ANNUAL 2023 Review OF SOUTH AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY

Perspectives and Stories of South African Philanthropy

83% of high net-worth individuals (HNWIs) gave money, time, or goods in **2021**

TRANSFORMATION OF GIVERS

1/2 Women

1/4 Black

1/3 Giving for less than five years

VALUE GIVEN

In 2021, South African HNWIs donated roughly:

- R4,2 billion in cash
- R2,6 billion in goods and services
- 3.2 million hours of their time

The value of cash donations decreased, with most givers contributing **less than R10,000 in 2021**

The proportion of givers who volunteered decreased from 56% in 2018 to 43% in 2021, likely related to the Covid-19 pandemic

TOP REASONS FOR GIVING

1. Care about the cause
2. Want to make a difference
3. Want to support a need I have been made aware of

Only 4% of givers were motivated by the Covid-19 pandemic

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Most HNW givers **did not change their giving practices** in response to the pandemic; and one-third increased their focus on immediate needs

IDENTIFYING ORGANISATIONS

HNW givers relied more on personal networks to identify recipients, and less on religious organisations. Donors increasingly made decisions about their contributions alone. When they did consult others, it was most often a spouse or partner

BENEFICIARIES

66%

of HNW givers supported social and community development causes, including orphans and vulnerable children and the elderly

18%

of HNW givers supported causes related to Covid-19, predominantly food security

25%

of HNW givers supported religious institutions or causes – down from 41% in 2018

NPOs

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) were the most supported beneficiary type. Most HNW givers do not want to support political parties

POST-DONATION EXPECTATIONS

More than

1/2

of all givers do not expect any feedback or acknowledgement after donating

GIVING MORE IN THE FUTURE

Most givers would consider increasing their donations in 2022, particularly if their personal financial situation improved or in response to need or a cause with merit

SOURCE: 5th Edition, The Giving Report 2022, published by Nedbank Private Wealth

Editorial Board Members

ANNUAL 2023
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OF SOUTH AFRICAN **PHILANTHROPY**

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Leadership in Philanthropy

By Yogavelli Nambiar

SOUTH AFRICA IS AT A SEMINAL MOMENT. ALMOST 30 YEARS SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF DEMOCRACY, there is a sense of growing discomfort with the limited and sluggish progress being made to change the fortunes of disadvantaged South Africans. It is quite clear that change is required, and quickly; and there are many dynamic changemakers actively seeking and driving innovative approaches to respond to the present challenges. What they and many others who develop solutions demonstrate is that the main ingredient required to build a country that serves all is leadership – a cohort of purpose-driven people creating a vision of change and a clear strategy to achieve it, and taking others along with them.

> **I am the wisest man alive, for I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing.** – SOCRATES

In this context, the ancient Greek philosopher's words are as relevant now as ever. Despite the present abundance of easily accessible information, ignorance and division continue to grow. Amid some wins on decreasing poverty, there are increasing levels of inequality, gender inequity, joblessness and damage to the planet. As levels of education have risen, levels of wisdom appear to have dropped.

It seems that much has been achieved but little has been learned.

Perhaps that's where leaders need to start – by admitting that they know nothing. And in so doing, open themselves to curiosity, reflection, and learning; and genuinely seek to gain knowledge and understanding from those with and for whom they work. Philanthropy, as a strategic and focused means of directing capital to address social challenges, is a vital component of the social justice equation. At the same time, philanthropists, as the holders of capital, operate in an environment in which the power dynamics are skewed. This creates a number of risks, including that philanthropic leaders may believe that they have all the answers; that they can stop listening; and that they can produce and enforce solutions and methods that, paradoxically, do not serve the cause they are trying to address.

In this regard, there is a need for a re-orientation towards responsible servant-leadership so that the work of philanthropy remains focused on the common good.

People often find their way to philanthropy from other sectors, serving on boards or as members of the executive, merging diverse forms of expertise, but sometimes with little experience of the nuances related to creating sustainable social change. Humility is thus required to trust; to learn from; and to build alongside those on the ground – those who have actually implemented programmes and who have hard-won lessons to share.

Inspiring and sustaining action toward equity, justice and opportunity for all requires leadership that is bold, empowering, strategic, future-oriented and supportive. The philanthropic leader is a key partner for social and environmental innovators and community changemakers; and, beyond being the proverbial cheque-writer, can and should be a trusted advisor, advocate and supporter.

In this context and considering the criticisms of philanthropy made by Anand Giridharas in a talk he delivered at the Aspen Institute in 2015 and his subsequent book, Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World, philanthropists should be thoughtful about their strategies and methods, ensuring that they are not perpetuating cycles of dysfunction and implementing ad-hoc solutions which may sustain the very system that causes the problems in the first place. Accordingly, philanthropists should reflect on their own mind-sets and motives for action. Have they adopted a point of view that seeks to create a transformative and sustainable impact for the programme participants? Is their work driven with a sense of urgency in recognition of the multiple crises that are faced by communities, countries and the world?

It was in the quest for answers to these critical questions that the theme for this edition of the IPASA Annual Review emerged: Leadership in Philanthropy. In the pages of this publication, you will find stories and insights from other leaders who generously share their experiences, practical guidance and tools to support your introspection. They will challenge you, enlighten you, and inspire you. The aim is that it should not be a once-off read, but rather, a source of wisdom that you will come back to as you ponder your own leadership journeys and choices.

Happy reading!

Yogavelli Nambiar is the Founder and CEO of Niara Advisory.

Bold philanthropy in a changing world

By Mmabatho Maboya

CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT AND THE RESPONSE TO CEASELESS CHANGE CAN OFTEN RENDER INDIVIDUALS AND organisations vulnerable, leading to inaction or even paralysis. This is particularly true when traversing the terrain of change and uncertainty in isolation. In this context, the Independent Philanthropy Association South Africa (IPASA), as a convening body and a connector to philanthropic entities across Africa and the world, has been an important guide and companion to many stakeholders in the sector. In this role, IPASA has provided the base for a bolder approach to philanthropy. Over the years, I have observed how bridge-building among the members of the association and with the beneficiaries of their philanthropy has led to agenda-setting for a common purpose. In the process, bold development aspirations have been advanced and accountability has been enhanced, not only in the public and private sectors, but within philanthropy as well.

There is a perpetual danger that crucial aspects of the philanthropic endeavour – such as collaboration, trust-building, a strategic approach, resilience and shared values – may be reduced to clichés. However, IPASA's efforts to establish worthy, engaging platforms for its members within their chosen sectors and addressing cross-cutting issues have given practical expression to these aspects of philanthropy, helping local philanthropists to meet their aspirations while fulfilling the association's own mission. Some of the ways IPASA supported the sector over the past year were:

- **Holding workshops and presenting case studies** to educate funders about collaboration and to provide them with the tools and knowledge to facilitate collaboration;
- **Hosting workshops and presenting case studies** to build awareness and knowledge around the impact of climate on funding and to help members incorporate climate responses in their funding strategies;
- **Commissioning a Funder Basic Education Survey** to identify key areas of funding support for the sector in an effort to address the current education crisis;
- **Facilitating knowledge-sharing and collaboration** among early childhood development (ECD) funders to strengthen the basis of education in South Africa;
- **Organising a series of grant-craft workshops** on innovative funding mechanisms; artificial intelligence, technology and philanthropy; monitoring and evaluation; and funding strategy development; and
- **Developing a knowledge platform** on its website, sharing information on regulations for foundations; best practices for foundations; and developments and priorities in particular areas of funding.

While it may be relatively easy to identify opportunities, it can be more difficult to take advantage of them – particularly if working on one's own. In this respect, collaboration can be crucial to effective action and new thinking. New opportunities that may be acted upon collectively have arisen in a number of fields including:

- **Technology:** Philanthropy can harness the power of new technologies, including AI, to drive social change and increase the capacity of grantees;
- **Innovation:** African philanthropists are seeking new, creative ways of addressing complex social and environmental challenges and producing greater impacts;
- **Youth:** There is an opportunity to build the next generation of philanthropy stakeholders, particularly in the climate and technology spaces;
- **Leadership:** There are significant opportunities for building leadership capacity in the philanthropy sector; and
- **Collaboration:** The establishment of collaborative efforts and collaborative funding among funders, NPOs and the government can help to optimise the impacts of philanthropic efforts.

The case for the importance of industry bodies and associations has been made over many years, as evidenced by the enduring presence of several professional networks which have existed for more than a century. At the same time, the relevance of these platforms and their power in shaping ideas and setting agendas derives from the active participation of individuals and organisations who willingly convene with others to enrich their experiences, thinking and efforts. In this respect, philanthropists, who are privileged to be in a position to deploy resources to support humanity, have an obligation to act in solidarity with others and make progress collectively - this is enabled and encouraged through IPASA with its unique position as the only independent philanthropy network in South Africa. MM

Mmabatho Maboya is the Chairperson of IPASA's Council and CEO of the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation

Philanthropic leadership must change to meet present needs

By Matthew Bishop

PHILANTHROPY HAS A GENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO HELP LIFT HUMANITY AND THE PLANET OUT OF THE PRESENT PAINFUL PERIOD OF POLY-CRISIS.

In this era of seeking multi-stakeholder solutions to the toughest challenges facing the world, wealthy philanthropists and endowed philanthropic organisations have a historically unprecedented chance to lead impactfully in ways that others in government, business and civil society often cannot.

In *Philanthrocapitalism: How Giving Can Save the World*, a book published just after the global financial crisis in 2008, Michael Green and I argued that a new Golden Age of Philanthropy was getting under way. Not only would it increasingly become a new global norm for successful business people to become philanthropists, the sort of problem-solving skills that had made them successful in business would equip them to succeed in helping to solve the world's toughest challenges.

Philanthropic capital has inherent advantages in the process of systems change, we argued, especially compared with other forms of money, such as public spending (which is subject to political cycles) and funding from businesses (which is subject to investor pressures). Philanthropists are free, if they so choose, to take greater risks and adopt a long-term approach.

> **Philanthropists are free, if they so choose, to take greater risks and adopt a long-term approach.**

In addition, they do not have to kowtow to (often misleading) conventional wisdom. In practice, however, philanthropy has so far fallen short of what Michael Green and I had hoped it would achieve in the 15 years since *Philanthrocapitalism* was published. If humanity is to solve present climate and nature crises and achieve the sort of widespread thriving envisaged by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, philanthropy must do much better in Africa and in the rest of the world.

This is not simply a call for (much) more philanthropy. The world needs giving that is smarter, agile, bolder in its risk-taking, willing to challenge conventional wisdom, collaborative and focused on impact – delivering real long-term good, not just short-term feel-good. To deliver this transformation, philanthropists and the philanthropoids who work for them must become better leaders.

That said, the continuous growth in the number of philanthropists and the scale of current philanthropy is a strong foundation on which to build. This trend is highlighted by the rising number of signatories to the Giving Pledge, a promise by some of the richest people on earth to give away to good causes at least half of their fortunes by the end of their lives. The Giving Pledge, which was established by Warren Buffett, Bill Gates and his then-wife Melinda in 2010, now counts more than 200 of the world's billionaires as signatories, including four from Africa: Mo Ibrahim from Sudan; Patrice and Precious Motsepe from South Africa; Mohammed Dewji of Tanzania; and Strive and Tsitsi Masiyiwa of Zimbabwe.

At the same time, the support for the Giving Pledge has not yet led to a big increase in actual giving. Indeed, those who have signed the pledge have not become relatively more generous – their fortunes have increased by far more than their giving. In other words, signatories are typically much richer now than when they promised to give away half their wealth. The same is also largely true of other new philanthropists whose wealth, though high, is below the billionaire level.

This phenomenon has puzzled and disappointed many of those involved in establishing and nurturing the Giving Pledge. Some of them blame Buffett's desire to keep the pledge simple, rather than include additional obligations for signatories to increase their giving immediately and provide evidence showing how their giving has had a real impact. In this respect, it may be argued that it is not too late to raise the Giving Pledge bar.

Warren Buffet. *Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.*

Bill Gates. *Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.*

Melinda Gates. *Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.*

> **The Giving Pledge, which was established by Warren Buffett, Bill Gates and his then-wife Melinda in 2010, now counts more than 200 of the world's billionaires as signatories.**

The past 15 years have also highlighted how right Buffett was, back in 2006, when he described doing philanthropy well as "much, much harder than making money". While I still believe that many of the leadership skills that made today's philanthropists rich can also help them be highly effective givers, I have been struck by how few of them are as good at giving money away as they are at making it. Becoming an effective philanthropist requires an evolution in leadership style, aspects of which seem particularly challenging to today's business and financial moguls.

These tycoons typically bring a high degree of confidence that they can help change the world. That can be valuable, given that many of the leaders sitting across the table from them as they try to figure out multi-stakeholder solutions are increasingly pessimistic, especially those leaders occupying government positions. But the challenge to which so many new philanthropists fail to rise is to dispense with the demotivating "I know better than you" attitude and instead make their confidence infectious and inspiring.

In business, know-it-all arrogance may be accepted. But philanthropists typically don't benefit from producing acquiescence through the kind of top-down, command-and-control leadership that is the norm in business – at least, not if they want to achieve significant impact. Such impact, as Bill Gates has observed, will frequently require not only leveraging other bigger sources of money but also winning over millions or even billions of hearts and minds.

In this context, effective philanthropy requires leaders with an unusually high degree of emotional intelligence and the humility to be truly collaborative, as well as the more typical business-leader attributes of ambition, long-term vision and a willingness to make big, bold bets.

That said, all too often in the past 15 years, I have observed that new philanthropists not only fall short on emotional intelligence and humility, they also tend to avoid the sort of high stakes risk-taking they would embrace routinely in business. Why they seem so averse to risk-taking as philanthropists is a bit of a mystery to me, although it may be most common when the philanthropy is driven by a desire to polish a tarnished reputation – which arguably is best done by playing it safe.

“New philanthropists not only fall short on emotional intelligence and humility, they also tend to avoid the sort of high stakes risk-taking they would embrace routinely in business.”

Another leadership challenge is that the ecosystem within which philanthropists operate is quite different to that of the business world, which is something that philanthropists, especially new ones, often underestimate or ignore. In this regard, there are a number of key differences.

First, while “not invented here” syndrome can work well for companies in winner-takes-all markets, this attitude can be a hindrance in a philanthropic context in which collaboration is often the only way to deliver real systemic change.

Second, the feedback loops in philanthropy are often dysfunctional at best, making it hard for leaders to learn and improve on the job (assuming they want to). In business, the measurement of profit and loss provides a relatively unambiguous indication of what is working and what isn't. The possibility of going bust tends to concentrate everyone's minds on doing what works. In philanthropy, being forced out of business is rarely a possibility; and the lack of such an existential threat greatly reduces the imperative to learn from, or even admit to, mistakes.

At the same time, philanthropists are frequently surrounded by staff (surprisingly often, friends from pre-wealthy days) who do all they can to preserve their cosy sinecures, including by blocking access to more competent rivals with better ideas, and by constantly flattering their boss.

Likewise, organisations that have received donations from philanthropists rarely have much incentive to provide honest feedback, especially when the impact that they are producing is less than had been anticipated. Much easier to honour the philanthropist at a black-tie gala – especially if the philanthropist is motivated primarily by reputation-polishing. Being a learning leader in philanthropy requires a constant effort by the philanthropist to go against the prevailing ecosystem and hold themselves to account for their impact. For this era of philanthropy to be truly golden, improving the feedback loops through better impact measurement and analysis is essential, and should be prioritised.

Philanthropists also have to contend with mounting doubts over their legitimacy as leaders of change. As the gap between the rich and the rest widens, serious concerns have been raised about plutocratic power. In addition, there is an increasingly heated and important debate about “decolonising” philanthropy.

The extent to which the wealth now being deployed in philanthropy resulted from extractive, exploitative or abusive behaviour will vary from case to case and place to place. So too the degree to which this should undermine the right or ability of philanthropists and philanthropoids to decide how this wealth may be used to change society. Whatever one's position, this is certainly a debate that, again, requires emotionally intelligent and humble philanthropic leadership. My hope is that, at a minimum, the decolonisation discussion will reinforce two other trends in philanthropy: trusting organisations receiving philanthropic donations to decide how best to use the money, rather than attaching a lot of strings to the funding; and giving intended beneficiaries a real say over how philanthropic funds are used. I currently chair the jury of the Catalyst 2030 Awards, which seek to accelerate collaborative systems change by celebrating the individuals and organisations that make it possible. In this context, it has been encouraging to see a growing number of donors willing to trust those on the frontlines with unconditional, long-term core support.

In my conversations with African philanthropists and social-change organisations, I am encouraged to see a growth in local giving by Africans to Africans. In addition, the issue of decolonisation is clearly a genuine concern, including for African philanthropists and international philanthropists who want to help Africa but hitherto have not put much trust in local organisations or people.

I am encouraged by the impact of Mo Ibrahim's efforts to have a vigorous, data-driven debate about how to improve the quality of government in Africa. Meanwhile, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was innovative collaboration among the African Union (AU), businesses and local and international philanthropists, including to strengthen the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

However, there is so much still to do; and it is time for the establishment of a new sort of philanthropic leadership to meet the present challenges. MB

Matthew Bishop is a former business editor and New York bureau chief of The Economist, and currently a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institute.

Helping to build a philanthropy ecosystem

A case study of EdelGive in India

By Naghma Mulla

IN 2012, WHEN I STARTED WORKING AT EDELGIVE FOUR YEARS AFTER IT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED, THE ORGANISATION HAD TWO EMPLOYEES AND GAVE LESS THAN HALF A MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR.

At that time its mission was to bridge the resource gap between the for-profit and non-profit sectors in India. Today, EdelGive is a philanthropy asset manager and advisor which works with corporates, institutional funders and high-net-worth Individuals across the country so that they can give with purpose. In its present incarnation, it directly and indirectly funds nearly 160 community-based foundations to the tune of $20 million a year.

A chartered accountant in my previous life, I was both horrified and fascinated by what I encountered when I started at EdelGive. As someone from a protected upbringing, I had no real understanding of, and was horrified by, the extent of the marginalisation in my own city of Mumbai, and India more broadly. At the same time, I was drawn to and fascinated by the multitude of decent women and men whom I met who were dedicating their lives to improving the lot of the most marginalised.

At first, their sense of commitment made little sense to me. Why would so many intelligent people sacrifice their personal ambition, chance at glory and record of achievement in order to work for the sake of others? It baffled me. However, as I travelled the length and breadth of India seeing first-hand how communities were living, I came to recognise the true face of leadership and the true meaning of audacity among these people engaged in development work.

I had met corporate leaders; admired social leaders; and watched political leaders, but this kind of leader was new to me. I had always thought of leaders as the achievers who ran successful companies, led revolutions or won elections. Now, I came across a cadre of leaders who were unknown at the national level, but were beacons of hope to the communities for which they worked. And they taught me the first critical leadership lesson that I came to learn over the past decade.

A leader leads through a common purpose

Some of the most difficult work with communities is pulled off by leaders who give people a common purpose with which they can align, such as “our children must receive a quality education”; “our women must be safe”; “our village must have access to clean, maintained water sources”; or “our community must be able to access government benefits”. When the people have a common purpose and are led by a leader who cares, a movement, however small, is born; and the journey to long-term impact is initiated. Within six months it was clear to me that the issues faced by the communities I had encountered were too intractable to be solved by EdelGive with its relatively limited budget. In this regard, although the foundation’s grant-giving was a lot about social change and how it may be enacted, it also indicated the limits of the social change that could be made possible by providing relatively small grants to a handful of civil society organisations (CSOs).

Accordingly, I approached Vidya Shah, who was the then chief executive officer of the foundation and Edelweiss – the Indian finance company which had established it – and planned for the future. The idea was that, through collaboration, the foundation could mobilise 40 times more funding over the next five years. The idea was accepted and it then took me a full year to plan the new shape of the foundation, and another

> **When the people have a common purpose and are led by a leader who cares, a movement, however small, is born; and the journey to long-term impact is initiated.**

Enhancing district-wide education.

to galvanise support from external stakeholders, thus sowing the seeds of EdelGive as it is today. In addition, the transformation would not have been possible without the enabling support of EdelGive chairperson Vidya Shah; Edelweiss chairman Rashesh Shah; Edelweiss executive director Venkat Ramaswamy and the CEO – Credit Edelweiss Group, Deepak Mittal. All of which leads me to the second lesson I learned about leadership.

Leaders surround themselves with trusted lieutenants in order to achieve missions

Leaders trust, and that trust begets trust. One person cannot do everything. Leaders need the support of good people, and they need to trust these good people. Philanthropy will thrive if its leaders trust the teams they work so hard to build and give them room to operate and fail.

This principle informed the establishment of EdelGive’s first collaborative, which was in the field of education. This multi-stakeholder collaborative, which was run efficiently like a corporate fund, met the expectations of its seven funders while providing the non-governmental organisations that were being funded with the freedom to achieve their mission without having to surmount any unnecessary administrative hurdles. The mission was to work with government schools to improve their processes and engage parents and principals in efforts to improve pupils’ learning outcomes. This first-of-its-kind project impressed the government to such an extent that, with official support, it was scaled from supporting 25,000 pupils in its first year to supporting 1.5 million children the following year. ▸▸

> **Philanthropy will thrive if its leaders trust the teams they work so hard to build and give them room to operate and fail.**

A leader finds partners for collaboration to foster impact

My main focus has been to try and create structures for participation in problem-solving. Accordingly, it has been extremely gratifying that I have been able to design three large-scale initiatives from scratch and contribute to the design of three other initiatives.

Responding to the Covid-19 outbreak, the philanthropy sector in India coordinated quickly and effectively with community-based organisations, doing whatever it took to help communities that were unable to access food and supplies. However, the pandemic placed the development sector under great stress. Teams became exhausted; already inadequate budgets were spent; and there was a lack of resources to help small CSOs continue operating. Amid this chaos, GROW was born.

GROW represents an ambitious, large-scale effort to address a number of identified challenges in the development and philanthropy ecosystem in India. It has brought together more than 30 funders donating a total of 1 billion rupees (nearly $13 million) to provide core funding for 100 CSOs. It has deployed best-in-class structures, processes, and frameworks from the corporate world to establish grant machinery capable of servicing 100 entities. Such has never been done before, which brings me to what leadership is really supposed to do.

Capacity Building Training for SHGs – Cluster Level.

Health and nutrition class.

True leadership shows up

It leads with empathy. It gives hope and it walks the talk. Such leadership is even more critical in a field such as philanthropy which is supposed to respond effectively to the shortcomings of government and business, and produce sustainable public benefits by enabling and empowering members of marginalised communities so that they can make better lives for themselves.

> **EdelGive still adheres to its 2008 mission to bridge the resource gap between the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Except now, it is not alone. An entire ecosystem of funders, CSOs and practitioners stands with it.**

In the past decade, as EdelGive grew from a humble giving entity to become a large funder and philanthropic fund manager, it was told to pace itself, keep it bite-sized, tread with caution. All good advice from folks who cared. And in this respect, the foundation still adheres to its 2008 mission to bridge the resource gap between the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Except now, it is not alone. An entire ecosystem of funders, CSOs and practitioners stands with it.

All of which is the result of taking good advice; preparing proper plans; and setting standards that go beyond business as usual. That is what leaders do; and that is what EdelGive has done.

Naghma Mulla is Chief Executive Officer of the EdelGive Foundation.

Leadership and African philanthropy

By Ralph Freese

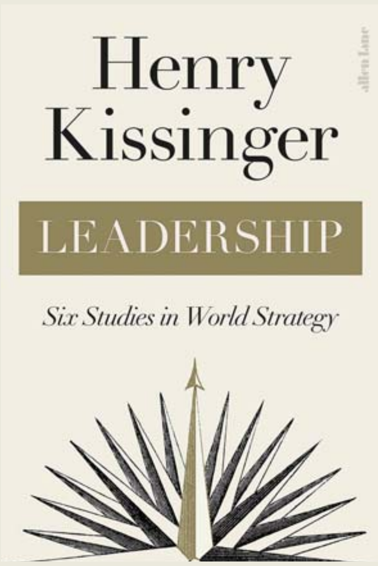
TOO MANY AFRICANS ARE ADRIFT WITHIN BORDERS THAT ARE A LEGACY OF COLONIALISM AND WHICH HAVE BEEN cemented in place as geographic power-bases for extractive elites. Culture, language and tribe; the stories that bind and divide; trade, commerce and migration all challenge these borders. Conceptual borders of class, of business, government and civil society, add to the mix. It is at the complex intersections where the borders blur that true leadership comes into play.

The intent of philanthropists is always – to their minds – positive, guided by their world views and value systems. Given the structural inequities of global society, the emergence of such a community should be celebrated. Much will depend on them for the foreseeable future.

Philanthropy generally derives from a successful history in business and usually brings the systems and practices of business to bear on systemic issues chosen by the particular philanthropist. The power of philanthropists to shape the environment in which they decide to operate is reflective of, and reproduces, their understanding of an ideal world and is not without risk to the target community. The value systems and world views of these powerful and wealthy individuals set the bounds of their engagement with the world. They choose to focus their wealth and power on fixing those "failures and deficiencies" which they have identified as most glaring.

The most impactful philanthropists endeavour to understand the history within which they work. They are able to navigate the borders and barriers that they encounter quite effectively. They understand because they have studied the terrain on which they have chosen to work. The veteran American diplomat and policy-maker Henry Kissinger wrote in his 2022 book, *Leadership: Six studies in world strategy*, "those who read, lead". Meanwhile, those who do not, fail or, at best, manage.

Philanthropists and their teams mainly work in partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs) in an effort to promote policy change and/or in order to implement projects benefitting the commons. Often the methodologies and value systems of the philanthropists and their civil society partners have different roots, which can produce contestation. Hence there is need for continuous dialogue between the two. This brings into focus the role of intermediary individuals (and organisations). Is it not here that true leadership comes to bear?



"Henry Kissinger wrote in his 2022 book, Leadership: Six studies in world strategy, "those who read, lead"."

Strive Masiyiwa. *Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.*

The London-based Zimbabwean billionaire Strive Masiyiwa has said that philanthropy is not corporate social investment or charity. He says that effective philanthropy seeks long-term systemic solutions to issues such as inequality and poverty. Philanthropy operating at the intersection between accumulated wealth and (non-charitable) civil society can have impacts that go way beyond addressing short-term emergencies. At the larger scale, philanthropy can include governments in the mix of business and civil society, adding an order of magnitude to the potential impact, as well as the potential risk. Great dexterity may be required to implement such initiatives effectively.

