

The **Nexus** between **CSOs** & **Philanthropy** in **Uganda**

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The Nexus between CSOs and Philanthropy in Uganda
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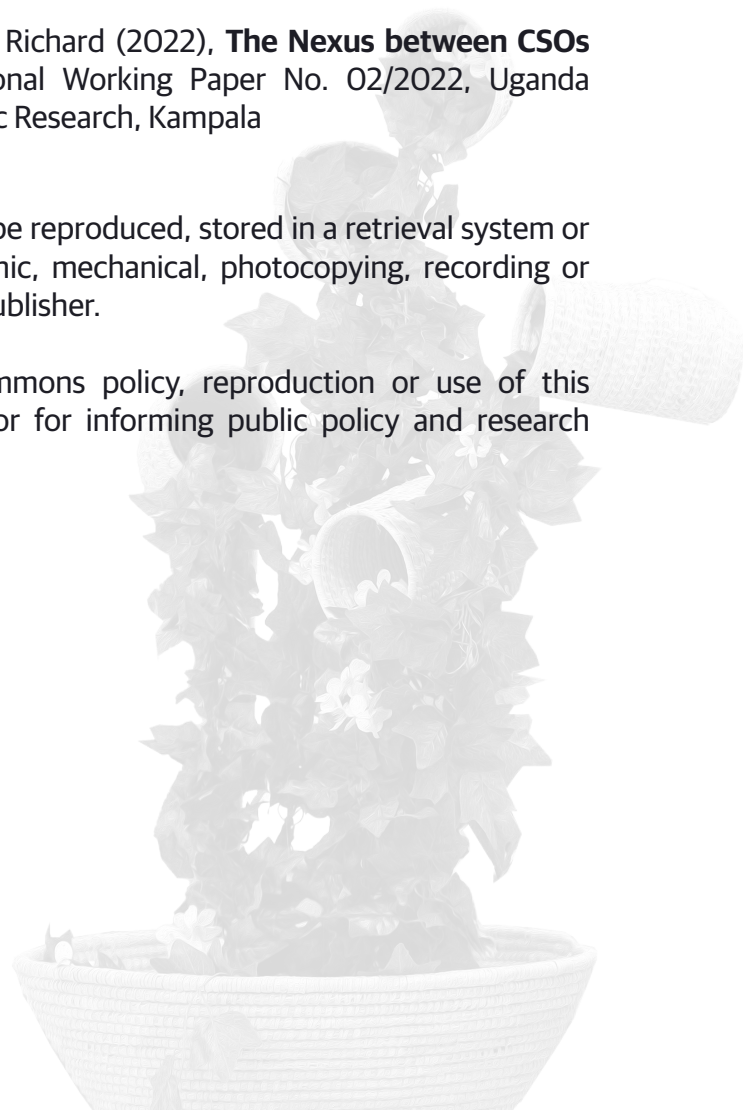




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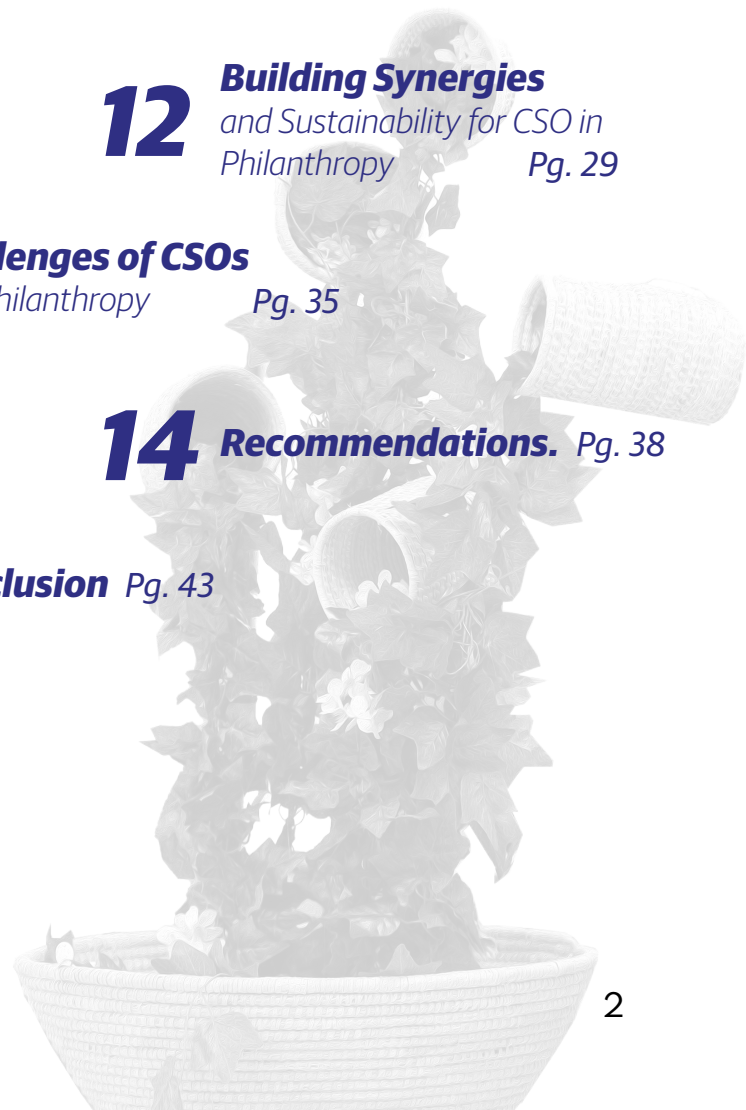
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01 Preamble

Philanthropy and civil society organizations are conjoined twins. They are held together by the umbilical cord of gift-giving and associated pro-social philanthropic behaviors that society has built over the years. The foundational philosophy of civil society is driven by the idea of associating and collectively organizing to respond to societies' needs.

On the other hand, philanthropy, giving and gifting as prosocial behaviors are about responding to society's needs by giving what one has - time, treasure or talent. With this simple association made, this 'Sense Making' Policy Position Paper will attempt to present the evolution of these two ideas of development. The paper will show how these two social ideas have structured life in Uganda. The paper will also make proposals on ways in which philanthropy and civil society can reinforce each other's utility value in Uganda's development.

This paper is exploratory in nature but with a firm solution-focused bias. This is to ensure that development practitioners in civil society and the philanthropic community can find value and efficacy in the policy proposals that emerge from such a paper.



02 *Contextual Overview*

To understand civil society in Uganda, one has to return to the history that formed the society known as Uganda and how associational life interweaved itself in the formation of Uganda. In the associational life of civil society organizations, we shall also be able to trace the role of prosocial behaviors, philanthropy and gifting and their impact on Uganda as a society. It will be evident in the analytical journey we shall travel that there exists a tension within the prosocial behaviors that are rooted in the African traditional experience and the colonial experience.

In this paper we shall not invest any analytical effort in offering judgmental analysis of the pros and cons of colonialism, but we shall demonstrate how the colonial life experience is an important historical fact in countries like Uganda and how we need to pay attention to that history to only build new alternatives that do not deny but embrace the diversity of tensions that countries like Uganda have to endure as they strive to build societies that are true to the African experience and ramifications of the colonial experience.

To kick off, Uganda got its independence in 1962 from British rule. Independence came with great expectations.



The lowering of the Union Jack and the hoisting of the Ugandan flag, the first speech by Prime Minister Milton Obote, the handover of instruments of power and putting together of a first cabinet that was seen as nationalistic. These are all fond memories in Uganda's history. Indeed, the development indicators of the first few years of independence put Uganda above or next to many of the East Asian economies.

Economic history reminds us that in 1968, Singapore's economy was worth \$1.4b while Uganda's was worth \$1.04b. They were both third world countries. Today, the two are far from peers. Singapore's economy is worth \$208.77b, while Uganda's is worth less than a tenth of that - roughly \$18b.¹ The positive economic developments of the early post-colonial Uganda did not stay for long. The army was the first to throw a spanner in the works with the mutiny for higher pay that led to the then Prime Minister to call in British troops to handle the situation. Indeed, a bad start for independent Uganda requiring foreign troops in the first few years. Like quicksand all kinds of challenges continued.

