

THE ROLE AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY AND CULTURE PLAY IN DEVELOPING AFRICAN COMMUNITIES

Abstract

It is often difficult to accept that cultural, historical, social, economic and political practices that were at some stage in the past highly regarded might now be viewed as outmoded, inappropriate, irrelevant or obsolete. The post-war years, for example, have seen phenomenal social, economic and political changes in the way African communities live and relate to one another. These communities, since the post-war years, continue to experience various forms of poverty and hunger.

The noticeable changes that have occurred have not all been an improvement in the lives of the poor, the needy and communities that deserve to be assisted. This has been particularly so in cases where indigenous philanthropic practices in some African communities were destroyed, partially as a result of inappropriate ways foreign and domestic donations have been managed and accounted for. In these instances cultural beliefs and practices, as well as public policies have not always contributed positively to promotion, marketing and development of philanthropy in many African communities.

However, the indisputable fact is that foreign and domestic donations, as well as assistance from African governments are needed to mobilise African communities to promote and develop forms of indigenous philanthropic practices that must address the socio-economic challenges of affected individuals and communities. Without some properly channelled and managed external help or intervention, particularly from foreign donors, there is currently little hope that the vast majority of African communities will ever experience a reasonable and competitive standard of living.

An effective and sustainable process of mobilising African communities around promotion, marketing and development of indigenous philanthropic practices should involve all: foreign, international and domestic donors, African governments, corporate organisations, and members of non-governmental and community-based organisations, including faith-based organisations and ordinary citizens. Philanthropic practices in the main must play a significant role in times of crises such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, refugee problems, ravages of war, droughts, terrorist attacks, coups, extreme forms of hunger, orphaned children, child-headed families, malnutrition, and so on. Organisations such as the Global FoodBank Network, Operation Hunger, the South African FoodBank and others, for example, cook and provide food to poor, hungry individuals and needy communities that cannot afford to get food for members of their families. This kind of assistance provides temporary relief, and is not sustainable. Donors that assist hardly have an intention to assist forever in these and similar cases.

However, endemic poverty and unemployment in Africa occur quite often as a result of misguided public socio-economic policies. In these cases no amount of philanthropy stands to provide a lasting relief to beneficiaries. If African governments/communities, for example, continue to pursue public policies that create inflation and lead to various forms of misery, economic ruin and frustrations, philanthropic practices would be put under severe stress. The argument for philanthropy to be promoted, marketed and developed under such conditions might simply lose meaning or remain untenable, even to known philanthropic international organisations, such as the Rotary International and WINGS (Worldwide Initiative for Grant-Maker Support) - an organisation dedicated to assisting grant support organisations and community foundations globally.

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of what should be the blueprint for African communities as they continue to seek and find new and better ways of improving the quality of life in African communities, through indigenous philanthropic practices. In these processes roles, obligations and responsibilities of each sector of society are outlined, to establish responsibility and accountability, and to monitor and evaluate progress on an integrated and regular basis.

As the concepts of **philanthropy, philanthropic, philanthropist and culture** remain relatively misunderstood and underdeveloped in known African communities, this chapter takes the view that these concepts be also promoted, marketed and developed on the African continent. Furthermore, the chapter also clears the air and defines these concepts, just to ensure that the reader is taken on board and not left behind on the exciting journey to promoting, marketing and developing understanding and applications of the concepts.

Defining Key Concepts

Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2001) describes **philanthropy** as the giving of money to people who need it, without wanting anything in return. In the past individuals in some parts of Africa would express their philanthropic giving through time spent assisting others, or through provision of goods, services or expertise to individuals or communities that needed these, without these individuals expecting payment in return for their generosity or service provision.

