

5 **The Whole Is Greater than the Sum**

Forging and Sustaining Multi-Stakeholder Philanthropic Partnerships in Africa beyond the Pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

African philanthropy and the culture of ‘giving’ are not new phenomena. They are ingrained in the fabric of African societies and how these communities sustain themselves. For centuries, before colonialism, aid agencies and development partners arrived in Africa, grassroots philanthropists and associations mobilised resources to address relevant issues and problems at the individual and community levels (Schwier and Holland, 2020). Religious giving, individual or institutional donations, mutual aid, diaspora remittance, and revolving fund organisations are various forms of grassroots philanthropic activities that continue to exist on the continent.

Philanthropy, however, does not exist in a vacuum. It is influenced by historical, social, and political events. Colonialism and the introduction of modern forms of philanthropy in Africa have made African giving invisible and created an image of dependency while perpetuating societal inequalities and social problems.

Peter Buffet, the son of billionaire investor Warren Buffet, has called mainstream philanthropy a ‘philanthropic colonialism’ (Buffett, 2013). In an editorial letter titled ‘The Charitable-Industrial Complex’, Mr Buffet discussed how capitalism and the legacy of colonialism shape modern giving, and the moral and ethical issues associated with it: ‘As more lives and communities are destroyed by the system that creates vast amounts of wealth for the few, the more heroic it sounds to “give back”. It’s what I would call “conscience

laundering" – feeling better about accumulating more than any one person could possibly need to live on by sprinkling a little around as an act of charity.'

This colonial mindset with regard to philanthropy is rooted in imperialism and the 'saviour' complex, and has been harmful to Africa in many ways. It not only transplants Western solutions to African problems with little regard to its local political contexts, culture, or societal norms. It also bypasses government institutions and marginalises local expertise and civil society organisations (CSOs).

For example, a research study commissioned by the Vodafone Foundation found that only 50 per cent of bilateral aid reaches Africa, and it is given to Western intermediary organisations to implement projects instead of local CSOs or institutions (Moyo and Imafidon, 2020).

Mainstream media and fundraising television ads by Western donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (i.e., the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children) continue to portray Africans as needy and vulnerable people who have no sense of agency or the capacity to address their own problems. In the age of social media, these widespread images showing sickly African women and children who live in extreme poverty contribute to this representation. Most people associate Africa with poverty, disease, and vulnerability, not the wealth, cultural, and environmental diversity of its 1.2 billion people. Nor is there an understanding of the thriving African philanthropy ecosystem that is driven by generosity, solidarity, and unity between local and diaspora Africans.

Global philanthropy has been at a critical junction in recent years. The debate started by Mr Buffet and movements to localise aid and decolonise wealth have led to some reckoning within the sector. Leaders in Africa are demanding reforms, implementing bottom-up approaches to solving problems, and using financial resources to strengthen systems and institutions, and build power within communities.

In 2020, the pandemic and the killing of George Floyd in the United States, which sparked a global movement for racial and

socio-economic justice, also brought greater scrutiny of charitable funds. More attention is being paid to how philanthropists address racial and societal inequities that have long existed but are now exacerbated by these recent events.

The 2014 Ebola outbreak and the resulting public health and economic crises in West Africa were turning points for the continent. It profoundly shifted the African Union (AU) Commission's role in addressing regional and continental public health issues, and forced it to take a visible part in the response efforts.

The AU sent a humanitarian mission and forged multi-sectoral partnerships to mobilise millions of dollars to curb the outbreak and protect the health and livelihoods of its fellow Africans (Musabayana, 2014). Though devastating, the crisis effectively put public health on the top of the political agenda for all AU member states.

This chapter explores the importance and impact of AU's strategic leadership and multi-sectoral partnerships in advancing the continent's health and economic agenda, the challenges inherent in sustaining and scaling these alliances in Africa, and the path forward.

BUILDING AN AFRICA-WIDE STRATEGY

During the Ebola crisis in 2014, AU and its member states began to play a leadership role in forging partnerships for public health. The AU organised its executive councils to authorise the deployment of civilian and humanitarian missions to curb the disease (Musabayana, 2016). African business leaders also partnered with AU and the Development Bank to establish an 'Ebola Crisis Fund', which raised over \$28 million (BBC, 2014).

