Adɔyɛ

Women. Africa. Philanthropy

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
Wits Business School
Sculpting global leaders
CAPSI
Centre on African Philanthropy & Social Investment

Women on the African continent play critical and diverse roles in philanthropy, however efforts to build narratives, develop knowledge, provide support, and advocate for equitable representation have not fully captured their contributions. There is a noticeable gap in research and initiatives focused specifically on understanding, supporting, and amplifying women's multiple roles in philanthropy.

In response, Adɔyɛ, Love in Action (formerly known as Women in African Philanthropy) was launched as a programme within the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment. **Adɔyɛ, Love in Action aims to recognise, understand, celebrate, support and amplify the significant significant roles and impacts of women in all areas of philanthropy across the continent.**

When we refer to "Women in African Philanthropy" we include women who engage in everyday or organic giving of their resources, as well as those who contribute to or through various community, civic, or non-profit organisations. It also includes high-net-worth women who are substantial givers and women professionals who are actively involved in or academically engaged with African philanthropy institutions. In this context, "resources" encompasses a wide range of contributions such as time, skills, expertise, social capital, assets, money, and other forms of giving. Our conception of "African" is pan-African; as such it is inclusive of the wider African diaspora, though initial attention will be focused on the continent directly. Our constituency is inclusive of women in all their diversities.

Adɔyɛ, Love in Action is a programme within the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI), aligning its mission with the Centre's broader goals of promoting effective and impactful philanthropic practices on the continent. This affiliation enhances its ability to leverage resources, networks and expertise, while being positioned to inform thinking within the Centre's other streams.

Our Values

Adɔyɛ holds at its core:

a) The diversity of pan-African philanthropic narratives, histories and practices.
b) That the multiple expressions of solidarity in philanthropy exceed monetary value.
c) The importance of centring African agency, perspectives, and lived experience in the process and content of knowledge creation.
d) The importance of challenging narratives and practices that exist through interconnected and structural systems of privilege, power and patriarchy.
e) That all voices, perspectives and contributions are equal, irrespective of background, status, affiliation or orientation.
f) That relationships must be rooted in dignity, respect and solidarity.
g) The importance of well-being and care as critical operational foundations.
h) The importance of collective action and collaboration in advancing the work.

Our Story

The seeds for the establishment of Adɔyɛ, Love in Action were planted in late 2021 when CAPSI held a webinar titled Women and Philanthropy – the Feminisation of Philanthropy. One of the emerging recommendations was the establishment of a network for women involved in different parts of philanthropy. Through consultations with partners and stakeholders, as well as further consideration under a Fellowship at CUNY in 2022, the imperative for this work was deepened.

In 2023, the programme began explorations with a call for women active in the sector across the continent to share reflections to inform the work. The initiative also launched a networking practice through a WhatsApp group. In May 2023, the Centre officially launched what was then known as the Women in African Philanthropy Programme.

Our Work

Adɔyɛ is guided by the following goals:

a) Advance knowledge on the roles and contributions of women in African philanthropy and the practices that underlie these.
b) Deepen understanding of the challenges faced by women in African philanthropy.
c) Foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders within the philanthropic community.
d) Strengthen the work of women in African philanthropy in advancing positive social change and justice-based transformations.
e) Influence more inclusive policies and practices within, and related to, the philanthropic sector.
f) Foster innovative research, and knowledge creation and amplify good practice.
g) Build a network of individuals committed to advancing the agenda of women in African philanthropy.
h) Strengthen the field of women in African Philanthropy.