Applied to poor, deserving and needy communities, the term philanthropy has since been developed into various shades of meaning and applications. There are now even talks about community philanthropy - a community characterised by a culture of giving and sharing. What does community

philanthropy mean? Community philanthropy is about looking at how poor and wealthy communities, for example, promote among themselves various forms of philanthropy – what some sociologists, observers and economists refer to as **horizontal or lateral philanthropy** – the practice of usually poor people in local communities that combine their efforts and resources to find ways and means of helping one another.

Realities of community philanthropy are that in assisting one another poor communities in the past were able to enjoy a better life than cry poverty at all times. In this regard, community philanthropy in Africa should have a chance to succeed in addressing identified instances of social evils of poverty, injustice, unemployment and socio-economic deprivations. However, certain African cultural beliefs and practices would need to change for this to happen. Community philanthropy would need to be understood as an effort to improve the well-being of humankind, through, for example, development and promotion of a culture of questioning an African leader and calling on him/her to publicly account for his/her actions, in the same way a citizen would be questioned and called upon to publicly account for his/her actions. Someone out there in the local community should be able to even tell the “king or the queen” that he/she is going around “naked” within the local community, to create a sense of real community life.

From the foregoing, an individual, for example, that devotes his/her life helping and assisting deserving, poor and needy people in a local community, for no pay or free of charge, is called a **philanthropist** – someone you and I would surely be happy to be associated with. If we did this, whenever we die we would have left behind some legacy/footprints. We would have, for example, during our lifetime, helped those that did not have the means or ability to lead and enjoy a normal life. These are the people that could have been born into poor families. Parents and relatives could have died when they were young and, therefore, could not have had an education to enjoy a better life or acquired skills required for work.

The sharing of the little we have with others has never been a crime in known African communities. As a matter of fact one of the most known and noblest characteristics of an African personality has been the expression of socio-economic values embraced in a common cultural spirit of *ubuntu* – that humanistic spirit characterised by a desire to care for and share with others in distress or experiencing some socio-economic pains – a display of a human interest rooted in a fascination with love for human beings and the human environment. By remaining a philanthropist, among other things, you would note and admit that you, for example, refuse to go to bed when next to you or in your community there could be people dying of hunger, malnutrition, diseases or poverty.

A **philanthropic** person or organisation, in the context of this chapter, would freely give money or other types of assistance to people who need it. This person or organisation would not expect anything in return for the offered

assistance. Examples of philanthropic organisations in Africa include foundations, trusts, charitable organisations, non-profit and similar organisations that issue grants to identified needy, poor and deserving individuals or communities. The benefits of these grants to recipients, small as they sometimes might be, are immense. Beneficiaries may start small businesses, create employment opportunities for themselves and others or free themselves from the pangs of ignorance, poverty, hunger and starvation.

Other examples of philanthropic practices include the work of foreign missionaries that over decades established mission stations in some parts of Africa. These mission stations provided local communities with educational institutions, hospitals and churches (Fleishman, 2007). Local communities used the institutions for spiritual revivals, educational advancement, and to improve health service delivery. The missionaries initially did not expect payment from local communities for their services. Their primary objective was, as they put it, to assist in the socio-economic advancement and Christianisation of local communities. The intercultural exchanges that took place account for numerous and different religious groups that coexist peacefully with one another across the continent. As a result of these developments the continent is at present fortunate not to have had uncontrollable and destructive religious conflicts.

A **culture** of philanthropy is quite often marketed as being influenced by a passion and a desire to assist those less fortunate than you are. You could be staying and working in an air conditioned office, having perhaps some of your well earned interest on your investments or living on three meals a day, punctuated by time for smoking a cigar, or having two or three tea breaks a day. Of course, there is nothing wrong with this style of living. I do not at all consider it lavish. You worked hard for your money to enjoy it the way you like. What is, however, wrong is to assume that others out there remain poor or destitute because they wanted or chosen to. Poverty in their case might not always have been a matter of choice. They could have been thrown into it much against their will.