The brutal expulsion of the first President of Uganda and King of Buganda, the military takeover of Government by Idi Amin, the expulsion of Asians and a host of atrocities have pockmarked Uganda's independence history like ugly scars. In 59 years, Uganda has seen over 11 Presidents and one Military Commission, a number of brutal military takeovers of government and the consistent degradation of different sectors of the economy. State looting and pillaging of different kinds brought the country to its knees at the turn of every regime.



03 *Contextual Overview*

The above context necessitated that Ugandans for a longtime depended on each other - through building strong social networks and systems of giving, gifting and community philanthropy built on the norms of reciprocity, solidarity, obligation, and trust. It is within this context that we discuss the nexus between CSOs and philanthropy in Uganda. The colonial period was marked by associational life and civil society that organized around resisting the excesses of colonialism.

During the colonial period (1920-1960) civil society organizations organized themselves in several categories. It is a foundational contention of this policy paper that the birth of the foreign-funded, proposal writing NGO, which is almost exclusively run by careerists, had (and still has) a debilitating effect on the rooted, authentic, and interest-based fraternity of civil society formations in Uganda which successfully championed workers' rights, land rights, negotiated agricultural produce prices, and ultimately won Uganda's independence through citizen-led struggles and causes.

The congenital defects with which the modern NGO was born not only polluted the operating environment for the greater civil society, but also groomed a detached middle class which upended the pursuit of group and community interests—a major characteristic of emerging democracies elsewhere.



There were the elite civil society groups that invested in fighting the colonial governance system and working to replace it with African self-determination and African rule. These used civil and elite methods like petitions to the colonial masters to try and point out injustices of the colonialist. These elite groups of the time did not indeed pose any significant threat to colonial rule as they were using civil means that did not destabilize the colonial power base.

On the other hand, the militant groups often comprising the trade union and farmers' association leaders with their political base on the peasantry and unionized workers focused on changing the status quo through organizing protests and strikes. These groups focused on demanding for higher commodity prices, better conditions of work and eventually political independence. On its part, the colonial state² provided little or no space for civil society activism and it *"sought to control the evolution, content and impact of associational life in Uganda... in order to prevent drastic challenges to the hegemony of the colonial state."*

An important and sometimes ignored practice of these early civil society groups was how they were sustained through giving by their own members. To sustain these struggles local people came together to give through different forms. For example, the civil society formation - The Young Buganda Society which included many of the best-known men in Buganda's office-holding elite in the 1940s, as well as men well placed within the protectorate's administration were also involved in some form of prosocial behaviors. As Summers Carol (2005) writes:

Members met occasionally, listened to speakers, wrote letters to the newspapers and government officials, and supported initiatives they considered progressive, such as syphilis treatment and school funding.³

Cooperatives are also fondly remembered to have pooled resources and sent one of their own - Ignatius Musaazi to London in 1950 to lobby the British Parliament for support of the Federation of Partnerships of Uganda African Farmers (FPUAF) Union aspirations.⁴ While civic organizing was challenging in the colonial times it was also alive on the margins of society and in many ways sustained by philanthropic efforts of members who participated variously.

Another key feature that accompanied the colonial project was the institutionalization of giving. Institutional giving was part of the mechanisms that were used variously in the colonial times. In societies where there was indirect rule the Chiefs who had hitherto been part of the gifting life cycle, became collectors of tax on behalf of the colonial government and extractors of treasure from communities completely negating the gifting ethos in their new configurations as accomplices in the colonial project.

These instances created a new dynamic with gifting rapidly being reconfigured into other types of giving that included taxation and other dues that were given to the state. But it should be noted that gift-giving was central to the encounter between Ugandans and Europeans in the late-nineteenth century and even beyond. It was performed as part of diplomatic encounters and political settlements⁵ It therefore follows that the attendant discourses around gift-giving and other prosocial behaviors are important in understanding the economy of affection in the colonial period and beyond.

The arrival of Christianity and Islam also reframed the narratives of giving with new forms of giving that included giving to the church for Christians and giving Zakat for the Muslims. Traditional gifting was sometimes demonized as part of the uncivilized customs of the natives. In this case the 'native' who was being modernized was encouraged to give in other forms - either through the church or the mosque.





04 *Meaning and Practice of Philanthropy.*

In the first Sense-Making Paper on the Meaning and Practice of Philanthropy we dealt with the conceptual terms relating to the prosocial behaviors related to philanthropy that are known by terms like; gifting, giving and charity.⁶ Suffice it to say, that in the pre and colonial African experiences, there was a strong culture of gifting and caring as discussed in the preceding sections. Communities in Uganda have always worked together, eaten together and even raised children together.

Several African authors in the last one decade or so, have spent significant time debunking the hegemonic discourse of western philanthropy as one that is an exclusively western notion. They argue that this articulation does not define accurately the reality of other parts of the world.⁷ The key argument being that philanthropy is a culturally rooted concept that is about pro-social behavior and can cover a myriad of behaviors. African authors have also argued that philanthropy is embedded in the life system of Africa and African lives are in themselves an encapsulation of the diversity of philanthropic gestures from helping relatives, to contributing to weddings, to giving to religious functions and most of all giving time to each other.⁸

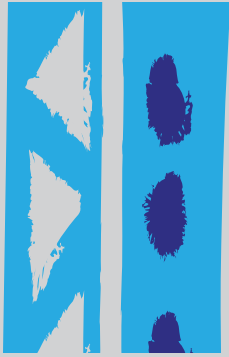
This expanded conceptualization of philanthropy to include new forms of philanthropy that even include community led philanthropy is what has led authors to ask the question - is there is a unique 'African Philanthropy' or do we only have Philanthropy with African Characteristics?⁹

It looks like this is a debate not yet settled but one that needs to be interrogated through further systematic research at country and continental level. Nevertheless, this is a pertinent question to ask.

As this proverb in Buganda says, Olugend'enjala terudda - The stomach that goes hungry is unlikely to return on a visit. The proverb was used as a demonstration of the fact that one's reputation would be at stake if a visitor was not gifted with anything during their stay and such visitors would never return. Further, authors on African philanthropy have demonstrated that philanthropy as understood in its 21st century framing is limiting in describing the true ethos of the African experience. What is experienced in Africa is more than charity, more than giving - but what is experienced can be better referred to as gifting. As Fowler et. al (2019) put it:

A simple reason for speaking of gifting rather than giving is that the former is premised on a positive moral element while the latter needs to be qualified to understand its value. One can give someone a cold shoulder, influenza, misinformation, a helping hand, job contacts, an introduction which expands a social network and so on. Without the qualifier, giving is not, a priori, an act dedicated to the well-being of others. Gift-giving is a compound option that implies a normative value to the interaction. However, a more substantive argument for use of gifting is that, from an ontological point of view, it is preferable because of its place in the evolution of the human behavioural repertoire that is cooperative rather than competitive.¹⁰

What the above quotation illustrates is that while philanthropy with its root in the Greek etymology is about 'love for humanity', the same practice in Africa represents a life force and the DNA of people. Indeed, gifting was at the root of associational life, which is a key characteristic of what has come to be known as organized civil society.



05 *Civic Organizing, Colonialism and Philanthropic Practices*

Colonialism brought new forms of associational life that were linked to giving. Charities that were part of the colonizing and civilizing projects became a new feature in the African body politic.