In this context, a key question is: Who are the leaders in this space in Africa?

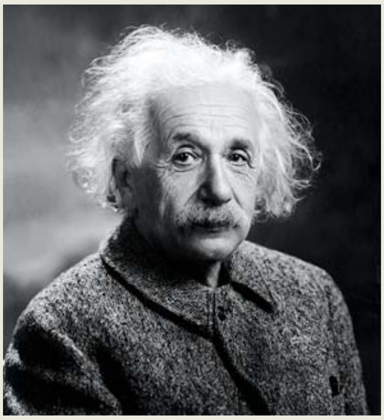
"Philanthropy is not corporate social investment or charity. Effective philanthropy seeks long-term systemic solutions to issues such as inequality and poverty." – STRIVE MASIYIWA

The philanthropists who provide the money and the founding ideas for the actions they initiate? Definitely. Those with their feet on the ground delivering the change? The academics? Those who navigate the intersections and bring the different intents and energies to bear? Patently, all these stakeholders have their roles to play in the philanthropic ecosystem of individuals and organisations.

In addition, there is a need for an overarching entity, such as the Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa (IPASA) which can help to guide and support (though not direct) philanthropic efforts and ensure the health of the sector.

Any discussion of leadership in Africa should at some point consider the question: Has leadership by business, government and civil society – despite the great efforts of a few – adequately delivered sufficient public good? The answer to this has to be a resounding "no". Poverty, inequality and underdevelopment, and a consequent lack of hope, are the symptoms of this failure, which stems from a lack of good, practical leadership.

In this context, there is a need to focus on the multitude of green shoots to be found in less-evident places. Across the continent, skilled, committed people are building practical interventions rooted in modern thinking and technology. They are challenging established, old ways of thinking and producing hope for the future. If there is a role for leadership organisations, surely it must be to support and protect these individuals and their networks.



If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper questions to ask, for once I know the proper questions, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes. – ALBERT EINSTEIN

Shazia Shariff, who founded an organisation called Leaders, in Rwanda, has said that there are well over a hundred "leadership" organisations in Africa with overlapping membership. Does this phenomenon represent a recycled elite or a new network for the future?

In addition, there are multiple networks of philanthropic endeavour in Africa. In this regard, although diversity is welcomed as a source of, and testing ground for, multiple approaches, the danger is that the deployment of similar analyses across and among these networks weakens the prospects for success in this complex space. In addition, diversity can foster competition for resources and exacerbate inefficiency across the sector.

Whether in philanthropy or any other field, a good leader is not only someone who uses his or her skills, energy and resources for the betterment of others and society at large; it is not only someone who holds himself or herself to high ethical standards based on integrity, honour, respect, public spiritedness, courage and compassion. The best leaders are those who also can guide people and organisations through the complexities of power, history and culture so that clear, practical solutions are implemented. Africa has many more such leaders than is generally acknowledged. They just need to be linked to the power to act.

It is widely held that death and taxes are the only certainties. Given the dire state of the world's economy, natural and social systems, debt and uncertainty may be added to the list. Recent years have seen unprecedented government borrowing; the lockdown of half the world's people; and a global recession. However, it should be remembered that the kind of uncertainty being experienced at present is not a new phenomenon. Empires have previously come and gone. In this context, it may be instructive to consider the fate of Pax Mongolica which was ushered in by Genghis Khan and brought peace to Europe and Asia in the 13th and 14th centuries, allowing the exchange of knowledge, culture and goods, including through the establishment of the silk route connecting China through India to Europe. This peace came to an end when the Black Death – a disease more lethal than Covid-19 – spread along the trade routes, infecting a third of all people, killing millions and plunging societies into chaos. Humanity survived but it took hundreds of years to rebuild.

Today, given the deeper understanding of disease and the rise of the art of economics, it may be hoped that a quicker resolution of the present crisis may be found and that systemic change to build a better life and improved ecosystems for all is fostered. In this context, a key question, as the American empire fades and China becomes more dominant, is: How can Africa ensure that the leaders with the greatest potential for understanding and addressing the changing world effectively are the ones who rise to power?

Instead of rushing, mentally if not physically, from one meeting screen to another, and jumping to conclusions and apparent solutions, should not society's leaders rather pause for thought in the context of a set of global crises that are largely of humanity's own making? For example, there has been a sharp focus on the Covid-19 virus and the consequences of national responses to the pandemic. However, this narrow focus, which is valid for short-term emergency responses, ignores the systemic issues that exacerbated the virus's destructive power. ▸▸

The best leaders are those who also can guide people and organisations through the complexities of power, history and culture so that clear, practical solutions are implemented.

Globally, dominant economic modelling and practices have failed to take account of many external factors or resolve the persistent problem of hunger across the world. Climate change; biodiversity loss; air and water pollution; and land conversion have lowered the resilience of the systems on which humanity's future depends. Many people lack adequate health services and water supplies. Social equity, gender equality, peace and justice remain a mirage for many. National social and democratic foundations are weak.

Africa faces a number of specific problems as a result of its particular histories: huge inequality; issues of race and tribe; high levels of poverty; and the dehumanising financial, psychological and social consequences of intergenerational unemployment. Our continent suffers from inequitable allocation of natural resources (minerals and water) and financial resources (hoarded cash and corrupt delivery). It also suffers from inadequate delivery of the educational and employment opportunities required for the equitable development of its human resources.

Answers tend to be rooted in the questions that are asked. Great questions carry the seeds of their solutions. So, there is a need to find the right questions to shape the future. These questions may be found through a recognition of the interconnectedness of systems and the need to produce balance among these, thus generating a healthier, happier, more resilient place for all. In this regard, it is worth asking whether the questions should centre on poverty, inequality and unemployment, or whether these phenomena are just symptoms of a greater malaise. Has the present political economy failed humanity and global ecosystems? Considering China's recent history, is democracy too weak a system to address the troubles of the world effectively?

Against the background of such concerns, thoughtful leaders capable of navigating complexity and delivering practical solutions are rare. Accordingly, it is important to interrogate the value and impact of the 150+ "leadership organisations" on the continent. Which ones are actually managing to improve the quality of African "leadership" and making enough of a difference to justify their spend? And which are the organisations taking the long view and putting in the effort over time that is needed?

In this regard, I have worked with one organisation that has been particularly effective: African Leadership Initiative. This organisation set out to select a number of people already in positions of power. It then helped them to grapple with the big questions that have shaped society over hundreds of years; and facilitated a deep personal introspection among them to foster a better understanding of their own power and the extent and kind of resources (including time, networks and finance) at their disposal. Then, in a continuous effort, it sought to energise this cadre and provide information about current events and trajectories that would help these individuals understand their contexts more fully and be more effective in shaping a positive future. RF

In conclusion, I offer the following:

In times of change, learners will inherit the earth while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.

– ERIC HOFFER

Ralph Freese writes in his personal capacity

Journey to deeper collaboration

A reformed collaborator's search for impact

By Anthony Farr

As a leader in the philanthropic sector, my journey into deeper collaboration began with a humbling realisation: no matter how ambitious or well-funded, a single entity cannot solve every problem.

Over time, this motivated a change from an insular approach towards a more collaborative one, understanding that it takes a collective effort to effect real change. What follows are three key moments in my journey that underscore this point. My hope is that these may serve as a lesson to others in the field.

Independent beginnings: Allan Gray Orbis Foundation

Early in my tenure at the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (AGOF), I was content with the independence and control that came with the foundation's approach. There was a naïve liberty in thinking that the foundation had the ability to do it all on its own and didn't need to carry the overhead of worrying about others in its singular vision to create extraordinary value-driven entrepreneurs. But the folly of that thinking soon became apparent as the work to nurture future Allan Gray Fellows matured. It became very evident that this could not be done alone.

Schools were key partners in the endeavour; and the foundation soon learned that a deeper understanding of, and commitment to, the programme among the participating schools was required if the initiative was to achieve its goal of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among pupils. ▸▸

> **No matter how ambitious or well-funded, a single entity cannot solve every problem.**

A common understanding needed to be fostered so that effective collaboration could be promoted. In this spirit, an annual Circle of Excellence event was established to bring together leaders from the schools that had successfully nurtured potential Allan Gray Fellows. This initiative reached into the uncertain and created a direct, co-creative relationship with the schools, catalysing greater energy for the recruitment of these Fellows – and, in the process, produced a different approach to implementation at the foundation itself.

As is often the case with collaboration, the mode of work produced a number of unexpected positive outcomes. One of which was the launch of the Allan Gray Entrepreneurship Challenge, a gamified digital competition that cultivated entrepreneurial aspirations among South African youth. School leaders at Circle of Excellence engagements had expressed a need for more tools and channels to develop entrepreneurialism in their schools; and the new initiative was launched in response. Accordingly, the success of this new project may be seen as testament to the power of collaboration, which produced a deeper engagement between the foundation and its partners as they jointly sought to address larger systemic problems.

Collaborating for the greater good: Addressing childhood stunting in South Africa

My second noteworthy encounter with collaboration came during my work with Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy South Africa (at the time known as Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Endowment). A key aim of the Endowment was to make a contribution at the very beginning of the educational pipeline by exploring solutions to the pervasive problem of stunting in South African children.

It was decided that it would be best to follow the lead of the DG Murray Trust (DGMT), which was seeking, in

"The Grow Great project offers a powerful example of how organisational humility and trust can create the space for innovative approaches to societal challenges."

collaboration with a number of partners, to deploy a multifaceted approach to address the issue. Recognising that this was a problem too big for one organisation and its partner network to solve, the Endowment saw an opportunity for working together. Together with two other funders, it established a new initiative, Grow Great, in an effort to foster a partnership committed to improving child nutrition. This collaborative endeavour has since made significant strides in pursuit of its mission, demonstrating how entities working together for a common cause can achieve much more than they would individually.

Grow Great, which has its own board, was incubated within DGMT but with powers of governance that were distributed democratically among the other funders. The project and its unique structure offer a powerful example of how organisational humility and trust can create the space for innovative approaches to societal challenges – a space that would not exist if organisations were to forge ahead alone.

Coordinated response to crisis: The Covid-19 pandemic

The previous experience of collaboration created a kind of muscle memory and a growing belief in the power of working together. These were harnessed to create an effective response at a time of great need when South Africa was plunged into crisis by the global Covid-19 outbreak. As the leader of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy Africa, I was tasked with steering the organisation towards a coordinated response to the pandemic among six entities in the wider philanthropy group.

A set of principles was adopted to guide the group's eventual allocation of R180 million. These principles promoted: a single portfolio approach; immediate action; a holistic perspective; and a balance between grant-making and catalytic philanthropy. The strategy allowed the group to leverage the strengths and experience of its constituent entities in pursuit of a common goal. The unity and solidarity, which were demonstrated by the collective nature of its efforts, were instrumental in enabling the delivery of immediate, comprehensive relief in a time of unprecedented crisis.

Collaboration also marked the character of the initiatives undertaken at this time, which included: the establishment of a ground-breaking multi-wave research project – the Covid Rapid Mobile Survey (CRAM) – which provided real-time information on the pandemic; investment in innovative start-ups to find solutions to the challenges posed by the pandemic; and support for joint programmes such as the Solidarity Fund and South Africa Future Trust.

Just as character is not generally created in crisis but rather is revealed by it, so too can collaboration not be created in crisis. It needs to already be in existence in the form of the trust and mindset that make it possible. In this regard, I am grateful that previous small steps towards better understanding and using collaboration that had been taken within the philanthropic group made it possible to respond effectively during the pandemic when such a response was needed most.

"Through collaboration and collective efforts, individual strengths can be multiplied to help create a better future for all."

Conclusion: The power of collaboration

Each of these experiences taught me that collaboration is not just a tool for achieving objectives; it is a mindset that requires humility, open-mindedness and a deep commitment to shared goals. It is about understanding that the collective wisdom and resources of a group can tackle challenges which are simply too big for one entity alone.

Looking ahead, the need for effective collaboration in philanthropy is more critical than ever. At the present juncture, the challenges facing society are increasingly complex, necessitating a concerted, coordinated approach.

In response a culture of collaboration among philanthropists and their grantees should be fostered to enhance the impact of their efforts. Partnerships that can help to broaden reach and deepen impact should be identified and nurtured. The collaborative mind-set required to foster such partnerships entails being open to learning from others; sharing knowledge and resources; and working together towards common goals.

It is important to instil the value of collaboration and co-creation in the next generation of philanthropic leaders. In this regard, the actions and achievements of the present generation of leaders should demonstrate that the greatest successes are often the result of collective efforts.

In conclusion, I am a proud "reformed collaborator". The path to deep collaboration was not a straight one for me, but it was a journey that taught me invaluable lessons about the power of collective action. I hope that my experiences can encourage others to embrace collaboration as a vital tool for effecting meaningful, sustainable change.

Through collaboration and collective efforts, individual strengths can be multiplied to help create a better future for all. Ultimately, in philanthropy as in life, people and organisations are always stronger together.

Anthony Farr is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy Africa.

Building multi-stakeholder initiatives

A case study of T4 Education

By Vikas Pota

A KEY QUALITY IN LEADERS WHO ARE SERIOUS ABOUT MAKING LASTING CHANGE THROUGH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER engagement is the humility to recognise that they do not have all the answers, but are actually just cogs in a much bigger wheel.

As the founder and chief executive officer of T4 Education, which is a global initiative that supports teachers in an effort to improve educational outcomes, I have met presidents and prime ministers; leaders in the private and civil-society sectors; celebrities using their platforms to advance good causes; and classroom teachers making a difference at the coalface every single day – and I have come to realise the important roles that they all have to play in addressing the challenge of meeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which seeks the provision of universal quality education by 2030.

A world off-course

Although the adoption of the SDGs by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 represented a significant collective achievement, the UN gave warning, even before the Covid-19 pandemic, that SDG 4 was unlikely to be achieved. This has been an uncomfortable truth for those, like myself, who have dedicated themselves to the achievement of this goal, particularly since that progress was further impeded by the global Covid-19 outbreak from 2020.

A total of 1.5 billion learners were shut out of schools and universities under national lockdowns imposed in response to the pandemic. This has had a dire effect in low- and middle-income countries where the rate of learning poverty has increased by a third. Pre-Covid, 57% of 10-year-olds in these countries were unable to understand a simple written text – today the proportion is 70%. Against this background, the gulf between hope and reality in terms of achieving SDG 4 is

not down to a lack of will. There is no shortage of organisations and leaders out there with the best of intentions and even significant resources to plough into tackling the global education crisis. But the truth is, no single organisation or collaboration between organisations can address the whole problem effectively. In this regard, too many stakeholders fall victim to their own hype, to their own rhetoric, to group-think. In fact, the best that an organisation can do is to focus on one particular area within which it has the skills, expertise, contacts and resources to make a tangible difference; while also bearing in mind the extent and type of its contribution in the context of the bigger picture.

T4 Education's place in it all

For its part, T4 Education has focussed on supporting teachers: bringing them together and building grassroots solutions to educational challenges by identifying and sharing expertise across borders and contexts. In this context, I only fully understood what my contribution could be when, in April 2020 at the height of the pandemic, T4 Education was trying to help teachers navigate the new normal. I issued a call for teachers to come together to answer the questions posed by the greatest crisis global education had ever seen, little knowing the scale of what would emerge: the world's largest summit for

" The best that an organisation can do is to focus on one particular area within which it has the skills, expertise, contacts and resources to make a tangible difference; while also bearing in mind the extent and type of its contribution in the context of the bigger picture. "

teachers which was attended online by 103,000 educators across the world. The initiative gave rise to a global community numbering over 200,000 teachers from more than 100 countries. T4 Education is now working with the members of this community to help them transform learning and school culture. To this end, it provides professional development opportunities; conducts research; and offers prizes.

Notwithstanding the success of this recent initiative, I would be naïve to think that my solution, my way of tackling the problem, is the only way; or even that it could exist in a vacuum. Unfortunately though, many leaders and organisations in the philanthropy and education sectors only see the problem in question through their own lens, despite the evident reality that they are operating in a multifaceted field, characterised by intricate institutional and individual connections and featuring a multitude of interdependencies. Much research has been produced highlighting the importance of funding for foundational numeracy and literacy (FLN), However, notwithstanding the manifest accuracy of such findings, it would be a mistake to conclude that if everyone joined together to fund work in this particular field, the world's education crisis would be solved. Such an approach would fail to take into account the plethora of challenges in the education sector, and the point that solving one alone is unlikely to lead to progress for the system as a whole.

In a similar vein, it has been said that efforts to support early childhood development (ECD) can produce the greatest educational impacts. However, such a view fails to acknowledge the importance of the structural interdependencies in the system without which meaningful, large-scale impact would be impossible.
So, an important first step is to understand one's own place in it all. One organisation cannot do everything and change the world on its own, no matter how deep the belief in its cause and the solutions on offer. The question then becomes: What and how can one contribute to the larger whole? ▸▸

" One organisation cannot do everything and change the world on its own, no matter how deep the belief in its cause and the solutions on offer. "

Theory of change

For its part, T4 Education founded a series of World's Best School Prizes with the aim of identifying and disseminating best practices in education, and school culture and leadership, so that other schools may replicate the success of the winners, which are celebrated for their exceptional achievement.

Examples of recent winners include Project Shelter Wakadogo in Gulu, Uganda, which won the World's Best School Prize for Overcoming Adversity in 2022. It has flourished from a school with only two classrooms founded in the wake of war to now educating over 450 children with one of the highest student retention rates in the country. Another recent winner was Escuela Emilia Lascar, a school in Peñaflor in Chile, which won the World's Best School Prize for Innovation for establishing its own television channel as a way of helping underprivileged students to focus on their studies during the pandemic. Emilia TV, as it is called, has further sought to educate pupils on issues, such as gender identity and mental health, which are relevant to them.

T4 Education was able to help these schools tell their stories to the world. At the same time, the organisation's theory of change also made it aware of the limits of its mission. T4 Education's strength lies in its capacity to mobilise teachers and schools and help them tell their stories. But it never seeks to go further than identifying and disseminating best practices. It relies on other collaborators to take things from there and ensure that the best practices which have been promoted are implemented more widely. In Chile, for example, President Gabriel Boric announced a nationwide expansion of Escuela Emilia Lascar's work after the school won its prize; while in the Philippines, the local education department agreed to scale up the work of Bonuan Buquig National High School.

> **“Project Shelter Wakadogo from Uganda won the World's Best School Prize for Overcoming Adversity by growing from a school founded in the wake of war to now educating over 450 children with one of the highest student retention rates in the country.”**

Recognising its limits, T4 Education welcomed a recent invitation to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Schools+ Network – a “network of networks” seeking to bring together education experts, school leaders and teachers from across the globe in an effort to respond to common challenges and inspire advances in classrooms, schools and policies. The network is a great example of an organisation that understands the importance of interdependencies and is bringing people together so that they can all contribute in their own ways, producing a sum that is greater than its parts.

Furthermore, T4 Education recognises that the OECD wields a kind of power that T4 Education does not possess. The OECD has the ear of ministries of education the world over. Therefore, T4 Education's hope is that, through the OECD, the voices of its global teacher community will be heard at the top table and the perspectives of those on the frontline will inform the education reforms being developed by those in power.

There's a mountain still to climb if SDG 4 is to be achieved by 2030, a climb that has only been made more difficult as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. But it is a mountain that can and will be climbed not “because it's there”, as Edmund Hillary was supposed to have claimed after he climbed Everest, but because the relatively uncelebrated Tenzing Norgay had his back, just as those working in the education have each other's. After all, it takes a village to educate a child.

Vikas Pota is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of T4 Education.

Global, regional and local funding collaboratives

Building philanthropy's scale and impact

By Leila Davids

THE URGE TO CONNECT AND COLLABORATE IS A UNIVERSAL HUMAN DRIVE. PHILANTHROPISTS AND FOUNDATIONS HAVE A DEEP HISTORY OF GIVING COLLABORATIVELY. Recently the number of formal collaboratives and the quantum of funding unlocked through these funding vehicles has risen steeply. Research conducted by Bridgespan shows that, to date, about $20 billion in funding has been channelled to social causes across the world.[1] More than half of the existing 400 collaboratives mapped globally have been formed since 2015, with 70% of aggregated pooled funds established after 2000.[2] The number of collaboratives and the amount of funding they unlock and invest is predicted to increase even further over the next five to ten years.

The appetite to collaborate and invest in a collaborative manner is also growing. Philanthropy leaders are increasingly focusing on networked approaches to foster greater impact. The effectiveness of collaboratives is partly down to joined up capital as well as connecting different forms of expertise. There is also a realisation that no single foundation or philanthropist, no matter how deep their pockets, can go it alone to achieve sustainable impact. Collaboratives offer an opportunity for philanthropists and foundations to direct their collective funding towards causes, to learn from one another about different ways of doing philanthropy and to access new (sometimes more diverse and more proximate) investable pipelines of grantees. ▸▸

$20 billion

IN FUNDING HAS BEEN CHANNELLED TO SOCIAL CAUSES ACROSS THE WORLD

400

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70%

OF AGGREGATED POOLED FUNDS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AFTER 2000

Donor collaboratives comprise a complex interplay of personal relationships and organisational partnerships.[3] While the evidence on what works in collaborative philanthropy is gaining traction, there is less data available on what doesn't work. Most collaboratives work effectively and provide outsized and sometimes unplanned returns (including an expanded network and new ways of 'doing philanthropy'), but there are certainly some that fail.

Global collaboratives

Collaboratives can magnify impact and catalyse more philanthropic investment. Large-scale collaboratives, such as the END Fund, Co-Impact and The Audacious Project, seek to drive impact at the global and systemic levels. These collaboratives, which dwarf most existing foundations and philanthropic endeavours in terms of their balance sheets and ambition, are greater than the sum of their parts.

The END Fund seeks to accelerate the elimination of neglected tropical diseases which affect more than 1,7 billion people including more than 1 billion children across Africa and South Asia.[4] Between 2012 and 2022, the END Fund has catalysed $1,5 billion for treatment, trained 3,7 million health workers, provided 1,2 billion treatments and 69,000 surgeries.

Co-Impact is a global philanthropic collaborative focused on improving the lives of millions of people through just and inclusive systemic change.[5] To date, Co-Impact has mobilised $685 million across its Foundational Fund and Gender Fund, reaching 600 million people through providing long-term flexible funding via 65 initiatives across Africa, Asia and Latin America.[6]

The Audacious Project, housed at TED, focusses on "big ideas for the world's most urgent problems". It has raised $5 billion since it was launched in 2018 and has disbursed much of that sum.[7] It aims to match bold ideas with catalytic resources.

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FOR TREATMENT

3.7 million
TRAINED HEALTH WORKERS

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SURGERIES

There is a high degree of connection and crossover among these three funds, which were singled out for their size, geographic focus on Africa, and purpose. All three have a diverse funder base, yet also share several key funders who were early adopters of collaboratives and/or are champions of large collaboratives at scale.

These include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), ELMA Foundation, Delta Philanthropies, MacKenzie Scott, Virgin Unite, and the UBS Optimus Foundation.

Pan-African collaboratives

It has been widely noted that collaborative giving in Africa is a thriving, deep-seated practice. The next five years will see a wellspring of formalised African-led, African-devised and African-focused collaboratives. Many of these collaboratives will focus on the clear need to shift the current funding dynamics across the continent - only 15% of all international philanthropy and 9% of African philanthropy to Africa goes to local organisations[8]. Organisations like Adeso, are scoping out the possibilities of a $1 billion African-based, African-led collaborative fund to focus unrestricted funding in the direction of proximate organisations. The African Visionary Fund (AVFund) assembles funding from various sources including individuals and private philanthropy, and pools and directs that funding towards high impact African founders. The aim is to tackle inequity and shift the power imbalance in philanthropy by offering unrestricted, long-term funding to grantees across multiple areas of intervention, from agriculture to education.

The African Gender Initiative (AGI), which is incubated within Co-Impact's Gender Fund is a collaborative fund focused on advancing gender equity across Africa. It aims to raise $50 million from African philanthropists and foundations. Launched and led by Tsitsi Masiyiwa, AGI provides an innovative pathway for philanthropists to contribute at scale and in their own currency.

South African collaborative funding mechanisms

In South Africa, foundations and philanthropists have been sharing expertise and combining their funding in formal ways for more than ten years.

Founded in 2020, the Solidarity Fund is unique globally as a pooled funding mechanism, a fit for purpose short term vehicle which raised $265million from over 350,000 individuals and organisations. Its success and impact shows the power of collaboration across multiple sectors in South Africa, with contributions from civil society, philanthropy, business, those who live in South Africa and from abroad, to take on the challenges of COVID19 and other national emergencies.

A set of philanthropic actors have, over time, evolved a model of collaborative funds to address issues for children in South Africa. Very often anchored by and incubated at the DG Murray Trust, under the leadership of David Harrison, these initiatives have taken innovative approaches to early childhood development and stunting. In this context, SmartStart utilises a franchise model to provide quality early-learning services across the country, Ilifa Labantwana focusses on universal access to quality early childhood development, and Grow Great aims to achieve zero stunting in South Africa by 2030.

As with the three wholly independent global collaboratives outlined above, there are anchor donors who are early adopters and champions in this collaborative space – DG Murray Trust, ELMA Philanthropies, First Rand Foundation and Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies. There is strong appetite among philanthropists and foundations at the global, continental and national levels to fund collaboratively. There is also ample opportunity and space for others to engage in such initiatives.

Why engage in collaboratives?

- **Increased scale of impact:** Pooling resources means that the funding can go further and produce greater impact than if it were deployed in isolation.
- **Increased learning:** Working with others opens the space to gain relevant knowledge and experience to inform one's own giving strategies. It also creates an opportunity to tap into other funders' skillsets and expertise.
- **Thoughtful decision-making:** Collaborating with peers fosters exposure to diverse views and approaches and deepens one's decision- making power.
- **Less duplication:** Co-creation and coordination leads to reduced duplication.
- **Decreased risk:** Pooled funding creates a diversified portfolio that lowers individual risk.

How to engage in collaboratives

There is relatively little information available on how to engage in collaboratives to maximise engagement and minimise risk. There is no one roadmap, as each funder and each collaborative is unique. However, experience and the literature indicate that there are key factors that need to be considered, several actions that may usefully be taken and pitfalls that should be avoided.

