



EPIC Africa
Enhancing Philanthropic Impact

CHALLENGING THE MYTHS



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INDIVIDUAL GIVING for African Civil Society Organizations

REPORT 2024

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Endorsements



**NANA ASANTEWA
AFADZINU**
Executive Director
WACSI



“Africans give” but do they give to development initiatives and which ones? The answer to this question is one that has not been completely answered as we engage more on the issue of local philanthropy and domestic resource mobilization to support Africa’s development.

EPIC-Africa’s research on individual giving to African CSOs contributes important information to help fill the knowledge gap.”



“Challenging the Myths” is a pioneering report that critically examines long-standing misconceptions surrounding African individual giving and uncovers deeper truths about its patterns and styles. The report emphasizes that many prevailing myths regarding the impact, scale, strategies, and geographical scope of individual giving in Africa warrant serious reconsideration. It highlights that diasporic giving is significantly more complex and multifaceted than previously recognized, indicating a need for a nuanced understanding of its dynamics.

Furthermore, the report asserts that individual contributions from Africans play an undervalued role in legitimizing and stabilizing philanthropic institutions across the continent. This perspective challenges the traditional narratives that too often overlook the significance of local giving and focus exclusively on the impact of international funding.

The report concludes with essential recommendations for institutional funders, African civil society organizations (CSOs), and infrastructure organizations, outlining crucial next steps to enhance the effectiveness and reach of philanthropic efforts in Africa. This should be required reading for everyone working in or on philanthropy in Africa.”



GERRY SALOLE
International Development
Expert and Philanthropist



“Looking back at my near 20 years career working in and with civil society, I realize that the main driver of limited progress has been the lack of data and plethora of assumptions behind decision making!

The findings of this historical first ever pan-African analysis of individual giving to African CSOs are an exciting and incredible source of insight for all of us who are striving to make our societies and communities better places for all.”



DIAKHOUMBA GASSAMA
Program Officer, Inclusive Governance
The William and Flora Hewlett
Foundation



“This report by EPIC Africa is an important and welcome contribution to a growing body of work and practice that recognize the power and importance of individual giving by Africans to civil society organizations.

For too long, the dominant system of international aid and philanthropy has insisted on the primacy of its own resources, at best overlooking, at worst entirely erasing, the rich picture of African giving and its critical importance as an expression of civic participation, empathy, and the claiming and protection of basic rights.

At a time when the legitimacy and ownership of civil society is increasingly under scrutiny from governments, feeding into narratives of foreign influence and interference, new narratives that centre, elevate and continue to grow public support for a diverse range of causes – and that bust myths about the nature of that giving – are more important than ever.”



JENNY HODGSON
Executive Director
of the Johannesburg-
based Global Fund for
Community Foundations
(GFCF)

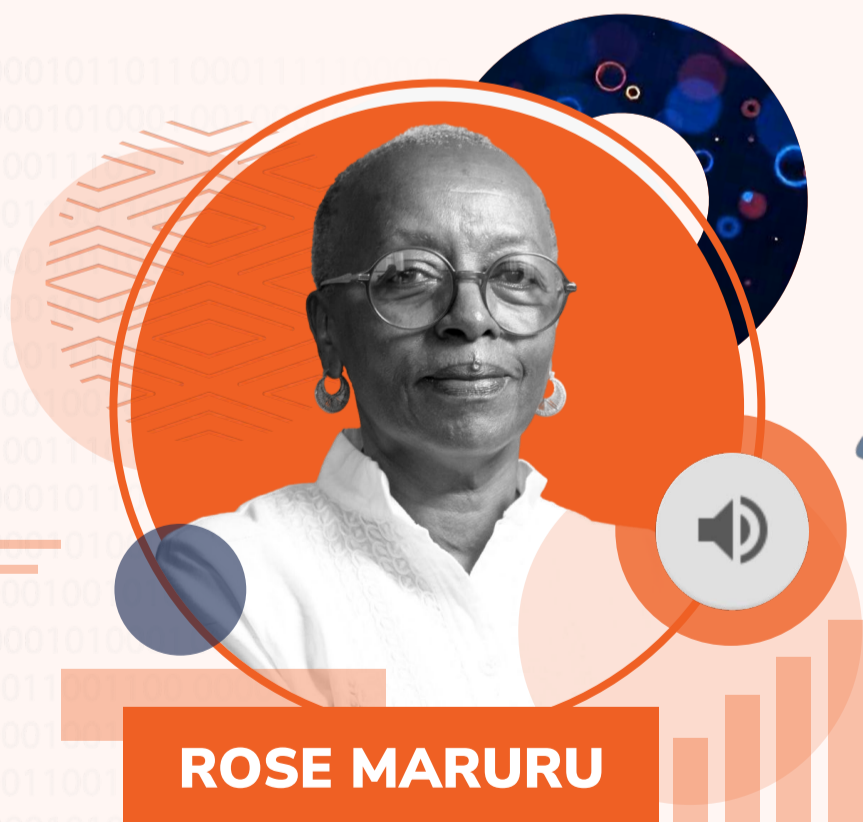
Messages from Our CEO

The narrative about individual giving in Africa has been heavily shaped by external voices, and particularly Western perspectives, oftentimes leading to a skewed or incomplete understanding of the local realities of philanthropy on the continent.

EPIC-Africa – seeking as always to use data to fill important knowledge gaps and raise the visibility of African civil society organizations (CSOs) – is delighted to share experiences of individual giving as revealed by the recipients’ organizations themselves.

We hope the insights from these experiences can help start conversations and forge collaborations from a different slant, one that better reflects the continent's rich cultures of mutual aid, solidarity, and network support – resources and values that are indeed individual giving, but often aren't labeled as such. In this way, we can fully appreciate and maximize the vibrant nature of everyday African giving and strengthen our civil society more holistically.

This groundbreaking research would not have been possible without the dedication of our research team: Halima Mahomed, who served as Lead Researcher and data collection coordinator; Segal Diallo, our Data Analyst Officer; and Sarah Hughes of Charity21, who brought her expertise as Social Change & Philanthropy Strategist to co-edit this report.



ROSE MARURU

Co-founder and CEO of EPIC-Africa

Rose Maruru is a seasoned global development expert with close to 30 years of experience.

