

## GPC Members Meeting 2018: Building Trust for Philanthropic Impact

Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

### GPC Member Insight Talk

Elizabeth Tanya Masiyiwa, Co-Founder, Simba Education

SPENCE: So, we're running ahead of schedule I think a little bit which is very exciting.

It's my great pleasure to introduce the first of this year's featured insight talks, which will be delivered by GPC member Elizabeth Tanya Masiyiwa.

Elizabeth Tanya, or Tanya as she's known to me and many others, is a social entrepreneur and advocate for youth-led social change. She's the co-Founder and CEO of Simba Education, an edu-tech startup with a mission to increase access to early childhood education leveraging the use of technology.

She is more recently the creator of Innovate, Elevate, a network convening southern African youth who are current and aspiring leaders in their communities. Furthermore, Tanya is the Innovation and Strategy Executive of Delta Philanthropies based in London, and co-manages a new social impact investment fund on behalf of her family office.

She continues to advise Higherlife Foundation, started in 1996 by her parents Strive and Tsitsi. Earlier this year, Tanya and I spoke about growing up in a significant philanthropic family. And she described learning early on, through the example set by her parents, that have commitment to social impact doesn't come after one has built a successful life or one after the other. Rather, it's part of what makes a life successful from the very beginning.

Tanya has heard that call to service loud and clear and has assumed a real leadership role with her family's work, as well as breaking new ground through her own initiatives. Please join me in welcoming Elizabeth Tanya Masiyiwa.

(APPLAUSE)

MASIYIWA: Thank you for the lovely introduction.

So, philanthropy is the love for humanity and as Peggy so gracefully added today, I agree it's also a love for the planet. It's recognizing that if you take responsibility for just a little bit, you might actually transform the lives of many.

As Marieke introduced, I'm Tanya Masiyiwa and I'm a philanthropist and a social entrepreneur.

I became a social entrepreneur out of a deep sense of responsibility; the responsibility to change and shape communities where you make the people that you're helping part of the solution; where you give them a voice and you continue to give them dignity.

So, in our philanthropic journey, my parents started a foundation before they even knew what the word philanthropy meant. And my mom had one simple and yet powerful philosophy. In order to help people, you have to understand the need.

And so, from the age of six, I accompanied her as we went to orphanages. We slept where they slept and ate where they ate. And I learned to see what the life of a rural impoverished young person looks like.

But no part of me thought that I was any different. As I got older, I began to see that inheritance and legacy are more than just wealth. It is a vision and it is the belief that I must use my resources, my skills and my talent in order to change the face of Africa, to do my part in it and to leave the world better than I met it.

It is my honor today to share some insights about how our family foundation has evolved to use the tools of our time, and how a principal giver can inspire the next generation to amplify what they have started. This is our story.

(VIDEO BEGINS)

UNKNOWN: The early '90s in Southern Africa saw a pandemic that spread beyond boundaries. The next generation of children on the continent was on the verge of being orphaned.

By 2010, reports showed that five percent of the region's adult population was infected with HIV. The death of friends and key staff members was a moment of obligation.

The founders of Higherlife Foundation filled a necessarily role and paid school fees for children left behind by old classmates, employees and neighbors. But the challenge was deeper.

We paid the school fees but the schools lack the necessary facilities for students to flourish. Our students were five times less likely to complete primary school and six times less likely to read.

We needed to do more. So, we innovated and built Ruzivo, a smart learning platform that is bringing quality education to African students; all of this done through Internet-enabled devices.

But after graduation day, they needed a career. And jobs aren't easy to find. So, we pressed on and founded Muzinda Hub, a technology hub and incubation center for the young brilliant minds in Africa. Now, over 1,000 web developers have been trained and are actively sourcing jobs from abroad.

It started with one child. Twenty years later, we've seen over 250,000 African scholars impacted. We call them our history makers.

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(VIDEO ENDS)

MASIYIWA: We call them history makers because they're no longer orphans. Through our staff team that is in every province in the country, these children are no longer alone. They're motivated and they're inspired to redefine their own future. To us, each and every one of them matters.

The Higherlife Foundation, which is our family foundation, was founded 21 years ago. It was created to answer a call, to a need. The HIV pandemic had claimed the lives of friends, of work colleagues, of classmates and it had left a generation of children who no longer knew hope.

The foundation was established in order to give them support to go to school through giving them scholarships and giving them food packs and the healthcare that they needed.

But this was no longer enough. It was no longer enough to send a child to school with a classroom that's overpopulated, where the teacher might not even show up, or where the kids might be too hungry to learn.

So, we innovated. Ruzivo education, our online platform that you saw on the video, now has more than 1.2 million users in Zimbabwe alone. And it's most -- and these users are predominantly in rural communities.

So, what's my thing? My thing is technology. Technology and innovation have the transformative power to create social impact, and not just any impact; the kind that brings about concrete social change.