The point I am stressing in the above paragraph is that poverty is never a matter of conscious choice. People do not choose to be poor directly, but what happens is that they sometimes choose dangerous causes of action that lead to poverty. Numerous individuals and communities in Africa are quite often thrown into poverty much against their will. In this regard, African communities face a serious challenge: to promote and develop a renewed African culture of philanthropy, based on socio-economic values of respect for human dignity, self-reliance and self-development – a culture of love, concern, caring, giving and sharing. If this happened, foreign donations would certainly have a better effect on development processes: strengthen, promote, market and develop existing forms of indigenous philanthropy, freedom of speech and expression, community participation, community-driven development, public accountability, and relevant management and leadership capacities.

Sachs (2005), on poverty and cultural issues in Africa, puts it as follows: "Even where African governments might be trying to advance their countries, the cultural environment may be an obstacle to development. Cultural and religious norms in African communities may, for example, block the role of women, leaving half of the population without economic or political rights and without education, thereby undermining half of the population in its contribution to overall socio-economic development".

To deny women their rights and education may result in cascading problems such as demographic transition from high fertility to low fertility rates that might be delayed or blocked altogether. Poor households might continue to have six, seven or even more children because the woman's role is seen mainly as child rearing, and her lack of education means that she has few options in the labour market. In these and similar settings women quite often lack basic economic security and legal rights; when they are widowed their social circumstances turn even more dreadful, and they are left completely impoverished and without hope for improvement.

What is culture then? Culture is quite often difficult to define. It differs from individual to individual, and from community to community, from generation to generation and from race to race. Bell & Williams (1999), for example, define culture as the complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, traditions and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society. This definition remains complex enough for one to clearly understand what culture embodies. The culture of an organisation, for example, is an amalgam of shared values, a common mindset and characteristic behaviours – the way people do things within the organisation, and symbols of various kinds (Sadler, 1995).

Values are the things that members of the organisation collectively see as important to guide their actions and behaviour. It is in some instances considered as a particular society or civilisation, especially considered in relation to its beliefs, way of life or art. Thus, you may speak of a people from different cultures. You could also have been brought up in a culture that said you must find a way of putting and planting back into your society what you have taken out. You could also have been told never to question those in authority, even if they were wrong to the extent of leading the entire community to an abyss.

Forms of philanthropy in Africa

The irony with most change processes is that quite often one has to destroy in the process of building. As new forms of philanthropy develop, old ones that might have served African communities well in the past could, unfortunately, get destroyed. Indeed, it would be a fallacy to assume that new forms of philanthropy are better than old ones. There is nothing altruistic in destroying an indigenous philanthropic culture that kept

communities relatively wealthy in the past merely to become fashionable or modern. If fashion or modernity comes our way to destroy our cherished and better ways of living, we should reject it. As African societies continue to embrace new forms of philanthropy, they should at the same time examine and carefully consider forms of indigenous philanthropy that in the past sustained African communities and made our forefathers not beggars or people that would go around crying for food, shelter, hand-outs, employment and other socio-economic advantages/privileges. What has gone wrong? Where did it all start? What should be done? These are some of the questions we should pause and ask ourselves.

Please! Do not misunderstand me. I am certainly not advocating for a return to the period of stone-age. Equally, I have no intention of apportioning blame to anybody. I do not think this would help at all. Instead, I am of the view that African communities, through indigenous philanthropic practices, combined with modern ways of doing things, still have the capacity to pursue aggressively socio-economic values based on respect for human dignity, self-reliance and self-development – a realisation that careers lay within people, and not within organisations (Corbin, 2000). People create their own values. The organisation does not create values for the people. This is what our forefathers believed in and did before us. They were not as educated as we are today, yet they were able to do a far better job in terms of ensuring that all in a village would not go to bed without a meal, and that no one in the village would be left so poor as to become an embarrassment and a shame to neighbours and the entire local community.

In the practice of philanthropy in some African communities a boy would look after cattle for a year and each year would be given a heifer for breeding cattle at his place. This offer would be made as a donation, and not as something the boy would naturally demand for his services. This practice ensured that each kraal in the village had cattle and cows for milk most families use for various purposes. Other communities developed associations of one form or the other to assist in times of need, to assist members in distress. Some of these communities would offer things like sugar, salt, candle sticks, matches and other basic household necessities to neighbours that went around asking for help as they could not afford to buy these commodities from merchants. All these were also forms of philanthropic practices that ensured a better life for all in a village.

Reflect also on practices that you might have experienced in your innocent youthful years when some benevolent local community members or some of your teachers opted to assist in the education of that bright child that could not afford to pay his/her school fees. If this did not happen the entire education career of the poor but bright child could have been thrown into complete ruin. In all known African communities this used to be the practice in the past. How then can African communities be allowed or encouraged to do away with so noble an indigenous African philanthropic practice? I am an African. I therefore just cannot imagine that there is under the sun a fellow

African whose conscience and values for human life would not be touched by situations similar to this one.

In a review of Connie Ngodi-Houghton's publication on philanthropy (2006), Firoze Manji in Alliance Volume 11 Number 1 March 2006 puts it as follows: "Conventional (or Western) definitions of philanthropy have ignored the rich traditional African spirit of community, reciprocity and mutual aid based on the philosophy of *ubuntuism*. The spirit is, she argues, the spring of philanthropy among the majority in East Africa". Firoze Manji's views are that the definition of philanthropy needs to be broadened, to include, for example, a distinction between charity and poverty. Charity, she goes on, can ameliorate, but philanthropy seeks to root out, for example, causes of poverty, suffering and inequality. Philanthropy inspires and promotes individual growth as it nourishes human welfare. I personally disagree with Firoze Manji when she states that philanthropy should be defined in terms of what the people in East Africa understand it to mean. I cannot accept, for example, that South Africa should develop its own definition of philanthropy. I just cannot imagine how the study field of philanthropy and society could operate and develop on the basis of embracing too many different and sometimes conflict localised definitions of philanthropy.

On Black philanthropy, Jacqueline (2004) seems to bring the issue of Black philanthropy closer to home. She puts it as follows: "African philanthropy may largely focus on direct social services to people from the same African community of origin". Indeed, this remains a common feature in most known African communities. Beneficiaries of these practices include extended families, nationality-based mutual aid societies and home-boy associations, as well as savings schemes of one form or the other – stokvels, burial societies and Christmas savings clubs run on a monthly basis, to benefit members at Christmas time. These civic organisations and similar ones practise various forms of philanthropy in Africa and, thus, continue to contribute significantly to local socio-economic development initiatives and processes.

Created by Americans, acting freely to meet their own needs and those of their fellow citizens, the civic sector of which community foundations and other non-governmental and community-based organisations are an integral part, is supported annually by nearly 70 percent of Americans of all colours, creeds, and socio-economic conditions (Fleishman, 2007), to the tune of more than \$260 billion. Its expenditures constitute almost one tenth of the nation's gross domestic product, its employees represent more than one tenth of the labour force, and its volunteers constitute between 30 and 50 percent of the citizenry, depending on the age of volunteers.

Justification for developing and promoting forms of philanthropy in Africa

Irrespective of whether the intentions of philanthropists are genuine or merely of self-serving interests, the fact of the matter is that Africa currently

needs philanthropists in the process of developing local communities. However, some observers feel there is nothing philanthropic or altruistic when donors fail to promote, develop or align their contributions to existing indigenous philanthropic practices. Others feel indigenous philanthropic practices in a global world need to change if they are to compete with international forms of philanthropy. In some cases the failure of philanthropy in Africa is ascribed to Africa's failure to promote, market and develop sustainable, vibrant and accountable socio-economic values based on human dignity, democracy, respect for individual freedom, and quantifiable self-reliance and self-development.

The war against poverty and socio-economic deprivations, for example, can never be won by a few individuals or public and private sector organisations working in silos, and not in unison with other sectors of society. The problems are too many, colossal, complex, challenging and not easy to disentangle. They need some collective effort from individuals and all sectors of society: government, individuals, civic organisations, corporate organisation and foreign development agencies. Ignoring these realities may not at all be the solution for required stability, peace and socio-economic development of the African continent, together with the international community.

Some of the problems Africa currently faces include HIV/AIDS, child-headed families, declining economies, corruption, crime, undemocratic governments, absence of a human rights culture, poor agricultural output, wars, low educational standards, extreme forms of poverty, resulting in large numbers of people without relevant education required for the socio-economic development of the continent. These problems and similar ones need some global attention. It is no longer the problem of the African continent. It is the problem of the international community. These problems affect the entire international community, as well as international trade and investments. In some instances these problems remain a threat to human existence, world peace and the United Nations' intentions to reduce world poverty by the year 2015. Something more than current commitments and initiatives now needs to be done. Africa needs to take a lead in this process.

Promotion, marketing and development of a philanthropic culture on the African continent could be a point of departure. This process might require mobilisation strategies and messages that do not only remain confined to ideas exchanged and generated among participants at national and international conferences. Knowledge is power. Mobilisation strategies in this regard should be aimed at opening a meaningful dialogue with citizens and governments of each African country. These dialogues would, among other things, determine roles, obligations and responsibilities of each stakeholder, to ensure that required accountability, community participation, and monitoring and evaluation processes of commonly shared, negotiated and adopted strategies are achieved, implemented, monitored and properly evaluated. African initiatives such as those of the African Union (AU), New

Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and others could also be used as vehicles to market, promote and develop philanthropy in Africa.

Responsibilities, roles and obligations of stakeholders

African **governments** should, in partnership with recognised and credible civic organisations, provide an enabling environment in the process of promoting, marketing and developing forms of indigenous philanthropic practices. How should African governments do this? Government, among other things, should, first and foremost, recognise the existence and the role of social movements, church organisations, volunteers, and non-governmental and community-based organisations, to find a way of harmonising and working collaboratively with these organisations, to promote preferred forms of philanthropy and improve the quality of life for all in local communities. Government also has the responsibility to identify and finance high-priority infrastructure projects, and make the required infrastructure and social services available to the whole population, and not just to a select few.

Results of partnerships and collaborative efforts between government and other sectors of society should be based on democratic principles and community participation – nothing more and nothing less. Government has specific roles to play in shaping up society and promote sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships between civic organisations and government. These relationships should be seen and understood as those of sectors that have to cooperate with and complement one another in the process of promoting, marketing and developing indigenous philanthropic practices. Civic organisations should not be viewed as community organisations that stand opposed to government planned programmes. Instead, these organisations should be viewed as organisations that assist government with service delivery and identification of socio-economic problems that might not always be easily understood by government.

Where possible it should be easy for government to contract some government functions to other sectors of society, for example, business or civic organisations. Partnerships of this nature should be based on public accountability, honesty, trust, professionalism, efficiency, effectiveness and responsibility (Roseland, 2005). This should not amount to government instructing the civic organisation or manipulating it as though the organisation was an extension of a government department. What all this means is that both government and other sectors of society have an interest to promote, and market, as well as develop community philanthropy through public service delivery that is based on socio-economic values of respect for fundamental freedoms, human dignity, self-reliance and self-development. The primary objective of this intervention, on the part of government, should be to empower local communities with sustainable skills and socio-economic values required for life.

Other things that government could do to promote, market and develop civic organisations include tax benefits to individuals and organisations that make donations to a civic organisation, particularly civic organisations that operate and have official licences to operate and pursue their stated socio-economic missions and objectives. Affected organisations should also be granted a tax exemption status. This would be one modest way on the part of government to contribute to socio-economic support, growth and development of civic organisations in Africa.

Civic organisations in Africa should operate within a public policy environment/framework that encourages community participation, democracy, and promotion of equal opportunities for all, Human Rights, freedom of expression and association, as well as gender equality. Promotion, marketing and development of indigenous philanthropic practices are some of the activities civic organisations should undertake as part of their responsibilities. The socio-economic evils of poverty, starvation, unemployment and other social problems, for example, are first recognised in local communities by civil society organisations even before the problems can enjoy government attention.

Through promotion, marketing and development of indigenous philanthropic practices, civic organisations, together with government, help local communities rely on their own resources and ability, rather than depend solely on government grants or vertical philanthropy – the practice of expecting support to always come from above or from sources external to a local community, usually from individuals and organisations with adequate resources to share with registered and recognised civic organisations. In this regard, establishment of community foundations could be tried and used as also other vehicles or intermediary organisations through which local communities or donors may fulfil a desire to assist in the process of developing local communities socially, economically, politically and otherwise.

What is a community foundation? Community foundations are basically grant-making organisations that, among other things, do the following (Mkhize, 2004):

- Seek to improve the quality of life for all people in a defined geographic area
- Are independent from control or influence by other organisations, donors or governments
- Are governed by a Board of Trustees/Directors broadly reflective of the communities they serve
- Make grants to other non-profit groups to address a wide variety of emerging and changing needs in the community
- Seek to build a permanent resource for the community, most often through the creation of endowed funds from a wide range of donors,

including local citizens, corporations, governments and other foundations and non-profits

- Provide services to donors to help them achieve their philanthropic giving and sharing goals
- Engage in a broad range of community leadership and partnership activities, serving as catalysts, conveners, collaborators and facilitators to solve problems and develop solutions to important community issues
- Have open and transparent policies and practices convening all aspects of their operations
- Are accountable to the community by informing the general public about their purpose, activities, and financial status on a regular basis.

An effective sustainable indigenous philanthropic practice should guarantee financial sustainability and other resources that should come from the local community. This is at present unfortunately not the case with known African communities. External donations should come to the community only as a cherry on top of the cake. Too much reliance on either government or external funding might destroy the required existence, **independence and autonomy** of civic organisations. Alternatively, funding organisations might also use recipient organisations for their purposes or complain of donor fatigue – an expression some donors use when they ask for how long are they expected to continue with their support. If this happened, affected organisations would find it difficult to pursue their mission and objectives, as well as serve properly the needs of local communities. Civic organisations need to remain vigilant and ensure that they do not fall into this dangerous trap.

Some churches in Africa, aware of the challenge and the need for them to continue to improve their philanthropic practices to the unemployed, the poor and the needy, both within and outside the church, encourage members to develop some entrepreneurial skills. In these instances the church uses church facilities at its disposal also as community development centres. These development centres provide capacity building training to local communities. The training programmes, in turn result in local communities establishing required small business enterprises that enable the church to assist the poor, the needy and deserving individuals both within and outside the church, and to also find some comfort in encouraging members to support the church by donating, at least, ten percent of an individual's earnings. These small enterprises could range from charity shops, baking, sewing, and promotions of home-based businesses, including development of community gardens that provide a variety of needed vegetables for household consumption and for sale to local communities.

The other important sector the contribution of which should not be left out in the process of promoting, marketing and developing indigenous philanthropic practices is the **private/corporate sector**. After the Second World War in 1945, for example, many countries emerged from the war completely

devastated. The corporate sector had to step in with reconstruction and development programmes/processes. Nation-states alone could not cope with the challenges most countries faced after the war. Nation-states in some cases were considered bureaucratic, inefficient, financially weak and slow to deliver. Through corporate social responsibility, corporate organisations assisted with donations to local communities, as part of their corporate social responsibility.

Corporate social responsibility does not operate on principles based on a system of barter – where goods are traded without regard for value of traded goods. An example of a barter system would be that I may give you a cow in exchange for a new car. The monetary value of a car and a cow would not count. What would count is the fact that each party needs something that the other party can provide, in exchange for what the parties are prepared to part with. No monetary value would come into the picture at all. Corporate social responsibility, however, means a corporate organisation makes a donation to community groups or organisations as part of its philanthropic practices or gesture. The primary purpose of this donation could be to contribute to poverty reduction/alleviation efforts in the local community or to make some lasting impression on benefiting communities or groups – to leave behind some legacy or landmarks.

Although different sectors of society have different roles, responsibilities and obligations in the process of promoting, marketing and developing indigenous philanthropic practices in Africa, their activities need to be harmonised, coordinated, monitored and aligned, for a greater impact. All sectors of society stand to benefit from a properly promoted, marketed and developed culture of philanthropy in local communities. Above all, local communities also feel empowered through ownership of community projects that are quite often established to benefit the wider community: government, corporate organisations and civic organisations. In this process government, above all, has to perform the function of coordinating identified stakeholders and introduce public policies based on democratic principles, and encourage promotion, marketing and development of philanthropic practices in local communities. However, this does not mean other stakeholders may not perform this function. Any stakeholder should have a right to take this initiative and persuade government to govern with a popular will of the governed.

Conclusion

You have now read this chapter. I congratulate you for doing so. Your next step now is to promote, market and develop indigenous and philanthropic practices in your local community, by explaining to acquaintances, friends, relatives, community members and business associates what philanthropy is about and how important it is for one to remain a philanthropist. Charity should begin at home. You and I should not wait for others to do this. We should take the lead and expect others to follow. We cannot talk about

philanthropy in the local community if we do not, for example, demonstrate to others how to practise philanthropy in the local community.

Second, you need to think of all forms of advertising something new in your local community. This could be by word of mouth, information brochures distributed at public places, for example, schools, churches, shopping complexes, shopping malls, radio programmes, newspapers, national and international conferences, and community meetings, as well as notices placed at government offices. If local communities understand the issues at stake, my experiences in community work are that local communities will always support whatever new idea is marketed properly and understood by local residents.

Third, I make a special appeal to institutions of higher education in Africa, to introduce, promote, market and develop studies on their campuses on Philanthropy and Civil Society in Africa, and beyond the borders of the continent. There is currently a real need for the frightening knowledge gap that currently exists between African institutions of higher education and those of their counter-parts in other parts of the world to be narrowed. We are now part of the global village and certainly need to understand the African continent in relation to events in other parts of the world.

As you continue to promote, market and develop indigenous and philanthropic practices in your local community ask yourself the following questions: How many promises are made and kept by those in a position to assist in the plight of children orphaned as a result of the scourge of HIV/AIDS in Africa? Will the rich world ever act quickly enough to save the poor? Some cynics simply do not believe the rich world has the will to respond quickly to save the poor. Their attitudes in some case are as follows: "Poverty is not our problem. African governments have the responsibility to deal with the plight of their citizens. This is not the problem of the rich world. It was not created by them. It is an African problem and requires an African solution". These attitudes only account for the mess in which the African continent currently and generally finds itself. This is perhaps more of the problem of the international community than to be understood as purely the problem of Africa.

The above attitudes underline the fact that African communities have no choice other than to start promoting and developing philanthropic practices that take into account realities of the African situation and that of the rich nations of the world. Socio-economic problems most African communities continue to experience on a daily basis need to enjoy the attention of all sectors of society, across the globe. Philanthropic practices, in particular, have the ability to assist local residents with an intention of getting out of poverty and welfare services, to start small enterprises or home businesses. Affected local residents might, for example, need some training to achieve this. In some instances they could only need some initial start-up capital or access to available credit facilities. In most of these needs promoted and

developed philanthropic practices could go a long way in providing some assistance to these people.

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