

APF QUARTERLY

AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY FORUM NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020

**BETTER
TOGETHER**

**MIEUX
ENSEMBLE**

**BORA
PAMOJA**

**MELHOR
JUNTO**



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About

AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY FORUM

African Philanthropy Forum (APF) was established in 2014 to build a learning community of strategic African philanthropists and social investors committed to inclusive and sustainable development throughout the Continent. It was incubated by the Global Philanthropy Forum (GPF), a global network of strategic philanthropists and social investors committed to international causes from 2014 - 2016. In 2017, APF became an independent entity and continues to be an affiliate of the GPF.

Over the years, APF has established a stronger presence on the Continent, with footprints in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda, through its regional meetings and conferences. APF has also invested in the development of two volumes of the Toolkit for African Philanthropists and the "Why Give" Series, which consists of interviews with Africa's strategic philanthropic leaders to showcase their motivations for giving.

Since inception, APF has reached over 2,000 philanthropists, social investors and key stakeholders in the philanthropic space across Africa and the world. Through APF's high impact convenings and initiatives, the organization has facilitated collaborations, amplified the work of change makers and shared best philanthropic practices and strategies for promoting homegrown development.

OUR MISSION

The African Philanthropy Forum is a strong and vibrant community of partners who through their strategic giving, investments and influence, foster shared prosperity on the African continent.

**To transform the culture of giving on the continent to the extent that it exceeds development aid by 2030.
(USD 42bn FDA in 2017, source: UNCTAD Report)**

OUR VISION

TSITSI MASIYIWA

APF Board Chair & Executive
Chairperson, Higherlife
Foundation

**LORD MICHAEL HASTINGS**

Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick CBE

**SWITHIN MUNYANTWALI**

Head, Appleton Luff's East African
Office

**NDIDI OKONKWO NWUNELI**

Founder, LEAP Africa & Managing
Partner, Sahel Consulting

**GBENGA OYEBODE**

Founder & Chairman
Aluko & Oyebode Law Firm

**ENGLISH SALL**

Board Member
Sall Family Foundation

**HRH QUEEN SYLVIA NAGGINDA**

Queen, Buganda Kingdom &
Founder, Nnabagereka
Development Foundation

**JEFFREY WALKER**

Chairman, New Profit

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Executive Director

APF ADVISORY GROUP

Funke Adeyemi

Regional Director, International
Air Transport Association

Mamadou Biteye

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Central Europe, Middle East
and Africa, Visa Inc.

Yvonne Chaka Chaka

Founder, Princess of Africa
Foundation

Innocent Chukwuma

Regional Director, Ford Foundation
West Africa

Tonye Cole

Co-founder, Sahara Group

Julie Essiam

Founder, Africans for Africa

Amadou Gallo Fall

Vice President NBA,
MD NBA Africa

Nyokabi Kenyatta

Director, Kenyatta Trust

Nyimpini Mabunda

Octodec Investments

Vuyiswa Sidzumo

Senior Program Officer,
Ford Foundation Southern
Africa

Jane Wales

Founder,
Global Philanthropy Forum

Zouera Youssoufou

CEO, Aliko Dangote Foundation

TOGETHER WE WILL BEAT THIS

I trust that you are safe and finding ways to manage in this extremely challenging time. Like you, I have been taking it one day at a time. I continue to monitor the latest news and effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and take the necessary safety measures required to curb the spread of the virus.

On the African Continent, the virus is no longer a threat but a present reality and as the world's most vulnerable, the worst may be yet to come, therefore appropriate collective measures must be taken to address this crisis immediately.

Based off this foregoing, I find it necessary to write to fellow philanthropists, especially because I believe we have a major role to play in these unprecedented times. In this time, we have two equally important roles, on one hand, this involves agility for the present-our ability to respond promptly to these challenges and on the other hand, the need to address our role in building resilience for the future.

Even in crisis, philanthropy is no different than any other kind of giving when it comes to core issues; however, all that may be different is the sense of urgency. While there is a great deal of heightened fear and anxiety, we are also witnessing an inspiring call to action. As communities, cities and countries are coming together



and practicing solidarity, we must also see more of the public and private sectors working together to mitigate the crisis for it is this kind of cross-collaboration that truly brings endless results.

It is to this end that APF has created a platform that curates relevant COVID-19 information for the continent. As this crisis unfolds, we want to keep members of the philanthropic community informed about fast-paced developments. We also want to

provide individuals with mediums for immediate practical action which is why we have taken a step to provide information on efforts by vetted independent organizations working to protect communities and to strengthen public health systems. By leveraging this technological tool, we are strengthening local philanthropy and enabling philanthropists become more knowledgeable about their local nonprofit sector, better able to support key service organizations, inspiring solidarity and saving lives.

Whilst I know it is impossible to predict exactly how a region will bounce back from adversity or what aid will be most effective, one thing is certain: philanthropy has a role to play in recovering from every disaster. For us we know that the trick is not to wait until it is over, but to act even in the face of uncertainties. With communities and people stricken with fear of the unknown, the call to give is compelling. If ever philanthropy should step up to help, I believe, it is in such times of dire and unexpected need as this.

In the simple yet profound words of Wangari Maathai, "It's the little things citizens do. *That's what will make the difference*". We should do something and the time is now.

Stay safe and stay healthy.

Best Regards,

Tsitsi Masiyiwa
Board Chair

INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

African Philanthropy Forum (APF) is thrilled to announce the appointment of English Sall and Lord Dr Hastings of Scarisbrick CBE to its Board of Directors.

English Sall

English Sall is a board member of the Sall Family Foundation and is pursuing the role of a next gen philanthropist. Additionally, she is on the boards of CARE USA, The EndFund, Jacaranda, and Aspen Management Partnership for Health. English is also a member of Maverick Collective, a co-founder of the organization Impact Thread which uses IOP to address workforce and organizational development through a social good lens. Before co-founding Impact Thread, English was co-director for Aspen Institute's Impact Careers Initiative.

English has also worked as a Data Strategist Fellow with Organize and as a member of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychologists-United Nations Liaison team. English is also the co-founder of Embark, a Gender Justice initiative powered by CARE. English served as Visiting Research Fellow at the Social Science Research Institute Duke University in the center for Advanced Hindsight. She is currently a principle at Community Health Acceleration Partnership as well as an Adjunct professor at UNC Gilling's School of Global Public Health in the department of Health Behavior.



Lord Michael Hastings

Lord Michael Hastings of Scarisbrick CBE began his career as a teacher moving into government service in 1986 supporting policy initiatives to bring employment and development to Britain's inner cities working directly with No.10.

