

Traditional African Philanthropy as an Alternative to Foreign Aid? An Empirical Model for Local Resource Mobilization among Faith-Based NGOs in Uganda

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Abstract:

This paper is a feasibility study on whether traditional African philanthropy could be an alternative to foreign aid funding for Ugandan Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs). It seeks to evaluate traditional philanthropy's ability to increase local resource mobilization and improve the resiliency of FBOs. The purpose of this research is to examine the structural, cultural and economic variables that affect traditional giving behaviors; and determine if African philanthropy which is based in local contexts could reduce the reliance of FBOs on external foreign donor funding in Uganda. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect data for this study. Survey data, financial data from the participating organizations, and extensive interviews with the leadership of FBOs in Uganda were all collected for the purposes of this study. Using a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data, this research provides a complete analysis of both the effects of traditional philanthropy and the qualitative aspects (i.e., the limitations and dynamics of communities) that influence the ways in which people give. The findings indicate that although traditional philanthropy has great relational and community-focused potential, it is still largely unexploited by FBOs because of fragmented fund raising approaches, lack of strategic involvement, and socio-economic structural barriers. However, the study reveals many opportunities to utilize local resources using culturally relevant fund-raising methods, better governance models, and enhanced community trust. In conclusion, this paper finds that traditional philanthropy may serve as an alternative to foreign aid, in some cases as a complement, and at times as a foundation or an ethical framework when FBOs use evidence-based fund-raising methods that are consistent with their local socio-cultural context. These insights may also inform larger discussions regarding financial sustainability of FBOs in Africa .

Keywords: Traditional Philanthropy, Local Resource Mobilization, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), Foreign Aid Dependency, African Development, Sustainable Development Financing, Community-Based Giving.

INTRODUCTION

As foreign aid continues to dwindle and regulatory hurdles increase, FBOs will be compelled to develop locally-rooted resource mobilization systems. Historically, across Africa, mutual aid, communal support, and solidarity has existed. This is through community-run self-help groups and collective labor projects that have shaped the social and economic livelihood of the people. Therefore, given the long-standing presence, locally-based traditional systems of giving that exist and have been the mechanism for which African communities have historically mobilized resources for the flourishing of the community.

Philanthropy has broadly been defined as voluntary action for the public good (Payton 1988). Despite their long history of traditional giving and helping practices in Africa's roots, Africans have largely been viewed as recipients of aid. This is as majority of the traditional informal philanthropic customs practiced throughout Africa have largely been replaced by the formal philanthropic programs that emphasize vertical

flows of money from donors to recipients. And as the foreign aid landscape becomes even more unstable because of shifting political, economic and ideological concerns, FBOs are becoming increasingly vulnerable to this trend; most notably in terms of reduced autonomy, diminished agenda-setting abilities and operational instability, especially when donor priorities suddenly change. Thus, there is growing interest in examining ways in which locally-sourced funding could create a greater level of financial sustainability and self-determination for FBOs engaged in Africa.

Within the current relief and development landscape in Africa, FBOs occupy a unique position. Many FBOs rely on religious traditions, mutual trust and a large-scale community of grassroots volunteers that provide them with a great deal of social legitimacy and moral authority. These are grounded in the Ubuntu philosophy. "I am because we are and since we are, I am." This is a philosophy that argues for the communal nature of the African populace. In turn, these attributes embedded within ubuntu offer unique opportunities to mobilize domestic funding, leverage faith-based incentives, common values and relational networks. Ubuntu frames the "public good" in the understanding of philanthropy as the direct wellbeing of one's community, it is expressed in the expression of interconnectedness. Yet, many organizations continue to struggle with developing traditional philanthropy at a larger scale due to various structural barriers, multiple disparate funding strategies and lack of institutional capacity.

Over the past few years, growing demands for the localization of aid and criticisms of dependence on foreign funding have highlighted the urgent need to strengthen indigenous philanthropic ecosystems in Africa. However, very little empirical evidence currently exists to determine whether indigenous giving can contribute substantially to the replacement of foreign funding for FBOs in Africa. While existing literature often provides theoretical, historical and normative views of indigenous giving traditions, relatively little research has quantitatively examined the viability of accessing local resources through the traditional giving practices, the rationale for using these methods to access these resources and the challenges associated with using the informal African philanthropic practices to mobilise resources for faith based organizations

The purpose of this study is to fill this void by providing an empirical model to assess the feasibility of traditional African philanthropy as a potential viable substitute for foreign funding for African FBOs. A mixed-methods approach incorporating financial data, surveys, and qualitative interviews was used to investigate the sociocultural, institutional, and economic variables that impact indigenous giving, as well as the organizational strategies that impact the success of resource mobilization efforts. The goal of this study is to provide evidence-based insights into the efficacy, constraints, and transformative potential of traditional African philanthropy in modern providing the necessary resources for the public good in Africa.

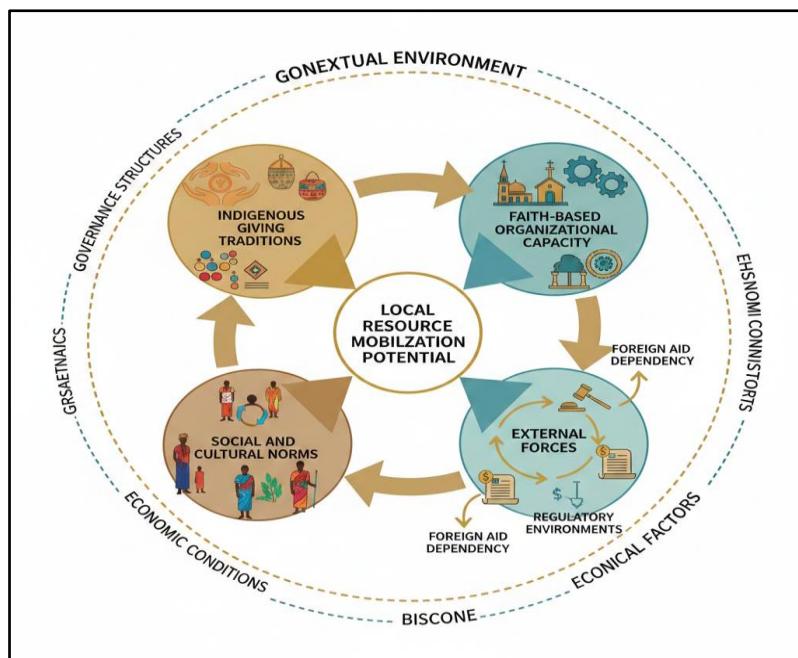


Fig 1. Conceptual Framework: A diagram illustrating the interactions among indigenous

