



Africa Philanthropy Network

Voice and Action for African Philanthropy

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# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

✦ 2024 – 2028

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*Building Solidarity for  
Collective Voice and Action*



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# 1 Preamble



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**Board Chair**



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APN will be fifteen years old in July 2024. Over the years, the APN has become an important continent-wide network of African organizations and communities promoting voice and action for African philanthropy.

Across the world, philanthropy is undergoing rapid transformation that brings about both exciting opportunities and complex challenges. As a more unified global culture around giving emerges, so do new players, approaches, and renewed and projected the use of optimism and commitment. Yet, shifting attitudes toward people-led philanthropy, intense debates about power and effectiveness and difficult and operating policy environments require philanthropists and social investors to demonstrate their value to a diversified of stakeholders. In addition, as many philanthropies broaden their activities to social impact investment, knowledge building, advocacy and movement building, they face the need.

This Strategic Framework was developed through a highly iterative, inclusive and participatory process with representatives of the APN family (membership, board, secretariat), partners and stakeholders including youth organizations, women and feminist movements and activists, tech support organizations, research and academia, community foundations, consultants, and individual philanthropists. The process entailed analysing the journey travelled so far; how APN has evolved and transitioned from a Grantmaking Network to a multi-stakeholder platform for African philanthropic virtues. Extensive consultations and feedback from our members and key partners have also informed and shaped the strategic intent and focus reflected in this strategic framework.

With so much in flux, and multi-layered power dynamics on the continent, actors are seeking alternative ways of doing and deciding. Leaders are asking how philanthropies achieve impact not just as a source of funding, but including non-financial resources. APN developed this strategy in response to this surge of interest. Over the next five years, APN will nurture the infrastructure for philanthropy in Africa, bring actors together and articulate a common voice to help drive solutions for Africa. We will as an African family, strengthen national and regional networks, and further enhance the effectiveness of philanthropy practice and policy. Also, we aim to strengthen the capacity of the secretariat to further enhance its position as a convener, coordinator, connector, promoter and an influencer for enabling philanthropic policy and practice.

We will prioritize broadening our membership, strengthen our linkages with African youth, pan-African institutions, social movements, civil society, and with African Governments, Regional Economic bodies and the African Union. Further, we will enhance our partnership with the private sector and global philanthropy development support entities.

## 2. Who We Are

*At its core, APN seeks to position African philanthropy as a fundamental expression of civic participation and solidarity for the purpose of building equitable and just societies in Africa.*

### \* Our Vision

A relevant, effective and responsive philanthropy for building equitable and just societies in Africa.

### \* Our Mission

APN's mission is to elevate the power of philanthropic giving practices that are inclusive and beneficial to the communities across the continent. In absence of a strong enough infrastructure that can bring actors in the African philanthropy field together to articulate a common voice, APN serves as a home to philanthropy actors in Africa – nurturing a pragmatic and democratic learning community, a safe space, and a trusted source of collective intelligence on African philanthropies.

## Our Values

*APN values are premised on Ubuntu Philosophy – I am, because you are!*

APN believes in African agency -Africans should be at the center of the response to their challenges, have control over their actions and be more responsible for the consequences on their own lives and communities. As such, we will aspire to live the values of 'UBUNTU' grounded in the spirit of Solidarity, Inclusiveness, Innovation and Accountability.

### \* Solidarity

We recognise each other as fellow human beings. We believe in solidarity as an element of human association that emphasizes the cohesive social bonds that holds a group of people together, allows them to feel valued and understood, and is based on community interests, objectives, and standards.

### \* Inclusiveness

We value and encompass 'the breadth and depth of human differences', including but not limited to differences of ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and identification, age, class, economic circumstance, religion, ability, geography and philosophy among other forms of human expression.

### \* Innovation

We value innovation and investing in the time and space for learning, developing and disseminating diverse knowledge products that are insightful of African-grounded experiences, as we adapt our cultures and practices by unlocking the inherent power and wisdom we have as communities in defining, shaping and determining our own development.

### \* Accountability

We hold ourselves to a high standard of ethical conduct, and encourage the same of our members, actors and stakeholders in the philanthropy field.



