COVID19 One year later:

Impacts of COVID19 on philanthropy in Africa.

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Abstract

It is fairly practical to opine that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the best of humanity across the globe. Due to its impact on sectors of society worldwide, the pandemic has left the world in a much different state that will take decades to reconstruct. Despite disruptions to the conventional practice of philanthropy, the pandemic has elicited philanthropic responsiveness from unimaginable sectors of society. It has accelerated moves to reduce funding hurdles, prompting many grant making foundations to relax grant requirements, speed up decision making, and give recipients additional flexibility on how they use funds. This paper is located within this disruptive paradigm shift in the conventional practice of philanthropy, hence seeks to establish the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic on philanthropic organisations with a special focus on operations, shift in priorities and fund-raising mechanisms. The paper also provides an overview on the changes that have been implemented and sustained by philanthropic organisations in Africa, one year post the onset of the pandemic. Quantitative methods were employed to analyse 319 respondents from a survey coupled with 12 in-depth interviews to validate the quantitative findings. This provides opportunities for the philanthropy sector to unpack the new face of philanthropy, for Grantmakers’ and donors to punctuate the dynamics affecting the philanthropic sector and for researchers to explore this new world. The findings indicate that African philanthropic organisations were largely unprepared for the disruptive nature of COVID19 and were therefore forced to adjust the manner in which they execute their mandates.

Keywords: African philanthropy, impact of COVID19, philanthropy
Introduction

“*These so called bleak times are necessary to go through in order to get to a much, much better place*”

David Lynch –American filmmaker

The COVID-19 pandemic has occasioned losses in many dimensions. The obvious and irreparable is the loss of lives and livelihoods. Others include income, sanity, and freedom of movement due to the prevalence of lockdowns or orders by authorities, employment, and many more. It is also during this period that the world experienced rapid transformations ever witnessed. For instance, education quickly became virtual leaving many disenfranchised. The work from home phenomena exposed the disparities that exist in the world.

It is however worth noting that disasters have always affected many across the world. Apart from the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, there have been other, sporadic, and isolated disasters reported across the world. It is probably permissible to pronounce the pandemic as the worst that has ever hit the globe in the past few decades. It is perhaps the first time that many lives, and for the longest time have been affected in the same way. Africa in isolation has been battling several pandemics. Beginning with the HIV pandemic from 1981 which continues to spread today and in Africa more recently, the EBOLA outbreak which has not reached its last chapter.

On a somewhat brighter side, mega natural events are often punctuated with considerable increases in otherwise relatively stable patterns of giving by individuals and organizations across the world. This shows that at the core of survival, humanity is supreme, and several individuals apply themselves to ensure that the little they do, does make a difference. Arguably, however, the pandemic has brought an unimaginable threat to the philanthropic ecosystem.

Philanthropic organisations such as NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and NPOs (non-profit organisations), especially in Africa play a critical role in complementing governments to provide basic human needs to the poor and they have continued to do so during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper sets out to establish the impact of COVID-19 on philanthropic organisations. Specifically, the paper outlines how NGOs and NPOs tackled the pandemic and how they continue to survive this and past disasters that have hit the African continent.

**Background and context**

As established, the space occupied by philanthropy in our societies especially during downturn periods has been made bold by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Philanthropy as a practice of benevolence is as old as humanity (Riech 2018). It dates back centuries, perhaps even to the beginning of mankind as it is practiced everywhere and by anyone in one way or another through religion, culture, personal giving, and personal upbringing (Payton and Moody
2008). It is often a term that is thrown around to showcase the theme of “love to mankind” and “love for doing good” (Sciortino 2017). Sciortino (2017) defines it more narrowly as, “donations of investment of private capital for the public good” (p.129). Such donations can be made by individuals as some great philanthropists have done and emerged over time such as Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919); John D Rockefeller (1839-1937) and Henry Ford (1863-1947) to mention a few.

Fowler (2016) advocates for the use of the concept of “gifting” instead of philanthropy because philanthropy is a foreign concept and vocabulary which is difficult to combine with the languages, philosophies, and views of Africans. Nonetheless, African philanthropy is the foundation on which modern institutions are built or get their inspiration and mission (Aina and Moyo 2013). Aina and Moyo (2013) argue that African philanthropy is at the centre of the universal meaning and even practice of world traditions of philanthropy. It is a “way of life” naturally embedded into Africans’ being and life as we know it (Aina and Moyo 2013). The consensus in the literature is that philanthropy, or giving in the African context, has the power to address societal problems and empower society (Phillips 2000) and the key characteristics of it would be voluntary giving for a public good (Payton and Moody 2008).

