individuals across the world is set to increase with individuals likely to give more both in terms of money and time' (*op.cit.*: 2). These individuals tend to give a portion of their resources to causes that are meaningful to them (*op.cit.*: 3). The increasing size of the middle class across Africa also means that more and more such individuals will be setting up their own foundations as a way of giving back to their communities. According to the analysis of the *2011 World Wealth Report* by Dalberg, there are between 1600 and 2000 HNWI's in Africa and Africa's HNWI population is the fastest growing in the world (11.1 per cent between 2009 and 2010 compared to 8.3 per cent global average).

The main challenge, however, with this group so far is that they generally tend to support issues that address only the tangible side or rather the material dimensions of wellbeing and not the non-material aspects such as governance, social justice, body integrity or issues related to policy reforms. There are exceptions. The Tony Elumelu Foundation, for example, supports governance issues around private sector development. The Foundation is also leading efforts to catalyse further investments in African management education, and to provide private sector support to transformational African governments. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation supports governance reform initiatives through the Mo Ibrahim Index and the Presidential Awards. But generally, most HNWI's support issues that have material expressions such as schools, health, building clinics, roads and

buying materials such as wheelchairs, books, and computers among others. More often these individuals are driven by short-term needs of the poverty-stricken contexts as opposed to long-term questions of policy and the environment under which wellbeing can be tackled substantively. In addition, short-term results drive the giving of these HNWI's. Questions of measurability also determine where they spend most of their resources. It is easier to show a school, count the number of desks and computers than it is to prove that policy change has indeed taken place. At times these HNWI's also do not make the connection between how they made their profits and the general policy and governance environment. When approached for support for questions of governance, human rights, etc., they normally pose the question, what is in it for me? This displays the disconnection between their success and the general policy and governance environment which most of these other non-material aspects of wellbeing seek to achieve.

There is also a widespread increase in the establishment of foundations that are set up by politicians such as former heads of state and government (for example, Nelson Mandela, John Kufour, Thabo Mbeki, Joachim Chissano and Kenneth Kaunda among others). While these might not be financially endowed as those set up by HNWI's of the likes of Elumelu and Danjuma, they nevertheless have built their foundations on the basis of the influence that they exert especially at the policy level. This is now a trend and it is therefore likely that more such foundations will be formed as other heads of state leave incumbency.

Sports and other celebrity personalities such as footballers, musicians and artists have also created their own foundations right across the continent, and these focus on issues that are dear to their hearts. These normally support sport-related projects. This is another area where more could be done given the numbers of athletes, soccer stars and artists who are making billions of dollars either locally or internationally. These can be linked to community foundations – another phenomenon that has seen an increase in Africa since the early 1990s. There are today more than 15 community foundations across Africa.

Foundations – whether family or corporate or even operational – have always been the biggest constituents of institutional philanthropy in Africa. But as stated above, there are other forms of philanthropy as summarised in Table 1 below. The highest concentration of foundations is still in anglophone countries mainly in Southern Africa (South Africa), East Africa (Kenya) and parts of West Africa (Nigeria and Ghana). Although there is no existing research that explains why this is the case, anecdotal information suggests that this is partly due to different colonial experiences and the fact that major philanthropic expressions, particularly foundations, have their history in North America and Europe whose geopolitical interests are in anglophone Africa rather than francophone or lusophone Africa. In addition, there is less literature on philanthropy in francophone Africa than there is in Anglophone settings. But new foundations are being set up in these previously neglected areas. North Africa, for example, particularly in Egypt, has developed some foundations.

**Table 1 Summary of philanthropic expressions in Africa**

Horizontal forms of philanthropy	Vertical forms of philanthropy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burial societies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family foundations and trusts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home Town Associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperate foundations, including Corporate Social Investments (CSIs)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotating Savings Clubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual giving, including religious giving (alms, <i>zakat</i>, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community foundations and chests</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Stokvels</i>, <i>harambees</i>, merry-go-rounds, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operating and private foundations, e.g. AWDF (African Women's Development Fund), TrustAfrica, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mutual Aid, including labour-intensive activities such as house construction, ploughing, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HNWIs and their foundations, including venture philanthropy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional loaning of cattle for milk and farming usually by a local rich person, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundations set up by politicians, athletes, artists and other influential individuals</li> </ul>

The majority of these philanthropic institutions maintain that their work is geared towards addressing questions of wellbeing. The Kenyan-based philanthropic entity, the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), views threats to wellbeing as simple issues of access to basic things such as education, health, food, etc. Janet Mawiyoo of KCDF argues that:

For many, once these simple and basic needs are addressed, it becomes easier to make choices on what to do or value. It is the basic issues in one's life that the Foundation addresses because the majority of people are not in a position to make choices due to their conditions.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, KCDF looks at the overall issues affecting a person rather than narrowly boxing its programmatic thrust into specific thematic areas. This way the Foundation has kept its agenda and focus open enough to respond to community needs. For example, one of the issues that has resonated across Kenya has been the demand for educational scholarships, particularly for children whose parents cannot afford education or those children who are orphaned. This has led to the development of an Education Fund which addresses access to education. As Mawiyoo notes:

In areas where poverty is extreme, it is impossible to talk about wellbeing unless you are able to be responsive to basic needs that are fundamental such as human rights, health, food, water, shelter, education, etc.... The foundation thus finds itself in a situation where it is not enough to work to influence government policy, it has to engage communities to think about long-term ways of addressing such concerns among them and among vulnerable groups in their midst. Making programme support flexible to address such matters is therefore critical. In this process, KCDF has recognised that developing and building grassroots governance is very critical as a long-term way of ensuring that communities have capacities to engage government and other actors on the ground for their benefit.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Janet Mawiyoo, Executive Director, KCDF, 20 September 2011, Bellagio Rockefeller Center.