## 3. Our Impact

*The sustainable development challenge faced over the 15 years has once again helped to improve the durability of the APN. The APN emerged from the African Grantmakers Network (AGN) that was founded in 2009 in response to a call for philanthropy in Africa to be more inclusive of both continental and global interests and resources.*

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For over 15 years the APN has convened funders, philanthropy development and support actors (PSDAs), curated knowledge on philanthropic practices, and connected forms of philanthropic giving to build an informed network of actors to articulate a common voice and engage with effective and responsive development. We have made some progress in the transformation of the field, garnering a reputation and credibility as a go to platform for all forms of philanthropic actors equipped to make a positive impact through their philanthropy for institutions and communities across the continents. With an immeasurable network of member organizations and partners, we have a good track record of accomplishments and a well-connected and credible network of field experts.

### Convenings

APN has organized assembly, and regional coverings (in person and virtual) for hundreds of practitioners and PSDAs working in different thematic areas and geographical areas. These convenings have enabled members and other actors to self-examine their efforts – individually, in relation to each other, and within a broader context.

The APN Assembly convening organized biennially is the flagship event of the network. The APN Assembly has provided a safe space for members and partners to meet other actors they would not otherwise have gotten to know. These Assemblies bring more than 300 practitioners and their partners together to share experiences, new knowledge and collective reflections on African philanthropy's development, to articulate a common agenda and share stories for shaping the narratives about Africa and Africans. For our members, building knowledge and collaborations has been a challenge because of geographical distance, language difference, and diversity of context and interests. Communities experience complex and intersectional problems that pose not only direct challenges to an African philanthropy arena that uses a fragmented approach to enduring said challenges. The inaugural Assembly was held in October 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya to set an agenda for African philanthropy. The second was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in November 2012, followed by the Assembly that was organized in Arusha, Tanzania in July 2015; then, in Port Louis, Mauritius, November 2018, and in Entebbe, Uganda in November 2022 under the theme: "African

Philanthropy: Driving Change". In 2020, APN was to co-host WINGS Forum in Nairobi, Kenya but it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and it took place in October 2023 instead, bringing together more than 500 PSDAs from around the world to Africa under the theme: "Transform Philanthropy".

Youth Summits organized in 2021 and 2022 have been instrumental in building information and understanding of youth participation in philanthropy, their gaps in accessing information and opportunities, and missing narratives about their contribution in development through philanthropy. We have built a great awareness on the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTFA) and gaps in ensuring their meaningful participation on the policy and implementation frameworks at the community, national, regional and continental levels. All this is available on our website.

### Connecting

APN as the only continent-wide network of organizations in Africa and its diaspora has attracted the interest of more than 100 member organizations with headquarters in 38 African countries, and philanthropic engagement with communities in 51 countries. It has become a space for African institutions to inform, intervene and inspire and interrogate power dynamics that shape how resource mobilization, distribution and spending impact the possibilities of transformative change in communities across

the continent. It has contributed to the development of practitioners in different fields, through providing a space for deepening knowledge and understanding of the effective strategies and tools for philanthropic development and advocacy. It has a holistic approach, appreciation of ubuntu values and encourages the fostering of synergy between issues facing people and their communities. APN therefore leverages the collective as a connector, influencer and co-creator, in order to make the voice, value and vision of African philanthropies visible.

## Field Mapping

APN conducts research, aggregates information, and disseminates findings to fill in the gap on practices and trends in African philanthropy. The research agenda is shaped by the issues that have emerged from convenings and peer learning among members. A few examples of reports are Sizing the Field, Mapping of PSAs, Assessment of Legal Environment, Social Justice Grantmaking, Women and philanthropy, and the ongoing studies on giving models such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Cooperate Social investment (CSI); just to mention a few. A full list of reports and publications is available on [our website](#).

