

# FUSING THE PHILANTHROPIC AND COVID-19 CONTEXTS

EMERGING THEMES FROM  
THE 2ND AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY  
CONFERENCE

## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS REPORT

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The Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) in partnership with TrustAfrica, African Philanthropy Forum, Harvard Center for African Studies, Southern Africa Trust, African Philanthropy Network and Wits Business School.



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# Fusing the Philanthropic and COVID-19 Contexts

## Emerging Themes from the 2nd African Philanthropy Conference<sup>1</sup>

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August 2021

### INTRODUCTION

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The COVID-19 pandemic has tainted our world. Life, as we knew it, has changed; work models have shifted; economies have shrunk; livelihoods have dwindled; and many Africans have lost their lives. There has also been a regression in gender equality. “Women and girls have borne the brunt of the socio economic fallout of the pandemic, women and girls have been placed at greater risk of COVID-19 transmission, loss of livelihood, exploitation, and gender-based violence,” explained Tsitsi Masiyiwa, Executive Chair and Co-founder, Higherlife Foundation.

However, the world of philanthropy has responded in remarkable ways; when there was no cash to give, numerous in-kind donations saw their way to alleviating a small part of the immeasurable devastation of the pandemic. Communities, individuals, corporates and numerous philanthropic organisations have all responded to the pandemic and addressed the negative effects of COVID-19.

In 2020, more than half of Africa’s philanthropic organisations increased their giving, directing over one-third of their budgets towards COVID-19 relief efforts. Frontline workers, especially those in the health services, along with many ordinary people, have given of themselves to care for loved ones, for communities at the height of the pandemic. “But they’re not the only ones who showed this exceptional love through giving,” said Masiyiwa, going on to commend the philanthropists, foundations, private institutions

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<sup>1</sup>This report on the 2nd African Philanthropy Conference was commissioned by Dr Bhekinkosi Moyo, CAPSI, and compiled by Angie Urban. The content is extracted from the verbatim transcriptions of the conference sessions that took place from 3 to 5 August 2021.

and many others. Agile philanthropy through collaboration and innovation has contributed to saving lives and protecting the most vulnerable communities.

“We must look beyond COVID-19 and see that the lessons that we’re learning now, the true power of agency, agility, innovation, and collaboration will prepare us for an even greater future,” stated Masiyiwa, who believes that the shifts occurring globally point towards Africa becoming the most important continent in the world.

**Not only is Africa the future but the future is also female. With the inherent agency that we have within our communities and on our continent, one message is clear; solidarity, partnership, and collaboration will take us further.**

*Masego Madzwamuse, CEO, Southern Africa Trust*

## Conference Introduction

The second African Philanthropy Conference was hosted by The Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) in collaboration with the Africa Philanthropy Forum (APF), African Philanthropy Network (APN), East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN), Southern Africa Trust, Harvard Center for African Studies Africa Office, and TrustAfrica. Three themes fall under the overall banner of African philanthropy’s role in surviving COVID-19. The first, ‘Celebrating African Philanthropy’, looked at the continent’s philanthropic responses to the pandemic. The second focused on ‘Systems Change, Virtual Platforms and Technology’, as it relates to philanthropy in Africa thus far in the pandemic. The third, ‘Uniting Africa’, considered the opportunities that philanthropy creates.

Despite hardships since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, stories of resilience, benevolence and philanthropic giving led to innovations and new narratives. This report summarises the content covered during the second African philanthropy conference.

## Theme 1: African Philanthropy Achievements During COVID-19

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Over the past year and a half, the threat of, and losses from, the COVID-19 pandemic have affected philanthropists and communities’ responses to the changing needs of the people.

### Celebrating African Achievements

Community responses to the challenges, actions driven by civil society organisations and individuals, are important in whatever form. “Every currency matters; be it currency in kind, currency in monetary terms, or the currency of just showing up and being part of the support structure for people who have incurred and experienced losses at a community or personal level,” expanded Madzwamuse as she introduced the celebration of philanthropic achievements in countries across Africa, namely Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, as well as cross-border traders throughout the continent.

### ***Approaching work differently***

"Africa is unique, looking at an African country, African civil society, African markets; you feel you are in Africa." Proudly Egyptian, Marwa El Daly, Founder and Chairperson, Maadi Community Foundation, described Africa as a 'beautiful mess', a mess that Africa is so accustomed to dealing with, that when the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, communities and community foundations merely modified their approach to deal with a bit more 'mess'. Seventy per cent of employees in Africa are informal and so the pandemic slogan, 'Stay home, Stay safe', was hardly applicable.

El Daly's community foundation could not just watch people staying at home waiting for food packages or for small sums of monetary assistance, "These people needed to pay for schooling and health care, they needed to work in dignity," she said. Spurred to respond, an indigenous giving mechanism was the beginning of a factory model, which addressed the core problem of people working from home. A nationwide campaign was launched and the foundation challenged philanthropists to support individual families and thus enable them to work from home. "In less than a month we had machinery like sewing machines and printing machines, people worked in a supply chain to produce facemasks or hospitals gowns, because this was what really was needed at that point," enthused El Daly.

In 2021, the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) contributed towards this initiative, the German Embassy and others were interested in investing in the factory model. An increase in the number of families joining the factory, made possible by investing in machinery that can be used at home, saw this concept become a viable business model.

### ***Supporting vulnerable households***

In Kenya, the situation was similar, ordinary people needed to work every day to generate an income. There were many vulnerable families and the questions on Grace Maingi's, Executive Director, Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), mind were, "How do we ensure that we are able to reach resources for emergency relief; how do we navigate the lockdowns?" The KCDF worked through numerous community-based organisations (CBOs) and had a large footprint throughout the country. The CBOs needed support, especially technical, to be able to manage, collaborate and communicate. In addition, KCDF formed an emergency committee, which ensured that the funding application process was simplified, providing speedy access to resources. "In April and May of 2020, we reached over 10 000 vulnerable households. We were able to do this because we had a lot of support from individuals, from the private sector, from religious communities. We were able to raise the resources that we needed, both in cash and in kind, and like I said, working through the CBOs, got that support to where it was most needed."

From June last year, they focused on practical solutions, not only to rebuild society but also to sustain their community's responses through a number of income generating activities such as making soap or masks. "There was demand for soap and masks, so we assisted them to get the support that they needed to start up small businesses," stated Maingi, who went on to describe the kitchen gardens that had helped to support many families.

KCDF received over \$1 million support from local and international funders and in August 2021 had projects on the go in at least 12 countries. “One of the things that have continued to help us to move forward is flexible funding. This has allowed us to be innovative, it has allowed us to see where the greatest needs are, and enabled us to use sustainable approaches. This is not what we thought works best from sitting at a desk in Nairobi, it’s what works best at the local level,” explained Maingi.

### ***Providing basic needs***

Jeremy Maarman, Co-founder and Director, Initiative for Community Advancement (ICA), works primarily in the Bergrivier municipal area in the Western Cape. This community, with help from ICA, pulled together to address their needs. “People couldn’t come to the normal soup kitchen, so in partnership with a local school and other local players we started a delivery program to distribute hot meals,” said Maarman.