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Dos and don'ts for engaging in collaboratives

Do	Don't
Be selective: Invest time and energy assessing the suite of collaborative opportunities available to you.	**Make assumptions:** Always keep lines of communication clear and open, especially when things are not going to plan.
Find your peer group: Connect with other funders who share or align with you on values and approach. Find strong founders and back them.	**Ignore the inherent relational complexities:** Each donor representative wears two hats – that of the philanthropic organisation and that of the collective giving vehicle. Strong and productive relationships allow for impactful collaboratives.
Align on purpose and ambition: Develop a shared understanding on purpose, problem and impact.	**Take for granted that a shared purpose remains static over time:** Check in with co-funders and the collaborative governance structure annually to assess ongoing fit and suitability.
Have a clear and agreed ambition: Know what success means for one's own foundation and for the collaborative. Ensure that the investment proposition is clear and either amplifies one's giving strategy or addresses an identified new area of interest.	**Over-prioritise full consensus:** Collaboratives are vehicles for joint giving and impact, and while it is important for most stakeholders to be on the same page, not everyone will agree with everything all the time.
Innovate: In the absence of a collaborative mechanism that suits one's needs or supports one's vision, reach out to peers and start a new collaborative.	**Cling to power:** Be flexible and open. Be collaborative!

Collaboration for play in the ECD sector

By The LEGO Foundation

Contextualising playful learning

Over the past decade, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of learning through play and its role in early childhood development (ECD). This is also the case in South Africa, where government, non-profit organisations (NPOs), the private sector, care-givers and communities have made a concerted effort to increase access to ECD programmes and improve learning outcomes for children. Since 2009, The LEGO Foundation in South Africa has maintained a steady focus on systemic work in early education with the aim of bringing about positive, long-lasting change in the form of a play based educational experience for children so that they may reach their full potential.

Government's decision in 2019 to shift the management, development, evaluation and maintenance of policy, programmes and systems for ECD in South Africa to the Department of Basic Education presented opportunities for meaningful collaboration on future ECD provision and the strengthening of quality learning through play. As it prepared to take responsibility for ECD, the Department of Basic Education was confronted with a lack of verified, accurate data and standardised reporting on the kind and scale of ECD provision across South Africa. This reality would affect its ability to lead and coordinate ECD as an integrated government service spanning multiple departments. Recognising the gap, the LEGO Foundation decided to support the implementation of an ECD census. Although the initiative represented a relatively large undertaking for the foundation, it was viewed as potentially instrumental in the establishment of a resilient system with the capacity to promote a brighter, better future in which children would thrive through the power of play.

Finding common ground

The basis for the collaboration between the LEGO Foundation and the Department of Education was strong. The newly established DBE directorate noted that a key barrier to effective planning in the ECD sector is the lack of data on ECD programmes and data systems.. In addition, there was a shared ambition to improve access to early learning opportunities for all children and ensure that they received quality education in support of their holistic development. It was also understood that the census data would help the DBE in its new role by providing an assessment of the extent and kind of ECD provision across South Africa and facilitating evidence-based planning for the sector.

However, there were also a number of challenges. The census initiative was launched at a time of great uncertainty about what the reallocation of the responsibility for ECD at the level of national government would mean for all involved. The ECD directorate at the Department of Basic Education was newly established and had not previously engaged extensively with the ECD sector.

Meanwhile, in June 2020 the Department of Social Development and the Nelson Mandela Foundation had recently embarked on a Vangasali campaign with goal of expanding the registration of ECD services across the country. In the first quarter of 2021, the government was also trying to distribute an ECD Employment Stimulus Relief Fund to help ECD service-providers recover from the loss of income brought on by COVID-19.

These projects, which required significant input and engagement from stakeholders in the sector, were undertaken at a time when the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic were placing a severe strain on the ability of ECD service-providers to continue operations and meet the needs of local children and communities. Despite the challenges, the census initiative presented an opportunity for collaboration that could galvanise key stakeholders in pursuit of their core mandate of providing safe, healthy responsive learning environments for children. It was understood that building resilient systems to anchor that work could significantly benefit the sector.

The power of play

Play-based learning is a valuable, effective tool for facilitating early development and education in general. Although it can be difficult to implement early-learning programmes effectively in environments with complex and competing challenges, the LEGO Foundation remains committed to promoting the benefits of play for children and more generally. As part of its contribution to the census project, the foundation continually emphasised the importance of play and how play-based learning aligns with the national agenda on promoting children's development and wellbeing. The foundation's contribution also included ▸▸

The 2021 national early childhood development census: A snapshot

What – An early childhood development census was commissioned by the Department of Basic Education and funded by the LEGO Foundation in an effort to collect data on all ECD programmes in South Africa; better understand the national ECD landscape; and enable evidence-based management of the sector.

Why – In making the Department of Basic Education responsible for ECD, the government placed one department in charge of the continuum of education from pre- to secondary-school levels. In this context, the census provided up-to-date data in support of policy-making and planning for an integrated system.

How – Fieldworkers employed by a survey research company contacted each ECD programme, which were geolocated using global positioning system (GPS) technology. They then undertook physical visits; conducted short interviews; and made observations, noting the extent and condition of the basic infrastructure at these places, including in relation to sanitation, access to electricity, play spaces, equipment and resources. The interviews were designed to establish the types of services on offer; fee structures; registration status; and access to nutrition programmes at the various ECD facilities.

Play – The data and indicators provide a basic assessment of how quality learning through play is being facilitated.

implementation of an awareness campaign for the census which, inspired by the joyful nature of play, shared key information on the initiative in colourful, child-facing and light-hearted ways.

Implementing the census and the lessons learned

The fieldwork for the census was conducted in the second half of 2021 under the lockdown restriction imposed by the government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. So, implementation required agility and responsiveness (in keeping with the iterative and interactive nature of play). Foundation staff remained actively engaged throughout the process, coordinating closely with the census reference groups and technical teams, as well as with other key partners and sectoral players – and so was in a position to pivot if needed.

The data collection undertaken as part of the census produced reliable, high-quality data on the sector for the first time and provided the DBE with the numbers and evidence necessary to make a solid business case to the Treasury for more funding. In February 2023, Minister of Finance Enoch Godongwana announced the first significant increase in national ECD funding for many years, with the budget rising 51% from R1.24 billion to R1.88 billion year-on-year. The DBE has acknowledged the catalytic effects of the census and a subsequent project to establish an ECD management information system (MIS) in convincing the Treasury to make this step-change in its funding for ECD. In relation to the census's core purpose to provide a clear idea of the kind and extent of ECD provision in South Africa, the survey identified 42,420 early learning programmes which varied widely in terms of resourcing, registration status, infrastructure and curriculum. Meanwhile, in an effort to ensure long-term, systematic collection and use of data on ECD provision, the LEGO Foundation unlocked more funding in 2022 in support of DBE efforts to develop a management information system for the sector, in the absence of any other such system at either national or provincial level.

The census project has also illustrated the importance of intentional collaboration that utilises the strengths of different stakeholders working towards a common goal. In this regard, the foundation found that effective collaboration depends on all those involved being prepared to ask for guidance and support as required; and ensuring that all the stakeholders were kept informed of progress on the project.

The LEGO Foundation is dedicated to building a future where learning through play empowers children to become creative, engaged, lifelong learners. In collaboration with thought leaders, influencers, educators and parents, the LEGO Foundation aims to equip, inspire and activate champions for play.
www.learningthroughplay.com

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Enterprising Technology Leadership

Building sustainable social solutions in post-Covid South Africa

By Dr Aisha Pandor

IN THE WAKE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE WORLD HAS BEEN FORCED TO RE-EVALUATE ITS APPROACH TO SOCIETAL CHALLENGES. This is particularly true for South Africa, with its unique socio-economic landscape. In this regard, a new kind of leadership in the technology sector is required to build scalable, impactful and sustainable social solutions, and to contend with the continuing uncertainty of the world today. Our organisation SweepSouth, is a technology platform operating in the home services industry, which bridges the for-profit and social impact world. We've had direct exposure to the need to embrace a different way of working in the face of challenges and uncertainty, both based on observing how other organisations within our broader ecosystem have adjusted, and also through our own experiences.

Innovation and courage: The heart of impactful solutions

Innovation is the cornerstone of the technology sector. Technology companies have revolutionised a number of industries by creating innovative solutions. For instance, online platforms have transformed the way people work, shop and connect with each other, improving efficiency and creating new opportunities for impact at scale.

Under the lockdown measures imposed in response to the pandemic, the use of new technologies among some socioeconomic groups expanded rapidly as the need to deliver services and products conveniently, without human contact, became increasingly important. At the same time, the challenges faced by low-income communities and households were exacerbated. Under lockdown, the poorest 10% of people in South Africa lost 45% of their household income on average,[1] as active employment fell by 40% across the country.[2] While earnings and employment recovered somewhat over the following two years, macro-economic challenges and a host of other domestic factors have led to a resurgence in joblessness, with unemployment rising to almost 33% in the first quarter of 2023,[3] reaching pandemic levels and undermining much of the recent progress.

Similarly, education across the country has been harmed by the pandemic and associated lockdown measures. It has been estimated that pupils are up to a year behind in their schooling.[4] Underprivileged students have been placed at a particular disadvantage due to unequal access to adequate learning environments, quality teaching and the internet.

While these challenges can seem insurmountable, they also represent huge opportunities for positive impact and the implementation of bold and visionary plans. During an interview for Harvard University's EdCast podcast,

> Innovation is the cornerstone of the technology sector.

Professor Fernando Reimers detailed how the challenges around education which arose under lockdown were addressed through innovations such as WhatsApp-driven curricula and communication, as well as digital teacher-peer networks through which advice and experiences were shared.[5]

In the post-Covid era, leaders in the technology sector must be willing to challenge the status quo and embrace innovation not just for profit, but also for the benefit of society. This requires a shift from traditional ways of doing business, including in relation to new ways of using technology to drive impact. Such efforts should also entail creating an environment that encourages creativity and experimentation – an environment in which failure is seen as an opportunity for learning and growth, and insights are shared as publicly as possible for the greater good.

Inclusive leadership: A necessity, not a choice

Given South Africa's history and current socio-economic disparities, inclusive leadership is not a choice but a necessity. All voices must be heard and solutions must be designed with the needs of the most vulnerable in mind, and with communities and their leaders at the table, and their lived realities considered, when the decisions are being made.

Technology companies have the potential to foster inclusivity by leveraging their platforms to help empower marginalised groups. SweepSouth's 6th Domestic Work Survey,[6] published annually, provides insights on the living and working conditions of domestic workers in South Africa, and the positive impact of the platform, in an industry that is highly fragmented and where there are few sources of accurate, longitudinal data. As a result of the insights that are published, the public are better informed of where the industry needs urgent improvement, is better conscientized to the plight of workers, and advocacy groups have concrete data with which to lobby for change.

The Covid-alert app,[7] which used community-submitted data to track peaks in cases and trace positive contacts is an example of another platform that leverages data to the benefit of both individual users and the community. Other such tools include MomConnect,[8] which brings together mothers and caregivers in a network offering mutual advice and assistance. Deploying a decentralised approach to producing solutions, such apps can address needs that may be left untended due to inadequate access to formal resources. They show how technology can foster the independence of communities by increasing their capacity to solve problems – and, in so doing, promote local dignity and agency.

Profit with purpose: The power of social entrepreneurship

One of the key lessons that may be learnt from efforts in the technology sector is that profit and social impact are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they can and should go hand in hand. This is the essence of social entrepreneurship: using business to create positive social change.

Vula Mobile,[9] which is a company led by Dr William Mapham, has created technology that connects patients in rural clinical settings to specialists in academic hospitals. The company has worked with 30,000 specialists and facilitated more than 1 million patient referrals. As a for-profit company that is addressing urgent healthcare needs for under-served patient groups, Vula Mobile has shown that it is possible to build a successful business while also making a significant social impact. Indeed, the dual focus on profit and social impact has been a key factor in the company's success.

I believe that more businesses should embrace this kind of approach. By combining a strong positive social-impact agenda with a for-profit model, businesses can create sustainable solutions that benefit both society and the economy. The approach may also foster collaboration among different types of organisations with compatible missions, including in the non-profit, philanthropic and public sectors. Such collaboration requires leadership that understands the power of social entrepreneurship and is committed to leveraging it for the greater good.

Business agility: The antidote to uncertainty

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus is quoted as saying "change is the only constant in life". And so what are organisations to do when their well-laid-out plans need to be put to the wayside by unforeseen challenges? The only antidote to uncertainty is to foster business agility to allow timely adaptation.

When the first lockdown was announced in South Africa in late March 2020, the SweepSouth team had less than three days to respond to what would likely result in a significant reduction in earnings for the business and loss of income for domestic workers working through the platform. Within days, new product changes were made to the technical platform that allowed customers to contribute to workers' incomes even when cancelling bookings, and to pause rather than cancel subscription bookings. This quick thinking and acting allowed us to protect the relationship between SweepSouth, customers, and service providers in the face of uncertainty, increasing long-term retention rates for both.

During 2020 and well into 2021, SweepSouth worked with impact funders such as the Dell Foundation, the Elea Foundation and the Harris Family Foundation, as well as customers of the SweepSouth platform, to establish a SweepStar Fund to cover the basic living costs of domestic workers and their families who were unable to work due to lockdown restrictions for more than 10 months. A great deal of support was garnered, more than would have been possible had the fund sought only to draw upon traditional venture capital funders in the tech sector. Once lockdown measures ended, the SweepStar Fund evolved into a permanent foundation supporting key projects to improve the lives of domestic workers. In the process, it has become a vehicle that a range of funders can continue to use to funnel resources to this economically vulnerable group.

Sometimes agility means responding to changes by making the difficult decision to turn off a promising growth channel or reverse a decision to launch a new product or enter into a new market. When macro-economic conditions in some African markets meant that SweepSouth would have to invest more than budgeted into growth, with a lower expected return on investment, the difficult decision was made to pause operations in these cities, despite the long-term opportunity for growth. When such decisions are made after much dialogue and with the support of board and shareholders, it's crucial to have understanding and aligned stakeholders who support the long-term sustainability of the organisation and market rather than those that seek short-term gains.

Conclusion

The post-Covid era presents both challenges and opportunities for South Africa. In many ways, uncertainty has increased as the world tries to recover from the shocks of the past few years. In this context, the leaders in the technology sector have a responsibility to foster a culture of innovation, inclusivity, impact and agility, as they address these challenges. Philanthropy, with its ability to catalyse collaboration and promote social responsibility, can play a crucial role in this process.

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Innovative leadership in philanthropy

System orchestrators as powerful catalysts of change

By Joshin Raghubar

IN PHILANTHROPY, A SPACE IN WHICH RESOURCES AND GOODWILL CONVERGE TO DRIVE POSITIVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE, the importance of organisations that act as system orchestrators is being increasingly acknowledged. These entities, also referred to as "field catalysts" or "ecosystem developers" can help philanthropists to identify, navigate and influence complex systems. They bring an understanding of the interconnections among various stakeholders, institutions, and sectors, promoting alignment of efforts to create meaningful change. System orchestrators operate as catalysts, fostering collaboration, innovation and sustainable solutions. As the chairperson of UVU Africa, which is a 24-year-old non-profit system orchestrator focused on harnessing innovation and technology for societal progress, I recognise how important it is for innovative philanthropists to rally behind and support these organisations. Research has supported this view; and the discussions at a recent international meeting, the 2023 Skoll World Forum, which was convened to advance entrepreneurial approaches and solutions to the world's most pressing problems, indicated that there is now widespread recognition that philanthropic support for system orchestrators represents a particularly valuable form of investment.

Why support system orchestrators?

- **Addressing root causes:** System orchestrators have a comprehensive understanding of the underlying challenges faced by societies. By focusing on systemic change rather than surface-level symptoms, they address root causes and have a lasting impact.
- **Leveraging networks:** System orchestrators excel at building and leveraging diverse networks, connecting stakeholders from different sectors and backgrounds. By facilitating cross-sector collaboration, system orchestrators amplify the collective impact of various initiatives. They bring together government entities; non-profits; businesses; academia; and local communities to drive coordinated and sustainable change.
- **Scaling impact:** System orchestrators can produce relatively large-scale impact by catalysing innovation and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies. They are more effective than traditional approaches in creating systemic change.
- **Embracing inclusivity:** Inclusive development is a key focus for system orchestrators. By involving marginalised communities and ensuring their voices are heard, these organisations address the needs of all stakeholders.
- **Catalysing future-fit societies:** The rapidly evolving nature of the world requires leaders who can navigate uncertainty and embrace innovation. System orchestrators are well-positioned to drive the transformation towards future-fit societies. By embracing technological advancements; fostering adaptive mindsets; and promoting forward-thinking approaches, they shape the trajectory of societies, ensuring they are resilient, adaptable and capable of thriving amid change.
- **Leveraging resources effectively:** Philanthropists often seek organisations that can maximise the impact of their resources. By supporting system orchestrators, donors can be assured that their contributions will be utilised strategically. These organisations possess the expertise to identify leverage points within complex systems and allocate resources efficiently, enhancing their potential to be deployed for transformative change.

> **Philanthropists can facilitate collaboration among system orchestrators by creating learning networks and platforms for knowledge sharing, and by investing in capacity building initiatives to enhance their effectiveness.**

Best practices for philanthropic support

- **Long-term funding:** System orchestrators require sustained support to drive transformative change. Philanthropists can provide multi-year funding commitments to enable these organisations to plan, execute and measure the impact of their initiatives effectively. This long-term funding approach allows system orchestrators to focus on their mission without the constant pressure of securing short-term resources.
- **Flexibility and trust:** Philanthropists should offer flexibility in their funding and grant-making processes. Recognising that system orchestrators tend to operate in dynamic, evolving environments, donors should be open to adapting the kind of support they offer in response to emerging needs and opportunities. Trusting the expertise and judgement of system orchestrators is vital, as it allows them to navigate complex systems and make informed decisions that can enhance impact.
- **Collaboration and learning networks:** Philanthropists can facilitate collaboration among system orchestrators by convening and creating learning networks and platforms for knowledge sharing, and by investing in capacity building initiatives to enhance their effectiveness.

In 2022, The Bridgespan Group, supported by the Skoll Foundation, surveyed about 100 system orchestrators or field catalysts across the world and interviewed 40 different leaders working on a variety of issues. The report from the survey highlighted the critical role played by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, in the eradication of polio, and, closer to home, the ▸▸

important work undertaken by Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator in addressing youth employment through partnerships, and, in this way, supporting more than 3.5 million work-seekers.

To be truly effective, system orchestrators must first imagine and inspire a vision of a better alternative future – a vision that can then transform the future by mobilising focused action in the present.

UVU sounds like oo-voo (/u:vu:/)

UVU Africa was conceived in Cape Town and founded in 1999 as the Cape Innovation and Technology Initiative (CiTi) with the aim of driving equitable and durable change at the city-region level. As South Africa emerged from the shadow of economic and political isolation after the introduction of democracy in 1994 and moved into the sunlight of a global economy being transformed by the internet, it was imagined that it could one day become a world-class technology hub featuring vibrant tech companies and a thousands-strong digital workforce. At the time, I was a fresh and eager recent graduate who, like many others, wanted to live in a future-fit, inclusive society in which I could feel like a global citizen. It was believed that such a society could be created by establishing a technology-led economy. Accordingly, CiTi focussed on promoting the inclusive growth of the regional digital and innovation economy.

Inspired by Harvard professor Michael Porter's cluster theory, which codified how industry clusters had been formed in other parts of the word, the team at CiTi established the organisation as a system orchestrator, aligning, coordinating and mobilising actors across business, government, academia, and society towards its vision of an inclusive digital economy. As it identified key leverage points, it also made a number of catalytic interventions, establishing enabling infrastructure for new tech ventures; nurturing digital job readiness; fostering educational- and bio-tech clusters; and helping to shape the local government's economic-development strategy, particularly in relation to efforts to attract global talent and investment.

“To be truly effective, system orchestrators must first imagine and inspire a vision of a better alternative future – a vision that can then transform the future by mobilising focused action in the present.”

“UVU Bio is a vibrant bio-economy cluster, laboratory-infrastructure provider and bio-tech entrepreneurial ecosystem operating in Cape Town and Kigali in Rwanda.”

In this regard, CiTi's Bandwidth Barn, which is the oldest tech incubator in Africa, and the initiative's Khayelitsha Barn provide critical infrastructure support for a growing township tech-economy; and the UVU Accelerate programmes has enabled thousands of young companies to survive and thrive. Meanwhile, the initiative's work readiness programme, CapaCiTi, which is one of the largest providers of digital skills for the labour market on the continent, has created more than 5,000 digital job opportunities for young people, helping them to embark on careers at a range of workplaces, from customer support centres to top-tier consulting firms such as Accenture. Another intervention has been the establishment of strategic open-innovation clusters, and field-catalyst organisations that can power these clusters. These have included Injini, which is now the most well-known edtech accelerator and think-tank in Africa; and UVU Bio which is a vibrant bio-economy cluster, laboratory-infrastructure provider and bio-tech entrepreneurial ecosystem operating in Cape Town and Kigali in Rwanda. ▸▸

Cape Town is now the largest and most productive tech hub in Africa, and one of the leading hubs in the world. A global benchmark study on technology ecosystems undertaken by Endeavour Insight found that the region has produced more technology jobs – 40,000-plus – than Nairobi and Lagos combined, which have produced about 7,000 and 9,000 such jobs respectively. The city's impact in the national economy is also notable. More than 70% of net jobs created in South Africa in 2018 were in Cape Town, which also accounted for more than 40% of such jobs in the last quarter of 2022. CiTi's work in Cape Town over the past two decades or so has driven durable and equitable change across the population of the city.

Zooming out from Cape Town, technology and connectivity continue to be immensely transformative across Africa. Technology is helping Africans leap-frog into development and out of poverty. Connectivity, mobile telecoms, mobile money and new tech-enabled business models are making an immense contribution to inclusive growth – the type of growth that gives small farmers and traders access to formal markets; students access to education; rural communities access to health interventions; and women control over their own money.

In 2023, CiTi was rebranded as the UVU Africa Group in recognition of how the organisation is expanding its work across a rapidly urbanising continent, city by city. The new name is inspired by the Swahili term for "innovation" – uvumbuzi. UVU Africa currently has innovation hubs in Cape Town and Kigali, and digital work-readiness campuses in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Over the past 25 years, UVU Africa in its various incarnations has received less than $1m of unrestricted funding and only recently began to receive multi-year funding support. It has been a precarious journey during which few resources have been leveraged. In this regard, research by the Bridgespan group has highlighted persistent underfunding as the main challenge faced by system orchestrators. Most field catalysts experience severe underfunding, generally needing to raise at least half as much again, or even twice as much as their current budget. For example, UVU Africa's funders to date have favoured project funding, ignoring the orchestration component critical to the work.

The breakneck pace of technology advancement conjures both fear and hope for the future among many young Africans. It has been writ large that, ten years from now in 2035, more young Africans will be set to enter the job market than in all the rest of the world. Meanwhile, it is conceivable that, as more work is done by fewer people, and geo-politics move economies to become more insular, a dark, dystopian future awaits the continent, which is already struggling. However, it is important to envision a brighter alternative future, and to challenge the status quo; create alignment; and make every effort to forge a more hopeful, vibrant and inclusive version of society.

Philanthropists who recognise that more than traditional approaches or band-aid solutions are required to address the present systemic challenges effectively will seek out organisations and initiatives that challenge conventional thinking; take bold risks; and are able to disrupt and reshape existing systems. In this regard, philanthropists and system orchestrators, unified in the belief that systems can evolve, represent a powerful force for social transformation.

Joshin Raghubar is Chairperson of UVU Africa.

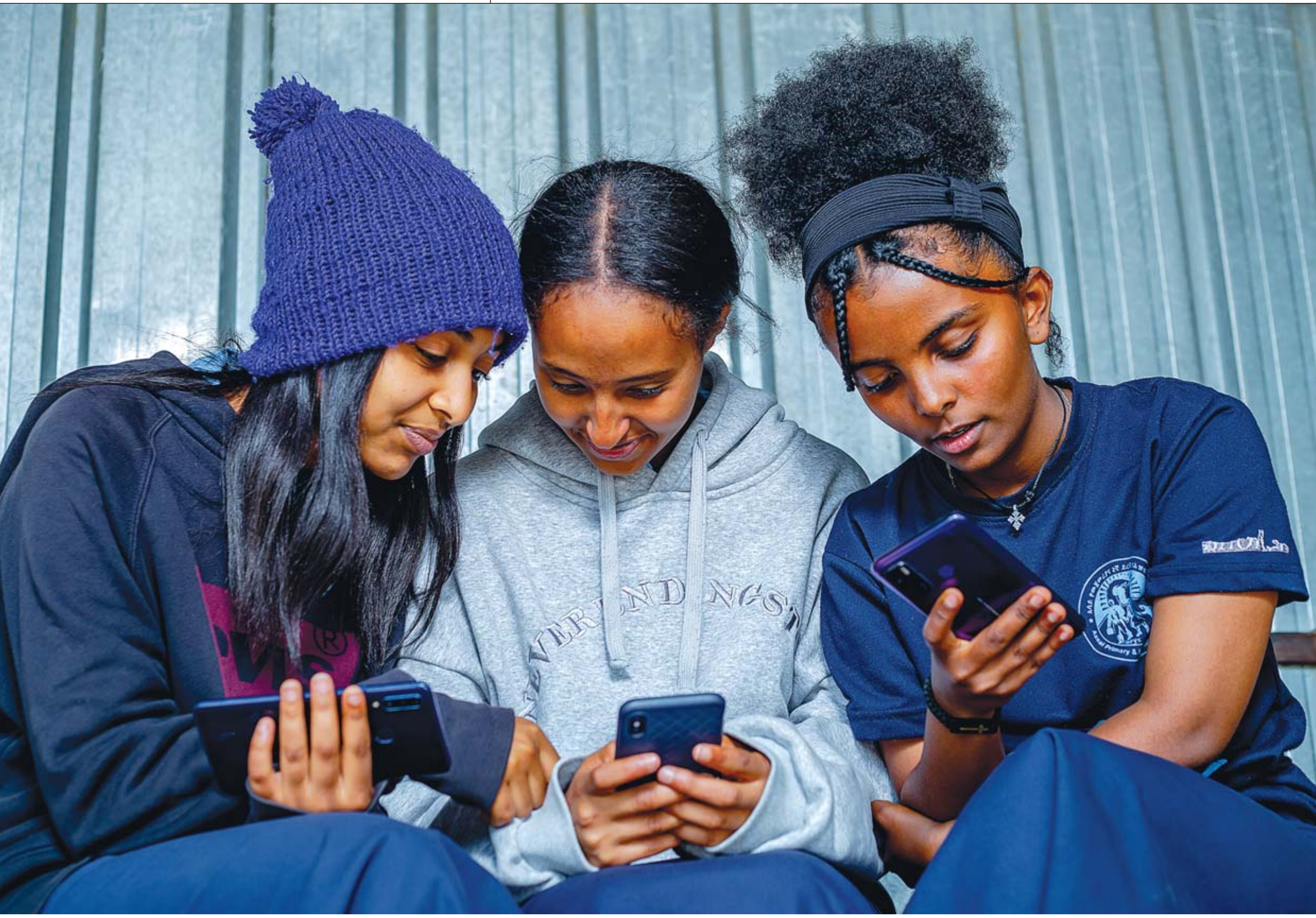

Photo credit: Girl Effect

Visionary Philanthropy

Harnessing artificial intelligence for a more human future

By Vilas Dhar and Yolanda Botti-Lodovico

IMAGINE A FUTURE IN WHICH TECHNOLOGY SERVES HUMAN PURPOSE RATHER THAN HUMAN PROFIT. In such a world, communities would lead technology creation; artificial intelligence (AI) tools would produce scalable solutions to global challenges; and human values would shape technological and social innovation. But this vision requires an intentional transformation – led by philanthropy and supported by a global, multi-stakeholder partnership – to build a digital future that prioritises humanity and the planet.