## Narrative Building

APN scales up the use of cultural advocacy to build and showcase various narrative around African philanthropy through collaboration with members and provision of 'catalytic grants' to youth, and journalists and storytellers of all levels. Capacity building trainings on narrative generation and storytelling around African philanthropy, and how to use catalytic grants to facilitate the production of blogs, and stories have been organized for youth. The annual publication of success stories through 'The State of Philanthropy Report' has ensured consistent documentation of our members' success in their respective thematic/geographical areas. Essay competitions targeting youth age between 18 – 35 years have inspired more young people to take up opportunities in engaging with philanthropy in their communities. These as well as many more upcoming

deliberate efforts to broadcast narratives that recognize the value of African philanthropy through our Blog (SIMULIZI) , and social media are on the agenda. As a result, there has been a notable increase in the acknowledgment and use of disseminated information for public awareness on the role of African philanthropy in systematic change.



## 4. Rationale

We embarked on future strategic planning with specific attention to the current contextual realities at the centre of our thinking. The challenges we face are multifaceted. The pandemics, conflict, forced migrations and the climate catastrophe over the past two decades have highlighted the lack of functioning structures and systems (political, economic, social, legal, etc.) at the community, nation and global level. There is a clear increase of inhumanity and distrust among institutions and actors including philanthropic actors and civil society, and many more groups.

- The narrative of the global North playing the 'saviour' role are still enmeshed around the notions of development and democracy, which ignore indigenous forms of organizing, economic production and social development norms in favour of a template like approach that suffocates autonomy and self-representation. A core critique is that the global North approaches to philanthropy are informed and developed around on Northern worldview, and merely tweaked to supposedly fit African contexts. The overriding concerns of many funders is to ensure coherence within programs but in the process these concerns can compromise relevance on the ground. Often times, partners in Africa are asked to respond within a pre-determined frameworks, which are not necessarily relevant to contextual realities in the continent or they miss key nuances that only communities would have intimate knowledge of;
- Philanthropy has accentuated and perpetuated the same inequalities we are fighting in social justice movements. Philanthropic support is biased towards quick-fix projects and programmes that address symptoms of social problems, not addressing the root causes for more sustainable solutions. The structural and systemic factors have compromised the ability of African philanthropy to generate and nurture safe and just societies as the restrictive development aid framework has become the norm;
- International development that is mediated through 'quick fix' projects and programmes satisfy more donor-centric aspirations instead of supporting people-centred movements. The latter require collective action and long-term investment to confront, challenge and co-create solutions that address the root causes of under-development. Movement building has more potential to shift practice, attitudes and beliefs by capitalising on the inherent power of communities to unlock and use their own assets and resources for their own development, however they define it;
- African civil society and philanthropic support institutions still work in silos and funded project-based initiatives. These initiatives are often managed for donor compliance and meeting donor defined targets using approved indicators to demonstrate tangible 'results' that in turn can unlock more funding for the next project cycle. They are constantly competing for the 'development aid,' which is locked in a complex web of politics, including a shrinking operating space.
- Most CSOs are afraid and often shy away from advocating for systemic and structural change towards community-led development agendas. When threatened with closure or reprisals by respective governments on the pretext of enforcing the rule of law, they shy away and will likely not dare raise counter voices. Thus, an inclusive and collective power of voice is needed to cushion them and stand in solidarity as they challenge and push for values of democracy, and equality;
- Young people have lost hope in a bright future for Africa, a direct result of coloniality, failed states, failed leadership and failed homes inspired by the pull of the diaspora. Many are giving up on the

opportunities to debunk, challenge, question, and, even more importantly, to nourish the development agenda for the Africa we want now and in the future. There is a need to consciously and strategically tap into the youthfulness of the continent, grow it and enhance its presence as a strategy for sustainability;

- Social norms, and the impact of the current frameworks of international development have negatively affected the mind-sets of the civil society, young people, women and professionals alike who only look up to external funding and technical support usually from the Global North. This results to much less appreciation for domestic and alternative resources within their communities and countries. This situation is worsened by the use of language that perpetuates the same inequalities we are seeking to address as they continue to exclude marginalised communities whose realities are not meaningfully considered;
- Sustainable philanthropic giving support is derived from connections, access and trust. It requires consistency in debunking, reframing and re-positioning the role of civil society and their communities to redefine the history of complex web of power relationships. This change requires working through broader definitions of development resources, which consists of more than just money; it includes non-financial assets such as trust, indigenous knowledge, community assets and organising; whilst, respecting the value of culture and local language in expressing and giving meaning to that which works.

