

**philanthropy**   
FOR **development**

# Philanthropy & Mindset Change

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**Giving  
For Change  
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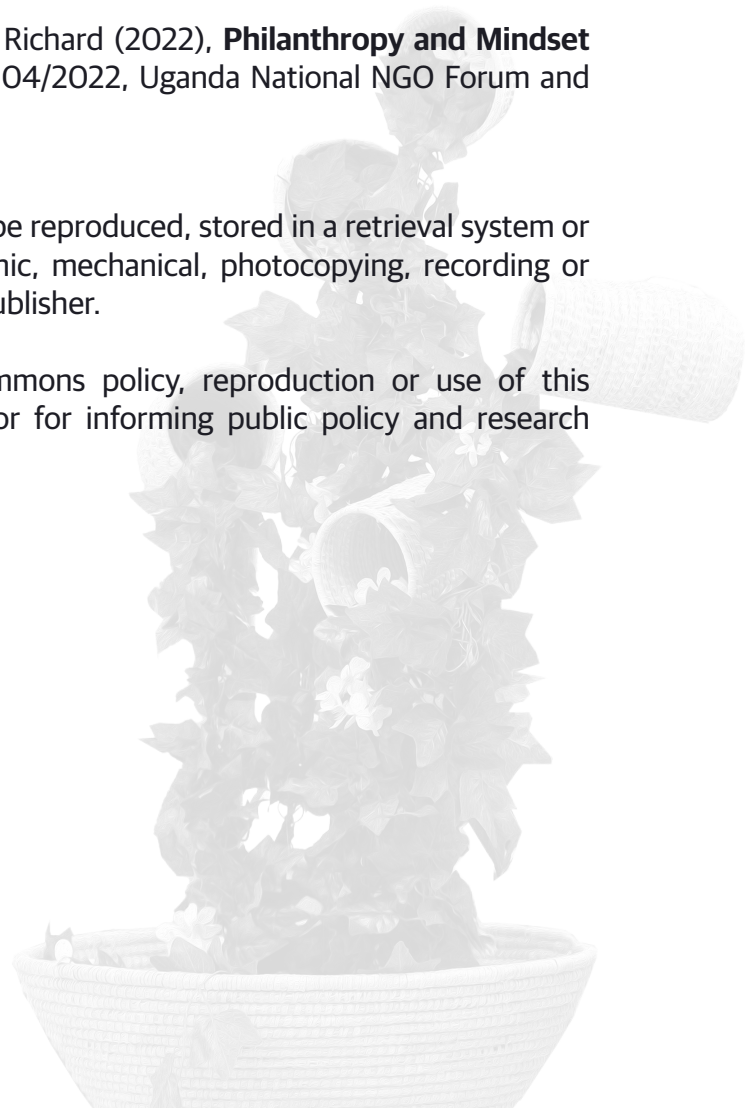
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# 01 Introduction

*“To give away money is an easy matter, and in any man’s power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how large and when, and for what purpose and how, is neither in every man’s power-nor an easy matter. Hence, such excellence is rare, praiseworthy and noble.” (Aristotle 384–322 BC)*

The words above come from the writings of Aristotle the Greek philosopher and polymath who lived during the Classical period in Ancient Greece. The statement (although gender insensitive) is instructive. It refers to the ease of giving and the difficulty of choosing what cause to give to – a situation many philanthropists find themselves seized with. Indeed, the struggle to decide who, what, where and how a philanthropist should give is an issue that presents itself variously in the field. This can even be traced in the conceptual complications that have surrounded the term philanthropy since the beginning.

The word literally means “love of humankind,” but it has come to encompass the wide range of ways people can share their time, talent, treasure, and ties to advance the common good. Today philanthropy includes charitable, “giving with the heart,” as well as more strategic, “giving with the head.” It includes giving by institutional foundations



and individual donors; small givers and large ones; private foundations, family foundations, donor-advised funds, giving circles, community foundations, corporate foundations and many more.

This paper focuses on exploring the issues around the mindsets (and orthodoxies) that inform philanthropy and giving. A mindset has been defined by scholars as a set of beliefs that shape how you make sense of the world and yourself.

Mindset influences how one thinks, feels, and behaves in any given situation. These mindsets or what some writers call 'orthodoxies' are deeply held beliefs about how things are done that often go unstated and unquestioned. These mindsets are not only individual traits, but they can be found in a host of places. Mindsets can be individual or they can be embedded in protocols of organizations and even in practices of an entire industry or different sections of society.<sup>1</sup> The military may have its mindset, just as the church may also have its own mindset. Mindsets are in themselves conventional wisdoms and help create standard practices that support people and organizations to function efficiently. Mindsets are also known to stimulate both productivity and unproductive resistance. Words like "that's not how we do things around here" can sometime be mentioned to defend a certain mindset.

Researchers on mindsets have distinguished mindsets into two types - the 'growth mindset' and the 'fixed mindset'. In the fixed mindset, people or institutions believe that their qualities are carved in stone. As Dweck (2006) writes, this fixed mindset creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. For a person, if you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character, then you'd better prove that you have a healthy dose of them.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand is the growth mindset, is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts, your strategies, and help from others. The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset. This is the mindset<sup>4</sup> that allows people to thrive during challenging times in their lives.

Mindset is a combination of one's attitudes, one's thoughts and one's beliefs. Other scholars create another cluster of mindsets: the magical mindsets - such mindset will perhaps leave everything to chance and hope things will happen in some miraculous way. Then there are narratives of positive versus negative mindsets.





## 02 *Changes in Society and Mindsets*

As society changes mindsets change. For example, in the history of the telecommunication, there was a time the dominant fixed mindset was that a telephone had to be a static piece of equipment that could be used in one place. Today nearly all telephones are handheld.

In the same way in the banking sector, it was thought that one could only withdraw money from the bank or from a bank branch that has a person behind the bank till who hands over the cash. The arrival of the ATMs and online banking as well as mobile money services have changed these mindsets completely.