The role of philanthropy in Africa is quite clearly to extend aid and mobilise resources in all contexts to support victims of disasters and governments faced with the crisis in all phases of the disaster lifecycle. It was thus essential to zoom the lens on African philanthropic organisations that exist for the public good and have evidently played a crucial role in the response to the COVID19 pandemic that has changed the world fundamentally.

**Objectives**

The sufferings occasioned by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic quickly sprung the philanthropic players across the globe into action. There was a consensus that curtailing the spread, saving lives and livelihoods, and providing longer-lasting solutions in terms of vaccines was the overriding priority for many players in the sector. There are numerous records documenting various philanthropic actions which demonstrates the critical space these organizations occupy during hard times (Obadare 2004). Although the pandemic has been disruptive to their conventional practice and operations, the pandemic has proved to be a catalyst for many non-traditional philanthropic responders from unimaginable quotas of the society. Ranging from small fund drives to large-scale crowdfunding, the clear message out is that the acts have reaffirmed the place of philanthropy in the world. Therefore, given this clear message of philanthropy, this paper set out to investigate and report the extent to which the disruptions occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the existence and operations of philanthropic organisations in Africa. Specifically, the paper strives to determine how these organizations were generally affected. Therefore, to evaluate the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on philanthropic organisations using CSOs as a proxy for philanthropic organisations. The paper classifies thematic areas emanating from the philanthropic organisations’ experience during
the pandemic. These are not limited to an increase in demand for their services, negative shock on funding, and any other thematic areas worth attention moving forward.

**Literature survey**

This section chronicles literature on philanthropic response to disasters and the specific contribution of philanthropy in alleviating sufferings during unfortunate episodes in the society. Given the present devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, philanthropic organisations, in general, have been severely exposed to the consequences of the pandemic. Specific to Africa, philanthropic organizations have significantly contributed to the fight against the pandemic and other ills facing the African society. For example, Jack Ma and Alibaba Foundation donated medical equipment and protective gear to African countries through the African Union (Ogunleye et al. 2020). MacArthur Foundation Nigeria office also contributed more than $900,000 to support various causes towards COVID-19, ranging from surveillance, prevention, and clinical management, expand testing capacity and to purchase personal protective equipment, public education, and community mobilization on COVID-19, among others (MacArthur Foundation July 23, 2020).

However, for the African continent, considering its share of socioeconomic challenges before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is safe to argue that any response may adversely impact the order of life in the continent. COVID-19 demanded a swift, clinical, and strict response to curtail further spread of the virus, prompting many authorities across the globe to institute strict lockdown or shelter in place measures. These responses, despite the good intention, have far-reaching ramifications on livelihoods in Africa especially. Prior health disasters and infectious diseases in the continent such as HIV, TB, Cholera, Ebola, Malaria, among others have left ominous lessons for the continent's populace. Thus, strict measures necessitated by COVID-19 needed to be well thought out given the multifaceted nature of problems already existing in Africa (Kluge et al. 2020).

As Kluge et al. (2020) reports, the presence of these diseases and health problems in Africa increased the danger of multimorbidity in the continent, concomitantly further exacerbating the spread of the coronavirus. This despite the delicate socioeconomic status in the continent which may not support closed economic activities as demanded by the public health guidelines. Thus, critical players involved in health provisions, community development, gender and children issues, democracy among many others at the grassroots levels may have been severely exposed. This is because the need for services increased manifold, while their ability to perform them became increasingly challenging given the new operating rules, especially regarding movement.
However, the unprecedented socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic in Africa cannot be adequately mitigated by the public sector or through government budgetary allocations. Already many African economies are plagued by budgetary deficits and inefficient allocation of public resources leaving substantial gaps in addressing general population needs, and in many circumstances resulting in severe poverty. Hence, players in the philanthropic ecosystem play an integral role in complementing governments in the provision of healthcare, education, and many other needs in society. The COVID-19 pandemic nonetheless exposed these organizations to unintended consequences thus adversely impacting their continued support to communities.

