



African Philanthropy Network
THE VOICE AND ACTION FOR AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY

2025 State of African Philanthropy Booklet



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is my great pleasure to welcome you and thank you for choosing this booklet. Since 2021, we have published the State of African Philanthropy Booklet, and this fifth edition continues our commitment to documenting, celebrating, and elevating African philanthropy practices. We remain dedicated to highlighting success stories from our members' work and sharing voices and actions that reinforce the power of African giving practices in advancing humanity.

Aligned with our 2024–2028 Strategic Framework, we continued to build on the foundations set in previous years—nurturing spaces for peer learning, dialogue, and networking that shape the narrative of African philanthropy. A major highlight of the year was the training of members of the domestic resources mobilization team, who identified alternative sources of funding and other support services and began developing resource mobilization plans focused on domestic sources. Together, we reflected on the significance of grounding our work in promoting community and domestic philanthropy as a key strategy for community ownership, legitimacy, and dignity.

This booklet is a result of a collaboration and partnership built on shared interests and a common vision. It presents inspirational stories from our members about community-led solutions and collective strategies to advance African philanthropy. Whether advancing women's rights, expanding access to economic justice, promoting community healing, or addressing emerging social challenges. These stories highlight the innovation, resilience, and generosity embedded in African ways of philanthropic giving.

I hope that as you read through these pages, you'll be inspired by the creativity and dedication that African communities demonstrate in shaping their own development, as highlighted by our members across the continent. You will also be motivated to share your story for a chance to be featured in the upcoming edition.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. We look forward to sharing more as we prepare the 2026 State of African Philanthropy Booklet.

In Solidarity,
Dr. Stigmata Tenga
Executive Directors

When Generosity Speaks: The Story of Masaka School for the Deaf

For the past two years, CivSource Africa and our affiliate, CivLegacy Foundation, have convened the Leaders' Summit—a gathering unlike the usual boardroom meetings or hotel conferences. We deliberately step away from polished halls into the heart of communities, because we believe that leadership must be lived, witnessed, and rooted in the places where people are solving real challenges.

These Summits are spaces of communion, learning, and encounter. Leaders gather to reflect, share, and yes—be disrupted by the stories and practices of ordinary people who are shaping extraordinary futures. This year, our Summit took us to Masaka, a district two and a half hours outside of Kampala. Among the places we visited was the Masaka School for the Deaf. Its foundation is, quite literally, a story of African generosity.

A Chance Encounter

The founder, Francis Kamulegeya, grew up in Masaka but left at the tender age of ten to pursue education in Kampala. That decision, made by his family, changed the course of his life. Education propelled him to opportunities in the UK where he studied and worked for nearly thirty years.

On his return to Uganda, Francis felt the pull of home. Driving through Masaka one day, he was hailed down by a man waving frantically. At first Francis thought this was a stranger, but something inside him nudged him to stop. The man was no stranger—it was his childhood playmate.

As boys, they had nicknamed him “Kasiru”—a word that in Luganda slang means “deaf person.” Through gestures and broken signs, Francis pieced together the story: while Francis had gone to school, travelled, and built a career abroad, his playmate had been denied the same opportunity simply because he could not hear.

When Francis recounted his journey, the man quietly replied: “I would be like you if I too had gone to school.”

That sentence pierced Francis's heart. It exposed not just personal regret but a systemic injustice: how talent, dreams, and potential are locked away simply because society fails to create inclusive paths for those who are different.

Building with What One Has

Haunted but also galvanized, Francis decided to act. His family offered land. He reached out to friends in the UK, many of whom gave generously to help him build what became the Masaka School for the Deaf. But like many stories of development, donor priorities shifted. Funding slowed.

Francis then turned homeward. He asked parents to contribute not just in money, but in whatever form they could. And contribute they did. For two decades now, parents have brought food from their gardens, fetched water, split firewood, tilled the school's farm, and paid fees to the best of their ability. Francis often says: “Each one has something they can give. They just have to be shown this.”

That simple truth has kept the school alive. Beyond parents, Francis leaned on friends and associates in Uganda. Slowly, a web of Ugandan donors emerged: individuals who pay school fees, others who bring supplies, and still others who show up with time and skills.

Today, Masaka School for the Deaf is a living monument to local philanthropy. It is proof that sustainability is not found in big cheques alone, but in many small, steady acts of giving.

Generosity in Action

At CivSource and CivLegacy, we hold a firm belief: you cannot visit a community and go there empty-handed. Our Summits always include a moment to give back.

This year, leaders contributed funds that bought three months' worth of food for the school. We also brought scholastic materials and clothing. Even more moving, some leaders committed on the spot to sponsor children's school fees.

But what touched us most was meeting the school's longtime headteacher, Teacher Sarah. She has been part of the institution almost since its founding. Her leadership is not just administrative—it is service animated by deep love.

The day after our school visit, one Summit participant attended Sunday Mass at a nearby Catholic church. To her surprise, there was Teacher Sarah at the altar, joyfully signing the liturgy for her students so they could follow along. She is not paid for this. It is not in her job description. Yet there she was, extending her leadership into worship, ensuring that no child was left behind.

This is the face of generosity—not loud, not transactional, but consistent, tender, and deeply human.