The ICA, with the support of the West Coast municipality, distributed food to people who live on farms in the area. The ‘Youth Bank’, a youth philanthropy group started by ICA, played an active role in the COVID-19 crisis: “They managed to give 223 toiletry packs to young girls and boys,” explained Maarman.

In September of 2020, the ICA established the Community Rebuilding Fund, and several small business owners received cash injections to boost their businesses after the initial impact of COVID-19.

Research in Bergrivier showed an increase in gender-based violence during the lockdowns. In response, the ICA launched ‘Speak Up’, an online talk show where women and girls could seek advice from a number of medical professionals. “We had 19 of these talk shows and over 30 000 interactions. This really challenged us as a foundation to position ourselves differently so that we can indeed reach the communities that we wanted to see receive assistance,” explained Maarman.

### ***Trading across borders***

The travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic affected cross-border traders throughout the continent, making trade almost impossible. “These traders depend on physically moving from one country to another so that they can source and sell their goods,” said Mary Malunga, Gender and Social Inclusion Officer, Southern Africa Cross-Border Traders Association (SACBTA).

In 2020, SACBTA kept cross-border traders informed. “We worked with the three of our affiliates in compiling and producing communication materials pertaining to the new regulations related to cross border trade. These helped traders to manoeuvre during the pandemic. We also were able to translate these materials into at least one major local language in each [trading] country, so that our traders had knowledge of what measures have been put in place,” explained Malunga. Beyond the regulations, they addressed some practical needs: “We provided sanitizers and facemasks to the traders, so that they’re able to trade safely

within the pandemic,” said Malunga. Furthermore, they provided funding to those traders whose businesses were severely affected during the lockdown.

Malunga described how they addressed the digital divide of affiliate organisations: “We were able to procure and provide office equipment to our affiliates in the trading countries. We also trained those that were not digitally competent to use digital platforms to enhance their businesses,” she said.

### ***Future opportunities***

Madzwamuse touched on identifying and addressing the needs of the people. “None of you said ‘we just focused on education, it didn’t matter that people were hungry, we were just working on education’. You did needs assessments, you responded to what the needs from the communities were. What a world of difference we make when our interventions are relevant, responsive, timely, and practical.”

Among various prospects that arose, two stood out:

1. *Storytelling and language*: El Daly suggested documenting the success stories and sharing these on a joint platform. Storytelling was echoed by Maarman, “There is a saying in South Africa: ‘local is lekker<sup>2</sup>’. We must share the impact of local projects because a lot of amazing work has been done at the community level.” He also recognised an opportunity for academics to draw closer to non-profit organisations, to bridge the divide in language, and to recognise the importance of non-profit work. On the language of philanthropy, Madzwamuse added, “It’s about flipping the script in the right direction because philanthropy is going to be citizen driven.”
2. *Collaboration and sustainability*: A collective approach to the sustainability of the philanthropy sector is important. African philanthropists can work together through various networks and forums, looking at areas that need more support. El Daly suggested creating a database of angel investors, while Madzwamuse provided a reminder of a number of continent wide platforms and initiatives involved in supporting initiatives and highlighting citizen agency. “We need to help communities see what they have in their hands. They are not just in a desperate, hopeless position; they bring something to the table. How can we leverage on that?” asked Maingi.

**It has been a joy to discover that we’re all working on the same thing basically.**

*Marwa El Daly, Maadi Community Foundation*

## **Philanthropy’s Support of Research and Development during COVID-19**

The dearth of philanthropic research in emerging markets calls for collaboration. “This research needs to focus on complex areas, like institutional development and capacity building

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<sup>2</sup>Lekker is an Afrikaans work for pleasant or enjoyable.

instead of education, health and the like, which is easier to measure,” stated Clare Woodcraft, Executive Director, Centre for Strategic Philanthropy, Cambridge Judge Business School.

### ***Research collaboration***

No one entity can address the challenges of COVID-19. “The scale, complexity, and magnitude of the pandemic is unprecedented, so collaborations between corporate, individuals, and foundations are important,” explained Una Osili, Efroymsen Chair in Philanthropy and the Associate Dean for Research and International Programs, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy: Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Innovation, especially the role of technology in research, has permitted an understanding of the COVID-19 crisis and the role and impact of philanthropy.

Equity and inclusion issues have been re-exposed through research during the pandemic. “We need to shift our focus from what funders need to do, to what communities need. We must ensure that the infrastructure allows the communities’ voices to be heard. Our work needs to centre on the communities we serve,” Osili said.

### ***Tracking the data***

Since the onset of the pandemic, there has been an increase in focus on research and data. Many donors wanted to know where partners and government were funding, but data of this nature was scarce. “Having a funding map was critical, but it didn’t exist in many countries,” explained Osili. Data is vitally important for philanthropy and requires investment in research and infrastructure. Osili described three trackers at Lilly Family School of Philanthropy:

- *GPT – Global Philanthropy Tracker*: Tracks cross-border philanthropy funding flows against other flows, such as ODS (official development assistance), private capital and remittances. This has shown that the philanthropy sector has increased their funding into research. It has highlighted that marginalised groups and inequality overall cannot be ignored.
- *GPEI – Global Philanthropy Environment Index*: Tracks the degree to which environments around world enable philanthropy, and how conditions can facilitate or deter philanthropy. Funding from the diaspora has enhanced diaspora communities and local funders.
- *COVID-19 response*: Tracks where funding flows are going, which entities are responsible for directing flows, and the impact of these flows, among other factors.

Philanthropies are often not aware of research or their availability, nor do they include research into their programmatic development. “The ongoing challenge is to connect the needs of practitioners with the available research,” suggested Woodcraft. However, currently much data is simply not available at national level and individuals or organisations are reluctant to disclose data due to concerns around regulatory frameworks that govern the dispersal of philanthropic data.

### ***Shifting the power***

COVID-19 was a catalyst that highlighted which issues to address to enable the shift of power. “Decision-making, raising capital, and measurement of impact are just a few of the shifts that

need to take place to ensure that African communities and businesses involved in philanthropy are included in the discourse," Woodcraft said.

The pandemic exposed the strengths of local funders and organisations. Ali Awni, Professor of Practice and Director, John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy, Civic Engagement and Responsible Business: The American University of Cairo (AUC), elaborated, "They were best positioned to respond quickly and efficiently to the crisis, whereas big funders were at a disadvantage due to distance; they needed to alter their approach and work holistically with local players in philanthropy." The need for a changing strategy of working with major donors was clear: the community must own the solutions.

### ***Education***

The onset of COVID-19 saw a rush to alleviate suffering, with no vaccines and the widespread epidemic people started talking of the new normal. "We wanted to help build a better normal, but some of the major issues were the mindsets of governments, the bottom up approaches, grass-roots innovation, strategic philanthropy, financing, etcetera, all working together," said Awni. He described a number of educational initiatives such as thought leader webinars, projects on trends in philanthropy to introduce or reinforce collaboration and workshops for people working in civil society. "When it was time to reflect on the impact, we focused on field research to document new knowledge and amend best practices," he said.

