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Helping Principles and Practice among the Poor in Southern Africa:

**The potential and promise of horizontal philanthropy for a reorientation
Of concepts and practice**

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Abstract

Based on demonstration cases conducted in 2006-2008, this paper described the origins, methodology and findings of the application of a horizontal philanthropy or philanthropy of community (PoC) lens to community grantmaking in southern Africa. It examines how PoC can be applied to deepen practice exploring its possibilities and limits. Preliminary theoretical perspectives for third sector performance are also suggested. The paper concludes that PoC is more than an idea rather practical application can offer new ways to see, talk about and practice the grantmaking craft, drawing on wider sets of concepts, language and instruments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation in the theory and practice of international aid and development often calls for a reorientation in thinking about what is already known. This form of creativity can be prompted by the new information and knowledge produced by research. This paper is about such a process and its potential for advancing the field of community philanthropy.

Its research origins are in a three year inquiry into how people who are poor in four countries of southern Africa help each other (Wilkinson and Fowler et al. 2005). The findings identified a system of mutual assistance captured in the concept of ‘horizontal philanthropy’, or philanthropy of community (PoC). Here resource mobilisation is internal to a community, with the poor being both the giver and receiver. The five principle characteristics of this system are described in the section which follows. This arrangement works ‘at right angles’ to ‘vertical philanthropy’ where resource flows from those of high to low net wealth, labelled philanthropy for community (PFC), with external resources made available to a community by another, richer, community.

Three workshop held in 2006 shared the results of the study with approximately 20 organisations in south and Southern Africa as well as the Community Grantmakers Learning Collective ¹ (CGLC) in 2008. The intention was to assess if and how practical applications of PoC could be investigated in an action-research setting. This exchange provoked a series of reflections that expressed dissatisfaction with both the philosophy of the development system providing ‘from above’ from as well as with procedures and technical mechanisms including the project and grantmaking cycle. The July 2006 workshop surfaced frustration with a common tendency of operating from a mindset that makes poor people needy victims rather than agents of their own development. Feeling that the local reality in which they work is not understood and that the life worlds of ‘back donors’, intermediaries and the community are “worlds apart”, participants from grantmaking and other community driven organisations acknowledged that:

We very seldom challenge those imposed procedures – so I think part of our role is not just to make do with whatever little or whatever leeway we would find within the system but the system needs to be addressed. So I think other than the reality of those imposed procedures we development practitioners are also holding ourselves captive in the whole setup – we don’t always look for healthier alternatives than those that further reinforce the systems.

A powerful momentum for movement arose from the belief that the concept and substance of horizontal philanthropy could bring a potentially path breaking alternative view and language to the craft of community grantmaking in southern Africa. It was recognized that the sector

¹ A network of up to 30 grantmakers in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, supported by the Synergos Institute, Cape Town.

itself has work to do in assisting back donors to understand local situations by connecting them more closely with “the field” and reality on the ground and PoC was a sound way of doing so. The approach to facilitating the empowerment of development donors is about offering an alternative viewpoint and then taking the initiative to come up with context relevant mechanisms which will allow the local grantmaking community to implement in their own space, with their own timing and monitoring methods. This approach challenges the practice community to provide a real alternative to the technical procedures and accountability based systems that come from the top:

What we are having from above are strong procedures, strong technical mechanisms of accountability. What it needs is not to be met with some sort of open and vague practice- rather something that is more open and less technical, but a systematic conscious process.

Some community grantmakers present at the July 2006 workshop became committed to the idea that PoC and a multidirectional philanthropic framework could make some headway in tackling the above challenge. A PoC lens has the potential to bring forward a stronger focus on people as well as promote a systematic and conscious practice that donors can buy into allowing them to see themselves as practitioners and not just the “bankers” of the sector. The task was to see what PoC could offer in terms of new ways of looking and working as well as strategies to improve what worked well already. The response to the challenge of establishing a ‘working alternative’ was to undertake and critically assess demonstration cases where PoC was applied in community foundations and community trust processes. The assessment was to be based on four performance criteria common to the aid community: sustainability, downward accountability, changes in human well-being and participation. These criteria are described in the section that follows.

Section three introduces five demonstration cases undertaken, highlighting what each set out to, describing the organisation and communities involved and explaining the methodology employed. Together, they have generated new resources and innovative ideas strengthening the potential contribution of community grantmaking to social development in southern Africa.

Attention then turns to the findings of the practical testing and their implications for the application of PoC. First, neglected aspects of grantmaking are brought to the surface. Next, what the demonstration cases offer deeper insight into the PoC dimensions including their means and measures are highlighted, including the importance of language and terminology in the reorientation process.

Finally, theoretical perspective for third sector performance are shared keeping with origins in debates about building on indigenous socio-economic systems, norms and standards as well as applying a psychological framework and practices that stress assets and proven capabilities rather than people's inadequacies and deficits.

The paper concludes by summarising what the paper has attempted to demonstrate, highlighting key points and their potential for alternative ways of seeing and practicing community philanthropy in southern Africa.

