African Philanthropy Network

THE VOICE AND ACTION FOR AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY

Mapping of Philanthropy Support Actors in Tanzania, 2025.

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List of Abbreviations

APN	African Philanthropy Network
CSA	Civil Society Actors
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PSA	Philanthropy Support Actors

1. Introduction and Background

1.1. Introduction

The African Philanthropy Network (APN) is a pan-African platform that convenes organizations, individuals, and members of the African diaspora who are dedicated to strengthening the continent's philanthropic ecosystem. In alignment with the focus of this report, APN works to elevate African-led giving, deepen community-driven philanthropy, and support actors who advance social justice. We champion African values and practices of generosity, ensuring they continue to shape local development and collective well-being across the continent.

APN envisions A relevant, effective, and responsive philanthropy for building equitable and just societies in Africa. APN's mission is to elevate the power of philanthropic giving practices that are inclusive and beneficial to the communities across the continent. In the 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.

The study was conducted in 2025 and it involved desk review, surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). It the (i) Mapping and categorizing PSAs, (ii) Understanding their roles in strengthening community philanthropy, (iii) Examining funding trends and the need for alternative resource mobilization, (iv) Identifying challenges (operational and legal) affecting the ecosystem, and (v) Highlighting opportunities for coordination, sustainability, and policy engagement

This report is organized into the following seven chapters. The first is an introduction and background, followed by the second on explanation of need for alternative resource. The third is providing rationale of PSA mapping, fourth the methodology and fifth, present the analysis of findings. In chapter six, areas for future research are suggested and chapter seven present the conclusion and key recommendations.

1.2. Context analysis

Tanzania's civil society ecosystem is diverse, vibrant, and increasingly influential in governance, service delivery, and community development. However, its financial landscape is undergoing significant changes. Understanding the context of funding for CSOs is essential for designing realistic strategies for sustainability, policy engagement, and philanthropic ecosystem strengthening.

For decades, Tanzanian CSOs have relied heavily on external donors' bilateral agencies, international NGOs, multilateral institutions, and corporate foundations based outside the country. This funding shaped the sector's growth, but also created structural vulnerabilities, including: Overreliance on project-based grants; Limited core funding; Restricted flexibility to innovate; and Dependence on donor priorities rather than local community needs. As global funding patterns shift, this model is proving increasingly unsustainable.

In the recent developments, the global landscape has changed significantly due to geopolitical tensions; Climate-related priorities; Internal donor-country fiscal pressures; as well as the shifts in thematic emphasis (e.g., humanitarian crises, global health emergencies, migration). As a result, many donors have reduced or redirected funding to other regions or issues. Tanzania is no longer a priority destination for many long-term grants, leading to increased competition among CSOs for limited external resources.

On the positive note, the Tanzania's economic growth and expanding private sector are creating new opportunities for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives; and Corporate foundations (especially in telecoms, banking, mining, and manufacturing). Nevertheless, most CSOs lack the strategies and networks to effectively tap into local corporate giving. Private sector support remains mostly charity-oriented and not yet positioned toward long-term development partnerships. Nevertheless, Tanzania has deep-rooted traditions of Zakat/Sadaka, Harambee-style collective giving, Church-based and mosque-based charity, Mutual aid groups (vikoba, burial societies, community giving circles). While these forms of philanthropy are widespread, they mostly remain informal. Few CSOs have established mechanisms to tap into this culturally embedded giving or build structured community philanthropy models.

In July 2019, Tanzania's Parliament passed the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act No. 3 of 2019, which significantly changed the NGO legal framework aiming to strengthen transparency and accountability. However, these regulations create Increased administrative costs, pressure on CSOs to maintain strong governance and created barriers for small organizations lacking compliance capacity

INGOs continue to play an important role in Tanzania's development landscape. Many acts as intermediaries—receiving large grants and sub-granting to local actors. This creates opportunities (capacity building, funding access) but also challenges power imbalances, short-term subcontract-style arrangements, heavy reporting burdens as well as limited autonomy for local CSOs. Strengthening local philanthropy and domestic funding mechanisms is essential for balancing this dynamic.