The African Generosity

Witnessing Masaka School for the Deaf reminds us of what African generosity looks like:

- **It does not give up.** Even when foreign donors turned away, Francis and the community carried the vision forward.
- **It is not loud. There are no glossy brochures announcing who gave what.** Parents bringing beans or splitting firewood are as essential as those wiring funds.
- **It welcomes every gift.** Nothing is too small to matter; everything contributes to the circle of care.
- **It builds trust.** When people see their contributions valued, they give again—and bring others along.
- **It sustains.** Because it is rooted in relationship, not transaction, it endures across seasons and setbacks.

For us at CivSource Africa and CivLegacy Foundation, stories like Masaka's are the heartbeat of our mission. We exist to find, honour, and amplify African giving.

In a world that often portrays Africa as a place of need, we insist on telling stories of abundance, resilience, and generosity. Because at the end of the day, what transforms communities is not what flows from outside, but what is nurtured from within.

The Masaka School for the Deaf is more than a school. It is a living classroom in generosity—a reminder that leadership, philanthropy, and community transformation are not abstract theories, but daily practices of giving, receiving, and sustaining.

And in that circle of giving, even those once silenced by society find their voice.

Story Author; Jacqueline Asiimwe, CEO CivSource Africa

Call for Equality and Development (COEDE)



From Crisis to Hope

How Community Philanthropy Restored Clean Water for Girls Rescued from Child Marriage at AKOS Center, Shinyanga

After more than 18 months without access to clean water, the girls at AKOS Center, a safe haven for survivors of child marriage in Shinyanga, Tanzania, are now experiencing a renewed sense of dignity, health, and empowerment. This transformation was made possible through a community-driven initiative led by CoED Tanzania, which successfully mobilized philanthropy to establish a sustainable water source by drilling a deep borehole, installing solar-powered pumps, and providing water storage facilities.

Initiative story:

For several years, the AKOS Center in Shinyanga has served as a critical sanctuary for girls rescued from the harmful practice of child marriage. The center offers shelter, psychosocial support, education, and vocational training to help survivors rebuild their lives. Despite its noble mission, the center has faced numerous challenges, among them access to clean water.

In 2022, the situation reached a crisis point. Due to a lack of donor funding, the AKOS Center was unable to pay its water bills to the Shinyanga Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (SHUWASA). The accumulated debt, exceeding 6 million Tanzanian Shillings, led SHUWASA to cut off the center's water supply. This left the girls and staff without water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and other essential uses for over 18 months.

During this period, the girls were forced to rely on unsafe, distant water sources, which exposed them to multiple risks—including waterborne diseases, physical exhaustion, and potential gender-based violence during water collection trips. Additionally, the center's sanitation and hygiene systems collapsed, further endangering the health and well-being of its vulnerable residents.

In response to this dire situation, CoED Tanzania, a community-centered development organization, stepped in with a bold vision: to mobilize resources and establish an independent, sustainable water supply system at the AKOS Center. CoED embraced the power of philanthropy, rallying local individuals, businesses, and well-wishers to support the initiative.



Through coordinated efforts that included awareness campaigns, community meetings, and digital fundraising drives, enough resources were mobilized to initiate the project. The initiative involved the drilling of a deep borehole, installation of solar-powered water pumps, construction of a 10,000-liter water tower, and placement of distribution tanks across the center

The impact of the water project has been transformative not only for the girls living at AKOS but also for the surrounding community. Some impacts realised, including

1. Restored Dignity and Health: Access to clean, safe water has drastically improved the hygiene and health standards at the center. The girls now bathe regularly, their clothes and bedding are washed frequently, and latrines are kept clean and functional. This has significantly reduced cases of urinary tract infections, skin diseases, and other hygiene-related illnesses.



2. Improved Nutrition and Food Security:

Water is now available for cooking nutritious meals daily. The center also established a small vegetable garden, irrigating crops such as spinach, tomatoes, and onions with water from the borehole. The fresh produce supplements the girls' diet and teaches them agricultural skills



3. Reduced Risk and Stress

The elimination of long, risky journeys to fetch water has removed a major source of anxiety. The girls now have more time for their studies, psychosocial support sessions, and vocational training. Their overall sense of safety and security has greatly improved.

4. Environmental Sustainability:

The use of solar-powered water pumps ensures that the water supply is both sustainable and environmentally friendly. The system does not depend on electricity or fuel, making it cost-effective and reliable in the long term.



5. Community Inspiration: The project has become a model of what local collaboration can achieve. It has inspired other organizations and community groups to explore community philanthropy as a viable development strategy. CoED has documented the process to share lessons with other actors working in similar contexts.



The success of this project has provided several critical insights worth sharing for further learning:

1. Local Communities Can Lead Solutions: Waiting for external donors can delay action and prolong suffering. By empowering communities to take ownership of their challenges, immediate and context-specific solutions can be found. This project demonstrated that when people feel directly connected to a cause, they are willing to contribute—even in small but meaningful ways.

2. Transparency Builds Trust: Throughout the process, CoED maintained transparency by sharing updates, hosting community meetings, and publishing reports. This built trust among stakeholders and increased accountability for the funds and materials contributed.