<sup>5</sup> Janet Mawiyoo, *op cit*.

In a similar manner, the Foundation for Civil Society in Tanzania also views the threats to wellbeing around the lines of access primarily to education and health. According to the Foundation's CEO, John Ulanga, these two areas impact heavily on citizens' capabilities.<sup>6</sup> And the AWDF based in Accra uses the women's rights lens to examine wellbeing and citizenship. The Foundation argues that the women's constituency has been part of the framing of the questions of wellbeing and the shift from the mere focus on economic performance to other encompassing indicators such as social, cultural, etc. The Foundation's Director of Programmes stated this point so eloquently by saying:

The marginalisation of African women through exclusion and discrimination has impacted negatively on the wellbeing of communities, nations and the continent. Whatever area it is (whether environmental, economic or otherwise), unless approached through the experiences or conditions of these marginalised women, we will still be in the same position in another 50 years.<sup>7</sup>

Mukasa continued to emphasise that:

Unless there is an ability to live the spirit of *Ubuntu* – humanness – as opposed to differentiating [read discriminating] on the basis of gender in our relations, we will have the same conversation in another 50 years.

What is very clear is that wellbeing is multidimensional and different entities emphasise different aspects depending on their contexts or ideological, even philosophical, orientations. Some like KCDF view their interventions as addressing primary needs such as access to food, education and health. There are some like the AWDF that approach wellbeing from a particular framing and political consciousness. Yet an organisation like the Southern Africa Trust (SAT) approaches wellbeing from a regional, systemic and multidimensional perspective. This implies that to properly get a full meaning of wellbeing or something closer to it, one needs to look at the aggregation of these institutions as opposed to a singular dimension. In many ways this is an indication of the complexity of the construction and meaning of wellbeing in a context that is beset by a mired array of challenges that encompass both first and second generation rights. Because these institutions define wellbeing and its threats differently, their strategies and innovations also differ as we discuss below.

## Innovations in African philanthropy

Africa is a land of experiments and innovations. A lot of creativity takes place across the board. Philanthropy has not been spared either. In an insightful article, called 'Powering Philanthropic Passions', Thomas Menkhoff writes that:

All forms of philanthropy are [today] experiencing unusual changes. The first is borderless philanthropy. The second is e-philanthropy and the spread of giving, enabled by technology, in innovative ways. The third is philanthrocapitalism, with the ambitions, and the resources of business entrepreneurs and their many ideas, ambitions and resources for increasing social impact. The fourth is collaborative philanthropy, as givers and even governments seek to collectively create greater social impact.

(Menkhoff 2010: 137)

---

<sup>6</sup> Interview with John Ulanga, CEO, Foundation for Civil Society in Tanzania, 20 September 2011, Bellagio Rockefeller Center.

<sup>7</sup> In-flight interview with Sarah Mukasa, Director of Programmes, AWDF, 23 September, 2011.

He argues further that all these trends are motivating the rich and the not-so-rich to give more and in new ways, thus powering philanthropy, leading it toward an exciting and sometimes surprising future (*op.cit.*: 137). As a result of these innovations, there has over the last decade or so been an increase in private capital flows. For example, during the global economic meltdown, private flows outpaced official development spending. According to *The Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances* published annually by the Hudson Institute:

Private and voluntary organisations contributed \$12 billion in private funding to the developing world in 2009, a slight increase from \$11.8 billion in 2008. Of the total amount, regionally 33 per cent went to sub-Saharan Africa, and 4 per cent went to the Middle East and North Africa.

(Center for Global Prosperity 2011: 12)

This was due to the new sources of money that included philanthropic investment firms, impact investors and the use of innovative forms of financing such as KIVA (Africa Progress Report 2011: 51). Online giving is one innovation that has occurred in philanthropy with the advantages of wider reach and responsiveness. In addition to the benefits of online platforms, there is direct connection between donors and recipients by such entities as KIVA. These platforms – KIVA and DonorsChoose, for example – provide instant matching services for donors and beneficiaries (Menkhoff 2010: 143). Established in 2005, KIVA allows people to lend money through the internet to microfinance institutions across the world, which in turn lend money to small businesses (*op.cit.*: 143). In 2010, KIVA had distributed since 2005 over US\$110 million in loans from over 630,000 lenders and donors (*op.cit.*: 143).

Huge donations by a few rich individuals have also changed the face of philanthropy globally and in Africa. Such donations as those from Bill Gates and Warren Buffet have had huge influence on the policy and practice of philanthropy in particular and development in general. In Africa huge sums of money endowing foundations such as Tony Elumelu and T.Y. Danjuma are also redefining the meaning and direction of philanthropy. If more private sector individuals establish foundations, impact investing will be the norm in Africa as it has already resonated with a number of organisations. And because these are locally funded, they have the flexibility to fund development differently without having to negotiate political interests with their donors. The trend of locally funded foundations is set to increase given the increase in local giving, especially by the middle class.