I.LITERATURE REVIEW

Africa's philanthropic landscape has been shaped by a variety of factors including culture and tradition; economic and social trends; and international and national policy and program developments. As such, the body of research on philanthropy in Africa is quite diverse and evolving. The purpose of this paper is to integrate and provide references for significant research contributions to facilitate further use in citations.

The Meaning of Philanthropy and Giving

Philanthropy is the "love of humanity" (Illingworth et al., 2011; Payton & Moody, 2008). Philanthropy is a voluntary action for the public good (Payton, 1988; Payton & Moody, 2008, p. 6). The defining feature of Philanthropy is its connection to morality (Payton & Moody, 2008, p. 96). Philanthropy is moral behavior that seeks to correct things that have gone wrong in society. It involves moral imagination for the common good (Payton & Moody, 2008). Philanthropy here is a behavior grounded in moral imagination. It is voluntary and not coerced for the common good and not the private good.

There is a difference between philanthropic giving in the Western and non-Western contexts. The dilemma of Philanthropic giving has been that giving in the context of the non-Western world has only been viewed as charity, especially when it is not through formal structures. Giving in non-western contexts like Uganda has long been considered only as a charity because it is mainly informal (Atibil, 2013). Furthermore, giving in Africa has largely been viewed as traditional, focusing on meeting only daily needs (Fowler, 2016). Giving in the context of Uganda, like many African countries, is complex, broad, and multifaceted. This literature review will focus on philanthropic giving in Uganda. It will include the practice, the history, the framework, and the motivations for philanthropic giving in Uganda.

The Practice of Philanthropy in Uganda

Like many other African countries, Uganda has long practiced Philanthropy (Murisa, 2020, p. 1). It was practiced long before European powers came into the scramble and the partition of Africa (Moyo, 2013; Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013).

Uganda is a former British colony. It is in East Africa, surrounded by Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan. Uganda has an estimated population of 45.9 million people (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2024, p. 8). Uganda is a heterogeneous country with 56 tribes that speak different languages. The official languages are English and Swahili (Reid, 2017). Various legislations govern the voluntary and nonprofit sectors in Uganda. These include the NGO Act of 2016,

The Anti-money Laundering Act of 2013, and The Computer Misuse Act of 2022 (CivSource-Africa, 2020a).

Giving is understood as a sacrifice to benefit the community and the individual. It is grounded in the Ubuntu philosophy that emphasizes the interconnectedness of the people in the community. The principles underlying giving in this context are pity and compassion and the philosophy of "Ubuntu," a Bantu tribal word that points to ones and means ""I am since we are." (Wilkinson-Mapos et al., 2005). Among the Baganda, the largest tribe in Uganda, it is referred to as "Obwa SseLuganda"; among the Teso tribe in Eastern Uganda, it is eitunga"nane." The Lugbara tribe in the northwestern part of the country is referred to as "Ba oa" /"Baa sii" (CivSource – Africa, 2020). All these are translated to mean giving something to seek the flourishing of the community.

The Conceptualization of Philanthropy in Uganda

The term Philanthropy is a complex and contested term in Africa and Uganda in particular. There are two views on whether it is "philanthropy in Africa" or" "African philanthropy "p." African Philanthropy is Philanthropy for Africans by Africans: Philanthropy in Africa is for the people in Africa (Fowler, 2016; Mati, 2017a). Philanthropy was not introduced to Uganda because African people have strong traditions of self-help, self-support, voluntary institutions, rotation credit, and associations (Wilkinson-Mapos et al., 2005, p. xiv).

Philanthropy in the context of Africa is conceptualized as gifting. Fowler and Mati argue for the use of the concept of "gifting" rather than "giving" or "philanthropy." This is to better capture the positive moral element and asymmetry of value in the transaction (Fowler & Mati, 2019, p. 727). Gifting is an inherent human behavior that is dedicated to the wellbeing of others. It is a form of Philanthropy that operates beyond individual giving, back by elites (Fowler & Mati, 2019). The word philanthropy cannot be easily translated into Africa's local or many regional languages (Fowler & Mati, 2019). In Uganda, no single word in the local Swahili language would represent the concept of Philanthropy (Aina & Moyo, 2013, p. 340). This demonstrates the complexity of defining the term locally in Uganda, as viewed and determined from the Western perspective. Different tribes will use other words that embody the activities of philanthropy, giving, and charity.

Philanthropy among people with low incomes in Africa was viewed with the notion of helping (Wilkinson-Mapos et al., 2005, p. 4). Wilkinson et al. argued for using the term help because Philanthropy is not widely used in the region and does not resonate with the local language as it only brings a monetary connotation. Therefore, Philanthropy, as viewed in the West, is better described as help in Africa and Uganda as it is simple and widely understood, covering both the material and non-material types of assistance without implying business transactions (Wilkinson-Mapos et al., 2005, p. 4). This means that even the poor have something to give.

Helping the poor is a regular feature of how the poor cope. A widely shared rule of giving informs it, brings its rewards, can be asked for or given without stigmatic overtones, and typically evokes positive emotions (Wilkinson-Mapos et al., 2005). In Uganda, this is expressed in proverbs such as among the Acholi in northern Uganda that says, "lacan bene huko welo ne." This means that even a poor person can host a guest and share something with them (CivSource – Africa, 2020). Everyone, including the poor, can give. In reflecting on who gives, in Uganda, all people, both the rich and poor, are expected to give. Philanthropy and giving in Uganda is a spectrum of forms and ways of giving informed by social, economic, and cultural contexts in which it is taking place (Ngondi-Houghton, 2005, p. 2). It is important to note that informal social networks, practices, and traditions foster and indicate reciprocity among people of different financial statuses (Atibil, 2013, p. 458).