Aligned efforts from philanthropies across Africa and the globe can fuel this transformation. The first step is to restore trust with communities through hands-on engagement and partnership – cementing philanthropies' role as institutions of public trust. Next, philanthropies must close the digital divide to ensure that communities and changemakers everywhere can participate in AI creation. This effort should entail equipping civil-society actors – who are often most proximate to communities – with the capacity to harness the power of community-driven technology and data and accelerate social impact. Finally, leveraging their resources and proximity to power, philanthropies can help establish a global multi-stakeholder network of changemakers ready to fuse technological progress with social progress at scale.

This article draws on the lessons learned at the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation as part of efforts to build a movement that bridges technology, civil society and philanthropic action in pursuit of a human-centred, AI-enabled future. The Foundation is a tech-inspired philanthropy that works across sectors to solve global challenges; advance justice and equity; and leverage AI to improve human outcomes. The Foundation's efforts extend beyond funding to active partnership, support and mutual learning for a better tomorrow.

Restoring public trust

As a myriad of interconnected global crises, including climate change, inequality and anti-democratic transformation, accelerate, institutions that fail to respond effectively risk losing public trust. Given their access to capital and power, philanthropies have a special responsibility and accountability to the public. But the unprecedented scale and number of intersecting crises – from mass displacement to the ongoing hunger crisis in the Sahel and coastal West Africa – demand a critical examination of the philanthropic tools, priorities and approaches that are used in response.[1] To restore public trust, there is a need for fit-for-purpose solutions. These should include technologies that can address needs and enable the implementation of value-driven priorities and new approaches that redistribute power to community leaders and local experts.

Today, a range of technologies exist to help diagnose and treat immediate challenges. But too few actors are able to access these tools. For example, when severe droughts destroyed crops across the Horn of Africa and the Sahel in late 2022, 60 million people plunged into near famine.[2] Responders were unable to decisively allocate responsibility for the droughts to climate change because the World Weather Attribution system didn't have enough rain gauges.[3] As a result, the crisis was exacerbated and, beyond this, accountability for addressing the crisis was undermined and the marginalisation of vulnerable communities increased.

The values of justice and equity should determine the types of tools that are built and the ways in which their distribution is prioritised. As with vaccines, those who are most vulnerable must have ready access to the latest, most effective technologies. Philanthropy can play a helpful coordinating role not only in funding the increased production of critical technologies, but also in facilitating and ensuring their just distribution.

> **"To restore public trust, there is a need for fit-for-purpose solutions. These should include technologies that can address needs and enable the implementation of value-driven priorities and new approaches that redistribute power to community leaders and local experts."**

Another element of restoring public trust includes the creation of new approaches that challenge traditional power imbalances in philanthropy and return power to locally-led organisations. Philanthropies can help drive this shift, by supporting local changemakers and actively building pathways for them to drive long-term change. The African Visionary Fund, for instance, is working with international philanthropies to provide more unrestricted humanitarian funding to African-led organisations. The Fund's advocacy and partnership have contributed to empowering a new generation of African changemakers who are designing effective solutions within their own communities and enabling transformation that is deeply responsive, community-centred and sustainable.

Closing the digital divide

Local community members are generally the ones who are most attuned to their own needs and how technologies can help them. But, in 2022, 2.7 billion people globally were offline. The United Nations (UN) identified Africa as the "least connected" region, with 60 percent of Africans offline across the continent.[4] Inequitable digital access – amid a rapidly shifting digital landscape and continual advances in AI – hinders the capacity of emerging civil society activists, changemakers and leaders to optimise their impact.

Philanthropies can help fill this gap by partnering with organisations so that every individual – including historically excluded individuals – has an opportunity to thrive in the digital future. AkiraChix is an education non-profit started by female software engineers in Kenya. In partnership with the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, it is pioneering efforts to close the gender gap in tech.

Through training and networking programmes, mentorship and a codeHive programme that fosters technical skills in a bid to increase economic agency, the organisation is empowering individual women, while also inspiring broader societal and economic shifts towards gender equity. AkiraChix is currently expanding its services across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia, and in refugee communities across eastern Africa.

Bridging civil society and technology

A tech-enabled civil society can help create a future where critical solutions are designed by communities for communities. This is especially important given that less than 20% of the AI-based solutions developed to advance the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are produced in the Global South – with the vast majority stemming from the Global North.[5] In this context, several trail-blazing organisations are working with philanthropy to deploy the wisdom of the communities they serve to establish more responsive digital platforms. ▸▸

Girl Effect is an international non-profit organisation (NPO) driven by a commitment to building trust and empowering adolescent girls and young women across Africa and Asia. It creates products that answer intimate questions about health – including reproductive and sexual health. Over the years, Girl Effect has transitioned from educational campaigns in print magazines, to digital approaches, using SMSes and a "Big Sis" chatbot launched in South Africa. In 2021, the team began to integrate AI, opening the doorway to more personalised responses, interactive engagement and increasingly positive impacts.

What sets Girl Effect apart is its emphasis on including local women and girls in the design of its technologies. Beyond seeking data-driven insights from its community of users, the team incorporates panels of youth advisors based in each region where it operates.

> **In 2021, Girl Effect began to integrate AI, opening the doorway to more personalised responses, interactive engagement and increasingly positive impacts.**

Photo credit: AkiraChix

From the earliest stages of development, it engages these panels as expert advisors, decision-makers and active partners – including them in donor meetings and technology creation. Karina Michel, Girl Effect's Chief Creative and Technology Officer, describes this "human-centred" approach as the organisation's "secret ingredient," and as core to ensuring continued responsiveness to the needs and contexts of the user communities.

Fusing technological innovation with social innovation at scale

Scaling these approaches requires more than just technological innovation. It requires broad-based social innovation – shifting from outdated methodologies and practices to a new tech-inspired and human-centred vision for solving the challenges of the 21st century. It also demands multilateral partnerships and commitment. Every sector of society, from public to private to civil, should feel prepared and empowered to engage with AI.

Given its proximity to traditional institutions of power, philanthropy is well-positioned to support this work. For example, the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation has partnered with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to support national governments in the Global South with their national AI strategies – offering diagnostic assessments of existing gaps and needs, consulting, and capacity-building support. Each programme is rooted in the ethics of artificial intelligence and tailored to the unique context of participating states. More broadly, the Foundation and UNESCO are expanding AI literacy and technical capacity across institutions to foster an environment in which AI tools are used safely, responsibly and for the benefit of humanity.

Getting started: steps to organisational success

Based on the Foundation's learnings across sectors, three key steps have been identified as critical to the successful adoption of digital technologies by organisations:

1. **Develop organisation-wide AI literacy combined with an intimate understanding of context-specific challenges**

The first step towards digital transformation requires an organisational commitment to learning. To meet the demands of a 21st-century world, 21st-century institutions need cutting-edge tools and future-forward capabilities. Organisations can amplify their impact by investing in the education and training of their staff; by experimenting with new tools and practices; and by seeking and sharing perspectives across fields and industries.

2. **Learn how to build, adapt and apply technology and data to achieve impact goals**

With open-source innovation and shared digital infrastructure, organizations have an opportunity to not only solve persistent problems, but also collectively shape the AI future. However, this will require bold curiosity, learning and new mechanisms of support, particularly from philanthropy.

According to Girl Effect, many philanthropies only fund programmatic outcomes and not critical infrastructure and back-end support. Girl Effect's Karina Michel said: "Some of the problems we face require bold solutions and could benefit significantly from advancements in technology like AI." But AI still requires research and testing to optimise effectiveness and safety. For organisations to fully participate in technology creation – and invite communities to do the same – philanthropies need to support both the acquisition of talent and the maintenance of infrastructure for sustainable, in-house digital operations.

3. **Dispose of outdated practices in favour of a new tech-inspired, community-centred toolkit**

Along with their increasing use of technologies and data, organisations should invest in both technical capacity and a set of ethical practices for data- and knowledge-sharing. The most equitable innovations return power to communities through data trusts or data cooperatives. On a sector-wide level, multi-stakeholder networks such as the AI Governance Alliance, launched by the World Economic Forum in 2023, can help organisations begin their digital transformation journey with robust support and as part of a community.

As a future-thinking, tech-inspired philanthropy, the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation believes that both technological innovation and social innovation are critical for progress at scale. The Foundation's partners in Africa are leading the way to harness the potential of AI for humanitarian response, climate action and workforce adaptation. With the support of multi-stakeholder partners and philanthropy, these trail-blazers can help promote an equitable, community-driven and inclusive AI future for Africa and the planet. VD YBL

"As a future-thinking, tech-inspired philanthropy, the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation believes that both technological innovation and social innovation are critical for progress at scale."

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Vilas Dhar

Yolanda Botti-Lodovico

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Philanthropic capital needs to take real risks in a country in crisis

By Bridget Fury

THE CONTEXT IN WHICH PHILANTHROPY EXISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA IS NOT NEW, NOR IS IT UNIQUE: A massively unequal society with rampant, endemic corruption, largely lacking ethical leadership and characterised by ever weaker governance structures and institutions; failed systems of public service; political polarisation; a lack of social cohesion; and youth disenchantment.

On the flip side, South Africa has a vibrant civil society supported in great part by philanthropy, civic engagement, social entrepreneurship, innovation, the private sector and important but increasingly rare support from the public sector. At the same time, the sad reality is that for most of the population the general trend is downward.

> **The context in which philanthropy exists in South Africa is not new, nor is it unique: A massively unequal society with rampant, endemic corruption.**

Philanthropy comes in many forms, but is essentially about "giving away" money in support of doing good. In the sense that there is no financial return expected from philanthropy, the capital being deployed is by definition "risk capital". This is capital that should be used as flexibly, creatively and innovatively as possible in pursuit of its aim – the transformation of society for the better.

The irony is that philanthropy is traditionally risk-averse and conservative – looking to support only programmes or organisations that have a "proven" model and are achieving results, however limited in scale; and it is often short-term in its outlook – seeking programmes that can deliver measurable results quickly.

In a country in which most people's lives are getting worse, this kind of urgency is understandable, and in and of itself completely rational. But it is time to think outside the box and re-examine the role of philanthropy and its relationship to risk.

While backing implementation partners that are delivering on their objectives and creating impact should always be a factor in funding allocations, philanthropy is beginning to acknowledge that this approach is not enough on its own. The great scale of the task faced, taken alongside a diminishing pool of philanthropic and government funding, means that new mechanisms need to be employed to catalyse the provision of additional investment and the production of new solutions.

Many philanthropists and foundations are engaged in a quest for such mechanisms and are looking at different approaches so that they can address complex, inter-connected problems for which simple programmatic solutions are insufficient. Such mechanisms may entail the deployment of different types of capital and engagements with partners across the spectrum of impact players, and may also entail collaboration with commercial capital providers.

Blending different types of capital

There is continued buzz around impact investment and how it has the potential to fund sustainable solutions that respond to many of society's challenges. Instruments such as pay-for-performance and impact bonds have been explored in South Africa and are being supported by a handful of foundations.

> "The uMaStandi initiative leverages the equity inherent in property to enable the owners to build quality affordable rental units on their land."

However, other blended capital structures that could be deployed by philanthropists are still not well documented. This lack of information together with a nervousness about how for-profit entities can and should be funded by philanthropic capital can impede the establishment of new kinds of funding structures.

There are a number of ways in which philanthropy has used grant capital to attract more commercial forms of capital. In this regard, blended structures may be established by providing a soft layer of funding in the form of a grant, a zero- or low-interest loan, or a technical assistance facility (or any combination these), which then enables the initiative in question to attract more commercial or quasi-commercial funding.

R125 million

WAS RAISED BY PROPERTY FINANCE COMPANY TUHF21 FOR ITS UMASTANDI FUND

For example, impact-driven property finance company TUHF21 raised R125 million for its uMaStandi Fund, which sought to finance the efforts of township property developers to grow their businesses by providing much-needed, affordable rental accommodation. TUHF21 was able to raise this sum from partners, including a commercial bank and a number of impact funders, because of the catalytic funding that had been provided by philanthropic capital.

The uMaStandi initiative leverages the equity inherent in property to enable the owners to build quality affordable rental units on their land. It also ensures that construction is properly managed and has all the necessary planning permissions in place.

The low-density sprawl in townships – which is a result of past ineffective and inequitable uses of space – has produced many opportunities for densification and the establishment of mixed-use developments in these places. Such development can stimulate township economies; create sites of employment; and offer people access to economic opportunity. In addition, the commercial partners supporting such development are able to diversify their investment portfolios

Incubating new approaches

Some philanthropy seeks to promote innovation by providing direct in-kind support as well as research and development funding for the creation of a new approach or concept. The provision of such support may entail developing a test case or pilot, or incubating a new implementing agency or operating entity. Such support typically takes a number of forms:

1. **A pilot project is established within the host organisation,** making use of its institutional and human resources. Such pilot schemes can test whether a project would be successful. The host organisation can experiment with different types of approaches and models before they embark on establishing an evidence base and a "case for support" so that funding or a government take-over of the initiative may be secured.
2. Beyond just seeking to **test and prove whether a new initiative would be effective**, the host organisation seeks to establish it as an independent entity.
3. **An independent trust or foundation evolves from within the host organisation** and is provided with in-kind support at inception, before going on to forge its own identity, organisational structure and purpose.

The Tenure Support Centre (TSC) – previously the Transaction Support Centre, is an action-research pilot project established by consulting company 71point4 in partnership with the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa (CAHF), offers a good example of a new kind of approach with the potential to drive systemic change. It seeks to empower lower-income residents by helping them to secure property rights. The centre comprises a walk-in advice office located in Makhaza, Khayelitsha, which is a lower-income neighbourhood of Cape Town consisting principally of properties built by the government for those in need.

The TSC team assists clients to formalise their tenure of these housing units and/or resolve other property-related issues. Beyond assisting clients, the TSC's partners, 71point4 and CAHF, document client case studies; identify systemic constraints that impede the formalisation process; and explore mechanisms for optimising existing processes. On the basis of the research and evidence collected, TSC and its partners coordinate with public- and private-sector stakeholders in an effort to improve client experiences and outcomes, and to drive systemic change.

The work of the TSC has been presented widely and has met with a receptive audience at the most senior levels within government. As a result, the centre is now seeking to scale up the programme, including as part of Operation Vulindlela, which is a joint initiative of the Presidency and National Treasury to accelerate the implementation of structural reforms and support economic recovery. CAHF and the TSC are contributing to this initiative after they were asked to prepare a detailed, intergovernmental implementation plan to support titling and property transfer for lower-income property owners.

> **"Philanthropy plays a fundamental role in South Africa, funding implementing organisations which are providing services that should be delivered by government."**

Philanthropy reimagined

Philanthropy plays a fundamental role in South Africa, funding implementing organisations which are providing services that should be delivered by government. It fulfills this function without the requisite resources or regulatory powers and while adhering to standards of accountability and transparency that are often lacking in government. In the context of the crucial role that it plays, philanthropy is now being forced to reimagine how it can expand its provision of catalytic funding, finding new ways of unlocking other financial, organisational and human resources in partnership with a range of stakeholders.

South Africa needs new solutions to the challenges it faces and if philanthropists are willing to take significant and calculated risks in supporting innovation and backing new approaches, it will be able to contribute to catalysing the change that is so desperately needed. BF

Bridget Fury is a philanthropy advisory consultant

Journeying towards trust-based philanthropy

By Lorrie Fair Allen and Jessie Chiliza
Inset by Yashmita Naidoo and Neo Mohajane

THE TRUST-BASED PHILANTHROPY (TBP) MOVEMENT HAS GAINED INCREASING SUPPORT OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, including in Southern Africa. At the same time, funders can feel discouraged from engaging in TBP practices due to a number of real and perceived barriers. At a foundational level, building trust between grant-makers and grantee partners is a key challenge, met by applying many of the principles of a meaningful personal relationship. There should be honesty and self-reflection, mutual accountability, kindness, respect and dignity, and a sharing of power. Building trust is a process – one that must address the trauma and inequity produced by histories of oppression and overt racism (examples include societies under *apartheid*, slavery and Jim Crow laws) and the more covert racism and inequality that has existed in the philanthropic sector for generations. In this context, the TBP movement offers a framework for funders to advance the healing, justice and equity that are vital for a better world. ▸▸

"Building trust between grant-makers and grantee partners is a key challenge."

At the Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project (CTAOP), our mission is to advance and invest in the health of young people living in South Africa to create a more equitable future for all. As a grant-maker, the "what" is just as important to us as the "how." CTAOP provides multi-year, flexible funding and capacity-strengthening support to community-based organisations. We also convene annual summits and offer a host of responsive accompaniments aimed at meeting the needs of organisations and communities. CTAOP believes this approach will improve the resilience and capacity of community-based organisations to achieve long-term outcomes and meet the needs of the marginalised populations they serve. We do not consider ourselves experts or claim that our way is the only way. In sharing our experience of this ongoing journey, we hope to offer some lessons, encouragement and support for those interested in trust-based philanthropy.

Do the hard work

A number of valuable resources that can help funders educate themselves about TBP's approach, values and practices are available at www.trustbasedphilanthropy.org. In addition to learning, some of the most critical work for CTAOP has been our team's ongoing self-reflection of individual, organisational and sectoral privilege and power. For many funders, this includes examining who has decision-making power; unpacking inequities in terms of race, gender, cultural norms and socio-economic status; and interrogating "why" things are done the way they are done. This framing and examination is not a once-off endeavour, but an ongoing practice.

When introducing a new lens, it is important to allow ourselves some grace. It takes courage and humility to reflect honestly and to be transparent with grantee partners regarding what we learn about ourselves. At CTAOP, the process started with discussions about philanthropic neo-colonialism, global north and white elitist norms, the ways in which we wield power unjustly and how our processes perpetuate inequity. We also explored a key question: Who is centred in our work and why? As we pulled back the layers of "why", we found that too often the answer was not linked to our core values – answers like, "this is the way it has always been done" did not sit well with us. We also engaged our programme partners in this process of self-reflection because we came to realise that if we are not transparent or honest with our programme partners about our challenges, goals, context and limitations, we can hardly expect them to do the same in return. Vulnerability and trust are intertwined, and our programme partners responded to our vulnerability with rich, honest and sometimes critical feedback.

> **At the Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project, our mission is to advance and invest in the health of young people living in South Africa to create a more equitable future for all.**

Photo credit: Nick Pinnoy

> **Vulnerability and trust are intertwined, and our programme partners responded with rich, honest and sometimes critical feedback.**

As funders, the onus is on us to take the first step. This might involve an apology for causing harm; sharing uncomfortable reflections; highlighting funder failures; admitting to blind spots and biases; or asking for help. After spending 18 months co-designing our theory of change *with* our programme partners and then subsequently creating a reporting platform *without* their input, we became frustrated when we found ourselves chasing reports; delaying grant renewals; and making harmful (and inaccurate) assumptions about our partners.

When we admitted that we didn't think we got it right, our vulnerability opened the gates to feedback that included, "Yeah, your reporting sucks", and led to meaningful change. The

harsh feedback was a compliment – an indicator that a trusting relationship had been established. This led to immediate changes to our application and reporting processes, and the establishment of new longer-term strategies. It was important that adjustments in practices and policies accompanied the continuous learning and reflection. Without these actions, there is no entrenched learning or change.

Take a human-centred approach

Philanthropists tend to view randomised control trials as the "gold standard" of effectiveness. However, communities are not laboratories and it is impossible to eliminate contextual factors that may impact the success of an intervention. Similarly, trust does not exist in a vacuum. There is an entire ecosystem of which each of us are a part, with each party (CTAOP included) coming from different starting points and different pasts. Everyone arrives with trauma, biases, harmful norms and entrenched approaches that can take time to navigate, dismantle or rebuild.

With this in mind, we aim to be human-centred in all interactions. From our first meeting to subsequent encounters, there is a continuous effort to build trust with, and learn from, our grantee partners. This learning mindset helps CTAOP understand the complexity of the work and equips us with the knowledge to advocate for our programme partners more effectively.

> **"We aim to be human-centred in all interactions. From our first meeting to subsequent encounters, there is a continuous effort to build trust with, and learn from, our grantee partners."**

CTAOP's human-centred process involves having regular conversations, or check-ins, with programme partners. This offers opportunities to reflect on learnings, providing a space for curiosity, deep listening and meaningful stories and ideas. We keep records of our conversations; and these notes along with anything else the programme partners choose to share, form the basis of an annual report. In addition, CTAOP holds annual summits which focus on the health and well-being of the individuals engaged in the work, as well as the health of their organisations. These meetings are spaces for healing, dreaming, co-conspiring, and unleashing the collective strength of the network. This mindset shift to focus on learning is a key element in building trust. If our focus as a funder is on compliance and control, the conventional approaches work very well. Results look quite different when our focus is on learning. We found that when we took the time to be curious and ask questions, we gained a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions affecting our programme partners and the young people with whom they were working, and this led to much more effective support.

This is not to say that grantee partners should not be accountable for their efforts, but rather that the accountability flow should be directed more to the communities in which they are working. The quest for conventional accountability can lead to funders imposing inappropriate objectives and/or unrealistic timelines on their grantee partners, which can effectively erode the trust between the grantee partner and the community it serves. Furthermore, the practice of collecting data points that are only meaningful to the funder is extractive and exploitative. Instead, CTAOP asks what indicators are important to the community and the grantee organisation – not to hold feet to the fire but in a spirit of curiosity and learning.

We base our approach to evaluation on the understanding that all organisations want to know if their programmes are contributing to positive change. In that sense, even if they lack a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, they are best suited to collect meaningful data in culturally appropriate ways. By placing the expertise of those closest to the challenges at the centre of evaluation efforts, we test our assumptions about what we think works. Another notable shift is CTAOP's emphasis on the importance of our own accountability to our programme partners, measuring our success, in part, on how well we are showing up for them and helping them achieve the impact we jointly aim for. If trust erodes or breaks, which can happen occasionally, we have learned to adopt a measured approach and not to jump to conclusions or act on the basis of prejudicial assumptions of mismanagement or corruption. When our relationships are strong and trusting, we can view things that may be considered red flags in traditional philanthropy with empathetic curiosity. CTAOP staff encourage open, honest, kind and clear communication and try to bring the relevant stakeholders together to facilitate a solution, while also being mindful of the power dynamics within the ecosystem.

A final thought...

Many who write about equitable grantmaking talk about how it takes time. We accept that the process of building trust may take years. However, given the urgency and scale of the problems faced by marginalised populations, funders have a responsibility to shift their practices immediately. With this in mind, there are several clear actions that funders can take. We all can: provide multi-year, general operating funds; simplify paperwork; be transparent; solicit and act on feedback; and give grantee partners the space and resources required to contribute to the systemic change we all seek, both in the philanthropic sector and in communities experiencing the effects of inequality. Quite simply, it is time to be bold.

Lorrie Fair Allen is the Chief Programme Director and Jessie Chiliza is the Associate Programme Director at the Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project.

Lorrie Fair Allen

Jessie Chiliza

A grantee's tale

HIVSA was established in 2002 and has a longstanding history of implementing community-based HIV programmes. In our 21-year history, we have received small and large amounts of funding from many local and international donors. Unfortunately, our capacity for understanding (and meeting) donor expectations is mainly based on previous experiences and the unspoken rule that "the grantee shall comply." Given the limited amount of funding available, grantees like HIVSA often have no choice but to accept funding from donors even when our experience, values and passion are not recognised or acknowledged. Being a community implementing partner, HIVSA often acts as an intermediary between donor expectations and the needs expressed by our community partners.

HIVSA's relationship with CTAOP began in 2013 – they provided seed funding for our online magazine, *Choma*, which aims to reduce HIV infections among girls and young women. Our 10-year relationship with CTAOP has been characterised by mutual learning and respect. We were pleasantly surprised during our initial engagements with this "new donor" that conversations flowed smoothly; that there was an appreciation of our thoughts and observations; and that WE were invited to help shape the basis for reporting and sharing insights on what we thought was important. CTAOP has a deep-rooted understanding of how the South African socio-political and economic landscape affects communities; and how the projects and organisations it supports can provide solutions in this context. CTAOP's in-depth knowledge of each of its grantees allows it to forge links and identify synergies, which can be valuable in times of crises when the extent of the need goes beyond CTAOP's ability to effectively address it alone. CTAOP staff have always been open and responsive to helping us meet the challenges we have faced and have always adopted a flexible, non-prescriptive approach to programme design and the use of the funding it provides.

However, with over 20 years of existence in the not-for-profit space, the shift to trust-based philanthropy was not an easy transition for HIVSA. Our relationships with donors have mainly been transactional – "we give you money, you give us the numbers to prove that you have utilised it efficiently and effectively." Being trusted by CTAOP to do what we know best took some getting used to but helped us achieve outcomes we didn't imagine possible. In relation to the adoption of a TBP approach, a major lesson for organisations like us is that we also have to transform ourselves if we are to embrace all the magic that can be conjured when two entities collaborate on the basis of TBP principles.