So, what does all this have to do with philanthropy? As the quote from Aristotle suggests, the decision to decide how to give could be more difficult than just giving. The decision to give is rooted in the realm of a person or institution's mindset. Scholars like Kant talk about giving as a moral obligation and others see it as an element of having a good standing in society and yet others see giving as an action to 'make good on past injustices' even if the giver is unconscious about that type of giving.<sup>5</sup>

It is evident therefore that the field of philanthropy has for long been influenced by certain dominant modes of understanding and mindsets on what motivates people and institutions to give.



## **03** *Mindsets and Philanthropy*

In philanthropy discussions, the debate is still alive especially among African scholars on what mindset constitutes the motivations of generosity and giving in Africa. Scholars and policy discussion on philanthropy in Africa make the case that giving is part of the lifeblood of African societies. It is argued that giving in Africa possesses a much strong moral outlook since it is about gifting which is a high moral imperative than giving generally.

As discussed in Sense-Making Paper 1<sup>6</sup>, the idea of giving that goes beyond the household to also encompass the community is very prevalent in Uganda and many parts of Africa. Authors like Fowler have argued that there is a need to make a distinction between 'giving' and 'gifting' because the two are motivated by different kinds of mindsets. This distinction is driven by the assertion that giving usually falls into two major categories – giving that is transactional and giving that is relational. As Fowler et. al. (2019) says;

*[...] 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. It is a type of transaction that co-determines the collaborative nature of the social order to be found within and across all societies. There is an implied 'altruistic' morality in gifting, analogous to modern philanthropy...<sup>7</sup>*

The gist of this framing is that there is a different mindset that informs giving in Africa vis-a-viz giving in the west - with the term "gifting" instead of "philanthropy" capturing the plurality of pro-social transactional practices in African philanthropy. The mindset that informs giving in the African context is also one that lends itself more to the idea of community philanthropy.

Community philanthropy here understood as a process of gaining the support of community members or creating a growth mindset at community level, leveraging community resources, and determining the use of external resources in that community to better address challenges or to improve the quality of life in a community.

Globally and historically, philanthropy has largely represented itself as giving by High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNWI) to causes that they deem important to them. For influential philanthropists like Carnegie, his writing in the Gospel of Wealth<sup>8</sup> represented a fixed mindset about the idea of philanthropy. He was very influential in shaping the discourse around philanthropy and what it constitutes.

In the Gospel of Wealth, Carnegie argued that extremely wealthy Americans like himself had a responsibility to spend their money in order to benefit the greater good. Such philanthropists can be said to believe in the theory of utilitarianism - a theory of morality that advocates actions that foster happiness or pleasure and opposes actions that



cause unhappiness or harm. Utilitarianism would say that an action is right if it results in the happiness of the greatest number of people in a society or a group. In other words, the richest Americans should actively engage in philanthropy and charity in order to close the widening gap between rich and poor.

While there were several criticisms to this "Gospel" by influential leaders of the time like Reverend Hugh Price Hughes, a Methodist minister, who writes in 1890, that while he was sure Carnegie was "a most estimable and generous man," his "Gospel" represented a "social monstrosity" and a "grave political peril"<sup>9</sup>, these words did not stop Carnegie from continuing to propagate his fixed mindset about philanthropy. There were also other influential critiques like William Jewett Tucker, a professor of religion who wrote that what the "Gospel" advocated for was "a vast system of patronage," and nothing could "in the final issue create a more hopeless social condition."

In the discussions above we see that contestations around philanthropy mindsets have always been around and have significantly shaped the face of philanthropy.



### *3.1. Fixed and Growth Mindsets in Philanthropy*

From the debates about what constitutes philanthropy and why philanthropy should be in place, we do recognize several aspects that are critical in developing a strong growth mindset in philanthropy. With the contemporary era of extravagant wealth and extraordinary displays of generosity, it is important that return to a discussion on mindsets in philanthropy and the role of these mindsets in shaping the direction, philosophy and practice of giving. The world now watches in awe as we witness the extravagant wealth and almost as extravagant displays of generosity and Africa has not been left behind. Philanthropy foundations are 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. Such Foundations are mushrooming as many high net worth individuals consider this as the route of leaving an indelible legacy or bequeathing something to the generations to come. 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.

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 particular mindsets, beliefs and cultural practices.<sup>11</sup>

For example, Foundations of HNWI have been accused of being 'playthings of the rich', allowing them to impose their own particular mindsets, preferences and priorities on society. In many societies giving is encouraged by tax incentives, and thus the average taxpayer subsidizes the whims of the wealthy – it is argued. While in their defense 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<sup>12</sup>; it is important that there is strong awareness of the power that HNWI play on the continent and with that power the mindset that HNWI propagate.

It can be argued and rightly so that this giving by HNWIs is without doubt transactional as it is motivated by the private gain of tax subsidies. The exponential growth in the number of private foundations across Africa and the world and the rise of initiatives like the Giving Pledge<sup>13</sup> signed by Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Michael Bloomberg, Larry Ellison, and more than a hundred and seventy other gazillionaires who have promised to dedicate most of their wealth to philanthropy, is the new “Gospel” stripped down and updated.

This paper will therefore use two lenses to look at the nuances and critical challenges relating to philanthropy mindset. In one part we shall present the societal shifts in the world that need to be watched and analyze their influence on the philanthropy mindset and the second part will present some of the predominant mindsets that need to be debunked as we explore ways in which a ‘growth philanthropy mindset’ can be promoted.

While Carnegie may have the luxury to claim that “wealth is the inevitable possession of the few” today the attendant ethical question about the distribution of wealth versus redistribution of wealth informs the philanthropy mindsets.