Giving in the historical context of Uganda

Before colonization, giving and philanthropy in Uganda had deep roots in communal kinship ties (Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013, p. 138). Giving was informal based on family, village, clan, or within the tribe. It was a means to advance social solidarity (Mottiar & Ngcoya, 2016). In traditional Africa, giving was largely informal. In certain instances, like in Buganda, the kingdom was the governing institution that

regulated gift exchanges around life events like marriage and land (Reid, 2017). In Buganda, the king (kabaka) was central to unifying the people around a common cause (Reid, 2017). Giving in the traditional practices of giving that was centered on building social harmony.

The colonization began in 1877, with the arrival of the first Christian missionaries to Uganda (Reid, 2017) (Reid. 2017). This period was shortly marred by disease and religious wars (Bazaara, 2002, p. 2). The disease included sleeping sickness, Spanish influenza, and syphilis. The wars were between the Muslims and Christians, the Catholics and protestants (Reid, 2017). Many people died, and those who survived were weak and needed assistance. The missionaries were critical in providing health care and education in this period (Bazaara, 2002, p. 2). Colonial rule in Uganda disrupted traditional social structures and introduced individualistic capitalistic giving practices, undermining the communal practices of giving. The missionaries that came to Uganda established early charitable organizations, but these had paternalistic approaches and focused on relief rather than systematic change (Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013, p. 139).

Formal practices of giving emerged in this era of colonialization. These took on the form of the organizations from Britain (Bazaara, 2002, p. 2). In Uganda, formal organizations were established that the rich gave to support the poor. These included the Family Planning Association in 1957, the Women's Corona Society in 1949, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in 1952, and the Uganda Council of Women (Bazaara, 2002, p. 8). These formal organizations primarily supported the vulnerable and were central to development in rural areas where many were viewed as backward and marginalized. In Postcolonial Uganda in 1962, when the country gained independence, the Ugandan government prioritized development, often relying on foreign aid (Bazaara, 2002, p. 13). Philanthropy giving became intertwined with the state agenda, leading to community mobilization efforts for people to thrive (Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013, p. 150). The state crowded out nonprofit organizations with the view that the state should undertake development. The voluntary organizations were to conform to and support state-directed development plans. The organizations had to demonstrate loyalty and cooperation with the regime. This ensured they were not used for political activities against the regime (Bazaara, 2002, p. 13). The quest for independence from Britain brought suspicion towards formal voluntary organizations with British linkages, leading to local self-help groups centered on religious trade unions (Bazaara, 2002).

However, later in the 1970s and 1980s in Uganda, there was an economic crisis. This was under the leadership of President Idi Amin Dada. This crisis increased poverty and reliance on local self-help initiatives. Communities began to form groups to address basic needs, reflecting a resurgence of local Philanthropy (Ngondi-Houghton & Kingman, 2013, p. 152). In this context of government failure, voluntary organizations emerged to fill the gap.

Furthermore, structural adjustment programs were advanced by the neoliberal agenda of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which gave rise to advocacy organizations (Bazaara, 2002, p. 21). This period was marred by disease and war. The emergence of HIV/Aids in Uganda increased foreign giving to Uganda. Uganda receives \$400 million annually from 20 international donors to address the HIV/Aids epidemic (Kakaire et al., 2016, p. 1). Voluntary organizations in Uganda largely depend on foreign aid (Barr et al., 2003, p. 671). A study found that 80.1% of the total revenue of nonprofit organizations in Uganda was from international grants (Barr et al., 2003, p. 666). This is where the lines between the government, market, and nonprofit sectors are blurred.

The Framework of Philanthropic Giving in Uganda

The philanthropic giving framework covers the individual and organizational levels, formal and informal forms of giving, and Western and traditional African perspectives of giving. These are the lenses through which giving and Philanthropy are experienced. Mati argues that sharing in the African context is expressed in three perspectives: vertical (formal), horizontal, and hybrid (Mati, 2017b). This framework is evident in contemporary Uganda.

First, horizontal giving and Philanthropy. It is informal relational giving based on traditional norms and conventions (Mati, 2017b, p. 30). This giving is interpersonal, with an emphasis on face-to-face

relationships. This makes traditional giving in Uganda distinct from the Western formal mode of giving that has intermediaries (Mati, 2017b, p. 36). In horizontal giving, there is a solid connection to place and people, as Africans are more likely to give to relatives, people from their place of origin, and people with whom they have an affiliation (Atibil, 2013, p. 461; Mati, 2017b, p. 37). This form of giving is expressed in traditional forms of giving in Uganda. In Uganda, horizontal giving focuses on addressing immediate needs such as food, education, health, access to social amenities, and empowerment of the marginalized (Murisa, 2020, p. 1). For example, it is embedded within the culture among the Acholi in northern Uganda, where a traditional practice is called "Bat Kaka." This practice involves sharing a culturally predetermined part of an animal with one that has hunted or slaughtered an animal. Among the Baganda and Banyankole tribes, the cultural practice of "Okutia Omuka" go" that seeks to build a self-help bond involves eating a coffee bean smeared with some blood to symbolize a lifelong blood tie of self-help. The "se "Oluata Omuk" kago" brothers should provide for each other's family as their own (CivSource – Africa, 2020, p. 12). Giving in is to maintain social cohesion in the community.