3. Sustainability Requires Planning: Installing the water system was not enough. CoED and AKOS Center also created a maintenance and management plan, training staff and selected girls to manage basic upkeep and troubleshoot small issues. This forward-thinking approach ensures the system's longevity.



4. Water Access is a Catalyst for Broader Change.

Although the initial goal was to provide water, the ripple effects of this project have been broad. The girls' improved health, mental well-being, academic performance, and vocational training outcomes all trace back to the restored water access.



Development Expertise Center (DEC)



The organization operates at the national level and focuses on five key thematic areas:

- Child Wellbeing and Educational Development
- Employable Skills Development
- Gender and Life Skills Development
- Humanitarian Emergency Response
- Advocacy Program

DEC has a strong track record in lobbying and advocacy, particularly through the Advocacy program and the "Giving for Change" (GfC) project. This five-year initiative (2021–2025) is being implemented in two districts of the Amhara Region and five districts of the Oromia Region. The project envisions a just and inclusive society where civic space is open to all citizens, allowing them to freely express their views, organize themselves, and exercise their rights.

Story Context

Across Ethiopia, the spirit of giving has always been woven into the social fabric. From traditional structures like “Edir,” which support families in times of mourning, to women’s Self-Help Groups pooling savings for mutual aid, community philanthropy thrives on solidarity and reciprocity. The Giving for Change (GfC) project, funded by the Dutch MoFa under the Global lead of Wilde Ganzen and facilitated by DEC in Ethiopia, has built on existing communities’ culture that established Communities of Practice (CoPs) to unlock their potential and empower them through training in rights-based advocacy, Local Fundraising (LFR), and Mobilizing Support (MS) using the Change the Game Academy (CtGA) tool. These investments have catalyzed grassroots efforts to address locally identified needs and unlock the community’s collective capacity for action.

The CoPs continue to mobilize resources and drive community transformation in a well-organized, systematic way. The following stories showcase how community philanthropy, ignited by GfC support, is reshaping lives and strengthening resilience in diverse corners of the country.

Amplifying Girls' Voices, a Community's Stand for Safe and Dignified Education in Holeta

For over 25 years, Burka Harbu School has been a cornerstone of education in Holeta Town, nurturing thousands of children. But behind this long-standing service lay a painful truth: the school was struggling. Financial constraints had left it without adequate classrooms or even basic sanitation, particularly for girls. The absence of proper facilities created an unsafe and undignified learning environment, affecting the mental well-being of students and contributing to a sharp rise in school dropouts among girls. This hidden crisis could have remained ignored, but the Burka Gelana Community of Practice (CoP) refused to let it.

In early 2023, the CoP raised the issue in one of their regular meetings with Civil Society Actors (CSAs). Deeply concerned, they prioritized the rights and needs of schoolgirls as a core agenda for the year. Equipped with skills gained through Mobilizing Support (MS), Local Fundraising (LFR), and Social Accountability and responsibility techniques from the Change the Game Academy (CtGA), the CoP set out to change the story of Burka Harbu School girls.

They launched an advocacy campaign and resource mobilization plan targeting both local stakeholders and institutional donors. Their dedication paid off. The CoP successfully secured a matching grant of 4,500 EURO from DEC, and in a remarkable show of community strength, raised an additional 350,000 ETB (equivalent to 5,300 EURO) in cash and in-kind contributions. This effort stood out among numerous proposals and ultimately earned them the funds needed to address the school's most pressing needs.



In just three months, the CoP oversaw the construction of gender-segregated pit latrines and the renovation of classrooms, transforming the learning environment into a safer, more welcoming space, especially for girls.

The impact was immediate and powerful. For the first time in years, girls at Burka Harbu felt seen, valued, and protected within their school. The new facilities restored dignity, improved attendance, and created a positive ripple effect throughout the entire school community. Today, Burka Gelana CoP stands as a model of grassroots leadership and girl-centered development. Their commitment not only amplified the voices of schoolgirls but turned those voices into action, and that action into lasting change. "This project brought joy, safety, and pride back to our school. We are forever grateful to the CoP for their vision and relentless efforts," shared by one of schoolteacher. This is more than a story about improved infrastructure. It is a story of empowerment, equity, and a community that rose together to protect its daughters' right to learn with dignity.



Disrupting the Status Quo, Rewiring the Philanthropy Engine in East Africa

2024 was not the year for playing safe. It was the year the East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN) leaned into uncomfortable conversations, rewrote the rules of engagement between sectors, and proved that philanthropy in East Africa is not just charity — it's strategy, leverage, and unapologetic power-shifting.

Working with our members and partners, we turned research into advocacy, convenings into coalitions, and bold ideas into systems change — driving a new era of locally owned, strategically driven philanthropy

Context and Description of the Initiatives

EAPN's 2024 agenda combined high-impact research, policy advocacy, convenings, and infrastructure development to strengthen the philanthropic ecosystem.

- **Turning Research into Tools for Change:** Six flagship studies, from unlocking corporate social investment to mapping family giving traditions, created actionable evidence that informed policy reform, donor strategies, and member programming.