Yashmita Naidoo is the Chief Executive Officer at HIVSA and Neo Mohajane is the Programme Director of Health Systems Strengthening at HIVSA

Robust and resilient health systems require effective public leadership and management

By Robert D. Newman

IT WAS EARLY 2010, AND I HAD BEEN THE DIRECTOR OF THE GLOBAL MALARIA PROGRAMME AT THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS.

I was preparing to deliver a talk about the state of the fight against malaria when it dawned on me that the greatest challenges that countries were facing were not technical, but rather leading and managing increasingly large, complex and expensive malaria-control programmes. The people trusted to lead the fight against malaria were generally medical doctors, nurses and public health professionals who had been promoted into their administrative roles because of their technical acumen. And while their jobs certainly had a technical component, most of their time was spent developing strategies and workplans; building budgets; inspiring and managing people; monitoring progress; communicating results; and coordinating the multitude of partners supporting diverse areas of malaria control and elimination. So, in that talk, I called for greater investment in strengthening leadership and ▸▸

management capabilities, and argued that, without such investment, it would be impossible to reach ambitious targets for the reduction of the global malaria burden. I also argued that this investment was needed not just to address the problem of malaria, but to support health systems more generally, if the health objectives set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 were to be achieved.

My plea fell on deaf ears. While there was (and still is) abundant investment in research and development to produce new medical tools; in the purchase and distribution of commodities; in building infrastructure; and in front-line delivery of services, there was (and still is) far too little investment in the leadership and management capacity of public servants responsible for establishing and maintaining effective health systems.

“Effective, motivated teams of individuals with robust leadership and management skills are essential if the expected return on all the other investments is to be realised.”

This failure flies in the face of reality. After all, healthcare workers cannot operate in a vacuum, and medicines and bed-nets do not distribute themselves. Effective, motivated teams of individuals with robust leadership and management skills are essential if the expected return on all the other investments is to be realised.

Building leadership and management skills among public health teams and innovators is important anywhere, but particularly in contexts, such as those found in much of Africa, in which resources are limited, and the need for efficient and effective health solutions is great. Effective leadership and management skills enable teams to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their programmes, and achieve their goals more effectively – all of which ultimately leads to the establishment of more robust and resilient health systems. By investing in leadership and management skills, governments can also help to foster a culture of innovation and continuous learning, which is essential for the long-term success of health initiatives, especially in the present era of increasingly rapid change.

After talking about this issue for years, I decided in 2018 that it was time to make it my day job. I accepted the post of executive director of AMP Health, which is a non-profit initiative based in South Africa that supports African governments in their efforts to build visionary and effective public sector teams. What primarily attracted me to the organisation was its firm belief in the power of such teams – groups of dedicated people working together – to make a difference.

Traditional approaches to developing leadership and management skills have often had limited and/or transient success because they focus on the individual (rather than the wider team and organisational culture) and on knowledge transfer (generally through lectures) rather than on durable behaviour change. They also tend to rely on identifying potentially promising individuals and sending them away for training, with the expectation that they will bring that learning back to their teams.

However, the goal should be to bring about systems-level change and to foster a broader ecosystem that encourages, celebrates and comes to expect and demand effective leadership and management practices. In this context, individualistic approaches to leadership development are unlikely to result in change at an institutional, let alone systemic, level. Environments shape behaviour. Accordingly, a collective approach to leadership is required. When a team, and the wider organisation into which it fits, share a common vocabulary and understanding in relation to what good leadership and management means, they create a culture of joint accountability and collective leadership that brings out the best in everyone.

The latest thinking on developing leaders has placed increasing emphasis on coaching, experiential learning, providing opportunities for learning on the job, and peer learning. In this way, education is moved out of the classroom, and provides opportunities for individuals to practise their nascent leadership and management skills in an actual work environment in which they can receive constructive feedback; reflect; and adapt, as they hone their skills. The methodology also fosters the development of a culture of lifelong learning.

Such is the approach deployed by AMP Health. The AMP model centres on the recruitment and placement of a “management partner”, who is generally a mid-career professional with at least some private-sector experience. This partner is embedded with a government team, usually for at least two years. They are not there to provide traditional technical assistance, nor to be a management consultant, nor to be an extra pair of hands to get the work done. Rather, they are there to act as a trusted coach and mentor to the team, helping from the outset to identify their most important programmatic priorities and the leadership and management skills needed to achieve them.

In addition to the embedded management partner, AMP Health provides structured leadership and management training that is tailored to each team’s needs. A dedicated in-house learning team, overseen by a chief learning officer, works closely with each team and their management partners to identify priority skills and tools and provide practical and relevant content in support of more effective leadership and management. AMP Health also believes in the power of peer learning, and creates in-person and online opportunities for partner teams to connect with peers from other countries; share their experiences; identify best practices; and support one another.

As an example, AMP Health and the Global Financing Facility, which is hosted by the World Bank, launched a collaboration in Nigeria in May 2022. AMP subsequently conducted experiential learning workshops and provided embedded leadership and management support for more than 50 health-system leaders from a number of sectors at the national and sub-national levels with the aim of addressing issues of family health and nutrition. As a result, communication and coordination have improved, and the Nigerian team developed a cohesive strategy to guide the provision of healthcare for mothers, babies and children across the country.

So why does investment in developing teams of public sector leaders remain so limited? In part, it may be because it is challenging to demonstrate the impact of such work, particularly in terms of the outcome measures that many funders demand, such as number of lives saved. It has traditionally been easier to understand the value of a new medicine or vaccine that has been developed, purchased, and deployed; or the worth of a new clinic that has been built; or the value of a front-line healthcare worker who has been trained, than the worth of fostering the collective leadership skills of a public-sector team.

Nevertheless, there is a strong argument that better individual leadership and management skills and improved team effectiveness strengthen health systems, leading to discernible and measurable benefits.

In this context, the Covid-19 pandemic produced a common experience that may have fostered greater appreciation of the value of leadership and management within health systems. Although there may never be a full understanding of why Covid-19 spared some places while battering others, it became increasingly clear, as the pandemic wore on, that thoughtful, data-driven, accountable and engaged leadership was a critically important determinant.

One way to prepare for and mitigate the effects of future outbreaks (and pandemics) while concurrently driving the achievement of national development goals is to develop the leadership and management skills of public sector teams. But this will not happen by accident nor by magical thinking. Rather, it will require a concerted, coordinated effort and significant investment from governments, as well as philanthropic organisations.

"There is a strong argument that better individual leadership and management skills and improved team effectiveness strengthen health systems."

Muhammad Pate, the former global director for health, nutrition and population at the World Bank, and a member of the High-Level Council on Leadership and Management for Development, which AMP Health convenes, has argued that leadership and management is the missing SDG. Moreover, it is the function that makes achievement of all the other goals possible, since there is no prospect of reaching any of the SDGs in the absence of effective leadership and management.

In the present era, much hope is pinned on evolving technology and the power of data. But better technology alone will not solve the intractable development challenges that are presently faced. Rather, effective teams of people are required in order to harness the tremendous power of new tools to produce better health; stronger education systems; and greater food security – and to slow the rate of climate change and mitigate its worst impacts.

Fortunately, there are many teams of public servants who are eager to do just what their name implies: serve the people. Governments are often dismissively described as bureaucracies that get in the way of progress. But it is time to turn that thinking on its head and acknowledge the tremendous untapped power of public-sector teams. Over the last five years, I have been repeatedly struck by how emotional the people in AMP Health's partner teams become when they talk about the leadership and management skills that they have gained. Often, they arrive at a new understanding of their own value and ability to contribute to their teams; and a greater appreciation of the collective ability of their teams to achieve ambitious goals and make a difference in the lives of many.

Perhaps this quote from Dr Michael Udedi, a member of the Malawi Ministry of Health, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health Unit, which AMP supports, sums it up best:

"There is a clear link between leadership and management and public health. There needs to be direction, guidance, and passing on skills from leaders to others. If leaders have leadership and management capacity, we can have an impact on how well our team gets things done; and, because we drive important policies and strategies, have an impact on public health." RN

Robert D. Newman is Executive Director of AMP Health.

Philanthropy's leadership role in building democratic justice, governance and transparency

By Audrey Elster

LEADERSHIP IS A CRUCIAL FACTOR FOR SUCCESS IN ANY SECTOR – AND NO LESS SO IN PHILANTHROPY. Much has been written about the qualities of good leadership. These include vision; courage; collaboration; taking a long-term view; and humility, among others. At this moment in South Africa's history, those qualities are needed more than ever. And philanthropy, with its abundance of resources, has a responsibility to step up to the challenge of leadership.

In this context, the RAITH Foundation has sought to adopt a leadership role by funding in the democracy space, in particular supporting work that holds those in power to account and empowers those who are marginalised to do so. We have a vision of the South Africa we want to see; a society in which people have equal rights and equal access to resources, where the institutions of state are focused on advancing the Constitution and where those in power are held accountable for addressing the systemic barriers to building a more inclusive society. Finding ways to build this society requires courage because there is no clear path, no quick wins. It is challenging work but, I believe, foundational, in that everything else we do is built on this. Without it, efforts to improve our education system, our health service and our economy will be thwarted. This was evident in the widespread riots and looting that took place in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in July 2021 and the regular, often violent and destructive service-delivery protests which continue to take place. People who feel excluded from the benefits of a democratic system, which should bring about a more just and inclusive society, have little to lose.

The work of building democracy and good governance is long-term, a slow-burn; results of the work funded by the Foundation, which is systemic and multi-sectoral in nature, are not quickly achieved or even that obvious. Often, it can feel as if little progress is being made.

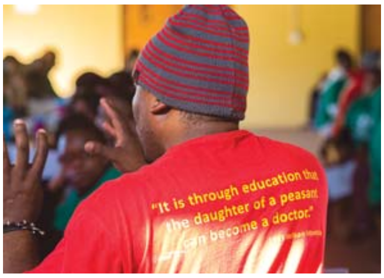
Some of the most challenging work in building democracy and an inclusive society is the work that takes place at community level, empowering people, who have been marginalised by their lack of access to resources and opportunities, to hold those in power to account and challenge abuses of power. Working with urban communities to hold local government to account for its use of public resources can be thankless and dangerous: systems are broken; transparency is frustrated; and people are abused and intimidated. Systemic change is not easily achieved in these environments. Given their limited resources, the Foundation's grantee partners are often only able to work with a few communities at a time – so achieving large-scale impact is a long journey. In rural areas, the challenges can be particularly overwhelming. Abuse of farmworkers is rife; people who have rights to land have been stripped of these rights; access to decent healthcare, proper education and justice is compromised. Communities which are already on the margins, such as people with disabilities, old people and sex workers, are the most at risk, and yet little support is directed their way.

"Some of the most challenging work in building democracy and an inclusive society is the work that takes place at community level."

So, how can democracy be built at community level? Efforts to facilitate access to information, including through investment in community radio, have been found to be effective in fostering empowerment. Getting resources to communities in support of local efforts to organise more effectively are crucial. There is strength in numbers – it is more difficult for those in power to ignore local people when they act together. The Foundation funds local partners who work with communities in mining areas, where abuse of the environment and workers is prevalent; and with parents and educators seeking to hold authorities to account so that pupils can receive a proper education in safe schools.

It is also important to continue to build democracy, transparency and accountability at the national level. National media have a critical role to play in this regard, especially independent media and investigative journalism. It can take reporters years to investigate and expose small-scale corruption and abuse, but such efforts can make a difference and can lead in ▸▸

time to major exposés such as the "Gupta leaks", which was a watershed moment in South Africa's young democratic history. Clearly, impacts in this field can arise from taking the long-term view rather than focusing only on short-term gains. A critical role is also played by campaigns and advocacy that place pressure on the government to implement policies that are relevant and inclusive. For example, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC's) many years of mobilising and advocacy resulted in a major policy change which led to thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS being able to access anti-retroviral drugs and enjoy a better quality of life. However, TAC is now struggling to fund its work which includes overseeing the government's efforts to reform the provision of healthcare nationwide through a new National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme.



> **"Philanthropists can promote social justice more generally by strengthening the civil society organisations that they support so that the gains achieved can be sustained."**

Another crucial policy initiative, supported by the Foundation, has been the provision of social protection and social security. The Black Sash and the Children's Institute, have worked to ensure that those most vulnerable are provided with a social safety net so that they can experience the fruits of democracy and participate actively in building a new society for themselves and their children.

Some of the most successful strategies employed in recent years have been those utilised by the Public Interest Litigation Organisations (PILOs), which seek to ensure that the rule of law is upheld and that legal institutions are respected and strengthened.

These organisations undertake research, advocacy and precedent-setting legal cases, which can garner significant public attention. In this regard, the Foundation has learnt that when such legal actions are aimed at supporting marginalised communities, these communities need to be at the centre of the work in order to ensure that any gains made in court lead to sustained implementation on the ground.

Seeking to deepen democracy further, the Foundation has invested in efforts to strengthen the institutions of state; ensuring a robust electoral system; capacitating civil service; exposing corruption; and building integrity in governance.

Furthermore, the Foundation has recognised the critical role to be played by the private-sector, in building a fair and democratic society. Accordingly, we support grantee partners that hold corporates to account for their role in environmental degradation, for meeting their obligations to the communities they work in and for responsible corporate practices more broadly.

Philanthropies wishing to get involved in social justice funding may start by applying a social-justice lens to the work they are already supporting. So, if their focus is to fund health or education projects, they may, for example, seek to identify the gaps in policy and practice that are preventing children from achieving their full educational or health potential; and then consider how they can support advocacy to address these gaps.

Given the role that media can play in promoting social justice, philanthropists may decide to support independent, investigative journalism that uncovers wrong-doing and communicates the experiences of communities on the ground; and, in this way, hold power to account and produce action in support of communities. This is a good entry point for any social-justice funder. As with any grant-making, we learn a lot also by experimenting, even on a small-scale.

Philanthropists can promote social justice more generally by strengthening the civil society organisations that they support so that the gains achieved can be sustained. This entails building trust-based relationships; having confidence in the expertise of those who are being funded and allowing them to decide how best to spend the resources they are given. It means helping them to build more resilient organisations, characterised by good governance and strong management systems and practices. Fragile organisations are not good investments and they are also incapable of achieving results for and with communities.

Philanthropists have a fiduciary responsibility to always look for results. In this regard, the risks associated with funding in the social justice space relate not only to a possible lack of results in the short-term, they also relate to the contestation that can arise when taking on the powers that be. So, this is not a comfortable funding space. However, it is a space that holds the most promise for long-term systemic change; for building the strong foundations of a thriving democracy in which everyone can participate.

The RAITH Foundation believes that such an approach speaks to the vision, courage, collaboration and investment in systems change that must underpin leadership in philanthropy. We believe that a focus on strengthening democracy establishes the basis upon which all other developmental interventions can thrive. We believe we have no choice but to take this route and would like others to join us.

Audrey Elster is Executive Director of the RAITH Foundation

Photo credit: Zeke du Plessis

Equity in crisis

Unravelling the intersections of social justice and climate change

By Joanne Harding

MERWEVILLE IS A SMALL VILLAGE 45KM NORTH-WEST OF PRINCE ALBERT ROAD AND 130KM SOUTH-EAST OF BEAUFORT WEST. The town is isolated and, until 2015, was one of the few places in the Western Cape not serviced by a sealed road. Despite its remote location in the Beaufort West Municipality, it stands at the crossroads to several far-flung towns and falls in the Karoo.

Merweville Advice and Development Office (MADO) is a small social justice organisation led by a tenacious stalwart, Jan Bostander, who grew up in the village, left to find work and returned to give back to the place from which he comes. The office recently established a cooperative to respond to the challenges of food security and the high levels of youth unemployment in the area. After a long struggle the co-operative has secured a nine-year lease on a 7,5-hectare tract from the municipality. Jan says he wants the project to become a green oasis in his community, providing food to the most vulnerable. One of the greatest challenges for the cooperative is water shortages caused by long periods of droughts.

MADO has been engaging with the local authority on leaking and failing municipal water infrastructure; a lack of boreholes; and poor service delivery. However, instead of addressing mismanagement of the water system, the municipality installed prepaid water meters in parts of the community without consultation in a bid to generate more revenue. As a result, people are paying for water that is not necessarily clean. Without a consistent, clean supply of water, the cooperative, which is seeking to feed the vulnerable, will fail.

The organisation has made multiple submissions on the issue of water scarcity to the municipality, including in the form of presentations at consultation meetings held to shape the local authority's integrated development plan (IDP). MADO also recently came together with two organisations in the Beaufort West Municipality, the Beaufort West Legal Advice and Development Office (BWLADO) and the Nelspoort Advice and Development Office (NADO) to make a submission to the National Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance on the problems of inadequate public participation and consultation; poor service delivery and infrastructure; and instability among the local political leadership which is stalling efforts to agree budgets and promote development.

This is one of many stories of community organisations engaging in social-justice issues related to climate change. South Africa is a diverse nation with a rich history of struggle for social justice that is now facing a complex web of environmental, economic, and social challenges arising from climate

"South Africa is a diverse nation with a rich history of struggle for social justice that is now facing a complex web of environmental, economic, and social challenges arising from climate change."

Photos credit: Zeke du Plessis

change. In general, those most affected by climate change are the elderly, the disabled, women and children, particularly those in lower-income groups. South Africa's unique geographical position and vast landscape makes it susceptible to a range of climate-related impacts. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts and extreme weather events such as cyclones threaten both urban centres and rural areas. As extreme weather events intensify; natural resources dwindle; and vulnerable communities suffer disproportionately, the need for sustainable solutions rooted in social justice principles is critical. Accordingly, it is important to explore the intersections of social justice and climate change, including in relation to the implications of the present crisis on marginalised communities, and the potential pathways towards a more equitable and resilient future.

The global climate crisis may be the defining moral issue of the 21st century. The consequences threaten rights promulgated in South Africa's Constitution of 1996 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1948. The nexus between social justice and climate change lies in the uneven distribution of both the causes and the consequences of environmental degradation. The people who contribute the least to the climate crisis are the most vulnerable. South Africa's history of apartheid has left a legacy of disparity in resource allocation and economic opportunities. Addressing climate change requires a commitment to rectifying historical inequalities while ensuring a just transition towards sustainability.

Climate change threatens the rights of women, especially those living in rural areas, who are more likely to be living in poverty; whose freedom of movement and ability to acquire land is more likely to be restricted; and who face systemic violence that can escalate during periods of instability (as was witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that gender inequalities are exacerbated as a result of climate change. Women have to work harder and face greater occupational hazards; their psychological and emotional stress is compounded; and their mortality rate rises more steeply than that of men. All of this in a context in which women have limited access to and control of environmental goods and services; and are generally excluded from decision making and the distribution of environment-management benefits.[1] At the same time, women have also demonstrated remarkable resilience to climate change and are leading climate action movements; championing clean sources of energy; and building alternative community models that focus on sustainability and cooperation.[2]

Monica Tyalimpi, who lives in Dordrecht in the Eastern Cape, is an example of a woman leading the fight against climate change in her community. Her organisation, the Dordrecht Legal Advice and Community Development Agency, has been running climate-change awareness workshops in surrounding villages where people burn waste contributing to air pollution. This organisation has also been having conversations with religious leaders on the issue with the aim of enlisting their support to mobilise the hearts and minds of her community. The agency is using the funds it has received to support household food gardens in six villages in the Machubeni and Boniswa region, fostering home gardeners' understanding of climate-adaptive methods for growing food and caring for the environment. The project is also distributing trees for planting to 500 households in the Harry Gwala and Munnicksville Section of Dordrecht. The trees will provide shade and a buffer against increasingly strong winds. In addition, after recent floods in the Eastern Cape, the organisation responded by providing food to those affected, as well as school uniforms and books for children who had lost these in the floods.

Climate change increases the likelihood of civil wars and conflict because it amplifies present economic, political, and social problems.[3] In this context, young people and children are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to their present relative socio-economic insecurity and because they will have to live with the future effects of the phenomenon. For example, youth unemployment, which recently rose to 62.1% in South Africa, can be exacerbated by climate change. Franco Snyers, a young person from Graafwater in the Western Cape, says that he has noticed job losses among local youth as farmers have laid off agricultural workers due to the damaging impacts of drought and water scarcity on crops and livestock.[4] In this context, young people must be equipped with knowledge about climate change so that they can affect the decisions that are being made about their future. The notion of a just transition refers to a shift towards a green economy that prioritises social equity and decent work opportunities. It involves creating green jobs in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and other eco-friendly sectors, while simultaneously supporting workers in fossil-fuel-dependent industries as they reskill and transition to new employment opportunities. South Africa has enormous renewable energy potential and is well positioned to pursue a just transition. By investing in renewable energy infrastructure and green jobs, the country can reduce its carbon emissions and uplift marginalised communities.

> **"The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that gender inequalities are exacerbated as a result of climate change."**

Photos credit: Zeke du Plessis





Photos credit: Zeke du Plessis

Leaders must recognise the urgency of the situation; have long-term vision; stick to their commitments; and strive towards the common good.

In 2022, the International Partners Group (IPG), which comprises the European Union (EU), France, Germany, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US), agreed to give South Africa an initial $8.5 billion to accelerate the decarbonisation of the national economy and help it achieve the ambitious targets set out under the country's agreed contribution to emissions goals. The only problem is that only 2.7% of the sum comprises grants with the rest being in the form of loans. Since South Africa is the 12th highest carbon emitter in the world there is an urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In this regard, given that the country must stop using coal-fired power stations, although these provide 80% of its electricity, it is presented with a double-edged sword.[5] The loans required to fund a just energy transition will be costly, but climate change is moving at such a pace South Africa cannot afford to take its time in responding.

Philanthropists have an important role to play in addressing climate change and promoting social justice. Financial resources can contribute to informing and driving meaningful change and can support initiatives that have a positive impact on vulnerable communities.

Grassroots organisations that work directly with communities impacted by climate change and social injustice are an important resource because they understand local needs and can implement effective solutions tailored to the specific challenges faced by local people. Climate-resilience projects that focus on adaptation can help support communities to withstand the impacts of climate change more effectively, safeguarding livelihoods. Gender equality and promotion of social inclusion will result in more holistic and impactful solutions. In this context, it is important to support initiatives that promote a transition to a green economy, such as training programmes for workers in fossil fuel industries; renewable energy projects; and efforts to foster the creation of green jobs in marginalised communities. Through education programmes, communities can be empowered to act and advocate for equitable climate policies.

The climate change problem can seem overwhelming which is why it is important to collaborate and seek coordinated strategies. In addition, consistent, bold, credible leadership is required to move beyond the climate crisis. Leaders must recognise the urgency of the situation; have long-term vision; stick to their commitments; and strive towards the common good.

Joanne Harding is Executive Director of the Social Change Assistance Trust.

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Unlocking the potential of philanthropy to catalyse change and support the transition to sustainable societies

By Louise Driver

IT IS LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY RECOGNISED THAT THERE IS INSUFFICIENT FUNDING AND ACTION BY PHILANTHROPY TO ADDRESS THE severe escalating effects of climate change; yet the impacts of climate change put many funders' missions at risk. This is especially so in South Africa, where it is vital for the philanthropy sector to invest in climate change action in an effort to build the country's long-term socio-economic and environmental resilience. However, given that there are so many other challenges facing South Africa, many of which were exacerbated by Covid-19, climate change is often not seen as a priority focus by philanthropists. At the same time, the innovations that were implemented across the board during the pandemic have provided a good basis for funders to think about how to manage severe unplanned disruptions.

Unfortunately, in most cases, opportunities for adapting and improving pandemic-related solutions to address sudden large-scale disruptions were not optimised – even though such solutions could have become a source of learning for how to address disruptions in general, including those caused by climate change, such as extreme weather events.

Meanwhile, there is a persistent lack of awareness and understanding of the cross-cutting impacts of climate change across every area of investment, be it in education, health, food security or social justice. Seeing climate change as a separate, optional funding priority is limiting the impacts that may be produced by philanthropists, and is a luxury that cannot be afforded. It is essential that funders realise that climate change funding is not a matter of "either or" – it is a matter of "both and". Any funder that is serious about achieving sustainable long-term change has to respond to climate issues in some way. The climate clock is ticking, and in some quarters, there is acknowledgement that the window of opportunities for mitigating the impacts of climate change is rapidly closing, which means that the focus is shifting somewhat to climate adaptation and resilience.

IPASA's role in the climate funding space

The Independent Philanthropy Association South Africa (IPASA), realising the urgency of the situation, took on the role of leading a climate awareness and action campaign among its members and other funders in the country. IPASA's leadership is aimed at facilitating a multiplier effect, increasing impact and accelerating much-needed action. Accordingly, IPASA is providing critically important information and bespoke support for its members and other funders so that they can make the best decisions possible in relation to integrating climate responses into their funding strategies. Over the past three years, IPASA has established a platform to share knowledge and create awareness, and has developed practical resources for funders to use on their climate journey. During this process, IPASA has learned that awareness does not automatically translate into action, and therefore is helping its members to shape their climate responses.

What does this look like in practice?

IPASA partnered with three of its members – the Lewis Foundation, Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust and the African Climate Foundation – to develop and implement an initiative that would create awareness about climate change among funders in South Africa and foster action to address the crisis.

In 2021, this led to the establishment of a "Future-proofing Philanthropy" series of webinars and the development of a "Climate Crisis Funders Toolkit". The aim was to provide funders with the knowledge and tools required to change their mindsets and practices in relation to climate change.

In 2022, IPASA developed a new initiative that sought to support funders in a more practical and focused manner. This initiative, which was underpinned by a baseline assessment of IPASA members' engagement with climate issues:

- **produced a number of case studies** of climate initiatives being undertaken by members of the association;

"Climate change is a health issue, a gender equality issue, a racial and social justice issue, an intergenerational issue, an educational issue, an economic issue, a cultural issue, a security issue, a human rights issue, and a local community issue. Fundamentally, it erodes the basis of all philanthropic activity. As such, we need an all-of-philanthropy approach with foundations integrating the climate lens across their programmes, operations and investments, regardless of their mission, size, scope or geographic location."

– PHILANTHROPY EUROPE ASSOCIATION (PHILEA)

- **offered members consultations** with climate philanthropy experts to get them started on their individual climate journeys, or to enhance and refine their existing initiatives in this field; and
- **involved hosting a series of awareness and action workshops** to share relevant knowledge with funders and encourage more robust climate responses among its members.

In 2023, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation joined those already funding this initiative, providing additional support for a number of activities. These have included further member consultations; the production of a second set of climate case studies; the implementation of another workshop series focused on climate mitigation, adaption and resilience; and an update of the climate crisis toolkit and resource pack.