Second, vertical giving involves formal giving mechanisms. This is the rich giving to the poor (Mati, 2017b, p. 18). This is the giving that came with the colonization of Uganda by the British (Ngondi-Houghton, 2005, p. 9). This is Philanthropy, as is often understood in the West. This is institutionalized giving practice through formal and legally registered institutions such as foundations and non-governmental organizations. This is giving that involves one person giving to many (African Grantmakers Network, 2013, p. 7). The giver is viewed as having more significant resources and power (Fowler & Mati, 2019, p. 731). Today in Uganda, it is practiced by giving through foundations like the Ruparelia Foundation, founded by the wealthiest man in Uganda with a vision to create change in society, the Kabaka Foundation began by the king of Buganda Kingdom, the Nabagereka Foundation started by the queen of the Buganda kingdom, Muljibhai Madhvani foundation established in 1967 is the oldest foundation in Uganda, Patrick and Carol Bitature, Joyce kafuko foundation, Brian white foundation among others (Murisa, 2020, p. 6). These foundations in Uganda are modeled after the Western idea of foundations and seek to address the root causes of various social problems in society. The common characteristic among these is that wealthy individuals give to the poor seeking to address systemic social issues. There are international foundations that are involved in giving aid to Uganda (Barr et al., 2003)

The final is the hybrid that heavily borrows from the West as it blends African and Western traditions of giving. (Mati, 2017a p. 54). This provides a blend of formal and informal giving practices. This is evident in mutual aid groups, self-help groups, and emerging community foundations (Mati, 2017a. p. 4). This form of giving has not been well documented in Uganda. In neighboring Kenya, there are "Harambees," contributions from the informal savings of the urban poor to advocate for housing for the poor (Mati, 2017a, p. 5).

In conclusion, Philanthropy in Uganda is rooted in traditional practices, and it has evolved from largely informal giving to more formal practices. This demonstrates a multifaceted concept with various traditional and modern influences in Uganda. This reinforces the importance of cultural practices in shaping giving and philanthropic behaviors.

International Aid and Dependence / Localization of Development Efforts in Africa

Research has illustrated that foreign aid, although beneficial to the development of Africa, has created systemic dependency issues that diminish local capacity and organizational independence. Critics argue that the donor-imposed agendas imposed through foreign aid create constraints on the local institutions and FBOs to innovate or prioritize locally defined needs [10, 11]. Discussions around the "localization of aid" focus on shifting financial control and decision-making authority to African organizations, while recognizing both the ethical imperative and practical necessity of reducing dependence on external donors [12]. In this regard, indigenous philanthropy is seen as an essential path to promoting the autonomy, resilience, and long-term sustainability of African civil society [13].

Funding of FBOs in Uganda

The FBO sector is funded primarily by international NGOs and bilateral donors (Barr et al., 2005, p. 657). Foreign aid is the largest source of funding for the different activities of the organizations. Survival is dependent on the ability to access a foreign grant. In Uganda, most indigenous FBOs need help to secure a stable domestic funding source, consequently relying on foreign funding to make ends meet. This leads to competition between organizations for scarce donor funding. (Dicklitch, 2001, p. 31). There are outcomes of the source of funding for the organizations.

Burger and Owens studied the survival patterns of NGOs in Uganda between 2002 and 2008. They found that the primary determinant of the survival of organizations in Uganda appears to be access to grants, and NGOs without grants struggle to survive (Burger & Owens 2013, p. 1284). The grants are awarded based on habit rather than merit. This is credited to a picture of two parallel NGOs in Uganda, one category that is small in revenue and barely surviving, and one that is large and more stable (Burger & Owens, 2013, p. 1284). The donors determine who gets the grants and who does not; once relationships are established, the donors fund those organizations. Several factors determine the funding of these organizations by the donors. These are both internal and external factors. In studying the internal and external factors that determine the capacity of NGOs in Uganda to raise funds, Fatchamps and Owens find that networking plays a critical role in determining the funding of an organization; this is whether an organization is part of an umbrella organization or a subsidiary of a foreign NGO, or the leader works with another NGO. This is because donors need help to screen local NGOs and rely on networks to access relevant information (Fatchamps & Owens, 2009, p. 317). Internally, in raising local fees, the leader's experience matters. There is a crowding out of local support with increased foreign donor support (Fatchamps & Owens, 2009, p. 318). This highlights the importance of the role of the leader in steering the Organization and the contacts and networks they bring to the Organization.

Donor Dependence in Uganda

Foreign aid funding has had both positive and negative effects on FBOs. Positively, foreign aid has 1) promoted service delivery to the citizens. Aid has enabled people to get involved in shaping their development (Hearn, 2010. p. 3). 2) Foreign aid has amplified citizens' voices on issues of democracy; 3) Foreign aid also benefits organizations because it can help support democratic governance (Knack, 2004, p. 252); and 4) Foreign aid promotes social development. Abbas and Navigaria (2009) argue that foreign aid can help with the social aspects of development by supporting equity in how income is distributed and access to public goods like health and education.

Negatively foreign aid 1) creates dependency and limits the organizations' abilities to act in the public interest, 2) the organizations supported are viewed by the governments as representing donor interests (Akpalima-Atibil, 2013, pp. 13-14). 3) Foreign aid has led to duplication of services, the same program might easily be duplicated because of the desire to promote the donors' agenda (Moss et al., 2006, p. 8), 4) foreign aid disempowers the local people. 5) it also distorts the direction of NGOs accountability mechanisms away from their local beneficiaries and directs it towards their donor (Akpalima-Atibil, 2013. pp. 13-14). Foreign aid can distort the very outcomes that donors seek to encourage. It leads to a lack of policy ownership, financial unsustainability, institutional dependence, and a dependent economic environment (Moss et al., 2006, p. 5). In the literature, there are more negative outcomes of foreign aid on organizations in Africa than positive ones that have been investigated. This is partly because between 1970 and 1998, when foreign disbursements to Africa were at their peak, poverty in Africa increased from 11% to 66%; despite more than \$1 trillion in foreign aid handed to Africa over the last 50 years, it has failed to deliver sustained economic growth and poverty alleviation. It is argued that foreign aid has worsened the continent (Moyo, 2009). From this, foreign aid in its current form has caused more harm than good. This calls for a review of the role of this aid in developing communities in Uganda.