Mass giving is also on the increase, especially for particular causes such as disasters or humanitarian situations such as the recent famine in Somalia and Kenya. The Gift of the Givers is a South African-based emergency relief philanthropic entity that has responded swiftly to such needy places as Haiti, Japan and Somalia. The Gift of the Givers has had to work through the Department of International Cooperation in South Africa to channel its resources across borders. While internationally there is an increase in borderless philanthropy, the legal and institutional frameworks for cross-border philanthropy have not been updated to meet the times. The Kenya for Kenyans initiative was another example of mass giving – a trend and innovation in philanthropy that addresses some of the elements of wellbeing. And in 2010 when Haiti was hit by a disastrous earthquake, a group of African civil society organisations and philanthropic institutions under the leadership of Mrs Graca Machel in collaboration with TrustAfrica, SAT, CIVICUS, AWDF and the African Monitor among others, pooled resources together to help the people of Haiti. One of the powerful resources was the solidarity that Africans from all walks of life showed towards Haitians. Financial resources were also gathered through online giving, tele-smses, individual giving and direct banking. This was an example of collaborative philanthropy for an international cause.

Grant-making is another tool that most of the philanthropic groups utilise. Most of these are very strategic regarding how they make their grants. The AWDF, for example, recognises that grant-making can be exclusionary. This is so, particularly to make the life of philanthropic organisations easy, for example, by giving small grants or not giving grants to groups that are not organised along traditional concepts of an organisation, etc., yet these constitute the largest population of Africa. Sixty per cent (60 per cent) of AWDF's grantee profile consists of women's organisations whose annual budgets do not exceed US\$100,000. According to Mukasa:

This requires greater investment by AWDF in technical assistance, capacity building, outreach and a flexible approach to grant-making which to some may appear costly and time-consuming. Nevertheless, this constitutes the majority of women's organising on the continent, particularly in rural communities. As an organisation seeking to support women's rights organising in Africa, it would be remiss to exclude this sizeable constituency, which is for the most part excluded from the traditional grant-making organisations which are increasingly adopting the 'larger, fewer' strategy (larger grants, fewer grantees = greater focus and impact). These investments are at the community level. But these women are then linked with the national discourses through the provision of a platform to showcase contributions, achievements and to express issues of concern. This enables them to influence national dialogues on legal, economic or political issues.<sup>8</sup>

Capacity building is another area of ongoing innovation that philanthropic groups are engaged in. The continent as a whole has embarked on capacity development as the way to achieve development effectiveness. The Nepad Capacity Building Framework is perhaps the continental blueprint that most institutions refer to in addressing their needs and those of their constituents. The AWDF has embarked on capacity building through movement building approaches that encompass various sectors. For example, the AWDF is the hosting organisation of the African Feminist Forum (AFF) – a program initiated by African feminists to craft an autonomous space for reflection and agenda setting. The AFF has been widely recognised as an innovative and effective mobilisation tool and methodology. The other movement building dimension is that of engaging with popular culture. Through the African Women in Film Forum, AWDF has convened a number of key actors, producers, writers and distributors in the *Nollywood* (Nigeria) film industry to examine the negative and discriminatory portrayal of African women in these popular movies.<sup>9</sup> TrustAfrica's grant-making strategy is also geared towards the provision of technical assistance in addition to institutional and project funding, particularly for its civil society partners in crisis countries such as Liberia and Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, for example, TrustAfrica has facilitated the establishment of an NGO House and Arts Factory where civil society formations will access subsidised state of the art services. In Liberia, TrustAfrica has focused on strengthening the capacity of civil society to engage in post-conflict reconstruction and policy engagement. And the Elumelu Foundation builds the capacity of African enterprises for good governance. It is through such efforts geared towards building the infrastructure for social change that some aspects of wellbeing are addressed.

Private-public partnerships are also increasing, being adopted by the philanthropy sector. In Tanzania, at least in the two areas of access to health and education, there have been innovations that express new ways of doing things. In health, for example, in the last three years, an initiative called Medical Women Association of Tanzania (MEWOTA) was established to respond to early detection of breast cancer. Appealing to the citizens, MEWOTA partnered with a private television station to mobilise resources to fund the campaign. So far the association has

---

<sup>8</sup> In-flight interview with Sarah Mukasa, Director of Programmes, AWDF, 23 September, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> For more details of AWDF, see [www.awdf.org](http://www.awdf.org)

raised more than \$300,000 from individuals, corporations, etc.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps what this shows is that people give to a clear cause. Still in health, a hospital run by an NGO – the Comprehensive Community-based Rehabilitation Treatment – has been raising money in partnership with Vodacom, Barclays and other corporations to treat disabled children and women with fistula. According to Ulanga, none of this money was raised from foreign sources. And in the field of education, the Foundation for Civil Society has given seed funding to communities as catalytic funding for bringing communities together to set up village communities to mobilise resources for community developments such as scholarships.

