

Values of African philanthropy can right social imbalance

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It is widely acknowledged that imbalances due to the abysmal wealth:poverty ratio in Africa must be toppled. What is not widely considered is the fundamental role of applied African philanthropy to equalise the scales, says Professor Bhekinkosi Moyo of Wits Business School.



He emphasises that the field of African philanthropy should not be ignored as it paves the way for the future. “Philanthropy must be part of dealing with inequality, as right now, the net worth of three individuals is equivalent to that of half of the population of the continent. What that tells us is that there is a call for philanthropy to redistribute wealth and resources in equal measure.”

African philanthropy expresses itself in different ways and we would be better positioned to develop an inclusive world if leaders were guided by its values of shared enablement.

Moyo explains that philanthropy features in our everyday lives, throughout our life. “Whether you give of your networks, time, or money, you are forever a philanthropist and your contribution is notwithstanding age, class and gender.” In comparison with US or European approaches to this field, he says that in African philanthropy, we have not created institutions to shepherd in change that is aligned to the societal priorities on the continent.

The funding landscape comprises almost 70% in finance from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and four per cent from the Ford Foundation. While a funding shift is starting to take place to imbed a stronger inter-continental philanthropic network and coordination effort, more needs to be done. He asks, “If the three highest high net worth individuals (HNWIs) pooled their resources, how much more could we revolutionise our internal impact?”

“The philosophy behind philanthropy is universal, yet every region, country, and community experiences it differently. On our continent we need to begin by talking to a different narrative because Africa has societal mechanisms of solidarity in place that are driven by the goal to make sure that no one is left behind,” he adds.

Moyo further believes that there is no solution developed that has not been anchored in philanthropy, particularly through the lens of Pan Africanism, which centres around solidarity. He sees the act of philanthropy as a day-to-day experience, a compass for how we do things, and a bedrock for how we formulate policy for the future.

Living our African values on a daily basis - whether in kind or in cash - has the power to play a huge role in policy development. The field of philanthropy links directly to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and should be part and parcel of solving the issue of climate change and the future sustainability of our planet.

“Ours is a discipline that helps leaders shape how the world should look and how to plough resources back to community, to anchor our existence,” Moyo says.

He explains that at WBS, postgraduate study in the field of African Philanthropy is about care, transformation and sculpting leaders who are able to put themselves “last in the line to receive”. The Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) at the school is truly Pan African and provides professionals with a locally relevant and internationally recognised curriculum.

Postgraduate student at Wits Business School, Thandi Makhubele, shares how she is assessing how philanthropists engage with women in rural areas through her Master of Management in African Philanthropy. Her focus is on developing a case study that highlights the realities of women based in the rural parts of Limpopo in South Africa. She says, “From a literature perspective, there is a significant disconnect between philanthropical entities’ views and those of individuals in the country. Philanthropic action must complement, rather than dictate what should happen, as our communities always know what they need.”

Other dissertations being researched by WBS students at the Centre include: The African Philanthropy Index; The Landscape of Social Investment in East Africa; Mapping Philanthropic Foundations in Five French-Speaking Countries: Mali, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Côte d’Ivoire, and Chad; Tracing Covid-19 Pandemic impacts and responses in Africa; Understanding the Operations of Philanthropic Organisations in Africa: A case of six selected countries including South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia; and African Philanthropy: Context, Contestations and Overview of Regulatory Frameworks in Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, Libya and Egypt.

The various SAQA-accredited qualifications available at WBS include short courses through which students gain an introduction to the Master of Management programme or Postgraduate Diploma in African Philanthropy and Resource Mobilisation. The latter provides students with enough of a foundation to move into the Master's degree.

Wits Business School also has a partnership with Cambridge University in this field of study, and qualifications can be studied either full- or part-time.

“Philanthropy is a universal field,” says Moyo. The study material at the WBS Centre is of deep value for professionals across sectors and disciplines, from medical sciences to engineering to marketing, mining, and manufacturing. “It is for people who manage big companies and those who pioneer start-ups. African Philanthropy is for all of those individuals who know their existence calls for them to play a role in society.”

“Business schools at this point in time have been challenged to think differently and to infuse notions of complexity and human relationships into business and management studies. That is what philanthropy is so good at doing. We are past the age of machines and we are back to the future, and into a singular moment that can redefine our African societies,” concludes Moyo.

For more information about the Masters of Management in African Philanthropy, [click here](#).

For more information about the Postgraduate Diploma in Management in the field of Philanthropy and Resource Mobilisation, [click here](#).