Institutions like the Boy Scouts - a global youth movement (with over 4 million members in Africa) whose stated purpose is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens started.¹¹ The Girls Guides movement also arrived in Africa whose stated focus is to empower girls and young women to be leaders - now has over 1.5 million members.¹²

These forms of civil society were followed by other religious based civil society configurations in several parts of Africa. In church, groups like the Mothers Union and Fathers Guild were influential forms of civic organizing. All these forms of organizing were built as charities where young people are expected to give of their time, talent and in some instances treasure. In the religious organizations the giving of treasure is central and has taken on various types of philanthropic gestures as mentioned earlier in this paper.



In Uganda, the era of creation of institutional homes to bolster giving and charity or what has been referred to in literature as 'institutionalization of suffering'¹³ was also an era of institutionalization of charity and philanthropy. This led to the spread of orphanages, disabled people homes and other such institutions that were built to manage and support the various categories of persons who are suffering. These kinds of institutions were started in the colonial period and are still existent. For instance, in Uganda the Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Home was opened in 1952 (before independent Uganda) as a detention center for 'troublesome boys'.¹⁴ This was supported through donations from well-wishers.

The same can be said about Sanyu Babies Home that was established in 1929 by Milnes Winfred Walker a midwife at Mengo Hospital. It is said that after noticing the overwhelming number of children abandoned after birth within the hospital, she started collecting the babies and providing them with much needed care and the home has existed for 90 years. The Babies Home is financed through philanthropic donations by a diversity of partners.¹⁵ It is a common practice for individuals, churches, mosques, corporate companies to occasionally – especially during the Christmas season – to give generously to these and other institutions of the same character.

In many ways institutionalization has continued in many parts of Africa but has been divorced from mainstream philanthropy, although there are many philanthropists that give to such centers across the continent.





06 *Civil Society and the State Dichotomy: An Illusion in Africa*

Influential writers on Africa, Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999) argue¹⁶ that referring to a civil society outside the state in sub-Saharan Africa is difficult. A dichotomy between state and civil society does not reflect realities on the continent. A notion of civil society can only apply if there is a meaningful institutional separation between a well-organized civil society and a relatively autonomous bureaucratic state.

What can be observed in sub-Saharan Africa, says Chabal et.al, is the interpenetration of the one by the other. Chabal's most important argument is that African societies are essentially plural, fragmented and above all, organized along vertical lines. Socio-political cleavages are usually a matter of factional divisions, which occur primarily because of competition and need for use of scarce resources. In general, vertical divisions remain more significant than horizontal, functional bonds or ties of solidarity between those who are similarly employed or professionally linked.

That is why associations charged with promotion of the "common good" within the public sphere are problematic in Africa. Chabal holds that questions of identity or community often undermine attempts at occupational or professional unity, and further, that the business of politics is more usually conducted along informal vertical channels of relations (patron-client networks, communal organizations etc.) linking the elites with the rest of the population.

A key question posed by the author is whether the primacy of such vertical and personalized ties on the continent does not invalidate the notion of a functionally based civil society. The authors make a bold conclusion that emphasizing a supposed opposition between



state and civil society does create the illusion that African political systems are more similar to their Western counterparts than they really are.¹⁷

Another closely associated reading of the state and civil society with implications for discussions on philanthropy is Peter Ekeh's 1975 thesis of 'two publics in Africa'. He argues that colonialism in Africa left two kinds of publics - a civic public and a primordial public. He submits that that while individuals pretend to uphold the virtues of the civic public (brought by colonialism) they also remain loyal to their primordial public (rooted in tradition). This clash of norms and interests according to Ekeh generate tendencies that have come to be known as tribalism and corruption with public officials stealing and looting and giving through philanthropic gestures as 'High Net Worth Individuals' to their clans and villages. He elaborates the point with what he calls the 'dialectics of the two publics' thus:

A good citizen of the primordial public gives out and asks for nothing in return; a lucky citizen of the civic public gains from the civic public but enjoys escaping giving anything in return whenever he can. But such a lucky man would not be a good man were he to channel all his lucky gains to his private purse. He will continue to be a good man if he channels part of his largesse from the civic public to the primordial public. That is the logic of the dialectics.¹⁸

Ekeh goes on to discuss voluntary organizations in the civic public and argues that the voluntary associations are not part of the civic public but are part of the primordial public. He states that:

If tribalism is amorphous, ethnic 'voluntary' associations are its visible operational arm. Again, voluntary associations emerge in the big urban centers and are nourished in our universities. Like tribalism, they have developed with the civic public and in fact feed on it. [...] he adds that...So long as the primordial public survives - and it survives on the insecurity of the African bourgeoisie thrust into unwonted places of authority - so long voluntary associations will retain their strength.¹⁹

This framing helps us to see the role of civic organizing in the recent memory of the African state. What has emerged here is what many scholars have referred to variously as 'legal pluralism' or the bifurcated state. Another influential analysis on this subject is the work of Mahmood Mamdani (1996) on the 'Citizen and Subject' when he argues that the African colonial state had a distinctive structure bifurcated between the "civil" and the "customary." In the civil sphere courts governed urban (white) citizens through European laws, while in the customary sphere "traditional" authorities governed rural (black) subjects through customary law.

Thus, the African colonial state was constituted through a racialized distinction between citizen and subject. After independence African states struggled to overcome the deep legacies of racial and tribal divisions. "To bridge the rural and the urban through politics that is both noncoercive and democratic," Mamdani concludes, "it is necessary to transcend the dualism of power around which the bifurcated state is organized around"²⁰¹⁶

This legal pluralism and confusion as well as conflicting value systems stands at the door of any reified discussion of philanthropic practice. As we engage in questions about the state in Africa and civil society organizing and philanthropy, we shall do well to return to these intellectual memories because debunking the ramifications of these memories is an important enterprise in reframing modern day philanthropy.

Nonetheless, we see several categories that emerge in the configuration of civil society and the state in Africa. The following categories of civil society emerged during the colonial and post-colonial period and have continued to influence the configuration of civil society in Africa:

Mass-based Membership Organizations:

These organizations were formed to promote economic and social interests of peasants and workers and included peasant-based cooperatives formed in the inter-war years to resist the monopolization of trade in agricultural products by the colonial state and immigrant communities from Europe and Asia. In addition to cooperatives, trade unions were formed in this period to address labor related issues including low wages and poor working conditions.

In Uganda, trade unions organized the general strike of 1945 leading to an increase in wages and an improvement in the conditions at workplaces.²¹ The earliest iterations of civil society or nonstate actors in colonized Africa spanned the cultural, socioeconomic, and political domains. Prominent amongst these were formations which championed the labour rights of the newly minted workforce made up of professionals and labourers whose employment run the engines of the colony. Agricultural cooperatives such as Namutamba Growers (formed in 1947 in Mityana, Buganda) and Ttakagwanika (formed in 1956 in Gomba, Buganda), led the charge in collectivizing the labour of farmers and negotiating produce prices with the colonial administration and other buyers.

The Bataka Association which staged major protests against the landed gentry who had been created by the Buganda (Land) Agreement represents the sprouting of the seeds of dissent and organising around outrightly political causes. Ultimately, it was the translation of the foregoing group interests into political parties like Kabaka Yekka and Uganda People's Congress that laid the foundations for a successful push for self-determination.

Elite-led Membership Organizations:

These were formed during the colonial period by middle class men aggrieved at the colonial policies. These included organizations such as the "Young Men of Buganda", the "Young men of Busoga, Young Men and Toro, Uganda African Welfare Association among others. The elite based and deeply patriarchal associations were very much about pushing back on the excesses of colonialism by those who had enjoyed the benefits of colonialism. However, there were also a number of women's civic formations that were vehicles for colonial resistance.

The first 'local' formal organization to promote 'women's concerns' and social change was the multi-racial Uganda Council of Women, formed in 1946.²² But this was preceded by a number of organizations that were racial in nature. For example, the British missionary wives formed their own association in 1906, which later opened up to Ugandan women in 1908. The Red Cross, although formed in 1918, was only able to open up to African women in the 1930s.