RELIGION AND PHILANTHROPY (VERBATIM)**Religion and Philanthropy**

Religion and Philanthropy are closely connected, as religion promotes the acts of giving and caring (Grönlund & Pessi, 2015; Wuthnow & Hodgkinson, 1990). The relationship between religion and philanthropy is multidimensional as it is influenced by psychological processes, the internal dynamics of the religious community, religious culture (Grönlund & Pessi, 2015) Religion in America plays a pivotal role in motivating and mobilizing charitable giving (Wuthnow & Hodgkinson, 1990). Religion has been over looked in the study of philanthropy despite the fact that religion has played a significant role in the non profit sector (Wuthnow & Hodgkinson, 1990).

Religion influences individuals through conviction of religious beliefs, values, and attitudes. The identification with a community and social pressure and solicitation for contribution (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). In the USA, about 60% of charitable donations are to religious organizations, and only 2% are to charitable aid (Illingworth et al., 2011, p. 3). Different religions have different practices for giving that determine how much would be given. In Judeo-Christianity, the belief is that one gives 10%, and in Islamic law, one must give 2.5% of the wealth (Illingworth et al., 2011). Religious affiliation and attendance at religious services are positively correlated with charitable giving. Frequent attendance at religious services strongly predicts charitable giving (Havens et al., 2006). Religious involvement influences the availability of resources to organizations, particularly through voluntary contributions of time and money (Cadge & Wuthnow, 2006). This is because religious beliefs and practices are linked to philanthropic giving and volunteering. Religious organizations absorb a significant share of America's altruistic behavior, with financial giving to religious organizations accounting for more than half of all giving from private households (Cadge & Wuthnow, 2006). Volunteering for religious organizations is more common than for any other kind of organization (Cadge & Wuthnow, 2006). This is despite the fact that religious institutions receive a significant portion of charitable giving and are involved in voluntary work (Wuthnow & Hodgkinson, 1990). Religious individuals donate more to all charitable organizations and not only religious one (Grönlund & Pessi, 2015). Historically, there is a relationship between organized philanthropy and organized religion in the United States of America (Wuthnow & Hodgkinson, 1990). Religion has been a driving force in promoting philanthropy (Grönlund & Pessi, 2015). Religions emphasize the need for care for humanity and these teachings are related into lifestyles and practices of the followers (Wuthnow & Hodgkinson, 1990). These teachings contribute to the acts of giving and caring as there are connections between religion and prosocial behaviors (Grönlund & Pessi, 2015). Religious giving in the United states is declining as a share of total giving and as a share of household giving. This is due to the decline in religious affiliation and attendance (Rooney, 2010).

Religious philanthropy has diminished over time as secular institutions have become more prominent the nonprofit sector (Anillo, n.d.; King, 2018)

Muslim philanthropy involves various forms of giving and acts of Charity that are rooted in Islamic teachings (Khan, 2012; S. Siddiqui & Campbell, 2023). It includes the concepts of zakat (obligatory almsgiving), Sadaqah (voluntary giving) and waqf (religious endowment) (S. A. Siddiqui & Campbell, 2023) Among the Muslims giving is practiced by giving first to the immediate family members and close community before giving to others (S. Siddiqui, 2010). Before giving to strangers, they are obligated to give to family members. Muslims give Zakat which is an obligatory charity that is given to those that are in need, it is a way to purify one's wealth and fulfill duty (S. Siddiqui, 2010). The debate is whether Zakat funds can be used restrictively to Muslims used to assists all those in need (Khan, 2012). Giving is Islam benefits not only the recipient but also the giver spiritually, it attaches beliefs in the believe in rewards to the giver (S.J, 2010). The giving toward Muslim Charities such as Islamic relief is to relieve alleviate poverty and suffering (Khan, 2012)

Among the Jews giving is practiced through tikkun olam (repairing the world). This goes beyond the traditional forms of giving (Failer, 2010). This form of giving may not involve financial donations but is a pivotal expression of Jewish moral obligation (Failer, 2010). The challenge is that tikkun Olam has been overused and has lost its distinct meaning, the term combines the spiritual and physical repair of the world and the sustainable social order and correction of systems that make society dysfunctional (Jacobs, 2009). This can include being a role model and a good example in society. Tikkum Olam needs to be reimagined to include individual actions that can have lasting impact on the world (Jacobs, 2009). The motivations for giving among the Jews include Justice (Tzedek), compassion (Chesed) (Failer, 2010). Tzedakah is seen as a means of restoring justice to the world (Jacobs, 2009). There is disagreement as to whether tzedakah should prioritize the needs of the Jews or non Jews, as well as the needs of the local community or the global community (Jacobs, 2009). In Judaism the poor and the wealthy are fundamentally the same and should be treated with the same level of dignity and quality of life (Jacobs, 2009).

Christian attitudes towards philanthropy were influenced by both Jewish and Greco Roman traditions (Vallely, 2020). Christian teaching emphasizes almsgiving and it was a necessary part of their faith and a means of showing charity and compassion (Vallely, 2020). In Christianity giving is practiced in different ways through tithes (ten percent of total income), and sacrificial gifts offerings (Orwin, 2002; S.J, 2010; Vallely, 2020). Compassion is the foundation of morality and the governing principle for philanthropy (Orwin, 2002). Christian compassion seeks relief of early suffering while charity sees suffering as necessary for the salvation of sinful mankind (Orwin, 2002). Jesus taught that giving to the poor is equivalent to giving to God (Vallely, 2020).

The bishops in the early church such as Basil played key roles in institutionalizing Christian charity and the development of early Christian practice (Vallely, 2020). The reformation was a major turning point in Christianity when the protestants and Roman Catholics split into two different groups, there is disagreement on the influence of the protestant reformation on philanthropic practices. Vallely argues that the belief that the reformation brought major shift to philanthropy is incorrect. Vallely argues that the changes then were linked to economic, social and political changes rather than the theological shift (Vallely, 2020).

In Christianity, giving is a means for individuals to participate in God's work of overcoming evil and promoting righteousness in the world (S.J, 2010). Giving is a form of love that God works through to accomplish his divine goal. There is a difference between philanthropic deeds and acts, acts are self-giving and can have transformative impact while deeds could be driven by self-glorification, acts are driven by self-sacrifice (S.J. 2010). Sacrifice and suffering are significant concepts in the Christian standing of philanthropy (Orwin, 2002; Vallely, 2020).