To advance the goals of the programme, we will prioritise the following strategies:

a) Building knowledge through academic and action-oriented research that informs practices and contributes to publications, academic and practitioner printed curriculum development; a senior fellowship programme to support critical reflection, writing, and knowledge sharing; and a mentorship programme to nurture emerging leaders in women's philanthropy.

b) Fostering dialogue through the creation of networking spaces for Adɔyɛ, Love in Action to connect and collaborate; convenings to interrogate and deepen particular issues and strengthen the work of women in philanthropy; and facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences. Adɔyɛ will engage in pan-African and global discussions that will help shape the narrative around women in African philanthropy and expand support for its ecosystem.

c) Cultivating partnerships will be essential to address gaps and advance our work. This includes collaborating with other philanthropic organisations and forming new alliances with groups that advance the work of women in philanthropy.

d) Advocacy efforts will aim to raise awareness through targeted campaigns and events, influence attitudes, perceptions, and practices by sharing research findings, and advocate for supportive policies through evidence-based insights.

Networking Group

During the initial stages, Adɔyɛ, Love in Action established a networking group. The idea behind this group was to provide an open space that could facilitate WhatsApp-based networking, and information sharing. To date, the networking group has attracted a diverse range of our targeted constituencies. The group boasts over one hundred members from South Africa, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Eswatini, Kenya, Ghana, Ethiopia, Malawi, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as international members from the USA and Barbados. Currently serving as a space for information sharing, we are exploring how to leverage the space to enrich discussions, perspectives, and collaborative efforts – fostering a truly pan-African and global dialogue on women's philanthropy.

Programme Lead

Thandi Makhubele

Thandi is the Programme Lead for Adɔyɛ, Love in Action. She holds a Master's in Security Studies with a focus on Philanthropy and Women's Development from the Wits School of Governance and is a City University of New York 2022 International Fellow of the Centre on Philanthropy and Civil Society Emerging Leaders Programme.

Steering Committee

Adɔyɛ, Love in Action is led by a Steering Committee of leaders from diverse backgrounds and sectors across Africa, each bringing a wealth of expertise and unique perspectives to the work.

Catherine Mwendwa

Catherine leads the GivingTuesday Africa Hub, a global movement promoting generosity. With experience in philanthropy and peace building across Africa, she co-designs dialogues, collaborates on research, and transforms insights into actionable strategies to strengthen African philanthropic practices. Catherine has supported women and youth-led peace building initiatives in East Africa, focusesing on the link between generosity, solidarity and civic engagement. She is a Senior International Fellow at the Centre of Philanthropy and Civil Society at the City University of New York and serves on the board of Wasafiri Consulting.

Coumba Toure

Coumba is a writer, storyteller, and educator who designs and produces educational materials and programmes for children and young people. With over twenty years of experience, Coumba has worked with organisations such as Ashoka and the Institute for Popular Education in Mali. She is a certified coach and public speaker, dedicated to promoting peace and justice, especially for women. Coumba is the board Chair at TrustAfrica and a member of the African Feminist Forum and the African Consultant International board.

Françoise Moudouthe

Françoise is the CEO of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), a feminist fund supporting women's rights and feminist organisations across Africa. She founded Eyala, a platform amplifying the voices of African feminists, and played a key role in establishing Girls Not Brides, the global partnership to end child marriage. Françoise's work focuses on supporting African feminist movements and advancing gender policy. She has served on the boards of several organisations, including the Malala Fund and the Equality Fund, and has been recognised as one of the world's 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy by Apolitical.

Grace Maingi

Grace is the Executive Director of the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), where she oversees initiatives to support sustainable community development across Kenya. With over twenty-three years of experience in the non-profit sector, Grace's work focuses on community development, civic education, constitutionalism, promoting free and fair elections, and women's rights. Her dedication to social justice and reducing inequality drives her efforts to create resilient communities capable of addressing and recovering from various challenges.

Halima Mahomed

Halima is an Independent Researcher and Philanthropy Consultant specialising in strengthening the knowledge, practice, and impact of philanthropy in Africa and on addressing the intersections between philanthropy, privilege, and power. Halima chairs the Adɔyɛ Steering Commitee. She is a Senior Philanthropy Consultant at TrustAfrica, a member of the Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace management team and holds advisory committee roles at Alliance Magazine and the International Centre for Non-Profit Law. She holds a Master's in Development Studies from Wits University and has written extensively on philanthropy.