**The impact of COVID-19 on African Philanthropy**

Arguably, there is consensus that philanthropy provides value in managing societal and environmental challenges. This is a consequence of operational flexibility the humanitarian philanthropic organisations have, their capacity to leverage funding and risk taking unlike profit oriented corporations who have diverse shareholder interests (Sciortino 2017). This flexibility and risk taking nature places philanthropy in a unique position to have easier access to address societal and environmental issues for the public good (Phillips 2018).

Philanthropic institutions such as NGOs are noted worldwide for their roles during disasters. These organizations play important roles at different stages of the disaster cycle such as attending to health, human right issues, poverty reduction and education for example (Shaw 2003). Governments are often not able to handle the crisis alone even though it is their primary responsibility (Kitamoto 2005), thus Hidayat and Egbu (2010) enlist three main roles and players in a reconstruction project: the government, disaster victims and NGOs. Each of these typically would make full use of their resources to provide relief and aid quickly.

Philanthropy therefore, in the form of NGOs, have positive and negative effects in disaster response and studies have highlighted that the role of philanthropy is better placed to “deal with field level, community issues and act as the most effective means of achieving an efficient communication link between the disaster management agencies and affected communities” (Shaw 2003, p.6). The role of humanitarian philanthropic organisations therefore includes undertaking socio economic projects, community based disaster management, capacity building through training, advocacy for preparedness and awareness raising and institutionalising the disaster management work through local government (Shaw 2003).

With regards to African philanthropy specifically, the Africa Grantmakers Network provides an explanation on the types of spheres of African philanthropic activities. These are labelled based on the approach and are explained in Mati (2017, p.53) simply as:

- **One to one**: One individual/institution giving to one beneficiary
- **One to many**: Gifting by wealthy individuals to large sums of beneficiaries
- **Many to many**: Mobilisation of resources from groups of givers to groups of receivers
- **Many to one**: Multiple giving from various groups of givers to one cause/case

The study focused on institutionalised philanthropy focusing on humanitarian aid i.e NPOs, foundations, NGOs and donor advised funds otherwise known as humanitarian philanthropic organisations which fall into the “many to one” category as these groups would all typically support in disaster response. Institutionalised organisations use two dimensions of project funding priorities and project development activities as described in the literature (Boesso et al. 2015) to differentiate how foundations implement philanthropic strategies.

The strategic approaches commonly pursued are described as:

- Seed capital for projects that are characterized by a large degree of self-government (for example, innovative solutions for providing timely health assistance to aged people through social venturing).
- Complex and long-term projects (for example, the development of local infrastructure or social housing).
- Projects proposed by the foundations themselves (for example, exhibitions or events).
- Research grants (for example, doctoral or postdoctoral positions).
- Unconditional grant giving (for example, financing external proposals, such as restorations of works of art).

(Boesso et al. 2015, 199).

Attention to philanthropy has grown significantly with wealthy individuals like Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Strive Masiyiwa and Patrice Motsepe (to mention a few) turning their attention to giving (Rogers 2015). This affords philanthropy a crucial role to address problems in the world such as disasters because “it is free capital – free not just because it tends not to require any economic payback for its use but because it is able to do pretty much as it likes, with very few constraints” (Bishop 2013, p. 477). Philanthropy is viewed as a social institution which continues to grow and will experience changes with a shift in philosophy and democratization toward a global and market-oriented approach (Rogers 2015) with more investors and philanthropists blooming even from middle income people as families with as little as $5,000 - $25,000 are now able to start a donor advised fund (Gunderson 2009).

Johnson, Rauhaus, and Webb-Farley (2020) argue that the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic critically threatened the ability of the non-profit sector to provide services and generate revenue. The complexity of the COVID-19 related problems increased demand for CSOs services despite the threat they faced through shrinking economic fortunes. Non-profit organizations such as civil society organizations (CSOs) depend on grants, donations from larger foundations, individuals, the corporate sector, and governments. However, as noted earlier, many restrictions imposed by authorities limit the ability of these organizations to raise funds.

Some of the preventive measures initiated by the African governments have had an undesirable effect not just on African societies generally, but specifically on the operations of philanthropic organizations across the
continent (Transparency International 2020). The most common challenges include complete loss of funding bringing some operations to a dramatic halt due to reduced funding, leading to major operational and structural changes, and the inability to implement programme activities on account of governments’ preventive measures against the pandemic. These effects were reported in East Africa (EAPN 2021).