Desktop users: Click to play embedded audio file here.



Mobile users: Click the icon to the left to listen on YouTube.



Overview

Historically, reports on giving in Africa have been dominated by perspectives, many of them Western, that overlook the nuances and realities of local giving practices. Studies have tended to focus on formalized, institutional philanthropy – often through large organizations, international development agencies, or high net worth individuals – with the effect of under-recognizing the deeply ingrained and culturally significant traditions of individual giving that exist within African communities.

By directly engaging with CSOs to understand all the different sources of funding they receive and their prevalence, this report sits in contrast to the external narrative and seeks to align it with the internal African experience.

In the first pan-African study of its kind, we reveal that individual giving is a significant source of funding for CSOs. A very considerable

65% of organizations surveyed receive some form of financial support from individuals.

Indeed, it is one of their top sources of funding including during the pandemic. Notably, donors contribute not only to traditional charitable causes but also to broad advocacy, human rights, social justice and environmental efforts, contradicting the prevailing myth that African individual giving is principally informal and predominantly localized.

Our research highlights that alongside individual donations and community-generated funds sits a third and important category discovered in our surveys that speaks to the interconnected and networked nature of African social engagement and civic participation. Personal sources, our naming of this category in the findings, allude to the cultural ways Africans give to society that they would not call philanthropy.

The report also emphasizes that despite occasional challenges, giving remains steady. For example, individual contributions continued unabated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

While this report tells us about the diversity and prominence of individual giving to African CSOs of all descriptions, its remit does not cover the motivations and demographics behind this giving. It does not compare the value of this giving alongside other, better documented sources.

This underscores the need for a deeper investigation of African individual giving to continue to shift perspectives, document insights and collect data, align funders, fundraisers and other practitioners, and strengthen the role of individual giving in supporting African civil society.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

01

Individual giving is overlooked by Western analyses of African philanthropy yet is reported to be one of their top 3 funding sources by CSOs.

02

Individual giving is misunderstood and under-recognized and therefore likely to be under-valued (and counted) and under-supported.

03

Dominant narratives obscure the rich realities of giving on the African continent and in turn stymie African-led solutions to the development agenda.

Why Individual Giving

Africans give! It is just not usually called philanthropy.

Our lived experience, oral histories and African scholarship¹ reflect the importance and pervasiveness of African giving generally, and of individual giving specifically.

Multiple manifestations of individual generosity, rooted in notions of agency, solidarity, reciprocity, and communal identity, show that:



Giving happens in multiple ways:

time, money, labor, expertise, goods, assets, skills and social capital, through varied means from one-to-one horizontal giving to collective or pooled giving.



Giving targets a range of causes :

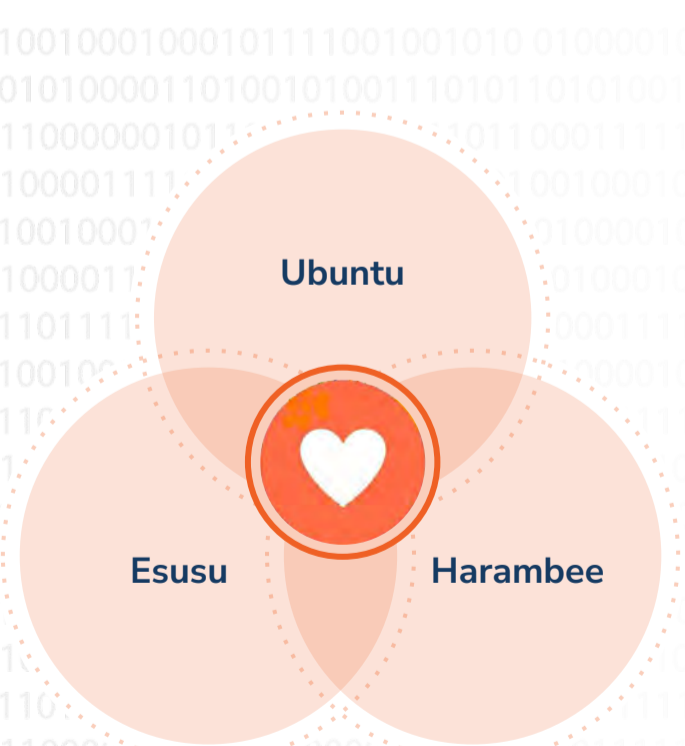
from giving to religious development organizations to supporting civic organizing and movements; from diaspora funding to supporting educational and health institutions; from giving to community-based organizations as well as to non-governmental organizations.



Giving is directed towards diverse outcomes:

purposes range from providing emergency safety nets to asset building, from building social cohesion to advancing social justice.

For too long, individual giving in Africa has been overlooked as insignificant and less impactful or dismissed as being too insular and reactive. The persistent narrative – particularly from a global perspective – is that Africans primarily give “informally” and “horizontally” to family and friends, as opposed to institutions and development organizations. When they do give to formal organizations, it is localized to issues within their communities. Significantly, this narrative underlies a multitude of efforts by the Global North that seek to “advance” and “professionalize” African giving, all the while not understanding what that giving picture looks like.



African giving systems exist outside formal structures

Very little about the role and impact of individual giving has been documented. From **Ubuntu** in Southern Africa, **Harambee** in Kenya, or **Esusu** in West Africa, there are many African systems of giving that operate outside the formal charitable structures that external observers might recognize. As a result, the true nature of grassroots philanthropy and communal giving in Africa is under-represented and misunderstood.

Yet as Africans, we have no difficulty recognizing our rich social heritage. We know from lived experience that our giving is directed at multiple constituencies – from family and community to a range of different types of institutions (community, faith-based, places of worship, development organizations, schools, and universities and other higher-level non-profit institutions) and enacted through a multitude of traditions.

As the study of African philanthropy by Africans deepens, we are beginning to see a redefinition of philanthropic narratives and a debunking of the myths and assumptions around African giving that were shaped by external definitions of philanthropy in Africa.