This approach is more or less what KCDF also does for communities and the Tony Elumelu Foundation does for entrepreneurs. According to Mawiyoo:

KCDF encourages communities to mobilise resources and the Foundation matches whatever the communities would have raised. The Foundation currently houses 20 community funds amounting to \$1 million from ordinary people, most of whom are home town associations. These communities decide how they want to use their resources and which areas they want to address. If for example, their Fund is for scholarships, the community members select the children they want to support using criteria they develop themselves. Further, these communities have used the money to establish income-generation projects that allow them to address other wellbeing issues such as health, youth, women, etc. KCDF has in the past provided incentives for communities interested in building small endowment funds for issues they are passionate about. A number of communities have opted to build such funds for education for orphans and other vulnerable children. KCDF still offers incentives to communities who want to raise money for things that matter to them but not to funders, e.g. a dormitory for girls, etc. This is meant to encourage communities to continuously consider resources from among themselves and not feel that they can only do stuff with money from outside.<sup>11</sup>

Social investments are new ways through which a number of philanthropic organisations are doing business today. GreaterGood, for example, is a philanthropic organisation based in South Africa which from the outset was established:

In order to address the need for information to strengthen civil society, to grow the connections between communities and people and to facilitate and encourage giving activities of all kinds; building a philanthropy of community, whilst at the same time creating the infrastructure, database and information that would ultimately also respond to the needs of the corporate sector wanting to engage more meaningfully with the imperatives of social investment.

(Ratcliffe 2010: 238)

As a result, GreaterGood also offers advisory services for social investment. In addition, GreaterGood provides 'a range of ways for connecting people with their communities (such as giving time, goods, skills, knowledge, reward points and money). At the heart of this approach is the message that everyone has something to give. Following out of this, GreaterGood created the South African Social Investment Exchange (SASIX) in 2006. This is a platform that helps CSI managers through pre-screening social investment analysis as well as monitoring and evaluating of impact. By the beginning of 2010, SASIX had brokered commitments of around ZAR250 million (approximately US\$26 million) in social impact financial investment (*op.cit.*: 241).

---

<sup>10</sup> Interview with John Ulanga, CEO, Foundation for Civil Society in Tanzania, 20 September 2011, Bellagio Rockefeller Center.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Janet Mawiyoo, Executive Director, KCDF, 20 September 2011, Bellagio Rockefeller Center.



Impact investing is a popular strategy that a number of social venture philanthropists, including the Tony Elumelu Foundation, are making use of. Venture philanthropy is a relatively new trend, albeit growing very fast. This concept originated 'among business people who after having achieved economic success mainly in the private sector, were looking for ways to use not only their money but their business skills and expertise to address social issues and community needs' (Johnson *et al.* 2005: 39). The term can also be used loosely to mean all forms of charitable endeavours that involve risk-taking, innovation and entrepreneurship (O'Halloran 2007: 52). More specifically, this form of 'philanthropy supports social entrepreneurs with scale-up potential'. Venture philanthropists or their followers have criticised conventional philanthropy, mainly foundations, for investing in programmes and projects rather than in non-profit infrastructure, capacity building and entrepreneurial talent (*op.cit.*: 52). As a result they have urged foundations to innovate and make use of the six strategies from venture capitalism: namely (i) deploying risk management tools; (ii) creating performance measures; (iii) developing close relationships with their investments; (iv) investing more money; (v) investing over long periods; and (vi) developing exit strategies.

Defined as 'generating financial returns', which can range from producing a return of principal capital to offering market-rate or even market-beating financial returns, while solving social or environmental challenges, impact investment is not necessarily a new phenomenon as the Dalberg Report on *Impact Investing in West Africa* (2011) shows. But it is a buzz right across Africa. In West Africa, for example, the highest concentration is in Ghana and Nigeria but overall there were 207 impact investors in 2011 during the time that Dalberg conducted the survey. Of these, 86 were microfinance institutions, 68 were venture capital funds, 18 were Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), 12 were foundations and 23 were institutional investors (Dalberg 2011: 24). Overall these had invested \$3.2 billion across various sectors.

Impact investing is, however, still not fully developed and as such there are some challenges that could hamper its success. For example, in most of these countries, the skills gap is still a major area to be addressed. And so is the legal and institutional framework for impact investing. As detailed in a *Special Report on Impact Investing* by the Rockefeller Foundation:

As with any nascent industry, the current framework for impact investing is still very basic and fragmented. There are only a limited number of independent third party sources of information or investment consultants; there is a complete lack of clearing houses and syndication facilities; and a common language for impact investing is yet to emerge. All this makes it difficult to communicate opportunities, successes and failures and greatly increases transaction costs for investors.<sup>12</sup>

The good news, however, is that the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) is developing some of these necessary legal and institutional frameworks, including the monitoring ones to make it easy for the field to use a common lexicon. Another challenge associated with impact investment is that of absorptive capacity. According to the Rockefeller Report, there are currently very few businesses with proven investment models. Thirdly, liquidity is a common and predominant challenge across Africa for impact investors. But these challenges can only make the industry stronger and more exciting as the world progresses more and more towards greater usage of technology and business models. To be sure, impact investing will not replace old conventional philanthropy but it will certainly unravel it a bit and complement it. In an interview with GIIN, Tony Elumelu, the founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, stressed the point that impact investment is new to Africa and that most of impact investment in the continent is conducted by foreign organisations. However, given his foundation's position in Africa, he hoped that it would become