Within this context, APN's understanding that gives it a comparative advantage and strategic positioning in the African continent entails:

- a) Legitimacy and capacity to convene different types of pan-African philanthropies in a stronger continental infrastructure, which makes space for voices to be heard and potential for synergies in ideation.
- b) A safe and trusted space for women, young people and experts in the African philanthropy field to confront and discuss difficult issues, share problems and experiences, amplify voices for agency, whilst reclaiming their power on philanthropic approaches (nexus with feminism).
- c) A home and platform for members to enhance their leadership skills and sustainability of their work (assets, capacity and trust) in legitimate ways that are rooted in fundamental needs, beliefs and context appropriate practices. The platform for deepening and edifying their agency and voice to push for systemic change, instead of just focusing on 'quick fix solutions'.
- d) Building a brand around African philanthropies and thriving in these communities. It is therefore a brand that is recognised as relevant and rooted in community practices, which is capable of unlocking the potential for more impactful transformation on the inherent African culture of giving. Africans are natural givers –APN seeks to provide an effective infrastructure and organising to make the giving even more impactful using the ubuntu value system.

APN is therefore unique through its trademark that makes African resources serve the humanity.





## 5. Strategic Priorities

*Philanthropy should be inclusive of both continental and global resources to benefit African communities.*

Drawing on its strategic niche and collective identity, APN will assert itself more as a network, source of information, leader, and go to platform with a stronger infrastructure to articulate a common agenda for advancing, intensifying and creatively engaging with African philanthropies.

In the next five years, APN will strengthen its capacity, capability and credibility as a network and source of credible information on African philanthropy ecosystems and practices. It will become the go to platform for philanthropic giving actors, and build an even stronger infrastructure for convenings and engagements, linking voices and actions from the community to the national, regional, continental and global level.

Guided by the basic tenets of its mission and values, *APN's goal is to be recognized as the infrastructure that brings African philanthropy actors and developers together to articulate a collective voice for African philanthropy.* APN will focus on harnessing the relational power to strengthen solidarity that enables to spark necessary innovation to promote the voice and action for African philanthropy.

Philanthropy is an act of power. If left unchecked this power can easily stifle African institutions and communities that on the receiving end of development aid. This power may lead to a mimicking of narratives and strategies that are deemed more comfortable to these funders but limited in the development of humanity. In these fluid and uncertain times, where global power will continue to shift in unpredictable ways, the role of APN is to strengthen the potential of African voices and institutions to adequately engage in global governance conversations, irrespective of how global power dynamics shift. Undertaking these efforts requires that we focus on three strategic objectives:

- To nurture spaces for collective voice and networking;
- To influence philanthropy practice and policy;
- To strengthen APN Resilience

### 5.1 Nurture Spaces for Collective Voice and Networking

Strengthening the impact of African philanthropy requires a strong, diverse and robust infrastructure that can lead the field, support its development and serve as a platform for collective philanthropy voices and agendas. Strong philanthropic and civil society institutions – working at community, national and pan-African levels have emerged, bringing with them a rootedness, legitimacy and credibility to engage in ways that open spaces for new and diverse voices, build movements that challenge the prevailing development system, and enable mechanisms to highlight existing power imbalances in national, regional and continental governance arrangements.

Furthermore, beyond traditional practices, there are a host of formalised communities-based philanthropies that are authentic sites of African agency at work. There is a great possibility for such institutions to inform and shape the governance discourse in ways that bring community priorities to the fore. Despite the emerging knowledge, we simply do not know enough to comprehensively reflect on the nature, trends and impact of African philanthropic giving in development. This is an opportunity for APN to think of effective forms of engagement and possible partnerships with these institutions so as to offer the space to actors who have legitimacy to create public awareness and drive conversations around how development must be done, the ineffectiveness in the current approaches to philanthropy, the transformative potential of African philanthropic giving practices, and the role of social justice philanthropy in creating safe and just societies.

## Key challenges to deal with

At the core of APN's identity are its members without whom APN cannot be a legitimate force to reckon with. APN will therefore focus on, firstly, expansion to a critical mass through drawing on diverse forms and manifestation of African philanthropies and actors. We will enable spaces for networking and knowledge sharing as critical pillars for community driven development. This critical mass movement is premised on solidarity and collaboration where everyone's voice counts in the transformation that is embedded in relationships of mutual trust and respect.