Such mutations colored the early Women's Movement with efforts to minimize difference in organizations that had been formed on the basis of race taking center-stage. Many women are remembered for working to establish linkages between the local Ugandan women and the foreign women. Sugra Visram, a Ugandan woman of Indian descent was one such woman who embodies the efforts of trying to link women from different backgrounds. However, one of the most notable efforts was the formation of the (Young Women's Christian Association) YWCA and the Uganda Council of Women.²³

These organizations that had started early before Independence were able to live through the test of time resisting different regimes and working to improve women through various initiatives.

Clans, Cultural/Ethnic-based Organizations:

These were organizations seeking to advance parochial interests of groups in the country. Examples here include organizations representing Kingdoms and other cultural institutions. These were common in countries like Uganda. An influential organization of the time was the Bataka Union. As Summers 2005 wrote about this organization:

During the late 1940s, activists in the "Bataka Union" mobilized tens of thousands of Baganda to read newspapers, attend mass meetings, donate money for international lobbying, and petition the kabaka (king of Buganda) with a vigor that turned into an armed insurrection. In voicing a rhetoric of grandfathers and grandsons, these activists imagined a new sort of citizenship grounded in local concerns over land, graves, and inheritance.²⁴

Welfare and Charitable Organizations:

During colonialism welfare and charitable organizations were founded often under the auspices of the church, such as Red Cross Society and the Salvation Army and other organizations based in Europe and other colonial capitals. These were distinct from the membership-based organizations in that they acted as philanthropic intermediaries providing welfare services to the poor. In this role they were the early precursors of the non-governmental organizations that rose to prominence in later years.



07 *The Post-1986 Configurations of Civil Society and the Dominance of NGOs*

As mentioned in the categories above, within the welfare and charity category emerged NGOs. NGOs come from a very particular global world order as discussed. This is a world order characterized by the demise of communism and the rise of capitalism and its attendant offshoots like economic liberalization.

One of the foundational characteristics of this global order was the valorization of the roll-back of the state, celebration of the private sector and non-state actors as the engine and vehicle of development. In fact, in the early days of structural adjustment, NGOs were seen as the most efficient vehicles for delivering development because the state of Africa was seen as failed and one that could not do business and even deliver essential services to its citizens.

This phenomenon, then led to the burgeoning bureaucracies of international NGOs that characterized most of the post-structural adjustment era. With this came the exponential growth of local NGOs which worked closely with their international partners.

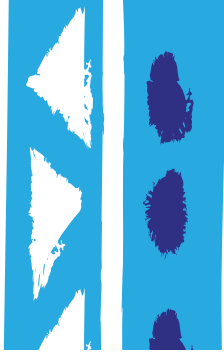
In Uganda one can recall the work of international NGOs in the 'rehabilitation phase' (1986-1990). These were days when NGO workers were even paid in foreign currency to deliver basins, jerry-cans, water, oral dehydration salts and much more to populations that were recovering from the Luwero Triangle war. This same phenomenon went on for quite some time in northern Uganda in response to the two decade Kony war. While this model could demonstrate results on the ground because the NGOs were able to demonstrate how they could reach the large numbers of

people, this same model was viewed with a dose of envy and a throat-lump of spite by government technocrats. With the strengthening of government institutions, the service delivery role of NGOs waned and many were lured into advocacy programs by their donors. The argument being that since government can deliver services then NGOs should only hold government to deliver services and NGOs should not primarily deliver services themselves.

The NGO bureaucracies rolled back and what emerged was the lean advocacy networks that make bold and discomfiting statements on all policy issues in the name of policy advocacy. They became a pain in the neck of government and government had to look for ways of delegitimizing them. Statements like - who do you represent, you only serve interests of your donors, you are as corrupt as all of us - became the order of the day. This was followed by the introduction of laws whose spirit was the policing of NGOs and NGOs were viewed as a security threat that had to be monitored by security institutions.

This was the troubled birth of the post 1986 citizens' organizing. These organizations were not helped by the Movement System of Government that indeed touted them as the quasi-opposition in the political dispensation where there was only one party - the Movement. In fact, for the women's movement that situation was even more precarious because the women's movement remarkable success was defined as the Movement Government System's success and for many the separation of the Movement System of Government and the women's movement for long could not be seen because even the leaders of the women's movement became influential leaders of the Movement System of Government. It is important to note that the women's movement is a civil society movement with many NGOs and indeed the exponential growth of women's NGOs during this time was a visible sign of the juxtaposition of the two movements.

In present day Uganda, NGOs are also under pressure - with a much more stringent law in place and a difficult operating environment. The NGO Bureau that regulates civil society has in 2021 even made bold steps like closing and suspending the permits of selected NGOs. One important development that has emerged from this 'history of the present' is the need for NGOs to deepen their reach by supporting and engaging in philanthropic activities that create purpose and reinvigorate passion in society.



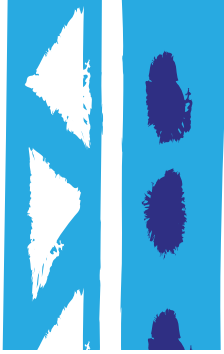
08 *The Civil Society* - *Philanthropy Nexus*

The discussion in this paper thus far has been able to map the terrain of philanthropy, civil society organizations and the state. In the discussion that follows in this paper explores the functional objectives that have been pursued by civil society and philanthropy foundations. In this section, the paper uses philanthropy foundations as a proxy in the analysis of the nexus between civil society and philanthropy.

Philanthropy foundations have had a significant influence on the shape and structure of civil society in Uganda. Philanthropy foundations unlike bilateral and multilateral donors that are involved in development are characterized as organizations offering private giving for public benefit. Public foundations have been an important contributor through the provision of additional private resources for public benefit, filling gaps in public provision, and catering for minority and vulnerable people's interests.

Civil society organizations in Uganda prefer philanthropy foundations as partners in philanthropic practice because they are sometimes less bureaucratic and more capable of generating a speedier response than funding from bilateral or multilateral donors. Philanthropy foundations are also known to finance pilots and innovations that are sometimes difficult for governmental agencies to undertake.





09 *Types of Philanthropic Foundations*

The world has witnessed a significant growth in philanthropic foundations that work closely with civil society as providers of grants or direct implementers of development projects. Just like other parts of the world, 'big' giving from personal wealth is emerging on the African continent. Below is a useful categorization as listed by Leat Diana (2016):²⁶

Endowed foundations:

These own a body of assets invested to produce a regular income to pursue the foundation's mission. These are the 'purest' form of foundation. These are foundations with the most autonomy, they are mostly self-governing and independent. They are fully endowed foundations and do not have to please anyone (except regulators) in order to survive. Endowed foundations vary radically in size and level of activity. Some foundations are run solely by the donor and his/her family members, others include nonfamily members on their boards. In Uganda most of the endowed foundations that support CSOs are foreign foundations from America and Europe and they include names such as Ford Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations and several other big foundations.



Corporate Foundations:

Corporate foundations may or may not be endowed. More commonly, a corporate foundation has no permanent endowment, but rather receives regular transfers from the associated company. These non-endowed foundations have a degree of autonomy and do not have to fundraise in the conventional sense in that they are likely to receive, say, a set percentage of the company's profits each year. Nevertheless, these non-endowed corporate foundations may have to keep one eye on maintaining the support of the board, shareholders, staff, and customers. In Uganda one longstanding foundation in this category is The Muljibhai Madhvani Foundation that was set up in 1962 on the eve of Uganda's Independence to honor the vision of the late Muljibhai Prabhudas Madhvani.²⁷ It offers education scholarship to children in Uganda. There are also other foundations like the MTN Foundation that was inaugurated in July 2007 as a vehicle through which MTN Uganda implements its corporate social investments (CSI).²⁸

Community Foundations:

These are in a sense 'endowed foundations in the making'. Community foundations, by definition, focus on a geographical community (or a community with a specific characteristic) and attempt to raise funds to both benefit that community in the short term and build an endowment for future use. As fundraising organizations, community foundations are constrained to a degree by the interests and concerns of their donors. Community foundations are increasing in number in many parts of the world. In some countries community foundations offer philanthropists a 'shortcut' to creating their own foundation with the service of donor funds, whereby a donor creates, in effect, a foundation within the community foundation.²⁹ Examples from Uganda include organizations like Kabaka Foundation³⁰ whose overall aim is to institute, promote, encourage and support cultural, educational, literacy, economic, social and charitable projects for the benefit of the public in Buganda and Uganda. There are also other smaller foundations like the Kwagalana Community Foundations that looks after street kids.