IPASA's position as an enabler that provides the connections and knowledge for funders wanting to include climate change in their funding strategy in South Africa has been firmly established over the past three years.

Opportunities for funders

IPASA is committed to continuing to drive the climate change agenda and has identified seven opportunities to increase South African funder involvement in climate action. These include:

1. **Developing a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy** so that the learnings from funders implementing climate strategies in South Africa are shared globally, and so that relevant climate funder information from outside the country can be readily accessed by local funders. To this end, IPASA will further develop its climate-crisis toolkit as a central hub for funders wanting to access relevant practical information on climate philanthropy.
2. **Driving targeted climate action** through the development of a community of practice comprising climate funders, potential climate funders and other key stakeholders. In this way, funders may find solutions that they can jointly implement.
3. **Developing a contextually-relevant national climate pledge** for funders in South Africa. In 2021 WINGS (Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support) developed an International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change. This represented a call to all foundations, regardless of their mission, status, and geographic location to respond to the climate emergency. Signatories to the international commitment pledge to take action under seven pillars. IPASA was chosen to be the South African ambassador for the commitment and was charged with encouraging local funders to sign the pledge.
4. **Creating pooled funding options for philanthropists** who want to start funding climate change but lack the resources or expertise to fund projects on their own. This would entail collaborating with key role players in the climate funding space to research possible projects or baskets of projects that could offer pooled-fund opportunities, and also finding reputable experienced climate funding organisations to manage these funds.
5. **Fostering local leaders** who can shape a greater understanding of the extent and severity of climate-related stressors on African economies and ecosystems. This work needs to be focused on empowering and capacitating young people as the generation who will have to deal with the impacts of the climate crisis. Philanthropy can support this by investing in capacity building and education to build a knowledgeable, skilled philanthropy sector staffed by people who are able to address climate change challenges effectively.
6. **Funding advocacy organisations** working to raise awareness about climate change and advocating for policy changes in South Africa. Such funding could help them to engage in public education campaigns, organise events and mobilise public and policy support for climate action.
7. **Exploring impact-investing opportunities** that align with climate-change objectives such as those that support renewable energy infrastructure; sustainable agriculture practices; and other climate-friendly initiatives, driving economic growth and environmental sustainability simultaneously.

Louise Driver is Executive Director of the Independent Philanthropy Association South Africa (IPASA).

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IPASA's position as an enabler that provides the connections and knowledge for funders wanting to include climate change in their funding strategy in South Africa has been firmly established over the past three years.

Leadership through impact by design at Alchemy

By Reza Bardien and Andrew Crichton

ALCHEMY, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2011 BY ANGLO AMERICAN PLATINUM AS A MAJOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE, helps fund the work of six development trusts that seek to address the needs of 5.2 million people across three countries living in and associated with Anglo American Platinum mining communities.

When funding started to flow through Alchemy towards community projects, two nagging questions arose. Were the efforts of the development trusts that it was funding producing a measurable impact in the communities they were serving; and were these efforts compounding to deliver the transformative change that was required to realise Alchemy's vision of sustainable, thriving communities?

The first step in answering these questions was for Alchemy to confront the widespread use of sloppy and often self-serving definitions of "impact" within the development community. For the development trusts under its auspices to be genuinely accountable to the transformative vision of their founder, Anglo American Platinum, as well as to the communities they sought to serve, they could not afford to dabble in soft definitions nor shy away from what an authentic commitment to helping create sustained social impact would entail. This realisation started a purposeful journey for Alchemy that would lead it to adopt an "impact-by-design" leadership philosophy and operating model in pursuit of large-scale, sustained social impact.

> **Alchemy adopted an "impact-by-design" leadership philosophy and operating model in pursuit of large-scale, sustained social impact.**

If you cannot explain why, it's luck, and luck eventually runs out

The impact-by-design strategy that has been adopted is novel in its approach but also based on tried-and-tested global practices. From the outset, the intention was to create a well-grounded model that could help describe why a development trust would choose a particular initiative and why that initiative could create sustainable change at a community level.

In this regard, it should be noted that, under Alchemy's founding principles, the development trusts are expressly required to work at a community rather than individual level, to create conditions that are conducive for sustained change. This approach implies that the development trusts should engage with whole communities and their social problems.

In order to understand the task it faced and how to go about it, Alchemy researched a number of global practices with the goal of developing a robust approach to its mandate and a fit-for-purpose philosophical model that would inform the development trusts' efforts. The resulting model featured two interlocking parts: a rights-based social accountability framework and an impact-by-design framework. As illustrated in Figure 1, the accountability framework aims to help the development trusts understand their fundamental purpose in relation to providing access to basic human rights so that the agency of local individuals and communities may be fostered.

Coterminously, an impact-by-design framework was established to provide the development trusts with an operating model that could effectively engage with wicked social problems and help deliver sustainable progress and improved individual and community agency.

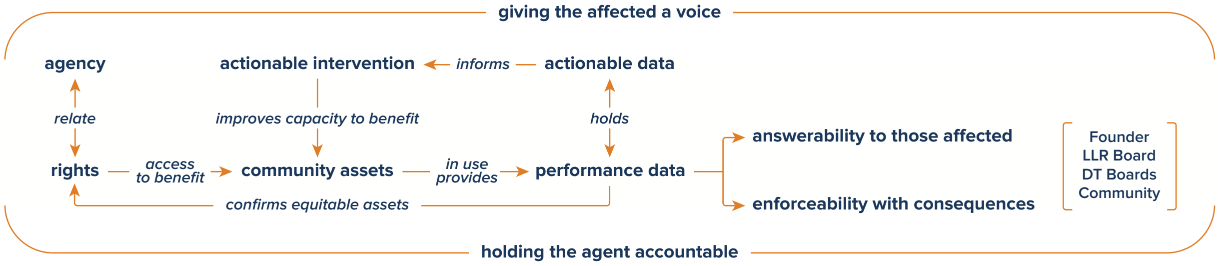
Alchemy's evolving leadership behaviours linked to its impact-by-design strategy

A number of principles for action were established under the impact-by-design strategy:

- **Work towards creating the future now:** Briefly, this involves understanding what factors interact to produce the current problem; describing a fundamentally better future state; and then immediately working towards narrowing the gap between the present and the envisaged future. This approach can lead to discontinuous rather than continuous improvement, which helps drive thinking in support of greater transformative change.
- **Strive to get close to those directly affected to validate the method for creating change:** Proximity to the lived experiences of beneficiaries provides a distinct point of view which can drive more empathetic problem-solving and, in turn, more meaningful interventions.

> The accountability framework aims to help the development trusts understand their fundamental purpose in relation to providing access to basic human rights so that the agency of local individuals and communities may be fostered.

FIGURE 1: **ALCHEMY'S RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**



While community structures and other stakeholders are essential to filling out the big picture, those who are directly affected are the best people to validate whether a proposed intervention will be of use.

- **Favour early action and mitigation:** Individual and community experiences spring from a range of different life events that may have historical roots. In this context, prompt action to mitigate the impacts of adverse events can promote longer-term transformative change at a community level.
- **Work towards engaging with the whole community's life-course:** Efforts to produce change at a community level should not be limited by the parochial interests or resource constraints of a particular implementing body. Accordingly, in an effort to foster authentic transformation, there is a need to establish diverse partnerships that blend direct and in-kind funding, as well as technical and functional expertise.
- **Doing better and not just good:** Arguably, all development work aims to do good, but not all development work helps communities to do better. For a community to do better, the underlying conditions that make it vulnerable must be addressed so local people can benefit from being part of the community. Accordingly, and in order to deliver on its mandate, Alchemy has focussed on doing better, that is, on changing the conditions that produce vulnerability.
- **Working at scale is only limited by the thinking that has been adopted:** Many managers believe in starting small and growing from there. However, the behaviours that such thinking produce are fatal to large-scale change. Alchemy has finite resources, but this does not stop it from working with others to reach enough affected people to create a real difference. Its approach is to consider the efficiency and scalability of proposals and to try and mobilise complementary resources in a timely fashion so that relatively large impacts may be achieved.

Translating the philosophy into a functional operating model

Ultimately any leadership philosophy is only as valuable as its real-world use. Alchemy used three overarching practices based on systems, design and small-wins thinking to facilitate implementation of the philosophy in the development trusts' daily work.

Alchemy also developed a normative framework for its impact-by-design strategy which sets out various criteria according to which the standard and quality of the impact-by-design practices may be measured. This framework has principally been used within Alchemy to conduct social-impact assessments of individual initiatives and organisations.

Implementation challenges

Alchemy's impact-by-design strategy is not just novel. It calls for a significant ideological shift from thinking based on grants management to thinking in support of long-term transformative change. Accordingly, a number of challenges had to be faced and overcome in order to implement the strategy.

> "Alchemy based its impact-by-design strategy on a rights-based approach to development."

Alchemy unapologetically based its impact-by-design strategy on a rights-based approach to development. However, Boards and their management teams and implementing partners are not necessarily that proficient in using a rights-based lens to look at community problems. In this case, unfamiliarity with the approach led to complaints that it was too philosophical. Alchemy addressed this problem by emphasising how the approach promoted the accountability of the agents of change *(see Figure 1)*.

Another challenge was that the impact-by-design strategy is grounded in a number of particular knowledge systems and practices. While implementation of the strategy does not require an MBA qualification, it does demand that those engaging with it understand its first principles, which originate from systems, design and small-wins thinking. In response, detractors seeking to maintain the status quo sought to label the approach as "theoretical". Addressing this challenge, Alchemy has fostered understanding of the impact-by-design

strategy's first principles among Boards and management teams including in relation to how these principles may be used at the development trusts to deliver the desired outcomes.

There was also resistance among the staff at the development trusts to the drive to make their institutions active facilitators of change rather than passive recipients of proposals for change. An oft-cited reason for remaining passive was that the development trust should do "what the community/department/municipality wants". This is an argument that does not hold up either in relation to the need to produce sustained impact or in relation to the question of whose "wants" are actually being addressed by current efforts. In fact, the strategy has sought to promote the establishment of a series of interactive community profiles in an effort to foster a better understanding of the communities at the development trusts, and in order to indicate how and where the trusts may engage more actively with local stakeholders. In addition, the approach enables those directly affected to have a stronger voice at the decision-making table.

> **"Many of the first principles of the impact-by-design strategy developed by Alchemy may prove useful to other funders and help them to craft more effective operating models."**

How Alchemy's impact-by-design strategy may be of value to others

The impact-by-design strategy came as a response to the question: Are Alchemy's social investments creating significant impact over time; and are they leading to meaningful and material change that promotes the agency of local communities and individuals? Many philanthropic and corporate social funders have considered this question. Accordingly, many of the first principles of the impact-by-design strategy developed by Alchemy may prove useful to other funders and help them to craft more effective operating models.

Another opportunity for other funders is to leverage Alchemy's work around the development trusts' "means plans" (actionable steps identified by affected communities to begin realising their future community), which have been developed with the goals of integrating their efforts more effectively. The authors would suggest that such planning creates a justifiable basis for efforts to produce impact in a community not only over the course of a few financial years but over the course of many.

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Reza Bardien


Andrew Crichton

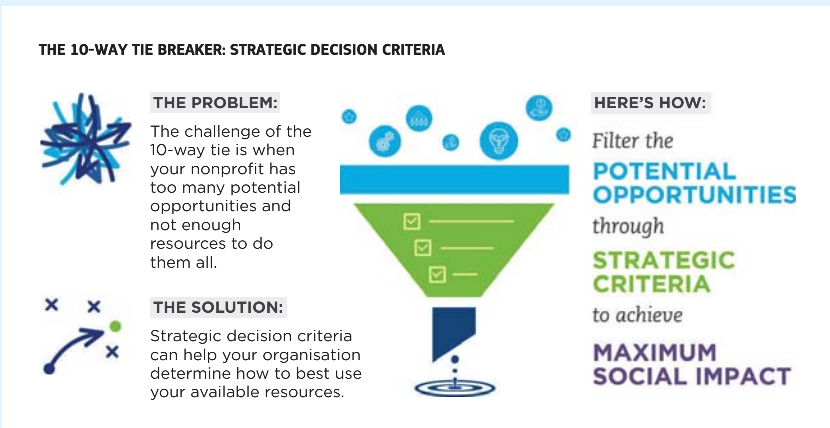
Using decision criteria to improve non-profit programme choices

By Libbie Landles-Cobb

> Strategic decision criteria are a powerful tool that help leaders discover which actions can make the most difference for their mission, and then focus available resources in those areas.

ALMOST EVERY NONPROFIT AND NGO FACES THE CONUNDRUM OF WHAT TO DO WHEN COMPETING PRIORITIES ARE PRACTICALLY LIMITLESS, BUT RESOURCES ARE NOT.

For many of the more than 250,000 nonprofit organisations (NPOs) in South Africa (according to the Department of Social Development),[1] resources are indeed limited—only 20 percent had an annual income above R20 million and only 40 percent had cash resources for more than six months of operation. For effective leaders of NPOs and NGOs in South Africa and across the globe, how best to use an organisation's finite resources to achieve optimal results will always be top of mind. Some potential activities and opportunities will obviously help your nonprofit advance its mission more than others. How do you ensure your team agrees on what those things are and makes those decisions consistently? By properly applying strategic decision criteria, nonprofits can discover which actions have the potential to deliver the most impact on their highest-priority objectives, and then focus available resources in those areas.



Five ways strategic criteria can help with decision making

Strategic decision-making criteria can help organisations structure and systematise their decision process in several important ways:

1. **Align the team.** Spelling out decision criteria takes the implicit factors that leaders use to make decisions and makes them explicit. In this way, decision criteria can ensure that options are evaluated according to a relatively uniform set of objective and measurable standards.
2. **Increase transparency.** Organisations with thoughtful, objective decision-making criteria can increase transparency by proactively sharing these criteria with internal and external stakeholders. That way, when the organisation makes major decisions, everyone understands why it made such choices and how it arrives at those decisions.
3. **Amplify equity.** By ensuring equity priorities are part of the criteria—for example, by prioritising specific populations or setting explicit diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
4. **Protect against oversights.** Sometimes, when organisations are excited about a new idea or novel programme, it can be easy to skip an important element of due diligence or overlook a potential pitfall. Explicit decision criteria help safeguard against these oversights by acting as a checklist to review when making important decisions.
5. **Allow fair comparisons between seemingly disparate choices.** Let's say your organisation has the opportunity to invest in two different programmes, but only has the resources to pursue one. Decision-making criteria offer an objective framework for comparing apples with oranges in a rigorous way to ensure you pick the option with the best likelihood of delivering desired results.

How to choose the right decision-making criteria for your organisation

There is no one-size-fits-all set of universal decision-making criteria. Ultimately, such criteria work best when they are firmly rooted in your organisation's own intended impact and theory of change, which encompasses the outcomes your organisation aims to achieve with a specific population and how you expect to reach those goals.

In addition to criteria rooted in strategic clarity, also consider organisational capacity—which includes things like financial sustainability, operational viability, and organisational benefits and risk. This could include assessing how a new programme fits within your organisation's existing initiatives, checking to make sure it would not duplicate or compete against strong programmes from other organisations, and evaluating whether the programme might expose your organisation to serious reputational or even legal risks.

Using those four categories, consider the following example criteria. In the first category, criteria can be highly variable amongst nonprofits, so we suggest investing time in customising and aligning as a team. The other three categories are more consistent across nonprofits, so leaders might select the few that are highest priority and customise, if needed. (A decision criteria resource is available online, which lists the criteria, provides an example of decision-making criteria of one hypothetical organisation, and offers a template to workshop your own criteria.)

> **Organisations with thoughtful, objective decision-making criteria can increase transparency by proactively sharing these criteria with internal and external stakeholders.**

We encourage nonprofits to prune their list to between eight and 10 key criteria, since larger lists can become unwieldy. Deep evaluations of decisions based on a few key criteria are generally more useful than superficial scans of criteria across many factors.

Thought exercise: Reflect on a recent decision

Consider a recent occasion when you had to make a consequential strategic decision.

For example: Deciding whether to take on a new programme or contract, to embark on a new partnership, or whether or not to expand to a new geography.

1. What process did you use to weigh your options and ultimately to make your choice?
2. Are you confident that your colleagues would have used similar considerations to arrive at a similar decision? How might their deliberations and conclusions have been different?
3. How might your organisation benefit from using a shared set of criteria to evaluate options and make important strategic choices?

It is important to note that not all decision-making criteria deserve equal weight. If a new opportunity does not align with an organisation's intended impact or theory of change, then it's unlikely to make sense even if the organisation has the financial and organisational capabilities to make it happen. For example, if racial equity is a strategic priority for an organisation, it will likely appear under their intended impact and theory of change. An organisation may decide, therefore, not to pursue a new opportunity that does not reduce systematic racism or serve a

Example Decision Criteria

The Bridgespan Group
Collaborating to accelerate social impact

Category	Sample Shared Criteria	
Aligned with intended impact and theory of change	• **Who:** Strengthens target constituents/clients • **What:** Addresses a critical community need and achieves target outcomes • **How:** aligns with core activities, approaches, values, and beliefs (builds on our "secret sauce")	**Highly variable between nonprofits:** Invest time in customising and aligning as a team
Financially sustainable	• Can cover fully loaded programme costs • Can be sustainably funded with mostly renewable sources • Cost per outcome is reasonable • Utilisation rate is high	**More consistent across nonprofits:** Select the limited few that are highest priority and customise if needed
Operationally viable	• Fits with staff skills and expertise; talent pipeline is strong • Feasible within available staff time/capacity • Leverages existing infrastructure • Relationships with partner organisations are strong • Scalable • Policy environment is supportive	
Organisational benefits/risks	• Strong fit with other organisational programmes and activities • Clear and unique leadership role for organisation • Aligned with capabilities and local market position (e.g. does not duplicate strong programmes for other orgs) • Organisational risks are low (reputation, relationships, legal) • Gives access to other high-impact opportunities	

historically marginalised population. On the flip side, an opportunity that does align with intended impact and theory of change may be desirable to pursue, but an organisation still might have to pass on it (or at least put the idea on hold and revisit it later) if they don't have the funds or organisational capabilities to bring it to life.

In this way, conducting rigorous evaluations using decision criteria can help organisations be brutally honest with themselves about whether they have the resources to launch bold new initiatives. Passing on a promising opportunity can be disappointing, but it's far less painful than having to pull the plug on a project midstream when an organisation suddenly finds itself overextended. Decision criteria are a powerful tool. For nonprofit leaders facing difficult choices about which possibilities to pursue, a structured and collaborative process can help clarify thinking and lead them toward the impact they seek. Indeed, defining the process by which to make strategic decisions could itself be one of the most consequential decisions a nonprofit makes.

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"Conducting rigorous evaluations using decision criteria can help organisations be brutally honest with themselves about whether they have the resources to launch bold new initiatives."

The art and science of ‘the good conversation’ for social change

By Nozipho Mbanjwa-Tshabalala

What is the good conversation?

What is the “good conversation?” The answer to this lies in as many different disciplines as there are ways of seeing the world. In my work as a conversation strategist, I have seen conversations that deliver social change in a transformative way – that is, in a way which allows speakers to be heard and seen, and which makes them feel safe enough to bring the truth, as they see it, into the room. Like any transformative process that is designed to translate raw material inputs into valuable outputs, transformative conversations are shaped by intentional agency – in this case, the agency of the speakers who are intentional about what they bring into the conversation. The raw materials for this process should be curiosity, open-mindedness and questions that allow for new thinking and progress. In addition to

“The raw materials for transformative conversations should be curiosity, open-mindedness and questions that allow for new thinking and progress.”

being transformative, the "good conversation" should promote an experience of feeling seen and heard. Such an experience is only possible when the conversation, as the poet David Whyte puts it, is listened into existence more than it is spoken. The good conversation therefore demands that speakers must have and should exercise the desire and discipline to listen and to stay engaged (even when they don't like what they may be hearing). Safety is the final criterion for the good conversation. Timothy Clark in *The Four Stages of Psychological Safety,* reminds us that "people only say what they feel safe enough to say". Until this condition is met, the good conversation has not started.

Why does philanthropy need good conversations?

Provided that the criteria for the good conversation are met, conversation can truly live up to its promise of being a birthplace of action and a pathway to social change. Philanthropy is in desperate need of the good conversation primarily because it is implemented as a practice in the context of an ever-changing world. Change demands new ideas, and new questions that will need to be asked in order to produce an understanding of new problems and a better grasp on the old ones.

In the good conversation, speakers feel safe to express and share their ideas, without fear of ridicule, dismissal or shame. Such an environment can nurture new ways of seeing and doing. However, it is not enough that the environment should allow for the expression of new ideas, the good conversation should also facilitate proper consideration, and even acceptance of, these ideas as a basis for change. In other words, it should offer the social lubricant that may allow new ideas to flourish. In the absence of such lubricant, the new ideas and actions that may have been proposed will likely encounter resistance, which, in the case of philanthropy, would hamper efforts to produce change through innovative approaches.

"Philanthropy is in desperate need of the good conversation primarily because it is implemented as a practice in the context of an ever-changing world. Change demands new ideas, and new questions that will need to be asked in order to produce an understanding of new problems and a better grasp on the old ones."

While philanthropy has made a name for itself in addressing social issues, it has found it much harder to address systemic problems. Systemic issues require collaborative action, going beyond the visible symptoms to the root of the various forms of inequality and exclusion. In this regard, the good conversation is collaborative. It strives to build a sense of community around common challenges that are faced and fosters diverse thought and action in support of outcomes that can produce significant benefits.

This is only possible when speakers feel included and feel valued. In good conversation there is no singular truth; instead, speakers come together knowing that when multiple worldviews can be expressed, better decisions can be made and therefore more effective action can be taken. If philanthropy is to make the progress it seeks, philanthropists must act in concert and collaborate. The conversations they have must seek to harvest their diverse experiences and build communities of stakeholders prepared to address the various challenges faced. Competition should only be expressed in the form of efforts to serve the communities who benefit from philanthropic action better and faster. The good conversation makes no room for adversarial postures. Ideas are debated – not people. There are no winners and losers, only poor ideas and great ideas.

Why do philanthropists struggle with the good conversation?

Philanthropy, by its nature, is unequal. The power dynamics of the sector are unavoidable. They are evident in relation to who distributes the resources; who sets the agenda; who exerts influence; who shapes the narrative on social problems; who selects the beneficiaries; and who takes the decisions that impact the lives of others. This asymmetry in power in the practice of philanthropy influences how conversations are held within the sector.

When conversations are dominated by the individuals or institutions that are holding the purse strings, the voices of the smaller organisations and less powerful actors are easily marginalised and may even be snuffed out. The good conversation can be a helpful tool in levelling, to some extent, the playing field, given its capacity to offer a psychological safety net to all involved. Psychological safety can ensure that the power dynamics in philanthropy do not exacerbate inequities. In this regard, Clark's four stages of psychological safety are a useful tool for the sector to consider in its conversations.

Clark's first stage of psychological safety is "includer safety". In this stage, all participants have ownership over the identified problem and a shared responsibility for solving it. Includer safety returns agency to beneficiaries and encourages donors to listen more. In the second stage, participants should experience "learner safety". In order to promote learner safety, all the participants in the process should acknowledge that mistakes can be made, and that shared and collective learning can come from mistakes. Such safety leaves no room for the would-be omniscient donor and, instead, facilitates active listening and sharing within the sector.

THE FOUR STAGES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

1. All participants have ownership over the identified problem.
2. All the participants in the process should acknowledge that mistakes can be made.
3. All participants should feel empowered to share their perspectives and views.
4. Participants should feel safe enough to call out ideas, actions, strategies and plans.

> **The power dynamics in philanthropic conversations must be recognised and addressed if more inclusive, effective approaches to social change are to be forged.**

At the third level, Clark introduces the notion of "contributor safety" under which all participants should feel empowered to share their perspectives and views. In the absence of this form of safety, donors may miss the point of view that derives from the lived experience of the beneficiaries, preferring to adopt a limited, albeit bird's eye, perspective. Fourth, Clarke says there is a need to foster "challenger safety" so that participants feel safe enough to call out ideas, actions, strategies and plans that are, in their view, not going to deliver the progress required. Without challenger safety, philanthropy remains a blank canvas on which the haves are free to portray the lives and needs of the have-nots without their input.

The power dynamics in philanthropic conversations must be recognised and addressed if more inclusive, effective approaches to social change are to be forged. Philanthropists must be intentional and unrelenting in their efforts to draw out diverse voices and create the space for more inclusive dialogues and decision-making.

Nozipho Mbanjwa-Tshabalala is Chief Executive Officer of The Conversation Strategists.

Philanthropy Advisors: Leading through influence

By Leila Davids and Kofi Rashid

To give away money is an easy matter and in any man's power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how much, and when, and for what purpose, and how, is neither in every man's power nor an easy matter.[1]

– ARISTOTLE

Humanity has never been richer. Over the past ten years, the number and wealth of billionaires has doubled[2] with the median net wealth of the top ten billionaires tripling from $39billion to $115billion.[3] There are 3,300 billionaires in the world in 2023 and counting.[4] Over the past few years, billionaire fortunes increased by $2.7 billion per day.[5] At the same time, inequality is deepening and, in some places, outpacing wealth growth. In Africa, the richest 0.0001% own 40% of the continent's wealth.[6] There is an increasing need, as well as opportunity, for accelerated generosity in the form of private philanthropy. Alongside and well networked in with this rise in the number and wealth of the super-rich, is the emergence of a new group of professional experts in the philanthropic ecosystem – philanthropy advisors. In February 2023, Devex declared that the "growth in these [philanthropy] advisors' influence, matches the rise of the super wealthy".[7]

In an article entitled "Lifting the curtain on philanthropy advising", Dr Beth Breeze and Emma Beeston noted that Aristotle, Andrew Carnegie and modern-day philanthropists would all agree with the maxim that doing philanthropy well is hard.[8]

Philanthropy consultant Sharna Goldseker describes philanthropy advisors as "the silent chorus that can help donors to thrive".[9] Philanthropy advisors work to build a culture of giving and to nurture existing and latent generosity in philanthropists and aspiring philanthropists. Philanthropy advisors often advise multiple philanthropists, families and foundations. At both individual and collective levels, philanthropy advisors wield significant influence and direct philanthropic resources toward causes and issues of great need.

Philanthropy advisors work directly with individual philanthropists, families and foundations to provide strategic guidance and practical tactics on how to give well, how to be more generous, and how to engage in philanthropy to maximise impact.

