UBS, TrustAfrica launch report on regional philanthropy

Wednesday, 03 December 2014 18:30
Written by EDITOR

UBS and the pan-African foundation TrustAfrica, recently, launched the first report on philanthropy in Africa by wealthy Africans.

Entitled "Africa's Wealthy Give Back", the report is based on interviews with and surveys responses from almost 100 wealthy Africans and exports from their regions of Southern, Western and Eastern Africa, with a particular focus on Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa.

It provides a clear perspective on how philanthropy is contributing to Africa's development and examines where more can be done.

The report shows that philanthropy is an inherent characteristic of African life, where giving to extended family or supporting a community member is seen as a matter of course.

The research also shows that informal giving plays an important role as formal giving and that it is embedded in cultural and social norms.

According to the study, African philanthropists have a unique connection to the causes they support.

Their personal history or the challenges they see around them are decisive in determining the causes they support and shape their philanthropic activities.

Growth and health attract the most support from wealthy Africans, with a significant proportion of giving also going to causes in education and community, or religiously based projects.

African are particularly involved in their philanthropic activities, whether in the selection of projects, the management of their foundations, or through their involvement on the boards of organizations.

However, they tend to prefer a degree of anonymity when giving, making visibility on the scale as well as the sharing of best practices within networks difficult.

Explaining the rationale behind conducting research on philanthropy in Africa, Head of Philanthropy Advisory, Silke Gedenber, said: "We realized that much research has been done about foreign aid in Africa, but since the explosion of wealth in some African countries we want to begin seeing more philanthropic activity being driven by Africans.

As part of our commitment to provide clients with the necessary tools and advice to use their wealth for positive social impact, we felt that we needed to better understand not only giving practices, their scale and scope but also to evaluate the potential of private philanthropy as a means of supporting systemic social change."

Executive Director of TrustAfrica, Tendai Mudur, commented: "Supporting the requisite infrastructure, laws and systems for local philanthropy is a powerful way of achieving the goal.

For there to be a robust, well-structured way to help people to help themselves strengthen their own systems for helping themselves when they are in need."

The number of wealthy individuals in Africa in 2013 was estimated at 169,000, a growth of 3.7 per cent over the year and Africa's projected growth is estimated to range between five per cent and six per cent in 2012 meaning that the pool of potential philanthropist capital is growing.

"Africa's Wealthy Give Back" sheds light on what is currently happening and provides recommendations on how the sector can attract growing resources to ensure that Africa's potential is fulfilled.

A key speaker at the event was Pascal Dail, a successful businessman and philanthropist, who shared his personal experience about his philanthropy and the creation of the Piala Coface Foundation, a foundation which supports well-being by empowering and giving from the means to become independent and locally self-sufficient.