# 04 *Societal Shifts* *Influencing Philanthropy* *Mindsets*

The world has seen a growth in several significant development challenges and societal shifts. The climate change crisis that the world is experiencing, the health crisis represented by several pandemics including Covid19 and Ebola in parts of Africa represent a significantly changing world. For countries like Uganda, hosting record numbers of refugees from neighboring countries and the conflict in the Great Lakes region are all issues to contend with.

All these societal shifts have implication to the field of philanthropy as they do for any other field in development. While it could be argued that HNWI philanthropy is sometimes insulated from societal shifts happening around the world especially because HNWIs have large permanent endowments that have been bestowed on their philanthropic organizations, it is evident that the world of philanthropy is not immune to the ramifications of the tectonic shifts happening around the world. Further the demographic structure in Africa is not only changing the populations but also changing the population's mindsets.

As we shall discuss later – millennials and their view and participation in philanthropy is very different from the practices of 'baby-boomers'.

For instance, acts of generosity during the Covid 19 pandemic in Uganda were at an all-time high. The "Generosity During the Time of COVID" reports clearly highlighted the outpouring of generosity in Uganda and that people gave variously of time, treasure to talent.<sup>14</sup> Philanthropy foundations supporting civil society in Uganda quickly launched emergency response funds, increased their spend-out rates, relaxed grant reporting requirements, and converted programmatic funds to general operating support expenses. Their reactions demonstrated just how quickly mindsets can change in a crisis.

Pandemics are a pathological intersection of social, economic, political and biological processes - thus have a cardinal bearing on mindsets. Pandemics often handcuff social policy and the immediate responses from people is to see how to cushion each other.

In thinking about the future of philanthropy and the attendant changes in mindset, we need to be inspired by the words of Winston Churchill's - 'we cannot let a good crisis go to waste'. In presenting the societal shifts and their implications to a philanthropy mindset we are inspired by the belief that the current disruptions of the status quo will help to rethink long entrenched systems and practices of philanthropy and support the acceleration of change. Below are some of the societal changes that may influence the philanthropy mindset in Uganda:



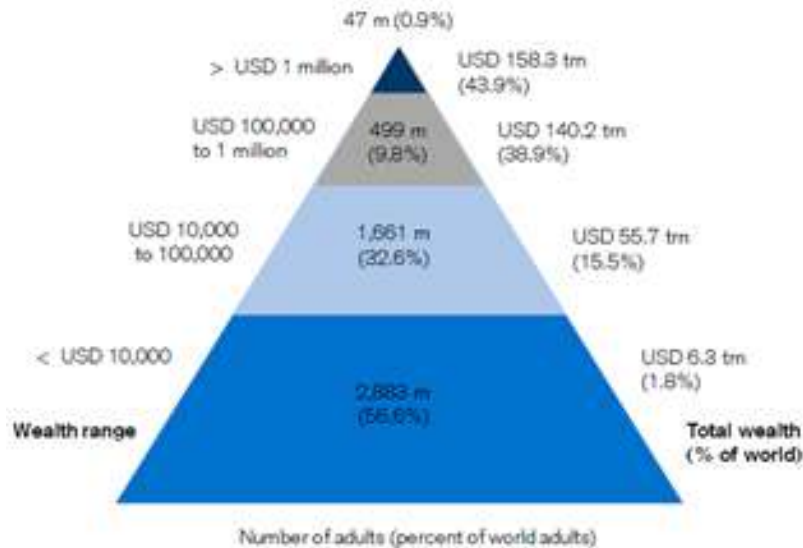
## 4.1. Economic Inequality Influencing Philanthropy Mindsets.

In Uganda, inequality levels have continuously increased. The Gini Coefficient (GINI index) stands at 37.6% in 2018 and has been at the same level for several years.<sup>15</sup> High and increasing inequality, combined with increasing poverty risks are straining social cohesion. Figure 1 below, shows that Uganda's inequality (Gini coefficient) dipped slightly between 2009 and 2012. It then rose again between 2012 and 2016. In comparison to its neighbors - Kenya and Rwanda, whose inequality levels have steadily reduced between 2005 and 2016; Uganda needs to do more to reduce inequality.<sup>16</sup>

While the economy has grown and poverty levels have fallen, income inequality has increased as mentioned above. Studies indicate that the richest 10% of Uganda's population enjoy over one third (35.7%) of national income, and this proportion has grown by nearly 20% over the past two decades. Additionally, the richest 20% claim just over half of all national income, this proportion having increased by almost 14% over this period.<sup>17</sup> Economic inequality produces a situation where inequality in income and wealth is in the hands of a few mostly because of the concentration of economic power. is strong awareness of the power that HNWI play on the continent and with that power the mindset that HNWIs propagate.

The variation in average wealth across countries accounts for much of the observed inequality in global wealth. The Global Wealth Report 2019 produced a wealth pyramid which shows wealth differences among adults and it reveals that an estimated 2.9 billion individuals - 57% of all adults in the world - have wealth below USD 10,000 in 2019. The next segment, covering those with wealth in the range USD 10,000 - 100,000, has seen the biggest rise in numbers this century, trebling in size from 514 million in 2000 to 1.7 billion in mid-2019. This reflects the growing prosperity of emerging economies, especially China, and the expansion of the middle class in many developing world!<sup>18</sup>

Figure 2: Global Wealth Pyramid, 2019



Source: Global Wealth Report, 2019

The story of inequality is also reproduced as gender inequality. This is the most significant of all identity-based disadvantages, and women are invariably more marginalized than men. Some of the key active barriers to gender inequality include personal and public beliefs as well as practices that generate biases against gender equality. Gender inequality is also about intrinsic imbalances in power. Many areas where there is an observed unequal distribution like access to land, capital or even information are related to gender inequality.

A study on inequality in Uganda does point out that while women are the most employed in the agricultural sector, constituting over 70% of the agricultural workforce, they own only 7% of the land. In waged jobs in the public sector, the average pay for women is 40% less than it is for men<sup>19</sup> These dimensions of inequality present themselves as shackles of patriarchy, the unending burden of misogyny and the mask of toxic masculinity which continue to be a big challenge for Uganda.