For the COVID-19 pandemic, the hoarding of diagnostics and personal protective equipment (PPE) by wealthier nations has forced many African governments, philanthropists, and business leaders to seize this as an opportunity to look inwardly for system-building and support. It dramatically increased African-led giving for pandemic responses at local and continental levels on a scale never before seen (Schwier and Holland, 2020).

The Commission organised the 'AU COVID-19 Response Fund' to mobilise up to \$400 million to support a sustainable response to the pandemic. Several wealthy Africans from the private sector were recruited and appointed as AU special envoys to mobilise resources and advocate for debt relief. Debt relief was an essential component of this effort because it would allow African governments to redirect their resources towards combatting COVID-19 instead of servicing debt.

A NEW PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER

After the Ebola outbreak, AU was committed to setting up continental structures to mitigate and prevent similar public health emergencies. To achieve that goal, the AU established the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) in January 2016. Africa CDC is a continental public health agency with the mandate to strengthen the capacity of each member state to prevent, control, and respond to emerging public health threats.

Less than two years after Africa CDC was formed, in July 2017, African heads of state and governments issued a commitment to accelerate the implementation of the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR). IHR is a global legal agreement that aims to prevent and respond to the spread of diseases before they become international crises. This declaration was dubbed a 'new public health order' for Africa. Nkengasong et al. (2017) suggest the declaration 'offers a momentous opportunity for renewed engagement for strengthening health systems to accelerate the implementation of the IHR and other commitments using a broader multisector approach including public-private philanthropic partnerships'.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

The establishment of the Africa CDC and issuing a declaration and commitment to accelerate the implementation of the IHR meant that African governments were serious about investing in the development of health systems and establishing robust surveillance and data infrastructures for health.

Within a short period of time, the agency set the public health strategic direction of the continent by creating emergency operations centres, laboratory systems and networks, and several divisions dealing with topics ranging from policy, health diplomacy, surveillance and disease intelligence, to training and research (Africa CDC, 2016). These nascent systems and structures were instrumental in preparing the continent better to manage the COVID pandemic (Kapata, 2020).

As soon as the first case of COVID-19 was announced in China, Africa CDC developed an 'Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak' to curtail the virus and prepare the continent for pandemic response and recovery (Africa CDC, 2020). The agency's leadership in setting this continental direction was transformational. Its director, Dr John Nkengasong, has been recognised for his pandemic leadership and advocacy with numerous awards and accolades, including the 2020 Global Goal Keeper Award from the Gates Foundation (BMGF, 2020).

The Centre partnered with the AU envoys, philanthropic entities, and the private sector to launch several initiatives to strategically direct donor funds towards programmes that would strengthen Africa's public health systems and are well aligned with its strategy.

To mobilise resources for its continental strategy, Africa CDC operationalised a new charitable foundation, the Africa Public Health Foundation, in April 2020. The Foundation's sole purpose is to raise money for Africa CDC, and Sahra Noor (the author of this chapter) served as its founding director. It works as a platform for philanthropists and other partners to support Africa CDC's strategic objectives without going through the AU or other intermediaries. During the pandemic, the Foundation partnered with Africa Donor Collective (ADC), a donor group with representatives from twenty foundations, including the BMGF, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Skoll Foundation. According to the June 2021 progress report, the Foundation has a fully functioning governance body and secretariat. It raised \$25 million from the ADC group to support pandemic-related

activities in fourteen countries and disbursed 70 per cent of all funds received (APHF, 2021).

The Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT) was an initiative set up by the Centre to reduce COVID-19 transmission in Africa by mobilising experts, community workers, supplies, and other resources to identify and treat cases in a timely manner. PACT has enabled over 47 million tests to be taken across the continent (Mastercard Foundation, 2021a).

Seeded by a \$1.5 billion donation from the Mastercard Foundation, the 'Save Lives, and Livelihoods' project supported the acquisition and delivery of vaccines to at least 50 million people while also 'laying the groundwork' for vaccine manufacturing in Africa (Mastercard Foundation, 2021b).

The Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative (Africa PGI) is a \$100-million, four-year partnership to expand access to next-generation genomic-sequencing tools and expertise designed to build the capacity of public health surveillance and laboratory networks. The initiative will help identify and inform research and public health responses to COVID-19 and other epidemics and endemic diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and cholera (Ayodele, 2020).