Recommendation:

- **Policy Advocacy with Teeth:** We strengthened civil society's capacity to influence regulatory frameworks through targeted analyses and strategic engagements. By building high-level, multi-stakeholder alliances, we enabled coordinated, regional advocacy and cohesive engagement with policymakers and regulators.
- **The Convening Power Play:** We brought together hundreds of stakeholders across the region to address key issues like data governance, educational equity, local philanthropy, and innovative financing. These shared agendas helped forge high-level, multi-stakeholder alliances that advanced regional collaboration and amplified civil society's policy influence.
- **The 2024 Grantmakers Summit:** A sector-wide reset that tackled trust deficits, transparency gaps, and the shift to equity-centred, feedback-driven grantmaking.
- **Rewiring Philanthropy's Infrastructure:** Launch of Knowledge Hub 2.0, expanded working groups, and capacity exchanges transformed EAPN from a network into an operational backbone for the sector.
- **Global Influence, Local Ownership:** From the APN Assembly in Zimbabwe to #ShiftThePower dialogues in Nairobi, we ensured regional priorities influenced global philanthropy discourse.

Changes Realized

- **Stronger Evidence Base:** Research outputs became practical advocacy and strategy tools for members and partners.
- **Policy Gains:** Greater understanding and engagement with legal frameworks, enabling CSOs to adapt and leverage new provisions.
- **Collaborative Muscle:** Convenings shifted from networking events to coordinated action hubs, producing joint strategies and partnerships.
- **Operational Strengthening:** Knowledge Hub 2.0 and capacity exchanges improved the sector's ability to respond to emerging challenges.
- **Narrative Shift:** Community-led, locally owned approaches gained greater visibility and legitimacy, influencing both local and global funders.

Lessons Learned and Way-forward

Learned:

- Data and research have maximum impact when integrated directly into advocacy, not left as static publications.
- Sustained legislative engagement requires both technical expertise and sector-wide solidarity.
- Convenings work best when they are designed for decision-making and follow-up, not just dialogue.
- Infrastructure investments like the Knowledge Hub and capacity exchanges are essential for long-term sector resilience.

From Unmet Needs to Collective Action

Way forward:

- EAPN will maintain continuous investment in research and knowledge sharing to keep pace with changing contexts.
- The network is geared to expand cross-sector collaborations, especially in innovative finance, to unlock new resource streams. And to advocate for progressive policies that recognize philanthropy as a strategic development partner.
- We prioritize community narratives and leadership to ensure initiatives are grounded in local realities

The EAPN's 2024 agenda was a turning point shifting East African philanthropy from reactive to strategic, from donor-driven to locally owned. By coupling evidence with advocacy, convening to build coalitions, and integrating infrastructure with innovation, we strengthened the sector's ability to mobilize resources, influence policy, and lead on its own terms. The momentum generated in 2024 has set the stage for a bolder, more connected, and self-determining philanthropic movement — one ready to disrupt entrenched systems and deliver transformative changes for the region.

Equality For Growth



From Housewife to Market Hero: How Veneranda Became a Voice for Mkuyuni Market Women



"I started with only 50,000 shillings, but I carried the strength of a thousand women."- Veneranda Joseph.

At Mkuyuni Market in Mwanza, the smell of ripe tomatoes and freshly harvested plantains fills the morning air. Behind one of the busy stalls, you'll find 50-year-old Veneranda Joseph. Her face glows with quiet confidence as she arranges her vegetables, plantains, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, all stacked with care. She's not just a trader. She's a leader, a mother of two, and a true champion for women's rights.

But Veneranda's life wasn't always like this. Years ago, she was a housewife, relying on her husband for everything. "It was a hard life," she remembers. "I believed that if we shared responsibilities at home, our family would be stronger." That belief pushed her to do something. In 2010, she started her own small vegetable business at Mkuyuni Market. She had little money, but a lot of hope.

She Sells More Than Fruits—She Sells Courage

Over time, Veneranda's business began to grow. She started with only 50,000 TZS in capital and now runs her stall with over 1 million TZS in capital. She even owns a two-bedroom rental house with a stable monthly income. More importantly, she's raised her children with this business; one is now a university graduate. But Veneranda didn't stop at selling vegetables. In 2015, she received training from the Equality for Growth (EfG) program and began to see business as more than income; it was a platform for change.

From Businesswoman to a Leader

EfG trained her in women's rights, business growth, savings, and how to stop gender-based violence. With this new knowledge, Veneranda began speaking out in her market, not just for herself, but for all women. She helped reduce abuse and encouraged women to own their stalls and express their opinions without fear. "Almost every woman is happy now," she says. "There's no more discrimination." She was soon elected Assistant Secretary General of the Mkuyuni Market, leading nearly 300 entrepreneurs. "Leadership is a calling," she says proudly. "Now, I can help protect people's rights."

Saving Together, Rising Together

Veneranda used what she learned from EfG to form a women's association group in the market. By 2024, their savings reached 48 million TZS. With 45 members joining by 2025, she expects the fund to grow even more. Women in the group can now borrow up to 1 million TZS with only 5% interest to expand their businesses. "We meet twice a month," she explains. "We share ideas and support each other."

She also joined a Vicoba group at her church, saving 5,000 TZS weekly with 35 other women. That group helped her get a 200,000 TZS loan to support her business. These savings groups are more than money; they are networks of strength.