Economic inequality is quite perverse. It produces significant new challenges and needs in communities across the country. The rich are becoming richer the poor are becoming poorer. This is a situation that has ramifications on the ways in which people view the world and engage in any practice including philanthropy. Countries including Uganda are creating massive fortunes for a few that can bolster philanthropy at extreme scales but there is also a growing acute awareness of the divide and interconnection between the haves and have-nots. This situation is creating all kinds of disparities and visible forms of public backlash against the severe concentration of wealth that is fueling much of today's philanthropy.

This reality cannot be wished away as it produces several types of mindsets. The wealthy may assume that what matters is to give to the poor and that will solve their problems, but the poor and other social justice citizen formations are also engaging in self-reflection about the origins of this economic inequality and the reasons behind it. Many people are starting to speak out against this Robin Wood mindset of stealing from the rich so as to give to the poor. It's the poor starting to challenge the Robin Woods of this country. This is a societal shift that will influence how philanthropy is positioned and the roles that different players can play in leveraging the role of philanthropy in development. If wealth creates inequality and suffering, will the same wealth eradicate inequality and suffering? This is an existential question that faces the HNWI who thrive to become philanthropists in a world where the wealth they have accumulated is part of the problem and therefore cannot be the entire solution.

## *4.2. Shifting Demographics influencing philanthropy Mindsets.*

Uganda, like many other parts of Africa, is faced with a significant demographic challenge. More than 75% of Uganda's population is below the age of 30 years. The country has a very high youth unemployment rate of about 13.3%.<sup>20</sup> About 400,000 youths are released annually into the job market to compete for approximately 9,000 available jobs. About 30% of the youths who are institutionally qualified in Uganda are unable to find jobs, and the situation is even worse for semiskilled and unskilled youths.<sup>21</sup>

Youths who remain unemployed or underemployed and do not exploit their full potential, are often associated with high incidences of drug abuse and gambling and several other vices. But while there are all these problems young people in Uganda are also making the mark on the country. Young people are the new digital natives leveraging the potentials of the internet and other forms of digital technologies to reshape the world they live in including their outlook on philanthropy.

While no empirical study has been conducted specifically on youth in Uganda and philanthropy, findings from other studies are indicative of the mindsets of many young people across the world. A study by Fidelity Charitable found that the very idea of a philanthropist is undergoing a transformation for young people. Younger donors interviewed show a marked shift in their idea of what philanthropy means. Nearly three-quarters of Millennials would call themselves philanthropists – compared to only 35% of Baby Boomers—illustrating the younger generation's more inclusive definition of philanthropy.



Millennials' broad self-identification with the term indicates that they are rejecting those traditional associations and understand the term to apply broadly to anyone giving time, talent or treasure to make the world a better place.<sup>22</sup> The same trend was observable in the studies conducted by CivSource Africa during the Covid pandemic lockdowns. Open Space Centre has also led campaigns of young people giving for good. Young people of all ages participated in giving to ameliorate the suffering faced by many during the lockdowns.<sup>23</sup>

In a country of many young people this demographic trend cannot be ignored as it deeply influences the young people's mindset, view and attitudes towards philanthropy. As the study on Millennial donors says, they are fueled by their belief in their own ability to be a force for good and their desire to contribute to social change.<sup>24</sup>



### *4.3. Digital Transformation and Influencing Philanthropy Mindsets*

The technology revolution is shaping philanthropy mindsets in significant ways. The ease by which information travels means that people can easily communicate and connect with one another. This means that people have a diversity of opportunities to understand what is going on around the world and access diverse perspectives as well as share data. For example, the number of internet users in Uganda has increased from 13 million in 2015 to 18.8 million in 2017 translating to a penetration rate of 45.4% and 297 government services have been automated, 71 of these are being provided online.<sup>25</sup> While there are still challenges in access, digital transformation has also changed lives of many people.

While there are only 6% of households that have access to a computer, 99% of internet access is through mobile phones.<sup>26</sup> In this case the mobile phone has become an important enabler of information sharing and this is creating new possibilities for generating impact, but also new challenges that philanthropy will need to address in its work. Use of digital Apps which enable sharing of data and airtime without doubt shape mindsets on sharing / giving and thus philanthropy.

## *4.4. Democratic reversals Influencing Philanthropy Mindsets*

The Global Democracy Report 2021 indicates that more than a quarter of the world's population now lives in democratically backsliding countries. Together with those living in outright non-democratic regimes, they make up more than two-thirds of the world's population. In East Africa, democratic backsliding is also a challenge that citizens are engaging with. While the region has been experiencing more than a decade of consistent economic growth there are still many social and democratic deficits in the region. Large scale poverty continues to prevail, and the region remains among the most deprived in the world.

As discussed earlier, inequality is still an issue and the gap between rich and poor extremely wide, justice systems are often not fully accessible for the poor; rights and entitlements are still a challenge to many people. Civic, socio-economic, and political rights are in constant flux and therefore frequently flouted especially during electoral periods and conflict is still rife in the region with rebel incursions and terrorist attacks. The pandemic has added another layer of complications. In Uganda the schools have been closed for two years, there has been a night curfew for two years and several businesses are still not open and yet even in the pandemic state institutions like Parliament never closed. The pandemic has therefore provided additional tools and justification for repressive tactics.

In the Covid pandemic times, while citizens have demonstrated significant levels of generosity both to the state and to fellow citizens, the pandemic has made it easier to justify excesses of the state including arrests of political opponents, manipulation of media, and increasing restrictions on Civic rights. These developments have got important ramifications on philanthropy as they are both a catalyst and inhibitor of generosity in the population.