Secondly, APN will invest in strengthening the existing national and regional philanthropy networks, and nurture new ones in under-represented regions to act as APN anchors; while leaving them to organize around their own value systems and challenges because they know very well what to prioritize. Over the years, we have developed an understanding of the need to think differently about what it means to support the demand side of governance accountability, such that people's day-to-day issues are connected with global discussions.

Thirdly, leadership development is a critical challenge. More substantive leadership is required in the CSOs, INGOs and cooperate arenas. There is also a need for more spaces for philanthropy leaders to actively reflect, and connect practice with knowledge generation.

## Priority Activities

- Aggregate existing and generate new information through action research on the nature, trends and impact of African philanthropic giving in development.
- Expand and grow the network membership to reflect the diverse philanthropic giving models, and evolving ecosystems.
- Enable collective space (national, regional, thematic and issue based) for knowledge sharing on issues such as community philanthropy, social justice grant making, and the policy environment for philanthropy to thrive.
- Enhance leadership capacity of members and youth to become substantive for sustainability of their work and organizational resilience.

## Expected Outcome

By the end of the Strategic Plan period, we expect to see an increase in more effective member collaborations; and better connected thematic/issue based, national and regional philanthropy support networks. Also, more resources generated for social justice objectives; improved access to knowledge about philanthropic practices, existing gaps and opportunities for investments that are needed to shape the narrative and grow the transformative potential of philanthropy.

The APN secretariat will work even more closely with its members to harvest learning and articulate more diverse and inclusive narratives and understanding of African philanthropic giving. Our members will become more effective in their leadership and opt to increase philanthropic commitments for social transformation and building just societies.



## 5.2 Influence and Advocate for Enabling Philanthropy Practice and Policy

Africans have a long entrenched tradition of philanthropic giving, rooted in notions of solidarity and trust. In spaces where people have been marginalised by state or other external actors, these individuals and pooled resources and have responded to people's needs and sustained livelihoods. In these mechanisms the real value and potential of African philanthropy can be found.

Recently, practitioners in the continent have been contesting the forward grounded narratives on the conceptual understanding of continental resources flows, challenging the myths of a continent dependent of foreign aid. Reflecting a practice of engaged citizens actively forging peer giving practices, and accessing aid when it is made available. There has also been a resurgence in remittance based giving from Africans in the diaspora. In some countries such remittances are the biggest source of foreign currency.

We see the rise of the foundations established by wealthy Africans, corporations, grant making, faith based, community foundations and other community philanthropies playing significant developmental roles. Several of these are supporting initiatives as sites of active citizenship and community organizing, enabling spaces to drive agendas that demand accountability and transparency. Yet, there is little support given to understanding and enabling these philanthropic mechanisms.

### Key challenges to deal with

APN will build on the 1st strategic objective and lessons learned to harness information, tools, and a critical mass to address challenges under this objective. To achieve this objective, APN will aggregate, generate and disseminate information on the narratives that influence our African social norms and practices by combining learning that emerges from our network with on field experiences, power relationships and policy environment. Second, APN will expand more consistently on policy advocacy, focusing on legal issues affecting the growth of community philanthropy. We will highlight progressive legislation, and create narratives to enhance the understanding on what an enabling environment means in such contexts; and how best to grow effective philanthropic giving beyond a tax framework. Through the use of social media channels we will work to: (i) increase stakeholders voice in creating the awareness of governments on their contribution in philanthropic giving and domestic mobilized resources (**policy**); and, (ii) influence the growth of philanthropy by increasing the awareness of donors (individual and institutional) to fund social justice and human right activities (**practice**).