Business schools create and disseminate knowledge and in the process create future leaders. Executive education arms of business schools are receivers of funds, which dictate their direction. "We must not forget that creating future leaders involves shaping the mindset and the culture. For this to be sustainable, our approach must be community driven, we need to align our design with what the community needs," cautioned Awni.

Operational efficiency is vital in philanthropic efforts in emerging markets and needs to be included in curricula. "Philanthropic organisations must have institutional components, including resilience, partnerships, impact-measuring, branding, governance; all the things that are taught to business, we need to teach to social purpose organisations," stated Woodcraft.

### ***Regulatory frameworks***

"What is missing is good governance!" exclaimed Awni. Good governance is more than mere democracy, it involves the rule of law, inclusiveness and openness, "If there is no governance then we will continue to put a rule here and a policy there, with no holistic and systemic view," he said, explaining that if philanthropic work meets the requirement of the masses, governments would follow with appropriate regulations.

**We should be doing research before the time to see the gaps in the market and identify the problems to be solved. We need to know who else is dealing with the challenge,**

and if there is any government involvement. So often, we jump in and address the need because it's urgent, but we need to take time out to assess beforehand.

*Clare Woodcraft, Executive Director, Centre for Strategic Philanthropy, Cambridge Judge Business School*

## Community Philanthropy Trends during COVID-19

Community philanthropy continues to play a major role in enabling independence in communities. In Africa, community philanthropy has been at its busiest during the pandemic, distributing aid, educating people about the coronavirus, as well as magnifying the voices of vulnerable people like the elderly, women and children," said Stigmata Tenga, Executive Director, Africa Philanthropy Network (APN), who facilitated the session. A number of trends emerged in community philanthropy as the world faced the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Complexity to clarity*

Community philanthropy is not another term for local fundraising. Not only does it involve mobilising resources, but it is also about giving people hope and decency; it is the process of developing the community and building trust. Jenny Hodgson, Executive Director, Global Fund Community Foundation (GFCF) described the manner in which many community organisations are seen: "Our organisations look like what they need to look like to unlock international money; they're not so good at looking like what they need to look like to get members of the community to contribute and feel that they are part of these organisations." She highlighted the need for reframing the workings of community organisations, "This isn't just substituting a bucket that used to be international money, and replacing it with local money; this is about hearts and minds and bringing people into the processes."

The simplicity with which communities themselves are defined can be problematic. "We should avoid just either demonizing or romanticizing communities because these are very complex places. The community that comes together to provide medical care, may be the same community that kicks somebody out because they're gay," explained Hodgson. Communities represent identities and are bound by shared interests; and whether they are provincial or cosmopolitan, the way they are framed and the language used needs to be appropriate.

### *Resilience and agility*

Community philanthropy is a continuum, from seasonal approaches at one end, semi-formal associations in the middle and formal structures at the other end. Tendai Murisa, Founder and Executive Director, SIVIO Institute, elaborated: "The most exciting part was what we saw at the beginning of that continuum; the loosely structured the seasonal ones that emerge in response to a crisis," said Murisa. These he called ephemeral pools of philanthropy, after the seasonal pools of water that occur after the rains. He talked of the women in communities

who created feeding kitchens and of teachers gathering the students and providing lessons during the lock downs when children could not be at school.”

“Local civil society and citizens will rise to the occasion to address the needs in their communities, because when it comes to the crunch, we cannot necessarily rely on international assistance,” stated Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director, West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI). She believed that creating an environment conducive to communities’ effective responses to problems was important. “We mobilised support for civil society organisations so that they could continue to support the vulnerable,” stated Afadzinu.

An agile and analytical philanthropy, teeming with agency and innovation, to meet the demands of communities is required. “We also need to build trust within communities for the donors and other actors that they work with, and strengthen leadership in the communities,” stated Evans Okinyi, CEO, East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN). Spurred by the pandemic, the EAPN promoted participatory grant making, ensuring all actors were involved.

### **Visibility**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a massive disruption: “The rules were all kind of broken and up in the air. We spent quite a lot of time with partners trying to make sense of what on earth was going on,” said Hodgson. She explained that community philanthropy is still largely invisible and unknown to major funders of civil societies around the world, and that this gap in knowledge needs addressing. The predominant narrative around international development aid is the continuous doubts about the capacity of local civil society to manage money. “If you’re working in African philanthropy you know that things are happening on the ground, every day, and yet there is a complete systemic blindness on the part of the international development system,” stated Hodgson. She described international NGOs launching local fundraising campaigns in competition with local organisations, instead of building communities; they were focusing on their own recognition.

Hodgson spoke of EPIC-Africa and African NGO’s report entitled ‘The Impact of COVID-19 on African Civil Society Organisations: Challenges, Responses and Opportunities’<sup>3</sup>, which details the effects of COVID-19 on over 1000 civil society organisations that were polled. It speaks of many difficulties and opportunities, and testifies to over 70 per cent of civil society organisations self-funding new programmes in direct response to COVID-19, and this in the face of tenuous financial sustainability. “If this isn’t the moment to embrace and build on what we’ve seen of the engine that drives the system we want, and to make a call to those development actors to say, ‘this is the future, invest in this, forget all that other stuff,’ then we will be missing a trick,” stated Hodgson.

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<sup>3</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5638d8dbe4b087140cc9098d/t/5efabc7884a29a20185fcbaf/1593490570417/The+Impact+of+Covid-19+on+African+Civil+Society+Organizations.pdf>

## **Storytelling**

"Africans are known for storytelling, but we are failing to tell our story, we are not telling it as effectively and as we should. Being raised in an African society, what people do may not be seen as something to tell. But you then get outsiders who are fascinated by what we take for granted, anthropologists will come and do fantastic PhDs here in Africa," enthused Murisa. He also spoke of terminology being a challenge; for example, the term philanthropy means solidarity, welfare, charity or giving to mention a few. "The term 'foundation' is not part of our sort of our lingo," he said.

The SIVIO Institute put together the stories of 11 community foundations in a magazine called 'Community Foundations in Zimbabwe: Analysis of Eleven Case Studies Surveyed by SIVIO Institute'<sup>4</sup>. When looking for these community foundations, these terms had to be simplified: "We said we're looking for an entity that's mobilizes a certain portion of its resources locally or from members of the community," explained Murisa. He expressed the need to drive the community philanthropy agenda: "We need to invest more in public awareness, effective communication through strategy collaboration, specifically with the media, so that we can advance the culture of African's own giving."