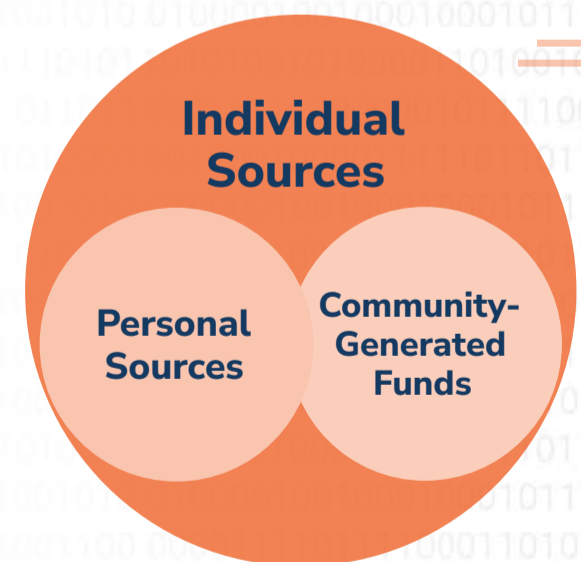
Confronting Myths and Reality

Table 1

Myths	→ Reality
✗ Individual giving in Africa is insignificant and less impactful.	✓ Individual giving is a vibrant and prominent source of funding for civil society organizations, with 65% of CSOs reporting individual donors, the community and personal sources in their top 3 sources.
✗ Africans primarily give informally and primarily to family and friends.	✓ Individuals in Africa give to a wide array of formal organizations and causes, including advocacy, human rights and the environment.
✗ Individual giving is localized and reactive in nature.	✓ The data asserts that individuals give nationally, regionally, and internationally, transcending their immediate environments and focusing far more broadly and strategically than previously assumed.
✗ External funding displaces individual giving.	✓ It is questionable to assume that institutional funding automatically reduces individual contributions. The data suggests that organizations can maintain multiple relationships with different types of funding sources, including both individual and institutional donors.
✗ Diaspora giving is one-dimensional.	✓ Different types of diaspora giving mechanisms are present within the context of individual giving data, and diaspora contributions are complex and multifaceted.
✗ Philanthropy in Africa is reliant solely on external international funding.	✓ Individual African resources can serve as a critical long-term source of legitimacy and stability for African organizations, especially in the context of decreased international funding.

This African redefinition not only breaks down external narratives and myths, it brings with it broad implications. These include how we understand narratives of African ownership and agency in their own advancement of a more equal society, and what that means for strategies that seek to further human rights and development agendas. This new knowledge also has significant implications for the infrastructure/support sectors in Africa and globally that seek to advance the field of philanthropy in Africa.

In a context of increased global inequality, decreased global funding and increasing stringent requirements accompanying international aid and philanthropic support, it is becoming ever more critical that we explore the potential to harness African resources to combat the continent’s development challenges. Accordingly, it is crucial to understand the role and potential of individual giving in Africa as a critical source of support for African agency.



The Actual Individual Giving Total is

~65%

Context

Between 2019 and 2021, EPIC-Africa, a pan-African civil society and philanthropy support organization, undertook a series of surveys of African civil society organizations (CSOs). The aim was to gain deeper understanding of and bring attention to African CSOs – focusing on what they do, how they do it and the challenges they face, with particular emphasis on the impact of Covid in the 2020 and 2021 surveys.

By directly engaging with CSOs to understand all the different sources of funding they receive and their prevalence, this report sits in contrast to the external narrative and seeks to align it with the internal African experience.

In a collective review of all three surveys, the funding data as regards demography and sources, and its implications are extremely interesting. Of 1,027 replies from African organizations, 838 responded to the funding question, and a significant number listed funds from non-institutional sources – individuals, community, and ‘Other sources’ amongst their top four sources of funds.

‘Other’ included many of the ways that Africans give that they would not call individual giving or philanthropy. This included giving by founders, boards, staff and a number of other warm connections or networks.

This finding is the first documented evidence from CSOs themselves that individual giving counted among their most common sources of funding, and that this ran counter to previous assumptions.

While much more needs to be done to better understand the depth and breadth of African giving to organizations, we believe this snapshot opens up important conversations and insights and we hope that it can be used as a basis to:

01 further deepen analysis and reflections on the nature, role and impact of individual giving by Africans to organizations;

02 strengthen organizational resourcing strategies in relation to individual giving; and

03 better inform the efforts in the field aimed at supporting and strengthening African philanthropy.



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Methodology



The methodology for this research involved two main tasks:

- a. a perusal of the existing literature and research on individual giving to African organizations to examine and explore any key findings; and
- b. a review and analysis of the data sets that emerged out of the EPIC-Africa surveys (along with the corresponding reports), with a focus on the 2021 survey data.

Literature and research on individual giving

Over the last 20 years, a few studies have sought to collate quantitative data specifically on the issue of individual giving (across socio-economic strata) to organizations in Africa. These include the following:

- A Centre for Civil Society nationwide study on **social giving in South Africa** shows that 54% of respondents give money to a charity or other cause; 31% donate goods, food or clothes to a charity or other cause and 17% volunteered their time to a charity or other cause. (This is separate from giving to beggars, street children or others seeking help.) [Habib & Maharaj (2005)].
- Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) compiles a World Giving Index, ranking countries on their generosity levels. **Out of the 37 African countries included in the last data sets, more than 50% of respondents in 3 countries donate money to a charity;** and between 25% and 50% of respondents in 9 countries contribute money to a charity in the month preceding the study (CAF 2023).
- Charities Aid Foundation South Africa report (CAFSA 2015) also looked at different types of individual **giving within the Gauteng province of South Africa.** Its data reflects that 63% of individuals donated money to an organization (inclusive of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), civic associations, schools and universities, religious organizations and mutual-aid and self-help groups).

- A Charities Aid Foundation study (CAF 2021) **analyzing individual giving in South Africa between 2017 and 2020** (based on the CAF World Giving Index data) shows individual giving to non-profit or charitable organizations (in the 12 months preceding the studies) as 55% (2017), 56% (2018), 59% (2019), and 62% (2020). Volunteering for community or non-profit/charitable organizations is also consistently above 45% for the different categories.
- A 2016 study by Yethu exploring **Kenyan giving** reflects that 65% gave to organizations directly (39% donated cash, 18% volunteered time and 54% donated in kind, with further giving to organizations taking place through a collective/group (based on family/peer clusters, alumni and professional groups, religious, professional and workers' groups, etc.).
- A study by El Daly (2008) on **philanthropy in Egypt** shows that 39.6% of respondents channel their charitable donations directly to individuals, 9.3% give via philanthropic institutions and 13.3% give through both.