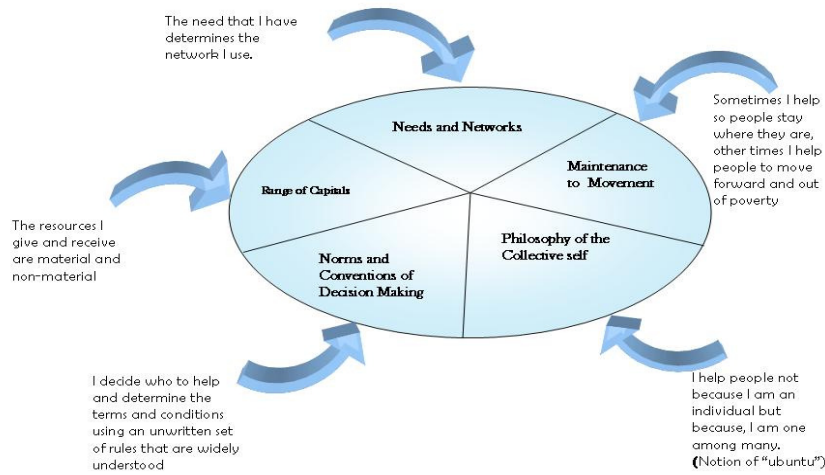
2. PHILANTHROPY OF COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE

The framework for designing and testing the application of PoC contained two sets of elements: dimensions of PoC identified in the original research and performance measurements widely used in community development practice. These were used to both set the objectives of each demonstration case and deepen the analysis of PoC and its interface with PFC. This section provides details of both sets.

The five dimensions of PoC

The system defined as philanthropy of community (PoC) has five dimensions, each with different properties and functions. First, is type of need as a co-determinant of the giver-receiver network selected. Second, is the range of capitals involved. Third, are ways in which motivations interact with the purpose of assistance. Fourth are the conventions or rules applied. Finally, surrounding and underpinning all other dimensions is a particular moral philosophy. While each may be found in social relations related to non-help interactions, the distinctiveness of PoC (in southern Africa) derives from their combination and properties emerging from them. The Building Community Philanthropy CP research inquiry surfaced five key dimension of PoC, that are interconnected and function as a system While best appreciated this way as illustrated in figure 1, each dimension is described independently for clarity.

Figure 1: The Five Dimensions of PoC



Dimension 1 – Interplay of Needs and Networks

Unmet needs or unresolved problems are a quintessential aspect of poverty that drives people to seek and provide help to each other. Poor people differentiated help in terms of needs that are “normal” or those that are “urgent”. Normal needs are typically small, regular and frequent, including daily use, short term and gap filling. These demands can be planned for and anticipated and the size is manageable in terms of a drain on assets. Such needs are often satisfied through individual reciprocity and the return is quick.

Urgent needs are immediate and unplanned for or unanticipated. They are usually generated by emergencies such as fire, flooding, death, accidents and drought. The poor also see urgency in terms of dangerous levels of debt or financial constraints that for example, prevent marriage because of an inability to meet a bride price. While perhaps lower in frequency and more ad hoc, urgent needs require a rapid response and can demand a significant contribution in relation to available resources. The size of demand in proportion to an individual’s asset base may require a group or collective response that can be spontaneous or premeditated. Typical in the latter case are collective creation of a risk-reducing strategic reserve – e.g. a burial society, or a savings and credit group with jointly managed resources that can be called upon under agreed conditions. Country comparisons suggest that both the degree to which such collective arrangements feature in help patterns and the associational modality involved varies. The formalization of help relationships tends to correspond to purposes that should improve rather than sustain or prevent regression in well-being: a spectrum explained in more detail later.

Both individual giving and pooling draw on and co-create help circuits. Access to assistance is gained through a personal set of connections or networks that mobilize resources and address needs. The network involved is shaped by the interplay between the type of need and the nature of affinity - blood and social identity or physical proximity between the actors – as well as individual reputation. In other words, help networks are needs-based and multiple. They may or may not include more institutionalized sources of assistance, such as informal associations and more formal organisations.² In this respect, depending on the nature of the need, networks may be simple arrays of individual connections or contain complex combinations of actor types.

Dimension 2 - Range of Capitals

A further aspect of needs and their network-generating effects are the importance that people who are poor attribute to non-material assistance described previously. While less frequent in terms of transactional content, the value attributed to knowledge, contacts, information, physical and manual assistance and moral/emotional support must not be underestimated. Such assets are not necessarily depleted, lost or foregone through use. In this sense, they help poor people satisfy a reputation requirement to give no matter how little – the act is as important as the content – which maintains eligibility for assistance, social cohesion and network access.

Dimension 3 - Maintenance to Movement

Poor people involved in the study judge help in many ways. An oft-cited criterion is whether or not the help is expected to maintain current living status, conditions and prospects – that is to prevent slippage into deeper deprivation – or to create movement, that is to increase the possibilities for escaping poverty and better countering adversity. Where political or economic forces and pandemics like HIV/AIDS are a continual source of livelihood insecurity and downward pressure on assets the developmental significance and impact of maintenance-oriented help is often overlooked.

More readily treated as developmental behaviour are help transactions that carry the potential for increasing or diversifying economic assets or other capitals and widening the scope of life to increase people's opportunities. The inclination of poor people to allocate resources in this way is mediated by their experience of returns on doing so. A case in point for many respondents was the diminishing value of investment in children's education that did not generate a benefit though improved access to employment or other sources of livelihood.

² Institutions are understood as stable patterns, norms, mechanisms, conventions and organizations of a social structure that govern an individual's relational behaviour.

Dimension 4 – Norms and Conventions of Help

People who are poor help each other and are helped according to unwritten yet widely understood conventions, customs, rules and sanctions. They are not static, but continually updated transaction by transaction. The help system is premised on the axiom “no matter how little you have you give”, which itself rests on a moral philosophy described in Dimension 5. It functions by means of experiential feedback that co-determines the reinforcement or attrition of a network’s value to those within it.

In operation, the horizontal help system rests on a decision-making process. First, a trigger arises and a potential transaction is initiated – help is asked for or offered. A request is screened for appropriateness and actor eligibility. If the result of this screening is positive, informed by a motivational principle, a help transaction is selected as a combination from the parameter options described previously. In a fourth step, actors establish an agreement on the terms or parameters that will apply. Finally, over time there are reputation rewards for conforming to conventions and rules and there are sanctions for not doing so. Sanction may be individual in terms of decreased eligibility for assistance from the chosen source in the future. When a person’s non-compliance becomes systematic or has wider effects, such as threatening social cohesion, they can be corrected by an acknowledged authority – such as elders or age cohorts - and in the extreme isolated, excluded or rejected.