Further, COVID-19 has also exposed the vulnerability of many players in African philanthropy to varying degrees. For instance, many philanthropic organisations are delicately exposed to external shocks due to their dependence on external financing and operational supports. For example, organizations concerned with youth development and educational organizations may need to pivot their programs and mode of service delivery to survive the pandemic. Earlier surveys carried out by EPIC Africa indicate that up to 98% of CSOs in Africa reported significant disruption of their operations due to COVID-19 (EPICAfrica 2020). The report further details that over 55% of CSOs in Africa lost funding, while about 66% expected to completely lose funding in the next 3 to 6 months. In East Africa alone, 89% of philanthropic organisations experienced disruptions in funding with 42% suffering from severe declines in funding (EAPN 2021).

The contactless work requirement of COVID-19 has also pushed the need for technology adoption which many philanthropic organisations in the continent are still lagging and may not have budgetary allocations for. For instance, the EPICAfrica report indicates that over 71% of African CSOs did not have technical measures in place to support work-from-home requirements. EAPN (2021) reported that 72% of CSOs initiated remote working arrangements with some donors allowing more expenditure in data and technology to work from home. However, several philanthropic organisations all over the world are reportedly concerned about reliance on technology and whether services delivered in that mode will be sufficient to achieve their goals.

**How African CSOs changed their processes to adapt to external impacts.**

Several organizations and players in the philanthropic ecosystem rely on fundraising and donations to carry out their activities. Yet, one of the stringent measures to curtail and contain the exponentially increasing spread of the virus was to ensure limited or no movements in the affected communities and countries. As a result, most of these organizations were forced to lay off staff, reallocate expenses to support virtual setups, cut down some operations, and opting to take on COVID-19 related operations to survive (EAPN 2021).

Interestingly, despite the dangers of this new terrain, sizeable philanthropic organizations have engineered operations and decentralized their activities by taking on measures such as online conferencing, meetings, and online campaigns among many. In short, the pandemic had a deep gash in their resources while increasing demand for their services (EAPN 2021).
For example, philanthropic organizations concerned with education and school feeding programs\textsuperscript{1} closed down or trimmed most of their services due to mandatory lockdown restrictions introduced by many governments. While organizations operating with health provision mandates have experienced an exponential increase in demand for their services while taking significant hits on their resources.

Foundations are major players in the philanthropic ecosystem. Foundations have many dimensions and vary across jurisdictions. Ubiquitous to many of them is that their mandates stretch beyond just one need or a cluster of needs. In a typical foundation, interests could range from poverty and inequality, women and girls, leadership and entrepreneurship, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants, education, food security and nutrition, governance and security, human rights, gender-based violence, environmental conservation among many others. In attending to all these needs or clusters of needs, the type of foundation may be geared towards a specific direction of needs. For instance, many corporate foundations are interested in sustainable development projects, hence will be more inclined towards needs such as education, healthcare, and rural development.

Other organisations affected by lockdown restrictions include school feeding programs and education in general. Many of these organizations pivoted their operations to include the provision of health services to cope with the urgent needs of many, and to also be able to attract COVID-19 funds. In Kenya, ZanaAfrica Foundation\textsuperscript{2} concerned with menstrual health management among teenage girls in schools pivoted their educational content to include support to adolescent girls while at home. The organization developed a new behaviour change communications series dubbed Nia at Home which offers a set of five educational comics designed to improve the health and resilience of girls throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

There was thus an interplay between government, the private sector, and the philanthropic sector as the challenges of COVID-19 were relentless. It was crucial for the study to assess the impact of the pandemic using a theoretical lens that encapsulates the heterogeneity of such institutions as Fowler and Mati (2019) articulate that institutions exhibit a variety of “presence” in society and this holds true for philanthropic organisations as well.

\textbf{Interdependency theoretical framework}

The theories explaining the existence and practice of philanthropy include government failure, interdependency theory and social origins. The government failure theory considers the existence and rise of the non-profit sector as a result of failures in the government/ market (Salamon and Anheier 1998). While there may be some truth in the nature in which non-profits compensate for government and market failure, the inherent limitation of the theory is in the assumption that non-profits would be able to supply where the state and market have failed.