Fundraising Grant-Makers:

These are one part of a larger category of fundraising foundations. Some people would argue that these organizations are not usefully put in the same box as endowed foundations but are really more akin to any other fundraising charity. Although they are obviously constrained by the need to appeal to large numbers of donors, they arguably have a greater degree of autonomy in how they distribute the funds raised as compared with a charity for a specific purpose.

Government Inspired Grant-Making 'Foundations':

This category is also a growth area in many countries. For example, in the UK the government-created National Lottery Boards, distributing a percentage of the proceeds of the sale of lottery tickets, have become some of the largest funders of charities and non-profit organisations. There has not been a specific foundation of this nature identified in Uganda.





10 *Roles of Philanthropy Foundations in Civic Organizing*

Here following are the major roles philanthropy foundations play in their functions as actors in civil society and supporters of civic organizing:

Support civil society organizations as grantees:

Foundations will either seek to identify partners that work in an area of their defined mission, or they will put out a call for proposals and select partner organizations to work with. This model has expanded variously, and many foundations are expanding their footprints across Africa in this manner. Examples include foundations like Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundations, MacArthur Foundation and even foundations based in Africa like Tony Elumelu Foundation and African Women Development Foundation.

The typical model for these foundations is to identify and work with partners who they have a shared objective with. This could be through strategies like:



(a) Develop Capacities and Build expertise of Civil Society Actors:

Another function that philanthropy foundations play in Uganda is support the building of expertise. This is a model that has been expanding quite rapidly. We see foundations that are investing heavily in education by supporting school and students across Uganda – like the Madhavani Foundation among others. MasterCard Foundation is known for its support for capacity development and Tony Elemelu Foundation is known to support young people across Africa every year and several others. Some of these foundations operate thematically in areas like: human rights education, health education, primary education and other types of sectoral capacity development initiatives. Some foundations offer short term courses in form of specific capacity development initiatives.

(b) Philanthropy foundations engage with stakeholders in governance and rights:

Foundations have also been known to support stakeholder engagement on governance questions. For example, foundations like Open Society, Human Rights Defenders Fund, Human Rights Fund and several others have been instrumental in engaging with stakeholders on critical governance and rights programs. This is mostly through financing specific projects.

(c) Supporting advocacy and seeking public opinion:

Foundations have also been known to engage with civil society to seek public opinions in diversity of ways. An example is Hewlett Foundation which for a longtime worked across Africa supporting advocacy on quality education. This was through supporting organizations in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania to learn from organizations in India and develop education advocacy programs that became the basis for governments in East Africa focusing on learning as an education result³²

As discussed in the preceding section, foundations are critical in the advancement of social causes, building community and citizen competencies and influencing society generally.



11 *Roles CSOs Play and the Philanthropy Nexus*

Voluntarism and Philanthropy:

While there is a myriad of definitions of what constitutes volunteering, one that encompasses several variations is that volunteering entails the self motivated act of a person(s) contributing their time, skills, ideas and talents for charitable, educational, social, political, economic, humanitarian or other worthwhile purposes.³³ An analysis by Civicus (2011) on volunteering in Africa found that country CSO partners tended to emphasise the socially, culturally and community rooted wellsprings of volunteerism, which pertain both to direct and community volunteerism. For example, in Uganda, cultural aspects of volunteering like; *Bulungi Bwansi* (loosely translated – ‘for the good of society’) is a practice that is used by CSOs and community groups in the central region.

There is a significant diversity of volunteering approaches across Uganda which are undertaken as legitimate forms of participation and are part of the larger rubric of civil society roles. In western Uganda there is the traditional of carrying sick people to health centers on local stretchers called Ngozi. In several communities there are burial group that assist community members when a loved one passes on.

'Additionality' – mobilize and bring in resources:

CSOs in Uganda bring in as much money as some of the multilateral organizations annually. NGO Forum (2015) reports that in Uganda, NGOs employ over 500,000 persons which is nearly twice the size of the civil service. NGOs contribute nearly 20% (20 billion) of official development assistance – 100 billion US dollars and traditionally NGOs have been heavily involved in the development of education, health and agriculture systems in Uganda – and their contribution could be anywhere beyond 50% of all interventions.

In the health sector Faith Based Organizations have contributed approximately 40% of services to the health sector alone and in some districts up to 60% water and sanitation services are provided by NGOs.³⁴ NGOs' contribution has been significantly acknowledged in environmental conservation, provision of microfinance and interventions in HIV/AIDS prevention and care. There are also other types of supranational philanthropic entities that work closely with CSOs, foundations, multilaterals and governments. Examples include organizations like The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria which is a private–public partnership with funding from both government and philanthropic sources that invests up to \$4 billion annually.³⁵¹⁶

It is generally difficult to determine exactly how much money is going to what, from whom and through whom; it is equally difficult to access aggregate funding data in order to secure an overview of the level of funding by CSOs and private philanthropic donors for international development but significant investments are made.

Mobilizing Private Giving for Public Good:

Private giving has always been an important source of financing for civil society organizations. Many international and local organizations have been largely financed through private giving. For instance, the child sponsorship models by international NGOs have been quite influential. For example, in 2019, World Vision globally reported sponsoring 3.4 million children, through its overall annual spending of around \$2.1 billion, while Plan International raised approximately \$436 million directly from sponsorship donations, 40 percent of its income in 2020.

Another international NGO, Compassion International, sponsored 1.9 million children in 2020, with \$755 million of its annual income raised through this programme³⁶ In fact, many well-known NGOs trace their origins to private individuals who give money to an array of charitable causes domestically and worldwide.

"Care of Last Resort":

CSOs have acquired the reputation of being "carers of last resort" to policy-failures and constrained government program-reach in Uganda. CSOs operate in marginal areas geographically and socially, providing such services as micro-finance, conflict resolution and peace-building, education and a lot more. Uganda for example was the country most affected by the flow of displaced people, and it hosted more than 1 million refugees.

The major partners working with government are CSOs both local and international that continue to care for people. The first responders in all these areas are community-based organizations that welcome refugees and internally displaced persons before the large humanitarian agencies arrive on the scene.





12 **Building Synergies** *and Sustainability for CSO in Philanthropy*

In this section we look at the issue of resilience and sustaining of CSO philanthropy work. One of the important questions that many CSOs grapple with is - sustainability. But while this is an important question, it is important to note that preoccupation with sustainability if not strategically explored creates relationships of insecurity, anxiety and preoccupation with organizational survival without thinking about the deeper reasons of why organizations do the work they do. For CSOs to engage meaningfully in development work, it is critical that the issue of sustainability is paid attention to in a nuanced manner.

CSOs usually operate to achieve some or all of these following dimensions; a) amelioration of suffering, b) identification of causes of problems and solutions and c) the pursuit of sustainable change. These are not mutually exclusive, but it is important for CSOs to see which one of these is their *raison d'être*. On the other hand, CSOs need to reflect on the type of philanthropy foundations that they engage with on questions of sustainability. This also largely depends on the funding approaches by the philanthropy foundation. These can be categorized in the following typologies a) 'gift givers', b) 'investors', and c) 'collaborative entrepreneurs'.