Dimension 5 - Moral Philosophy of the Collective Self

“You can fail to give because you don’t have anything to offer; you are poor.
But when you can’t give you feel pained by the fact that you don’t have
something to offer to make you *a human being among others*. (Emphasis
added)”³

The above quotation, and similar expressions to be found in the research narrative, point towards a moral philosophy among respondents that requires re-calibration of western metrics of selfless or selfish behaviour that are premised on Durkheim’s ‘anomie’ of individualistic choice. The philosophy of *ubuntu*, - I am because you are – rather than the Cartesian axiom of I think therefore I am (Masamba Ma Mpolo, 1985), provides a different behavioural proposition and interpretation of help among the poor in southern Africa.

Essentially, *ubuntu* is a theory and philosophy of collective self with strong spiritual and symbolic connotations (Mbiti, 1975; Louw 1999). Denying help to another is to deny one’s own identity as a human. The ‘moral sentiments’ among respondents co-define the normative

³ Mixed age female focus group, rural Mozambique.

underpinnings of social capital. They stem from deeper wellsprings of reciprocity than western perspectives of non-exploitive, networked action might recognise. As a philosophy of collective self, *ubuntu* should not be reified or over-estimated as a foundation for cooperation. Indeed, it is argued that in today's South African politics appeals to *ubuntu* are often manipulative (Marx, 1992). Nevertheless, the respondents' moral framework invite re-interpretation of what self-interest and selflessness actually mean if 'self' is a collective property. In such a philosophy, help is never selfless which creates problems with the concept of altruism if defined as a selfless act.

Proportional demands of normal needs tend to be low and manageable. Often premised on reciprocity, return is typically soon or rapid. However, the bigger and more frequent normal needs become, the less likely a positive response because of a growing mismatch between the imperative to act and the proportional demand made on a giver's resource base. Lending a cup of sugar a day is one thing. Lending a sack of sugar every day is another and less likely.

Four performance measurements

To apply PoC and test is interplay with PfC four features of the assessment criteria commonly used in the aid community are drawn upon to inform our framework. They include sustainability, downward accountability, changes in human wellbeing and participation. Each is described and where relevant further nuanced with reference to conversations emerging from the field of philanthropy as referenced in popular literature including the *Alliance* publication for *Philanthropy and Social Investment Worldwide*.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a systemic condition. It is normally associated with resource/asset /accretion/depletion and energy flows. Common sustainability lenses link economic, social and environmental sub-systems. In the context of international development, it refers to the enduring maintenance of the intervention from local sources. In other words, sustainability is a condition reached when stimulated change becomes connected as part and parcel of ongoing systems and human behaviours.

Shannon St. John, past CEO of the Triangle Community Foundation as guest editor of the March 2006 *Alliance* volume focusing on *sustaining community philanthropy looking for new models* calls for a reconsideration of the traditional financial model of community foundations. She calls for a shift away from the focus on endowments to sustain the organisation by generating income for programs and running costs, to seeing sustainability as more than a matter of finance. She sites the opportunity to look for means of sustainability that are more

compatible with mission including building a culture of philanthropy. Included here could be involving a wider breadth of the community in donating and paying closer attention to what she considered as perhaps the most important and significant lesson learned in two decades of international community philanthropy development – namely the only form of community philanthropy that is ultimately sustainable is one that builds upon the indigenous impulses and traditions of philanthropy that exist in every culture, region and human heart (St. John 2006).

Downward accountability

Downward accountability is typically treated as a process through which those with less powerful influence exert control over those with more power. This is usually reflected in the way that decision making includes and is sensitive to the views and realities of the relatively disempowered. In 2005 the European Foundation Centre (EFC) and the Council on Foundations (COF) created a joint working group to examine the question of accountability in international philanthropy. In 2006 they produced a set of stewardship principles, that are voluntary and offer funders a framework to draw on embedding accountability within the organisation and process with the vision of being responsible, respectful and make a positive difference in the field or communities where they work. They take fiduciary responsibility, legal compliance and administrative oversight as “*givens*” focusing on practice options to be more broadly accountable and effective agents of change. They focused on good practice options addressing the issues of accountability to mission, grantees and partners and ultimately to the intended beneficiaries. Seven principles of accountability for international philanthropy include integrity, understanding, respect, responsiveness, fairness, cooperation and collaboration and effectiveness (EFC and The Council on Foundations, 2007).

Human well being

This measure can be approached from many angles. One is the potential for people to realise their preferences. Another is through the lens of human security expressed in terms of freedom from fear and from want, translated into five domains: economic (an assured basic income); food (access to adequate nutrition); health (a minimum of protection from degradation and scarcity of water resources), personal (protection from violence and criminal acts), community (protection from loss of traditional affiliations and attack by other communal groups) and political (honouring of human rights). Another leans enabling people to realise their preference is human conditions, computed in UNDP’s Human Development Index: income, education and longevity. Like sustainability, another approach sees human well-being as composed of economic, social and environmental conditions and (gender) (in) equalities that people enjoy or are denied. Poverty is but one aspect of well-being, usually indicated by the consumption potential of income with a threshold of US \$ a day. For our purposes, the

most appropriate approach could be to apply PoC to economic, social and environmental dimensions of well being.