Looking at the above studies in the literature, we can note the following:

- **Many align with our findings that individual giving to institutions is prevalent.**
- **The unit of analysis in all the above-mentioned studies is the individual – not the institution receiving donations.**
- **EPIC-Africa's study uses institutions as a unit of analysis, thus giving it a different perspective on the data.**
- **No other pan-African analyses explore individual giving from this institutional perspective.**
- **No pan-African analyses disaggregate the donations to specifically look at different categories of individual giving (individual/ community/personal) to institutions. Hence further disaggregation would be important in any future studies.**

EPIC-Africa survey data

Our analysis of EPIC-Africa's data sets focused specifically on the subset of data related to some form of giving received from individuals. These were reflected in three categories within the survey: (1) individual givers, (2) community-generated funds and (3) Other. We further subdivided the responses in the Other category to extract those pertaining to individuals. We called this category 'personal sources' of giving.

Personal sources of giving

When asked to specify other sources of individual giving, respondents gave a range of replies indicating donations they did not perceive to fall into categories of individual givers and community-generated funds. These donations include "network and membership contributions" and other gifts from what can be considered close or personal (known) connections, such as the founder, staff, board, or relatives. These donations are seen separately from unknown individuals or public donations.

We would assume that the majority of these contributions are from the African continent. As diaspora was not disaggregated in the questionnaire, we cannot verify this. It is also possible that some networks may comprise institutions rather than individuals. However, we believe this personal category to be significant and worthy of further studies.

Parameters of the data set under study

As with all studies using existing data sets, we noted some inherent parameters for this report:

- Regional centers in southern, east and western Africa dominate. This is unsurprising, given linkages to geographies where civil society organizations are more networked.
- Religious institutions that support development work, schools and universities were not part of the respondent cohort. Adding these to the analysis would yield significantly higher numbers.
- This specific part of the analysis explores monetary contributions only.
- The survey did not differentiate between donors on the continent and donors outside of it. We reflect on assumptions and implications regarding this in our findings.

We also found separate studies specifically focusing on quantifying high net worth (HNW) giving produced by Bridgespan (2021),² UBS/TrustAfrica (2014), Nedbank (2022),³ as well as CAPSI through its range of HNW philanthropy country studies. In addition, there is some research on specific modalities like crowdfunding or mobile/electronic giving, diaspora giving and volunteering within particular countries. While a comprehensive literature review and analysis was not part of the scope of this work, it would be important to engage in an extensive scoping literature review on individual giving in Africa.



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Key Findings

The findings from our analysis collectively illustrate a more complex and robust picture of individual giving and CSO funding landscape in Africa than previously documented. As one of the top four sources of funds, its critical role in supporting civil society organizations is underscored and warrants further research.

Individuals support African civil society very broadly, illustrated by the diversity of thematic focus or nature of work supported. Organizations with varying geographical focus, including national, regional and international, as well as community, provincial or municipal initiatives are funded, and systems change, or social justice, is as much a feature of the support as local causes.

The individual giving that is not specified as an individual donor or community-generated lifts the number of CSOs receiving individual funds. **from 53.34% to 65%**

These other diverse forms of personal giving, stemming from the interconnections and relationships between people, are a vital and vibrant backdrop to grassroots giving in Africa. In summary, our four main findings reveal that:

Individual giving is a top source of funds for CSOs

Around **53.34%** of African CSOs reported receiving funds from individual donors in their community.

65% of CSOs receive individual donations, including 'personal sources.'

A total of **42%** of CSOs received new Covid-related funding from one or more of the three categories of individual giving as among their top four.

Individual giving is geographically far-reaching and socially broad

At least **56%** of the CSOs supported operate nationally, **8%** International, and **5%** Pan-African.

Individuals contribute to a variety of causes, including:
- *advocacy*;
- *human rights*;
- *democracy and governance*;
and
- *the environment*.
This finding challenges the notion that African giving is primarily informal and localized.

Trust is an enabling factor

As high as **70%** of CSOs receiving individual gifts are more than 5 years old. **5+** YEARS OLD the age appears to foster trust.

Over **50%** have incomes of under **\$100,000**.
So size does not appear to sway choice.

Individual giving is nuanced

- African individual giving is *interconnected and involves personal connections and networks* as well as public fundraising initiative.
- *Individual giving is likely under-accounted* for since many cultural norms of giving would not be labelled as philanthropy; this invites further exploration.
- *The complexities and realities* of individual giving in Africa **must be explored** as part of an African-led agenda for positive social change.

Data Analysis

Overall sources of funding

Figure 1: Overall sources of funding – segregated



53%

The most commonly cited source of organizational income is individual donations



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The three individual giving categories combined

Figure 2: Source of Funding - Respondents who selected one or more of “Individual donors”, “Community-generated funds” or “Other” related to personal sources (by numbers)



In exploring funding sources, respondents to the 2021 survey were asked to list their primary sources of funding (up to four sources). Of those who responded to the question, the most commonly cited source of income was **individual donations (over 53%)**, with international NGOs (46.78%) international foundations (43.79%) and community-generated funds (25.89%) in 2nd, 3rd and 4th place respectively.

This statistic alone challenges the conventional wisdom that institutional money (whether from private foundations or government-based bodies) is the most pervasive source of funding for African civil society organizations (CSOs).

It is important to note that this data does not look at amounts given by each source – which would give a deeper snapshot into the quantity of funding received from these sources. We also don’t have the data to tell us where these individual donors come from, whether they are (i) Africans living on the continent, (ii) Africans living in the diaspora or (iii) individuals who are from outside the continent. The surveyed organizations range from those operating at community/municipal/provincial level, all the way to the pan-African and international level. Looking at the range, and the fact that we know that internationally targeted individual-based fundraising campaigns do exist on the continent, we can assume that it is likely that this category would also include individuals from outside the African continent.

• **When this individual donations figure is added to the categories of community-generated funds and personal sources, we see that a total of **65%** of respondents report some form of individual giving.**

Data Analysis (cont.)