Fighting for Better Markets

Even with her success, Veneranda continues to push for better infrastructure in Mkuyuni Market. Flooding during the rainy season keeps customers away, and poor drainage creates unsafe working conditions. "There are only two toilets for women and two for men," she says. "That's not enough." She's urging the government to build modern markets with clean water, breastfeeding rooms, and changing spaces for women.

She also helped improve market safety. With traders now paying 3,000 TZS monthly for security, they feel more protected. "Our goods are safe. We can sleep peacefully."

Innovative Ideas That Keep Her Ahead

Veneranda is creative when business gets tough. She calls customers directly during floods and delivers their orders using motorcycle taxis. While others go to buy stock, she stays at the market early to catch morning buyers and sends her assistant to restock later. “It saves time and helps me win early customers,” she smiles.

Challenges That Didn't Break Her

As a woman leader, Veneranda has faced insults and disappointment. Once, she reported flooding to the market chairperson, who visited the area but never took action. Still, she continues to fight. “I take it as a challenge, not a failure,” she says. “I will keep pushing.”

Stepping into Tomorrow

Veneranda dreams of opening a wholesale grain shop and expanding her capital from 1 million to 3 million TZS. To help her reach that goal, she plans to apply for the 10% Local Government Loan. More than anything, she wants women to believe in themselves and each other. “One woman alone cannot solve all problems,” she says. “But together, we can do anything.”

Veneranda says to the government and local leaders, “Build better markets. Give us clean water, modern toilets, and safety. Support women, we are the heart of the economy.” She also pledges to other women not to look down on market work. “It can transform your life.”



Lessons Learned

1. **Empowerment begins with knowledge:** Veneranda's transformation was fueled by training in business management, women's rights, and financial literacy. Education and mentorship are critical for enabling women to realize their potential.
2. **Collective action strengthens resilience:** Forming savings groups and associations allowed women to pool resources, support each other, and access loans to grow their businesses. Unity amplifies impact.
3. **Leadership is about service, not status:** Veneranda's leadership emerged from a desire to serve her peers and address their challenges. True leadership builds trust and fosters community development.
4. **Women's economic empowerment benefits the wider community:** As women gain financial independence, they contribute to family welfare, local economy, and community infrastructure improvements.

Recommendations

1. Expand women's access to training programs: Government and NGOs should increase opportunities for market women to receive business, financial, and leadership training.
2. Support collective savings mechanisms: Encouraging market-based women's groups and Village Community Banks (VICOBA) initiatives can enhance financial resilience and entrepreneurial growth.
3. Promote women's leadership in market governance: Encouraging women to hold leadership positions ensures that policies reflect their needs and strengthens community representation.
4. Invest in market infrastructure: Authorities should provide clean water, adequate toilets, safe spaces, breastfeeding rooms, and proper drainage to improve working conditions for women traders.

Domestic Resource Mobilization Two Chiefdoms Secure Perpetual Corporate Philanthropy Support from a 12MW Mini-Hydro Project

Success being celebrated

In the heart of Zambia's Southern Province, a new chapter in Corporate Social Responsibility is unfolding, one that promises lasting impact for generations to come. The Kafue Gorge Lower Power Development Corporation (KGL) has pioneered a model that moves beyond short-term CSR gestures and embraces a bold vision: perpetual, community-driven development.

This success story centers on two chiefdoms, Naluama in Chikankata District, Southern Province, and Nkomeshya in Lusaka Province, that have joined forces with KGL to secure unprecedented development financing. By contributing land for the KGL power station, these communities are now stakeholders in a unique venture. A 12-megawatt mini-hydro power plant, necessitated by environmental flows to preserve aquatic habitats in Zambia's Kafue River, now generates proceeds that will fund local development initiatives throughout its lifetime.

What is being celebrated is not just the commissioning of an energy plant, but the creation of a model that redefines the relationship between corporations and the communities they serve. Instead of one-time donations or ad hoc projects, the people of Naluama and Nkomeshya now have a perpetual stake in a renewable energy enterprise, ensuring that development in their chiefdoms is both consistent and sustainable.

For many years, Corporate Social Responsibility in Zambia's rural areas was synonymous with short-lived acts of charity. A borehole here, a set of school supplies there. While well-meaning, such interventions often did little to address deep-rooted, systemic challenges. The lack of continuity and ownership meant that benefits rarely lasted.

Story Context

That narrative began to change in 2023, when the KGL power station was officially commissioned. Recognizing the need for a more enduring approach, KGL management and leaders from the two chiefdoms conceived the idea of establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle for community development. This vision became a reality in 2024 with the incorporation of the KGL Community Development Company (KGLCDC).

Wholly funded by the profits from the revenues from the 12MW mini-hydro plant, KGLCDC is designed to operate for as long as the power station itself. Given that hydropower plants typically have operational lifespans ranging from 50 to 100 years, the initiative effectively guarantees decades of predictable corporate philanthropy support for community development.

What sets this initiative apart is the governance structure. Naluama and Nkomeshya Chiefdoms are not passive recipients of corporate generosity; they are active stakeholders who represent their communities on the Board of Directors and help shape the company's priorities and strategic direction.