Linnetta Gilbert, Senior Programme Officer at the Ford Foundation, Community and Resource Development programme and the 2007 recipient of the Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking, reflects on the relevance of well-being to the definition of community philanthropy used by the European Foundation Centre that points to the role it can play in promoting the well-being and betterment of others. She argues that community philanthropy organisations must begin to pay real attention to the specific conditions that affect the well-being of people in their communities and garner the resources to bring about real change in the living condition of a specific area. She suggests that what well being means is context specific and the responsibility of boards and staff of community philanthropy organisations to find ways to take heed of the words and visions of the people they serve to define its meaning. Beyond this however she points to the need to take strategic risks that can advance the welfare of others. Supporting change to enhance living conditions is an immediate, intermediate and long term investment in the betterment of the community. (Gilbert 2006)

Participation

Participation is supposedly tied to the degree of control and ownership required for aided development to be effective. It can be used instrumentally and can be a process to empower. Human agency infers a willingness and capability to engage in social and developmental processes. Grantmakers in southern Africa as part of a consultative process in 2006 noted that a PoC lens helps deepens their understanding of the social dynamics and issues of community participation and exclusion in their projects. Understanding of the norms and conventions of horizontal helping relationships and circuits as an organic phenomenon, offers a framework in which to understand why some people default or are excluded and other are not.

3. DEMONSTRATION CASES

Five demonstration cases were designed and conducted in South Africa from 2006-2008. They spanned three provinces and in one case reached across the national border into Mozambique and Zimbabwe. A network, three community grantmakers, a local non governmental organisation, a local community based organisation as well as seven communities - both rural and urban- contributed in a direct and substantive way to the process and content generated in each case.

The cases can be classified in two ways: reappraisal and action research. The one reappraisal case reviewed what was already in play from a PoC perspective, drawing out broader lessons

and significance for thinking and practice. The site was the Jansenville Development Forum (JDF) an umbrella body that incubates the capacity of local organisations and associations to strengthen their capacity and increase their access to funding including municipal and provincial finance. The other four cases relied on action research that asked grantmakers to change their practice. New guidelines, tools and techniques were developed from a PoC perspective, introduced and piloted tested giving grantmakers alternative instruments and methods to use in design, implementation and evaluation.

A rich wealth of experience and lessons for process and substance emerged. The reappraisal case produced a case study, published in an international collection of edited reflections on community asset and agency. (Mathie and Cunningham, 2008) The other four cases each generated a set of practice relevant knowledge products including new instruments and illustrative case stories. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide detail as this done elsewhere. (www.gsb.uct.ac.za) it is sufficient for purposes here to detail, the organizations and communities that collaborated with the CGSI program, what each case set out to do and relevant PoC dimension(s) explored.

Demonstration Case 1: Carried out in the Eastern Cape and in collaboration with Ikhala Trust (www.lkhala.org.za) and the Coady International Institute, Saint Francis Xavier University, Canada, (www.coady.stfx.ca) a review of the JDF was conducted and documented into a case study. The case set out to review from a PoC perspective JDF's umbrella body model of support based on incubation and capacity development to indigenous local associations/ organisations increasing their access to external funding including donor and state funds.

Demonstration Case 2: Carried out in the Free State and in collaboration with the Greater Rustenburg Community Foundation (GRCF) existing tools to map community assets were expanded to include techniques that capture an inventory and map of helping circuits. Three communities participated: Witrandjie, Derby and Boitekong. The PoC dimension needs and network was highlighted, and attention focused on how to list and map the local helping networks used by community members, to inform planning and design.

Demonstration Case 3: Carried out in the Eastern Cape with Ikhala Trust, this case set out to measure the quantum of PoC and then how to impute a financial value to it. New instruments were developed and applied at the household as well as associational level in three communities: Alicedale (rural), KwaNoxolo (urban) and Jansenville (town). The PoC dimension highlighted was range of capitals as the content of a help transaction - money, time and in kind goods were measured and valued.

Demonstration Case 4: Carried out in the Northern Cape, this case collaborated with DOCKDA Rural Development Agency (DOCKDA) www.dockda.org.za, a rural One of its grantees, Tshepong Home Based Care for the Terminally Ill, a community based organisation, reliant on volunteers was also directly involved. The demonstration occurred in Galeshewe Township, on the outskirts of Kimberly. It set out to offer an accessible way to track and monitor the impact of external support on indigenous norms of self help in a community. The five PoC dimensions were employed as domains of change within the Most Significant Change (MSC) evaluation technique. As well given its focus on the impact of external assistance, light was also shed on understanding PfC.

Demonstration Case 5: This case collaborated with a group of up to 30 organisations as members of the CGLC, coordinated by the Synergos Institute, Cape Town < www.synergos.org > and drawing on members, community foundations and trusts from South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It focuses on all five dimensions of PoC and their engagement with the PfC system. This case set out to expand the organisational development instruments available to grantmakers offering an alternative to self referential assessment through use of the measures used by poor communities for their own help practices.

Methodology

Demonstration cases were conducted to apply PoC in practice and generate relevant knowledge and evidence on its significance for making grantmaking more effective against four performance criteria. Interest was in both its promise and limitations. All cases were carried out in a collaborative learning space, engaging the practice and academic community, facilitating a bridge between them. This approach provided the opportunity for organisations to experiment, innovate and think critically about their craft more generally and how they work specifically.

The demonstration cases did not follow a “prototype”. Common participatory action–research principles, an open-mindedness, a commitment to exploring ideas and options and finally a commitment to problem solving, guided design and implementation. However a uniform process steered each unique design. First the grantmaker identifies a relevant case they are committed to and begin to develop its preliminary design. Second, in collaboration, the grantmaker and the CGSI programme discuss and refine the offer and enter into a memorandum of understanding; next, implementation follows, with the grantmaker and relevant partner organisations and communities starting the demonstration with CGSI’s technical, theoretical and conceptual support. In the fourth and final step learning is distilled

and analysed. Results are feedback to relevant stakeholders at the project or community level, including participants, board members, local government, members of civil society etc. Proceeding, findings and analysis are written up, documented and disseminated.

