



philanthropy 
FOR **development**

**June - September 2024
Update**





Introduction

The Philanthropy for Development Programme sets out a bold vision for transforming how development is done by focusing specifically on the recognition and importance of domestic resources in increasing local ownership, unlocking agency and strengthening communities' ability to claim entitlements from duty bearers. The ideal achievement after the 5 years of this program is a social movement that believes in philanthropy and domestic resource mobilization, a pro-philanthropy policy environment and an improvement in donor funding models.

Since June 2024, the Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF) embarked on an effort to create a movement of local actors who will champion the advocacy for a pro-philanthropy policy framework in Uganda. Central to this effort was the creation of strategic alliances with like-minded institutions such as CivSource Africa, leveraging their expertise and networks to build a robust, cohesive platform for action. In addition, UNNGOF prioritized training a cohort of media practitioners who will play a pivotal role in shaping positive narratives around local giving and promoting a culture of philanthropy that resonates with Ugandan communities.

Alongside these activities, policy conversations were initiated around key issues such as tax regulations affecting the non-profit sector in Uganda, and the 'Grand Bargain'—a global agreement aimed at improving humanitarian aid through greater collaboration and efficiency. These discussions were critical in informing the necessary policy reforms, ensuring that the regulatory environment is conducive to the growth of local philanthropy.

This update is meant to update the alliance members on what is happening in Uganda and any prospects for change. It offers a summary of the key activities undertaken by UNNGOF between June and September 2024, outlining the strides made toward accelerating the community philanthropy agenda in Uganda, especially under domain 2.



Annual Learning and Reflection Meeting for GfC partners.



In a bid to strengthen programme coordination, learning, and reporting, the GfC Alliance organizes an annual face-to-face learning meeting. This event serves as a platform to enhance the network, reflect on outcomes from country-level learning meetings, review the programme's theory of change and strategy, assess risk analysis, and foster mutual accountability. This years' **reflection meeting** 2024 was hosted by the UNNGOF from the 12th to 15th August 2024, at Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort & Spa, Kigo, under the theme: **Connecting, Supporting and Influencing Community Philanthropy in a context of Shrinking Civic Space.**

The meeting provided a space for GfC members and partners to take stock of progress made over the past three years, reflecting on challenges, and collectively strategize for the remaining period of the programme. Beyond fostering networking and **meaningful connections**, partners were able to share country-specific experiences among GfC partners, built scenarios about the future of the programme. In order to foster experiential learning, participants undertook a learning excursion to three UNNGOF members i.e AVSI, Watoto Wasoka and Open Space Center. This excursion provided an opportunity to the alliance members to have first hand experiences with what organisations are doing to transform their communities.





Powershifting Philanthropy Conversation

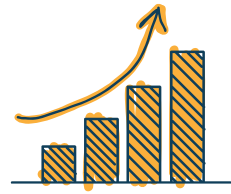
Over the years, the aid system has been preoccupied with “quick solutions” despite existing knowledge that change takes time, centering money as the main driver of change while dismissing non-financial assets such as social capital, local networks, local knowledge, and their contribution to local development. This context has also created artificial divides between communities, civil society, and international funders, and has fueled an aid system that does not deliver the desired change but defined by power. Against this background, UNNGOF in partnership with the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) organized a **meeting** on re-imagining aid and the role of International NGOs in Uganda. This meeting was held on 16th August 2024 at Ndere Cultural Center Kampala.

The meeting brought together state and non-state actors from Africa and beyond to collectively reflect on and redefine the role of development practitioners within a system that values all forms of capital—both financial and non-financial. The goal was to foster collaboration between civil society organizations (CSOs) and international NGOs, building bridges for more inclusive development approaches. A key outcome was an increased awareness of the need to pursue a development agenda in partnership with communities to achieve sustainable change. Additionally, the government, represented by the Office of the Prime Minister, reassured participants of its support for localization efforts in Uganda.

The meeting also highlighted a growing appreciation for the importance of investing in the legitimacy and credibility of local CSOs, elevating local resources, and viewing communities as active co-funders of their own social justice initiatives. In the context of shrinking civic space where national governments are increasingly frustrating the flow of international resources, accelerating community philanthropy has emerged as a critical strategy. UNNGOF will continue leveraging this platform and collaborating with actors that seek to advance a community-led agenda.



Reflection Meeting with Development Partners



In response to the growing complexity and scale of crises around the world, development practitioners have recognized the need for more efficient, effective, and locally driven responses. The Grand Bargain, launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, emerged as a ground-breaking initiative aimed at transforming the way humanitarian aid is delivered. By fostering greater coordination, reducing inefficiencies, and emphasizing the importance of local actors and affected communities, the Grand Bargain seeks to ensure that aid reaches those in need more quickly and effectively.

