

**RESOLUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL
PHILANTHROPY FORUM-GHANA-2016**

**VENUE: ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE**

June 23-24, 2016

The Philanthropy Forum-Ghana, works to strengthen the capacities of not for profit organizations and networks; developing knowledge products through cutting edge research and build social action partnerships with public and private corporations in aid of increasing the visibility and ability of non-profit organizations to leverage resources to support their activities. Through research, we scale up approaches that work, disseminate learning and best practices, and convening stakeholders to promote broader collaboration and impact.

We foster collaboration opportunities amongst national, regional and international networks that aim at advancing philanthropic endeavors.



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BACKGROUND OF THE FORUM

The 2016 National Philanthropy Forum (NPF) was consequently organised around the overarching theme of “Tapping into Indigenous Philanthropy for National Development” to a priori understand the different contributions made by varied development stakeholders and to further gain insight into the development perspectives that inspire such contributions, all under the aegis of philanthropy.

The forum brought together government representatives, international agencies program directors, and representatives from business corporations, faith-based organisations, civil society groups, academics, voluntary workers, the media, students and some segments of the general public. The NPF was also an attempt to establish networks and partnerships among all stakeholders to enhance their collective impact.

At the heart of the NPF was the intention to showcase Corporate Social Responsibility endeavours of some corporations in Ghana as well as an aim to bring to the limelight the immense contributions of individual philanthropic and charitable activities in Ghana.

The plenary sessions were modelled around three major thematic areas that the NPF deemed necessary for its maiden edition – 1. “The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in National Development” with special emphasis on the extent to which CSR can be leveraged towards the achievement of National and International Development Goals, 2. “The Efforts of Local and International Non-Governmental Organisations Towards the Attainment of National Development Goals” and here the emphasis was on the Realities, Challenges and Way Forward, and finally, 3. “The Role of Indigenous Philanthropy or Faith-based Institutions in National Development” and following each plenary session was a discussion session for our dynamic audience to engage with the panel of experts through a Question-and-Answer session.

Finally, participants from all the three groups re-convened to present their respective deliberations and suggestions for subsequent convocations.

RESOLUTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

PARTNERING

1. Participants acknowledged that philanthropic collaboration happens at different levels (specific local projects, multi-year programmes, policy, advocacy) and through different approaches (building the capacity of local partners, funding pilots, bringing initiatives with demonstrated impact to scale, supporting research, convening etc.) and that all these levels and approaches offer vast potential for increasing impact and supporting innovation through more effective partnering.
2. Participants saw the need to initiate and consolidate partnerships across sectors that enhance synergies and leverage distinct comparative advantages of each partner (philanthropic, corporate, government and other development actors).

DIALOGUE

3. To work on bringing clarity to an increasingly unsettled terminology that has been developing in the field of philanthropy and non-profit organizations over time. Confusion about the meaning of philanthropy, volunteering, association, civil society, non-profit organization, foundation and charity has handicapped communication and understanding, particularly in development and inter-disciplinary contexts.
4. Participants also acknowledged the existence of a wide communication and collaboration gap between philanthropic organizations and government. A deepened mutual understanding is therefore needed at all levels to allow for dialogue, joint learning and action.
5. Acknowledge the importance of multi-level dialogue and coordination between foundations, governments, and other development stakeholders to strategize our work more purposefully within the context of national efforts.
6. Participants reiterated the value of inclusive and systemic dialogue between philanthropic organizations, governments and other development stakeholders. This may involve participation in policy-setting processes, development of frameworks, community dialogues, public-private partnerships, or other approaches that carefully assess and engage the public, private, and civil society interests.

DATA/KNOWLEDGE SHARING

7. Participants acknowledged the importance of using timely and accurate data to support better decision-making. This could include the sharing of data on spending and inputs as well as other types of knowledge such as due diligent assessments, impact evaluations, problem analysis and context-specific evidence.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

8. Participants were of the view that corporate social responsibility or corporate philanthropy should go far beyond what bottom-line duties require for the entity involved. Thus, it should be one of the ways for companies to demonstrate the values they stand for: making a difference and being part of the 'solution' even where turnover and profit are not increased.

9. The gathering also resolved that, corporate bodies align their CRS activities to national development goals. Thus, corporate bodies should link their CRS endeavours to national development agenda to allow them to free themselves from short-term approach and confines of geographical focus.

10. Encourage corporate philanthropic foundations that were created with a vision and not the compulsion of fulfilling the legal obligations, to align their programmes with the broader developmental agenda.

FAITH-BASED PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVES

Participants highlighted the critical role Faith-based institutions play in sustaining development outcomes. For instance, faith actors have a strong grassroots presence, working in inaccessible areas often not covered by government services. During conflicts, they tend to remain on the ground long after other humanitarian actors have left and ensuring sustainability.

12. In recognising the importance of faith-based organizations, especially in improving the protection of person such as (e.g. refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and the internally displaced), participants strongly affirmed the key principles underpinning humanitarian work (i.e. impartiality, non-discrimination, respect for the beliefs of others, diversity, empowerment, equality, humanity, and protection against any form of conditionality), and acknowledged the need to respond to humanitarian situations according to these principles.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

1. That, Government should acknowledge and recognize the important role of non-state actors in accelerating the country's development process. That, the philanthropic sector be seen as a critical government partner in improving social and economic issues. Ultimately, a stronger NGO sector should contribute to the institutionalization of a culture of civic inclusiveness and participation as well as mutual accountability by all stakeholders in the important processes that affect the lives of citizens at different levels within the country.
2. Create an enabling environment for both local and international philanthropy in order to help the sector to flourish and contribute to its maximum potential in strategic philanthropic giving towards development.
3. Development oriented Government establishments should become more familiar with local and international philanthropy and civil society organizations; ensure data on philanthropy is accessible; ensure policies and legislation encourage indigenous philanthropy, non-governmental organizations and civil society more broadly.
4. Government should institute incentives that encourage the expansion of local philanthropic giving; and foster openness toward philanthropic contributions to complement government resources.
5. Government to sponsor a National Philanthropy Day: A special day set aside to recognize and pay tribute to the great contributions that philanthropy play in Ghana's national development.
6. Encourage all forms of philanthropy (Non-governmental Organization, Faith-Based Organization, Philanthropists, Civil Society Organizations, etc.) to plan according to national development goals, in order to stimulate action and real collaboration towards holistic development.
7. Government should seek greater understanding about the philanthropy landscape: 'Governments do not show greater appreciation of the contributions of local NGO's' was a common sentiment among a section of participants. On the other hand, there was some degree of resistance to categorize and structure the activities within the sector in

defined frameworks, emphasizing the importance and value of flexibility and freedom of operation.

8. Government should strive to create a framework for engaging with the philanthropy sector.
9. Government through district assemblies should heighten coordination of efforts with foundations and non-governmental organizations and initiatives in order not to negate or unnecessarily duplicate the efforts of other contributors.
10. Government should heighten appreciation for and understanding of the role faith-based institutions in addressing national development needs beyond just being seen as peace advocates.

THE 2016 FORUM