Three features of the collaboration criteria differentiate our approach. First partner organisations had to meet the pre-condition of having a presence on the ground in community philanthropy/grantmaking. Second, there had to be a willingness of the board and staff to engage and invest in social innovation and collaborative learning. Next, all parties had to share the risk. CGSI did not contract the practice partner as a donor nor were their partner services hired as a consultancy. Rather, each party had to bring something to the table with everyone mutually invested and shared in the consequence of either falling short of our objective or achieving it.

The result was a process that relied heavily on trust, mutual respect and a high degree of clarity around what each party was putting in and hoping to gain. Successful implementation was then based on a high level of up front investment in design as well as personal relationships and joint commitment. While a memorandum of agreement was in place to document our common vision, objectives and division of labour as well as resource allocations and budgets, implementation involving various iterations, was not guided by contractual agreement rather a commitment to one another and a shared goal. Sustained commitment and resilience were required by this process that lasted between 6 and 18 months. All demonstration cases were successfully completed.

4. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Is horizontal philanthropy merely a concept or idea? Does PoC have practical utility and could application of its dimensions deepen and improve the practice of community grantmaking in southern Africa? Put another way, what is the potential and promise of tapping into the local context for genuine and “home grown” approaches to community philanthropy in southern Africa?

The most important finding of the social action research phase is the confirmation that PoC is more than an idea. It has application, not as a silver bullet, but rather as a one way to facilitate a more community centred approach to community grantmaking drawing on a broader range of instruments.

This section of the paper details critical findings. First, assumptions and neglected aspect of grantmaking are surfaced. Second, insight into the five PoC’s dimensions including their

means and measure are explored and finally new terminology is introduced highlighting the importance of a reorientation in language.

Neglected aspects of community grantmaking

Application surfaced neglected aspects of community grantmaking including assumptions about community assets, affirmation of PfC's own validity, predominance of a donor perspective and finally insufficient knowledge on how PoC and PfC engage.

Assumptions about community assets

Much of aided change relies on a deficit paradigm. That is an assumption that poor communities are rich in needs and problems and lacking in assets and agency. This condition means they enter an aid relationship with an appetite to receive but with little to offer. The resources that communities have are not acknowledged much less thought of in terms of leverage and tapped into as part of a solution. Perceptions such as this injure the prospects of using what people know and do about getting resources to where they are needed most, as a development instrument that can be learned from, strengthened and leveraged. This renders external grantmaking support distinct from what exists and is rooted in people's lives, what is known and lived everyday.

Amidst challenges and adversity can be found a community's resilience and strategy. This includes indigenous helping circuits and networks. However, these assets and the ability to make things change are often invisible to "outsiders". Self help while integral to the social fibre and part of "how things are done", is rarely celebrated and not readily accessible to external agents.

Demonstration case 3 tested a possibility to quantify and assign financial value to the local contribution. It showed the possibility for a fundamental mindshift as communities saw themselves in way they have not fully appreciated before and began to see other opportunities.

Partnership language and philosophy prevalent in community driven development approaches, to which much community grantmaking belongs, suggest that the practice of itemising the community contribution on a grant application and reporting formats as well as coming up with a "a community budget" is not entirely inappropriate. Rather it could be an effective way to promote and appreciate genuine community participation and recognise ownership as something embedded in the community which is proactive or taken, not given. This idea of a more detailed "community budget" has not been explored yet it raises some

interesting issues with the potential to inform grantee eligibility and selection criteria and assess levels of risk and social investment.

Affirmation of financial grants

Underpinning community grantmaking is the priority assigned to money. While important, best practice promotes the idea of “more than money” and case experience reveals that while communities seek financial support they recognise and value other forms of assistance including advise. Backing up the weight given to financial grants, is the belief that money is inherently good. This leads too readily to an assumption of least harm; a position questioned by grantees when they confess that “money changes things” and is often the source of many problems in their projects. Yet conventional wisdom that grants are always good means that that insufficient attention is paid to their social impact.

Indicators that consider the impact of an external grant on the local ethos of self help and the strength of safety net a community falls back on when external support is withdrawn are not typically an integral feature of monitoring and evaluation systems. Arguably development assistance including community grantmaking would strive to strengthen or at least not diminish or displace local self help. Yet, this feature of impact falls below a conventional assessment gaze. It is an oversight, which runs the risk of leaving a community in a worse off situation than before the intervention.

Predominance of the donor’s operational systems

Grantmaking relationship places the responsibility on the grantee to adapt to the grantors ways of working. Training in bookkeeping, report writing and governance structures are familiar dimensions of capacity building support often provided to prepare the grantee to receive a grant. Less familiar are grantor efforts to understand how indigenous institutions make decisions, manages resources and puts in place checks and balances. Structuring contractual agreement or memorandum of understanding and the grantor – grantee relationship to reflect the community’s way of working is helped by applying a PoC lens. Claude Ake’s position explored elsewhere in this paper, suggests that enduring outcomes or “*sustainable development has to work through what people value, understand and feel at home with.*” (Ake,1989) This proposition if taken seriously suggests a reorientation in practice to place the onus on the grantor to work with the organic systems and structures of decision making and from here find creative ways to accommodate their met their own reporting and upward accountability imperatives. To do so, would potentially be a critical investment in enduring change and a definite shift in the status quo.

The PoC and Pfc interplay

A neglected aspect of grantmaking is the relationship between the two community philanthropy systems. As not enough is known about the PoC and Pfc relationship there are more questions than answers: Do PoC and Pfc operate in isolation, in combination or does it really matter? What would the world of community grantmaking look like, if organised philanthropy was to fully realise how to engage with the values and practices of local helping systems?