## *4.5. Environment and Health Crises influencing Philanthropy Mindsets*

Climate change and the politics around it is a critical issue in shaping the mindset of philanthropy. The Covid-19 pandemic was instructive in making the connection that health and environmental crises, as well as human-made ones, can exacerbate existing problems or swiftly and unpredictably trump the existing agenda of any community or funder.

The current environmental challenges around the world are a wake-up call for all communities to depend more on the power of togetherness and generosity to build resilience at the community level. Local and international disasters are significantly changing how communities come together and their mindsets toward generosity and solidarity. While Covid 19 has been evenly distributed, the vaccines have not. The vaccine inequality is making people especially in the Global South re-think their engagement terms with the North.

Many people now think we are on our own and so this new mindset has a bearing on solidarity and generosity. This is an important individual and collective variable that effects mindsets significantly.

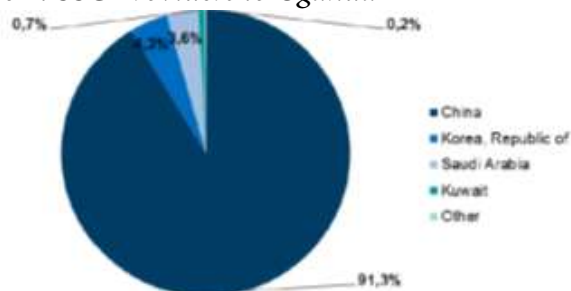
## *4.6. The Blending of Profit, People, Passions influencing Philanthropy Mindsets*

The resources that are financing development have significantly widened globally. While governments like that of Uganda have for long been involved in debt servicing because of the huge debt burden, the number of stakeholders that are investing in development have widened. There are several new countries that are now providers of development cooperation money. The rise of countries like China, Russia, Brazil, India, South Korea as providers of development assistance have reshaped the discourse on development cooperation.

Today development cooperation is no longer a preserve of traditional providers in the global north, even countries that are in the global south are supporting each other. These countries are using new principles of partnership that are built on the ideas of solidarity, mutual accountability, south to south cooperation and not on traditional donor conditionalities. In some cases, these new providers are supporting countries with business loans that focus on business interests and not on political conditions in the recipient country. Also the development financing from traditional donors has been tweaked from being purely development assistance to trade enablement. Bilateral donors now play a dual role of promoting development and trade.

Studies on Uganda indicate that South-South cooperation in Uganda is largely dominated by China, which provides about 91.3% of all south-south funds, according to data compiled by UNDP. South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait are the next most important south-south partners, providing about 4.3%, 3.6%, and 0.7% respectively. The remaining partner countries, encompassing 16 countries which provide altogether about 0.2% of all south-south flows. Between 2000 and 2014, 91% of Chinese support came in the form of loans (81%) and grants (10%) to support infrastructure development projects. Figure 2 below provides an overview of the main providers of SSDC to Uganda.

Figure 2: SSC Providers to Uganda



Source: DFA 2019

While South-to-South Development Cooperation may be motivated by principles of solidarity in pursuing partnerships, if left unprotected, it may slowly evolve into new forms of inequalities and underdevelopment.<sup>29</sup> It thus becomes imperative to enhance the accountability and monitoring of SSDC policies and practices according to the widely accepted SSC principles, if it is to effectively

contribute to the eradication of poverty and inequalities as well as sustainable development in developing countries. This process has huge implications of the corporate mindset of philanthropy and calls for building of a strong growth mindset that can look at the opportunities that emerge from these new partnerships.

On the other hand, the number of non-state donors is also expanding. The growth in giving by foundations is at its all-time high with foundations providing in the excess of billions of dollars to causes that they identify with but also to causes that governments and citizens are aligned with. MacKenzie Scott who owns 4% of the shares of Amazon has through her foundations provided some of the biggest unrestricted grants globally.

In Uganda, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is providing significant funds to combat challenges in the health sector and agriculture sector. Locally foundations by local private businesses like Madhvani Foundation, Kabaka Foundation and many other are working innovatively to contribute the much-needed resources to deal with community challenges in Uganda. All these providers are creating significant shifts in philanthropy mindset.





These changes are important in as far as they relate to mindset around philanthropy. This is because each of the issues raised above have got both positive and negative impacts on society. Resultantly, the effects of each of these societal shifts will create a different type of mindset. Some of these will reinforce already existing fixed mindset about philanthropy, while others will promote a growth mindset around philanthropy. However, the directional influence of each of these shifts will depend on the assumptions held.

In the sections that follow we present some of the major orthodoxies and fixed mindsets that are sometimes held in the area of philanthropy that need to be debunked in order to create room for the flourishing of a growth mindset.



# 05

## **Fixed Mindsets** *influencing Philanthropy*

Just like the global economic recession led to a debunking of hegemonic economic theories about how development happens, the recent Covid-19 crisis is in many ways inviting us to interrogate the mindsets around philanthropy. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit the globe all countries responded. In Uganda we witnessed individuals, families, and grassroots groups rising to the occasion by responding variously to the crisis. Communities across the country came together and offered help to those negatively impacted by the pandemic. This ranged from giving out food, to delivering medication for HIV/AIDS patients, offering a sympathetic ear and a safe haven and shelter for women and girls experiencing domestic abuse in many homes and families.

Philanthropy was called into action on a major scale around the world in and in Uganda. This experience of the outpouring of philanthropy was well captured in the Generosity Reports by CivSource.<sup>30</sup>

What exactly is the role of philanthropy in society at times like this? This is a question that has been on so many people's mind. Whilst philanthropy is not meant to replace the government, it can play a role that transcends what we might expect from the government. In a democratic society, philanthropy should in fact complement government action and resources. Therefore, the mindsets that get formed as a result of the experiences that the world is going through are crucial. For young people across the world who are defining themselves as philanthropists, they are not waiting to die to give away their money.

## *5.1. 'We only support success stories – failure should be avoided at all costs' mindset*

Organizations that receive resources from philanthropy foundations are sometimes faced with this challenge. Philanthropy funders sometimes see themselves as stewards of scarce resources and look to ensure that their grants are always very successful. They want to ensure that the communities they are helping are served as planned and that there are no flaws in the design of programs and assumptions made.

