About TrustAfrica

TrustAfrica is an independent foundation that strives to secure the conditions for democracy and equitable development throughout the continent.

Led by Africans, we convene dialogues, catalyze ideas, and provide grants and technical assistance to organizations working to advance these goals.

Our programs focus on:
- Governance
- Equitable Development
- African Philanthropy

Cultivating African Resources for Democracy and Development

Africa’s epic struggle for independence is one of the most remarkable human achievements of the last century, but winning formal independence was only the first step toward achieving peace, democracy, and development. Despite the end of colonialism, the bulk of Africa’s development needs still depend on financial resources from abroad. The dependency has weakened Africa’s ability to set her own priorities and policies for development. Foreign donors, from global financial institutions to national governments to private foundations, still wield considerable power throughout the continent. Development strategies such as structural adjustment programs set strict conditions for countries seeking new loans or lower interest rates. Even the most well-meaning funders exert subtle and unintentional forms of influence over the state institutions and civil society groups they support.

In response, TrustAfrica is leveraging new and traditional forms of African giving to advance democracy and development and to minimize reliance on external donors. Cultivating indigenous philanthropic resources can help in some part to shift the balance of power back towards the continent, reclaim ownership of African agendas and help to support and strengthen African agency.

Africa is already home to a deep-rooted culture of giving and mutual support, though it operates mostly at family and community levels. Efforts to acknowledge and build knowledge of these traditions are fundamental to enabling African narratives of giving to take an equal space alongside more formalized philanthropic mechanisms. They are equally important to
developing an understanding of a continent that is not just a recipient of aid, but one in which internal flows of resources have played a critical role. Building on these traditions, and extending their reach, could give civil society organizations greater leverage with funders overseas as well as with wary governments here at home.

At the same time, strong economic growth in many parts of Africa is creating new pockets of wealth. An emerging generation of African philanthropists and a new set of formal African philanthropic institutions—including corporate, private, and community foundations—can play a vital role in sustaining African initiatives for democratic governance and equitable development.

**Strategies**

TrustAfrica seeks to align external philanthropic resources with African agendas as well as to cultivate indigenous resources that support the continent’s own priorities for democracy and development. We engage in and support efforts to:

- **Build knowledge:** We seek to build and disseminate knowledge on the nature, role, potential and impact of African philanthropy through research, publications, and convenings.

- **Promote social justice philanthropy:** We are working to advance the narrative, practice and impact of social justice philanthropy in Africa.

- **Strengthen the field of philanthropy:** We strive to facilitate collaborative networks, develop learning platforms, strengthen collective philanthropy positions, encourage critical reflection and advocate for a more enabling environment for giving on the continent.

**Selected Accomplishments**

- **A groundbreaking study on the state of philanthropy in Africa, Giving to Help, Helping to Give: The Context and Politics of African Philanthropy,** which reflects on theoretical, philosophical, historical and cultural underpinnings of the field and explores its relation to civil society, the state, regional organizations, and Africans in the diaspora.

- **Field research on community foundations and a set of papers on social justice philanthropy; an increase in African voices, positions and papers at key African and international fora; an extensive database of literature on African giving in four languages; research related to high net worth philanthropy in Africa and; work related to the intersections between philanthropy and resource governance.**

- **TrustAfrica is one of the founding members and supporters of the African Grantmakers Network, the first pan-African philanthropic network on the continent. It has also played a critical role leading up to the development of the African Social Justice Philanthropy Group.**