Faith Based Organizations and Religious Organizations and Faith-Based Motivations for Giving in Africa

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) play an important role in both Africa's philanthropic and developmental frameworks.

The concept of FBO is complex as there is no single universally agreed upon definition of the concept. These organizations could be viewed as a spectrum as there are different ways in which religion is integrated in these organizations (Ebaugh et al., 2003; Jeavons, 1994; Sider & Unruh, 2004). Furthermore, FBOs in Africa are gap fillers in many countries in Africa where there has been government failure (Steinberg et., 2024). These organizations are critical in service provision and are viewed as development partners (Bompani, 2015). The organizations play a critical role in providing health and

education and advocacy (Bongmba, 2015). The organizations have been shaped and influenced by the colonial legacy that did not separate colonialism and missionary work. That complicates the relationship between FBOs and perpetuation of western ideological agendas (Bediako, 1996; Ohlmann et al., 2020). This historical dynamic is partly responsible for neo colonialism and the complex power dynamics that exist between western funding and southern dependency as expressed in Africa (Plaatje, 2017). There is growing discussion on localization among the FBOs in Africa and this involves the place of African initiated religious institutions promoting development. This has been expressed in African independent churches that promote development that is grounded in African world views, this is also expressed in the Pentecostal movement that is involved in providing various social services to their communities and Islamic charities that through Zakat are meeting needs of people in the community (Bompani, 2015, 2018).

-Research has documented that religion is a major faith based motivation for giving (Giving USA, 2014), this is as well in Africa a major force behind giving behaviors in Africa, noting that faith-based traditions create a sense of moral obligation to give to the less fortunate, provide for social welfare, and contribute to uplifting one's community [6, 7]. FBOs have the advantage of drawing upon deep-rooted networks of trust, spiritual credibility, and continued contact with local populations, which enables them to access local resources. Despite these advantages, there are limitations to FBOs' ability to contribute to indigenous philanthropy as evidenced by studies identifying challenges of institutional weakness, a lack of professional training and development, and an overreliance on external funding [8]. Increasingly, the literature is advocating for the enhancement of the governance and financial management capacities of FBOs to maximize their contributions to indigenous philanthropy [9].

Theoretical underpinning of the study – Resource dependency Theory

Resource dependency theory helps explain how an organization's behavior is shaped by its dependence on resources from an external, uncertain environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2015). A central proposition of the theory is that the survival of an organization depends on access to critical resources in the environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2015; Wry et al., 2013).

The resource dependency theory was formulated by Pfeffer and Salancik in 1978; it argues that an organization does not exist in isolation but in an environment (Wry et al., 2013, p. 446). The organization depends on its external environment for crucial resources, and this dependency shapes the organization's behavior (Wry et al., 2013). The theory explores dependence from two aspects: forming dependence and managing dependence (Choi & Walsh, 2023).

The behavior of faith-based organizations is influenced by the environment within which they operate (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003b; Wry et al., 2013).

Resource dependency theory assumes dependence creates disadvantaged conditions for dependent firms, requiring them to either exchange the balance of power (Choi & Walsh, 2023). Dependence offers a competitive advantage as the dependent organization has the potential for growth, gains immunity against competition, and enables the organization to develop competencies (Choi & Walsh, 2023, p. 1995). Furthermore, dependence enables the organization's sustainability by developing dynamic capabilities through the learning opportunities presented and gaining legitimacy and a reputation (Choi & Walsh, 2023, p. 1995). The possible reciprocal nature of dependency is ambiguous in the theory (Casciaro & Piskorski, 2005).

The central premise of the resource dependency theory is that organizations are influenced by their external environment and seek to minimize dependence on external organizations to reduce their vulnerability (Coskun & Oztürk, 2024). This could imply that dependency is not entirely harmful but could benefit the organization.

Dependence is not inherently negative as it provides strategic advantages to dependent organizations enabling them to accomplish their mission.

Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is a theoretically informed and systematically organized approach to investigate indigenous philanthropy as an alternative resource strategy for the sustainable operations of Ugandan faith-based organizations (FBOs) at a global standard (Q1) of scholarly quality. To achieve this goal, the research methodology incorporates financial analysis, sociocultural analysis, and organizational assessment to provide a comprehensive understanding of the feasibility of indigenous philanthropy as an alternative to foreign resources for Ugandan FBOs.

In terms of methodology design, the research methodology utilizes a convergent parallel mixed-methodology (mixed-methodology) to analyze the multifaceted phenomenon of indigenous philanthropy. In addition to gathering quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, the methodology design utilizes separate quantitative and qualitative methodologies to collect, analyze, and then integrate findings to form a single integrated conceptualization of local giving capacity. This methodology design is based upon the understanding that indigenous philanthropic behavior is shaped by both structural economic factors and culturally symbolic interpretations, therefore requiring a combination of empirical and interpretive methodologies.

