

2020 IPASA symposium addresses lessons learnt from Covid-19

The recently concluded Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa (IPASA) Symposium provided an opportunity for funders to unpack some of the challenges and lessons learnt from Covid-19 and how these could help funding practises in the future.



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Many of the hard-hitting challenges during the pandemic have given rise to new funding practises and behaviour such as:

- Large foundations and trusts updating their restrictive funding and governance policies and relooking at their organisational processes for quicker decisions to be taken in crises situations.
- Foundation mandates allowing more agility to provide support to different humanitarian needs in emergency situations.
- Increased collaboration and communication with all philanthropy stakeholders and role players – no longer working in silos - to ensure the sustainable impact of the sector.
- Giving more attention to the acquisition and supply of on-the-ground data to inform effective decision-making as well as dealing with the lack of transparency within the sector to respond to the crisis with more efficiency.

Delegates were realistic that collaboration will not continue as it has during the crisis, but that an increase in transparency and communication would build a solid infrastructure for future philanthropy.

The symposium closed off with a strong message to all funders and investors, that if Covid has taught the sector one thing, it is that there is a need for a more holistic approach which must start with the adoption of responsible investment (ESG).

“It was very enlightening to see so many people sharing their experiences and actively taking part in the discussions on the strategic possibilities for philanthropy in the near future. The IPASA symposium has highlighted the real importance of collaborative work among funders in South Africa to build back systems better and make them work for all,” Louise Driver, executive director of the Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa (IPASA).

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