This isn't a bad thing, but over time, this mindset can lead to recalcitrant and risk-averse organizations only funding "sure things." On the side of the receiving organizations the pressure to report only success stories can become an obsession that ends up pushing any organization's failures under the carpet, falsifying impact and indeed leading to less impact than more impact. But this kind of mindset also leads to some funders deliberately carving out a portfolio of their work to fund higher-risk, higher-reward ideas and innovations that could have outsized and overblown impacts which sometimes succeed but also sometimes fail.

It is therefore of absolute importance that the philanthropy community learns from both failure and success and supports organizations to have honest assessments and reporting of their work. Failure stories are equally important to shape the trajectory of development in communities and so Foundations / donors need not only pay attention to successful and replicable stories.

## 5.2. *'We work with only NGOs only mindset*

While for a long time, grant-making to non-profits has been a major part of philanthropy, this trend and mindset is changing. Some philanthropy foundations are starting to work in a more hands-on way with private businesses and local governments to deliver social services and improve communities. While there is a critique that this will 'crowd-out' the NGO sector, it is also true that some of the philanthropy foundations and partners are realizing that they need to expand the network of partners, approaches to community development and even who participates in a given investment.

Another perspective that has implications for this mindset is the current challenges that Uganda is faced with. Currently the country is going through an unprecedented civic space moment which makes it hard to work exclusively with NGOs. For the first time in decades NGOs were closed on account on not following the NGO Act, civil society leaders have been harassed, jailed and threatened. The biggest Development Partner Basket Fund supporting governance and rights work has been closed for now close to a year and not allowed to spend any of its resources for programme related work. This current scenario is one that was never anticipated by many political economy analysts.

The implications of all this is that supporting civil society in Uganda can no longer continue in a business as usual fashion. If indeed civil society cannot find the resources to do rights and governance work and civic actors are being muzzled, how can development partners and philanthropic funders continue to support and stay in solidarity with the sector? With This crisis one would argue that this should act as a catalyst for doing things differently and finding ways in which NGOs continue to push back on the excesses of the state and support citizen engagements in ways that will build alternative forms of civic organizing across the country and the East African region.

The growth mindset to build therefore is one that could consider options like, expand support to traditional forms of civil society beyond NGOs. It is a time to work more intentionally with labor unions, cooperatives, cultural institutions, women's groups, faith-based organizations and informal 'cause-inspired' groups that come together on particular issues. Supporting such organizations is possible in a constrained civic space moment because they are legitimate and cannot easily be closed since they have a defined agenda and constituency, and it will be politically risky for them to be harassed in ways NGOs are harassed.

This is not to say that NGOs are illegitimate but to make the point that that particular configuration of some of the group helps them navigate constrained civic space. This will require mapping of such entities and working out how that support can be given. Currently some of these are doing commendable work. The cooperative movement in Uganda has once again been embraced by the same government that closed it three decades ago, the cultural institutions are working on several social and economic rights issues that affect their constituencies.

The labor unions are regrouping, and several informal labor organizations are emerging as different sectors like market women, boda-boda riders and such informal groups are coming together to secure their livelihoods through saving and investments but also protect their business interest from capitalist takeover as we witness the struggle between 'big capital' and 'small capital' in many parts of the country. The faith-based organizations are also exploring how to engage with changes in society, with many young people challenging the value addition and practices of mainstream faith-based organizations. These developments are indicative of the need to debunk the notion of working with the non-profit sector exclusively.

### 5.3. 'Endowed Permanent Philanthropist is the 'Norm' mindset.

While the power of endowed foundations cannot be disputed and for long they have marketed themselves as the default face of philanthropy, this mindset is being contested by the new generation of young people and how they relate and engage with philanthropy. The foundations that have made a name across history include organizations like Rockefeller Foundation, Open Society Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, Ford Foundation to mention but a few. Foundations such as these, have a widespread footprint across the world through their investments in a diversity of social and political causes. However, we also see the growth of foundations whose founders are still living and they are investing huge sums of money across the world.

The most recent names include foundations like Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that has in the recent past been one of the 'biggest spenders' investing billions of dollars across the world. MacKenzie Scott has now taken the number one spot as the biggest spenders in the world. As reported by Forbes, she has funded over 780 organizations in under a year – part of the \$8.5 billion that she has given away since July 2020. As Forbes reports:

*Scott's made quite the impression on the world of philanthropy as a result, even while shunning the spotlight and not talking to reporters. She doesn't appear to have an office or even a mailing address for her philanthropy, instead working through nonprofit firm Bridgespan. While Scott publicly announces each round on Medium, the blogging website, she does not appear to speak directly to the nonprofits. In each post, Scott includes a short essay explaining her view on philanthropy alongside the list of groups receiving funds. Her latest round on June 15 2020 was \$2.7 billion distributed to 286 groups.<sup>31</sup>*

As reported by research comparing Baby Boomers and Millennials, while the Baby Boomers' philanthropy is more likely to be motivated by the nonprofits they support and how the cause resonates with them, the Millennials' motivations are tied back to their strong social conscious and how they see themselves as philanthropists. Both generations believe they have a responsibility to give back but Millennial donors are also fueled by their belief in their own ability to be a force for good and their desire to make social change core to how they live their lives. This type of mindset is insightful and one that needs to be understood and appreciated and the ways in which it is influencing philanthropy across the world.

## 5.4. 'Philanthropy Organization's Cardinal Role is 'to lead' mindset.

The amounts of funding available to the traditional philanthropy organization is a lot. This money has come with significant power. Today several organizations are wielding significant power in the global economy as well as the philanthropy world. There has now emerged a new form of philanthropy that blends its works with the practices of capitalism known as philanthrocapitalism<sup>32</sup> This is an idea that has been promoted by authors like Bishop (2008) who argue that since these philanthropists have been successful business leaders, they can use the same methods used in business in philanthropy to become leaders on 'smart philanthropy' that uses business models.