\textsuperscript{1} For instance, MTN Foundation Basic Education Program in Nigeria offers a range of school and educational related services including feeding programs

\textsuperscript{2} http://www.zanaafrica.org/covid19-interventions-nia-at-home
In Africa this is a concerning limitation as the non-profits sometimes are also not able to step in where government and the state have failed. This paradigm of conflict is not the sole way to view the relationship between government and non-profits (Salamon and Anheier 1998).

The paper thus views the impact of COVID-19 to philanthropy using the interdependence theory lens. This theory acknowledges that whilst there is government failure and market failure – there can also be voluntary failure. Voluntary failure is the “inherent limitation of the voluntary sector as a mechanism for meeting public needs” (Salamon, Sokolowski, and Anheier 2000, p. 12). Non-profits establish their own expertise and can mobilise communities to respond to disasters but they have trouble generating independence and self-reliance as they work with the government, market and communities often to provide value (Salamon et al. 2000). In essence there is “interdependency” between the players and this approach has been adopted to analyse the impacts of COVID-19 on the philanthropic sector as the impacts are an interplay of other sectors with philanthropic organisations not being viewed in isolation. The theoretical framework is displayed in figure 1 below:

![Interdependency Theoretical Framework](image)

*Figure 1: Interdependency Theoretical Framework*

**Research Approach and Methodology**

The wave of havoc accompanying the spread of COVID-19 around cannot be exhaustively captured using a single statistical method. To the philanthropic organizations, the multifaceted impact of the pandemic on their existence, operations, and funding landscape required an intensive approach. Consequently, a sole quantitative or qualitative approach may struggle to exhaustively reveal the real impact of the pandemic to various philanthropic groups. The
study pursued a mixed-methods approach with a qualitative angle to deal with complex issues such as human behaviours and felt needs (Isaacs 2014). With 12 – 26 responses deemed acceptable for qualitative research (Isaacs 2014), the study conducted 12 interviews with various staff members from philanthropic organisations to validate the study.

A quantitative methodology was adopted in the form of a survey with predetermined questions from the literature and expert opinion. Survey Monkey was the online survey collection method selected due to its ease of use and accessibility. Survey Monkey is an online tool where respondents are directed to enter their responses, at their pace and saved on the website. Survey Monkey as an online survey tool saved all the data to an easily downloadable format for analysis. This proved useful to collect data during the ongoing lockdown periods in most countries.

As a predetermined survey was adopted this helped with the reliability and validity of the survey questions, however, variation was important to capture views of different staff levels within the civil society organisations. For the survey, the study collated databases of third sector organisations from the Centre on African philanthropy and social investment at the Wits Business School. These databases contained email addresses of approximately 2000 staff members of various philanthropic organisations from East, West, South, North and Central Africa. All the emails were entered in Survey Monkey so that respondents could have an opportunity to participate in the study. 12 staff members were drawn from this same database and previous studies, they were then invited to participate in the qualitative interviews.

To answer the questions proposed in this study, a descriptive quantitative research design was deemed appropriate. Descriptive design is applicable in situations where the research is aimed at uncovering the features describing the phenomena of interest. The methodology characterises the phenomenon under investigation to answer questions related to what, where, when who, and to what extent. The intended outcome of this type of analysis is geared towards identifying trends and patterns depicting the phenomenon. In some rare circumstances, the approach also allows the researcher to identify the causal relationship between the characters under investigation. Tools used include frequencies of the distribution, measures of central tendency where the emphasis is usually placed on the first two statistical moments, means, and variances.

In this study, the interest was in understanding the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic affected the operations of CSOs in Africa. Given the overarching objective of the study, understanding the interventions taken to address the dire situation that befell many of these organizations required a clear diagnosis of the landscape of needs and opportunities.

**Presentation of results and Discussion**

Using the 12 in-depth interviews conducted, some of the sentiments echoed by philanthropic organisations regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on their work are captured in figure 2 below:
There were mixed responses where organisations like CivSource (represented by Jackie Asiimwe) and Zambia Governance Foundation (ZGF represented by Barbara Nost) reported a thriving operational environment through the pandemic. Civsource received all funding as planned and created new revenue opportunities for artists in Uganda while ZGF also conveyed sourcing new ways to create revenue all the while receiving their funding as planned. Barbara Nost of ZGF described COVID as a “blessing in disguise” because it enabled them to fast track their income diversification strategy which had begun in earnest before COVID hit their shores.