## **Working together**

Indigenous African philanthropy should inform the development of models and institutional mechanisms that supports the work being done around social justice, social accountability, social protection and social services. "We need to work together on these things and build the resilience, relevance, legitimacy and trust in civil societies and our citizens," said Afadzinu. She explained the need for better accountability from the philanthropy sector to improve engagement and alliance, "We are very good at accounting to our donors, but we need to be looking at how we engage more with the citizens. We must also advocate for the development of the culture and infrastructure of African philanthropy in our countries." She suggested working within traditional systems, with religious institutions, and through national policy formulation, to encourage individual giving and clarify philanthropy's role in development plans.

The international development sector and, to a large extent, the international philanthropy sector are struggling with issues to do with power, diversity, equity and inclusion. Hodgson elaborated, "You don't have to solve the answers in London, Paris, or New York; come here [Africa], the answer is before you, let's start talking."

Afadzinu highlighted a need for collaboration between different constituents of society in West Africa, such as faith-based organisations, professional association and voluntary groups, as well as with governments and the private sector. In East Africa, collaboration was evident: "Communities are increasingly being put at the centre of all the decision making processes. We are seeing the gulf between international and local funding sources being bridged, because the pandemic opened doors for the mobilisation of local resources," explained Okinyi.

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.sivioinstitute.org/magazines/>

Many countries have struggled with demonstrating the contribution of philanthropy as a sector to national development. We need to package the sector's contribution, showcase that contribution, and open up the sector for greater recognition.

*Evans Okinyi, CEO, East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN). Kenya*

## Theme 2: System Changes and Technology Shifts in African Philanthropy

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The pandemic has ignited a conversation about the need to reset and start afresh to address the challenges of inequality, poverty and many other social ills. The world is in the middle of a climate crisis, an inequality crisis and a health crisis; "COVID-19 was not the start and when everyone is vaccinated it's not going to be the end," stated Mosun Layode, Executive Director, African Philanthropy Forum. "But we still have one of the best jobs in the world, as philanthropists; to see poverty alleviated and communities uplifted," she added.

The pandemic has highlighted the systemic and structural changes needed to address Africa's crises. It has magnified the underlying problems. Everjoyce Win, Executive Director, Shine Campaign, an organisation that focuses on investment in and support for last mile communities, specifically women and community-owned renewable energy access, described system changes as the root causes embedded in national and local networks. "We can't keep addressing the consequences or manifestations of something that is much deeper than what we are seeing; it's like bandaging over a bad fracture," she exclaimed.

COVID-19 has proved the capacity of the philanthropy sector in Africa, disproving the 'need for capacity building' narrative that has permeated many a plan intended to right Africa's dilemmas. When the experts could not travel, the communities responded without them, "There is a need for us in Africa, to look at how we strengthen the networks we had, and those that emerged as a result of the pandemic," stated Win.

The structural needs have not changed. COVID-19 showed up the inefficiencies in infrastructure related to health care, such as electricity to run clinics and refrigerate vaccines. However, it also highlighted the fact that it is not only a health crisis, "Soon we were talking about the education crisis, violence in the homes, hunger," she said. Philanthropists and aid agencies in all their forms obviously need to choose specific areas to work on, the areas in which they have the expertise, but very importantly they need to remember that people do not live in 'thematic silos'. "Not any one specific area is the 'magic bullet', it just one of the tools in our armoury. It's the balance between the practical and strategic needs that we need to ensure. We need to do both; they go together. We cannot do humanitarian work in a context with no democracy, no civic space, and silenced voices," Win explained.

The philanthropy sector can have convoluted procedures; COVID-19 has shown that there is a better way of doing things than the complicated applications, prolonged time to move money to the site of the work, and even more complex systems for accountability. "Where is the trust?" asked Win.

Philanthropy does not sit outside the system; it is part of the power of money, power of knowledge, policy agenda, patriarchy, marginalisation of minorities and others. In essence, aid needs to be decolonised, Win continued: “We need to start with ourselves, how we work in our networks, how we share power, conceive of power, build power to enable equal distribution of power in the world.” This translates to communities driving their own development, making their own decisions and knowing where the money went.

**As Africans, we need to set the agenda for system conversations. We need to identify the collective power that we bring to the table to affect systems change, because we have knowledge of the communities and of the solutions that work.**

*Everjoyce Win, Executive Director, Shine Campaign*

## System Change Requirements

African philanthropists live in the pandemic situation, so understanding the resource distribution and approach is important. COVID-19 responses happen at government level, community level and business level. Philanthropists are not just donors, but they are also in business, and might be forced to look at structural changes to reduce the silos. “Regardless of how insulated you think you are, the problems are coming to your doorstep,” warned Tanya Masiyiwa, Executive Director, Delta Philanthropies.

### *Social solutions*

Academics view social problems as complex, intractable, even wicked, something that persists despite the work being done. François Bonnici, Director, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, explained, “Long histories cannot be addressed overnight; systems were designed to intentionally control, oppress, and either retain or remove power from societies.” Social changes may seem unattainable and frustrating; however, it is about context, relationships and shifting power. Many organisations are working systemically and empowering both the people who live the challenges and those on the front lines. Bonnici expanded saying, “Those of us who work in this industry need to shift our day-to-day practices, a technical mindset is not sufficient, the emphasis must be on the relational, on building a common identity, and empowerment.”

Woodcraft elaborated on impactful initiatives: “They have outcomes that are sustainable, scalable, and measureable, these are not one-off projects, but long term programmes to increase system change, address a socioeconomic challenge, and bring about positive change in people’s lives,” she said.

### *Investment and collaboration*

Large investments, and thus scaling up operations, can mean the perpetuation of some of the problems, because there is a focus on ‘what we do’ without understanding ‘what needs to be done’. In addition, large-scale investment might crowd out smaller philanthropists. Organisations should decide on their own partners for the best results, this cannot be imposed from the top

down. “Collective learning and investment must ensure that [philanthropy’s] systems don’t perpetuate the historical systems that we are trying to leave behind,” stated Bonnici.

Donors should incentivise the outcomes that really matter. Sharmi Surianarain, Chief Impact Officer, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, explained scale as a vanity metric. “Shackling organisations to metrics that don’t make sense, like how many people were reached, versus how sustainable and how enduring the change is; this [the latter] is a much better measure of success.” In addition, donors should incentivise collaboration, as it often takes numerous big and small partners for effective systems change. She likened it to the holes in Swiss cheese: “You need many layers to cover all the bread,” she said.

Tanya<sup>5</sup> Masiyiwa shared some lessons around collaborations: “Obviously you need funding, but you also need skills and innovation to achieve the impact. It would be remiss to believe that one organisation can do it on its own. In our education department we have links to food distribution, health care response, and teachers,” she explained, acknowledging the broad experience gained from numerous partners.

### *Youth employment*

Employers’ expectations versus youth employment is not a supply and demand issue, it is a complex problem. “It’s not just about skills and qualifications, young people are talented, the problem is about money to print CVs, transport to work, childcare, and then also job creation,” stated Surianarain.