This participatory model ensures that development is not imposed from the outside but co-designed with the very people it is meant to serve. Through consultations and planning workshops, community members articulate their needs, identify priorities, and co-create solutions. The result is a model of ownership and accountability that strengthens trust while ensuring that projects remain relevant and impactful.

Benefits Realised

Since its establishment, KGLCDC has embarked on ambitious philanthropy initiatives spanning health, education, water and sanitation, and local economic development.

In 2025 alone, several major interventions are being rolled out:

- **Education:** Construction of classroom blocks, staff housing, and water reticulation systems. For instance, the new education facilities will reduce overcrowding, which severely compromises learning outcomes, improve attendance, and create an environment where children can thrive academically.
- **Maternal and Child Health:** Development of maternity annexes designed to improve access to skilled maternal care. Women are forced to walk long distances for antenatal and delivery services, leading to high risks of maternal and infant mortality. These new facilities will bring essential care closer to families, reducing deaths and promoting healthier communities.
- **Water and Sanitation:** Installation of both mechanized and hand-pump boreholes. Women and children in the two chiefdoms spend hours fetching water from unsafe sources, exposing households to disease and keeping children, especially girls, away from school. By bringing safe water closer to homes, these projects are improving hygiene, reducing disease, and restoring time for education and economic activities.

- **Economic Empowerment:** Support to local cooperatives through a winter maize production project. By equipping communities with inputs, training, and irrigation support, KGLCDC is enabling farmers to increase yields, boost incomes, and improve food security.
- **Gender and Health:** Funding for a community-led menstrual health initiative, aimed at breaking taboos, improving access to sanitary products, and keeping girls in school.

Each of these projects is more than an intervention; it is a statement of what happens when communities are empowered to define and drive their own development.

Lessons Learned

The KGLCDC experience offers several critical lessons:

- **Predictable Corporate Philanthropy Support:** By tying development financing to a long-lived revenue-generating asset like a hydro project, communities can secure predictable, long-term resources. This breaks the cycle of dependency on short-term donor funding.
- **Community Ownership Ensures Relevance:** Giving communities a stake in governance ensures that projects address real, felt needs. Ownership fosters pride, accountability, and sustainability.
- **Partnerships Build Strength:** The collaboration between KGL and the two chiefdoms demonstrates the power of partnerships where corporations and communities share both risks and rewards.
- **Holistic Development Creates Synergy:** By addressing education, health, water, and livelihoods simultaneously, the initiative improves overall quality of life and creates reinforcing benefits.

Recommendations

For other corporations and development partners, the message is clear: sustainable impact requires models that embed **permanence, participation, and partnership**. Investing in renewable energy-based revenue streams and linking them to community-led institutions can turn CSR from charity into an engine of long-term transformation.

The story of the Naluama and Nkomeshya Chiefdoms shows that development need not be fleeting. With vision, collaboration, and shared ownership, communities can secure not just temporary relief but a **legacy of prosperity that will endure for generations to come**.

Recognizing this profound gap in rights education and access to justice, the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) began conducting mobile legal aid clinics and awareness sessions. They didn't just lecture from a distance; they sat on the ground, listened to stories, and saw the raw reality of the community's plight. The LRF's approach was to educate the community on the interconnectedness of rights, explaining how the lack of one, such as the right to livelihood, could lead to the non-enjoyment of others, including the right to education. During one-on-one sessions that followed, the LRF team observed that while there were many instances of civil rights violations, the most pressing daily struggles stemmed from the dire socio-economic situation. This realization made it clear that a holistic approach was required, one that would address the root causes of poverty, which in turn fuelled other societal ills and made them susceptible to rights violations. The solution, they realized, had to be a fusion of legal empowerment and economic upliftment.

Inspired by this new understanding, the LRF empowered villagers with knowledge about their rights and the potential to create solutions from within. This marked a profound shift from being passive recipients of aid to active agents of change. The community embraced this idea and launched a groundbreaking initiative: the "Legal Project." The name itself is a tribute to the LRF, as the project stemmed directly from the ideas and guidance provided during their legal sessions. This project, a testament to grassroots ingenuity, was born from a collective decision to pool their own resources to combat poverty. Instead of seeking external aid, a steering committee of seven members was formed, and under the guidance of individual kraal heads, 20-member groups were established. Each member of these groups contributed a goat, which would be bred to create a sustainable source of income. This act of collective giving is a powerful example of community philanthropy and domestic resource mobilization.

From Legal Aid to Livelihoods: The "Legal Project" Transforms the Swereki Community, Beitbridge, Zimbabwe

In the remote Swereki Village of Beitbridge, the silence of destitution was deafening. Residents lived under the constant threat of hunger, which manifested in severe malnutrition, rampant theft, and desperate measures like child marriages for survival. Lack of school fees forced many children to drop out of school, a situation many parents endured without realizing they were violating their children's right to education. The community's struggles highlighted a critical need to address not only civil and political rights violations but also the profound socio-economic challenges that threatened their very existence. The justice system felt impossibly distant, a world away from their daily battles. Access to legal recourse was nonexistent, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and further marginalization.

