

**PHILANTHROPY
WEEK**



Kenya: The State of Philanthropy in Kenya – 2022

Introduction

Enhancing the civic space has been touted as critical in the democratization process and has been one of the cardinal markers and a central objective of the democratization process across the globe. This can be traced as far back as the turmoil in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Western societies as people were trying to fight for their equality in a continent saddled by social stratification based on one's birth and with limited (if any) social mobility. Largely fueled by the successes of the Glorious Revolution in England in 1688, the American Revolution in 1776, and the 1789 to 1791 French Revolution that saw the overthrow of then-French King Louis XVI, the recognition of the equality of man before all men would prompt a quest for the institutionalization of the civic space as a guardian against state excesses.

Since then, several strides have been covered including in the realm of political rights. Lamentably, while the civic space has expanded in Kenya, there are a lot of dangers, threats, and drawbacks. In lieu of the foregoing, this country brief seeks to enhance the understanding of the current context in local philanthropy in Kenya including key issues under focus, key players and their current interventions/activities, and gaps that can be addressed through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) support. The country profile brief entails a quick scan of the philanthropy landscape and safeguarding civic space in Kenya.

The Enabling Environment in Local Philanthropy in Kenya: Key issues and Themes Emerging on Local Philanthropy in Kenya

The changing tide of global geopolitics is having profound effects on the character of philanthropy as we have known it. The nationalism and economic populism that is surging in West European and American politics has been slowly but steadily driving donor dollars away from recipient countries. This steady retreat by the previously ubiquitous Western bilateral donors following political changes in their home countries has seen the identity of benefactors gradually change to assume a more domestic face.

Local philanthropy i.e., the acts of giving to support and promote the welfare of others in society has been a normalized facet of socio-economic life in Kenya. This has particularly been part of the corporates and private sector Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) since the turn of the 21st century. In Kenya, corporate contribution to the community has come a long way over the years. Initially, it started off as a one-off charity giving to more business/corporate philanthropy, and to some extent, a more strategic focus with an emphasis on selected partnerships with Civil Society Organizations. Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Banking, and Finance sectors emerge as the most notable players having consistently given KES 1 million and above between 2014 and 2016¹. The entry into the scene of corporate foundations such as the Safaricom Foundation, Mastercard and Equity Foundation, Kenya Commercial Bank Foundation, and the Aga Khan Foundation, has led to an unprecedented expansion of the charity work of local Kenyan corporates².

Key players and their current interventions/activities

Additionally, philanthropy enabling organizations such as the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) have also been on the rise. Such organizations have been working alongside mobile money platforms such as MPESA to create an enabling environment in local philanthropy as well as to encourage the growth and promotion of organized giving in the country. The goal of organizations such as the Kenya Community Development Foundation is to herald a mind shift amongst Kenyan communities and the wider Kenyan public from the mindset of depending on external resources and to begin to fund their own development. Moreover, these organizations have been creating structures that facilitate such giving as essential for continuity and consistency. Additionally, the Kenya Community Development Foundation has also been working with Government and like-minded organizations in order to establish an appropriate policy and legal framework that incentivizes the growth of local philanthropy.

1 Strathmore University. n.d. "Corporate Philanthropy in Kenya: Debunking myths and realities." Strathmore University. Accessed July 30, 2021. <<https://strathmore.edu/news/corporate-philanthropy-in-kenya-debunking-myths-and-realities/>>

2 IMPACT Philanthropy Africa. n.d. "Catalyzing Local Philanthropy in Kenya." IMPACT Philanthropy Africa. <<https://impactphilanthropyafrika.org/resource/catalyzing-local-philanthropy-in-kenya/>>

On the other hand, organizations such as the Ufadhili Trust have been at the forefront of promoting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In the wake of the 2007/8 post-election violence, for instance, Ufadhili Trust raised in excess of \$1 Billion locally in order to help communities who were displaced or negatively affected by the post-election violence. Under the stewardship of Safaricom and the Kenya Red Cross Society, Kenyans also came together under the *Kenyans for Kenya initiative* whereby they raised close to \$10 Million shillings in response to the famine that was experienced in northern Kenya in 2011.³

Other notable players include the Africa Philanthropy Network, a continent-wide network of African grant-making organizations that facilitates networking and learning experiences among established and emerging African philanthropic institutions as well as the Strategic Advisory Group for the African Venture Philanthropy Alliance, a lobby group for corporates and non-profit organizations that focuses on social investment and promotion and growth of corporate and private giving.