### Priority Activities

- Produce and disseminate tools and knowledge products that can build evidence on the nature, trends and impact of African philanthropic giving in development through social media.
- Produce more blogs and storytelling to (re)shape the narrative aiming to change perceptions of the power of community philanthropy - from one that is limiting to the one that opens possibilities for collective agency and shared values.
- Organize APN Biennial Assembly, a flagship convening aiming to enhance collective power while balancing shared values and collective agency for the African philanthropy agenda.
- Collaborate with members and partners on representation of African philanthropy at key global and multi stakeholder platforms.
- Partner with pan-African and global institutions to co-create spaces (at national, regional and global levels) to discuss the role of community philanthropy as it pertains to resources, practice, and power dynamics.
- Collaborate to develop pathways for youth and other population groups in the periphery to access power holders upstream.

## Expected Outcome

At the conclusion of the five years, we expect to contribute to the reinforcement of the policy environment for philanthropy, specifically, improve some conditions in selected countries by supporting and amplifying the voices and actions of civil society. Governments and donors (institutional and individual) have increased awareness on the importance of domestic philanthropy in national development. Our members will be empowered in their advocacy efforts to bring about transformative messages, and create dialogue required to enable positive changes on philanthropic practice and policies.

Within the ecosystem, APN will also become the source for information on African philanthropic giving practices, which will be acknowledged in their diversity, as well as a critical strategy to bring about transformation and sustainable development.



## 5.3 APN's Resilience

Established in 2009 as a network of African led member organizations, the challenge remains building resilience and while maintaining a focus on nurturing a strong enough infrastructure that can bring African philanthropies together and articulate a common voice. It is critical therefore to strengthen APN as a platform with the capacity and resources to execute its mission effectively.

Strengthening the impact of African philanthropy requires strong, diverse and robust infrastructure that can lead the field, support its development and serves as a platform for collective philanthropy voices and agendas. For a long time, civil society and community philanthropy organizations were dependents on northern-based organizations (INGOs) and networks as the site of peer learning and analysis. The recent years have seen the emergence of a range of infrastructure institutions at the national, regional and continental level such as APN. While these are not without challenges, there is considerable potential to strengthen the African philanthropy arena.

During the five years, we will mobilize members from all African regions and deepen our work in sub-Saharan Africa, while attracting strategic partners and identifying opportunities globally. We believe that without adequate investment in this infrastructure, the impact of philanthropy field will undoubtedly remain marginal.

### Key areas of focus

We believe that advancing and strengthening organisational infrastructure and skills to systems and practices, will prepare the Secretariat for this work and enhance APN's legitimacy. Firstly, we will strengthen governance and leadership as key vehicles through which APN will demonstrate its aspirations as captured in the vision and

mission, through realising these strategic intentions. The APN board will continue to provide strategic oversight in the implementation of this strategic framework; whilst the Secretariat assumes coordination and influencing roles so that members can effectively engage. Secondly, we are mindful that as we move forward into this strategy: i) we will

continue to be the convener of our network members and will strengthen our community work; and (ii) our work around thought advocacy and influencing for practice and enabling policy will draw on our institutional capacities with more rigour. Thirdly, we will work as a team (members, board and secretariat) to ensure that fit-for-purpose structures and systems are established, supported by adequate operational policies and systems of accountability between governance and leadership structures. This will be through a clarified membership engagement strategy; human resources recruitment and management through distributed leadership values; other assets in addition to financial resource mobilised and accounted for; operational processes designed and managed to enable all the structures to 'walk the talk' when applying APN values as evidence of its institutional culture built on ubuntu philosophy.

Lastly, APN is the only network pushing for the recognition of the voice of African philanthropy, and the necessary infrastructure for building a common agenda.. We will therefore put more deliberate investments in the necessary infrastructure and mobilization of more and better resources to enable us deliver on our mission effectively.

## Main Activities

- Enhance structures and supporting operational policies and systems;
- Resource our organisation and provide our teams opportunities for learning and professional development in all aspects of our work;
- Mobilize and account for resources - human and other assets in addition to financial resources in order to enable all the structures to 'walk the talk;'
- Implement a digital transformation strategy to align internal ways of working with external commitments with good quality, time and scope;
- Improve internal and external communications for influencing and advocacy work; and
- Invest in learning and accountability practices to enable us to measure the progress of our work, inform our decisions, planning, operations, as well as, networking and partnerships.