The Rise of African High Net-Worth Individuals

Africa's economy has grown exponentially since the 1990s. Subsequently, the continent has approximately 170,000 millionaires with more than \$660 billion combined net wealth holdings. From 2000 to 2013, Africa's wealthiest individuals increased by more than 150 per cent compared to the worldwide growth rate of 73 per cent (Tendai, 2018). The number of Africans with more than \$30 million in assets is projected to double by 2025, representing a growth of 59 per cent compared to the global figure of 34 per cent for the same period (Tendai, 2018).

This economic growth and rise of wealthy Africans offer a new path for the continent to harness the potential of its people and local resources. Some of these high net-worth individuals (HNWIs) are

active philanthropists operating family foundations and supporting various sectors such as health, education, entrepreneurial development, and infrastructure. The most notable wealthy Africans are from affluent countries, including South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, and Kenya. They include Aliko Dangote, Nicky Oppenheimer, Patrice Motsepe, Mohammed Dewji, Strive and Tsitsi Masiyiwa, Olajumoke Adenowo, and Ndidi Nwuneli (Sieff, 2018).

AFRICAN-LED GIVING

According to research by the Bridgespan Group, African philanthropists gave seven times their annual average number of major gifts to help the continent respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the giving, the Bridgespan Group found that forty-five large donations between March and December 2020 in three countries totalled roughly \$269 million in value compared to sixty-four large gifts of \$1 million or more than the group identified between 2010 and 2019 (Schwier, 2020)

According to a new survey developed by Dalberg in partnership with the African Philanthropy Forum, 71 per cent of philanthropists who are focused on the continent have either increased their giving as a share of endowments or are considering doing so in response to COVID-19. Their contributions primarily target health care, economic recovery, and food security issues (Mwangi, 2020).

This African-led giving falls into two categories: (1) cash donations and in-kind items intended to strengthen the ability of private and public health-care providers to respond to the crisis, and (2) investments in start-ups and existing businesses that aid in addressing the economic fallout caused by mandatory lockdowns and other measures instituted by different national governments to slow the spread of the virus (Mwathi, 2017).

IMPACTFUL LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Beyond projects initiated or led by AU and Africa CDC, various multi-sectoral approaches are used to fund COVID-19 response activities in local communities to manage and recover from the pandemic. These

initiatives have been facilitated through locally led philanthropic funding and implementation.

South Africa's Solidarity Fund was created as a fundraising and rapid response platform to help the government, philanthropists, the private sector, and the general public collaborate and coordinate efforts to fight the pandemic. The Fund has supported multiple health and humanitarian projects, including refurbishing hospitals, paying health workforce salaries, distributing PPE to health-care workers, and rolling out vaccination campaigns across the country. As of December 2021, the Fund had raised 45 billion South African rand, equivalent to 3 billion US dollars (Solidarity Fund, 2021).

Amref Health Africa, the most prominent African charity focused solely on health development, has partnered with the different Ministries of Health (MoH) in East Africa to improve surveillance and early detection of the virus. In Kenya, the MoH has partnered with Amref Health Africa to launch a campaign to educate health workers on COVID-19 by leveraging an innovative mobile network technology known as Leap mHealth. The Leap platform equips health workers to identify, isolate, and refer suspected cases and prevent possible transmission through community education and other prevention measures (Ntonjira, 2020). Amref onboarded over 74,000 community health workers onto the platform.

In Somalia, the Hormuud Salaam Foundation, the charitable entity of two of the largest corporations in the country, formed a partnership with the government and other private-sector leaders to fund COVID-19 response efforts. The Foundation alone funded the dissemination of health awareness messages, refurbished hospitals, and built Somalia's first public oxygen plant (*ADF Magazine*, 2021).

Somalia is one of twenty-two out of the fifty-five African countries classified in 2021 as 'fragile or conflict-affected countries' by the World Bank.¹ These countries face unique governance, political,

¹ www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview#1.

and economic challenges not shared by wealthier, more stable countries on the continent. For example, they have populations that live in extreme poverty, and their governance and health systems have been decimated by war and civil conflict, yet the flow of money is inhibited by threats of violence, terrorism, and international sanctions. Local private-sector leadership and philanthropic funding partnerships are essential in buffering the economy. They also help fill institutional gaps and strengthen the government's capacity to curb the disease and save lives.