---

<sup>12</sup> See 'This is Africa' – *A Special Report on Impact Investment* by The Rockefeller Foundation.

a resource for networking and partnerships for impact investing in Africa. And highlighting the opportunities presented by impact investing, Elumelu said:

As impact investing grows in Africa, it can influence traditional investors in Africa to be more aware of the social and environmental effects of their investments. By driving the concept of impact investing, the private sector will see that there is a lot of money to be made in Africa not only by providing services to middle and upper class Africans, but also by providing services to the poor, such as investing in low-income housing, agriculture aggregation, education and low-income health care to name a few. We are at a tipping point now as there are billions of dollars coming into Africa through private investment. That's why it is important that a significant portion of this new capital is deployed in ways that are intentionally about impact investing.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, the emergence of new philanthropists who are hands-on and seek to be more responsive to the changing and complex Africa is also making significant changes to the face and practice of philanthropy. In many ways this is helping change perspectives on Africa from being seen as a charity case to seeing Africa as a place for innovation and success. Elumelu summed it well when he said:

In the coming years, impact investing has the potential to truly transform the continent. Those of us pioneering impact investing field in Africa are not only making investments, we are also engaging and supporting important partners who can help impact investing grow. As an African entrepreneur, I hope to show African entrepreneurs that they can make money while also truly touching the people who live at the base of the economic pyramid.<sup>14</sup>

Endowment building is another area that African philanthropy has adopted. The concept of an endowment is not new in Africa. In most traditional societies, a granary was used to store resources for perpetuity. Also, family names were and still continue to be used as memory and legacy. Only family names can keep alive the lineage. For a number of these philanthropic groups, the question of sustainability is one that they seek to address through building endowments. The AWDF, Mandela Children's Fund and KCDF among others have all established these funds to sustain their interventions. Others like T.Y. Danjuma have their own endowments personally financed. These endowments enable these groups to engage in policy advocacy and other areas of lobbying that cannot be funded from outside. TrustAfrica and the Southern Africa Trust, for example, are involved in advocacy efforts towards protecting the space for civil society in Africa. Politically this is a minefield and matters are made worse if such efforts are funded from outside Africa. Endowment building will help make the agenda local and legitimate.

Perhaps the most important innovation and strategy is that of collaborative philanthropy alluded to above. Realising the power of transformative partnerships is an innovation that for years to come will define how relations are made. In many ways, this is in response to the realisation that addressing wellbeing is not something a single institution can tackle alone. There is a need for collaborations that transform the status quo. This discussion is taken further below.

---

<sup>13</sup> See *Investor Spotlight: 'The Tony Elumelu Foundation'*, [www.thegiin.org/cgi-bin/iowa/investing/spotlight/225.html](http://www.thegiin.org/cgi-bin/iowa/investing/spotlight/225.html), (accessed 13 October 2011).

<sup>14</sup> *op.cit.*

# Transformative collaborations and partnerships

Building strong relationships between different types of groups as opposed to developing the wellbeing of one group over others is fast becoming a must-do in the continent among philanthropic actors. Neville Gabriel of the Southern Africa Trust sees this as one of the priorities of his organisation as it builds a value chain of relationships especially for policy change.<sup>15</sup> SAT has developed strategic partnerships with key civil society actors, the business sector, intergovernmental agencies and more importantly with the media across the region and continentally.

The issue of partnerships is further taken up by the Africa Progress Panel in its 2011 Report which states that 'effective cross-sectoral partnerships can make it possible to overcome challenges that are too difficult or complex for one organisation or sector to address alone. Partnerships can also make efforts more effective by combining resources and competencies in creative ways'. As noted by Menkoff:

Even the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the world's largest foundations with total assets of US\$30 billion, has worked actively with other foundations. There is a realisation that today's challenges and their scale require the power of partnerships and diversity of talents than only an alliance with other organisations can bring.

(Menkhoff 2010: 144)

Partnerships have been established by African philanthropic entities at a global level with such platforms as the European Foundation Centre, WINGS, Synergos, the Africa Grant Makers Affinity Group and the Foundation Centre among others. However, the single most transformative partnership they have created since 2009 is to collectively come together and establish a network in Africa dedicated to their common experiences, visions and expertise. This platform, the African Grantmakers Network (AGN), emerged as a result of the need to reposition and clarify Africa's position in global relations as well as critically develop efforts to unite Africa's response(s) to global challenges of wellbeing. The formation of the AGN has the potential to function as a platform for diverse philanthropic actors and institutions for the development of the continent. Such a platform or network will collate views and ideas; amplify African perspectives and methodologies; conduct mapping studies to understand the terrain; hold dialogues and convenings to catalyse ideas and collectively identify needs and strategies to address them. Launched after a series of many consultations in 2009, the AGN is a platform that aims to:

- establish systematic mechanisms for fostering learning, sharing, exchange and collaboration among Africa's burgeoning grant-making community;
- harmonise current and existing informal attempts to have a continental body that brings together ideas, skills and people working on philanthropy;
- build on regional associations such as the East Africa Association of Grant Makers by providing a platform for cross-regional learning and exchange;
- conduct a number of studies that will deepen the sector and institutions' understanding of the philanthropic terrain, for example the grant-making landscape, in Africa;
- build a participatory platform for broader engagement with development processes;
- hold regular convenings on philanthropy and other related development issues;
- conduct studies related to building a knowledge base and evidence-based grant-making;

---

<sup>15</sup> Gabriel, *op.cit.*

- advocate for an enabling tax/fiscal environment in African countries;
- become a resource for stimulating giving, including from the corporate sector and the Diaspora (Moyo 2009b).