In that period onward, he became a Commissioner with the Commission for Racial Equality (serving 9 years); a Member of the Social Security Advisory Committee (4 years) and the first minority on the Metropolitan Police Committee (3 years) and subsequently Advisor to Sir John Stevens, then Met Police Commissioner. Michael founded Crime Concern in 1988, merged it with the Rainer Foundation in 2008 to created CATCH22, the leading crime prevention agency. He received a CBE in 2003 for services to crime reduction and community safety. Following from there he has worked in several capacities some of which include: Chancellor, Regents University London; former Global Head of Citizenship, KPMG; former Trustee, Vodafone Group Foundation; VP, UNICEF; President, ZANE; Advisor, Stephen Covey Institute, Utah State University; Governor, M-PESA Academy, Nairobi, Kenya; former BBC Head of Public Affairs. Between 2017 and 2019, he also attended the World Economic Forum in Davos annually and led the enquiry into the Future of Civil Society for the WEF. In 2014, Michael was conferred with a Doctorate in Civil Law from the University of Kent, Canterbury in recognition for his leadership at KPMG, the BBC and for his work in international development and corporate responsibility. In 2017 Michael was installed as the Chancellor of Regent's University London.

Covid-19 Resource Page

This page is designed to provide relevant resources surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a medium for immediate practical action for those impelled to service through giving.

A little over two weeks after the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus in Africa, APF provided an update on the role we can play as philanthropists in response to COVID-19.

In this update we committed to taking our role as both philanthropists and a learning and sharing community seriously during this time of crisis, and find ways to connect and stay in solidarity to support each other through this unsettling moment. We also asked our community how we could support them as we all confront this crisis and a common response was to share resources.

To that end, we launched a free to access COVID-19 Resource Page

and a short video on the impact of philanthropy. Our focus for the Resource Page is sharing resources related to four categories in Africa: 1) nonprofits and community based organisation tackling COVID-19 in Africa 2) educational articles, videos, infographics and materials providing relevant information surrounding COVID-19 3) those supporting individuals in our community, and 4) actions individuals can take to support their communities during this time.

Our COVID-19 Resource Page is tracking and analyzing the rapidly evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and this in addition to our video and other efforts provides a deep well of information for philanthropists, business preparedness leaders, and the public. We are consistently updating our Resource Page with must-have information for philanthropists.

To assist NGOs working under challenging conditions to make this outbreak and its effects more bearable for

the most vulnerable in our societies, visit our Coronavirus Resource Page, this brings together verified NGOs working to tackle the effects of the virus across Africa. Also, help by sharing articles, infographics, and videos available on the platform.

We will continue to explore other actions we can take to better support philanthropists during and after the virus outbreak as well as develop and update resources as new information becomes available. Visit today at <https://www.knowledge.africanpf.org/covid-19/>.

By working together, we can not only solve the current COVID-19 challenges but improve how the supply chain works in the months and years to come. If you have relevant resources to share with us – or you are looking for help findings specific resources email us at apf@africanpf.org.

In addition to providing information, we want to simply say “thank you” to all those working tirelessly to keep our continent and world moving.

APF Video: The Power of Collective Giving In Time of Crisis



To view the video, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZ9K6DBs2xU&t=2s>

To encourage mass giving across the Continent, APF has created a giving video. Using the popular Time Management jar, rocks and sand story, the video highlights the roles we all play in generating critical mass as we give to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of philanthropy, especially at a time like this is undeniable. Now more than ever before, it is essential to help Africans in need- battling the virus, frontline workers, vulnerable families and those who have lost their livelihood during this pandemic.

By providing funds, food and other basic amenities to the most vulnerable, we are cushioning the impact of the pandemic. Governments, foundations, non-profit organizations, high net worth individuals and every single one of us have a role to play.

Remember, small actions make a big difference, together we can do this! Please watch and share with your family and friends. The impact of philanthropy, especially at a time like this is undeniable. Now more than ever before, it is essential to help Africans in need- battling the virus, frontline workers, vulnerable families and those who have lost their livelihood during this pandemic.

INTRODUCING APF SYSTEMS CHANGE PROGRAM



TEACH FOR NIGERIA



CHOLERA SECRETARIAT

MALAWI AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIAL
INVESTMENT CORPORATION (MAIIC)

THE END FUND

Most countries in Africa lack the funding, technical expertise, institutional capacity, and market intelligence to achieve widespread coverage of basic social infrastructures such as health, education etc., much less meet their ambitious targets for increasing literacy or life expectancy. The most effective way to improve outcomes in this environment of scarcity is to generate more scalable ideas that tackle the complex system, improve infrastructure system performance, develop higher-impact tools and solutions, and build robust markets and distribution channels for crucial amenities.

At APF we are committed to understanding and addressing the complex systems that surround the social issues that plague us as a continent.

Entrepreneurial initiatives that are driving systems change in Africa—especially those led by Africans—could use more support in order to achieve impact at national and continent scale. These initiatives face bottlenecks that constrain the impact of their efforts, internally and/or externally and to overcome bottlenecks to achieving systems change at scale; as a result, there is need to help accelerate systems change initiatives across the continent.

SESAME WORKSHOP
SOUTH AFRICA

At APF we are committed to understanding and addressing the complex systems that surround the social issues that plague us as a continent. We see a critical opportunity to examine the performance of our systems in a comprehensive way and apply an innovative mindset to the delivery, financing, governance and management of our social responses.

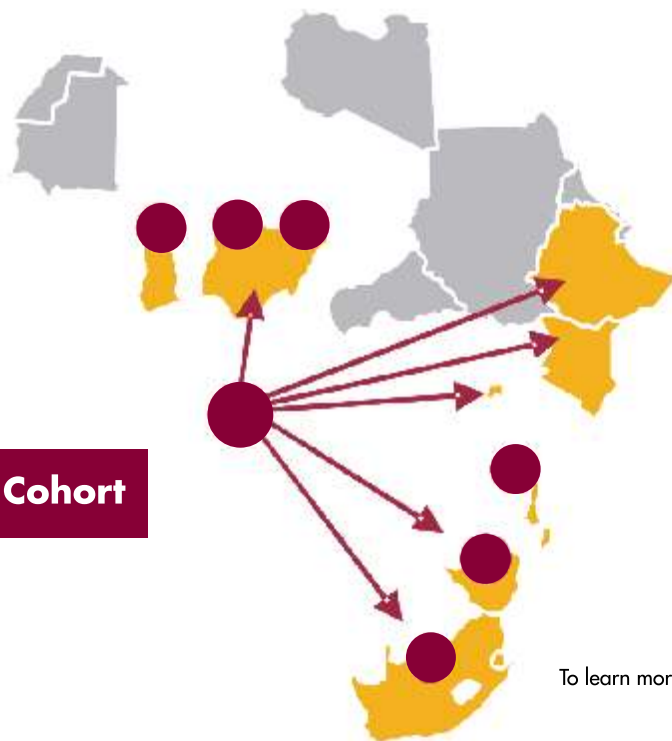


It is to this end that we have designed our maiden Systems Change Program. To deliver optimum results, we are working with two partner organizations - Dalberg and Bertha Centre for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, to implement the pilot program. Designed to address systemic challenges in multiple SDGs areas on the Continent, this pilot will accelerate systems change initiatives by bringing together a cohort of leaders and embedding them in a program that encourages systems entrepreneurship.