Gift givers usually give smaller one-off, fixed-term grants. They may or may not give the full sum requested and they usually require little measuring or 'impact assessment'; the grant is a gift. 'Investors' typically identify promising areas of work/organisations, assess what is needed to achieve a result, and then invest in the work at an appropriate level for an appropriate period of time. 'Investors' monitor their grants and if something appears not to be working as planned the 'investor' may pull out or may invest more resources to get things back on track. The 'collaborative entrepreneur' starts with a goal to be achieved and then looks for organisations likely to be able to deliver that goal. The relationship with the 'grantee' is a collaborative dialogue, and the size and length of the grant are determined by what is necessary to get to the desired result.³⁸

Another formulation of this could benefit from a formulation by Louis Klein (2021)³⁹ who argues that we could see philanthropy as evolving from; philanthropy 1.0 (focusing on charity), Philanthropy 2.0 (focusing on venture philanthropy), Philanthropy 3.0 (focusing on community-led philanthropy) and then Philanthropy 4.0 (focusing on social value philanthropy that leverages the advantages of the digital revolution).

In all situations that bring CSOs and philanthropy organizations together under the dimensions described above – sustainability is a question that must be answered. While in everyday practice the impulse is to focus on financial sustainability, it is now common knowledge that finances are not a panacea for sustainability. A lot more happens beyond money to sustain organizations. INTRAC's framework and holistic view to sustainability that discusses the six elements of sustainability in CSOs is instructive here. These elements include; legitimacy, resourcing, leadership, mission and values, space and context.⁴⁰

Legitimacy as Sustainability – A Cornerstone:

Legitimacy is an issue that preoccupies many organizations. This is because organizations have to earn legitimacy. Being a legal entity will not mean you are a legitimate entity. Legitimacy touches on how different stakeholders view organizations. But because legitimacy is about value judgement, civil society always finds itself walking a tight rope. First in the eyes of government, when CSOs challenge the status quo, they are seen as illegitimate and asked – who do you represent?

This manifests itself differently, those in capital cities are accused of promoting foreign interests and those at the sub-national level are accused of promoting 'elite' urban-based interests. But in the same sector when organizations speak in support of some power center then they are seen as legitimate and indeed useful or when they deliver the much-needed social services. The implication of these and several other relationships point to the need for organizations to ensure that they have a constituency to which they are accountable and which can vouch for their legitimacy.

For philanthropy foundations the question of legitimacy is not very pronounced especially for those foundations that have endowments. These foundations are able to operate without anxiety, but for CSOs this is a question that cannot be ignored. However, for foundations that support areas considered controversial like governance or minority rights issues, this is a question to grapple with as it can affect the ability to contribute to CSO causes that are transformational.

Diversification for Sustainability

is another critical area that affects work of CSOs' accountability. CSOs cannot run away from the reality that without money they cannot survive as organizations. For CSO funding to be sustainable it has to be diversified and accounted for. In effect this means that organizations will have to find themselves working with a range of partners – some gift givers, investors and collaborative entrepreneurs. However, regardless of the type of partner, diversification is critical for sustainability.

Diversification of sources of financing is key to sustainability but also it is what allows an organization to build sustainable advocacy engagements and a tapestry of networks that can ensure sustainability. Surviving on one source of funding for any organization is the first step towards building an unsustainable institution and hence the organization may end up engaging in short term projects that do not allow the organization to stay focused on mission critical areas. Civil society therefore needs to build in elements of diversification in the fundraising so that it can build institutions that can pursue longer term development agendas. While for development partners, one funding source may create less transactional costs, having money in one basket and disbursed centrally also contributes to building organizations that have insecure funding bases. But the onus is on civil society organizations to find strategies that allow them to fundraise variously.⁴¹

Leadership as Sustainability:

In civil society, myopic, weak and uninformed leaders can be a disaster for organizations. Even with the best funding modality the absence of leadership can create a real crisis in an organization. Right leadership also needs to come at the right time. Civil society organizations are usually started by people with a passion to a social cause and the attendant advocacy engagements. Charismatic leaders are seen as an important contribution to an organization's capacity to engage in any work, but as the founder members transit and organizations grow, it is important to get leaders with managerial and catalytic capacities that can help build systems and ensure that the organization stays on track with its mission.

For philanthropy foundations they usually play a role in building capacity of local leaders at the front line. The critical issue in building sustainable leadership in CSOs is for funders to ensure that they do not use their disproportionate power that comes with financial resources to make judgements about which groups are well-equipped to achieve social change. While funders may have views on how to build leadership as Alison (2018) says:

Funders do not always see that the lived experience of many powerful frontline and grassroots leaders is what makes them experts. Their expertise might not fit neatly into a box that funders can check off, and they may not agree with funders' ideas or strategies. But it is not their role to agree with us or fit into philanthropy's predetermined and often structurally racist criteria; it is our responsibility to see them, listen to them, and follow their lead. Building relationships and trust with these leaders means spending time with folks in communities—where they live, play, pray, congregate, eat, organize, dream, and work together.⁴²

Civil society leaders must be able to operate at the level of the 'city boardroom' and the 'village bonfire'. As one CSO leader said, 'leaders in civil society need to be versatile and broad-minded with the ability to read the context, text and subtext of their work'. But when we think about leadership – it should encompass both leaders at the secretariat and leadership at the Board and through the ecosystem of the whole organization.

Many organizations are crumbling under the weight of unprogressive Boards or mismatched leaders at the Board and Secretariat. It will be important that organizations ensure that in situations where Board leadership is weak, there is a strong secretariat and in cases where secretariat leadership is weak there is a strong Board. These decisions are very critical in ensuring the growth and sustainability of organizations and ability of CSOs to undertake meaningful advocacy initiatives.

Organizational Mission is Critical to Sustainability:

The commitment to vision, mission and values is critical for organizations to be able to carry their programs. CSOs are usually set up with very good intentions. They ensure that these intentions are known by all in proposals, in value statements that are written on all walls and reception areas and a lot more. But sometimes these mission statements hide one reality; that like people, organizations have a life cycle. They are born, they grow, they live, and they die. Organizations also get accidents and sometimes catch a 'disease' that kills them. But unfortunately, many CSOs work as if organizations are immortal, and they can only die when they have achieved their mission.


The fundamental point around the adage 'survival for the fittest' is the question – what does 'fittest' look like? If 'fittest' is about those that can write the best proposal and develop the best budget and have the ability to manage complex grants with thousands of forms, then it is superficial. 'Fittest' in civil society has to be about something deeper. It has to be about changing and improving lives of people and questioning in a deeper sense why one wakes up every day and come to the office. When an organization loses its passion and commitment to a core ideology that drives its mission and values - it quickly dies. When organizations are driven by a core ideology that fuels its mission and vision then logos become irrelevant.

For philanthropic foundations remaining true to their mission is also critical. Although for these organizations, they encounter the need to remain focused on their missions in different ways. For foundations that are formed by successful businesses, they usually have a cause that they believe in and invest in. In this case the mission is personal to the foundation and does not require any external effort to stay on mission. For those foundations that are grant makers, they may also experience the influence of mission-focus differently, as they focus on an issue and fundraise for it. In that case any change in the mission-focus will have known consequences for the foundation.

Enabling Environment and Sustainability:

Even with money, good leadership and clear vision – an enabling environment matters for an organization's sustainability. Enabling environment for civil society essentially is the political, economic and social space in which civil society representatives operate. Today, in many parts of Africa, this space has come under serious attack and pressure, leading to a diversity of threats to civil society. Threats to civil society seriously undermine sustainability of organizations. This is because fear of reprisals and attacks will lead to inability to fundraise, attract partners and work coherently at community level.

While it is appreciated that CSOs play a vital role in development by way of providing citizens an opportunity to gain, gather, hold and exchange information, to participate in shaping development policies and partnerships, to initiate and oversee the implementation of these policies, and to claim their legitimate rights as citizens – for all these to thrive – there must be an enabling environment. Today, more and more CSOs in Africa work in an environment where their operational and political space is considerably limited. Those include legal as well as arbitrary measures such as restrictive administrative procedures, which hinder registration or access to funding, stigmatization, criminalization, intimidation as well as physical harassment.