Jacqueline Asiimwe

Jacqueline is a lawyer, feminist and philanthropist with three decades of experience in the international development sector. She is the Founder and CEO of CivSource Africa, a philanthropy advisory firm aiming to refine the practice of philanthropy in Africa. Jacqueline's work focuses on centring the philanthropy of women and marginalised communities, connecting traditional philanthropy with African feminist movements. Her insights have empowered women and advanced feminist agendas across the continent, reshaping narratives around giving and generosity in Africa.

Leila Hessini

Leila is a transnational feminist leader with over twenty-five years of experience in advancing feminist funding, human rights, and gender equality. She founded Leila Hessini Strategies, a consulting firm that works with feminist funds and organisations across Africa and the Middle East. Leila has served in leadership roles at the Global Fund for Women and Ipas, where she led strategic grantmaking and advocacy efforts. She holds an MPH in Public Health, an MA in Middle Eastern and North African Studies, and has published extensively on topics related to feminist philanthropy and reproductive rights.

Lerato Mashianoke

Lerato is an international development and grantmaking specialist, African feminist thinker, and global strategic leader. She has extensive experience in philanthropy, women's rights, and social justice, utilising dialogue and strategic philanthropy to challenge inequality and promote systems change. Lerato has led and designed philanthropy and grantmaking strategies on various issues, including human rights and climate change. She holds multiple advanced degrees and certifications, including a Master of Management in African Philanthropy from Wits University's Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment.

Nadia Ahidjo

Nadia is a pan-African feminist leader with extensive expertise in feminist global development. She has a strong background in leading diverse teams to advance gender justice and social inclusion. Nadia frequently provides expertise to leading institutions to drive philanthropy, advocacy, and policy initiatives. Her significant contributions include insightful publications, impactful philanthropic projects, and advisory roles in various African institutions, foundations, governments, and NGOs. Nadia is committed to amplifying African feminist voices and developing lasting partnerships through co-creation and co-implementation techniques.

Nana Afadzinu

Nana brings three decades of experience in the civil society sector. She is a passionate advocate for social justice, focusing on women's rights, gender equality, and community development. Nana's work involves strategic leadership and programme development to advance the rights and well-being of marginalised communities across Africa. She is known for her dedication to empowering women and fostering collaborations to promote social change. Nana holds various leadership roles and serves on multiple boards, contributing to the growth and impact of civil society organisations.

Noura Selim

Noura is the Executive Director of the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development. Her career includes roles at McKinsey & Company, where she worked on healthcare and education projects across the US, Europe and the Middle East. Noura has led large-scale transformations in technical education and training, improving performance and employment outcomes, and spearheaded healthcare reform programmes aimed at increasing access and quality of care. She holds advanced degrees from Harvard Business School and the University of Pennsylvania and serves on several boards, including Orascom Development Egypt and the National Investment Charity Education Fund.

Sibongile Mkhabela

Sibongile is the Executive Director of Barloworld Empowerment Foundation, dedicated to igniting self-belief and creating resilient communities through innovative measures. She is the former CEO of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and the initiator of the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital Trust. Sibongile has a long history of activism, serving as Secretary General of the South African Student Movement and participating in the June 16, 1976, uprisings. She has received numerous awards for her commitment to community development and children's rights and serves on several boards, including TrustAfrica and Global Philanthropy Alliance.

Zanele Makombe

Zanele is a social justice activist dedicated to advocating for the rights of women and girls. With extensive experience in gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS, Zanele has supported programmes that amplify the voices of women and girls in social change. She has successfully designed and implemented initiatives with various institutions and partners, focusing on systemic change. Zanele holds a Master's degree in Development Studies and is a PhD candidate at Wits University's Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment.

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Adɔyɛ, Love in Action represents a significant step forward in recognising, celebrating and amplifying the contributions of African women in philanthropy.

For more information and to get involved, please visit CAPSI's website, or reach out to thandi.makhubele@wits.ac.za.

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