TRANSFORMATIONAL PLATFORM

The COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant threat to the supply chain of medical commodities, products, and pharmaceuticals. To help African countries procure pandemic-related medical supplies and equipment, the AU launched the African Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP), the world's first continental digital procurement platform.²

This game-changing platform was developed by the AU and its Special Envoy, Zimbabwean billionaire Strive Masiyiwa. It is powered by Janngo, an African-led social enterprise that invests in pan-African digital companies. Funding partners include the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and leading institutions, foundations, corporations, and multilateral partners (Gachenge et al., 2020).

AMSP is anchored in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA). This trade agreement is embedded in the Agenda 2063 of the AU, signed by fifty-four countries. It requires members to remove tariffs from 90 per cent of goods, allowing free access to commodities and services (Kelleher, 2021). To level the playing field between public and private health sectors, purchases made through AMSP are restricted to governments, national health systems, NGOs, and donor organisations (Gachenge et al., 2020).

² <https://amsp.africa/about-us/>.

The AMSP has revolutionised Africa's response to the pandemic, and its impact on leveraging Africa's bulk-purchasing power to secure COVID-19-related medicines, vaccines, and supplies was felt immediately.

Pooling continental demand ensured price competitiveness, improved quality and availability of products, simplified payment processes, and reduced logistical bottlenecks. The platform now offers a wide range of health supplies and equipment to meet the needs of Africa's health sector beyond the pandemic (Crone, 2020).

AMSP's plans include an aggressive vaccine procurement effort to help the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT), established by the AU chairperson. AVATT has secured 570 million doses from Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, and Sputnik V (Donnenfeld, 2021). It also facilitates the supply of medicines and vaccines from the Novartis Pandemic Response Portfolio to the AU member states.

As an e-commerce platform, AMSP has bigger ambitions to address historical and emerging procurement challenges. The platform's future plans include boosting indigenous pharmaceutical production by establishing an open licence for enlisting local manufacturers and featuring 'Made in Africa' options on the first page. Such incentives could motivate the diversification of operations by African companies to address the demand and supply mismatch for protective equipment and COVID-19 supplies in Africa (Ramaphosa, 2020).

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

While generosity and informal philanthropy are substantial on the African continent, some significant risks and constraints must be overcome to sustain and grow Global South–Global North philanthropic partnerships. Corruption, lack of tax incentives and other enabling environments, and political instability in some parts of Africa pose a great risk to the continent's ability to attract local and global philanthropic and development resources.

Corruption and Lack of Enabling Environments

Historical events, including international sanctions, anti-terror, and anti-money laundering policies have limited inter-continental money flow (Messick, 2020) and continue to fuel donor apprehension.

Rampant corruption, money laundering, and a lack of transparency harm Africa's image and ability to build trust among diverse stakeholders and shepherd these fragile alliances (David, 2021). Admittedly, this issue is often hyped by the media and international donors and is used to stigmatise and marginalise the continent. However, there is strong evidence to suggest it exists, and it must be curtailed for the sake of Africa and its people. Given the public perception and its pervasiveness, it is difficult for multi-sectoral partnerships to thrive without curbing public and private corruption.

Limited tax policies and a lack of regulatory frameworks that meet global standards, promote and incentivise giving, and facilitate the cross-border flow of money are also challenging. Some countries impose burdensome bureaucratic and procedural requirements for foreign donations or require mandatory routing of foreign funding through government channels.

Stewardship and Transparency

During crises, it's normal to see donor enthusiasm increase contributions, but this can overwhelm and potentially collapse the systems they are intended to support. This can also lead to or at least incentivise increased corruption and misappropriation of funds. Identifying the sweet spot where adequate donor funds flow unrestricted and reach the target beneficiaries is critical. Continuously assessing capacity and supporting government and CSOs' accounting systems can improve transparency and accountability. Trust is a precious commodity in philanthropy, and collaborative decision-making can facilitate communication on how, when, and where funds are spent.