The Means and Measure of PoC's Dimensions

Demonstration cases have illustrated the potential of PoC to deepen practice and offer grantmakers a wider range of instruments to draw on by addressing four critical areas: the measure of PoC, the stability of its dimensions, its interplay with Pfc and finally the meaning of language for the reorientation of practice. Each is detailed in turn.

Determining the PoC quantum

The problems and challenges in social science of quantifying the qualitative are well known. Assigning value to intangibles such as prayer and emotional support are at best problematic and at worst impossible to defend their integrity and credibility, underscoring the folly of seeking an absolute or accurate figure and value to what the poor bring to the development process. However this quest, uncovered the possibility for a reasonable measure and a believable estimate. Through collaboration with a community grantmaker that services poor and remote rural communities and a civil society representative body with membership made up of local associations and clubs, we had sufficient insight and intuition to believe it possible and potentially powerful.

The promise lay first, in offering the community a way to surface their assets and achievements for a more positive vision of themselves than what a conventional lens offers and second, in providing local grantmakers with a new base of evidence for advocacy and their own intermediary organisation efforts to attract more resources to the communities they serve. The "community calendar" instrument and pilot / case study report developed in collaboration with Ikhala Trust and the JDF are detailed elsewhere < www.gsb.uct.za >. For the immediate purpose a few words on tool design, its offer and limitations are sufficient.

Table 1 The “Community Calendar” – its offer and limitations.

Offer	Within the offer	Beyond the offer
Actor Type	Registered and non registered organisations, association, clubs, groups	Individuals, Households
Purpose / nature help	Self help initiatives (income generating projects) and community service (soup kitchen, home based care, burial society) with staff, membership and volunteers	External support agencies
Transaction type	Money (\$), time (unit & \$ value). Description of in kind good and unit. ,	Ability to impute a value to in kind goods
Time frame	Monthly calendar. Potential for longitudinal study.	

A low threshold tool, accessible to those with basic numeracy and literacy was a non negotiable criterion for design as was a data collection process that itself, would build community confidence and awareness. Related to this the process could not be long and burdensome. Also flexibility and options were a must, allowing instruments to “travel well”, accommodating a variety of likely contexts and scenarios. These include: use with registered as well as non registered clubs, groups and associations; use by an external facilitator as well as the possibility of self administration and finally, utility for real time as well as retrospective data collection.

A methodological issue that cannot be overlooked in data collection and its completeness as well as accuracy is recall. However our experience indicates that the help provided to local organisations is either so regular, consistent and frequent that it forms a pattern that is remembered easily and in some cases recorded for example on a work roster or record of membership dues or so exceptional that it is not easily forgotten. To illustrate a help response driven by an emergency quickly comes to mind, or a large windfall or donation for example from a government department or a grant from an NGO. Collection of data with a group of members also increases the likelihood of capture, as one comment triggered and reminds people of other contributions. As well the background information generated by the organisation profile sheets, an asset inventory as well as physical map of the “community of help”, assist the group to recall and the facilitator to prompt.

The case grappled with how to impute a financial value to non material help captured in time units (in our case hours) and units of good (in kind materials). The community’s contribution can be valued against the official economy or the secondary economy, being the one that

plays out in people's daily lives. The value of giving a person a lift to take their sick child to the hospital is illustrative. The financial value of this help can be imputed with the official economy standard of the Automobile Association rate (AA rate) of 2.46 Rand per kilometre or the amount that would be charged in the local economy if you stood on the road for a lift. In the case of imputing financial value to time in labour hours worked, the official economy in South Africa provides a minimum wage standard for different levels of employment where the poor eak out their livelihoods (e.g. farm labourers, domestic workers etc) as well as a social grant structure of monthly entitlement for various social classifications including a child grant, disunity grant, old age grant etc provide another framework. The second economy offers the actual rate of remuneration that people receive or expect to get in their context.

Each approach has its rationale, contributions and draw backs. Use of the official rate or value "overstates" in financial terms the actual flow of resources, generating a figure which does not depict reality making it unbelievable. Application of the official economy rate however allows the financial value of the external and internal contributions to be comparable across and between different associations and also across the grantor and grantee world, through use of a common standard or measure.

Experience illustrates that in the context of scarce financial means, people are very aware of financial flows – money in and money out. Without the luxury of a "financial cushion " or margin, people tend to know for example, exactly how much a cell call is and how many units are in their phone and the cheapest way to get from a to b, as this information informs conscious decisions about how to allocate scarce financial resources. Furthermore, the financial data generated on a group's contribution, first and foremost, for our awareness building objective, had to have meaning and be believable to the community and set within their reality. They had to nod and say, "Yes that is us". This is not to say that the data for hour units could not be valued for another purpose, for example to leverage external fund using the official economy rate. Once the number of hours is calculated the option remains. Experience generated a useful practice; impute value using the standard that is most defensible and believable to the audience using the information.

Tracking change and impact – PoC and M&E

How stable are the five dimensions of PoC? Are they immune from the effects of external interventions or are they subject to their influence and likely to change? Do the PFC and PoC systems operate simultaneously in parallel or in combination? Is it possible using the PoC dimensions to generate insight into how and in what way external support changes community self-help behaviour?

Concerned with these questions we set out to test if it was possible to establish a monitoring and evaluation technique that would be responsive to and indicate the sites of change in self help when external support is introduced. It was beyond the scope of the demonstration to develop self help indicators. Nevertheless, we did establish the potential to identify the likely sites of change that warrant tracking and incorporation to deepen monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. The importance of this effort is grounded in the reality that external funds and advice are usually short-term and not there for ever. When support is withdrawn communities are left with and fall back on their own internal systems of self help. External support that displaces or diminishes this system risks leaving a community worse off. The argument about creating dependency is not new however, what is new and potentially powerful is tracking the impact of support on the “health” or “quality” of self help as one measure of dependency.