Harambee began with getting young people ready for work and matching them to jobs. What began in 2011 with 40 pathways expanded to 500,000 pathways in 2020; however, scale is not enough. “Scale was the obsession of the last decade. Systems change will probably be the obsession in this decade, that’s a pretty big pivot!” she exclaimed. Three lessons of this pivot:

1. *Adoption of scale*: Government adopted the Harambee model of matching jobs to youth.
2. *Fall in love with the problem not the solution*: Beyond a clever idea is constant iteration to address the big picture problems access to data, transport and childcare.
3. *Move from ‘what we do’ to ‘what needs to be done’*: As a result of COVID-19, women came last, contrary to the adage ‘women and children first’. For example, UIF payouts did not reach as many women as men, because women were in more precarious jobs that did not contribute to UIF.

The structural barriers mirror the legacy of inequality that has only deepened with COVID-19. No longer is there a linear pathway from education to a job, because there are numerous structural barriers to be overcome, “It’s a gig, it’s a hustle. We try to dignify the hustle,” explained Surianarain. That is the future of work.

**We need to collaborate at the policy level with government, and at ground level with fellow philanthropy partners.**

*Francois Bonnici, Director, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship*

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<sup>5</sup>First name included to differentiate the contribution from Tsitsi Masiyiwe.

## Technology Changes and Innovation for African Philanthropy

The pandemic not only caused devastation but also provided opportunities for technology innovations in the philanthropy space. From March 2020, life could not proceed as normal, things had to change, and many organisations took the opportunity to transform themselves. Keratilo Mogotsi, lecturer and PhD student at CAPSI, was excited about the introduction of new tools and new ways of doing things to survive and thrive during this pandemic. “It’s so important to make lemonade when life throws lemons at you,” she said.

Despite all the challenges in Africa with power and connectivity, philanthropy has provided many opportunities to sustain the gains made during COVID-19 and find new ways of working. Win reiterated the importance of both online and offline relationships.

### *Tech companies go virtual*

Murisa spoke of the SIVIO Institute, a relatively young organisation, which was started in 2018, “For most of our first year we were working virtually, then our resources improved and we moved into an office at the end of 2018. But we always had in our DNA and our memory, how to work virtually,” said Murisa as he explained their move online again with the onset of the pandemic. SIVIO developed a protocol for working virtually and voluntarily went into lockdown before the rest of Zimbabwe. “We learnt two things, one, you can’t commit to an eight to five day when you are at home; all the [home] responsibilities kick in. So, we revised that to six hours a day, at whatever time. We understood that people are human first, workers second,” explained Murisa. One of the pitfalls of working from home, he warned, was team burn-out: “You don’t see the signs of fatigue, but it’s something that we all have to watch out for.”

### *Technology-related initiatives*

SIVIO’s signature initiative is the ‘philanthropy lab’, a catalyst platform that helps to establish community foundations, specifically those in response to COVID-19. “Using our virtual platforms we help them to register, we help them to develop a strategy, raise resources for the work that they are doing, and then we provide support,” stated Murisa. He described the various projects with which they were involved:

- *Solidarity Trust of Zimbabwe*: Working towards turning around one of the hospitals that became a COVID-19 response centre;
- *Hope Foundation*: Responding to the vulnerabilities in low-income areas;
- *Policy Analysis Centre*: Tracking performance of policy adherence and preparing reports;
- *Local Government in Action Tracker*: Incentivising respondents to provide data on health, education, water and refuse collection;
- *WhatsApp training platform*: Training entrepreneurs.

Franck Sombo, Head of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI), has been instrumental in supporting organisations through training and technical support during the pandemic. It provided a platform for organisations to connect,

build and raise funds and assisted in setting up mobile technology that organisations could use to send money. “But the pace of adoption of technology is a large impediment, as is data security and data privacy,” Sombo added.

### ***Future focus***

“If you are talking about grassroots initiatives, we need to work as a collective force to turn the situation around; that means investing in building our digital culture,” stated Sombo, who went on to state the importance of leadership buy in and investment of significant resources. “In terms of digital leadership, a lot of investment needs happen for us to have that tech backbone,” echoed Murisa.

Technology can reinforce inequality; Murisa qualified this saying: “Many of our stakeholders, like participants and even lecturers, cannot afford the cost of being online. So, for most of our online training, we offer data scholarships.”

### ***COVID-19 technology innovation***

COVID-19 was a big opportunity for the technology ecosystem, but it came at a time when many organisations in the technology space were not ready. Oswald Jumira, Head of Innovation Partnerships, Liquid Intelligent Technologies, recalled the early days of lock down: “Zoom was crashing every other day, and the Zoom guys had to really perfect their infrastructure to meet the demand. COVID-19 saw an acceleration of digital transformation in many industries on this continent; a tectonic shift in adoption of technology across different sectors.” Digital transformation has grown the equivalent of 10 years in the last year; but this does not come without confusion, challenges and opportunities.

Digital adoption in the health-care space is now a reality and is potentially going to address a number of challenges in Africa. First, telemedicine, consulting virtually with doctors, during the pandemic means doctors and patients stay safe. Then COVID-19 communication, infection records, vaccination records, vaccination passports, vaccine distribution and COVID-19 medical supplies dissemination, all possible through technology.

**Let’s not let any gains be lost. All the advantages COVID-19 has brought, let’s embrace them,**

*Oswald Jumira, Head of Innovation Partnerships, Liquid Intelligent Technologies*

### **Community Responses and Impacts**

Early last year, at the beginning of COVID-19, one of the prevalent narratives was along the lines of, ‘just wait and see the carnage and devastation that is going to come to Africa with its weak health systems and many other vulnerabilities’. Briggs Bomba, Programs Director, TrustAfrica, said that the conversation has changed. “Now there are stories of community responses as the vehicles for change,” he stated.

### *Community philanthropy descriptions*

The aid narrative around philanthropy in communities has been underestimated and undermined, “The stories of community solutions that have existed for years have too often gone unacknowledged,” explained Tendisai Chigwedere, Learning Manager, TrustAfrica. She spoke of ‘catalytic partnerships’ developed by communities: “Catalytic goes beyond simple giving of resources, it must ensure space for voices to be heard and agency to be demonstrated. It must give time to experiment and develop sustainable solutions. This is authentic partnership,” stated Chigwedere.

The humanitarian aid system is set up to provide what agencies and donors have to offer, instead of giving people what they say they need. “We need to build trust with change agents in the communities by acknowledging the indigenous intelligence in communities,” she explained. When communities are granted time and space for self-organising and self-realisation to surface, then the responses and partnerships of donors and agencies will have relevance. “This type of solidarity can only come from listening and being with communities as they chart their path to the solutions that are best suited to the complexity of the challenges that they face,” enthused Chigwedere.

Ebrima Sall, Executive Director, TrustAfrica highlighted the importance of community philanthropy, defining it as a place where: “People contribute according to their means and receive according to their needs.”

