



Africa Philanthropy Network  
THE VOICE AND ACTION FOR AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY



# WOMEN AND PHILANTHROPY IN AFRICA

## SUMMARY OF SYNTHESIS REPORT



In 2022, the APN conducted a study of Women and Philanthropy in six African countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda. The objective of this study was to better understand the context, trends and patterns underpinning Africa women's philanthropy by focusing on the lived experiences and perspectives of African women.

The four main objectives:

- to develop key definitions and criteria for identifying women in philanthropy
- to identify women-led philanthropic organisations and their investments across the diverse population groups
- to analyse the enabling environment (both legal and fiscal) for women in philanthropy
- to develop a roadmap of actionable recommendations, opportunities for potential partnerships, and implementation strategies for co-creation

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a combination of primary data (key informant in person and virtual interviews), secondary data (desk research of reviewed reports and papers). The sample size was 199 respondents drawing from Burkina Faso (30), Ethiopia (28), Ghana (60), Kenya(28), Mozambique (33) and Uganda (20).

## STATUS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PHILANTHROPY

Women's participation in African philanthropy is largely informal. There is a direct relationship between the giver and the receiver without the use of an intermediary. Here are is the status of this philanthropic giving:

- Philanthropy is effectively enhanced where there is embeddedness, reciprocity, and obligation. In most societies, there is direct giving at household and community level, between people of similar socio-economic characteristics.
- Exchanges are not motivated by the giver's expectation of reciprocation. The emphasis is on solidarity, compassion, altruism, and generosity.
- Cultural and religious ties form an integral part of giving. Faith-based community organisations account for the bulk of the observed examples of 'community philanthropy.'

- **Women being considered the “main parent”, or socialised to be carers** conscript their children into their philanthropic activities. Bringing up their children to embrace these practices early on, as they learn by doing.

## BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PHILANTHROPY

- Most women significantly contribute to the sustenance of their families, leaving barely to no resources to give elsewhere.
- Lack of information on enabling policies that support philanthropic giving e.g. tax reliefs and incentives.
- Patriarchal systems means most assets and resources are controlled by men.
- Women philanthropists lack the infrastructure to organise and scale up sustainable giving.
- Entrepreneurship is skewed towards men, whilst enterprises by women are often born out of necessity.
- State regulations hampering on philanthropy and the CSO space will likely have trickle down effects on women's community philanthropy practices.
- Cumbersome registration requirements by local and central government.

## FACTORS MOTIVATING WOMEN TO GIVE

- Compassion and obligation in addressing social problems and obeying religious creeds.
- Building relationships among members of the community, enhancing support for the local culture and building infrastructure for their local areas.
- Increasing ownership of local charitable initiatives, and changing the existing overbearing international donor practices.
- Financial security such that women give without fear of risking their own or their loved ones futures.



## STRATEGIES USED BY WOMEN

- Volunteering
- Capacity building and mentorship
- Direct financial assistance

## WOMEN'S SPENDING PATTERNS

- Women favour giving to individuals than charity
- Time is considered just as valuable of a resource to give
- Celebrations and holidays especially religious ones often involve a practice of giving
- Women are inclined towards philanthropic interventions that address the needs of marginalised or vulnerable people in society

## OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVEL THE PLAYING-FIELD

- Financial inclusion and community micro-finance development
- Build women's groups and cooperative societies
- Positive masculinity: encouraging boys and men to fight against gender inequality in society.
- Recognition of the power of women's philanthropy
- Tapping into the rapidly changing gender roles, and the empowerment this afford girls and women
- Tapping into the large population of innovative African youth.

- Building infrastructure for sustainable, scalable giving. The study in Kenya found that while the growing middle classes are said to be giving away 22% of their monthly income, it is often done through informal gifts and support to family, friends, and neighbours.
- Tapping into continent wide movements including #africansrising, #participatorygrantmaking, #givigandpower, #shiftpower, and women's giving.

## POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN IN PHILANTHROPY

The country studies revealed a gap in the laws and policies that govern philanthropy. Here are some areas to work on to create a conducive policy environment for women's philanthropy:

- Charitable organisations are lumped together with not-for-profits, such that all giving falls under the same stringent legal regime including heavy taxation.
- Bureaucratic bottlenecks can be stifling on women's organisations. In Burkina Faso, officials of women organisations must travel to the capital, Ouagadougou, in order to register and/or renew their organisation's registration. Similarly, in Uganda, operating permits issued upon registration have to be renewed every three or five years.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- More tactful strategies are needed on resource mobilisation and community philanthropy
- Capacity enhancement of women's groups and cooperative societies
- Promote positive masculinity
- Encourage cultural and local participation
- Mobilise communities better and create incentive mechanisms for giving
- Foster responsive legislation and incentives to encourage women philanthropy
- Grow the visibility of African women philanthropic practices within the continent and globally

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Social organisation of African women in diaspora philanthropy in order to tease out greater areas of engagement with African women's giving circles;
- Holistic research on the social protection and welfare systems in selected African countries to cultivate a needs-based women philanthropic intervention;
- Research on informal philanthropic giving by African women in Web 2.0 platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.