

The logo for EvolutionAfrica features a series of blue dots of varying sizes arranged in a curved path that arches over the word "Africa".

# EvolutionAfrica

## PHILANTHROPY

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### MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

***"To give away money is an easy matter and in any man's power. But to decide to whom to give it, and how large, and when, and for what purpose and how, is neither in every man's power nor an easy matter."***

*Aristotle*

Very few people in Kenya describe themselves as philanthropists. Indeed few can even define what the word means. But all seem able to agree that it somehow applies to people such as Bill Gates or Oprah Winfrey and definitely not to them. Yet when we look at the definition of the word we find many of us are undeniably philanthropists.

The word philanthropy is thought to have been coined some 2500 years ago by the ancient Greeks and quite simply refers to *"effort or inclination to increase the well-being of mankind as by charitable aid or donations"*. In reality philanthropy is simply about people giving their time, help and care to a cause they support in order to make the world a better place to live in.

According to recent qualitative research conducted on behalf of KCDF almost all of us are instinctively philanthropic, no matter our wealth or background. The research sought to identify attitudes towards philanthropy and explore the resulting behaviours in order to understand how best to tap into and grow philanthropic activities in Kenya.

Recognizing that distinct cultures may have differing exposures and opportunities, and respond differently to need, the research explored the attitudes and behaviours of Africans, Europeans and Asians separately. The results show that while all cultures believe in "giving back to society" their method of giving and the pay-back expected is indeed quite different by culture. But while how we give and what we give may differ significantly, our reason for giving is unwaveringly consistent - we want to improve the lives of people less fortunate than us!

The logo for EvolutionAfrica features a series of blue dots of varying sizes that form a curved, upward-pointing shape, resembling a stylized 'A' or a rising arc. Below this graphic, the word 'EvolutionAfrica' is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

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## Why We Give

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There are many reasons for giving but most people in Kenya give because the need is so obvious and in their face on a day to day basis:

*“so many people need so much help, what I have done is just a drop in the ocean”*

*“I give back because I realize the needs are very big, they are beyond any one”*

*“I see it as an investment in the community”*

People recognize that ensuring the well-being of their community at large benefits the individual and in our research all respondents felt some obligation to assist the less fortunate around them. However motivators and drivers differed significantly by culture.

## What Moves Us Most

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**AFRICAN** respondents suffer pressure and expectations from their immediate community and feel obligated to give to individuals whom they consider needy. Thus their giving is very immediate and often a direct reaction to requests from people who approach them through home or work. This results in unstructured giving based purely on trust.

**EUROPEAN** respondents are much more structured in their giving. They are often motivated by guilt and are strongly aware of their privileged position in Kenyan society. They have a high level of discomfort with poverty and want to remake the world, uplifting the living standards for everyone. Lacking direct interaction with potential recipients they can trust, they look for institutions through which to channel their giving.

**ASIAN** respondents fall somewhere in-between the African and European in their behaviors – they want to have direct interaction with the recipient but do so through the safety of structured organized giving. They achieve this through volunteer organizations such as Rotary and Lions Clubs and also community based activities such as feeding programs and health camps.



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## What's In It For Me

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There is universal agreement that giving provides emotional satisfaction and that seeing (or anticipating) the difference that will be made through the act of giving has its rewards.

*"It is more beneficial to the heart to give and not to hold on to wealth so tightly"*

*"I feel great satisfaction that I have made a change in somebody's life"*

*"When you have something to give, do it without expecting anything in return"*

There is less agreement on whether giving for personal gain (such as prestige or publicity) is desirable or even acceptable: The **Asian** respondents find "tied" giving most distasteful and claim their culture demands anonymous giving. The **European** has a certain discomfort but accepts public acknowledgement of giving, believing that the good of the "gift" far outweighs any distaste. The **Africans** are much more comfortable with public acknowledgement of their good deeds and often give for recognition and prestige

## Imperatives For Giving

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Despite the different approaches to philanthropy, the imperatives for giving are relatively constant:

**TRUST** | All respondents need to trust the recipients and want to feel involved or have some sort of personal connection with the individuals or organizations they select.

**INFORMATION** | They want to be kept up to date and to feel informed and connected.

**TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY** | They need to feel empathy with the focus and values of the organization and be provided with proof of transparency and accountability.

**PROJECTS AND INTERVENTIONS** | Respondents are reassured when they can relate interventions to benefits and demonstrate how lives have been changed. However they are distrustful of NGO speak and want people to tell their stories in their own words.

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