Mobile money (M-Pesa, TigoPesa, Airtel Money) and digital platforms create new opportunities for Individual giving, online crowdfunding, SMS-based micro-donations and E-commerce charity partnerships. While digital giving is rising globally, Tanzanian CSOs are only beginning to explore these tools. Barriers include low digital fundraising skills and limited online presence among many organizations.

The continental level study was undertaken in 2022/23. APN conducted regional mappings across Eastern, Central, West, and Southern Africa. Building on that foundation, APN has now shifted to more in-depth, country-specific studies, beginning with Tanzania and Zambia. The later will be undertaken in 2026.

2. Need for Alternative Resource Mobilization

Tanzania's civil society landscape has grown significantly over the past two decades, playing critical roles in service delivery, policy influence, community empowerment, and accountability. However, the financial foundation that once sustained this sector is shifting. Reliance on traditional donor funding is no longer adequate or predictable. As a result, there is an urgent need for CSOs to rethink how they mobilize resources, diversify revenue streams, and strengthen their long-term sustainability.

Many traditional donors have reduced long-term commitments or shifted priorities to other regions and thematic areas. Global crises and geopolitical tensions mean that Tanzanian CSOs must prepare for fewer multi-year grants and more competitive funding environments. Where funding still exists, it is accompanied by: stricter compliance requirements; shorter funding cycles; thematic restrictions; increased focus on quantifiable results and frequent meetings and reporting.

Tanzania has a rising middle class, a vibrant private sector, and strong traditions of community giving characterized by zakat/sadaka, harambee, individual and clan giving, giving circle and faith-based practices to mention a few. Yet most CSOs have not fully tapped these local sources. Local philanthropy if well cultivated can become a consistent and trusted funding base that strengthens local ownership.

Many CSOs remain project-dependent, making them vulnerable to collapse when grants end. Diversifying resources through social enterprises, membership fees, service contracts, partnerships with private sector, endowment building, or digital fundraising, creates more resilient organizations capable of planning beyond one-year project cycles.

3. Rationale for the Mapping of PSAs

Tanzania's civil society landscape is undergoing rapid shifts driven by evolving regulations, changing donor priorities, and increasing expectations for transparency and accountability. At the same time, local and regional philanthropy is growing, yet remains insufficiently documented, coordinated, or leveraged. As a result, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and community-based groups often operate with limited visibility of the broader support ecosystem, leading to duplication, underutilized opportunities, and fragmented impact. Mapping Philanthropy Support Actors (PSAs) is therefore essential to build a clear picture of the philanthropy ecosystem, strengthen local resource mobilization, enhance coordination and reduce fragmentation, inform policy engagement and advocacy, identify capacity gaps and support needs, increase visibility and recognition of local practices and to provide evidence to shape future programming.

3.1. What is the Use of the PSAs Mapping

The philanthropic space in Tanzania is diverse ranging from CSOs promoting Giving, INGOs and Funders, Government Institutions, Academia, Training and Research, Media, Parliamentary Committee, Religious institution and Private sector (Corporate Institutions). Currently, there is no consolidated database or understanding of who is doing what. Mapping will provide a structured and accurate overview of existing PSAs, their mission, strengths, areas of intervention, geographical reach, sector and target group

With international funding becoming increasingly unpredictable and s declining, the sector faces pressure to diversify revenue sources. PSAs mapping helps reveal which actors are supporting resource mobilization, where new opportunities lie, and how CSOs can engage with partners who are promoting local giving, impact investment, and corporate social responsibility.

Many actors operate in isolation, which limits the efficiency and collective influence of the sector. Mapping highlights areas of overlap, gaps, potential partnerships, and opportunities for joint action supporting a more connected and collaborative philanthropy ecosystem. Recent regulatory reforms such as stricter registration procedures, reporting obligations, and compliance requirements affect PSA. Understanding how PSAs are navigating these frameworks provides essential evidence for constructive dialogue with government and for advocating for a more enabling environment.