Key Drivers, Enablers, Regulators and Obstacles

In 21st century Kenya, charity activities by Kenyan companies especially in support of education scholarships have expanded significantly. The Wings to Fly initiative offers secondary school scholarships to academically gifted children from needy backgrounds. Since its inception in 2010, the program has benefited more than 15,000 students and projects to offer scholarships worth in excess of Ksh 5.8 billion in five years. Other Kenyan corporates have continued to join the philanthropy bandwagon in major ways, motivated by a genuine interest to offer a helping hand to the needy, or perhaps by popular pressure to share their good fortune with others, manage possible hostility from host communities, earn a positive reputation among peers, or build brand equity⁴.

However, despite organizations particularly those in the caucus of the East Africa Philanthropy Network, a membership association that brings together Trusts and Foundations in the East Africa region with the aim of promoting organized giving being at the forefront in pushing for policies that will make philanthropy favorable across the East African region, most notably, the Tax Incentives and Exemption, there is no enabling environment.⁵

Moreover, while a strong culture of generosity exists, it is predominantly informal rather than oriented toward the CSOs. As such, while Kenya's growing middle classes have been giving away 22% of their monthly income, this is often done through informal gifts and support to family, friends, and neighbours. Religion and local traditions are strong drivers for individual giving. Additionally, the post-independence tradition of Harambee (rallying call for pulling resources together), rooted in self-help and cooperative work, is a key driver for their giving. Kenyans engage with a wide range of individual and community giving but feel most positively about faith-based organizations. Religion is the second biggest motivation for giving behind personal attachment to a cause. Lamentably, CSOs' work is largely perceived as an alien sphere where donations trickle from outside.⁶

East Africa Philanthropy Network Report: Givers in Kenya

The East Africa Philanthropy report, launched in 2021 indicates that while philanthropy is important in social change, individual giving in Kenya has been influenced by the response to need (charity) rather than alleviating suffering (philanthropy). As a result, the tendency for individuals to support structured organizations such as civil society is still in its early stages. However, there has been a remarkable shift in institutional giving in Kenya overall as a result of increased public awareness of philanthropy and legislative and regulatory changes that have promoted public grant-making charities and other forms of institutionalized giving in the region. Civil society organizations, high-net-worth individuals, community, corporate foundations, and trusts make up the current giving ecosystem. The popularity of institutional giving in Kenya is growing, owing to an increase in the number of philanthropic organizations.⁷

3 KCDF. n.d. *Promoting Philanthropy*. KCDF. Accessed July 31, 2021. <https://kcdf.or.ke/index.php/about-us/promoting-philanthropy>

4 Kamau, Macharia. 2018. "Kenya: Local companies increasing their contribution to charitable initiatives, especially in the education sector." Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, February 5. <<https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/kenya-local-companies-increasing-their-contribution-to-charitable-initiatives-especially-in-education-sector-2/>>

5 KCDF. n.d. *Promoting Philanthropy*. KCDF. Accessed July 31, 2021. <<https://kcdf.or.ke/index.php/about-us/promoting-philanthropy>>

6 Charities Aid Foundation. 2020. *Growing Giving in Kenya*. Kings Hill, Kent: Charities Aid Foundation

7 EAPN. Local philanthropy environment in Kenya. EAPN. Accessed November 16, 2022. <https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/60127f811818950bd9033f7b/6245be61f602dec85aaa1175_Giving%20Research%2031-3-2022%20with%20list%20of%20Figures.pdf>

Gaps that can be addressed by actors within the philanthropy ecosystem

For the philanthropy ecosystem, including the CAF initiative, there are gaps that require intervention. For instance, helping individuals and communities understand the value chain of CSOs, as well as greater transparency, knowledge about individual organizations, and understanding of how donations are spent, could further encourage formal giving (i.e., giving to CSOs). There is also a need for CSOs to utilize partnerships with religious institutions, and the importance of tapping into local traditions when engaging individuals around growing their giving. Thirdly, interventions should be tailored towards popularizing technological and fintech's aided fundraising strategies such as Go Fund Me, M-Changa, Global Giving, and M-Pesa.



CONTACT US

Kenya Community Development Foundation
P.O. Box 10501-00100
Nairobi
Kenya
Email: info@kcdf.or.ke