Out of the over 80 reviewed initiatives, APF with the support of Dalberg selected a group of 7 organizations based on their strengths and accomplishments to participate in this pilot. Over the next year, participants will benefit from a range of sessions and support services including capacity strengthening.

In addition, the organizations will have the opportunity to leverage APF's network to access philanthropic capital, benefit from sector-specific advisory support from leading consulting firms and develop their ability to navigate complex systems towards transformative change.

Footprints of Pilot Cohort



To learn more visit <https://apfsystemschange.co.za>.



ACT Foundation currently holds educational webinars that span across relatable topics useful to Non-Profit organizations during this pandemic. Some of the topics include- Non-profit Resilience - Strategies for Business Continuity, The Future of Philanthropy and so much more. Its focus is to ensure organizations make the most of this pandemic by considering all possible ways and strategies to build continuity.

MEMBERS' RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS



BUA Foundation is the philanthropic arm of BUA Group. BUA Group has been actively involved in the fight against COVID-19, working to ensure the spread is contained through:

DONATIONS (CASH) – \$5.6m to support different states

GRANTS (\$7.7m) - Provision of Health Infrastructure Intervention

FOOD- Perishable and non-perishable food items

OTHERS- Twenty-five pickup trucks and eight ambulances across seven states

“We can break the cycle if we all come together and fight it. No one person can do it alone, and now more than ever we need each other to come together and fight this virus”.

- Rabiu Abdul Samad, Founder and Chairman of BUA Group


COVID-19

 Online Resource & News Portal
SAcoronavirus.co.za

 health
 Department:
 Health
 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA


Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation in partnership with the South African Government established the COVID-19 CoronaVirus South African Resource Portal. This portal is a useful tool for individuals to learn more about the virus, symptoms one can have, as well as preventive tips to limit the spread of the virus. The portal also ensures individuals are kept up to date on all COVID-19 statistics in South Africa, reliable news content, resources and guidelines, as well as recent audio and video updates.


583,855

Tests Conducted


22,583

Positive Cases Identified


11,100

Recoveries


429

Deaths



During this pandemic, HOI have collaborated with three NGOs to support the most vulnerable in our society.

- **Lagos Food Bank Initiatives** which developed a COVID-19 Emergency Food Intervention Plan (CEFIP) to support a total of 70,000 direct beneficiaries/vulnerable families with food essentials and household items in over 16 Local Governments Areas in Lagos.
- **LifeBank** works closely with the Lagos State Government to increase testing capacity and response to the pandemic with the adoption decentralised screening centers.
- **Serving with Love (SWL)** have set up a relief program tagged 'COVID Kindness' to support families during the lockdown period by providing food packages, cooking stoves, mosquito nets, clothes, as well as shoes to a total of 6 orphanages and 66 families.

"There is no better time than now to expressly show that love is indeed an action word".

-Eyitope Owolabi, Founder HOI



HIGHERLIFE FOUNDATION

Higherlife Foundation is ensuring children continue to learn during the lockdown period with Ruzivo digital learning. Ruzivo was developed with the Zimbabwean primary and secondary learner in mind. Its educational materials span across 111 different learning areas from languages to mathematics, social studies, science and technology, as well as agriculture. This digital learning was established to ensure learning never ends. They were also involved in the Budirio, community outreach. The aim was to ensure community members know the importance of hand washing and the importance of containing the spread of COVID-19 virus with face masks. The face masks were distributed to individuals present.

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation



Conrad N.Hilton Foundation has focused its efforts to limit the spread of the virus by awarding grants to organizations fighting against COVID-19 in Africa, some of which include:

Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO) -

\$500,000 to support outreach initiatives in settlements in Kenya and support Kenya's COVID-19 Response plan by ensuring trusted information is passed across.

World Health Organization Regional Office -

\$3,010,000 to strengthen the capacity of nine high-risk countries in Africa to respond to COVID-19 cases.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) -

\$1,500,000 to strengthen the capacity of four high-risk countries in East Africa to respond to COVID-19 cases.

Smaller grants are also given to other organizations throughout Africa.

Humanity United



As the impact of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic grows, Humanity United's focus is to support communities breaking through cycles of violent conflict. More than 400 peacebuilders from around the world shared insights on how the current COVID-19 crisis is impacting their work, changing their needs, and shaping their perspective. In collaboration with Conducive Space for Peace, the insight gathered was used to publish a report, it shares the key findings from the consultations, as well as recommendations from peacebuilders from around the world.

In a time that requires transformative thinking, this aims to offer a helpful ground level perspective.

Ishk Tolaram

Ishk Tolaram Foundation developed a virtual Ishk Skills Hub session for students to learn online and continue to invest in their education. They also involved facilitators who have lent their valuable time to students.



In response to the pandemic, The Kenya Trust is working with The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to develop educational programs, which will help support learning while at home. This is to ensure learning continues and no child lacks education, even while some schools remain closed.



Luminos Fund

The Luminos Fund works in Ethiopia, Liberia, and Lebanon (with Syrian refugees) providing education programs focused on accelerated learning for children who have missed schooling due to circumstances beyond their control some of which include- crisis, poverty, or discrimination. In these times, Luminos has pivoted quickly to provide relief to students and their families. Some initiatives include:

Providing relief for families: Distributed learning materials to hundreds of Liberian students, as well as soap and detergents to students' families during the lockdown period. A second emergency distribution was carried out in May to give out additional learning materials, soap, drums to store water, as well as bags of rice for each family.

Sensitization: The distribution outreach was used as an opportunity to educate villagers on the necessary measures to adapt to stop the spread of COVID-19 virus.

"We are reaching children who never went to school before and getting them to a level where they want to keep going. That's humanitarian. So, when an emergency arises like COVID-19, it's important that we step up and revise. Providing relief during COVID is not strange. It is what we have to do"

-Abba Karnga Jr, Program Manager in Liberia



Mainstream Foundation is the Corporate Social Responsibility outlet of Mainstream Energy Solutions Limited.

In response to the recent pandemic, Mainstream Energy Solutions Limited (MESL) made a commitment of \$1.3m support to a University Teaching Hospital and an Isolation Centre. The funds will aid in providing the Personal Protective Equipment required by health workers on the frontlines of fighting the pandemic, critical equipment for use in the isolation wards, furnishing rooms at the newly constructed Trauma Centre, accommodation for doctors and nurses, as well as fully equipping a 50-bed Isolation Centre.