3,300

THERE ARE 3,300 BILLIONAIRES IN THE WORLD IN 2023 AND COUNTING

$2,7 billion

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, BILLIONAIRE FORTUNES INCREASED BY $2.7 BILLION PER DAY

0.0001%

IN AFRICA, THE RICHEST, 0.0001%, OWN...

40%

OF THE CONTINENT'S WEALTH

Philanthropy advisors act as a bridge between philanthropists, those who are philanthropically curious, or foundations, and the change-making organisations and people who drive positive impact. Philanthropy advisors can help to unlock generosity, work to facilitate more funding, and help shift the direction and quality of giving.

Beeston and Breeze, in what has been hailed as the first book on philanthropy advisors as an emerging profession, argued that these advisors play a critical role in expanding philanthropic giving and maintaining the flow of charitable donations:

'While philanthropic decisions can be tricky, advisors can help the altruistically inclined navigate analysis paralysis and fear of criticism, and become more thoughtful, effective givers. They can also help shift worrying trends toward lower levels of charitable giving, which likely have more to do with donors feeling overwhelmed rather than ungenerous.' [10]

Devex noted that philanthropy advisors have become essential to the philanthropic ecosystem, and that while the names of billionaire philanthropists, (think Bill Gates and MacKenzie Scott), are "instantly recognisable",[11] the names of their advisors are less so.

Within the philanthropy advisor ecosystem, large companies such as Bridgespan, Arabella Advisors and Geneva Global sit alongside smaller firms and individual advisors (for transparency's sake, like us). Private banks have seen the business case for philanthropy too. Investec and Nedbank Private Wealth in South Africa, and UBS Optimus, Coutts and other financial institutions globally offer philanthropy advisory services to wealthy clients.

It has been estimated that there are currently 300 philanthropy advisory companies and individuals working across the globe, with the majority based in the USA. Unsurprisingly, there is a noticeable lack of diversity in the philanthropy advisor ecosystem, but this is shifting with efforts underway to expand access and influence for philanthropy advisors of colour globally.

> **It has been estimated that there are currently 300 philanthropy advisory companies and individuals working across the globe, with the majority based in the USA.**

Mosun Layode, executive director of the African Philanthropy Forum (APF), helpfully points out the limitations that philanthropy advisory may produce:

'As with big consultancies which sometimes apply what may seem like tried and trusted methods regardless of context, the use of advisors without building local capacity may lead to interventions failing once the advisors' involvement ends.' [12]

Notwithstanding such reservations, in an age and sector in which increasing attention is being paid to the idea of decolonising philanthropy, philanthropy advisors are in a position to ask tough questions and navigate tricky and sometimes shifting terrain.

While Devex described philanthropy advisors as being akin to high school guidance counsellors, offering advice but not telling philanthropists what to do with their money;[13] the experience of many practitioners, including the authors of this piece, is that the philanthropy advisors' role, whether on a large-scale or more intimate basis, is more profound than this. It can entail supporting the philanthropist or foundations' generosity journey helping them to establish strategic direction, asking critical questions, being an honest broker, understanding the complexities of giving, and reflecting back experiences, positionality, and perspective, and being very clear about what does and does not work.

Ntefeleng Nene, a partner at Bridgespan, noted that philanthropy advisors have a key role to play in shaping the philanthropic ecosystem:

'To see meaningful impact ... there is an urgent need to give differently. It is great to see philanthropists giving the unprecedented way, i.e. giving unrestricted funding, "paying what it takes" and acknowledging the need to give to small proximate organisations doing great impactful work. Collaboration in philanthropy is also key in moving the needle to tackle society's most pressing problems and accomplishing shared goals.' [14]

> **Collaboration in philanthropy is also key in moving the needle to tackle society's most pressing problems and accomplishing shared goals.**
>
> – NTEFELENG NENE

Philanthropy advisors deploy a combination of expertise and relational skills to influence philanthropists and foundations. Kasey Oliver, a senior director at Geneva Global, described the relationship aspect of the philanthropist/philanthropy advisor dynamic:

'My best piece of advice, I think, is to ask an advisor about what it's like to work with them. Someone may have the best expertise – but working with them is miserable. Philanthropy advisors are not "one size fits all" What will it be like to work with them? Will they explain the pros and cons of different choices? What happens if they don't agree with your decisions? A good philanthropy advisor is a guide who helps you to explore – not someone who tries to push you down their path.' [15]

> "A good philanthropy advisor is a guide who helps you to explore – not someone who tries to push you down their path."
>
> – KASEY OLIVER

How to work with philanthropy advisors

There are a number of key considerations to bear in mind when working with philanthropy advisors:

- **Philanthropy advisors are about trust.** Finding someone you can trust with your thoughts, ideas, money, and family concerns is paramount. It is important to work with someone who is sensitive to where you are in your philanthropic journey and is willing, able and prepared to help you think through that journey to achieve the objectives that are most important to you.
- **Good advisors ask good questions**. They should know the right questions to ask to frame a conversation and produce results.
- Philanthropy advisors can help **test your assumptions and refine your strategy and approach**. They may also be able to help you **scale your ambitions** by connecting you with other philanthropists, organisations, governments, etc.
- **Experienced and excellent philanthropy advisors have strong networks**. They can facilitate peer connections, connect you with convenings, they can matchmake you with high quality and high impact organisations and leaders.
- Philanthropy advisors **bring experience and understanding of the sector**, although, ultimately, it is the philanthropists who make the decisions and disburse the money. Some advisors will have **significant technical expertise** in particular areas, such as, education, agriculture or women's empowerment, but the starting point should always be the donor's interest/passion/concern. For foundations and experienced philanthropists who already know what they want, philanthropy advisors should be **domain experts** in process, grant-making, organisational design, measurement, etc.
- Philanthropy advisors can work with you to **leverage your voice** as well as **leverage your money**. Strong and experienced advisors can **help you shape your influence** and can maximise your resource and philanthropic investment. This way you can **attract more philanthropic capital** to be unlocked for impact, you can **influence and inspire others to do more**.
- You get what you pay for. Your money is valuable, your time is valuable, your voice is valuable. **The advisor you hire should match that value.**

> "It is important to work with someone who is sensitive to where you are in your philanthropic journey and is willing, able and prepared to help you think through that journey to achieve your most important objectives."

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Leila Davids

Kofi Rashid

Building social value at scale

Leadership is the critical denominator

By Clare Woodcraft

IN A POST-COVID, MULTI-CRISIS WORLD, CREATING SOCIAL VALUE AT SCALE IS COMPLICATED. Philanthropic practitioners face a panoply of barriers to impact that the pandemic exacerbated. Sector leaders are now required to inspire their teams and deliver scalable outcomes while also "future-proofing" their organisations in a world where adversity has become "business as usual".

The exponential speed of change that the digital revolution has unleashed, coupled with the converging threats of climate change, mass migration and conflict, have created a veritable smorgasbord of issues. For those in the Global South, who may face a fragmented ecosystem with scarce resources and limited institutional capacity, the challenges are amplified. Macro trends suggest a greater level of intersectionality and new challenges. Funding, capacity, and regulatory frameworks are particularly important.

> **Sector leaders are now required to inspire their teams and deliver scalable outcomes while also "future-proofing" their organisations in a world where adversity has become business as usual.**

Funding

Development finance has always been under-funded. Post-Covid, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes that the shortfall for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 has increased by 50% (or $1.2 trillion) to $3.7 trillion. Government spending has tightened, while inter-generational wealth transfers (and hence potential philanthropic giving) have increased, suggesting that pressure will increase on philanthropists to collectively fund the SDGs rather than "going it alone". But as Olivia Leland of Co-Impact noted in 2017, co-funding is impeded by a "critical market failure [with] few effective mechanisms to match leaders looking to solve social issues at scale with the philanthropists interested in providing the right size and kinds of capital, and the partners needed to succeed.

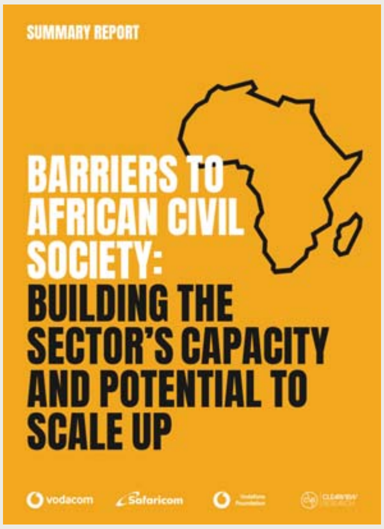
Consequently, these two types of powerful assets remain relatively disconnected, causing both to fall short of their full potential for impact." In other words, philanthropic capital is still disbursed in a highly fragmented fashion that bodes poorly for scale. Blended structures can help but depend on institutional capacity. The Global South Impact Community notes that blended finance can: "complement primary funding sources and project- ▸▸

specific grants to address emerging needs"; help improve coordination of aid; support risk management; and drive a broader investor base thereby improving "knowledge transfer and expertise sharing alongside financial contributions". Digitised funding also helps. Una Osili, Associate Dean for Research and International Programs at Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, says crowdfunding platforms are multiplying and mobile giving is growing rapidly facilitating "fundraising activities [which serve] as a catalyst for domestic giving". Philanthropic leaders must be willing to explore this new funding paradigm.

Building capacity

The number of young people seeking a career in the not-for-profit sector is growing. However, until long-term professional development is available to create competitive opportunities, the sector will struggle to source and retain top talent. Competition is tight with high-performing individuals being poached and under-performing entities being held back by their inability to create efficient teams with strong problem-solving skills. Institutional capacity remains an entrenched issue. Too often, social purpose organisations (SPOs) are beset by immature management systems; a lack of comprehensive data and knowledge repositories; and a limited capacity to adopt digital solutions.

SPOs may struggle to leverage the digital revolution and build relevant analytical skills which can help institutionalise a culture of open sharing, improved decision-making, and elevated voice. Sector leaders who are not exploring artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies risk losing talent. A report titled "Barriers to African Civil Society", produced under the leadership of Professor Bheki Moyo at the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) in collaboration with the Centre for Strategic Philanthropy at Cambridge University, notes that insufficient funding



"A report titled "Barriers to African Civil Society", notes that insufficient funding for capacity-building is rife and that a complex mix of systems, requirements and reporting mechanisms exacerbate the challenge."

for capacity-building is rife and that a complex mix of (often Global-North designed and led) systems, requirements and reporting mechanisms exacerbate the challenge. SPO leaders need to unite and ensure funding for institutional capacity is increased.

Regulation

In the absence of clear industry standards, the philanthropy sector will continue to face high transaction costs. From donor-advised funds to impact funds, the increasingly wide range of financial tools means investing considerable time and energy navigating cross-border challenges rather than mission delivery. Governments struggle to understand a complex sector with its own terminology. Meanwhile, basic tasks such as creating an endowment can be complicated for would-be philanthropists. Governments in some countries tax local giving but not international donations,[1] essentially disincentivising local fundraising. Better regulation in emerging markets would facilitate the flow of capital, help improve resilience and help SPOs in the Global South mature faster. Janet Mawiyoo, the executive director of Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), a leading Kenyan non-governmental organisation (NGO), believes SPOs can work with governments to "engage in policy discussion and assess legal frameworks" so that giving is encouraged.[2] Nana Afadzinu, who is executive director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), echoes this point: "What we have now is just generic registration through a company law which makes all non-profit companies limited by guarantee. When it comes to philanthropy, it's better to have a taxation framework that incentivises it which requires better infrastructure for the philanthropic sector to be set up."[3]

In order to respond effectively to the trends shaping philanthropic practice in the Global South, leaders in the field are obliged to go beyond overseeing day-to-day operations and move to advocating for regulatory policy reform. This requires particular leadership characteristics, including communication skills, business acumen and robust courage in one's convictions.

Clear communications

Effective communication skills are critical for any leader; but in the philanthropic sector, (often poorly understood and jargon-ridden), the need is even greater. In the words of Naina Batra, the leader of the Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN), this is "the only sector where non-experts tell the experts what to do".[4] Philanthropic leaders must be able to articulate their needs clearly and calibrate messages to diverse audiences or risk having their remit hijacked by others. Building movements for change depends on succinct messaging and a clear call for action. Clear communications build trust and

> **The long overdue current global discourse about shifting the power dynamics in aid, development, and philanthropy is exciting, important and urgent.**
>
> – DEGAN ALI

understanding among actors in other sectors, notably government officials and private-sector funders. Degan Ali, who leads the #ShiftThePower movement, which seeks to transform the global dynamics underpinning the distribution of aid and promotion of development,[5] is a good example of a leader who has helped build momentum through consistent engagement and articulation of a key message – the need for transformative change around what she describes as "the long overdue current global discourse about shifting the power dynamics in aid and development."

Business acumen

It has become increasingly clear that SPOs cannot rely on distant sources of funding if their efforts are to be sustained. They must build financially viable operating models that include an element of self-generated income. Although this idea of social enterprise is not new, business acumen is still lacking in a sector with high transaction costs and operational inefficiencies. Deploying the language of business to articulate a "value proposition" rather than a charitable "ask" is important. Customer service, marketing and the art of selling are under-developed in the sector although excellent resources are available for philanthropists to build these competencies among staff, in boards and within institutional culture.

The Africa Venture Philanthropy Alliance (AVPA) and its sister networks – the European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA), the Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN) and LatImpacto – have rich resources to help SPOs become more financially viable and entrepreneurial. By engaging with such networks, leaders can update their own expertise and promote systemic change.

Courageous conviction

Calling for change requires courage and conviction that change is a sine qua non. Leaders can expect push-back; they can expect to be challenged and even undermined; and they need a strong cohort of advisors, mentors and followers to embolden and empower them. Leadership is a lonely place - peer-mentors can challenge and steer. In a post-truth world beset by fake news, authentic and principled conviction is a precious commodity. It can help inspire teams, build effective trust-based partnerships, and bring hope to the community. It can also underpin other competencies; conflict resolution; negotiating skills; the ability to handle difficult conversations and, most importantly, the ability to empower teams, making them unafraid to challenge the status quo. When teams feel they are trusted rather than micro-managed, they become tenacious and ambitious. Strong teams mean leaders can build effective succession plans and thus resilience.

DJ Cuppy, a young Nigerian philanthropist, has shown just how conviction can catalyse change. Her drive helped create powerful networks of women with a passion for gender equality who sought to improve opportunities for girls and women. As a young female philanthropic leader, her strategy of both challenging and willingly collaborating with local authorities in Nigeria is a model for others notably by highlighting how philanthropists can be key allies who "add value to the government systems from an outsider's point of view".

And what is leadership, if it's not the ability to inspire, reassure, cope with sometimes extraordinarily challenging realities, and carve out a path for survival and for thriving? In this regard, philanthropic leadership can no longer be considered a ''nice to have". It is a crucial characteristic that third-sector social-innovation champions must foster. Driving social change is no longer solely about understanding a particular issue, mobilising the resources, monitoring the impact, and reporting on the outcomes. It is about building understanding, knowledge, and the capacity to withstand crises, and ensuring that these institutional capabilities are entrenched in organisational DNA. Those working in the sector must be able to continuously regroup, re-innovate and re-inspire on the back of difficult circumstances and failure, if they are to ensure the positive, and progressive advancement of their joint enterprise. CW

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One team, distinct leadership roles

The example of the DG Murray Trust

By David Harrison and Mvuyo Tom

The CEO's view

The DG Murray Trust (DGMT) is an unconventional funder. It positions itself as a "public innovator through strategic investment", which means that its activities extend well beyond grant-making. They include the incubation of new ideas and initiatives, and the management of pooled funding and bilateral aid when there is clear strategic alignment. The funding from other organisations which is managed and allocated by the trust is greater than the funding it provides in its own right; but the trust would cringe at being called a funds administrator.

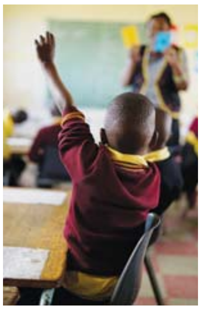
DGMT works in dynamic systems and thrives on uncertainty. It understands that small-scale pilot projects are often not good predictors of their ability to change a system because they are not exposed to the complex socio-political interactions that play out at scale. DGMT sees its role as trying to open policy windows – working at the point at which, to use John Kingdon's language, strong empirical evidence, public demand and political interest converge.[1]

If you ask a DGMT team member what they do, they will say: "We commission, communicate and connect." Board meeting cycles – and all the preparation, motivation and adjudication that they entail – are definitely part of the work, but so are daily site visits; media interviews; advertising and editorialising in the public space; efforts to convene non-governmental organisations (NGOs); and business and government interactions. The trust has to be flexible and responsive. I often compare it to an octopus – it has vibrant cerebral energy in both its central brain and in the neural nodes of its free-minded tentacles.

> **"The DG Murray Trust positions itself as a "public innovator through strategic investment", which means that its activities extend well beyond grant-making."**

As chief executive officer (CEO), my role entails inspiring the DGMT team – both Trustees and staff - and constantly reviewing and refining the trust's plans in line with its five-year strategies approved by the Board. Over the past 13 years, an extraordinarily high level of trust has been established between the Board and the executive management team, but this is not taken for granted. Respective mandates and lines of accountability are clear, enabling frank and robust debate and, occasionally, sharp disagreement. To ensure that I do not become a gatekeeper, the chief finance officer (CFO) is authorised to bypass me in cases of disagreement and report directly to the chairperson of the finance, risk and audit committee. This understanding between the CEO and CFO keeps me in my place and the CFO has not yet had to make use of this provision. In addition, decision-making is delegated among the staff so that everyone feels valued and empowered.

> **“As chief executive officer, my role entails inspiring the DGMT team – both Trustees and staff - and constantly reviewing and refining the trust's plans in line with its five-year strategies approved by the Board.** – DAVID HARRISON”



The executive management and the Board work continuously to ensure mutual confidence. I try and ensure that the Board is never surprised with either good or bad news. The decisions that are made must be consistent with the overall strategy; defensible with evidence; and predictable – or at least “predicably unpredictable” in that DGMT looks for strategies that disrupt the status quo.

The production of five-year plans for the trust takes about a year. The process starts with a contextual analysis and assessment of progress to date. It includes structured conversations with the trust's implementing partners. The findings are compiled in the form of a DGMT “green paper” – a high-level discussion document that aims to ensure philosophical coherence. This paper is the lodestar for the next five years. Strategic specifics – framed largely as outcomes that accommodate new ideas and solutions – are outlined in a subsequent “white paper”, which is then finalised as the next five-year strategy. The planning process nurtures strong collective ownership. Then, over the following five years, the strategy is pushed and prodded and revised as necessary in response to outcomes, *ad hoc* discussion papers, and debate at Board meetings. ▸▸

In those months in which no Board meetings are held, I write and disseminate a two-page update of strategic developments to keep the Trustees in the loop. "Friday post-its" are also produced detailing the significant activities that have taken place that week. These outputs create a sense of order and aim to ensure that Trustees are not flooded with superfluous information. A significant annual event is the Board site visits, which are conducted in one province over the course of four days. These visits build a sense of comradeship and a shared understanding of the work of the Trust.

Inevitably, complex situations arise and it gives me a great sense of comfort to know that the Chairperson is just a phone call away.

The Chairperson's view

The DGMT Board charter is clear: The Board is responsible for approval of strategies; investment of its finances; and fiduciary oversight. The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Trust and the Trustees do not interfere in this. The delegation of responsibility is critical given the scope and scale of DGMT's operations.

In practice, the CEO is responsible for all engagement with policymakers; the media; implementing partners; and other funders, except when the support of Trustees is specifically sought. The approval of grants of less than R1 million is delegated to the CEO, who ensures that the process of grant adjudication involves a number of key stakeholders. Grant applications above R1 million are presented as motivations to the full Board. In the context of the regular exchanges between Trustees and the executive, it is unusual, but not unprecedented, for the Board to decline such a motivation.

DGMT is a proactive grant-maker and is happy to conceptualise and develop initiatives from scratch if it believes there is a service delivery gap or new opportunity. The ideas for new initiatives are germinated, nurtured and discussed, often over a period of a year, so that there are no surprises by the time they reach the Board. The motivations for new initiatives are subjected to a frank appraisal of strengths and weaknesses on the basis of their potential long-term viability in the policy and systems space within which DGMT operates. The Trustees try to understand the expected impact of each initiative and offer direction and advice on how to enhance the probability of successful outcomes.

"We must be bold and be willing to take risks to achieve the radical change South Africa needs."

– MVUYO TOM

To this end, the Board thinks of its programmatic investments as a portfolio, the impacts of which it is seeking to optimise. In this regard, it is understood that investments in the realms of policy- or behavioural change can produce potentially higher returns than those derived from project-based funding, but the implementation risks are greater and the timeframes are longer. In this regard, the Board engages with the executive team not on the basis of immediate success or failure, but on the basis of whether it can produce evidence that DGMT's beneficiaries are on a fundamentally different trajectory to that they would have experienced without investment from the trust.

DGMT's mission is to ensure that every person in South Africa is able to reach their full potential. The pursuit of this mission underpins the collaboration between the Trustees and the staff. It is what unites them, bound by mutual trust and integrity. In a country wracked by inequality, where basic needs are not being met, we feel a sense of great responsibility. We take our fiduciary obligations seriously – and this is increasingly important as organised crime seems to be homing in on the non-profit sector. But we must still be bold and be willing to take risks to achieve the radical change South Africa needs. DH MT

David Harrison is the Chief Executive Officer and Mvuyo Tom is the Chairperson of the DG Murray Trust.

David Harrison

Mvuyo Tom

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Creating a new generation of leaders

The Laureus Youth Empowerment through Sport (YES) programme

By Marlene Coetzee-George

IN 2002, A NATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE LAUREUS SPORT FOR GOOD FOUNDATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH the goal of uplifting communities in a sustainable way through the power of sport. At that time, a relative lack of resources and poorly maintained sports facilities were commonplace in most disadvantaged communities. This represented an opportunity to mobilise residents to create safe spaces for learners so that they could engage in sport and thus come to envisage a life beyond the social ills and deprivation affecting their communities. Subsequently, the foundation came to realise that there was also a need to support these learners further during their transition to adulthood, so that they could augment the cycle of change initiated by the Laureus-funded sports initiatives in their communities.

Accordingly, a Laureus Youth Empowerment Through Sport (YES) programme was launched in 2012 ▸▸

premised on the belief that young people can be a major force in inspiring change and championing transformation. When equipped with appropriate technical, vocational, entrepreneurship and personal-development skills, young people can make a significant contribution as economically active citizens and, with time, mature into leaders with a social consciousness capable of paying it forward.

Laureus YES seeks to embed an understanding that authentic leadership entails helping to produce solutions to the challenges that are faced. Many of the young people in the programme grew up in difficult circumstances and learned to protect themselves by cutting off and closing down. However, the programme provided them with access to a coach in a safe space who could teach them how to circumvent the pitfalls they faced and, with the support of peers on the programme, gradually discover the power of being their authentic selves.

Those who have consistently chosen the soccer ball over drugs or a gun, develop great resilience, strength of character and a capacity for responsibility, which makes them ideal candidates for leadership, including as coaches of youth who come from a similar background to their own. Meanwhile, mindful coaches who use sport to create safe spaces, are, broadly, contributing to the solution and, slowly but surely, helping to transform their communities socially.

> I was encouraged to apply for Laureus YES by a fellow coach. He believed the programme would have as positive an impact on my life as it had had on his. The programme challenged me to face my fears, develop personally and professionally, and transfer these skills to advance my career at Grassroot Soccer SA. I impressed my supervisors so much, they gave me a promotion; and I was able to climb the ranks from volunteer coach to global trainer. This fuelled my confidence to go back to school to complete my law degree. Over the years, my role as a leader in sport has provided me many opportunities to grow, travel and, in the process, inspire my peers and the participants I coach.
>
> **THABILE NENE, 2017 LAUREUS YES GRADUATE**

Laureus YES seeks to promote personal development. A young person may apply for Laureus YES for a number of reasons, ranging from a passion for sport and a desire to remain in a sector that makes a tangible difference, to fear of failure due to low self-esteem, or a lack of resources to complete their tertiary education.

From these different starting blocks, each young person who joins the programme is encouraged to visualise themselves on the podium of success. Initially, every opportunity for engagement becomes a teachable moment, with learning occurring incrementally. In this way, the value of lifelong learning for personal and professional enrichment is taught.

Laureus YES adopts a multi-layered approach to motivation, which takes place at peer level and facilitator level, and in small groups with dedicated mentors. The approach seeks to address the needs of young adults who have reached maturity with minimal support and a lack of affirmation. Young adults for whom the barriers to success can otherwise be paralysing.

By the end of the programme, the participants have become confident conduits of motivation, able to coach others and with the drive to advance themselves. They also receive an accredited online qualification in sports administration from the Exercise Teachers Academy. For many, this qualification enables access to formal learning at a tertiary level.

> Putting a group of young leaders in a space to feed off each other's energy is one of the best things that can happen to mankind. The Laureus YES programme helped me to find my purpose, to know that it's okay to not be okay, and that everyone has a story to tell. It was here where I gained my own family in a group of people who

were also trying to find their own way in the world. We were all united by a common bond and goal: To make the world a better place, one day at a time.

Laureus YES programme unleashed the leader in me and taught me to be vulnerable and authentic. I learned about hardships through the voices of my peers and that empowered me to share my story too. In that moment, a new leader was born; a new man who was proud of his growth.

I have subsequently gone on to become a Royal Commonwealth Associate in 2016 and a Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership SA Alumni in 2018. I earned my Confederation of African Football (CAF) D Coaching License in 2021; and also became a Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni that year. ”

KAMOHELO MAKATENG, 2016 LAUREUS YES GRADUATE

Laureus YES sees value in vulnerability. A 2011 White Paper on sport and recreation noted: “A child in sport is a child out of court”. The harsh reality is that substance abuse, gangsterism and desperation produced by deprivation tend to lead to prison. In this context, sport has the power to change young lives and bring hope where once there was only despair. The Laureus YES Programme has been a safety net for many emerging young leaders who chose sport over the other paths, but who carry the battle scars of that journey.

In this regard, Laureus YES is a compassionate programme. It steps into the complicated and the messy; loneliness and brokenness, acknowledging the vulnerability of participants and helping them to envisage a new direction for themselves.

“The programme has not only equipped me with the skills I need to execute all my goals, but it fuelled me with hope. In the first year my whole life changed, and my healing started. I was diagnosed with clinical depression at a very young age and attended therapy. But it was being part of the Laureus YES family that finally allowed me to go through my journey of self-healing and self-acceptance. One of the greatest successes of Laureus YES is how it creates a platform for young people from different backgrounds to come together and find solutions to build better, healthier communities. The programme also helped me be more aware of my personal growth and exposed me to all the possibilities in my life.