Nonetheless, the fact that individual giving is cited the most, in and of itself, is an important finding that merits a deeper inquiry. *Who are these individuals? Where do they originate? Where do they reside? How much do they give? What is the nature of their relationships with the institutions they give to? What are the motivations underlying giving to these institutions? How often does this giving happen? Is it in tandem with other types of giving?* These and others are all questions that require deeper investigation. Likewise, these questions also need to be explored in relation to those who are included within “community-generated funds” (which was selected by more than a quarter of organizations) as well as the smaller “personal sources” category.

While this data is a snapshot in time, and we cannot make direct comparisons with the data in the 2019 and 2020 surveys given that several of the questions are different, we do note that individual giving surfaces as an important source of funding within both these data sets. In addition, in a 2023 CONGAD4 survey of Senegalese institutions, 50% of the 48 organizations that responded indicated that they received funds from one or more of the three categories. There is limited overlap between all these sample populations. Put together, these figures reflect that there is certainly a phenomenon here that needs further understanding and unpacking.

New Sources of Covid Funding

Figure 3: Sources of new funding - Individual donations, community generated funds and other personal sources combined



Institutions were asked about their new sources of covid-related funding in 2021. Despite the economic and other constraints that arose out of the pandemic and related lockdowns, the combination of individuals/community/personal funds (42.4%) were still an important source of new funding. This was to a lesser extent than the overall funding distribution received in 2021, but important nonetheless that these categories of givers still gave significantly to institutions even in the immediate aftermath of Covid lockdowns.

It is important to note that as we look at both current and new funds, there is another myth to be challenged. There is a long-held assumption in the field that within institutions that start off with individual/community funding sources, that external funds tend to crowd out this giving – but this data does not bear that assumption out. We still see significant individual/community/personal giving, even in the presence of external institutional funding. This is an area that needs to be further explored.

Individual giving is geographically far-reaching and socially broad

Individual giving is not just directed to local issues within people’s immediate environment – but also further afield to organizations working nationally.

1. Organizations were asked to select which levels they operated at. Of those with individual/community/personal funding, we can see that the organizations worked at different and multiple levels. Two points are important to reflect here:
2. It is not only organizations working at community/municipal level that receive individual giving – but even those who operate at a national level and higher. This tells us that, contrary to the myth, individual giving is not just directed at local issues within people’s immediate environment but also further afield.

There is also a myth that CSOs don’t cultivate local funding and rely overwhelmingly on external institutional sources. We see here that, at least with the CSOs that operate within their own countries – there is a strong link with non institutional giving sources.

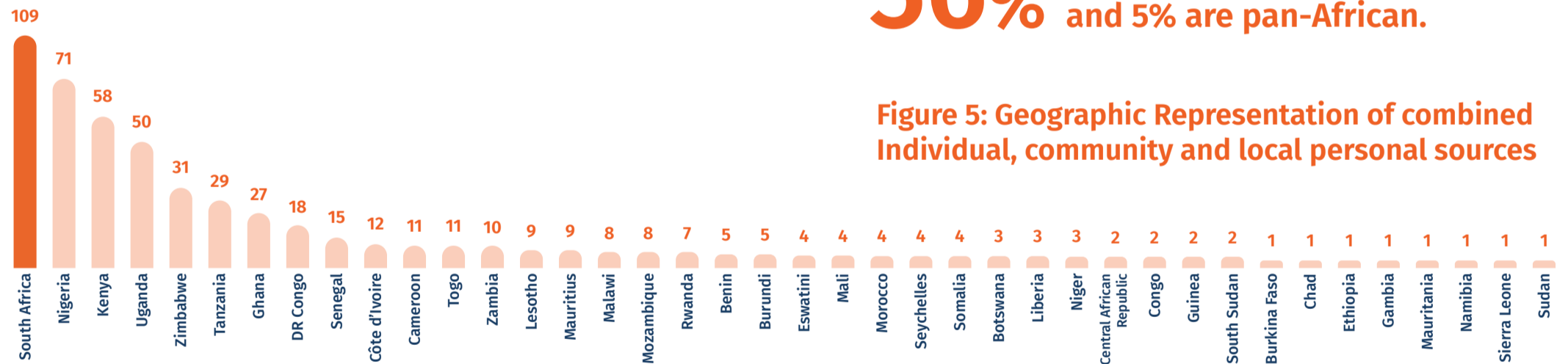
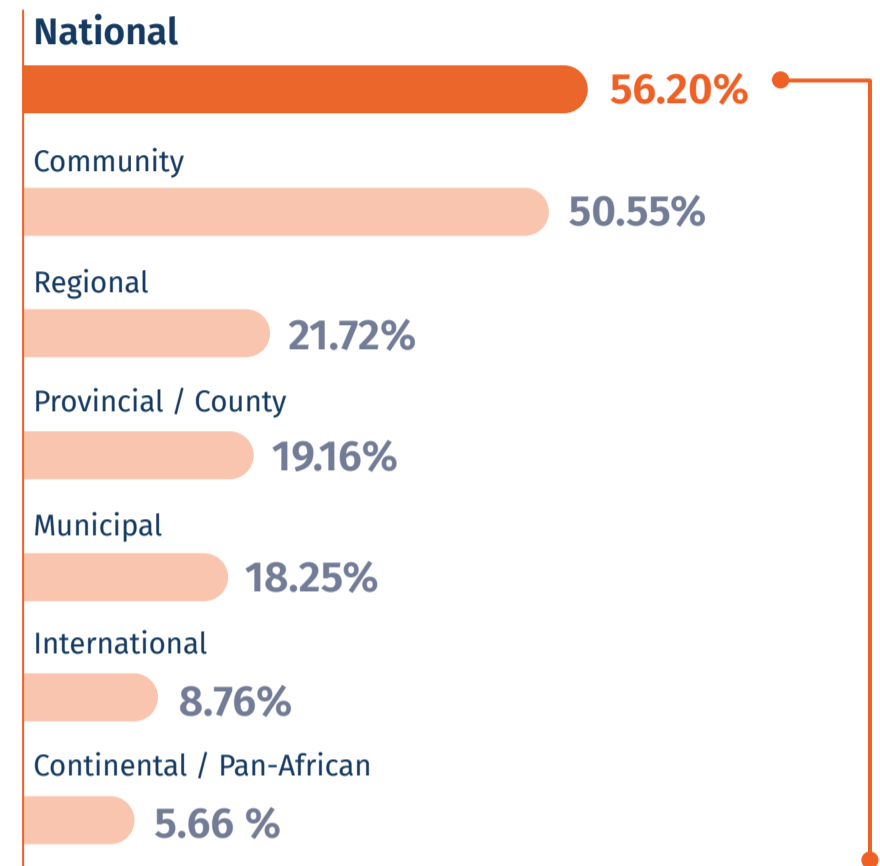


Figure 4: Combined individual / community / personal sources - Level of Operation



Around **56%** of the CSOs supported operate nationally, 8% are international and 5% are pan-African.