There are many influential names that have embraced this type of leadership and have started well-endowed global foundations. These include personalities like; Bill Gates and Mark Elliot Zuckerberg. Bill Gates is the owner of one of the biggest tech companies in the world (Microsoft) and Mark Zuckberg (Facebook) own the biggest social media platform in the world. As Edward (2008) has argued; these approaches are relentlessly donor-centric, emphasizing the assets and ideas that funders bring to the table, instead of building the agency of those who are doing the work on the ground.

As a result, it is increasingly common for foundations in the US to close their doors to unsolicited applications and simply select the groups they want to implement the programmes the foundation has designed<sup>33</sup> Edwards ends up calling for this debate on the leadership of money to become even more pronounced. As noted, that the debate on future of philanthropy is so important because;

*Who owns and controls philanthropy, and how other forms of influence become attached to it, are questions that lie at the heart of any transformational agenda. Recognizing and acting on this fact is vital, rather than pretending that money is somehow neutral or separated from the broader processes in which it is accumulated, expended and exchanged. And that means that questions of money must be integrated into the search for social transformation so that modes of funding can challenge pre-existing inequalities instead of reproducing them, as the new philanthropy tends to do.<sup>34</sup>*

It is worth noting that philanthrocapitalism has become a very attractive model even for philanthropist in Africa. Most of the foundations started by successful capitalists like Dangote, Elumelu and Madhvani are modeled on approaches that privilege the use of business approaches to philanthropy. Telecom Companies and Banks are all starting up Foundations and while these are branded as part and parcel of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), they are indeed an epitome of philanthrocapitalism





## 5.5. *'We are the best vehicle for community philanthropy' mindset*

Philanthropy foundations have for long seen themselves as benevolent providers – sometimes with a mindset that they know and can accurately define the problems at community level. This mindset does not pay any attention to the subsidiarity principle – the one closest to the problem has the solution. This kind of mindset has been criticized in development work for long with the birth of the participatory development movement. Participatory development has sought to engage local populations in development projects and has taken a variety of forms since it emerged in the 1970s, when it was introduced as an important part of the "basic needs approach" to development.

Most manifestations of public participation in development seek "to give the poor a part in initiatives designed for their benefit" in the hope that development projects will be more sustainable and successful if local populations are engaged in the development process. Today it is common practice that participation by those affected by the community need should be at the center of the development interventions being proposed.

It is therefore still perplexing to see that in the field of philanthropy, foundations still use the approach where they dominate the design, development, and execution of intervention with the financial muscle being the only justification of this way of working. It will therefore take a lot of unlearning for 'big spender' philanthropists to embrace participatory philanthropy which should have the beneficiaries at the center of all programs.

The growth of community philanthropy as a movement is therefore a welcome addition to the field. While sometimes there is a quick association of community philanthropy with community foundations, it should be noted that there is a clear distinction. Some of the literature also assumes that community philanthropy is philanthropy that targets specific communities<sup>36</sup> This is also a bit of a misnomer. Community philanthropy should

not be equated to a specific organizational form of geographical scope. This is because community philanthropy is a universal practice. In Africa, what is being understood as African philanthropy is rooted in the ideas of community philanthropy. When communities come together to help each other in community experiences associated with terminologies like; Ubuntu, Harambee, Obwaseruganda – this is community philanthropy at work. The main thread of this type of philanthropy is that it is rooted in social norms and values, such as: reciprocity, solidarity, social cohesion, self-reliance, and interdependence.<sup>37</sup>

The use of mutual funds, community digging groups in rural Africa, burial groups, brigades that transport the sick and exchange of gifts for a diversity of lifecycle functions from birth to death are all important ways in which community philanthropy has existed for centuries and expanded and grown. For community philanthropy to thrive there will be a need for a meeting of minds and change of mindset. Philanthropy foundations built on western models will have to unlearn their models and be open to accommodate community priorities in their philanthropic missions in a manner that responds to specific needs. This will be challenging but it could be the revolutionary growth mindset that will ensure that 'baby boomer' and 'millennial' philanthropists are at a confluence that will expand the scope, relevance and reach of philanthropy in new ways.

It is evident today that with the rise of new billionaires, this has been followed by a rise in community problems that require new thinking and new engagement. It is possible that this is the liberative discourse and space that will reframe philanthropy at community level.

There could be several other mindsets not known to the authors that need to be interrogated and debunked, but in this sections presented above, focus has been on the dominant and influential mindsets that influence the sector of philanthropy.





# 06 **Recommendations** *towards Building a Growth Mindset in Philanthropy*

So where do we go from here? It is clear that there is a need for significant change to happen in and around the mindsets that define and influence that structure and character of philanthropy globally and in Africa. Below we offer some recommendations that can stimulate debate and appropriate pathways that will support to development of a growth mindset in philanthropy.

## *6.1. Develop strong collaborative multi-stakeholder partnerships for mindset change*

There are several changes happening in society, including changes in the long-trusted partners of philanthropy – NGOs. The tectonic shifts that NGOs are undergoing are creating new challenges. Trust in the NGO sector is at an all-time low especially because of the negative public comments by some state officials, the claims of absence of significant impact 'on the ground', the small, projectized and short-term funding to the sector and the sheer lack of strategic long-term funds that can support the growth of the sector.

Yet the same NGO sector still accommodates some of the best brains in community development work. On the other hand, the philanthropy sector still enjoys a lot of trust and may be the most trusted sector today. Governments are ready to work with the philanthropy sector, NGOs get financing and are historical partners with the sector and multilateral institutions are also starting to work closely with the sector.