This was not the case for the rest of the CSOs interviewed. Figure 3 below shows some brief responses from CSOs that were affected and found ways to re-engineer themselves and keep the work going and growing:
Figure 3: Finding new opportunities through COVID-19. The CSOs speak

Dikeledi Seleka Ewa of Sisters Empowerment in South Africa found new ways for their organisation to exist and serve new sectors like universities whilst Briggs Bomba of Trust Africa found new opportunities in creating online festivals to raise funds for the public health needs in various African countries. These sentiments were similar to those echoed by 5 more respondents from the in-depth interviews namely Dorothy Hove of Zimbabwe Women’s Resource Centre & Network, Joy Mabenge of Action Aid, Hardlife Mudzingwa of Community water alliance, Cornelia Selipiwe of GRRA, and Zenzele Ndebele of the Centre for Innovation and Technology.

To unpack these impacts, the study initiated an online survey using a database from the Centre on African philanthropy and social investment and received 319 responses from various CSOs across the continent. The results are presented and discussed below.

Survey Sample Characteristics

The survey was populated by CSO representatives from all corners of Africa. Figure 4 details the frequency of responses per country:
Six countries including Ghana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Nigeria, Kenya, and Zambia produced over 85% of total responses. Zambia produced 32% of the total responses with smaller proportions coming through Madagascar, eSwatini, Liberia, Ethiopia, Angola, and Uganda.

Detailed characteristics of the sample are availed in table 1 below:

Figure 4: Frequency of responses per country (%)
Table 1: Sample characteristics of the CSOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Community-Based Organization (CBO)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil society organization (CSO)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>18.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based organization (FBO)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Governmental organization (NGO)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>49.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit organization</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.72</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Think Tank</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social movement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary focus of organization</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>19.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.88</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democracy and Governance</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10.66</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic development</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.08</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10.97</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>Human rights/Activism</td>
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<td>Women/Gender</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Youth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position in organization</td>
<td>Administrative/operational staff</td>
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<td>16.30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Middle management/supervisor</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18.18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Senior management or executive</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>55.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff members</td>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>59.56</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>16-30</td>
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<td>15.67</td>
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<tr>
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<td>More than 30</td>
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<td>239</td>
<td>74.92</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.27</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 and above</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>18.81</td>
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The sample was quite diverse with 10% focusing on democracy and governance matters, 11% focusing on health, and another 11% focusing on education. Only 2% focused specifically on COVID-19 with economic development also taking a back seat with 4% of the sample focused on this. The survey was mostly completed by senior management with 55% of the sample being identified as senior management. The organisations were largely small with the majority of 60% having less than 15 staff members in the organisation and 75% have 1 – 3 operating locations across the continent.

Figure 5 displays the impacts of COVID-19 where Q1 displays the change in mandates to shift operations to COVID-related matters and Q2 presents the percentage of donor losses. Q3 displays the number of grants received after the lockdowns with Q4 indicating the changes in labour contracts that have transpired since the pandemic began.

Figure 5: Impacts of COVID19 on CSOs in Africa
The first quadrant indicates that 73% of the organizations shifted their focus, perhaps suggesting the pivoting of focus to meet the unpredictable demands of the pandemic. However, the quadrant also shows that 26.3% kept their operations unchanged. The second quadrant documents that 53.6% of the organizations lost grants, while 46.4% did not experience any loss occasioned by donors scaling back funding. Quadrant three reports the number of organizations that received any grants during the pandemic. 62% of the respondents indicated that their organizations did not receive any grants in that period. Quadrant four indicates that 44.8% of the organizations reconsidered their contractual agreements with their employees, while 33.5% were in the process or deciding what to do with employees given the loss of funding, change of donor agreements, and shift of focus. Given the output of figure 5, it became clear that locating the impact of COVID 19 pandemic would be through the developments in labour contracts. These include recognition of terms, pivoting to new activities, furloughing staff, reassignment of duties, salary reduction/increase. The underlying thinking behind this construct other than what figure 5 is displaying can be explained by the proximate victim analogy. Misfortunes that befell organizations of whatever orientation ordinarily result in employees as victims. When there is economic meltdown, organizations respond by downsizing their workforce, when disasters hit, organizations cannot proceed with the same workforce, hence labour contracts as a construct is well placed to mathematically trace the impact of COVID19 on CSOs in Africa.