Figure 5: Geographic Representation of combined Individual, community and local personal sources

Unsurprisingly, the most responses to the survey come from South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya – the three sub-Saharan regional economic centers, where civil society organizations are more easily accessed and networked and where English is widely spoken.

Looking at the responses to the combined “Individual / community / personal sources” category, we see a similar distribution pattern. In this category, majority of the top 10 respondent countries show that more than 50% of respondent organizations in these countries receive some form of individual/community/personal giving.

It is important to note the paucity of responses from North Africa which are likely be in part due to language, distribution/outreach networks etc. We thus cannot extrapolate for that region as is. We do know, however that north Africa has a rich history of individual giving and it would be important to explore any comparative Arabic literature on individual giving to institutions.

Individuals contribute to a variety of causes, including advocacy, human rights, democracy and governance

Individuals don't just give to ameliorate immediate issues and conditions. A substantial percentage of organizations involved in human rights, democracy and governance and environment indicate receiving funds from individual/community/personal sources.

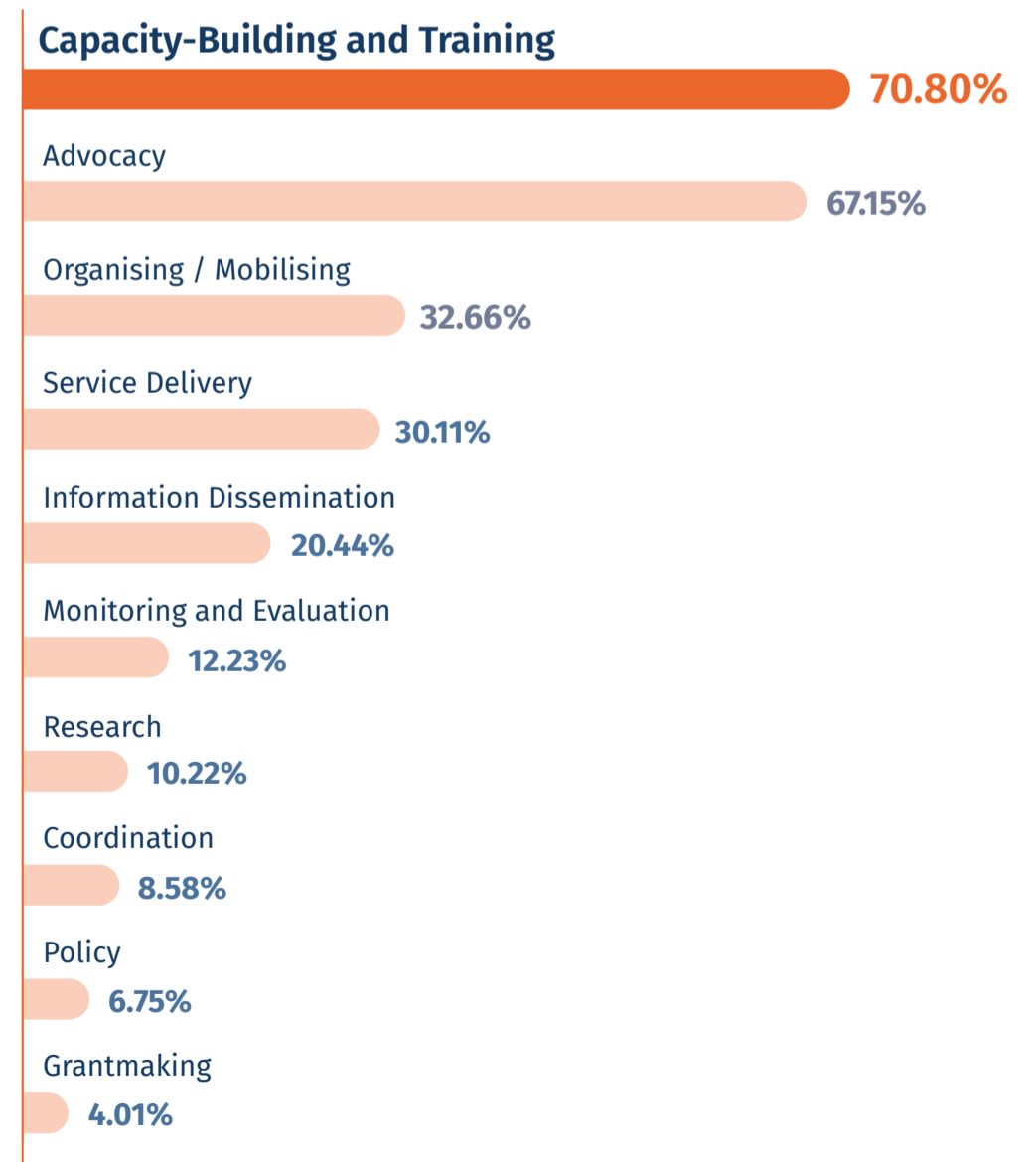
Figure 6: Combined individual / community / personal funds - Thematic Areas of Focus



While the thematic variation of the organizations that receive individual/community/personal-membership funds is more or less aligned with the overall sample, what is interesting to note is that it includes a substantial percentage of organizations involved in Human Rights, Democracy and Governance, Environment and, to a lesser but still important extent, conflict resolution. These thematic areas are often considered “higher level” issues that are ignored by ordinary people, who tend to lean towards service delivery issues. Yet, the data shows that organizations engaged in such issues are receiving funding from individuals/community/personal sources.