### *Origins of community philanthropy*

The building of an embedded system of giving in communities comes from traditions and behaviours already in existence, something not all organised philanthropy has understood. “When we talk about communities and community philanthropy we must contextualise and legitimise, but not romanticise,” explained Halima Mahomed, Senior Fellow, TrustAfrica, and Research Associate, CAPSI. Numerous informal COVID-19-specific initiatives emerged; Mahomed expanded saying, “These were probably initiated by the hub of people that are always rising when there is a need, whether it’s an emergency, humanitarian, or other need.” Some of the projects organised by the community included the following:

- Purchasing oxygenators for loan in the community;
- Preparing meals for families in need and
- Training to prepare bodies of deceased Islamic people according to the strict COVID-19 protocols.

These small acts must be recognised as philanthropy. “Things don’t just spring out of nowhere, they emerge from the ways in which we live, and how we locate ourselves in society. It is critical for the organised philanthropy sector to understand how community giving works, how things happen on the ground; so that we can figure out the best ways to interact, leverage, and give space to communities,” she stated. “It’s time to shift the narrative, name our philanthropy, instead of trying to feed into and fit into the external narrative. This is not formalised giving, these are not high net worth individuals, our type of philanthropy very

often cannot be monetised," emphasised Mahomed. Chigwedere spoke of the community philanthropy narrative: "In Africa, we've allowed our narrative to continue to be shaped by philanthropists outside the continent, and we keep losing both voice and agency."

In order to validate local giving, it needs to be documented using metrics that the community understands and recognises, and not merely for development agencies or academic institutions. This validation should not erode the responsibility of the state and the private sector. Mahomed elucidated her point: "There have been a lot of conversations about people's and communities' resilience. I don't want to celebrate resilience, I want to celebrate the dismantling of the systems that the people and their communities them to keep being resilient," she said.

### *Informal settlements*

Kennedy Odede, Founder, Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO) wants to give informal settlements in Africa the tools to have a collective voice and agenda; particularly organising these communities around health, education, water and livelihoods. "What would happen if we put grassroots voices in charge of setting the agenda on development?" asked Odede, who developed SHOFCO for just that purpose in Kibera, an informal settlement on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya. Despite the poverty, violence, lack of opportunity and deep gender inequality that exist in informal settlements, he recognised that people sought something different for themselves. "I am inspired by my mother to build solutions to urban poverty though addressing gender inequality," said Odede.

To be or not to be with?

Is that even a question.

When all the acronyms fade away, and the jargon moves to the periphery.

All that remains true are the strands we call community.

Decades of debate and research of the factors that enable communities to act.

And what do we know, exactly what we repeatedly forget.

Community is the centre of transformative process and social change.

Why do we shy away from the only truth that has withstood the test of time.

Something to do with time?

It takes time to sit with community, as it needs itself.

And remember if it takes time to allow for the messiness to play out.

It takes time to allow for the messiness to play out.

It takes time to follow the unpredictability of finding a rhythm.

It takes time to get to a place of authenticity, self and with other.

It takes time to walk alongside community reclaiming dignity.

It takes time to feel forward and feel backward without fail.

It takes time to track with what may seem like bushwhacking through processes for collective well-being.

It takes time to discern, how to transform the irreconcilable.

It takes time to learn dance and song, which brings community to life.

It takes time to discern the parts, and to see the whole.

No matter how you word it, the inquiry remains the same.

Do we have the time.

Do we give that time.

Are we ready for time to pass.

*Tendisai Chigwedere, Learning Manager, TrustAfrica*

### **Theme 3: Opportunities for Uniting the Continent and Philanthropy's Role**

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The African Union (AU) dreams of a united Africa. The continent is steadily making progress towards realising this vision with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement and active youth who are pushing this agenda. "How do we get philanthropy to participate in the building of one Africa? Numerous processes are unfolding at an interest level, a business community level, and a people-to-people level; the challenge is to connect these and attain a united Africa," said Sall.

#### **Uniting Africa in Response to the Pandemic**

Regarding the lessons from the pandemic, John Nkengasong, Director, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention at the African Union, said, "Most important is the coordination, cooperation, collaboration, and communication for a 'whole of Africa' approach to COVID-19." Several health security challenges exist, namely local manufacturing of PPE, therapeutic and medical equipment and public health workforce development. In a call to African philanthropies, Nkengasong stated the need for a new Public Health Order for Africa, created through partnerships of African origin, aligned with continental priorities such as Agenda 2063. "African philanthropies have an opportunity to guide and support the pandemic response as well as other public health threats by providing African solutions to African problems," he said.

#### ***The people's experience of COVID-19***

When decisions are made at a high level, these decisions are taken in the hopes that ordinary people on the continent are going to benefit. During 2019/2020, the Afrobarometer obtained the views on COVID-19 from Africans in 13 countries, and the views on trade, regional integration and development cooperation in 32 countries. "Our goal is to give the public a voice in policymaking through the public opinion data gathered," explained Joseph Asunka, CEO, Afrobarometer.

The COVID-19 research revealed varying statistics regarding loss of income and the effects of lockdowns, which raised an important question: "Was this the right type of lockdown,

could we have done it differently now that we know what happened?" he asked. Over half of the people polled were comfortable with restricted freedoms during the health emergency despite losses of income for many people. Furthermore, the majority favoured free movement across borders; however, the pandemic had made that difficult. It was hoped that the free trade promoted through the AfCFTA agreement would assist.

The view of government assistance was varied across the countries and the people's assessment of their government's performance in terms of handling the pandemic saw some concerns around trusting information from government, and corruption related to the distribution of resources. Regarding the efficacy of the vaccine, "We were not too surprised to learn that lots of people thought prayer was the best protection," said Asunka.

**In the end, philanthropists should look back and see a better place, not only a return on investment. We should see something that is sustainable.**

*Solomon Zewdu, Deputy Director, Africa Office of Global Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

## Philanthropy Opportunities in COVID-19 Vaccine Rollouts

As the numbers of COVID-19 cases continue to increase across Africa, the availability of vaccine doses and administration of vaccinations faces many challenges. The outset of the pandemic saw huge concern for lower and middle-income countries because of their compromised health systems that could be overwhelmed with the COVID-19 crisis. Philanthropy has a role to play, not only in short-term, tangible outcomes but also in strategic or systemic change. "These countries understand their needs and philanthropists understand opportunities, but often the levels of insight fall short of the assistance countries' receive," stated Solomon Zewdu, Deputy Director, Africa Office of Global Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA) and Igbinedion University Teaching Hospital (IUTH), at Igbinedion University Okada, Nigeria, launched Africa's vaccine initiative<sup>6</sup>. The initiative aimed to advance the research, development, manufacturing and distribution of vaccines and is built on investment by Africans. Souad Aden-Osman, Executive Director, CoDA, was adamant that philanthropic individuals who were willing to support the initiative accepted the parameters, "We will not replace Africans with non-Africans who want to do the same," she stated. She emphasised the importance and the value of African giving, "The dependence on foreign donations cannot make a difference to Africans. For Africans' lives to change it will have to be done by Africans," she stated.