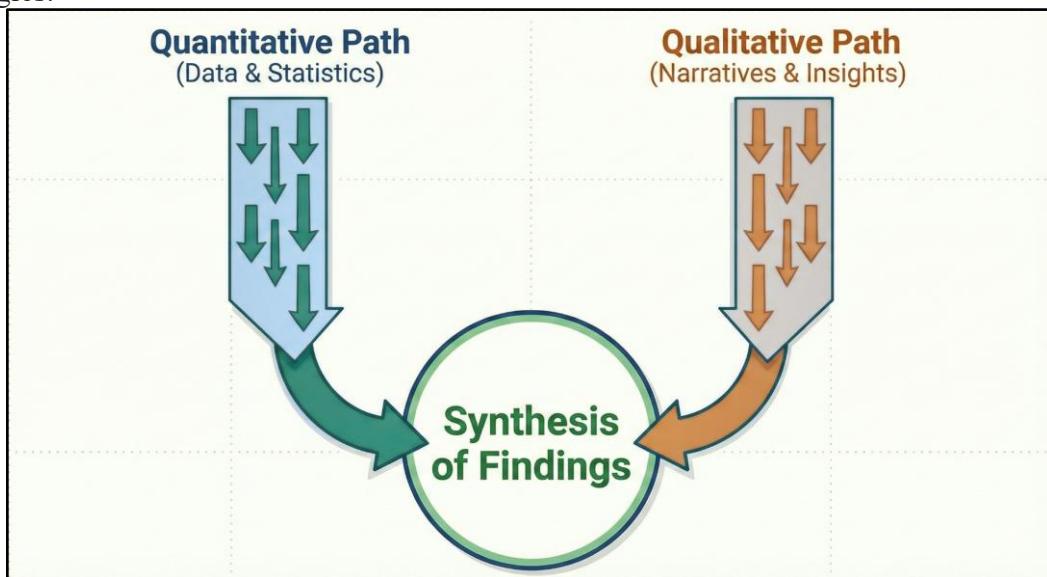


Fig 2. Mixed-Methods Convergence Model

2. Data Sources

Three primary empirical data sources were used to address various aspects of indigenous philanthropy: financial processes, behavioral patterns, and institutional practices.

a. FBO Financial Information

Audited financial records, internal budget documentation, and donor profiles were collected from a purposeful sample of FBOs **within Uganda**. The dataset provided the opportunity to assess:

- revenue structure (local vs. foreign)
- trend analysis of grassroots contributions through time
- donor segmentation and concentration metrics
- financial liquidity and sustainability metrics
- service delivery cost structure

b. Surveys

A structured questionnaire was administered to a representative sample of FBO-associated respondents (congregants, volunteers, employees, and community donors). The survey assessed:

- socio-economic background of givers
- reasons for religious or culturally inspired charitable contributions

- levels of confidence in FBO governance and transparency
- perceived responsibility to donate to their communities
- attitudes about foreign versus local charity
- willingness to increase local financial assistance

Survey instruments included Likert scale items, behavioral choice questions, and open-ended response sections.

c. Semi-structured Interviews

Qualitative interviews were conducted with leaders of FBOs, philanthropic specialists, traditional authority figures, and local donors who have actively contributed to philanthropy. The interviews explored:

- cultural expectations and traditions for donating money
- institutional strategies and barriers for raising funds locally
- perceptions regarding dependence on foreign aid and how external donors affect local philanthropy
- possible ways to expand indigenous philanthropy
- barriers to mobilizing domestic resources

3. Sampling Strategy

A multistage, stratified sampling plan was used to maximize representativeness and analytical rigor.

Sampling Level 1: Country

The study focuses **exclusively on Uganda**, selected for its diversity of philanthropic customs, religious traditions, and regulatory frameworks governing philanthropy.

Sampling Level 2: Organizations

Purposive sampling of Ugandan FBOs was conducted, encompassing a range of denominational affiliations (Christian, Muslim, ATR), organization size, and stage of organizational maturation.

Sampling Level 3: Participants

Stratified sampling of survey participants (age, socioeconomic status, membership type) and key informants was conducted using expert and snowball sampling techniques.

Descriptive Note for Future Visual Representation (M2: Figure Sampling Map for Uganda): A map showing Ugandan regions selected and the locations where surveys and interviews took place.

Analytical Instruments and Models

Both advanced statistical and qualitative methodologies were applied to analyze the data.

a. Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed utilizing R/Stata to conduct:

- statistical descriptive analysis to summarize giving trends and givers' demographic characteristics
- correlational and covariance analyses to assess the relationship between governance practices, levels of trust, and amount donated
- regression models to determine which variables contribute most significantly to successful local resource mobilization
- donor concentration ratios to measure the extent of vulnerability of funding
- robustness tests and multicollinearity checks to confirm the reliability of the regression models

Result and Discussion

1. Financial Capacity of Indigenous Philanthropy

An analysis of financial records from faith-based organizations (FBOs) in **Uganda** indicates that indigenous philanthropy makes a significant yet inconsistent contribution to overall revenue, with shares ranging between 18% and 42% among the entities surveyed. Organizations with higher levels of local

contributions consistently exhibited transparent governance, robust internal controls, and strong community involvement. Further regression analysis confirmed that confidence in leadership and diverse donor outreach are significant predictors of local resource mobilization.

Interpretation:

From the perspectives of sustainability and systems engineering, these results suggest a reliable, culturally anchored funding source that bolsters organizational resilience. While it is improbable that indigenous philanthropy will completely replace foreign aid, it provides a decentralized and less volatile resource base, thereby enhancing the adaptability of systems and minimizing dependency on external funding sources.

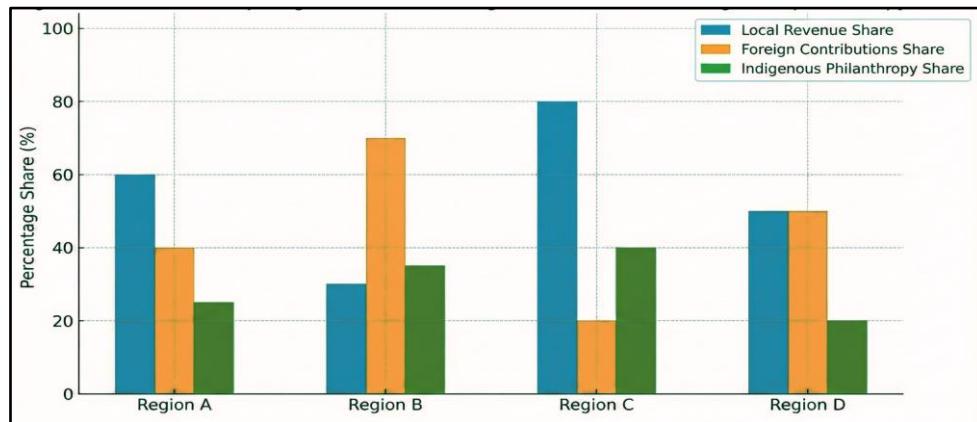


Fig 3. Bar chart comparing local revenue shares to those of foreign contributions.