“There is no blueprint for navigating this crisis. However, the actions we take now will shape the post-COVID-19 world. This crisis is teaching us how interdependent we are as well as how powerful collective action can be... After all, we are in this together”

- Reeta Roy, President and CEO, Mastercard Foundation



Mastercard Foundation operates independently under the governance of its own Board of Directors. Established in 2006 by Mastercard International, its mission is to advance learning and promote financial inclusion for people living in poverty. It is one of the largest foundations in the world; it works almost exclusively in Africa.

In response to the pandemic, Mastercard Foundation has developed a COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience Program. This program has two fundamental aims:

First, to address immediate needs such as support for health workers and first responders and to provide emergency funds for students.

Secondly, work towards expanding access to financial services for micro, small, and medium enterprises, enabling e-learning, as well as supporting the adoption of digital solutions to address real needs of the population.



TYDF made donations to over 5,000 persons fleeing the Boko Haram insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria at IDPs resettlement camps.

The Foundation is also partnering with a health advocacy organisation - Nigeria Health Watch - to create awareness around COVID - 19.

“The IDPs to whom the Foundation is offering support today were dislodged from the North-East and are barely eking out a living here in Wassa. As restrictive but necessary measures to combat the novel coronavirus are being enforced, a lot of the IDPs have been cut off from their means of livelihood; necessitating a quick humanitarian responses from institutions like ours to cushion the adverse effects”.

USADF C.A.R.E.S COVID-19 Program

Under the USADF Capital for African Resilience-building and Enterprises Support (C.A.R.E.S) Program, we are immediately disbursing working capital to approximately 300 African enterprises and entrepreneurs that USADF currently supports across USADF's 21 countries of operation.



USADF developed the USADF C.A.R.E.S (Capital for African Resilience-building and Enterprise Support) COVID-19 Program, to disburse approximately \$3.5M in relief capital assistance to approximately 300 USADF grantees. These grantees include enterprises and entrepreneurs in over 21 countries across Africa who reside in some of the most under-resourced communities in the world. Its goal is to provide effective solutions to grassroots organizations facing severe socio-economic uncertainties.



The recent pandemic has enforced lockdowns that has led to a noticeable increase in the number of violence cases against women and girls being reported (64% increase in phone calls) as more women (72% cases) and children are in quarantine with their abusers. This shadow pandemic, recognized globally, has become a growing concern.

WARIF has established:

- **The WARIF Rape Crisis Centre**
- **The active 24-hour confidential helpline**

APF AT EVENTS



Osayi Alife, Nneka Okekearu, Mosun Layode and Bankole Oloruntoba

LSETF Employment Summit (February) – Lagos, Nigeria

The Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF), in its drive to boost economic growth through wealth creation and employment opportunities, collaborated with both the state government and private sector in the delivery of its maiden employment summit themed *"Showcasing Leading Practices for Job Creation"*. The summit created an avenue for various actors to discuss strategies that promote job creation through skills development, applied technology and entrepreneurship. APF was represented on the "Fundraising for Development Projects" panel by the Executive Director, Mosun Layode.

#EMBARK LAUNCH SUMMIT (February) - Cape Town, South Africa

In February 2020, we spent three transformative days with amazing women from all walks of life who have a deep understanding of both the gender and philanthropy space. We explored, questioned and strategized on how best philanthropy can invest in systems that ensure just societies for women.

Hosted by CARE International, The Sall Family Foundation, and SAP, the three-day Design Thinking session which held at the Hasso Plattner School of Design Thinking at the University of Cape Town, called upon philanthropists, influencers and activists to address how organizations and individuals can collectively invest intellectual, social and financial resources to challenge unjust systems.

English Sall, Co-founder of Embark commented, *"There is immense disruption and struggle across the globe with the rise of xenophobia and fascism coupled with shrinking civil society spaces. Like never before, there is an urgent need for collective action to push for social and political change at all levels, and this is what inspired Embark."*



Participants at the summit



Gbenga Oyebo and Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani with participants at the event



Mwende Mbevi, Mosun Layode and Nyokabi Kenyatta

#AfricaNoFilter (February) - Johannesburg, South Africa



Moky Makura, Mosun Layode, Uzo Iweala, Jackie Chimhanzi and Gbenga Oyebo

We joined a stage of enthusiastic storytellers, partners, fellows and culture makers in Johannesburg as they discussed how to expand the creation and dissemination of more accurate, nuanced and contextualized stories about the 55 countries in Africa. #AfricaNoFilter was a wonderful celebration of African literature, culture, movies, poetry and other platforms for storytelling. At the event our Board Member Gbenga Oyebo who serves as a key Africa No Filter advisor, Gbenga Oyebo said "Narratives about Africa matter because they define how the rest of the world hears our stories, how companies invest in our continent, and how the future for our next generations will be shaped".

A big take away was not to reshape but define the narrative. There is power in confronting the uncomfortable and it is essential these stories be told in a way Africans want to be represented.

Will COVID-19 change corporate philanthropy in Africa?

By Kenneth Amaeshi



In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses and their leaders are falling over each other to demonstrate their care and support. Globally, there is concerted effort by the private sector to find creative ways of contributing to tackling the pandemic. Some businesses are adapting their manufacturing systems to produce some of the essential materials and equipment required to combat the pandemic such as sanitisers, ventilators, testing kits, et cetera. Others, especially those in the biochemical and pharmaceutical industries, have intensified their Research and Development (R&D) efforts towards a solution. It is literally all hands on deck!

The corporate sector in Africa is not left out. Given the paucity of manufacturing and R&D capabilities in the

continent, local businesses are crowding in their capabilities in different forms through donations of funds, construction of isolation centres, and collaboration with governments and third sector organisations, amongst others. It is literally a matter of life and death and a race against time!

Whilst these good deeds are appreciated, they call for some reflections. Why does it take a crisis of monumental proportion for businesses to truly appreciate that they are part of society and need to contribute positively to it? Why are businesses willing to conveniently ignore their negative impacts on society and the environment, in their quest for money and profit, outside a crisis? Why is it unattractive for businesses to collectively contribute to national

institution building, instead of spending energy on ad hoc, in some cases tokenistic, individual corporate philanthropic initiatives?

Many more questions could be asked. However, one thing remains unquestionable – the reality that businesses love one thing in particular; more money! And even better when it comes with good reputation. Business leaders understand this and often do their best to protect this interest, in season and out of season. Anything that makes money is good; throw in an extra reputational gain and you find yourself a successful and celebrated business. This understanding and philosophy is at the heart of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) industry and practice.

Consequently, many CSR Managers are pressed for the business case – i.e. how CSR initiatives impact on the proverbial bottom line, directly or indirectly – to justify investments in the causes they present to their organisations. The business case here may include an opportunity to access a favour from a powerful actor (e.g. the government or local communities) or even an opportunity to unlock new business deals dressed in the toga of philanthropy. Any project that fails this business case litmus test rarely sees the light of the day. CSR managers understand this game and unashamedly stick close to it. Anything short of that is dismissed as theoretically academic or outrightly naïve. This is usually the case where CSR is mainly seen as voluntary corporate philanthropy – especially in Africa.