Different actors contribute uniquely to strengthening philanthropy, including through training, research, networks, or funding. Mapping enables the identification of weak areas, under-served regions, and capacity-building needs that can guide future investments and technical support.

Tanzania has rich traditions of mutual aid, community solidarity, ujamaa, religious giving, and local fundraising initiatives. Yet these contributions are under-documented and under-valued. A well-documented mapping exercise offers actionable insights for APN, development partners, local philanthropists, and CSOs to design targeted strategies, strengthen partnerships, and mobilize resources based on real needs and opportunities.

4. Methodology

The methodology for this study was to produce a validated map of Philanthropy Support Actors (PSAs) in Tanzania, combining a structured desk review with participatory primary data gathering through KIIs, survey, focused FGDs/CSAs), followed by analysis and triangulation producing actionable strategies for collaboration among PSAs.

4.1 Desk Review

The desk review looked into the Government registries, regulator lists, NGO directories, funder/INGO lists, academic and Research directories, media and business scans, previous mapping reports etc. The standard metadata were extracted for each PSA into a database template including name, contact and location, sector, role in philanthropy (category), target group, sources funding, Mission, and areas of interventions.

4.2 Data Collection Survey

A structured questionnaire was used in mapping the similarities and variations in the types of philanthropic actors in the country. The questionnaire was focused on organisational information, organisational direction and decision-making, financial information, and ways of working and giving out, focusing on instruments for undertaking philanthropic activities and funding priorities. A total of 42 PSAs were systematically sampled based on the categories derived from the desk review mapping list by categories as indicated in the Table below.

Table 1: Sample Size of PSAs by Category

S/N	Category	Sample size
1	CSOs promoting Giving	26
2	INGOs and Funders	6
3	Government Institutions	1
4	Academia, Training and Research	1
5	Media	3
6	Parliamentary Committee	1
7	Religious institution	2
8	Private sector (Corporate Institutions)	1
Total PSAs Sampled		42

4.3 Limitations of the study

There were limitations in this study due to the poor response rate by a few PSAs chosen as part of the sample. Out of 42 organisations sampled, 5 provide incomplete responses. In most cases there was unwillingness to disclose financial information, both value of grants and donations as well as the names of the donors. Another potential limitation is the fact that the philanthropy support Actors are evolving something which require frequent updates. However, the discrepancies did not affect the general results as the gaps were addressed through compensations with other actors in the same category.

5. Summary Analysis of Findings

5.1. Philanthropy Ecosystem in Tanzania

The philanthropy ecosystem in Tanzania is broad, diverse, and dynamic. Based on the distribution of 420 Philanthropy Support Actors (PSAs), about eight (8) categories of the ecosystem were clustered (see Annex 1). The analysis indicated that the ecosystem is dominated by Civil Society Organizations promoting giving (62.9%). International NGOs and funders form the second-largest group (13.1%), followed by other institutional actors including government, media, academia, religious institutions, parliamentary committees, and the private sector. Overall, the ecosystem is pluralistic but fragmented, characterized by strong grassroots presence with limited coordination across actors.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution Categories of Philanthropy Support Actors (PSAs)

Category	Number of PSAs	Percent (%)
CSOs promoting Giving	264	62.9
INGOs and Funders	55	13.1
Government Institutions	14	3.3
Academia, Training and Research	11	2.6
Media	30	7.1
Parliamentary Committee	10	2.4
Religious Institutions	23	5.5
Private Sector (Corporate Institutions)	13	3.1
Total	420	100

5.2. Characteristics of Different Ecosystem Categories of PSAs

The analysis of information collected, revealed the following characteristics of PSAs in the country.

a) CSOs promoting philanthropic giving represent 62.9% of all PSAs mapped. These are primarily community-based organizations, engaging in social work, local fundraising, and voluntary associations.

b) INGOs and Funders are about 13.1% of the PSAs. They seem to engage with shaping strategic direction, resource flows, and provision of technical capacity.