2. Sociocultural and Organizational Drivers of Local Giving

Data collected from surveys and interviews in **Uganda** reveal three main factors driving indigenous philanthropy:

- Religious duty
- Communal reciprocity
- Trust in leadership and transparency

Respondents frequently articulated giving as a moral responsibility connected to shared identity and the welfare of the community. FBOs that regularly showcased accountability measures, such as public financial disclosures, garnered greater levels of domestic support.

3. Structural and Systemic Constraints

Even with robust cultural norms promoting generosity, various systemic limitations hinder scalability within Uganda:

- Economic instability and varying household incomes
- Insufficient digital and financial infrastructure in FBOs
- Inconsistent or restrictive regulatory frameworks
- Lack of strategic fundraising capabilities

These structural challenges create obstacles in the philanthropic pipeline, diminishing the overall capacity of the resource system.

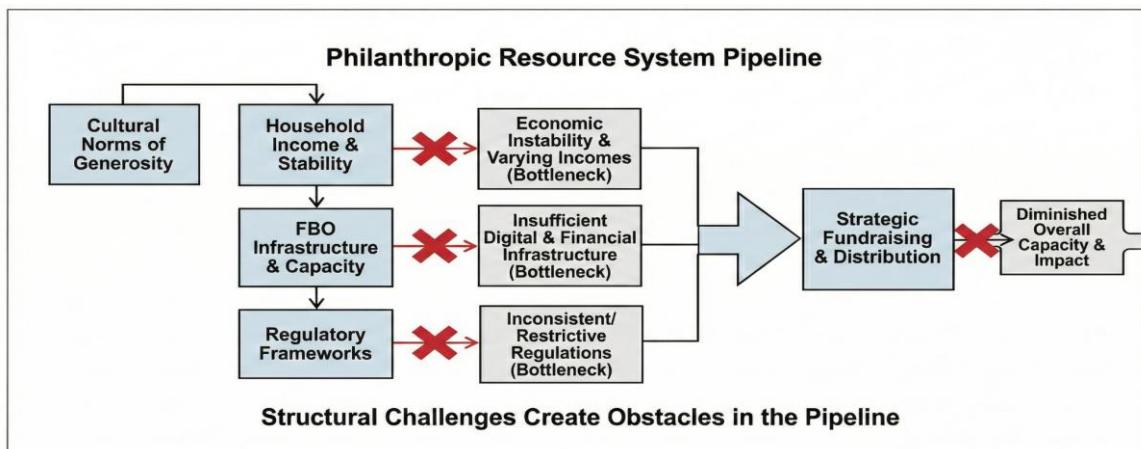


Fig. 4 Process diagram identifying bottlenecks in the philanthropic system.

4. Sustainability Implications

The cohesive findings indicate that indigenous philanthropy represents a viable and strategically crucial element for the financial sustainability of Ugandan FBOs. Its advantages encompass:

- Cultural validity
- Relative predictability
- Alignment with community values
- Flexibility to local socio-economic conditions

These characteristics align with sustainability and engineering principles regarding local resource circularity, redundancy, and distributed resilience. Indigenous philanthropy should be regarded not as a complete alternative to foreign aid but as a stabilizing supplement that promotes long-term organizational independence.

5. Limitations

The interpretive boundaries of this study are influenced by:

- Uneven regional representation within Uganda
- Differences in FBO financial reporting standards
- Possibility of social desirability bias within surveys
- Limited temporal data

Future Scope

Indigenous philanthropy in Uganda is being shaped by rapidly changing socio-economic conditions and rapid technological advancements, which may provide opportunities for increasing local fundraising. The expanded reach of digital platforms, growth of mobile money networks, and emergence of decentralised financial technologies may contribute to an increased ability of Ugandan FBOs to engage with donors, secure their assets over time, and build long-term sustainability. Applications such as blockchain-powered transparency tools, donor-focused AI-based analytical solutions, and automation of financial reporting systems could greatly enhance trust and efficiency, two critical elements of local giving.

In addition to the emerging prominence of African HNW philanthropists and increased diasporic involvement in giving, there appears to be a trend toward hybrid funding environments that combine established methods of giving with modern financial infrastructure.

Comparative analysis across different Ugandan regions would enable researchers to identify diverse indigenous giving environments based on differing cultural and institutional frameworks. Engineering-based optimization models have the capacity to generate simulations of resource flow, identify systemic impediments, and support strategic planning in local fundraising environments.

As climate resiliency, transition to renewable energy, and digital inclusion grow as priorities, interdisciplinary research focused on philanthropy and engineering-based development projects will become increasingly important within the Ugandan context. Longitudinal studies and the use of mixed

methodologies will help researchers understand how changes in Uganda's economy, governance, and demographics affect the long-term evolution of indigenous philanthropy.

Overall, the paths identified above will form a rich platform for generating both theoretical insight and practical innovation in the Ugandan philanthropic environment.

CONCLUSION

Research into this area demonstrates that indigenous philanthropy is an appropriate and culturally relevant way to help increase both the financial sustainability and independence of Ugandan faith-based organizations (FBOs). Indigenous support provides a long-term, integrated-to-the-community funding stream that aligns with the concepts of sustainability and systems engineering such as redundancy, reliability, and local resource circulation, but it will not replace all foreign aid. Indicators of indigenous giving include trust, transparency, and reciprocal relationships between donors and their communities, while constraints to indigenous giving in Uganda include limited digital infrastructure, inconsistent regulatory environments, and economic instability. Engineering solutions need to be developed to create simplified financial processes, improve governance, and expand digital platforms to increase the fundraising potential for Ugandan FBOs. Therefore, policymakers have several opportunities to create a regulatory environment that supports philanthropic entities and enables greater transparency and digital means of conducting and reporting local charitable efforts.

Longitudinal studies, comparative analyses across Uganda's regions, and system design models will also be useful in developing philanthropic systems and assessing new technologies (mobile money, blockchain, etc.) to assist in increasing domestic resource mobilization. This study has provided evidence that indigenous philanthropy can make a substantial contribution to sustainable, community-led development financing in Uganda, if supported by effective policy initiatives and technology improvements.

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