In this section we have made linkages between CSO sustainability and philanthropy. There are several ways in which organizations can work to become sustainable. Philanthropic foundations are strategic partners for CSOs and can support their sustainability. However, they can also look like potential competitors in development when they move into the operational and advocacy space that they have long occupied at both community and international level. Some of the criticisms of, and skepticism about, private philanthropic donors may stem from fears that new, independent grantors will displace rather than complement traditional development actors.

From this perspective, philanthropic foundations in development could be viewed through civil society lens, as civil society actors in their own right who use, or could use, their financial clout to engage in deeper community level engagements. When it comes to the question of sustainability, CSOs and philanthropic foundations need each other. It is therefore imperative that CSOs and philanthropic foundations work closely and recognize that to build truly sustainable CSOs will require to look both at the internal and external environment and recognize that what will drive true sustainability is working at various levels and not focusing only on financing as the panacea for sustainability.





13 *Challenges of CSOs and Philanthropy*

There are many challenges that CSOs face in their interaction with philanthropy. These include:

Generosity and Justice Tensions:

The tight rope that CSOs and philanthropic foundations have to walk is anchored in what constitutes generosity and justice (to use Ford Foundation President's - Darren Walker's words). Foundations in their giving are both an expression of democracy in the sense that rich people have the right and leeway to do whatever they want but in the same breath the rich are also able to undemocratically choose or dictate which services, issues, and approaches deserve support and crucially, which one do not.

In this same breath some of these organizations then shape policy debate and draw attention to selected issues while others are ignored. In the COVID 19 pandemic for example some critiques argue that the philanthropic giving to the research and manufacture of the COVID 19 vaccines was legitimate giving to public good. But ignoring of issues around vaccine equal distribution led to vaccine inequality and vaccine apartheid. In some developed countries vaccinated populations are up to 80% of their eligible populations and those in the developing world have vaccinated less than 1% of their population.



On the other hand CSOs sometimes frontload their focus on justice with little regard for the funder's priorities. In such situations CSOs then feel betrayed by the funders who shun governance, rights and justice related issues and choose to invest in more livelihood related issues. The tension between generosity and justice is not one that has been resolved as yet. It is therefore gratifying that philanthropy foundations are starting to engage with the questions relating to the intersection between generosity and justice as seen in Darren Walker's book – From Generosity to Justice.⁴⁵

Civic Space Challenges and continued negative narratives:

Civil society and philanthropy will only thrive with a dynamic civil society where there is expansion of associational life and citizen organizing. Several citizen groups in Uganda are faced with an uphill task to meaningfully engage in the governance of the country. State repression of citizen voices is still an issue in Uganda. Civic space for citizen's organizations and human rights defenders is still an issue.

The freezing of accounts of advocacy NGOs in the run up to the 2021 general elections in Uganda by the Financial Intelligence Authority, the arrest of human rights defenders and episodes of human rights irregularities and violence during the 2021 General elections are issues that indicate elements of shrinking civic space in Uganda. For CSOs and philanthropy to thrive, civic space must be enabling and not constrained.

Rootedness and Connection:

Marina Ottaway used the word 'trusteeships' to describe what she called an assumed mandate that many civil society organisations and NGOs have. They are often not as embedded as they ought to be in the societies and communities they work in. As one commentator once asked [...] how many people would rise up in public action if an NGO was closed down tomorrow? This indeed is not a matter for only civil society in developing countries but also International NGOs in the countries where many raise money, including from individual givers. If CSOs are to improve their chances of being relevant, they must connect better with the population, lest they increasingly alienate themselves from reality that is driving the world.

Whose money and whose results?

The rising tide of technocracy that has swept through the philanthropy community - has driven CSOs as clients to work on a limited range of agendas, mainly biased towards service delivery and democracy promotion instead of deep-rooted transformation of politics, social relations, markets and technology. This is happening despite donors and philanthropy organizations moving towards more political methods for facilitating development, which efforts remain hampered given that there has been little shift in the narrow conceptualization of civil society.

There are still very few examples of philanthropic foundations and traditional donors with the ability to design innovative funding mechanisms to support, rather than erode the political roots of civil society organizations. This is particularly the case for bi-lateral donors who unlike philanthropic foundations, are a lot more 'governmental' in their 'DNA', and align more with or at least sympathize with governments, and are always mindful about their limits.

Capacities and skills to implement development programs:

Sometimes the skillset required to implement programs is limited for civil society actors. This is especially evident in areas that require technical monitoring like infrastructure projects by multilateral agencies to government. In many cases civil society actors will either depend on consultants or on the limited knowledge they possess to conduct such advocacy. It is therefore imperative that CSO undertake capacity development on a continuous basis within civil society. This is because of the everchanging development terrain as new issues emerge on the daily basis. To continue to be relevant, civil society will then need to focus on building competencies that are critical in the development arena.

Although studies have also shown that the crop of leaders in civil society also has very good competencies. One study placed NGO Leaders in Uganda as being of high intellectual promise and concluded that while Ugandan NGOs rely on foreign resources, they do not depend on foreign manpower.⁴⁶ In the study by Barr (2003:22) says:

*[...] surveyed NGOs as a whole muster considerable manpower resources. The average number of staff members and volunteers is 129 (...) but with a median of 18, hence there are considerable disparities. Surveyed NGOs had on average 15 full-time staff and 18 part-time staff”, with very few foreigners, and quite a large percentage of professional and management staff. These numbers are expanding rapidly, prompting the conclusion that “The Uganda NGO sector may depend on foreign funding; it does not depend on foreign manpower.” The same survey shows that 84% of the NGO directors had a tertiary or university degree and 14 years of education on average. Using Social Security figures, the John Hopkins Comparative Non-profit Sector Project estimates that “the workforce in the civil society sector exceeds that of the public sector [in 1998]”.*⁴⁷

Dilemma of Foreign Funded, Proposal Writing outfits:

As illustrated earlier in this paper, the history of civil society in Uganda is intertwined with the political history of the state in Uganda which suggests that civil society was not always in the position of vulnerability in which it finds itself today. Civil society was once vibrant, locally rooted, locally supported, diverse in nature and character. Indeed, elements of community philanthropy were present in the ways in which some organizations were supported. While nostalgic aspirations cannot take us far, what needs to happen now is rethinking support to civil society. While civil society cannot return to the romantic past of self-sustenance or does not desire to stay in the present state of mutual suspicion among donors and civil society, it must confront the question of financing the sector in a manner that allows it to become sustainable and rooted in the communities in which it works.



14 Recommendations.

The options for the future in this study are based on the idea that; CSOs and philanthropic organizations must seek to be both procedurally and substantively legitimate, effective and sustainable in what they do in the communities they serve.

For philanthropy to thrive, CSOs and philanthropic organizations cannot pursue one at the expense of the other. There are fundamental shifts that have to happen at every level as we build collective efforts towards new ways of doing philanthropy in Africa. The following are the key shifts that should occur:

Reclaim the Narrative and Definition of Philanthropy: Philanthropy as a concept has travelled through numerous historical epochs moving from love for humanity, to charity, to institutional giving, to high-net-worth individual giving and several other mutations along the way. The term now sits in a very difficult place where it is held hostage by the new philanthropists. The new philanthropists, some of whom earned much of their wealth in the Silicon Valley and dot.com boom, have developed an approach to solving the problems of extreme poverty based on the principles that made them successful in business. Branded the 'Silicon Valley Consensus', innovation, technology and modern management methods are seen as the framework for solving the poor's problems and global poverty.⁴⁸ This current narrative framing of philanthropy is too narrow. The emphasis on the ultra-wealthy 'giving back' and presented as if they possess a superior moral agency than the poor is problematic. The poor give every day in small and big ways at community level. They continue to sustain their communities over time through this giving.