In a survey I conducted with some colleagues about 15 years ago (Amaeshi, et al., 2006), we found that CSR was largely understood as corporate philanthropy – also known as corporate community investments or corporate giving – in Nigeria; and that understanding still persists. As the name suggests, corporate philanthropy is mainly an act of giving back to society at large. This has included donations to schools, hospitals, local communities, prisons and orphanages; construction of roads and decoration of public spaces; economic empowerment and poverty alleviation. Whilst these are laudable corporate activities, they appear to distort the true and broader meaning of CSR. The emphasis on corporate philanthropy gives the broad CSR agenda a poor characterisation and invariably an underserved negative reputation.

The other side of the equation that is not often explored in

the CSR debate is the idea that CSR should be a business philosophy, which takes the private governance of externalities seriously. Externalities here connote the positive and negative impacts arising from corporate entrepreneurial activities that are borne by some third parties who are unconnected to the business. This could be at the production, sale or consumption point.

A good example of a negative externality is the pollution arising from a production plant, which causes some health hazards to residents not involved in the business transaction.

In some cases, firms voluntarily incur some extra costs to go beyond the minimum expected by regulation or fill public service gaps to provide education and other social infrastructure through philanthropic or other citizenship activities.

Another negative externality could be the impacts of binge drinking on society, which is not factored-in in the production and sale costs of alcohol products. In such instances, the social costs (including health costs arising from the use of alcoholic products) are borne by society. These negative impacts on society are hardly accounted for in the profit and loss statements of most companies, and neither do they have such in their balance sheets. In other words, the firms have externalised some of their costs by free-riding on some

public or common resources.

Other possible negative corporate impacts on society as a whole include: child labour, bribery and corruption, corporate connivance with oppressive government regimes to sell their products and services (companies involved in arms and ammunitions are often accused of such deals), human rights abuses, et cetera.

Agreeably, businesses do not only generate negative impacts. They also create many positive externalities, which include jobs, tax contributions, contributions to economic development, and investments in human capital development, production of quality goods and services,

From experience, one of the things that has stood in the way of collective action is the zealotry to protect corporate brands as well as extract reputational value from traditional corporate philanthropic initiatives.

profits et cetera. In some cases, firms voluntarily incur some extra costs to go beyond the minimum expected by regulation or fill public service gaps to provide education and other social infrastructure through philanthropic or other citizenship activities.

Traditionally, the burden of governing corporate externalities has always been borne by the State. In order to curtail negative externalities, the State uses such regulatory mechanisms as taxes, subsidies and quotas. But institutions in many African countries are weak, hence the inefficiencies in the system. A classic case is the apparent revelation of the poor health system in many African countries in the evolving face of COVID-19. As the rich and poor confront their common demons, it makes much sense to now appreciate that we are all victims of the system. Unsurprisingly, these institutions need to be strengthened; and this is where true CSR comes in. This will require more than isolated corporate initiatives. It will require collective action.

CSR post-COVID-19 will need to be radically different. It should focus on addressing the root causes of many of the inefficiencies in Africa, which are strongly linked to bad governance and weak institutions. To meet this goal, Corporate Social Responsibility, as corporate philanthropy, needs to become Collective or Collaborative Social Responsibility, where businesses will need to work with each other, and other possible partners, to address the weaknesses in the system.

In my opinion, the focus should primarily be on strengthening the public service in most African countries to function effectively and efficiently. For example, instead of a business building a local school without teachers alone, businesses in a region can pull resources together to support the ministry of education to do its job. The same applies to health and other issues. This will surely require a new mindset and competence.

From experience, one of the things that has stood in the way of collective action is the zealotry to protect corporate brands as well as extract reputational value from traditional corporate philanthropic initiatives. Businesses will have to learn to overcome this challenge and find new ways of extracting value from collective or collaborative social responsibility.

By implication, the dominant view of CSR as corporate philanthropy amongst most African businesses needs to be seriously challenged. And there is no better time to do that than now. The good crisis should not be allowed to waste, as they say!

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EARTH DAY:

Why Cultural Values, Landscapes and Ubuntu Matter

By Sylvia Nagginda & Dr. Musonda Mumba

Published on The Observer



...the world celebrated the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22 under lockdown, a day that was designed to call the world to action...

The place we call home, Planet Earth, is in the midst of Covid-19 crisis, a pandemic that has spared no one. Lockdowns, confinements, closed borders, schools, businesses have become the 'New Normal' which has made a number of us find coping and adjustment mechanisms to survive. The focus is to ensure the curve is flattened and the spread is contained. The Buganda Kingdom and the rest of Uganda has not been spared. The Kabaka of Buganda, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, whose kingdom has a deep history and connection to all things nature and sustainable landscape

management, has voiced his concerns and advice on the pandemic.

Buganda is surrounded by mosaic landscapes of forests, the amazing Nalubaale (Lake Victoria) with its islands, diverse wetland ecosystems, fertile soils and biodiversity, these natural wonders are essential benefits citizens have come to depend on for generations.

Today, nature has become intensely important to celebrate different milestones in life, part of our daily routine- long walks, as well as creating lifelong memories with families and friends-boat cruises on the lake. People,

especially in the cities have now realized the benefits nature accords us: clear air, tranquility of the outdoors, clean water, scenic landscapes and diverse food systems. Nature has become a necessity to surviving the harsh polluted world we live in, it can be seen as an escape from the hustle and bustle of city living. As such, the world celebrated the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22 under lockdown, a day that was designed to call the world to action to address some of the pertinent and systemic environmental challenges of our time.

What is evident now is the power of our collective action, our value systems – in Luganda referred to as “obuntubulamu.” Obuntu bulamu, Ubuntu. This is needed now more than ever as we face this pandemic and crisis that will undermine all gains made on our planet. Our value system is central to respect of one another, caring for the earth and making sure we conserve our natural resources for future generations should not be an expectation to our known virtues.

Our children's children need a safe, clean place they can call home. It is wise to start teaching our children from an early age, the importance of ensuring we keep our planet safe, this is why days like Earth Day should never be ignored or forgotten. We can never underestimate the power culture, knowledge and values inculcated plays in the younger generation – something central and pivotal to The Nnabagereka Development Foundation.