So far the AGN has managed to hold its first inaugural assembly, where it brought together more than 200 grant-making or philanthropic institutions in Africa. Here the agenda for the AGN was set and today there is a serious move to position the network as the premier pan-African platform for philanthropy in Africa offering membership services, capacity building, outreach and philanthropic advisory services to different groups of philanthropists.

In addition to the AGN, there are philanthropy circles and forums including regional networks. Across Africa, philanthropic institutions have created networks or platforms to collectively respond to issues that affect them from a national, thematic or even regional dimension. In Nigeria, for example, the T.Y. Danjuma Foundation in partnership with other philanthropic entities in the country holds an annual philanthropy forum to address the landscape in Nigeria. In the inaugural session, the country's President, Goodluck Jonathan, committed to setting up a commission that would look into the regulatory framework for philanthropy in Nigeria. In South Africa, the Philanthropy Circle is a forum where national issues affecting philanthropy are addressed. In Liberia, the Philanthropy Secretariat was developed to coordinate donor funding primarily to the government. And in East Africa, the East Africa Association of Grantmakers (EEAG) holds annual assemblies to take stock of the landscape in the region. Unfortunately, the Southern African Grantmakers Association fragmented and died a few years back. These platforms are critical as they give participants 'voice'. According to Gabriel of SAT, 'voice' is an important part of wellbeing. In most of these platforms, there is an increasing realisation that there is a need to celebrate African philanthropists. Awards feature prominently in these forums; examples include SAT's 'Drivers of Change', and the Inyathelo Awards among others.

Other partnerships are at the level of individual organisations. For example, TrustAfrica – a pan-African foundation based in Dakar, Senegal – has since its establishment prioritised partnerships with local African institutions and other development actors. For example, with the Southern Africa Trust, a number of collaborations such as joint funding, publications and staff exchanges have been conducted since 2008 resulting in collective outputs. The Tony Elumelu Foundation improves the competitiveness of Africa's high-growth private sector businesses while introducing some of the world's brightest young business talent to executive suites across Africa. It also partners with Tony Blair's Africa Governance Initiative on the Blair Elumelu Fellowship Programme that supports transformational governments by strengthening the private sector's role in economic transformation. Each of these foundations has developed partnerships based on mutual respect, credibility and reciprocity. In the coming years, investing in partnerships will increase in importance as will impact investing.

## **Case study: Collaboration and solidarity in ‘crisis’ Zimbabwe**

As early as 2007, TrustAfrica responded to the political and economic crises in Zimbabwe through projects that sought to strengthen the vibrancy of civil society and its capacity to respond to those crises. So when Zimbabwe Alliance – a consortium of donors interested in funding Zimbabwe – was born, it made sense for TrustAfrica to collaborate for a number of reasons. First, to avoid duplication of effort. Second, it was in line with TrustAfrica’s approach of collaboration, dialogue and consultation. Third, it further bolstered what TrustAfrica was already doing in Liberia – another post-crisis country – where it collaborated with Humanity United to strengthen civil society to contribute towards the reconstruction of Liberia.

TrustAfrica saw itself playing a critical role in Zimbabwe Alliance. Because of its existing projects in Zimbabwe, it brought knowledge, experience and political consciousness. In addition, TrustAfrica’s staff – from operations, grant-making and programming – were all involved in the identification and implementation of projects. The Zimbabwe Alliance would thus benefit from a low overhead and be able to disburse most of the resources to the partners as TrustAfrica staff were already covered by its core funding. TrustAfrica had also developed and expanded its internal systems so that the Alliance could be assured that its resources were in good hands and would be disbursed after rigorous due diligence.

In addition, TrustAfrica’s pan-African reach meant that it had developed networks across the continent which helped provide the necessary solidarity, movement building and partnerships to deal with politically charged situations. Finally, TrustAfrica attempted to match in part the resources from Zimbabwe Alliance, financially and in kind.

Perhaps it is too early to say definitively whether the collaboration has been worthwhile, but the signs are that it has. TrustAfrica has pooled resources and indications are that more members will join and increase the grant-making budget. Like all other collaborations, TrustAfrica and the Alliance had to learn about their individual and organisational cultures, approaches and principles: what to compromise and what not to compromise; what to prioritise and what to leave for later. In many ways, it has been an opportunity to deepen understanding, particularly of identities and principles. The collaboration with Zimbabwe Alliance has also made it possible to tighten Zimbabwe projects and connect all collective partners there under the banner of the Alliance. And if the political climate worsens, there is a network through which to build a stronger resistance. Only partnerships and collaborations have the potential to address the underlying causes of political and economic malaise in a country like Zimbabwe. And civil society is key to such an intervention.