## Expected Outcome

With effective implementation of the objective, APN secretariat will enhance its operational agility and evidence-based systems making it a resilient and responsive network and organisation. We will achieve key institutional modernisation milestones including a fully operational and integrated staff team with better job satisfaction, effective membership strategy, diversified resource mobilization plan. Our learning and accountability framework will have been institutionalized to appreciate the role played on attaining feminisation and sustainable development. And, finally, we will work towards improving financial health and institutional resilience, important ingredients to build a strong continent-wide infrastructure for philanthropy.



# Implementation Approaches

APN will aim to remain true to our mission and values by embracing the following main approaches in all our operations and relationships:

- **Partnerships:** We appreciate the importance of relationship-building and collaboration rather than time-limited transactional approaches that come with international development models and practices. We believe that parties in a partnership have a shared interest in learning, co-creating new paradigms of engagement and thinking together in a collective manner. We will therefore work with our members and other pan-African philanthropy actors to strengthen connections, networks, developmental practices and voices within, across and between different forms of philanthropy in the continent.
- **Distributed Leadership** which emphasizes the importance of interconnectivity and teamwork rather than a top-down leadership framework[1]. We believe in a horizontal structure wherein leadership opportunities are flexible and fluid, thus allowing decisions to be made through mutual trust and responsibility. We will therefore employ principles of earned autonomy in the management of power dynamics, enhance transparency and equity throughout our conduct and operations.
- **Narrative Building:** We believe in creating and investing time and space for learning, developing and disseminating diverse knowledge products that demonstrate and edify African-grounded experiences. We will facilitate peer learning, conduct regular reviews with our members, and develop good practice tools and models that enhance standards; thus, amplify community voices in the development discourse and African perspectives in global platforms. The critical role and contribution to the development of non-financial forms of giving (mainly found in horizontal philanthropies) remains under-researched, under-theorized and un-appreciated. Hence, we will be proactive to conduct customised and action research, document and disseminate these practices, which are shaped by one's context, focus and relations.
- **Data-driven systems change:** Action research will be captured under the pillars as it is one of the means to achieving the systems change we want to see. Mindful of the multifaceted nature of African philanthropy, which is more than money but includes skills, knowledge, community assets, networks and other resources; we will invest in data-driven approaches and processes to challenge the inherent capitalist system that has perpetuated imperialist attitudes and practices that currently drive philanthropy, and, critically analyse underlying principles that perpetuate power structures, systems and practices of inequality. Data will therefore be employed for informed decisions and engagements, design transformation processes, drive systemic change, advocate for enabling policy frameworks, and promote governments recognition of philanthropy as a key strategy for sustainable development.
- **Gender and Inclusion:** Ensure any debate and conversation around harnessing and dignifying domestic resources and philanthropic giving practices are intersectional and inclusive of the marginalized and vulnerable communities in their approaches. We are aware of the fact that discussions on philanthropy transformation are still in their infancy on the continent. However, it is also known that the disability sector and other minority and vulnerable groups such as women, youth, indigenous, pastoralists, LGBTQI and human rights defenders are even more marginalized due to dominant power structures. It will be important to frame discussions around systemic change in ways that are inclusive, whilst recognizing and addressing ways in which knowledge, attitudes and practices can result in multiple and interlinked forms of structural discrimination.

[1] "GREAT LEADERS DO NOT CREATE FOLLOWERS; THEY CREATE MORE LEADERS." TOM PETERS

We will also take the opportunity to learn and embrace solidarity based self-philanthropic resourcing strategies deployed by movements that operate outside formal institutions. Their voice, knowledge and perspectives will be embedded in every strategic pillar as much as their peculiar needs and preferences will also be integrated. This will be employed as one of the sustainability measures in the African philanthropy discourse.

- **Meaningful participation of young people:** We will ensure that all our initiatives take into serious account, the plight, needs and priorities of youth (boys and girls), who are not only Africa's majority population but are also the most marginalised by structural and systemic barriers to development, and the dominant social norms (be they informed by religion, cultural norms, traditions, practices, rituals, etc.). Going into the sustainable future, African philanthropy will require deepening youth involvement not only for their talents, but also for a safer future. Studies have shown that youth flourish from active participation in philanthropic initiatives, are more resilient; whilst sustainable societies are those with higher levels of youth participation. We will therefore proactively create spaces for youths to be a central voice at the national, international, regional and global debates. We will leverage on digital technology to inspire their growth and to participate in advocacy for enabling policy infrastructure for youth participation.