"Before the LRF came, we felt lost and forgotten," shared Gogo MaKhumalo, a respected elder in the village. "We had no idea what our rights were. When a neighbour stole our goats or abused our children, we could not go to the police because we had no idea how the law worked, and we certainly could not afford a lawyer. Our children were marrying young just to survive. We were living without dignity."

To date, five of these groups have been formed, and a total of 100 goats have been contributed to the project. Once the goats begin breeding, the initial herd will be sold. The proceeds from these sales will be used to create a community fund, managed through participatory grant-making. The community itself will decide how to allocate these resources, with the primary goal of paying school fees for children and assisting people with disabilities and the elderly. This approach ensures that the community maintains ownership and agency over its own development.

The "Legal Project" is more than just a goat-breeding scheme; it is a symbol of self-reliance and resilience. By leveraging their own assets, the community is directly addressing the challenges of hunger and poverty. The goats provide a continuous source of nutritious meat and milk for malnourished children, as well as valuable manure for farming, boosting agricultural yields and food security. The income generated from selling the goats will cover school fees, reducing the economic pressure that often leads to child marriages. This initiative showcases how a community can use its own resources to build a resilient future, empowering itself to create a life of dignity and purpose.



Sweraki village members with some of the goats from their Legal Project

The journey from a community unaware of its rights to one actively using its collective power to secure its future demonstrates the transformative power of rights education. It shows that access to justice is not just about courts and lawyers; it's about empowering people to solve their own problems, building a foundation of resilience and self-reliance that will serve them for generations to come. "Now we know our rights, and we are using them not just for our legal problems, but for our livelihoods," Gogo MaKhumalo concluded with a smile. "The LRF didn't give us fish; they taught us to build a net, and now we are catching our own fish and sharing it with our children."

Centering African Voices and Practices in Continental Philanthropy and Aid: The Southern Africa Trust's journey

As the Southern Africa Trust (The Trust) marks 20 years of grant-making and amplifying marginalised voices, 2025 represents a pivotal year in our commitment to contributing towards efforts to decolonise knowledge by challenging narratives that have typically hailed colonial perspectives. We centred African knowledge through strategic curation of and engagement in spaces, and innovative programming that seeks to redefine how resources flow among communities in the region and across the continent.

Our 2025 began with a bold statement [1] on the advent of the Fourth Financing for Development Conference (FFD4) in Seville, Spain, where we issued "Financing Care is Financing the Future: A Feminist Call from Southern Africa," calling on governments, international financial institutions, donors, and private sector actors to take five transformative actions, including:

1. Re-centring care work in development planning and public financing frameworks.
 2. Raising and spending domestic resources in gender-just, care-oriented ways.
 3. Linking debt relief to binding commitments for social spending, especially care.
 4. Embedding care in climate and crisis financing instruments.
- Funding and scaling feminist, community-led models of care

Building on this advocacy messaging on a global platform, we hosted a flagship webinar and designed a learning grants program reaching across five countries, and engaged over 740 community nominations, and created meaningful participation in philanthropic practice to influence policy and programming continent-wide.

Building directly on our feminist call at FFD4, we hosted a webinar, "Collaboration in Crisis Contexts: The Role of Intermediaries and Fiscal Hosts in the Civic Ecosystem," as part of our strategy, Seriti, to contribute towards efforts to decolonise knowledge systems and practices.

The global advocacy stage set at FFD4 established the foundation for challenging diverse knowledge practices that perpetuate dominant colonial paradigms.

The webinar drew grant-makers, philanthropy support organisations, academics, and civil society leaders across multiple African regions with a two-fold focus:

- Challenging colonial legacies in funding models that often perpetuate dependency and external agendas.
- Showcasing African-rooted practices such as solidarity-based giving, communal responsibility, and Ubuntu-driven philanthropy.

Participants described it as "a rare space where African voices defined African philanthropy on their own terms."

In parallel, the Trust piloted a participatory grant-making model through offering community-selected and community-led projects for multi-year unrestricted learning grants across five countries: Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This process is centred on supporting interventions based on community nominations; where local actors identified social justice/human rights formations, networks, and movements doing outstanding work whether registered entities or unregistered collectives to receive the learning grants.

This initiative is designed to amplify and strengthen people's power for social justice and accountability. It strengthens the broader civic formations ecosystem and infrastructure by resourcing diverse civic groups working towards climate justice, economic justice, social protection and care justice, gender justice, and meaningful youth engagement.

This process has already enabled several learning important points, including:

- The importance of legitimacy and trust: where communities' direct involvement in the grant-making process is prioritised;
- The importance of including the often invisible: when working with unregistered but impactful movements, which have gained more visibility and recognition;
- The value of reaching out to identify community-led interventions: Through the Call for Nominations, the Trust received over 740 nominations, including community-based formations and social movements.
- The importance of deliberately investing in learning for adaptation: Both The Trust and the communities reflected on lessons for scaling participatory practices across the region.
- **Both the webinar and the learning grants intervention demonstrate potential for building continental solidarity**, with the webinar creating a platform to rethink a predominantly colonial narrative on financing in Africa. The learning grants show how philanthropy can be locally defined and democratically governed, reducing barriers that exclude community-led initiatives and actors. Both initiatives challenged the donor community to reimagine philanthropy as African-led, rooted in domestic resource mobilisation and community priorities.
- Policymakers who engaged with the webinar recognised philanthropy as a driver of social and systems change, strengthening advocacy for enabling environments.