**Table 2 Summary of innovations and partnerships in African philanthropy**

<b>Innovations/strategies</b>	<b>Partnerships (collaborative philanthropy)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-philanthropy (online giving, direct connection between donors and recipients, new social media, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global partnerships (such as with WINGS, EFC, AGAG, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-border (borderless) philanthropy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local partnerships</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philanthrocapitalism (social investments, venture philanthropy, impact investing, social stock exchanges, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>African Grantmakers Network</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy and lobbying including awards celebrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philanthropy circles, forums, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Huge donations – fewer recipients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional associations of grant-makers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mass giving, including Diaspora giving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philanthropy secretariat(s)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint programming</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building, including movement building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public-private partnerships</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public-private partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secondments (staff, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endowment building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint funding and fundraising</li> </ul>

## Pointers for new knowledge and policy implications for promoting wellbeing

This paper has discussed the various expressions of philanthropy in Africa and how each of those manifestations relates to wellbeing. Clearly, there is no one dimension to philanthropy and neither is there one aspect to wellbeing. Different actors address wellbeing differently based on their contexts, structures, orientations and beliefs. Despite these different nuances and perspectives, a number of trends stand out that have implications for the promotion of wellbeing and policy development in the twenty-first century. The following paragraphs pull out some of those trends in order to offer pointers for policymakers, philanthropic institutions and other development actors.

First, there is a new way of practising philanthropy in Africa, one that builds on solidarity, reciprocity, giving and helping from local sources. The emergence of locally established and funded foundations and the fact that from Tanzania to Kenya to South Africa, individuals, corporations, etc. give to public and private causes is a reaffirmation that Africans are givers naturally. There is hope that Africa can support her own developmental needs as well as define her own trajectory. Till such time as African finances her own development, wellbeing will remain elusive. The challenge, however, still remains that in most of the African countries; there is no legal and institutional framework for philanthropic practice. Perhaps the African Grantmakers Network's real relevance would be to cultivate the culture of philanthropy for social justice and other forms of development inclusiveness among policy makers by establishing the necessary

policy frameworks as well as motivating African citizens – individually or collectively – to give towards the wellbeing of societies and their peoples. This calls for dialogue and collaboration between citizens, their formations and the sphere of public authority (the state) in fashioning African-led and African-supported initiatives and frameworks.

Second, Africa has unique philosophies and cultural foundations. These underpin the different expressions of philanthropic practice. Africans' wellbeing therefore cannot be separated from these cultural and philosophical foundations. Utilising Sen's capability approach, it means Africans have to take the lead in promoting their own wellbeing. This implies that philanthropists or development actors who are not aligned to these foundations will overlook the nuances of African wellbeing. In many ways this calls for a review of the development trajectory that Africa adopted, one that does not prioritise local institutions, knowledge and perspectives. This calls for serious investment in strengthening local institutions, systems and normative frameworks. The new HNWI's are well positioned to fund development differently in Africa. Not only can they provide leadership in this area, they are also influential individuals who can champion policy agendas for wellbeing in Africa. For this to happen, philanthropy in Africa has to forge a partnership with different HNWI's and policy influencers to address wellbeing questions in Africa. Rather than focusing on their differences and the methodologies they employ, it is time now for these to collectively respond to the challenges facing the continent and the world, such as climate change, democratic deficits, inequality and other forms of exclusion.

Thirdly, the best and fastest way to address wellbeing is for development to be driven by the people concerned. And yet ironically it takes a long time for a project to be people-driven. This implies that for policymakers and development actors alike there is a need to invest adequately in participatory frameworks just as much as giving attention to material aspects of human wellbeing. Questions of capacity building, infrastructure development, leadership development, governance reforms and education become more critical than projects-based investments. As discussed earlier, one of the strong aspects of social venture philanthropy is that it prioritises building the infrastructure for social change. This is likely to grow and attain resonance among many African institutions. For policymakers, this requires creating an enabling environment for social investments. And for conventional philanthropy, this means learning from some of the principles that have made venture philanthropists successful. And as for the venture philanthropists, it requires humility to accept that not everything needs a business model.

Fourth, there is a danger, especially because HNWI's and the private sector still do not fund or support social justice questions, that the notion of wellbeing can be narrowly simplified to mean tangible questions of access to water, education, health, etc. but not address the wholeness of a human being. As this paper has tried to demonstrate, human wellbeing comprises both material and non-material aspects, and as such, focus should be given equally to all its dimensions. Because wealth is increasingly concentrated among a few HNWI's – who are also primarily from the private sector – there is a tendency (and perhaps rightly so, given their background) to be reductionist and seek solutions for social challenges in the business models that have made them successful. To be sure, there is a role for this approach but it must not replace the other forms of philanthropy that have existed for years and addressed such challenging and complex questions as social justice, democracy, the media and increasingly now socioeconomic rights. For policymakers, this is a call for an appropriate environment for all forms of philanthropy to thrive in order to meet the ever-changing dynamics of wellbeing. For philanthropic actors, there is a need to build mechanisms for complementarity, collaboration and new ways of tackling inclusive development.