**Modelling the impact of COVID-19 on CSO operations**

To further elucidate on the reported descriptive statistics, this study also conducted a stepwise regression analysis to identify pertinent features or factors underpinning the felt impact of the pandemic on surveyed philanthropic institutions. The following variables were entered into a stepwise binary regression model to identify independent variables that predict whether an organization will cut back on staffing because of COVID: modify agreement, scaling back operations, impact of COVID on budget, loss of donors, additional grants received, organization shifting focus and development of a strategy.

From the results in table 2, loss of donor, impact of budget, modification of agreement scaling back operations, and development of a strategy were statistically significant and therefore influence the decision to cut back staff or not by the philanthropic organisations. Organisations which have lost their donors are 3.9093 times more likely to cut back their staff compared to organisations which did not lose their donors.
### Table 2: Stepwise Binary Regression Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Z stats</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>LCI</th>
<th>UCL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.3291</td>
<td>0.4511</td>
<td>-5.164</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>0.0974</td>
<td>0.0402</td>
<td>0.2357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor lost (Yes)</td>
<td>1.3634</td>
<td>0.2686</td>
<td>5.075</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>3.9093</td>
<td>2.3091</td>
<td>6.6185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact budget (No change)</td>
<td>-1.1202</td>
<td>0.5599</td>
<td>-2.001</td>
<td>0.0454</td>
<td>0.3262</td>
<td>0.1089</td>
<td>0.9774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact budget(other)</td>
<td>0.9999</td>
<td>0.7955</td>
<td>1.257</td>
<td>0.2088</td>
<td>2.7180</td>
<td>0.5716</td>
<td>12.9234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact(reduced)</td>
<td>0.7216</td>
<td>0.3033</td>
<td>2.379</td>
<td>0.0173</td>
<td>2.0577</td>
<td>1.1356</td>
<td>3.7284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify agreement (Yes)</td>
<td>0.6648</td>
<td>0.2876</td>
<td>2.311</td>
<td>0.0208</td>
<td>1.9441</td>
<td>1.1064</td>
<td>3.4160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaling back (Yes)</td>
<td>0.7297</td>
<td>0.2965</td>
<td>2.461</td>
<td>0.0138</td>
<td>2.0744</td>
<td>1.1602</td>
<td>3.7091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy technology (Yes)</td>
<td>0.5619</td>
<td>0.2718</td>
<td>2.067</td>
<td>0.0387</td>
<td>1.7541</td>
<td>1.0296</td>
<td>2.9885</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, the confusion matrix was adopted to check the model performance and the ROC curve below:

### Table 3: Confusion Matrix for the binary regression model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this confusion matrix, out of the total 160 number that stated that they reduced staff, 122(76.25%) were correctly classified and from the 159 who did not reduce staff, 113(71.07%) were correctly classified by the model.

In essence, the entire model is statistically significant and correctly predicts the reductions of staff with an accuracy of 73.7% and shows non-significance on the Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test (0.983) at the 0.05 level, which is evidence of a well-fitting model.
To evaluate the performance of the model, Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve and confusion matrix with cut-off point 0.5 was plotted. Figure 6 shows the ROC curve and AUC for the model which used stepwise regression to select variables. The AUC score is statistically valid at 0.8012.

![ROC Curve](image)

**Figure 6: Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC Curve) for the binary regression model**

Table 3 provided the accuracy, sensitivity, specificity, and AUC derived from the logistic regression model. The reported sensitivity, accuracy, specificity, and AUC are high. The overall accuracy for the model, which used stepwise regression, is 73.7%, sensitivity is 76.3% with specificity of 71.1%.

**Table 4: Accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Misclassification error</th>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
<th>Specificity</th>
<th>AUC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model with all variables</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>0.7563</td>
<td>0.7107</td>
<td>0.8015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model with variable selection</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>0.7625</td>
<td>0.71069</td>
<td>0.8012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the model that used all variables, the sensitivity, accuracy, and specificity rates derived by the logistic regression model are high yet lower than those derived from the same algorithm from feature selection using stepwise regression.
Logistic regression using all variables was able to produce classifiers with approximately 75.6% sensitivity, 73.4% accuracy, and 80.2% AUC.