Again, this is a significant challenge to the stereotype about individual Africans overwhelmingly focusing on work related to immediate service delivery or crisis mitigation.

Figure 7: Combined Individual/community/personal funds - Scope of Activities



Data Analysis (cont.)

Organizations receiving individual/community/personal funds are engaged in a range of activities similar to the overall survey sample as regards distribution. What is interesting, however, is that individuals contribute to organizations involved in advocacy as well as to those involved in organizing/mobilizing. These are not usually activities external analysts generally associate with the direction and scope of individual giving in Africa.

As such, this data again helps to challenge the assumptions about African giving based on immediacy and urgency – for both advocacy and organizing/mobilizing are long term strategies. It would be interesting to look at such data in relation to, for instance, African social movements, which have a strong level of individual/community and/or membership contributions.

In addition, this data set unfortunately does not tell us how these respondent organizations are classified; so we are unable to make any correlations in that regard here. But it is certainly an issue to engage with further and understand in more depth.

Trust is an enabling factor

Figure 8: Age range of organizations that receive individual / community / personal funds



Annual budget expenditures

Figure 9: Budget range of organizations receiving individual / community / personal funding

Budget Range	2018	2019	2020	2021
Below US\$ 100,000	55.66%	51.82%	55.11%	50.55%
US\$ 100,000 to 200,000	10.95%	16.42%	14.05%	18.25%
US\$ 200,000 to 300,000	6.02%	6.75%	6.39%	6.75%
US\$ 300,000 to 500,000	4.93%	3.65%	5.29%	5.29%
US\$ 500,000 to 1M	5.47%	6.02%	3.83%	4.38%
US\$ 1M to 2M	3.65%	4.38%	4.20%	4.20%
US\$ 2M to 5M	1.82%	2.01%	3.28%	2.74%
US\$ 5M to 10M	1.64%	1.64%	1.09%	0.91%
Over US\$ 10,000,000	0.55%	0.73%	0.73%	1.64%
Not yet existed	9.31%	6.57%	6.02%	5.29%

Over 50% of the organizations receiving individual / community / personal funds have a budget below \$100,000. However, we do not have a breakdown of the variation within this, and more disaggregated data will be very useful to explore. On one level, this range has similarities to the budget size of the overall survey population, on the other hand, the number of institutions with budgets below \$100,000 is about 5% higher among the organizations that received individual / community / personal funds than it is for the overall sample.

African individual giving is nuanced

African individual giving is interconnected and involves personal connections and networks as well as public fundraising.

Individual giving is likely under-accounted for since many cultural norms of giving would not be labelled as philanthropy; this invites further exploration.

In an African context where giving is embedded into and woven within daily activities steeped in notions of solidarity, many ordinary Africans would rarely count themselves as “givers” or include their giving actions within a framework of philanthropy. Therefore, a question on “individual donors” could also be interpreted as or understood to mean “individuals” outside of one's own immediate sphere (personal/family/community).

Further questions

Recognizing that in-depth data and African-led scholarship on individual giving to organizations on the continent is still limited, this report underlines that significant investments are needed to made better understand the following:



How Africans define and understand “individual giving” in relation to themselves and to others? How is the term “individual giving” understood in relation to inter-community; intra-community, diaspora and broader society?



What does an analysis of individual giving look like if disaggregated by association: CBO, NGO, faith-inspired development organization; educational institutions and healthcare institutions?



Who are the individual givers that donate to organizations? What are the different ways in which individuals contribute to organizations and how prevalent are these? What are the channels individual givers use for giving?



What role do membership associations and networks play in relation to individual giving to organizations?



What is their demographic makeup? Where do they originate? Where do they reside?



How do African diaspora giving and remittances factor into individual giving to organizations? What are the different mechanism that African diaspora use to contribute to organizations?



How much do individuals give? How often does this giving happen? Is it in tandem with other types of giving?



What role do associational systems play in individual giving donations to organizations?



What is the nature of their relationships with institutions? How have these been developed? How are they maintained?



What is it about these organizations that resonate with multiple types of givers? How do they maintain these differing relations?



To what extent do founders/staff/boards contribute to their own organizations? How often and how much? What are the implications?



What happens to individual giving to organizations when institutional funding is brought into the picture? When does it displace? When is it complementary?



What are the motivations underlying individual giving to different types of institutions?



What is the demographic makeup and motivations of individuals that give towards organizations engaging in issues such as Human rights, conflict and governance?



What are the factors that enable/encourage individual giving to organizations and what are the factors that inhibit these?



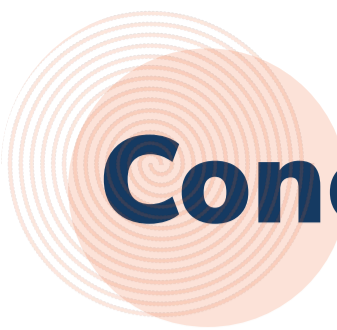
What is the demographic makeup and motivations of individuals that give towards organizations engaging in advocacy and organizing and mobilizing?



What is the impact and influence of this individual giving on the organizations and on the work they undertake?



What context-driven enabling environments are required to help support and strengthen individual giving to organizations?



Conclusion

This report challenges prevailing narratives about the nature, scope and scale of individual giving by Africans to African organizations. Contrary to wide held external assumptions about African giving, individuals in Africa do in fact give to organizations to a significant extent; they give to a diversity of organizations and they give to issues and activities that transcend their immediate environments and their urgent needs. Indeed, individual giving is not only prevalent, it is a top 3 source of funding among the 8 different sources CSOs were asked to report on, and it persists even during times of scarcity and hardship. The key myths debunked and ready for new dialogue are:

Myth 01

Individual giving in Africa is insignificant and less impactful.

Individual giving is a prominent source of funding for civil society organizations, with 65% of CSOs reporting individual donors, the community and personal sources in their top 3 sources.

Myth 02

Africans primarily give informally and primarily to family and friends.

Our findings reveal that individuals in Africa also give to a wide array of formal organizations and causes, including advocacy, human rights and the environment.

Myth 03

Individual giving is localized and reactive in nature.

The data assert that individuals give nationally, regionally, and internationally, transcending their immediate environments and focusing far more broadly and strategically than previously assumed.

Myth 04

External funding displaces individual giving.