Ubuntu is the very essence of community and central to it are our agro-ecological and diverse food systems. The people of Buganda and many other traditional communities across Africa are known for their indigenous and traditional knowledge systems. Knowledge transferred from one generation to another – communities shared seeds, practiced mixed cropping systems, forests and wetlands both served as sources of food and cultural products. These foods have been equally nutritious, providing the adequate nutrients needed for human immunity. The medicinal plants of forests and grasslands have also served as frontline response in moments of illness and this continues to date.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) report produced by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) recognized the role cultural institutions such as Buganda Kingdom play in Natural Resource Management. Scientists acknowledge that cultural institutions tend to have a deeper understanding of local ecosystems and their dynamics helps in making informed decisions around conservation and management of natural resources. It was established that local communities have

A post-Covid-19 world accords us an opportunity to rethink ways to care for our earth better and recognize the power and relevance of culture within modernity. In spaces where degradation has occurred, active restoration should start sooner rather than later.

a reciprocal relationship with nature rather than viewing nature as existing to serve humans. As such, for many across Africa and Buganda in particular, our institutions, cultural values and the way we see nature, is inseparable from our social life and identity.

This is evident in both our totemic signs and clan systems. Therefore, with this traditional knowledge over time and the use of nature – there are different views of what to use, how to use, as well as when not to use nature. Inevitably, in places where such values are lost, undermined or ignored, degradation ensues. Compounded by climate change, the results of the degradation have had detrimental effects on livelihoods, particularly those of women and youth. However, to every cloud, there is a silver lining. A post-Covid-19 world accords us an opportunity to rethink ways to care for our earth better and recognize the power and relevance of culture within modernity. In spaces where degradation has occurred, active restoration should start sooner rather than later. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021- 2030) provides another opportunity for all to participate, an initiative the Kabaka of Buganda is championing. Restoration of our landscapes should also provide room and opportunities for innovations, landscape entrepreneurship that provides job opportunities for youth and continued inter-generational exchange of knowledge and cultural values. Unfortunately, for a better planet, we do not have another 50 years to waste. Time for action is now.

Solving the World's Biggest Problems:

Better Philanthropy Through Systems Change

By Jeffrey C. Walker

Published on Stanford Social Innovation Review

It's one of the perennial questions facing the nonprofit world: Why, despite the sector's collective resources and best efforts, do so many social problems remain so persistent?

This stubborn gap between intentions and outcomes is drawing increased attention from across the philanthropic community. Many within the sector are coming to a shared conclusion: For too long, nonprofit boards and donors have emphasized the creation and growth of long-life organizations with ever-growing staffs and budgets. Perhaps what we need instead, according to the emerging line of thinking, is an emphasis on what is called “systems change”—on identifying the organizations and individuals already working on a problem, and helping them join forces to achieve their common goals.

Several of the most significant philanthropic achievements of this century—such as the extraordinary reduction of annual malaria deaths—have used systems change strategies. Yet despite these and other well-documented successes, the nonprofit sector still has a long way to go. While we have created many great social enterprises that generate innovative approaches

to everything from frontline health care to early childhood interventions, we have not spent enough time and resources on doing what it takes to turn innovative ideas into lasting, system-level change. Examples of this mismatch problem can be seen all over the world. Good ideas and innovations in schools, such as Teach for America and KIPP, haven't translated into large-scale, systemic solutions. Even during the Ebola outbreak, a systems approach to understanding the problem and its potential solutions might have led to more effective and sustainable strategies for improving community health in the hardest-hit nations.

The message is clear: Our focus should be more on solving problems through creative collaboration, and less on the establishment and perpetuation of new institutions. In addition, we need to develop and employ system entrepreneurs who are skilled in coordinating systematic approaches to addressing the complex, large-scale problems of our time.

The Rise of Systems Change

In 2011 *Stanford Social Innovation Review* published an article by two FSG managing directors, John Kania and Mark Kramer. The piece was titled “Collective Impact,” a phrase that is still often used as a shorthand for systems-based approaches to philanthropy.

The article began with a no-nonsense provocation, invoking one of the subject areas that had consumed so much of American philanthropy's money and energy over the years: education.

“The scale and complexity of the U.S. public education system has thwarted attempted reforms for decades,” wrote Kania and Kramer. “The heroic efforts of countless teachers, administrators, and nonprofits, together with billions of dollars in charitable contributions, may have led to important improvements in individual schools and classrooms, yet system-wide progress has seemed virtually unobtainable.”

But there was at least one “remarkable exception” to this dismal record of philanthropic underachievement: a Cincinnati initiative called Strive. Kania and Kramer observed that despite economic downturns and budget cuts, this school-reform campaign had generated improvements in high-school graduation rates, fourth-grade reading and math scores, and the number of preschoolers prepared for kindergarten.

“Why has Strive made progress when so many other efforts have failed?” Kania and Kramer asked. “It is because a core group of community leaders decided to abandon their individual agendas in favor of a collective approach to improving student achievement.”

The article had an immediate and lasting impact, spawning a legion of follow-up pieces. Strive was hardly the only early example of a system entrepreneur seeking to address social needs by drawing upon the strengths and assets of diverse actors in a system. In fact, there are more and more people these days whom

I would describe as system entrepreneurs. They help like-minded organizations and individuals focus on a problem of shared concern—and act as honest brokers among the members of the coalition to help marshal each one's unique capabilities and resources. They are catalysts for action.

Ray Chambers's extraordinarily successful anti-malaria campaign, which brought together a motley alliance (ranging from the Peace Corps to ExxonMobil) to radically advance progress against the disease after decades of stasis, was another example of effective systems change. So was EducationSuperHighway (ESH), a venture that has helped bring broadband Internet access to schools across the United States.

In short, systems change campaigns have begun emerging in a way we had never seen previously. Which begs the question: Why now? One answer is that such strategies are, as system entrepreneur Jean Horstman of Interise put it, “part of the zeitgeist.” At a moment when our most pressing social and environmental challenges are so complex—and the resources available to any single institution to deal with those problems seem so limited—it makes sense to use the systems that are already available.

And let's not kid ourselves: Money is not the only resource in limited supply. In fact, cash is positively abundant compared to other, more abstract necessities like hope, imagination, and social cohesion. Systems change is gaining traction because the old ways of doing things seem so spent.

At a systems change conference that I co-hosted at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government last June, political commentator and former presidential advisor David Gergen said such approaches represent a constructive response to policy paralysis and political gridlock: “It's been hard to move the needle, and it's hard to know where one goes from here.”

The potential path forward is nicely illustrated by John Cawley of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. “We realized after spending millions over the years that we were not having the systems impact we needed and wanted due to the complexity and size of the issues,” Cawley said. “So we redefined our role; we are curators or stewards of the ecosystem around an issue. ... [We can be the connective tissue between parts of the ecosystem.”

Which in turn begs another question: How can such curators and stewards succeed in their task? How can they best serve as connective tissue for partners who may not even think of themselves as having anything in common? Who can help coordinate these strategies?

What, in other words, are the fundamental elements of successful Systems change?

Five Keys to Successful Systems Change

As Vanessa Kirsch, Jim Bildner, and I wrote in a July *Harvard Business Review* article, five priorities distinguish successful systems change collaborations:

1. Think in systems. Having a great idea for solving a social problem is just the beginning. You also need to identify the collaborators who can help you translate your innovation into real solutions for the real world.