It is therefore imperative that CSOs in Africa and philanthropy organizations invest in a political project of reclaiming the narrative on philanthropy generally and accord gifting in community and African philanthropy the visibility that it deserves. This will be through initiatives that boldly discount the hegemonic narratives that surround the Silicon Valley philanthropy movement and its attendant offshoots like philanthrocapitalism.

Overstated contribution of new philanthropy:

The hegemonic positioning of 'new philanthropy' as discussed by Edwards (2015) is instructive. In Africa, like many other parts of the world, there is an emergence of a strong movement of philanthropy foundations that are driven by successful capitalists. For example, foundations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Qatar Foundation, the Emirates Foundation, Mo Ibrahim Foundation and many others all privilege the approach of using market mechanisms, technology and 'big data' to guide decisions. For example, the presentation of the impact in many of these foundations is presented in terms of rates-of-return on investment.⁴⁹

Further small civil society organizations in Africa that do not have the organizational sophistication to present their results in this way end up failing to compete favorably under these circumstances. What then emerges is the overstating of the contribution of these new foundations.⁵⁰ Organizations that agree to work with such foundations must endure very close supervision, standardised outputs as indicators of success and entrepreneurial results-oriented frameworks. Words like 'value for money' and several others such as smart economics formulations are the norm.

This overstated contribution of new philanthropy ends up masking the qualitative contribution of civil society organizations that have to struggle to put their best foot forward if they are going to work with such foundations. Governments in Africa end up embracing these kinds of foundations more easily as they present compelling quantitative stories about development impact. Community philanthropy, for example, disappears from the radar as these 'high net worth entities' reposition themselves in the world of philanthropy

Under appreciation of gifting:

It is now abundantly clear that philanthropy in Africa cannot be structured around the same relationships as philanthropy in the west. The cultural logic that informs philanthropy is that, in Africa, it is rooted in community experience and African tradition.

The philosophy of 'Ubuntu' and the attendant social practice of 'gifting' have for long not been positioned as an influential philanthropic approach at community level but have not gained prominence in development narratives on philanthropy. Susan Wilkinson-Maposa and Alan Fowler (2009) make a compelling argument when they state that the unique capability of poor communities is not found in exceptional wealth, influence or power over others⁵¹. Their greatest development strength is found in the 'ordinary'. Self-help and mutual assistance is part and parcel of the social fibre of how things are done in poor African communities.

As we rethink the practice of philanthropy it is imperative that old concepts like 'gifting' and 'ubuntu' that sustain and build community resilience are given visibility and value in the discussions on philanthropy. These concepts need not be discussed in a patronizing manner that belittles actions that are not backed by 'big money' but they should be discussed as community actions that possess agency in their own right.

Pay attention to the Obscure Power of High-Net-Worth-Individuals (HNWI):

The phenomena of philanthropy foundations is spreading across Africa quite rapidly. Studies have shown that several foundations have been formed by the emerging club of High-Net-Worth-Individuals across Africa.⁵² As of December 2020, the total private wealth held in Africa was approximately two trillion U.S. dollars. The amount was accumulated by 125 thousand millionaires, 6,200 multimillionaires, 275 centimillionaires, and 22 billionaires.⁵³ A study by Trust Africa/UBS on giving habits of approximately 40 HNWI spread across the African continent found that these HNWI were actively giving within their extended families (19%), communities (12%) and beyond (26%). Moreover, they do not only give through their foundations but also through informal channels. Their giving is also embedded in beliefs and cultural practices.⁵⁴

While all these are important efforts in understanding philanthropy in Africa, it is important that HNWI in Africa are not 'charged' of the known excesses in philanthropy. Foundations of HNWI have been accused to be 'playthings of the rich', allowing them to impose their own particular preferences and priorities on society. In many societies giving is encouraged by tax incentives and thus the average taxpayer subsidises the whims of the wealthy.⁵⁵ While in their defence HNWI have argued that rich people have the right to spend their money as they choose and charitable giving is for public benefit, so society is the winner, it is important that there is strong awareness of the power that HNWI play on the continent. We have seen some of the HNWI being given roles to support state and continental projects.⁵⁶

We all need to be aware of the multiple layers of power that come with resources and HNWI have the responsibility to ensure that their philanthropy does not just mirror western typologies but also lends credence to the gifting philosophy that embeds African philanthropy exemplified by dignity and respect.

Politics of Giving or Patronage Shadowing Philanthropy:

A worrying trend and dimension that CSOs have to contend with is the exploitation of the motivations of philanthropy through practices that pollute philanthropy with patronage politics. It is common knowledge that not all giving is altruistic. For instance, in the history of independent Africa, authors have documented various ways in which African communalism and giving has been exploited. In Peter Ekeh's 1975 thesis mentioned earlier on 'two publics in Africa', he argues that the clash of norms and interests in Africa generate tendencies that have come to be known as tribalism and corruption with public officials stealing and looting and giving as philanthropic individuals to their clans and villages.

These instances and practices do point to the fact that giving is deeply embedded in the politics of patronage and while it can be wished away, we know that it is a reality that scholarship on philanthropy should engage with. Indeed, when the first Covid 19 lockdown happened in Uganda, the first people to start distributing food publicly were politicians who were interested in the political capital that comes with giving. This led to a serious and brutal crackdown on politicians who were distributing food during the lockdown.

Giving will always have to contend with the politically strategic and perverse patron-client political economy relationships responsible for much of Africa's bad governance. The connection between giving and political calculation by politicians and state officials who donate part of their loot to constituents as a way of buying loyalty and patronage is something that has been variously documented in Africa.

The discussion on sometimes outright selfish and "dark" motivations for individuals as well as private and corporate foundations to engage in philanthropy further accentuates this view. Research needs to be done in this area as a way of opening doors to the broader questions of the politics of giving in Africa. This will provide an opportunity to bring into conversation the hitherto estranged epistemological standpoints on giving and politics in Africa.





15 *Conclusion*

This policy paper has engaged with the question of CSOs and philanthropy through a broad overview of important elements that need policy attention. The paper has presented a brief overview of African philanthropy, the colonial and post-colonial structures that philanthropy has had to negotiate, the nature of the state and civil society in Uganda within which it is located. The paper also presented the typologies of civil society in colonial times and post-colonial Africa, the nexus between CSOs and philanthropy foundations as vehicles of philanthropic practice.

The roles of both CSOs and philanthropic foundations as well as the challenges that each need to contend with are also presented. The paper ends by presenting options of the future. What this paper has attempted to do, is situate the discussions around CSOs and philanthropy in a manner that is significantly nuanced and ensures that any future discussions on the role of CSOs and philanthropy engages with these questions critically.



Foot Notes

- 1 See news article by Abimanyi John (2012) in Monitor Newspaper at: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/lifestyle/reviews-profiles/lesson-to-learn-the-singapore-economic-miracle-1520918>
- 2 See Mahmood Mamdani (1983), *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*, Heinemann Press, Nairobi
- 3 See Summers Carol (2005) *Young Buganda and Old Boys: Youth, Generational Transition, and Ideas of Leadership in Buganda, 1920-1949*, *Africa Today* Vol. 51, No. 3, *Youth and Citizenship in East Africa* (Spring, 2005), pp. 109-128 published By: Indiana University Press
- 4 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignatius_K._Musazi
- 5 See Bennett, A (2018), *Diplomatic Gifts: Rethinking Colonial Politics in Uganda through Objects*, *History in Africa*, 45, 193-220. doi:10.1017/hia.2018.5
- 6 See Ssewakiryanga Richard (2021) *Meaning and Practice of Philanthropy: Sense-Making Policy Position Paper I*, Commissioned by Uganda National NGO Forum, Kampala
- 7 See for example; Moyo, Bhekinkosi (2005) *Setting the development agenda. U.S. foundations and the NPO sector in South Africa: A case study of Ford, Mott, Kellogg and Open Society Foundations*. Johannesburg, South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation
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