Likewise, the process revealed four critical insights:

1. **Platforms matter:** Safe spaces for dialogue among African grant-makers are essential for rethinking entrenched funding paradigms.
2. **Participation builds legitimacy:** Community-driven processes enhance trust and ensure resources reach truly impactful actors.
3. **Indigenous knowledge resources and documentation can be systemically transformative:** creating collective platforms and knowledge materials that centre African and indigenous knowledge and practices can influence narratives and mobilise communities in solidarity for advocacy to transform harmful colonial systems.
4. **Inclusivity requires courage:** Supporting unregistered community-led movements challenges regulatory norms but yields stronger, more authentic partnerships.

This experience demonstrates that supporting African-led innovation in philanthropy yields results that extend beyond individual grants. It creates new models, influences continental discourse, and builds sustainable ecosystems that honour community wisdom while delivering impact. Decolonising knowledge is a central element for challenging systems that marginalise communities and perpetuate unsustainable dependency models. Centering African perspectives and indigenous wisdom unlocks systemic transformation that creates lasting impact by dismantling exclusionary practices and building resilient, community-driven alternatives.

We invite our partners to join us in scaling these progressive approaches, supporting the next phase of African philanthropy that prioritises community agency, shifting power, and justice alongside resource transfer.



Local Giving Restores Dignity to Women Accused of Witchcraft in Ghana

Ifumbo Youth Organisation is a typical grassroots-level organization that is finding its feet, not yet glamorous, and located too far away at the outskirts of the country to be noticed. It is dedicated to empowering youth and vulnerable groups in Chitipa, Malawi, and fostering their participation in development and democratic processes. It does this work by mobilizing resources from among its membership and the community in which it exists.

The organization received, in 2023, a Catalyst Fund Grant from the Shifting the Power (StP) Programme that Tilitonse Foundation is implementing in Malawi in partnership with Comic Relief and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom (FCDO). The programme provides financial and capacity development support to local organizations to address their capacity gaps, systems, and structures, making them more resilient and able to carry out their mandates.

From the initial £5,000 catalytic grant for the setting up of basic systems and structures over 6 months, the organization has, in 2025, graduated to a Civil Society Strengthening Fund in the same programme, which is offering them long-term financial resources worth £150,000 (restricted and unrestricted funding) for further capacity development over a maximum of 5 years.

Between the Catalyst Fund and the Civil Society Strengthening Fund, the organization has evolved from a local movement bringing together passionate inexperienced individuals, organized through a basic structure and governance system, and working handicapped with people in roles they don't fully understand to a formal organization that is registered with the local NGO Authority (NGORA), has a trained Board of directors, operational systems and structures, and officers in key roles such as Finance and Communications.

The organization has purchased its first organizational vehicle through the StP programme and is now working to establish a social enterprise as a means of sustainability. It is now much bolder and more confident in the initiatives it is pursuing. In terms of resource mobilization, they have purchased some laptops with funds from the StP programme, which has expanded the scope of their mobilization efforts beyond their community and the Ifumbo diaspora. The organization is also engaging its community more to mobilize and respond to the pressing needs in its area.

“Shifting the power is very possible as now the community can realize its part in development activities. Ownership of projects and programs has also improved, and there's a good relationship with the community because the Shifting the Power programme has enabled us to engage them more,” says Louis Mhango, Executive Director for the Organization.

In October 2025, the organization coordinated a large-scale community activity to prepare designated plots of land for the upcoming national tree-planting season. This involved clearing the ground, creating planting beds, and filling planting tubes with soil and compost.

. The activity took place in the fields and community areas around the Ifumbo region in the northern district of Chitipa, a region experiencing environmental challenges such as soil erosion and deforestation. It was strategically timed to have the land ready for the rainy season, giving the seedlings the best chance to grow when the national tree planting season officially commences early next year.

The primary motivation was to address local environmental degradation, mitigate the effects of climate change, and ensure a greener, healthier future for their community. The participants understood that planting trees is one thing, but proper preparation and care are essential for their survival and long-term impact. The youth collaborated with local leaders and community members, pooling their efforts and knowledge. They followed expert guidance to create the optimal environment for the young saplings, thereby ensuring a higher survival rate once they were planted.



The activity was more than just physical labor; it was an educational experience that taught everyone involved about the importance of conservation and sustainable practices.

The story of the Ifumbo Youth Organisation's October activity is one of foresight and collective action. It highlights how young people can become powerful agents of change by investing their energy and time in building a resilient and sustainable future for their community and the planet. Their hard work ensures that when the rains come and the planting season begins, their community will be ready to make a lasting, positive impact.

Even better, their story demonstrates how far community movements born of passion and philanthropic efforts can go when properly nurtured and supported. Like the tree seedlings that Ifumbo planted, it's not the planting that is important, but the aftercare that will grow the tree so that it produces fruit.



African Philanthropy Network



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Empowering Communities, Shaping Futures



Legal Resources Foundation