## Implementation Modalities

The governance and implementation structures of APN will assume responsibility and remain in the driver's seat so that they are accountable for the realisation of these strategic intentions. The Board will continue to provide strategic oversight through thought leadership and guidance, ensure our internal infrastructure can deliver effectively and efficiently on our mandate; clarify and enforce accountability mechanisms between governance, membership and operational requirements; and, ensuring a well-equipped, well-resourced and functional secretariat that coordinates APN business effectively. Such a distributed leadership culture and values will be embedded in up-to-date policies that enable us to walk the talk.

The Secretariat will maintain its coordinating role whilst ensuring that the APN brand remains visible and a force to reckon with, in philanthropic spaces everywhere. The secretariat will ensure that all requisite infrastructure for this work is in place, including human, financial and capital resources that are mobilised and accounted for. We will employ systems and processes that are designed and managed to enable all the structures to be effective, efficient and accountable.

The strategic framework will be implemented through annual plans that clarify priorities and asset/resource investments needed with effective member engagement. Members will assume responsibility for implementing and accounting for all these strategic intentions. A digital transformation strategy will support our efforts to improve our communication (both internally and externally with stakeholders), whilst ensuring credible data and evidence is used to enhance our learning and accountability practice as we deliver quality and timely targets. Strategic partnerships will continue to support and edify the work we do under each pillar and this will be done as an on-going process.

A participatory learning, monitoring and evaluation framework will be used so that APN maintains its credibility and relevance, using less traditional methods like the ones dictated by donors. Participatory tools and frameworks aligned to our digital transformation strategy will be employed to track and measure progress and impact of APN's philanthropic initiatives. Convenings, peer learning spaces, bi-annual meetings, membership surveys and annual planning and reviews will also become our key mechanisms to track, review, analyse progress and achievements as well as lessons drawing on social justice principles.





## Learning

The Learning for Accountability (LAA) is informed by the context within which APN operates where internal and external accountability are necessary. On internal accountability, we will be accountable to our commitment, be true to our values and to fulfil our promises – coming from the inside out and create a credibility that others trust and respect. On external accountability, we will be accountable to others and create an environment (a set of social norms and standards) that partners feel compelled to follow. In this regard, we will observe, both horizontal and vertical accountability.

This approach will help us to strengthen how we coordinate and engage with members, aggregation of existing data and generation of new evidence to inform our advocacy on the recognition of African philanthropic practices in development. APN will continue to track its progress in influencing and advocating for policy change through LAA; while improving our practice in measuring systems change. LAA will adopt outcome and impact harvesting methodology with relevant indicators to measure external and internal growth with a focus on our capacity, capability, and connections. This will entail, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the of the outcome and impacts, integrating result measurements (quality and quantity) in all our objectives, the implementation of priority activities and processes-and make informed adjustments on plans against annually planned outputs. The LAA framework will be designed to respond to questions, such as: What do we want to measure? Why are we measuring this? How shall we be measuring this? Who is involved in data & information collection? How is the analysis done?

This methodology will help us to create data for open-shared learning and allow us to use timely data to make management and programming decisions, and have a significant progress in our day-to-day work. As a result, our learning for accountability methodology will be central to our implementation methodology and approach to delivering on our mission.

## Key Milestones

- Design a LAA framework and incorporate our values
- Introduce and validate LAA with key stakeholders; and incorporate comments to ensure it is relevant and user-friendly.
- Conduct semi-annual and annual learning for accountability check-in for operations and programmes to ensure that timely corrections are made, if any.
- Document experiences and lessons in the journey of growth of the infrastructure for philanthropy in Africa.

## Expected Outcome

By the end of the 2nd year of this strategy, APN is planning to have a designed and adopted LAA. The adoption and implementation of LAA is expected to improve learning from our programme and operations. Relevant and reliable data and information will be harvested and managed to ensure integrated learning about our capacity, capability and connections across the organization and the network. There will be a greater collaboration and partnership with members and partners who work on creating evidence in systems change.