At the heart of all these partnerships is that all major sectors in development are working to effect lasting change on the root causes of the world's most intractable problems. What remains absent are efforts that build strong partnerships that facilitate cross-sectoral learning and support towards a growth mindset. It is important for all partners to appreciate that in development work they are all but just one piece of the puzzle in the collective work of building a better society for humanity from actions relating to protecting the environment, ending hunger and protecting the rights of communities and much more.

If all development sector partners collaborate, they can share lessons learned and share the risks of taking on these problems. Each institution needs to promote the use of its unique strengths whether it's funding, community development expertise, logistical infrastructure or institutional influence to address our biggest challenges through a mindset that embraces transformation and learning from each other through multi-stakeholder partnership is critical to the entrenchment of a growth mindset.

## *6.2. Leverage the Convening Power of Philanthropy Foundations*

Since philanthropy foundations are one of the most trusted sectors, the foundations need to use this role even more strategically. While there are many concerns and challenges relating to the positioning of the philanthropic sector in the development community, it is still possible for philanthropy to position itself as an important convener who can bring the other major institutions together to create vital partnerships.

There are many examples today to support for a bigger role for philanthropic organizations in development and this has been seen in such areas like vaccines for Covid-19, campaign for education around the world and in the work on SDGs. This collaboration and convening role is an opportunity for philanthropy to step into the role of a supporter of innovations and convener of innovators experimenting with new solutions to find out what works and then partnering with the public sector and CSOs to take those solutions to scale. This is an important part opportunity in building a growth mindset that refuses to use only 'old school' solutions but is available to do more to create a world that works for all by leveraging the convening power of philanthropy.

### *6.3. Recognize, Amplify and Expand 'Value Driven' Philanthropy as the 'New Normal'*

Africa has got a burgeoning population of young people. Nearly three quarters of Africa's population are millennials. As discussed earlier, studies show that millennials are embracing philanthropy in new and different ways.<sup>38</sup> When millennials participate in philanthropy, they are more attached to their values than they are to specific institutions.<sup>39</sup>

One study notes that 'righteous actions' are becoming increasingly important as a form of giving. Young people are making purchases from socially conscious firms, investing in funds in philanthropic organizations that support equality and environment causes and supporting organizations that promote economic or racial justice are gaining traction. This is what has been called the "next wave" form of philanthropy. These new forms of giving are being embraced by young people. The evidence shows that while 7 in 10 philanthropists, overall, believe it is important to work for an organization that engages in socially responsible actions, Millennials, at 87%, outpace other cohorts.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear that this generational mindset shift in relations with philanthropy needs to be embraced. For Africa it is not a luxury anymore to embrace and work with this new mindset - as millennials outstrip all population categories.

## *6.4. Fragmentation of giving practices requires a new mindset*

Traditional organizations like NGOs and the big philanthropy foundations that have supported them will not disappear anytime soon. But the wide array of ways in which philanthropic giving is happening means that philanthropy is spreading widely and giving practices are becoming diversified and fragmented especially institutional philanthropy. In Uganda as in other parts of Africa, community and traditional giving has been invisible as a distinct category of philanthropy and generosity.

With the additional impetus and focus on 'giving-a-name to giving,' at community level, it is clear that more needs to be done to understand the diversity and fragmented ways in which giving is happening. For institutional philanthropy, funders now do not just focus on who to give to but also on how to give. For NGOs this fragmentation may translate into competition for funds with non-traditional formations that may be delivering on causes dear to the hearts of some donors. Further, with the government in Uganda restricting funding to the NGO sector, this may require a mindset that expands the types of partnerships that NGOs need to build in order to continue receiving funds.

At community level, fragmented philanthropy is also coming alive with the new impetus towards making community philanthropy more visible. All these developments require a new type of mindset – approaching philanthropy with the attitude of – 'letting a thousand flowers bloom' and celebrating the diversity of giving and generosity instead of worrying about the implications of this fragmentation for one sector or another.

## 6.5. *“Do well by doing good” – is the new growth mindset*

The debates doing good with doing well were awash in the pre-covid times. The Covid-19 pandemic shock the world to its core. It created one of the biggest economic recessions that the world has seen since World War 2. But with this significant shift in societal relations, we have seen the unprecedented rise in generosity and the unprecedented rise in innovation. Private sector companies in Uganda and across the world have recognized that it is possible to do well as well as do good.

These discussions about the importance of the ‘bottom-line’ and pleasing of shareholders at the expenses of displeasing the communities in which companies invest, have been restructured through the effects of the pandemic. Businesses, communities, philanthropy foundations and individuals have come together in all types of formations across many societies to respond to the clarion call that doing good and doing well is possible.

For private companies, many of them have been further incentivized to engage in social good at community level and new types of cross-sectoral conversations are happening. We have seen examples like a luxury brand company that repurposed its perfume production lines to make hand sanitizer, to hotels that converted otherwise-empty buildings to quarantine facilities and much more. Businesses, in short, understood they needed to lean in to protect themselves by protecting others. Over the next five years they will need to go further, looking beyond their own profit and loss in order to promote broad economic growth and thus create shareholder value.

For civil society organizations, while the pandemic led to a shift in programming and a decline in funding for some of their programs, the pandemic also led to new conversations and ways of looking at the world that were different. As the private became public – with homes being repurposed as offices and funds being relocated to emerging community needs – mindsets of all stakeholders not only changed but continued to lean toward growth than fixed mindsets. This is a trend that should be embraced and continued.





# 07 *Conclusion*

This paper has focused on the idea of shifting philanthropy mindsets from the predominant fixed mindsets and orthodoxies to a growth mindset that builds opportunities for transformation. However, it is important to note that we should not expect the philanthropy community to magically embrace this new mindset.

There will be a need to continue providing opportunities, incentives and external pressure to philanthropists to embrace the transformation necessary to reshape systems. Surfacing these issues is a first step to ensuring that philanthropy continues to expand and to engage in a manner that promotes the growth of the sector and the expansion of a progressive mindsets.

## Foot Notes

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