Systems Change versus Incremental Change

Global colonial philanthropy tends to entrench African governments and communities in survivalism and competition while preventing a radical change in the name of pragmatism. It hasn't worked and perpetuates inequities and mistrust. To advance more just and equitable systems, funding partnerships must be both catalytic and impactful, and focusing on incremental change in outputs and activities is short-sighted. The funding collaborations between local and global philanthropy must pair knowledge, expertise, and existing networks to achieve tangible and sustainable change.

Given its rapid demographic changes and technological advances, Africa requires funders and investors who can adapt to a fluid environment that demands more strategic and systematic investment approaches.

The AU must play a continental leadership role in mitigating these risks and implementing solutions to address these challenges to secure the flow of philanthropic support across the continent and prevent the rich and powerful from grabbing the resources meant for the poor. Political will is a must, but there is room for government and philanthropic co-operational collaboration, including investing in human capital, financial systems, and the sustainable policies required to deal with this issue.

THE PATH FORWARD

Forging partnerships is essential, but it also carries risks for all involved. Each partner has to accept the challenge, invest time and resources without guaranteeing that others will do the same, adapt to dynamic ways of working together and prevent opportunism. One of the destructive elements of philanthropic practice has been using money as a substitute for local knowledge and expertise. No one wants to be in partnership when they think they are being used for image and reputation. Identifying the right partner and building mutual benefits that multiply impact are key to relationship-building.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUED COLLABORATION

Philanthropic partnerships aimed at the COVID-19 response have been chiefly led by AU and Africa CDC, closely coordinated with local governments, civil society, and the private sectors. The response has been fuelled by generous donations from Africans and global partners. This large-scale collaboration and international solidarity are noteworthy and encouraging, but tenuous. As the pandemic went into its third year, sustaining partnerships became increasingly challenging due to complacency, reduced investment and donor fatigue. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Collaborative philanthropy that combines African philanthropists' insights with Western donors' global experience is imperative to boost efforts to reduce the burdens of poverty, ill-health, and injustice.

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

The pandemic has amplified the need for government inclusion and leadership, along with the positive impact of African-led collective action. At the height of the pandemic, this shared purpose and aligned interests increased the coordination and reach of response activities. This unprecedented scale of giving and coalition-building can serve as a springboard to create systemic and sustainable change if understood and executed on a continental-wide institutional level.

One of the lessons learned from the supply hoarding and vaccine apartheid seen during the COVID-19 crisis is that Africans must be their own saviours. These inequities serve as a rallying cry for the unity of purpose that is not solely driven by responses to public health or humanitarian emergencies but is rooted in self-reliance and interdependence to improve the quality of life for the continent's citizens.

As much as it enrages our leaders and upends Africa's bilateral and multilateral political relationships, it also provides an opportunity for the AU and African governments to continuously assert their leadership and vision for creating an internal sustainable resource base for holistic development.

HUMILITY GOES A LONG WAY

'Decolonise wealth' or 'decolonise aid' are not just social media slogans. They are grassroots movements stemmed in social justice, demanding greater equity and systems change (Villanueva, 2019).

Creating the conditions for enduring and trusting partnerships requires an end to the status quo and an earnest shift in how global philanthropy and development funding has historically operated in Africa. It demands an end to the transfer of financial resources meant for Africa through Western intermediaries instead of going directly to African-led NGOs or implementing partners. Regardless of the intended impact of this practice, the nature of the pandemic means that no foreign entity can operate alone or in silos without partnering and engaging African stakeholders.

Sharing power and relinquishing control are challenges that can be overcome by focusing on the value potential partners bring to the table. Building relationships with the right stakeholders willing to engage in an ongoing, open, and honest dialogue requires humility.

EXPANDING CHARITABLE VISION FOR PARTNERSHIPS

To bring everyone to the table, philanthropy must be grounded in what African countries and beneficiaries want and need versus what Western individuals and nations think they want.

Magic happens when partnerships are formed and sustained to engage everyone in the decision-making process and not dismiss constructive criticisms that inevitably arise along the journey.

For global funders new to the continent or those interested in doing things differently, leveraging the influence of African foundations whose projects get broader support across Africa may be beneficial. These donors have a track history of local partnerships and regional relationships to build capacity and promote best practices with their peers. Trusted partners can serve as ambassadors to inspire others to remain engaged in partnership-building during and after public health crises. They can advocate for more collective action to

complement and advance the continent's strategic public health and development goals.