UNNGOF collaborated with the Office of the Prime Minister, The **Grand Bargain** National Reference Group and The Humanitarian Platform for Local and National Organizations in Uganda to organize the Uganda Country-level Annual Grand Bargain meeting. Stakeholders from government, INGOs, and local NGOs were able to review progress, identify gaps, and establish clear action points to enhance accountability among signatories. There was renewed zeal and commitment amongst stakeholders to build and accelerate equitable partnerships in Uganda. The government of Uganda pledged to provide an enabling policy framework that will accelerate the localization agenda in Uganda. This meeting was held on 11th September 2024, in Kampala.



National Dialogue with the Minister of Internal Affairs on tax policy for non-profit actors

The P4D program and UNNGOF seek to promote regulatory excellence and operational efficiency by NGOs while working towards preventing the risks of over-regulation and its unintended consequences. On 26th September 2024, UNNGOF, in collaboration with the National Bureau for NGOs, Defenders Protection Initiative, and the Human Rights Centre Uganda, convened a national dialogue between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and key government bodies—including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, and the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA). The dialogue, themed "Taxation and Current Tax Trends for NGOs," aimed to promote regulatory excellence and operational efficiency among NGOs while addressing challenges related to tax policies and compliance. The event (#GovtCSODialogue2024) provided a platform to address complex issues like difficulty in obtaining tax exemptions, ledger distortions, and inconsistencies in tax regulations. These challenges have caused significant operational delays and financial strain on NGOs. The URA pledged to implement reforms such as streamlining tax exemption processes and establishing a direct liaison desk for NGOs to improve communication and support.

The discussion highlighted the need for more awareness and capacity-building initiatives to help NGOs understand their tax obligations and utilize available incentives effectively. Additionally, the dialogue emphasized the need for regular engagement between NGOs and tax authorities to address ongoing concerns, particularly regarding the taxation of grants and surplus income. This meeting marked an important step toward creating a more supportive tax environment for NGOs, as stakeholders recognized the need for mutual understanding to resolve the systemic issues that hinder compliance and disrupt NGO operations.



Capacity building for Community Facilitators:



As part of the program's commitment to enhance the capacities and competencies of actors that facilitate local philanthropy conversations at the grassroots, the P4D Community facilitators participated in the 2024 International Association of Facilitators (IAF) **Africa Regional Conference** from 23rd – 25th September 2024 in Kampala. The conference (#IAFAfricaC2024) provided a unique opportunity for our Philanthropy for Development community facilitators to connect and learn from educators, and esteemed change makers on how to drive sustainable change in communities. There was a renewed commitment to embracing facilitation as an empowering practice and the use of community-context facilitation skills in order to accelerate community-driven development. The P4D community facilitators are now part of this wider community of practice that champions facilitation worldwide.



Training of Civil Society Actors and Media Practitioners

UNNGOF seeks to build a movement of actors that recognizes and harnesses the potential of domestic resource mobilization. In this effort, the role of civic actors, community facilitators and media practitioners in agenda-setting and amplifying citizens' voices cannot be over-emphasized. As such, UNNGOF organized training of CSAs, particularly media/communication enthusiasts from the 26th to the 27th of September 2024. **This training was part of our efforts towards building progressive relationships with media practitioners** who will be pivotal in not only profiling innovative ideas in the community but also supporting in increasing the visibility of philanthropy work at the grassroots and national levels. It is expected that these actors will **contribute to shining a spotlight on local philanthropy**, shaping narratives, and influencing social change in Uganda. A community of practice on spotlighting generosity was formed. Moving forward, UNNGOF will be partnering with a reputable institution to recognize and celebrate journalists who actively contribute to this goal.



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Local Giving Fair

In a bid to increase awareness of the inherent potential of domestic philanthropy, UNNGOF collaborated with CivSource Africa, and Qweshunga Initiative to convene the **Gathering of givers 2024**. This local gathering, brought together over 400 people (physically) from across Uganda and reached over 1,000,000 via traditional and new media platforms under the hashtag #OurGenerousSpirit #GatheringOfGivers. It provided space to showcase and celebrate the spirit of generosity in Uganda to increase public awareness of the potential of domestic philanthropy. It is expected that this public demonstration will be critical in facilitating policy conversations with duty-bearers and policymakers at the national level.

The highlight of the event can be accessed **here**.



Government-CSO Dialogue on the Parish Development Model

The Government of Uganda initiated the Parish Development Model (PDM) in 2022. This model is a flagship strategy to create wealth and economically empower citizens at the parish level. Aware that some of the service delivery constraints at the community level arise from national-level policy challenges, the adoption of the PDM was identified as the best delivery mechanism. One of the pillars of PDM is to support initiatives focusing on mindset change. As part of the process to influence how the program is implemented to achieve expected results, in 2023, UNNGOF undertook an assessment of the study which explored the model's prospects of impact on local communities after 2 years of the implementation phase.

On the 23rd of July 2024, UNNGOF organized a **national dialogue** to engage the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of Government over the implementation of the Parish Development model. The discussions at this dialogue were informed by the findings of the study. Key policymakers from the Office of the President, Ministry of Local Government, and Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development engaged with the findings and promised to make key changes to improve the implementation efficiency of the model. Several other closed-door conversations between UNNGOF and these ministries have been organized to track the implementation of the recommendations from the dialogue.



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