Around the world, more than 100 million children living in urban slums don't have access to quality early childhood education. And 60 percent are in sub-Saharan Africa. That's 100 million children that could be teachers, doctors, nurses and even world leaders, but they don't even get the opportunity to start.

I started Simba Education. Simba is a social enterprise that designs and develops technologies that improve education outcomes. And between you and I, Ruzivo is one of my customers.

We have developed a software that guides teachers through the school day. It has the tools that the teacher needs to learn to educate, and also to track the development of each of their students, and be able to manage the classrooms.

We didn't just come up with an idea. We involved the communities. We held focus groups with community leaders, teachers, and even asked the students themselves. In Zimbabwe, only 20 percent of early years educators have any type of formal training. And in other countries in the region, the number is even lower. In South Africa, it's as low as 12 percent.

I mean, how many of you would confidently leave your child or grandchild at school, knowing that the person in the front is merely improvising? And so, Simba Education created a gamified way to engage these teachers, and to give them the support that they need, because it would take us years to train teachers to be able to create, impact and to give those children an opportunity to start.

Seeing philanthropy is what made me want to see -- wanted to explore other avenues to be able to create a social impact in this world. I wanted my beneficiaries to be my customers. I wanted to create employment. And I wanted to create economic value.

And so, the last insight that I'll share on is, as most of you in the room will know, there are very few things that are easier than starting your own business. And I'm talking about the early days here. So, this led to my mom and I finding our own social impact investment fund, where we invest in Zimbabwean entrepreneurs that have founded their own businesses, but businesses that are driven for impact.

It's one thing to raise money as an investor starting out, but it's another in a country where banks don't even have cash. So, we've managed to create a portfolio of 25 businesses in the last two years. And we're going with that as our last -- as the most recent project.

So, what matters to us most is giving every child an opportunity, giving them the chance to thrive, the chance to redefine their own future. Because I believe that to educate a child is to educate a community. And to educate a community is to educate a nation. Thank you.

SPENCE: Thank you, Tanya. We have time for a few questions. Peggy?

DULANY: Tanya, my dear, I'm so proud of you.

MASIYIWA: Thank you.

DULANY: I just took a picture to send to your parents because they would be so proud of you.

So, I wanted to comment, not on the amazing things you're doing -- and congratulations on that, but it's a reflection. We had the Synergos board meeting yesterday and it was very interesting because you said this wonderful sounding statement of, you know, we give people a voice.

And as we were talking about it in the board meeting, someone brought up the fact, actually, people have voices but no one listens. So, what you really did was connect with them to give them a platform to express their voices. And that to me is an even more powerful thing that you're doing and may you keep doing it.

MASIYIWA: Thank you.

DULANY: Thank you.

UNKNOWN: Thank you so much. Sorry, I was late and I think I disrupted the back a little bit. This is awesome and I got the end of your talk. It's really wonderful. Everybody here knows me as Naza Mendelek's (ph) daughter, but I started recently as a Director of the Child Development Institute at Duke and UNC.

The reason I'm bringing this up is because I think both your work are really tremendous. And we have a global implementation resource science network at our institute that provides all the early child development and education modules that are deployed in the United States to all the states and the schools.

We would love to explore whether any of those could be of use in your communities to align them with sort of the developmental research and science in education that the institute has built over the last, you know, 55 years. Because I think you guys are really the target audiences that we would like to engage with our education science.

So, you know, it's wonderful and all I see is opportunities to connect. I'm very excited. So, let's talk after your part.

MASIYIWA: Thank you.

UNKNOWN: And you, too.

MASIYIWA: I think that would be an amazing opportunity. I think when you look at countries like Zimbabwe, we really started with nothing. The government created a great early childhood education curriculum. But there were no resources and the teachers had no idea how to interpret this curriculum.

And so, when we launched, I mean, we recently -- we have a network of over 12,000 teachers now, just in early childhood education. And most of them, the attraction is that they have no idea what to do. And we are looking for solutions that can help them at a grass roots level. So, definitely.

UNKNOWN: Yes, absolutely. The word for us is fidelity and sustainability. And we're going to have a summit with the World Health Organization because education is such a key gateway to health and wellness. So, I'd love to connect more with you to see if we can sort of forge a relationship.

MASIYIWA: Thank you.

UNKNOWN: Thank you.

QUESTION: Thanks, Tanya. What keeps you at night?

MASIYIWA: What keeps me up at night?

QUESTION: Yes.

MASIYIWA: I think when I look at my own background and I know this is a safe environment. I look at my own parents and they've made a lot of strides in their life. But when I look at where they came from, they -- my dad was raised in a village for the first seven years of his life.

And so, there must have been a philanthropist somewhere who must have helped him to get to where he is today. And I thought to myself, I'm so privileged. How many people are like him, that could make the progress in their own community and in their own country that he had the opportunity to make?

And so, I feel like I myself am in a position where I can identify and where I can maybe help the person even start. And that's what keeps me up at night.

(APPLAUSE)