Our test case, the field of home based care for the terminally ill, mostly with HIV/ Aids and tuberculosis was particularly poignant and relevant. What would the provision of support from a team of trained volunteers working for a local organisation, with the professional assistance of a nurse seconded from the department of health and supplied with food parcel from the department of social development mean for indigenous systems of family, neighbour and church care for the ill? Would it support and strengthen, distort or displace indigenous systems of care? To illustrate, is a neighbour who has been helping two times a day to wash and care for the patients likely to maintain their assistance and increase the quality of care through interaction with a health care worker (increased knowledge and reduction of stigma) or would they be likely to withdraw assistance as a professional is providing support?

Using the most significant change monitoring and evaluation approach (MSC) based on the collection and analysis of stories from the community and other stakeholders, the five dimensions of PoC were used as “domains of change”, i.e., broad and often fuzzy categories of possible change. Unlike an indicator, domains allow for different interpretations of what constitutes change in a particular area. (Dart and Davies 2005) It is possible to develop and pose a change question for each of the five domains. However, for the purpose of tracking change in the self help system it was more useful to solicit information by posing a general change question and then using the specific questions and domain filters for each PoC dimension as an analytic tool, distilling and classifying the responses focused on points of change within PoC system. This practical approach is summarised in table two.

Table 2 PoC Domains of Change

Broad Domain of Change Question:		
What do you think has been the most significant change in how people help each other since the organisation / project started offering its services to the community?		
PoC Dimension	Specific domains of change questions by dimensions – to gather information	Domain Filters – for analysis
Needs and networks	What do you think has been the most significant change in the needs people have in this community and how they address them since the organisation began providing services?	Changes in the nature of needs and the help circuits or network linkages used to satisfy them.
Range of capitals	What kinds of help are given and received in this community and what do you think is the most significant change since the organisation began providing services?	Changes in the type of assistance, material or non material that is given and received.
Norms and conventions	How are the decisions made in this community about who gives and receives help and what do you think has been the most indicant change in these practices since the organisation began providing services?	Changes in the norms that govern eligibility to help or be helped as well as sanctions applied for non compliance with the “agreement / rules”
Philosophy of Collective Self	Why do people in this community help others and what is the most significant change in their motivations/reasons, since the organisation began providing services?	Changes in the individualism or collective identify that motivates and underpins the help impulse.
Maintenance to movement	What do you think is the most significant change in the quality of people’s lives in this community since the organisation began providing services?	Changes in the quality of peoples lives. Are they better or worse off? How has help allowed them to maintain their condition (not worsen it) or move out of adversity (improving their condition).

The analytic process had three core steps. First stories were filtered by each PoC dimension, sorted assigning story narratives to each element and then what they indicate about change was distilled. Second, this change knowledge was further explored by assigning it to the appropriate feature of external support. In the demonstration case this was one of three core programs: home based care; a soup kitchen and distribution of food parcels. This was then categorized by quality of change as illustrated below in table three. This process effectively worked through the PoC dimensions to flag points of interface that a PoC sensitive M&E system could develop.

Table 3 Categorising programs for quality of change - the example of Tshepong

Intervention / Project	Strengthen			Distort		Deplete
	Support	Supplement	Complement	Compensate	Alter	Displace
Food Garden		X		X		
Soup Kitchen		X	X			X
Home based care	X	X	X			X
Distribution of Food parcels		X			X	

The ability of PoC to provide a finely grained insight into the effects of external interventions on the deeper social dynamics and values is potentially one of its most powerful features. It opens up a new avenue to examine development theories described in the following section.

Terms and Terminology

There is a well established relationship between language and the understanding and interpretation of reality. Communication about PoC introduced new concepts – such as horizontal philanthropy – to the world of community foundations and philanthropy. The experience of demonstration cases underscores that words and language occupy a central place in the reorientation of thinking and practice. For the participants and more widely, the BCP research inquiry made a critical contribution by naming and labelling the norms and behaviour of resource mobilisation for self help in poor African communities in its own terms. This increased the visibility of the ‘invisible’ which becomes less difficult to overlook or ignore. Labelling PoC and its dimension makes them more accessible to organised philanthropy. Also identification of the word “help” offered a way to talk about philanthropy that was practical and a living part of people lives, widely understood at the community level, holding a shared meaning and implying a transaction but not business. For the poor help is understood to be *“the giving and or receiving of something to satisfy or alleviate a need, a problem , a difficulty, sense of deprivation or lack of something, bit it a tangible good/asset or ability”*.(Wilkinson and Fowler et al 2005:.36)

The Community Grantmaking and Social Investment (CGSI) programme and the demonstration cases shed lights on the notion of *“contribution”* used in the cases to draw attention to what the poor bring to a development process. However more broadly, this term reframes the idea of a grant, describing the external agency offer. The term is more inclusive of non material

help than the term “grant” commonly associated with money. It takes heed of the call within the philanthropy sector internationally for greater acknowledgment of grantmaking as “more than money”. This idea is to be found in southern Africa when community grantmakers combine financial assistance with other forms of support including advise and capacity building either as preparation for a grant or complementary to it.

Second and as critical is a shift in meaning. Contribution is to *give in order to help or achieve something* , while a grant is defined as agreeing to give something to someone, formally or legally, with the old French origin being “consent to support” (Paperback Oxford English Dictionary). Contribution introduces a critical nuance and implies being part of something bigger, a part of the whole. Use of the word contribution to refer to the external and well as internal resources mobilised for and within a community is a critical shift. It recognises that everyone at the development table has resources and with this brings both an “offer and ask” – they put something in and want to get something out. Recognising this sets the ground for a new type of conversation, negotiation and power dynamic between the parties. Under this new dispensation, “grantor – grantee” language becomes questionable as an appropriate way to describe and manage the relationship.