Philanthropy should be looking at long-term interventions, end-to-end solutions and financing that would address a country, region or continent's requests. "It must provide a resilient

<sup>6</sup><https://codafrika.org/2021/06/25/coda-launches-initiative-to-champion-vaccine-research-development-and-manufacturing-for-africa/>

health system that deals not only with COVID-19, but all the prevailing health issues," Zewdu explained.

### ***Vaccine research***

"It is because we [countries] are poor, that we cannot afford not to do research," said Helen Rees, Chairperson, South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), and Director, University of the Witwatersrand Reproductive Health and HIV Institute (Wits RHI). She explained that people think that poor countries do not do research, because they cannot afford to do it. "It's almost the opposite, because some of these problems can only be solved in their own environment," she stated. She explained that the predominant supposition on research was that academic thinking emanates from the northern hemisphere, and that this belief needs to change, "Centres of excellence exist in Africa and Africans can, and do, develop independent academic thinking." In terms of financing, "We need to make the case to local philanthropists to say we can do independent research, we can partner of course, but we are an investment opportunity," said Rees.

Another part of a resilient health system is long-term funding for surveillance on diseases, in terms of laboratories, the system as a whole, training identification, to mention only a few. "Sometimes the funding received was in response to a particular crisis, but it covers far more areas, so when the original crisis has been averted, and funding gets pulled, it can negatively affect so much else," Rees said.

### ***Vaccine manufacture***

Manufacturers of the vaccine, and philanthropists, need to be able to invest in and capitalise on research and manufacturing opportunities in Africa. Despite the difficulty, it is not impossible to do; it has already been done in South Africa and Senegal, it now needs optimisation. "The environment to grow the opportunities needs to be created, we also need regulatory functions, trade agreements, and raw materials," said Zewdu.

Zewdu saw this as much more than technology transfers, a limited amount of 'fill and finish', or packaging: "So much needs to happen at country level, at government level, at private sector level. It's a true and intentional long term engagement on a higher level," he stated.

### ***Dosage supply***

COVAX is an initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO), The Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) working towards equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines. COVAX has had numerous challenges with supply but has committed to deliver doses to cover 20 per cent of the African population by the end of 2021.

The absorption capacity of a country is important and does not necessarily correlate with the size of the population; the level of preparedness of the country should determine the number

of doses sent. “Philanthropists can help to prepare the countries. We are going to receive multiple products from multiple sources with unique dosage requirements, and countries can underestimate the complexity,” explained Phionah Atuhebwe, Vaccines Introduction Medical Officer, WHO Africa Regional Office. However, Africa’s big challenge is still the unavailability of doses. “We need to look for the bottlenecks and gaps. We need to make sure that when we get the funds that they are committed,” she said.

COVAX was a single platform dealing with high- and low-income countries. “I think it muddied the water a little bit having the different tiers all under the same umbrella. We need to have a model that’s really clear to everybody,” stated Rees.

### ***Vaccination delivery***

Many countries had difficulty with vaccine rollout at the beginning of the year, due to inefficient health systems and inadequate funding. “Many countries don’t realise the type of infrastructure and logistics required to ensure that vaccines don’t expire in depots, but rather get into the arms of people as soon as it arrives,” explained Shabir Madhi, Director, South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA); Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences; and Professor of Vaccinology, University of the Witwatersrand.

Philanthropists can assist to prepare these countries, using lessons learned from other places regarding decision-making on where and how vaccination occurs. The cold chain for vaccines is a prevailing issue. Atuhebwe expanded saying, “Africa needs more ultra-cold chain equipment; we need the mobile units we see in the developed world. Gavi and COVAX are offering funding for this equipment.”

A further issue is the shortage of health-care workers to administer the COVID-19 vaccinations. “The health workers who are vaccinating are the same health workers expected to run other campaigns, the other diseases have not stopped,” stated Atuhebwe.

By August 2021, South Africa had the capacity to deliver 250,000 doses per day because of involvement and engagement of the private sector. “This is a form of philanthropy on the part of the private sector, but we need strategic interventions to get local philanthropy to take ownership of the process,” Madhi said.

“Upstream is focusing on delivering vaccines, while Africa is expected to vaccinate – it’s a global effort and should not be left to the country context,” said Zewdu. Communities need to be engaged and miscommunication addressed if Africa is to see its people vaccinated in the shortest time possible. “This is a crisis; we all have to work together towards one common cause to end this pandemic,” stated Atuhebwe.

### ***Dealing with vaccine hesitancy***

Regarding vaccine hesitancy, the CoDA sought opinions from a number of quarters, including the youth, “We soon realised that Africa does not have a problem with vaccine hesitancy, it has a problem with vaccine availability. Of course, people are careful and maybe

there's some that are hesitant, but it's not at a level that is problematic," said Aden-Osman. Misinformation regarding all aspects of vaccines and vaccination needs to be addressed, and philanthropists have a role to play in education. "As religious leaders are respected and trusted in Africa they could also assist with combatting misinformation when the need arises," Asunka stated.

**Focusing on poor countries having access to vaccines; that would be a clear ask for philanthropic organisations.**

*Phionah Atuhebwe, Vaccines Introduction Medical Officer, WHO Africa Regional Office*

## Opportunities for Youth Engagement on the Continent

In Africa, nearly 60 per cent of its people are under 25 years of age; this makes it the youngest continent in the world. COVID-19 has provided an opportunity for young people across Africa to unite and participate in the development of their continent. "The disruption of COVID-19 has brought out the potential in young people to come together and contribute to Africa's sustainability," said MacDonald Munyoro, Youth Development Worker, Southern African Youth Forum (SAYoF-SADC).

Young people need support and encouragement, they need to be listened to and engaged with, as they are vital investments in Africa's future. Speaking of the role of African philanthropy, Sall expressed the need to be bold and heed the difficult questions from the youth, especially during COVID-19. "We should be inclusive, and clear channels, and have conversations, and make ways of overcoming objections, and counter the fake news, and have the right kind of messages going out," he said.

### *Development decision-making*

"Governments and international organisations need to allow the youth to play a meaningful role in development at the national, regional, and continental levels," said Munyoro, speaking of the need for national strategic plans to include the youth.

A study to assess awareness, participation and perspective of the youth regarding the AfCFTA recommended that the plans and actions of governments, policymakers and private entities include young people. "The youth have what it takes to transform Africa; they are tech savvy, which needs to be used for the benefit of the continent. There are many opportunities to flourish and achieve the vision for a united Africa," expanded John Magok, Executive Director, Nile Youth Development Actions East Africa and Mining Policy Officer, African Union Commission.

AfCFTA interactions were beneficial for the youth during COVID-19. Bora Kaumba, Child Ambassador for children's rights, UNICEF, expanded saying, "When young people engaged with AfCFTA there was a lot of learning and many opportunities to create structures and advocate for the youth."

### ***Youth unemployment***

Young people must equip themselves with everything necessary to become employed. "You have to work on yourself and invest in your skills, know your weaknesses and strengths. Moving into the digital era reduces the cost and effort to identify opportunities for training and work," explained Heba Assem, Youth Activist, Afro-Arab Leadership Platform.