Finally, no one organisation or individual can address human wellbeing holistically, not even Bill Gates or Warren Buffet. Even these have seen the need to forge partnerships in order to strongly

respond to the needs and demands of societal and individual wellbeing. It is for this reason that the establishment of the AGN and the other regional and national philanthropic platforms are crucial in moving Africa forward. Increasingly, it is becoming very clear that the lines between the business sector and philanthropy will be closed and both will partner with governments to address pressing developmental questions in Africa. There is a dire need to prioritise transformative partnerships, most of which are driven by new technologies, innovations and the passion for a progressive continent. Nothing seals these partnerships better than the spirit of solidarity and reciprocity underpinning African relationships. Thus, impact investing encompassing venture philanthropy, online giving, and strategic philanthropy, among others, will complement in effective ways other forms of philanthropy in Africa in tackling development and wellbeing.

## References

- Africa Progress Panel (2011) *The Transformative Power of Partnerships*, [www.africaprogresspanel.org/](http://www.africaprogresspanel.org/) (accessed 18 October 2011)
- Annan, K. (2011) 'Foreword', in *The Transformative Power of Partnerships*, [www.africaprogresspanel.org/](http://www.africaprogresspanel.org/) (accessed 18 October 2011)
- Barclays Wealth Insights (2010) *Global Giving: The Culture of Philanthropy*, [www.barclayswealth.com/insights/global-giving-and-the-culture-of-philanthropy.htm](http://www.barclayswealth.com/insights/global-giving-and-the-culture-of-philanthropy.htm) (accessed 18 October 2011)
- Capgemini and Merrill Lynch (2011) *World Wealth Report*, [www.ml.com/media/114235.pdf](http://www.ml.com/media/114235.pdf) (accessed 18 October 2011)
- Center for Global Prosperity (2011) *The Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances*, Washington D.C.: The Hudson Institute
- Clark, D.A. (2005) 'Sen's Capability Approach and the Many Spaces of Human Wellbeing', *The Journal of Development Studies* 41.8: 1339–68
- Dalberg (2011) *Impact Investing in West Africa*, [www.dalberg.com/blog/?p=223](http://www.dalberg.com/blog/?p=223) (accessed 18 October 2011)
- Deneulin, S. and McGregor, J.A. (2010) 'The Capability Approach and the Politics of a Social Conception of Wellbeing', *European Journal of Social Theory* 13.4: 501–19
- Edwards, M. (2011) *The Role and Limitations of Philanthropy*, paper commissioned for the Bellagio Initiative on The Future of Philanthropy and Development in Pursuit of Human Wellbeing, Brighton: IDS
- Everatt, D. and Solanki, G. (2005) *A Nation of Givers? Social Giving among South Africans*, Durban, South Africa: Centre for Civil Society
- Feierman, S. (1998) 'Reciprocity and Assistance in Pre-colonial Africa', in W.F. Ilchman, S.N. Katz and E.L. Queen (eds), *Philanthropy in the World's Traditions*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 3–24
- Johnson, P.D.; Johnson, S.P. and Kingman, A. (2005) 'Promoting Philanthropy: Global Challenges and Approaches', in Dirk Eilinghoff (ed.), *Rethinking Philanthropic Effectiveness: Lessons from an International Network of Foundation Experts*, Gutersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung: 34–43



- Menkhoff, T. (2010) 'Powering Philanthropic Passions', in Willie Cheng and Sharifah Mohamed (eds), *The World that Changes the World: How Philanthropy, Innovation and Entrepreneurship are Transforming the Social Ecosystem*, San Fransisco: Wiley: 137–54
- Moyo, B. (2010) 'Philanthropy in Africa: Functions, Status, Challenges and Opportunities', in *Global Philanthropy*, London: MF Publishing: 259–70
- Moyo, B (2009a) 'Philanthropy in Africa', in Helmut K. Anheier and Stefan Toepler (eds), *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, [www.springerlink.com/content/j62k806410114239/fulltext.html](http://www.springerlink.com/content/j62k806410114239/fulltext.html) (accessed 18 October 2011)
- Moyo, B. (2009b) *Establishing the African Grant-Makers Network*, a discussion document prepared for the Launch of the AGN, Accra
- O'Halloran, K. (2007) *Charity Law and Social Inclusion: An International Study*, London and New York: Routledge
- Ratcliffe, T. (2010) 'South African Social Investment – A Giving Model Beyond Philanthropy', in Norine MacDonald and Luc Tayart De Borms (eds), *Global Philanthropy*, London: MF Publishing: 235–50
- Schwettman, J. (2011) *Capacity Building for Africa's Cooperatives and Social Economy Organisations: A Contribution to the Expert Group Meeting Cooperatives in Social Development: Beyond 2012*, Mongolia, 3–6 May
- Stiglitz, J.E.; Sen, A. and Fitoussi, J.P. (2009) *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*, [www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/](http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/) (accessed 18 October 2011)
- White, D. (2010) *The Nonprofit Challenge: Integrating Ethics into the Purpose and Promise of our Charities*, New York: Palgrave-Macmillan
- Wilkinson-Maposa, S.; Fowler, A.; Oliver-Evans, C. and Mulenga, C.F.N. (2006) *The Poor Philanthropist: How and Why the Poor Help Each Other*, Cape Town: Compress