We question the assumption that institutional funding automatically reduces individual contributions. The data suggests that organizations can maintain multiple relationships with different types of funding sources, including both individual and institutional donors.

Myth 05

Diaspora giving is one-dimensional.

Our research raises the need to consider different types of diaspora giving mechanisms within the context of individual giving data, acknowledging that diaspora contributions are complex and multifaceted.

Myth 06

Philanthropy in Africa is reliant solely on international funding.

We posit that individual African resources can serve as a critical long-term source of legitimacy and stability for African organizations, especially in the context of decreased international funding.

So what should happen next?

Based on the qualitative insights and quantitative data from our research we would like to make four clear recommendations:

Enhance Our Understanding of Individual Giving

01

We must conduct comprehensive research to better understand the motivations, demographics, and behaviors of individual givers in Africa. This should include exploring the diversity of giving practices and the various contexts in which individuals contribute to organizations. ***The complexities and realities of individual giving in Africa must be explored as part of an African-led agenda for positive social change.***

Strengthen Our Philanthropic Infrastructure

02

We must develop and promote enabling environments that support individual giving, including favorable tax and regulatory frameworks. We should foster networks and relationships that build trust and legitimacy between donors and organizations and create locally-appropriate training and education resources.

Leverage African Resources for Sustainability

03

We must encourage organizations to tap into individual African resources as a critical source of funding and legitimacy. This can be achieved by creating platforms that facilitate connections between individual givers and organizations, highlighting the impact of their contributions.

Continue to Enthusiastically Reframe Narratives Around African Philanthropy

04

We must actively challenge and reshape external narratives that underestimate the scale and significance of individual giving in Africa. We must promote awareness of the diverse ways in which individuals contribute to societal advancement, emphasizing the importance of local agency and ownership in philanthropic efforts.

These recommendations aim to enhance the understanding and effectiveness of individual giving in Africa, ultimately contributing to the sustainability and impact of CSOs.

Conclusion (cont.)

We therefore encourage institutional funders to play a pivotal role in building the long-term capacity of African CSOs to tap into individual giving and create more sustainable funding streams. For example:

Institutional funders action points

Support Technology Infrastructure:

Many African CSOs lack the technological tools needed to manage individual giving efficiently, such as CRM systems, fundraising software, and digital marketing platforms. Funders could provide grants or subsidize access to platforms that help CSOs build and track relationships with individual donors.

Fund Donor Research and Market Analysis:

African CSOs often lack the resources to conduct thorough market analysis on individual giving trends. Funders could commission or fund locally led studies on the state of individual giving across Africa, helping CSOs understand how to tap into emerging trends and use data-driven strategies to attract more individual donors.

We encourage African CSOs to take steps to attract and retain more individual donors by focusing on relationship-building, leveraging technology, and delivering clear value to donors. For example:

African CSO action points

Develop compelling brand and impact narratives:

To attract individual donors, CSOs need to clearly communicate why their work matters and how donor contributions will make a tangible difference. This will require developing compelling narratives that convey the organization's mission, vision and impact.

Leverage Digital Fundraising Platforms:

Digital platforms, such as crowdfunding sites, social media, and email campaigns, offer low-cost, high-reach opportunities to attract individual donors. CSOs could use these platforms to run targeted campaigns, create regular, engaging email newsletters to keep current and potential donors informed about upcoming campaigns, success stories and ongoing needs.

We encourage Infrastructure organizations to play a critical role in strengthening the capacity of African CSOs to attract and retain individual donors. They can offer targeted support, resources, and platforms for learning and collaboration, and provide valuable guidance to CSOs looking to diversify their funding streams. For example:

Infrastructure organization action points

Provide capacity-building programs focused on individual fundraising:

Many fundraising capacity-building programs are generic and fail to meet CSOs where they are. Philanthropy Support Organizations (PSOs) can design and deliver evidence-based training programs grounded in local knowledge and specifically aimed at building the skills needed for CSOs to engage with individual donors, e.g. training on donor segmentation, personalized communication, and leveraging digital tools.

Facilitate access to technology and fundraising tools:

African CSOs lack the technical infrastructure to effectively manage individual giving. PSOs can help bridge this gap by offering access to fundraising platforms, donor management systems, and digital marketing tools. They could:

- Partner with technology providers to offer discounted or free access to donor management software (CRMs), digital payment platforms, and email marketing tools.
- Run training sessions on how to effectively use these tools to track and engage individual donors.
- Help CSOs set up user-friendly donation pages and mobile payment systems to make it easier for individuals to give.

What we are looking for is a leapfrog effect.

It is not enough to simply reproduce traditional models that have taken time to establish in other countries. We must learn from them and revitalize them, engineering locally-invented solutions that bypass tired conventions and marry fiscal, technological and social innovations with our very special cultural norms. **Let us cultivate a very African individual giving journey.**

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“If you want to go fast, go alone; If you want to go far, go together.”

- African proverb

"We've challenged the myths about African giving with data, now we invite you to be part of rewriting the narrative. Our ancestors knew that going together takes us farther—today's data proves that individual African donors are already leading the way. Join us in strengthening this powerful ecosystem."

- Rose Maruru, Co-founder and CEO of EPIC-Africa

Learn About EPIC-Africa

EPIC-Africa is a Senegal-based non-profit organization that seeks to strengthen philanthropic impact by filling critical data and capacity gaps in the African civil society sector. We envisage a vibrant civil society ecosystem with diverse, influential, sustainable African civil society groups at the center.

EPIC-Africa contributes to this transformative vision by gathering, analyzing and sharing sector data, as well as providing services and tools that aim to set standards and ensure continuous improvement in performance and impact, champion new approaches, and advocate for better policies to support the sector.

For more information, please visit epic-africa.org

Learn About The African CSO Platform

The African CSO Platform is a new online resource supporting African civil society organizations (CSOs). Developed from years of collaboration with thousands of CSOs, the platform addresses critical needs for funding access, sector insights, and peer engagement. At its core is a searchable database of CSOs by country and focus areas, like health and climate change.

The platform offers a vital gateway to CSOs' impactful work and reliable data for donors, researchers, and policymakers, revealing insights to advocate for better support and resources for African CSOs.

For more information, please visit csoplatform.africa

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