c) Media: these represents at least 7.1%, of the total PSAs. They were reported to focus mainly of influencing the philanthropy narrative, public awareness on the impact of community philanthropy, and accountability.

d) Religious Institutions: they represent 5.5% of the PSAs in the study. These institutions seem to drive faith-based philanthropic giving and also, they provide support on community welfare, health, education, water, as well as spiritual well-being.

e) Government Institutions: About 3.3% of PSAs are the government t institutions responsible for influencing operating regulations, philanthropy policies, and an enabling environment.

f) Private Sector: almost 3.1% is comprise of the private institutions (businesses and cooperates). These tend to contribute on philanthropy through CSR. It is also good to men tions here that, CSR

is support by laws of the country but the enforcement and or implementation is limited to selected sectors of development (such as mining, & industry) and it is been practiced with just a few institutions.

g) Academia and Research: these represents 2.6% of the PSAs mapped. Most of them are contributing in research, evidence generation and trainings.

h) Parliamentary Committees: these represent only 2.4% of the PSAs mapped. Their main task is to mainly impact laws and monitor the impact legislation, oversight and support advocacy through debates in the house

5.3. Contributions of PSAs to Strengthening Community Philanthropy

PSAs support community philanthropy by mobilizing local resources, providing legitimacy, strengthening capacity through training, shaping narratives through media engagement, and contributing to policy discourse. Their collective efforts help professionalize and expand community philanthropy across Tanzania.

5.4. Challenges Related to Operational and Legal Environment

Operational challenges include fragmentation, limited financial sustainability, weak institutional capacity, underutilization of local giving potential, and dependence on external donor funding.

Legal challenges involve complex compliance requirements, administrative burdens related to reporting and audits, regulatory uncertainty, limited local authority engagement, and overlapping mandates across regulatory agencies.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1 Conclusion

The philanthropy ecosystem in Tanzania is vibrant and diverse, with CSOs at its core. Despite significant contributions from all PSA categories, the ecosystem faces challenges related to coordination, sustainability, and regulatory complexity. Strengthening collaboration, enhancing compliance capacity, and promoting local resource mobilization are critical for a more resilient and interconnected philanthropic environment.

6.2 Recommended Research Areas

The study was useful in identifying information and knowledge gap, and in recommending more areas requiring research in the future in order to facilitate smooth mobilization of PSAs into a movement of solidarity towards reclaiming philanthropy as a strategy for community-led and national development in Tanzania. The following research questions need to be explored:

    a)   how people give, (household giving behaviors),
    b)   how PSAs collaborate,
    c)   how regulations and digital tools shape the sector, and
    d)   the value and scale of informal philanthropy.

Annex 1: Definitions of Categories of PSAs

PSA Category	Definition of the PSAs categories based on their functions in the philanthropy eco-system
CSOs promoting Giving	Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that encourage people and communities to give money, time, skills, or resources to help others. They raise awareness about generosity, mobilize local support, and promote community-led development.
INGOs and Funders	International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and funding institutions that provide financial or technical support to projects and organizations. They often support development programs, humanitarian work, and social impact initiatives across countries.
Government Institutions	Public bodies and agencies that create policies, laws, and programs that guide and regulate philanthropy. They may also provide public funding, incentives, or partnerships to support charitable activities.
Academia, Training and Research	Universities, colleges, research institutions, and training centers that study philanthropy, provide education on giving and social impact, and generate knowledge to improve philanthropic practices.
Media	Organizations and platforms (such as newspapers, radio, television, and digital media) that share information, raise awareness about social issues, highlight giving initiatives, and influence public opinion on philanthropy.
Parliamentary Committee	A Selected committee within parliament responsible for reviewing, discussing, and overseeing laws and policies related to civil society, philanthropy, taxation, and social development.
Religious institution	Faith-based organizations such as churches, mosques, temples, and religious foundations that promote charitable giving as part of their faith and support community welfare through donations, services, and outreach programs.
Private sector (Corporate Institutions	Businesses and companies that support philanthropy through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), donations, sponsorships, employee volunteering, or social investment initiatives.