Summary – Philanthropy of Community and Social Change

Horizontal philanthropy and the PoC dimensions can do more than offer ways to measure change in helping behaviour they can be used to inform broader social impact indicators as illustrated below in table four.

Table 4 PoC’s Lens into Social Change

PoC DOMAIN	BROADER SOCIAL CHANGE
Needs and networks	Shifts in social networks, the relationship between needs and networks, levels of social cohesion, exclusion, or marginalization, and an assessment of risk spreading and asset distribution patterns.
Range of capitals	A measure or sense of the actual social capital available, its type and distribution, understanding the categories of assets utilized by the poor; and understanding the profile of assistance to see where it can be supported or mirrored.
Philosophy of the collective self	Collective action and what holds a group together/ gives a sense of belonging, understanding of the shared moral/values framework and ideas about the boundaries people set for their help behaviour.
Conventions of decision making	The way people decide – assess, filter and judge helping behaviour and understanding expectations about reciprocity, reputation standards and sanctions.
Maintenance to movement	Understanding what can be reasonably expected of PoC, as a catalyst for social change, identification of indicators of community status (poverty), the potential for change and understanding and tracking poverty exit and entry.

Accumulated evidence from the demonstration cases suggests that the dimensions of Philanthropy of Community represent a conceptual, linguistic and practical approach offers the following advantages to viewing social development policy, programmes and projects.

What does the original research and empirical evidence from the demonstration cases suggest in terms of the theoretical landscape? The concluding section addresses this question.

5. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Following from the principles of grounded theory, recent completion of the demonstration cases means that the connection to and implications of results for theories of development and change are only just being considered. As such this section is very much a work in progress. Hopefully this conference will help in this effort.

A first review of the theoretical terrain suggests the potential applicability of four conceptual frameworks: modernization, development from the indigenous, social capital and the political economy of philanthropy. In each frame work, PoC invites a number of interesting questions.

The first optic draws on the substantial body of work initially associated in international aid with the ‘stages growth’ economic theories of Rostow (1960) dedicated to understanding how

modernization works as a capitalist, market-driven system. Can PoC offer any new insights on the deep processes through which poor people are affected by and are incorporated into a globalizing market place? And, in a related vein, does PoC have anything to say or add to the psycho-social processes associated with modernization theories, alienation from community and individuation? In other words, do patterns of horizontal help demonstrate a movement from non-market to more market-oriented transactions and relations and the rules applied? Are resistances to these processes generated and how do they play out? How are shifts in vulnerabilities and risks associated with market penetration dealt with? By helping poor people cope, does horizontal philanthropy aid and abet its own demise?

A second body of theory is associated with debates about how best to bring about development itself as an 'aided' process. The arguments involved stems from development strategies premised on change evolving from transformations in existing indigenous practices rather than the incorporation and imposition of foreign institutional norms and forms that remain embedded in the social and political fabric. This debate has been and remains particularly pertinent in Africa. A major proponent of the indigenous school the late Claude Ake.

His 1988 article "*Sustaining Development on the Indigenous*" forwards the proposition that sustainability, described as enduring change, will only occur if it is embedded in people's lives.

"People make development sustainable... only development – sustainable development at any rate – will not occur unless it works through what excites and motives people, what they value and understand, and what they fell at home with". ... development has to come to terms with all the things that are important to them (ordinary people) especially their values, culture, history and interest." (Ake. 1988:19)

Horizontal philanthropy illuminates a neglected but deeply embedded feature of micro-level socio-economic relations among people who are poor. It allows a new angle into addressing unresolved debates about how sustained change can be accelerated. And, more practically, it can help better interrogate a critical distinction in community development as something indigenous to be built on as opposed to being built from. Put another way; are horizontal help relations a platform at the disposal of aid or a guide for how aid could be usefully transformed on the continent?

A third theoretical lens is provided by social capital, particularly debates about its attributes as a product intrinsic to trust-based networked relationships or as a property held by individuals. The need-based networking arrangements in horizontal philanthropy suggest a potential value

of PoC to analyse decision-making scripts and to assess the accumulation or loss of social capital depending on how help transactions play out. In other words, to introduce a dynamic method of observing social capital that may help adjudicate current debates.

A final theoretical frame of interest is provided by philanthropy and philanthrocapitalism that has emerged as an industry in its own right. An industry that as quotes from community foundation practitioners indicate has characteristics that seem to work against its own intentions of bringing about sustained change that respects people's dignity and efforts. This perverse paradox invites better explanation that a PoC analysis may help to provide. In doing so it could contribute to critical debates and innovations in philanthropy to be seen on attention to social justice and assessment of performance. This appears to be fertile ground for intellectual effort that informs the conclusions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The paper concludes with two central findings. First, PoC is not a concept relegated to the world of ideas rather it has application and belongs to the world of practice as well. When applied its five dimensions deepen the understanding not only of the PoC substance but of the community grantmaking process as well. Second, PoC has potential for alternative ways – a view, language and practice- that could narrow the gap between the worlds of the back donor, local grant makers and the community, identified as one impediment to effectiveness. The view point of a PoC lens offers existing practices of self help and mutual assistance as a new starting point, building from helping assets that can be mobilised rather than only deficits to be filled, as an alternate paradigm and finally new terminology that resonates in the local context including the idea of a “contribution”. In all the study of horizontal philanthropy and its application brings to the surface an important and overlooked system of philanthropy that has developmental potential and promise in Southern Africa.

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