One international issue that seemed especially ripe for the systems change approach was the modern slavery crisis. An estimated 45 million people worldwide live in slavery or slavery-like conditions today. The annual profits derived from forced labor are estimated at \$150 billion. Slavery is a complicated problem. The global trade in forced labor reaches into every populated continent, and its opponents are an unwieldy amalgam of government agencies, multinational bodies, businesses, religious groups, and NGOs.

Geneva Global, a Paoli, Penn.-based consultancy that has emerged as a leading incubator of systems change campaigns, had developed some experience and credibility in the sector. It was already managing an India-Nepal anti-slavery program funded by the Legatum Foundation.

Geneva Global and Legatum had come to realize that in order to tackle the slavery problem at the necessary scale, a systems-based approach was needed. In 2013, Geneva Global CEO Doug Balfour initiated discussions with Legatum and one of the other major funders of the movement, Humanity United. They then contacted a third major donor, the Walk Free Foundation.

The three funders came to some shared conclusions. The sector was too fragmented. Its successes were too scattered

and too limited to achieve global gains. It wasn't learning from its own triumphs and failures in any systematic way. And it wasn't attracting enough new private money. More specifically, the anti-slavery campaign was not yet taking advantage of emerging pooled-funding strategies that were opening up huge new possibilities in other social-service realms, such as disease prevention and vaccine development.

To fill this gap, the funders agreed on a joint strategy for a new pooled-fund organization—an entity that became known as the Freedom Fund. From the start, this was to be much more than “just a fund.” In addition to pooling donors, it would take an active role in the strategy, research, and policy issues pertinent to the global anti-slavery movement.

For Freedom Fund CEO Nick Grono, that means developing more effective strategies—everything from litigation to the use of anti-corruption statutes. “It's about being smart and strategic, and thinking what more could be done in this space,” he says.

Six of the largest anti-slavery funders are now involved in the Freedom Fund, and the organization has begun to play a significant donor-convening role worldwide. It now directly funds 112 NGOs, 100 of which are grassroots groups in India, Nepal, and other countries where forced labor remains widespread.

This means the Freedom Fund and its benefactors are effectively ceding credit and control, and persuading local partners to give up a bit of theirs in return—all in the name of achieving the kind of progress that will actually last. That is the essence of systems change. “Getting people to collaborate and work together is probably the hardest thing to do in the international development space,” says Geneva Global's Balfour. “Persuading people to essentially give up their own autonomy in the promise of seeking greater impact is a delicate and diplomatic process.”

Jenna Mulhall-Brereton, a Geneva Global managing director who has assisted other systems change efforts at the firm, points out that such allowances are essential to effective collaboration. “When you're looking at systems-level change, the chances are you're going to need to work with partners,” she says. “We want to give people a realistic

sense of what that means, taking ego out of it and making it all about achieving the goal.”

The number of systems incubators who help start large-scale interventions, like Geneva Global, is growing. They help find systems entrepreneurs; set up backbone support for coalitions; and assist fundraising. New Profit, Tides Foundation, and The Pew Charitable Trusts have all set up such systems change incubators.

2. Engage in research and analysis to hone your strategy. Figure out what's really needed—and what works.

Systems change leaders need to research and analyze the strategies that others have tried in the past. This guards against reinventing the wheel and other redundancies of effort. Such research will ideally draw upon a wide range of outside sources. It should seek to harness the best thinking from incubators, nonprofits, universities, and think tanks.

One systems change endeavor that has used thoughtful research and analysis to hone its approach is the Compassionate Schools Project, a partnership of the University of Virginia (UVA), the Jefferson County, Ky. public schools, Louisville Metro Government, and an impressively diverse array of philanthropic donors. In this case, UVA and the Brown family of Louisville, Ky., were the systems entrepreneurs guiding the project.

The Compassionate Schools Project aims to have a major impact on children's education nationwide, due to its extraordinary scale: 50 schools and 20,000 children over the project's six years, beginning with the schools of metropolitan Louisville.

The project is the most comprehensive study ever undertaken of a health-and-wellness curriculum in an elementary or secondary school setting. Through mindfulness techniques, physical exercise, nutritional awareness, and training in emotional skills, it seeks to instill such essential qualities as focus, empathy, and resilience.

Organizers faced some hard initial questions about which methods to feature in the curriculum. There was no shortage of options—or opinions. So they dove into intensive research to assess the various potential approaches. Yoga training was found to be an especially good curricular addition for physically active kids. Nutrition training was important to ensure both academic readiness and healthy physical growth. Then, of course, there was the large and growing body of research on the benefits of meditation and mindfulness training for mental performance, physical well-being, and emotional balance.

The partners dug deeper into the potential offerings. They found that most mindfulness-centered programs didn't offer yoga programs; yoga programs tended to lack a social and emotional learning component; and the social and emotional curriculum under consideration was missing both yoga and mindfulness training.

Through this research, the project partners came to a firm conclusion: A hybrid strategy combining all of these elements would produce better outcomes than an initiative focusing solely on, say, meditation or nutrition. To simply take one nonprofit's programs and embed those into the Louisville school system would probably fail to meet the needs of the student body as a whole.

“These are all ideas that we know can help, but they've never been put into a package that could be implemented in schools as a regular part of education,” says Patrick Tolan, the project's principal investigator. “These are things that are really valuable because they educate the whole child, with attention to both long-term and short-term implications.”

In this synergistic spirit, UVA helped Louisville assess a wide range of innovative approaches to create a customized blend that would be both effective and feasible for the district.

With the public elementary schools of the 28th largest district in the United States as its proving ground, organizers hope the project's lessons will be noticed and applied across the nation. If that proves to be the case, the

rigorous research and analysis carried out for the Louisville effort will bear fruit for many other school systems—and countless students—nationwide.

3. Understand that effective communication is the lifeblood of any systems change campaign. Maintain transparent and compelling communications both internally with collaborative partners, and externally with public audiences.

The systems change model demands a high level of interaction and transparency between previously unaffiliated individuals and groups. If these links break down, or are never quite formed in the first place, it is unlikely that an effort will succeed.

Jane Wei-Skillern, adjunct associate professor at the University of California, Berkeley's Hass School of Business, a leading scholar of collaborative philanthropy, says of systems change partners, “If they don't have authentic relationships, even if they have everything else from a structural approach, it won't work.”

One example of a systems change effort that has placed a high priority on the value of communication is the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy initiative. Established as the Global Ocean Legacy campaign in 2006, this effort has already helped secure commitments to lasting environmental protections for 2.4 million square miles of ocean, mainly in the Pacific Ocean.

Highly attuned to the need for collaboration with coastal populations that have long relied upon the sea for their livelihood, Ocean Legacy employs communications efforts that are tailored to the unique culture of each site. The campaign's advocacy efforts first focus on building relationships with communities, and then on reinforcing those relationships through a broader communications strategy. Through the campaign, organizers identified innovations that far-flung communities could learn from and share. Informing participants about innovations they can use is a vital role for any systems change organization.

