



The State of Philanthropy in Africa Book (Introductory Statement)

The State of Philanthropy in Africa book initiative seeks to build an infrastructure for philanthropy in Africa through research, intellectual reflection, and advocacy. Building such an infrastructure requires sound, rigorous, and ground-breaking research, strong partnerships, and informed advocacy. To achieve these, TrustAfrica is initiating in 2007–08 a publication that will measure the state of philanthropy in Africa.

The initiative will address gaps in the field of African philanthropy and philanthropy in Africa in at least two levels. First, TrustAfrica as a philanthropic infrastructure organization will use this initiative as a platform for thinking about ‘doing philanthropy’ in Africa. In so doing, TrustAfrica will include its partners in the philanthropic field and intellectual research, including universities, research institutions, and training centers. Second, TrustAfrica will use the initiative to facilitate advocacy around improving legal frameworks and promoting interest in African philanthropy or philanthropy in general especially within the context of Africa.

The other rationale for the project is that philanthropy is not a popular field even among universities. Mention the term ‘philanthropy’ at an African university and students and lecturers alike are likely to ask, ‘what is that?’ Talk of ‘African philanthropy’ is even less familiar. To address the myth that philanthropy is not an interesting field of study and research, and other related misconceptions, this initiative seeks to introduce a new narrative on African philanthropy.

Some of the areas that the publication will venture into are the theoretical and philosophical as well as historical (cultural) underpinnings of the term ‘philanthropy’ especially within the African context (regional perspectives will be prioritized). Further the publication will among other topics address the following on an annual basis.

1. Local forms of philanthropy and the challenges of mobilizing resources
 - a. Does local giving (local philanthropy) add value to African foundations that get most of their support from international and big donors? If there is value, what is it?
 - b. What explains Africans’ willingness to give to African institutions such as foundations (as expressed in formal and informal gatherings/networks) and their reluctance to actually donate or give to these institutions?
 - c. What has been the psychological impact of international philanthropy on Africans toward giving and by implication on development in Africa?
 - d. Whose worldview has been used to define and describe philanthropy?
 - e. Is the current worldview an appropriate one? How can a new one be devised, one that would reposition different philanthropies into their appropriate positions in global relations?

2. Foundations in Africa
 - a. How should foundations reconfigure themselves in ways that do not impact negatively on their development initiatives?
 - b. How should foundations work with the new initiatives in Africa that seek a united and sustainable Africa?
 - c. What are the current mechanisms that facilitate an interface between foundations and the new African agenda (AU, RECs, NEPAD, etc.)?
 - d. How do foundations align their work with that of the African peoples? In other words, beyond making grants and implementing projects, do foundations understand the people and the cultures among whom they operate?
 - e. What limitations do foundations face in their grant making, especially with regard to African organizations, most of which do not meet donors' criteria?
 - f. Endowments for African foundations have been difficult to establish. Some organizations in Africa have shied away from creating endowment funds while others have creatively established them. It would be useful to conduct a study around possibilities and limitations of endowment building in Africa.

3. Civil Society and States in Africa
 - a. Recently, civil society organizations have advocated for participation in matters concerning the AU and other regional bodies. A number of spaces have been made possible in the process either through advocacy (created spaces) or by invitation (invited spaces). The question to be answered is how civil society can manage these various spaces in ways that will contribute to development rather than 'messy' relations between CSOs and states.
 - b. How can African philanthropy be targeted to strategic plans of nation states, regional communities, and the AU and its organs?
 - c. What role can philanthropy play in connecting citizens to their leaders?
 - d. Can philanthropy be a vehicle for citizens' participation in decision-making, development initiatives, policy formulation, and implementation?
 - e. How does philanthropy take advantage of the new thinking in Africa, which promotes the inclusion of civil society and other social formations in the affairs of the continent and member states?
 - f. How can African philanthropy (and/or philanthropy in Africa) build a social movement for peace building, development and an inclusive Africa?

4. Diaspora and African Development
 - a. How does the Diaspora organize, how is it motivated, what are its contributions to Africa and its mode of engagement with African institutions;
 - b. What are the present frameworks/structures in Africa for financial, social, political, and intellectual capital from the Diaspora;
 - c. Why are the African Diaspora not as passionate about Africa as the European and American Jews about Israel;
 - d. How do African embassies in other parts of the world engage the Diaspora on issues of Africa at a country, regional, and continental level?