The soft skills taught in the programme are things most of us don’t learn in our own communities, where people still deal with generational trauma. But at YES, I was equipped and supported, and I can return to my community to engage in important conversations to start the process of change. I have been empowered to achieve so many goals: getting my licence and owning a car; growing my business and serving as a national boxing coach; and studying further to improve my standing in a professional space. ”

KWANELE JENNIFER MATIBI – 2020 LAUREUS YES GRADUATE

Laureus SA’s commitment to authentic leadership extends beyond its drive to foster personal development among the youth it seeks to empower. The commitment also shapes the conduct of all its staff. It has been said that authentic leadership is revealed in the alignment of what you think, what you say and what you do. Does Laureus YES succeed at this every day? Probably not, but it wins on most days.

Marlene Coetzee-George is Chief Executive Officer of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation SA.

VUYISWA SIDZUMO is the Regional Director, Southern Africa, for the Ford Foundation. In this role, she oversees all of the Ford Foundation's grant-making in Southern Africa and leads a team seeking to promote the growth of philanthropy and support the work of grantees in the region.

In particular, the Foundation's programmes focus on Gender, Racial and Ethnic Justice, and Natural Resources and Climate Change in Southern Africa.

Vuyiswa Sidzumo

Regional Director, Southern Africa, Ford Foundation

Interview by Yogavelli Nambiar

Please describe the pivotal moments in your life that have motivated and informed your passion and drive for this work.

I've always enjoyed working in the NGO sector. I studied science and when I was doing my Masters dissertation, I started working with a non-profit that was doing capacity-building for other NGOs in South Africa. This work really sparked my passion for working with NGOs and even though I moved on to other sectors because I wanted to better support my family, my commitment to NGOs remained. In 2005, I got a role at the Mott Foundation and started working on the issue of access to justice with a focus on community-based advice offices. I saw the value of this work and made it my solemn mission to support the non-profits in this space in whatever way I could.

What was one of your proudest moments doing this work?

When I joined the Mott Foundation, many of the community-advice offices were in danger of closing due to issues with funding. In response, the Mott Foundation with the Foundation for Human Rights (FHR) and other partners helped establish the National Alliance for the Development of Community Advice Offices, which later became known as Community Advice Offices South Africa (CAOSA). The aim of this collaboration was to advocate for continued financial support of advice offices. Both Mott and FHR worked tirelessly to get other funders on board and made significant financial contributions to the sector at the time.

Through this collaboration, the Africa Centre of Excellence on Access to Justice was launched. Senior leaders in the justice fraternity from various African countries attended the launch in Kigali, Rwanda. It was particularly reaffirming to have the participation of judges and a powerful moment to witness for those who believed that alternative justice should be part of the formal justice system. For many poor people across the continent, the formal justice system is either inaccessible or does not work for everyone. For example, when someone commits a minor offence, they may go to jail and the file gets forgotten, and then, five years later, they are still in prison. If alternative forms of justice were working, mediation would take place; the person would agree to pay a fine or there would be some other remedial action that is agreed by both parties. That's where you see the importance of alternative forms of justice in spaces where the formal justice system is clogged.

What are some of the key attributes of your leadership style?

I am deliberate about exercising empathy while still insisting on accountability, and I try to find the right balance between these principles. The focus for me is always about seeing the other person while also holding them accountable.

I am not one for micro-managing and I believe in working with people who are smarter than me. The team at the Ford Foundation is very diverse, so I am always learning. A team member once told me that I was curious, and my curiosity helps in a way. I tell colleagues that one of the things I am here to do is to ask you the right questions and support you in what you do. You use your best judgement on how to do your job; I show you the ropes and then let go. I am also a thought partner, so when someone wants to brainstorm an idea, I help them find solutions when they're stuck. In this way, I see myself as a catalyst to get the best out of people. I believe this is my superpower. Also, I show my trust. I am fine with people making mistakes but then we must learn from them.

What are the specific challenges and concerns that you have had to navigate in your leadership? And how have you managed to overcome these challenges?

Finding the right balance between work and personal life is the biggest challenge for me. I wish I could have more time for everyone but this is a challenge because there are not enough hours in a day to honour all the meeting requests I get. My biggest regret is not being able to give more time to community-based groups where I think my knowledge and experience could be of benefit. I have also had to learn about managing a team and individuals. When you develop a culture of flexibility and closeness, it's not easy to be the "bad guy" at the same time. But you know that it's your role and at times you have to be the bearer of bad news.

Do you believe African philanthropy is different in form and approach from Western-based giving? If yes, what differentiates it for you?

African philanthropy, in its purest form, is perhaps not as transactional as US-based philanthropy. I believe that Africans have a deeper understanding of the complexity of their experiences within their context. The practice and experience of philanthropy aren't always premised on monetary value or one-dimensional power relationships. It gives me hope that there are institutions like the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), which is really getting to the bottom of this question of understanding the various forms and approaches to philanthropy from an African perspective. I also think alongside academia, there's a need for a stronger Africa-wide alliance of philanthropy-support organisations. This would provide further insights into practice and inform what African philanthropy could look like.

> **"This work requires a lot of humility. I know I have failed if grantees say I am not humble enough."**

Being rooted in reality and context is really important. For example, one of the dilemmas for institutional philanthropy is that you can have strategies that relate to important issues such climate change and GBV. But when you ask the average South African what are the top four issues for them, it is likely to be loadshedding, jobs, crime, and corruption. We have to constantly think about how philanthropic funding aligns with reality. Of course, you don't want to just change strategies all the time and drop important issues that still need resourcing, but there needs to be a balance and agility to respond to current moments.

Tell us about a lesson you have learned in this work?

Patience is one of the things I have learned. Some things can't be rushed. You have to find people where they are and you have to be patient and see the bigger picture. I may have all these grand ideas as I sit in an air-conditioned office in Rosebank, but I'm not in the actual heat of the work in the village. In this respect, this work requires a lot of humility. I know I have failed if grantees say I am not humble enough.

What gives you hope for the future?

My daughter and her generation. My generation entered the workspace when the country was building a democracy. So, you did your bit wherever you were. You were prepared to carry the world on your shoulders so the next generation would not have to. But my generation failed; I failed. And it has not been for lack of trying. Meanwhile, my daughter was a "Fallist" student protestor at Rhodes University. She is passionate about social justice – she's the activist in the family. I feel I have done so little compared to her at the age of 27. So, she gives me hope that this country will be in better hands. As parents, we normally say that our kids are apathetic, but while my daughter doesn't want to be in politics, she is interested in making this country a better place. I know she is not alone in this, there are many like her who are committed to putting their weight behind making South Africa a success.

This article is drawn from an interview with Vuyiswa Sidzumo conducted by Yogavelli Nambiar.

As the President and CEO of Delta Philanthropies, which is a United Kingdom-registered charity focused on impact investing and grant-making founded by Strive and Tsitsi Masiyiwa, **ELIZABETH TANYA MASIYIWA** oversees all the giving that takes place in the Masiyiwa family. She is also on the Board of the Higherlife Foundation, which is the implementing partner for Delta Philanthropies and which works in local communities in Burundi, Kenya, Lesotho and Zimbabwe across four strategic pillars – education; global health; rural transformation and sustainable livelihoods; and disaster relief and preparedness.

Elizabeth Tanya Masiyiwa

President and CEO, Delta Philanthropies; and Board member, Higherlife Foundation

Interview by Yogavelli Nambiar

Please describe the pivotal moments in your life that have motivated and informed your passion and drive for this work.

Growing up, my parents deliberately instilled in me the importance of helping others. My mum, particularly, believed that for this to happen, I had to understand and appreciate what life was like for others. One of the ways she did this was to send me to children's homes and, quite literally, go where they were; eat what they ate; and sleep where they slept. This was such a small act, but it has had a lasting impact on my values; the work I do; how I approach things; and the work I undertake at the Higherlife Foundation. The other pivotal moment was when the doors of Simba Preparatory School opened. This is an early learning childhood centre I established in Domboshava, Zimbabwe. This was a personal project for me. Together with three others, I built the school from scratch. We didn't have many resources, but we were determined to demonstrate a better approach to early childhood education in rural areas. Opening the doors of the school and having enrollments oversubscribed made me realise what I was capable of.

What was one of your proudest moments doing this work?

Nothing is more rewarding than knowing you've impacted someone's life. If you ask any philanthropist, they will tell you a story, for example, about a brief encounter with a person they have supported which left a lasting impression. It's so important to keep these stories and examples of people you've helped in mind because they keep you focused on what you are trying to achieve and why.

One of the stories I often come back to is about Charles who had applied for a scholarship to our leadership academy but didn't meet the criteria. He refused to give up and even showed up at the bootcamp, insisting he would participate. Charles ended up being a stand-out candidate. He received a scholarship to Waterford Kamhlaba United World College, where he was a brilliant student, and got into Yale but decided to take up an opportunity at Syracuse University instead. Charles's story reminds me of what we've built through the Foundation and how our platforms change people's lives.

The second story is about Prince. I remember interviewing Prince for one of our initiatives, the Andrew Young Scholarship, and telling him that at 16 years of age, he was too young. He was so determined that he stayed behind preparing when others went for lunch. Despite being a couple of years younger than the other applicants, Prince was given a waiver and got the scholarship. He graduated summa cum laude, became a Rhodes Scholar, graduated with a PhD from Oxford and now works at Amazon.

> **One of Higherlife Foundation's biggest strengths is that our teams live and work in the communities we serve, making them best-placed to know what is needed and what will work.**

As a foundation, we do incredibly impactful work that often puts people's lives on a new trajectory. We need stories like these to keep us energised and focused on what we are trying to achieve.

What does Afro-centric leadership mean to you?

Afro-centric leadership is about trust and empowerment. You need to trust the people on the ground who are working in communities to solve the problems. One of Higherlife Foundation's biggest strengths is that our teams live and work in the communities we serve, making them best-placed to know what is needed and what will work. The Foundation couldn't be as successful as it is or have the impact it has if it didn't trust the teams implementing the work.

Afro-centric leadership is also about giving a voice and genuinely collaborating with local stakeholders, especially those facing the problems you are trying to solve.

As an African woman leader, what are the specific challenges and concerns that you have had to navigate? And how have you managed to overcome these challenges?

There are so many, and I'm overcoming them every day. The world has very few spaces in leadership for young black women. Although the world has progressed towards gender parity, it is still 132 years away from accomplishing it at the current rate. One of the biggest challenges, as a young black woman, is being unseen, undervalued and underestimated. A few years ago, at a conference, I was supposed to attend one of the private side meetings. When I got to the room, I was asked to leave because "secretaries are not allowed to sit in this particular meeting". Rather than make a scene, I left, although some of the male junior members of our team got to stay. You know, there were important decisions made at that meeting, yet women were excluded.

How do I overcome these challenges? By investing in myself and improving my skills and knowledge to ensure that I have the right accolades to have a seat at the table.

Do you believe African philanthropy is different in form and approach from Western-based giving? If yes, what differentiates it for you?

Absolutely! First, unlike in developed economies, there are little to no incentives for African philanthropists. For example, giving is not tax-deductible. Second, African philanthropy plays an important catalytic role in supporting broader development objectives. So much of the giving by African philanthropists goes towards tackling big societal challenges, from nutrition to disaster response and basics around health and education. In contrast, Western-based giving has more latitude to support other areas, including the arts and humanities; libraries; and religion. As Africans, we'll get there, and we are seeing a change, but we have a few other priorities first.

I think the third differentiation between African philanthropy and Western-based giving is that many African philanthropists are still building their wealth. While giving has always been a strong part of African culture, formal

philanthropy is relatively new. When you combine this with the lack of incentives and challenges African communities face, I think you find African philanthropists are pioneers in the sense that they are redefining what philanthropy is and how it can work for African communities and goals. Take, for example, the growing discussion on local-currency giving, which enables the Kenyan philanthropist to give in Kenyan shillings and the South African philanthropist to give in rand instead of converting everything back to dollars, pounds or euros.

Tell us about your biggest "failure" or mistake as a philanthropist and what did you learn from it?

It wasn't so much a "failure" but more a lesson in making tough decisions when you need to. About a decade ago, as an organisation, Higherlife's structure had become complicated. It delivered work in trusts; for example, the Capernaum Trust, which housed the Foundation's legacy scholarship programme, and the National Healthcare Trust, which led the Foundation's health initiatives. This structure made the organisation inefficient and spread its resources thin. It also meant that the foundation couldn't leverage synergies and that its teams weren't positioned to create systemic change. The structure was wrong for the impact the Foundation wanted to achieve. Creating the right structure was painful and entailed losing some people. The change was certainly tough, and people were skeptical of the leadership's motivations. But, as the leaders, we knew what we had to do, and today the Foundation is a much stronger organisation that can pivot, exploit synergies and share knowledge and experience across its programme areas.

"What gives me hope is that the next generation has not stopped caring."

As a next-generation philanthropic leader and giver, how do you view your contribution to the sector?

I believe I bring a unique perspective and diverse voice to the table. Having a multigenerational approach to giving has opened the Foundation up to more ideas; made room for a lot more creativity; and made the Foundation willing to tackle different issues that may not have been appealing or of interest when the organisation was first founded. The Foundation's giving is value-driven. We sat down as a family and decided on the values of our Foundation; so, as the next generation, I am responsible for carrying on those values as the Foundation's giving grows and takes a different shape or form. So, my incentive to give is not shaped by any benefit or reward; it is what the family does, it is shaped by the family's values, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to ensure that the Foundation stays true to these values.

What guidance or advice would you give other philanthropists and philanthropic leaders?

You need patience and to remain focused on your goal, even when things don't go to plan.

Sometimes you start a project and encounter new challenges, including humanitarian disasters, pandemics or competing causes, making it tempting to divert resources and leave the project behind. For example, great strides were being made worldwide in improving the quality of education; and then Covid-19 happened and reversed decades of progress. Researchers estimate that school closures and disruptions to learning amounted to losses valued at US$10 trillion in affected children's future earnings. Covid set the Foundation's work back three to five years, if not more. The question was: Should the organisation give up on its education interventions and pivot to something else, or should it take on the burden of that loss of learning and continue driving forward because, ultimately, the consequences of stopping would be catastrophic, right? You must stick it out. I could say the same for the Foundation's work in neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). It is making progress, but it is slow. If the Foundation were to stop funding, it would be a disaster for local communities and the partners left behind to fill the gap.

My final piece of advice is: Use your voice to amplify change. Your giving creates a platform because you are using your own resources as a philanthropist.

What gives you hope for the future?

What gives me hope is that the next generation has not stopped caring. There is an increased social consciousness which is reflected in how people do business, how people consume products, and even how people create content. On issues like equality and climate change, I would say people now care more than generations before ever did. As philanthropists, we must embrace the younger generation and join this positive disruption. As technology advances, philanthropists also have an opportunity to accelerate changes and leapfrog progress in all areas of development, including education, healthcare and more.

This article is drawn from an interview with Elizabeth Tanya Masiyiwa conducted by Yogavelli Nambiar.

NICOLA GALOMBIK leads the Yellowwoods Group's efforts to drive economic inclusion and sustainability through its portfolio of businesses in financial services, restaurants and eco-tourism – and through multi-sector partnerships in Africa focussed on digital skills and youth employment; impact sourcing; nature-based carbon; and financial inclusion. Under her leadership, Yellowwoods has incubated a portfolio of African social enterprises, including the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator.

Nicola Galombik

Executive Director, Yellowwoods Investments

Interview by Yogavelli Nambiar

Please describe the pivotal moments in your life that have motivated and informed your passion and drive for this work?

I came of age in the anti-apartheid struggle, got involved in politics at a young age and have focused on addressing issues of social justice and economic inclusion since then; but have also strived to understand where the biggest opportunities for large-scale systems change exist.

In my first career, I made a series of documentaries about the history of Soweto and later went on to set up and lead SABC Education and then worked as a management consultant in government and in business.

Undertaking this work, I learned much about different South Africans – not just in relation to their struggles but also in relation to the huge energy, resourcefulness and resilience of people. This understanding was pivotal because it shaped a lot of my strategy. I don't really approach things from a charitable mindset, I approach things from the point of view of making the system operate better. Talent, resourcefulness and solutions often lie with people who may not have access to power or money. But leaders really matter, and change needs to be organised carefully for lots of things to come together.

From the beginning of my political work in the 80s, I have been building common-purpose coalitions and common-purpose programmatic interventions that require and include many social actors. My primary base for doing that is business, but I have also worked in the social sector and in the public sector. So, a lot of my strategic approach is about understanding how these actors need to work together to get new outcomes or to change the way they are doing things.

What was one of your proudest moments doing this work?

My proudest moments are when the results that have been sought are reached collectively. I'm a very results-focused person so when a victory is declared in respect of the big goals which have been set, that makes me proud. That could be, in the case of Harambee for example, achieving huge numbers of young people transitioning to employment; or in our businesses, shifting the way a market works by procuring and hiring more inclusively, or in a different project, shifting the way a government regulation works,

for example in the field of early childhood development (ECD). I am particularly proud when the people who need to keep sustaining that result are the ones who own the outcome.

What are some of the key attributes of your leadership style?

I am primarily a social innovator – so, I am always seeking the opportunity to do things differently and achieve better social outcomes. I'm also a change leader and work with other leaders to build leadership coalitions and drive new leadership agendas forward. So, a leader of leaders, one might say.

I'm agile in moving between worlds and organisations and the different kinds of leaderships teams that I work with so as to understand where they are at and how to move them to a different place. It is very much a strategic-change and social-innovation leadership role rather than an executive-management role.

The Yellowwoods Group has incubated many social innovations over the past 10 to 12 years, including with executive teams in the group itself as well as by working with people in the ecosystem and creating new intermediaries. The goal then is to find the team to lead the new intermediary, and to coach and support this team. Providing strategic advice and a vision for how things could work is critical in this work. Other attributes are the capacity to build common purpose around that vision; staying doggedly persistent; and driving people quite hard for results – which entails being quite fierce about achieving results but being very comfortable in uncertainty.

"It is important to hold people and teams together through uncertainty. It is difficult even for strong leaders to deal with uncertainty and complexity, so my job is to hold people through that."

It is also important to hold people and teams through uncertainty. It is difficult even for strong leaders to deal with uncertainty and complexity, so my job is to help hold people through that.

How do you build leadership in the people around you – those you work with and for?

One of the important decisions we make as leaders is who we choose to have around us and lead things in our organisations or work – in other words, picking the best people to lead organisations, processes, implementation efforts and organisations. There's often a default toward the idea of capacity-building, but it is really important to pick the right people for the right time. Also, to think about how people are incentivised and rewarded and how that drives and shapes how the organisation works.

What are the specific challenges and concerns that you have had to navigate in this space? And how have you managed to overcome these challenges?

Many leadership challenges arise because you're working in collaborative or multi-sector processes. You're working in systems that have multiple stakeholders or customers that you're trying to address. The leadership challenges require a high emotional quotient to manage that level of complexity and uncertainty, and to manage different stakeholders. To build that leadership competence is a really important imperative.

One of the challenges in the social sector is that you sometimes have people who may be good at one thing or the other but can't hold both in one place. They may be good at innovation and delivery or at engaging strategically with stakeholders, but what the sector often needs is a combination of both.

"One of the challenges in the social sector is that you sometimes have people who may be good at one thing or the other but can't hold both in one place."

There's not a whole lot of unicorns around so it's important to think about building great teams rather than just great leaders – thinking about what great teams look like and how they succeed. You have to constantly be reading the situation, understanding the challenges, strategically deciding how to respond to the challenges being faced and then executing whatever the required response is well. What I'm describing is the imperative to "live in the space of challenge and concern" and navigate every day accordingly, and to love that.

There are people who thrive in that kind of hurly-burly of strategic and tactical challenges all the time – thinking about where new solutions are needed; being direct; pivoting; changing; being agile. It's not about the particular nature of the challenges, rather the question is: Are you well-designed to respond to an environment that constantly throws up challenges? I have seen many examples of donor-driven philanthropy or charitable activity which are designed to deliver something but lack the capacity or ability to pivot in order to respond to their context, either because that's not how the donor relationship is established or because that's just not how the organisation is built. If the funding is structured purely in order to produce a particular deliverable, it is difficult to then respond in an agile way if the world no longer needs that deliverable. And a lot of funding is structured that way.

Tell us about your biggest "failure" or mistake in your present work; and what did you learn from it?

Things usually take longer and are harder than you think they'll be. You don't know what you don't know until you're doing it, especially when you're trying to change systems or to do things at a large scale. It can be costly; it can be disappointing; and you have to take detours to get to your destination. You have to be very disciplined to know whether you're moving forward, and disciplined enough to keep yourself honest and remain ambitious in terms of what you are trying to achieve. Sometimes you can have a good innovation that leaps things forward, but you need to take people along with you. You make mistakes when you don't take enough time to understand the interests and rationales of the people in the different systems and organisations you are trying to work with. We often talk about "falling in love with the problem, and not your solution". Mistakes happen when you stay attached to your solution for too long and don't let go quickly enough and say, "That thing we're doing is nice, but it isn't scalable." It's hard to let go of things that you have created, especially things that work well but are not scalable or are no longer fit for purpose.

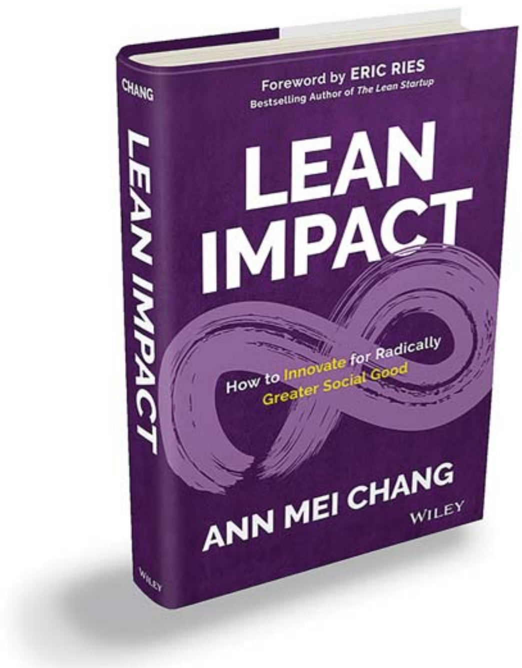
In my leadership role, I pivot all the time and it helps that I have a broad portfolio of activity. It's harder for people to let go of something if it's the one whole thing they're working on. One of my principles is that I get massive energy from optimism – and when I feel like I'm onto something that is going to work, rather than something I feel isn't going to work. Sometimes letting go enables you to find something new that is even better or at least has the promise of what this other thing doesn't offer.

What guidance or advice would you give other leaders in the philanthropy world?

Do not think because you have money that money is the solution – it may be a necessary part of the solution, but it is a small part of the solution. A lot of the solution sits elsewhere, including with government, business and ordinary citizens. Understanding your place in the ecosystem and how to play your role well is really important in relation to the problem you're trying to solve.

This article is drawn from an interview with Nicola Galombik conducted by Yogavelli Nambiar.

Understanding your place in the ecosystem and how to play your role well is really important in relation to the problem you're trying to solve.



Lean Impact

by **Ann Mei Chang**

Reviewed by Annette N. Brown, PhD

CHANG BEGINS THE BOOK BY ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL INNOVATION CONTEXT FOR HER LESSONS. Her first chapters argue that the purpose of innovation here is to achieve social impact, that we should think big (have "audacious goals"), and that we need to be more driven by the problems that we want to solve than by the solutions that we devise. This last one should be a given for those working on social development, but when we gain years of experience implementing specific approaches, we are just as prone as anyone to become hammers looking for nails.

The middle section provides more discussion of how and why to validate. In the Value chapter, she gives examples of how to design minimum viable products to bring value to the targeted stakeholders. In the Growth chapter, she delves into the challenge of starting small and fast but with the aim of eventually taking a solution to scale. In the Impact chapter, she looks at how we understand and measure social impact. The final section, called Transform, is where she dives into the challenges of using a lean startup approach in the social development sphere as it is currently organised and funded.

What I liked

There are many things I like about Chang's book. It is an enjoyable read. She writes well and uses many interesting examples. I appreciate that her examples span many countries and contexts. The arguments aren't new, but her presentation did focus my mind on problems and inspired me to think about big ideas.

I was glad to see her criticize the use of what she calls "vanity metrics". She says, "Vanity metrics have spread through the social sector like a communicable disease. If you go to the website of your favourite mission-driven organization, I bet what you'll see highlighted is the number of people it has served or reached. While at USAID, I constantly railed against the continual pressure to share the number of people we'd 'touched.' It's meaningless."

She is also concerned that sometimes the use of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) to test interventions can "constrain rather than enhance innovation", especially when large studies require the intervention to continue without adaption for a significant period of time.

She also sees a potential "danger" if past RCT results, perhaps from different contexts, become overly influential when seeking evidence-based policies. She reinforces a point made by many that academics, who are often the preferred providers of RCTs, have incentives that are not always aligned with the needed validation exercise.

Finally, she hits the heart of the problem in the last section where she explores the challenges of systemic change and how innovation in the social sector is funded. I love that she even has a chapter titled, "A message to funders", as I am sure many who read the book spend the early chapters rubbing their foreheads and muttering, "how are we supposed to do that within the constraints of our grants or contracts?"

What gave me pause

I came away from the book excited about using the lean approach for product development but even more skeptical about using it for programme design, especially for programmes addressing systemic development challenges like governance, private sector development, and poverty reduction.

Chang addresses theory of change, but she trips up as many do by using a results framework to talk about theory of change. The arrows in a results framework – how you get from one step to the next – often conflate theory with assumptions. However, theories and assumptions are different. In Chang's tutoring example, "tutors are competent" is indeed an assumption, and we can test the assumption by testing the knowledge and skills of the tutors. But "test scores increase" is not an assumption, rather it is the prediction of a theory, in this case a theory about how students learn (or perhaps a theory about how students do well on tests).

There is much we do in social development that is neither product design nor programme design, and the concepts in lean impact can be useful for many of those tasks. AB

Abridged from a post originally published in FHI 360's R&E Search for Evidence blog on 19 February 2019.

Annette N. Brown is Chief Strategy and Evidence Officer at FHI 360 and Editor-in-Chief of R&E Search for Evidence blog

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