In each country, Ocean Legacy promotes collaboration among varied community groups, including fishermen, scientists, indigenous peoples, industry, and conservationists. In the Pacific Ocean, the initiative has established Island Voices—a diverse group of residents from across different islands. These individuals play a critical role in advocating for marine reserve proposals in their communities.

In addition to these highly personalized efforts, Global Ocean has also used social media to build local support for conservation. For example, in Palau, Facebook is an important community resource, and a coalition of supporters built a page to promote the proposal for a reserve. Ocean Legacy helped fund a 40-minute documentary film narrated by the US marine biologist Sylvia Earle, and commissioned artists in New Zealand to develop ocean-inspired works that eventually resulted in an exhibition that traveled the globe and raised awareness of the importance of marine reserves.

The field of communications and awareness-building is an especially dynamic one in the age of social media, global Internet penetration, and the 24/7 news cycle. Yet the participants in any systems change effort must remember that the most important communications of all are those that occur within a campaign, among the participants themselves.

The Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy initiative has shown a unique ability to communicate with both local partners and global audiences—a capability that will serve the campaign well as it seeks to expand the protected zones of the world's oceans.

4. Embrace your inner policy wonk—and your inner politico. If you seek to change a complex system, you will often need to change the laws, administrative rules, and official practices governing that system.

This means being serious about policy—and being willing to engage in the often-difficult work of seeking political

and regulatory change. I'm the chairman of New Profit, a Boston-based philanthropic venture group, and I've seen the importance—and the challenge—of policy change firsthand.

Like countless other nonprofit organizations, ours is tackling the immense problem of US educational dysfunction and inequality. We set up the Reimagine Learning Fund to ensure that all students—including those who may be marginalized or disengaged because of learning disorders or socio-economic disadvantages—can succeed both in school and beyond.

The Reimagine Learning Fund embraced systems change strategies from the start, eventually conducting a network of more than 350 educators, funders, social entrepreneurs, academic researchers, and policy experts from more than 150 separate organizations. “We see our role as a healthy balance between facilitating and actually leading the effort,” says Kim Syman, a New Profit managing partner who has helped lead the organization's education-reform work.

That effort has included a significant policy component, assisted by a New Profit coalition—America Forward—that is devoted to lobbying and advocacy. The initial purpose of this alliance was to support the reauthorization of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, and to ensure that the act gets translated into effective regulations.

For example, the coalition sought to establish a Comprehensive Literacy Center to assist children with dyslexia or related conditions. This measure was sponsored by Senator Bill Cassidy (R-La.), one of the legislators whom Reimagine Learning and America Forward met with on a day of Capitol Hill visits in 2015. Reimagine Learning and America Forward have waged a comprehensive, nonpartisan campaign to identify partners in both major parties who can help the alliance reach the elected officials, appointees, and candidates who will determine the future of education reform.

In September 2012, with the help of about 100 partner organizations, 26 state governments, and 35,000 schools across the country, Marwell and his team gathered the information they needed to understand the true scope of the Internet-access challenge.

That work is by no means limited to Washington, D.C. Given the continued primacy of state governments in US education policy, Reimagine Learning and America Forward have been active at this level, working to influence state-level policy to support district-level change. “The more we worked with school and district leaders, the more we saw the challenges they faced,” says Syman. “As a result, we are now thinking more about how to support practical solutions, not limited to those coming out of research or academia.”

5. Measure and evaluate. Then measure and evaluate again. The most successful systems change campaigns create consistent and ongoing data assessments, and rely upon those findings to guide strategy and ensure accountability.

Rigorous data collection and consistent measurement are essential components of systems change philanthropy. EducationSuperHighway (ESH) remains the gold standard in this category.

ESH's objective is to “Upgrade the Internet access in every public school classroom in America so that every student has the opportunity to take advantage of the promise of

digital learning.” ESH founder Evan Marwell and his colleagues understood that in order to prove the continued need for better digital connections in schools, they had to come up with data illustrating the scope of the problem.

To achieve this, they set up a diagnostic website, SchoolSpeedTest, in September 2012. With the help of about 100 partner organizations, 26 state governments, and 35,000 schools across the country, Marwell and his team gathered the information they needed to understand the true scope of the Internet-access challenge. “Suddenly we had a data set,” says Marwell. “No more anecdotes.” What that data set revealed was unsettling. About 63 percent of school districts—representing 40 million students—lacked the broadband required for digital learning.

As states and districts began paying more attention to the connectivity problem, ESH's measurements would play a crucial role in assessing progress. An authoritative ongoing report, State of the States, is available on ESH's website. Such publicly-available measurements, in turn, create added incentive for states to keep up. This seems to have created a virtuous cycle, spurring significant advances in connectivity.

Beginning in 2013—the first full year of ESH's existence—the share of US school districts achieving the target level of Internet connectivity (100 kilobits per second) more than doubled in just two years, rising from 30 percent to 77 percent.

An Evolving Model

What seems clear is that the systems change approach to

philanthropy will continue to gain traction worldwide. At a time when public budgets are under increased economic and political stress, there is a certain appeal in making the most of existing resources and expertise.

The five elements laid out above will provide a sturdy grounding for any collaborative campaign, but system entrepreneurs need to understand that any such endeavor will have its inherent quirks and complexities. After all, systems change is all about tackling our most complicated problems, drawing upon the power of diverse networks and potentially fractious coalitions.

Geneva Global's Doug Balfour believes that while the strategies and tactics used in building past systems change campaigns may hold lessons, each will have its own distinct identity. “Each systems venture is completely different,” he says. “They are always custom. There are some principles that are the same, but the ways in which you have to put it all together are always unique.”

To address the world's biggest problems, it's essential that we build upon the great work already being done by traditional social entrepreneurs. It's time to support the growing ranks of systems entrepreneurs by investing in systems incubators—and by helping systems change campaigns get the support they need to engage in effective research; communicate with internal and external partners; pursue successful policy change; and measure relevant data to see what works.

The basic steps of systems change are proven and clear. It's up to the philanthropic sector to make this powerful vehicle of progress more available to more of today's social innovators.

Webinars

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We started the year with excitement and exhilaration about the upcoming 2020 APF Conference, with the focus on **Driving a Decade of Change**. However, we did not anticipate the reality in which we have all found ourselves.

With deep regret, we announce that the 2020 APF Conference, initially scheduled for October 29 and 30 in Nairobi, Kenya, will no longer hold as a physical conference this year. This was a hard decision to make seeing as we look forward to the power of connections, unforgettable memories, as well as lingering inspiration made at APF Conferences.

However, we are thrilled to inform you that we are organizing a virtual conference; details of the online event series will be announced in the near future.

Thank you for your constant support over the years. We look forward to building stronger connections with you.

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