Agriculture is a source of employment for many young people. This is not only an opportunity to produce for their communities, but also a chance to become an employer. "Young people's innovation must be capitalised on; they must be provided the necessary support to create small businesses and employment, support their communities and develop their countries," Magok said.

Rural and urban youth can work together using their unique skills. Magok expanded saying, "Young rural people might have skills to farm, while a city person might have computer skills. The city person, through the computer, could promote the products of the farmer. These things must be combined."

Sharon Onkoni, an Anti-corruption Youth Ambassador from Gabon and a founder of J-Act Anti-corruption Youth Foundation, highlighted the importance of the need to invest in key sectors to improve employment and development. "Sectors like health, education, and agriculture can contribute to building a generation of young Africans who are autonomous," she stated.

### ***Engagement and communication***

The AU and United Nation's engagement of youth-led organisations and grassroots activists is a challenge as most young people have insufficient or no information about the initiatives that can improve the lives of people that aspire for a better continent by 2063. In addition, the technical terms and jargon used are seen to exclude the youth from meaningful participation. Patience Munyenembe, Deputy Country Director, Africa-Asia Youth Foundation and member of SADAC Youth Parliament stated, "Agenda 2063 mentions youth as the cornerstone; governments must come up with actions that begin to include the youth because we cannot talk about sustainable development when 60 per cent of the population have been left out." She went on to talk about governments' funding and commitment to youth projects, "We are tired of lip service paid by the leaders we trust. We are demanding action as opposed to policy pronouncements; walk the talk, engage us!" she exclaimed.

The importance of disseminating information in native languages was stressed, to reach not only social media platforms, but also other modes of communication such as community radio stations. Munyenembe acknowledged the importance of including all the youth, rural and urban, in the communication of initiatives. "If the rural youth cannot come to conferences in the city, we must have outreach programmes to go to the rural areas to tell them about the initiatives, and hear from them what they have to offer, and incorporate that into our programming," she said.

### *Young people's response to COVID-19*

The pandemic revealed the capacity of young people around the world, but especially in Africa, to heed the calls in their neighbourhoods. Young Africans responded quickly to help the community in the peak of the pandemic, which included online and offline initiatives. Assem told of the online awareness campaigns for COVID-19 precautionary measures relating to social distancing and sanitisation, and the fundraising calls to combat the many detrimental economic effects. "The offline efforts were tremendous, we saw the youth helping elderly people to get their medicines, going to rural areas to distribute masks and sanitisers and food, and volunteering at hospitals and health care centres to serve the patients," she said.

The millennial generations make good use of online tools and are creative in driving engagement and unity. Many young Africans created platforms and initiatives to provide online training. Assem spoke of the course she offered online, "I wanted to help young people to become leaders and peacemakers in their communities. The experience made me realise that we need unity more than ever before. This couldn't have happened before Corona," she explained. She believes that young people can turn any hardship or trial into an opportunity to help and improve.

**The main lesson from the pandemic is that nobody can survive alone, we need to work together. You cannot turn your back on others to save yourself; the first to realise this were the youth.**

*Heba Assem, Youth Activist of Afro-Arab Leadership Platform*

## **MOVING FORWARD**

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CBOs must become instrumental partners in areas as diverse as health, education, energy and food security "The collective response in communities was not something that suddenly happened, COVID-19 just increased its visibility," stated Tenga, speaking of community reactions to the effects of the pandemic. However, regional collaboration was lacking. Layode believed that African philanthropists have the influence, the power and the resources to enable changes in systems and policy at regional level that will transfer to national level and filter into communities. "The burden of providing social services in Africa cannot be left to government," said Akyeampong.

Communication among governments, private sectors, civil society and social movements must result in a flow of information that is easily understood. "We need information we can rely on," added Sall.

Despite the complications and time-consuming procedures involved in moving funds internationally and locally, the front line work of communities and other small organisations have continued unabated. "It became evident that some systems have not worked and that things need to be simplified. How do local communities and local organisations hold on to the

important gains during the pandemic, and change the systems that COVID-19 has made even more pressing?" asked Akyeampong.

Telling the African story is vital. Madzwamuse saw this as a necessity: "How are we amplifying the voices of communities? We need to share what leadership in these unprecedented times looks like and what it takes to respond to such a crisis," she urged.

Many African philanthropists are already champions; however, Layode believes that there is a call for philanthropists to be bolder. "We can say it's a moral problem when Africa doesn't have vaccines; we can produce our own vaccines. We can say it's a moral problem that Africa is lagging behind; we can solve our own problems. Let's stop playing the moral card," she stated.

**Collaboration works! We are community, we don't walk alone in Africa.**

*Mosun Layode, Executive Director, African Philanthropy Forum*

## CONCLUSION

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Although African philanthropy has been slow to assist at the continental level, this is evident at community and national levels. African philanthropists, CBOs and other social enterprises have had tremendous achievements in their responses to COVID-19. This occurred without much assistance from the usual external experts who continuously cite a lack of capacity as a constraining factor in Africa. "African communities and organisations have proven that they have the capacity and depth to meet Africa's present needs when challenged. Local organisations and individuals became the first responders to affected communities, showing innovation and resilience and the movement of money and resources to areas of need," enthused Akyeampong.

Reflecting on the meaning of philanthropy, what it means to be a philanthropist in Africa, and what makes African philanthropy what it is, Sall stated, "We are an African village, which means that we are making the effort to understand our context and our history. The pandemic means that we identify specific challenges and position ourselves to address those challenges." Reconnecting with Africa will not be merely economically, philosophically or spiritually, but in a modern way, that unites the continent.

**Reclaiming African philanthropy means reclaiming our voice, our action, and our resources.**

*Stigmata Tenga, Executive Director, Africa Philanthropy Network (APN)*

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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The conference also recognised the contribution that has been made by Dr Akwasi Aidoo to African philanthropy over several decades. Dr Aidoo was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award in Philanthropy by conference partners. Ebrima Sall, the TrustAfrica CEO had this to say “...*Brother Akwasi, you have not only been an Institution builder who played a leading role in conceptualizing and nurturing The West Africa Rural Foundation (WARF/FRAO), based in Dakar, and TrustAfrica that you literally established, together with Gerry, Tade, and others, and led for many years, but also seeded and supported many other organizations, networks and publishing houses such as Per Ankh.*

*You are also an inspirational leader, and a good manager who knows how to set achievable goals and develops the right strategies for ensuring that the goals are achieved while paying great attention to the welfare of your staff.*

*You have also been a mentor to many young scholars, philanthropists, and generations of civil society leaders; and a brother, colleague, and friend to many people in Africa and around the world.*

*Your contribution to the advancement of African philanthropy has been immense: TrustAfrica is an excellent example. With this Lifetime Achievement Award we say: thank you for all that you have done to advance African philanthropy and the African transformation and development agenda.”*