Furthermore, most diaspora Africans and HNWIs tend to fund and support programmes and projects in their local countries because it is easier to manage how the funds reach beneficiaries and track their contributions (Ansah, 2018). Expanding their charitable vision transnationally and harmonising their giving to continental priorities will ensure their impact on the continent for generations.

Powell et al. (2018) argue that when executed well, funder collaboratives can achieve significant results by creating economies of scale, but, to be sustainable, they need to articulate how their collective action will create value for beneficiaries, grantees, and themselves. Among the most reported benefits were greater ability to drive systems-level impact, greater reputation boost, and more or better non-financial support. The researchers also noted the importance of the positive emotional effects such as trust-building and networking that these collaborations have on individual leaders and organisations who actively participate in them.

FORMALISE PEER LEARNING

There is so much that is still unknown about partnerships, especially those that have been formed in response to public health crises. Facilitation of multi-sector philanthropy forums and gatherings adapted to the African context can help disseminate good practice models, tools, and strategies that can be replicated. They can create opportunities for private philanthropists to engage with the state at several levels and promote peer-to-peer exchange.

Corporations and HNWIs could be engaged more if governments provided them with opportunities and platforms for thought-leadership and advisory roles. AU appointing Strive Masiyiwa and other HNWIs as Special Envoys for policies and causes they care about is a good start, but more must be done to give such envoys wider exposure and help bridge the transparency gap.

Philanthropy networks, including the African Philanthropy Forum and other regional forums, provide platforms for philanthropists to engage in emerging topics and issues. They could be more strategic in engaging governments, supporting and increasing the pool of HNWI's, and aligning their giving to the continental development agenda. Spaces for sharing knowledge and experience with peers need to be more tailored to the nature of giving by the wealthy in the African context.

STUDY AND DISSEMINATE BEST PRACTICE

Engaging academia and supporting thematic research on existing partnerships in Africa, their impact, and lessons learned may provide more in-depth understanding of what works and what does not. Research can help all stakeholders have a clearer vision about how to solve problems and help them embrace evidence-based tools to measure impact. Funding and programmatic partnerships often conflate programme activities and outcomes with effectiveness. Investing in independent research and evaluations and other processes helps partnerships communicate more effectively to broader audiences and become vehicles for learning and growth for the sector, and holds partners accountable for their own contributions.

THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE SUM

Collaboration is key to creating lasting solutions to society's biggest problems. Drawing on the lessons learned from the Dalberg report on African philanthropy, locally led giving has become focused, innovative, and fast-paced in response to crises. Yet, it can't transform the lives of Africans without building broad-based partnerships with the government and other stakeholders on the continent and beyond (Mwangi, 2020).

An African proverb says, 'it takes a village to raise a child', and it aptly applies to public-philanthropic-private partnerships. We know that UN set the vision for poverty elimination, but it alone did not lift more than 1 billion people out of extreme poverty since 1990 (UN,

2015). That level of achievement was only possible through long-term commitment and multilateral and multi-sectoral partnerships.

As Africa tries to fully vaccinate its population against COVID-19, prepare for future emergencies, and recover economies, mobilising its own resources will prove transformational. However, it will also need to bring on board its global donors, along with bilateral and multilateral partners to address gaps in scientific research, marginalisation, inequity, and the zero-sum premise of international power competition experienced on the continent.

Kituyi (2020) argues that global collaboration is crucial now more than ever: 'There is strength in numbers. We learn more, and faster, together – and the pandemic is underscoring the critical role of international collaboration on the frontiers of science and technology.' Yet the focus on partnerships and cooperation must remain on placing Africans at the forefront of philanthropic giving. The paradigm of Africans as helpless, barefoot, and hungry, and Western donors as saviours, has shifted permanently. Gone are the days when international donors and development partners parachuted projects and shoved their ideas onto Africans as needy beneficiaries who lack vision, creativity, and agency.

Africans have demonstrated unprecedented leadership and generosity in recent years. They are well positioned to ensure that charitable resources are deployed, with a deep understanding of the nature of the challenges they are intended to solve. As Africa recovers from the pandemic, it will need a new form of philanthropy that is collaborative, grounded in Africans' reality, and represents their vision and aspirations for the future.

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