![ROC Curves](image)

*Figure 7: Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC Curve) to compare the two models*

The two models (table 2 and table 3) were compared to each other using the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) analysis. The ROC curve is a plot of the true positive rate (sensitivity) against the false positive rate (1 – specificity) for each possible cut-off. Furthermore, the performance of the model was measured by calculating the region under the ROC curve (AUC). From Figure 7, it suggests that both models performed well and accurately predicted the impacts of COVID-19 on philanthropic organisations.

From both models, the loss of donors, impact to budget, modification of agreements, and strategy development significantly influenced philanthropic organisations and their staff numbers because of COVID-19.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Essentially, the impacts of COVID-19 were quite unprecedented and multi-faceted to the philanthropic organisations in Africa. Many reduced their staff numbers and re-engineered their operations to face the new demands and virtual ways of working all the while experiencing a shrinking funding landscape with significant increases in the demand for their services. Many philanthropic organisations found new opportunities during the pandemic to diversify their sources of revenue and introduce innovative ways to reach their communities. The interdependence was certainly at play. Technology became the chief cornerstone in keeping philanthropic organisations alive as they were forced to cancel physical setups and migrate to online work with staff working from home. Through two regression models, a logistic regression and stepwise binary regression, the paper developed predictors for staff reduction and found that COVID-19 had a significant impact on the reduction of staff through variables such as loss of donors, impact to budgets,
modification of donor agreements, and development of a strategy. Philanthropic organisations that lost their donors during the pandemic were 3.9 times likely to reduce their staff when compared to organisations that did not lose their donors. Loss of donors was thus a fundamental predictor of whether philanthropic organisations would reduce their staff numbers.

Furthermore, the study found that 73% of philanthropic organisations had to revamp their work and shift activities to focus only on COVID-related matters as 62% of organisations did not manage to receive any new grants during the pandemic. 54% of organisations lost donors during the pandemic which contributed to the strength of the model developed in predicting the ensuing staff losses as 44% initiated changes in their labour contracts to employ on a part-time and virtual basis with an additional 34% contemplating changes to their labour contracts.

The paper poses the following recommendations for practice, policymakers, and future research:

**Recommendations from the study**

Through mixed methods, the study has not only highlighted the factors that had a significant impact on philanthropic organisations but it has also developed a model to isolate specific variables that can be used to predict the impact of the pandemic on the philanthropy sector. The study recommends that the loss of donors, impacts on budget, modification of agreements, and development of strategy significantly influence the activity of staff reduction by philanthropic organisations. Organisations that lost donors during the pandemic were 3.9 more times likely to reduce their staff numbers. It is thus recommended that philanthropic organisations in Africa need to diversify their sources of income as others have managed to do like CivSource, ZGF, and Sisters Empowerment, because when donors and funding declines, an avalanche of issues rise which pose a threat to the organisation’s existence. Donor dependency is a threat and statistically valid influencer thus the onus is on the philanthropic organisation to monitor this faithfully and use the new operating space to diversify their sources of income.

The loss of donors has proven to be a valid predictor of changes in staffing and strategy for philanthropic organisations. Philanthropic organisations played a significant role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic but suffered numerous losses with a decline in their resources and a substantial increase in the demand for their services. Policymakers should thus use the model developed in this study to utilise the factor of loss of donors to predict the changes to philanthropic organisations and enable effective decision-making based on data reporting the increase or loss of donors. If donors have been lost, that alone is a reason to take action and re-engineer the philanthropic organisation to avoid staff losses and extinction of the organisation.

The study provides implications for both philanthropy researchers and management researchers. The model developed in the study shows philanthropy-specific factors that have an impact on their existence without involving other sectors like government and the private sector. The COVID-19 pandemic did not spare any sector, it would thus be essential to investigate its impacts on governments and the corporate sector who also have philanthropic elements.
Overall, this paper contributes to the provision of African philanthropy data and dynamics, fairly reporting the impacts of the pandemic to civil society organisations in Africa. COVID-19 was an eye-opener, a shock to the system, and has gone down in history as the event that transformed philanthropic organisations. The question going forward is, has this eye-opening event triggered an opportunity to revamp philanthropy and open their eyes to other ways of working and other sources of income besides donors? Only time and future research will tell.

References:


