

Redefining modern philanthropy in a post-Covid-19 world

In the light of the unprecedented need created by Covid-19, NGOs and corporate social investment (CSI) programmes will be looking for ways to best utilise their resources, finances and people to build sustainable, ethical businesses with maximum impact.



Gita Carroll, social entrepreneur and founder of The Good Machine

The needs, usually met by corporate donations, is exploding with hundreds of thousands of South Africans unemployed. The unemployment rate is [expected to rise to 50%](#) and the Department of Employment and Labour has paid out close to R6bn in Covid-related claims.

Integrated, consolidated initiatives

Social entrepreneur and founder of The Good Machine, Gita Carroll, believes modern philanthropy needs to be redefined in this new social environment: “Corporate philanthropy initiatives need to be integrated and consolidated. Like never before, every cent and every deed matters.”

Carroll believes earning and giving is not enough. “How we earn our money, what we do with our money, how we treat and interact with our staff should all be considered philanthropy. Human health and the economy in this setting are interchangeable, you can’t heal one without healing the other.”

“Revitalising a business' contribution to society will be essential to navigate the way through; NGOs and corporate donors require agility to adapt according to the new normal,” said Carroll. “Redefining South Africa is going to depend on redefining business, which starts with redefining profit.”

“The corporate sector requires a holistic method of CSI and ethical business practices, creating value beyond profit,” added Carroll.

Aligning philanthropy spend with company vision, mission

“To redefine profit and increase social impact, organisations need to align their philanthropy spend with the company vision and mission. In the philanthropic space, there are very few standardised templates and measurement tools, besides the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and I believe that consistent reporting and analysis are essential to give insight to the true impact of that spend.

“By working with local and international donors, we’re able to increase the reach and scalability of their current social investment and build CSI programmes into core business practices, so the external giving and generosity is reflected internally with all company policies. Businesses truly need to practice what they preach,” she added.

Building trust

In January 2020, the Edelman Trust Barometer revealed how much trust the citizens of 28 countries have in government, business, media and NGOs, which includes a score for South Africa. The survey showed that South Africans have the lowest trust in the government of all the nations surveyed, with a score of just 20%. The survey also found that 59% of South Africans trusted NGOs and 58% trusted business while only 40% trusted the media.

“Building trust between corporate donors, NGOs and recipients is essential for long-term effectiveness to overcome the challenges of poverty and inequality in South Africa,” said Carroll.

The latest Nedbank Private Wealth Giving Report identifies donor and recipient accountability as a trend in 2020 and Carroll believes this is essential for trust and resulting success.

There are over 100,000 registered NGOs in South Africa and Carroll says that combining efforts will enable greater impact. “We encourage NGOs to partner with each other and not reinvent the wheel.”

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