

African Global Citizen patrons urge world to consider continent's giving power

By [Cooper Inveen](#)

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Through a sweltering afternoon into a clear-sky night, some 20,000 people descended on Ghana's historic Black Star Square in Accra on Saturday, 24 September, to dance, cheer and sing along to songs performed by some of their favourite stars including Usher, SZA, and Stormzy.



Oxlade performs at the Black Star square during the Global Citizen festival in Accra, Ghana. 2022. Reuters/Francis Kokoroko

The Accra leg of Global Citizen's annual music festival, held simultaneously with another concert in New York City, wasn't your average show.

Attendees earned their tickets by cleaning beaches, distributing online petitions, or participating in other forms of activism benefiting women, girls and the environment.

"It's fun to give," said Michael, an 18-year old student who earned his spot by contributing to a girls education charity. "People need to know that it's not always about giving to Africa, Africa can give, and we can have fun too."

Now in its tenth year, organisers of the festival expect to see more than \$800m committed to those causes from various countries and organisations.



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It has also spurred the establishment of an Africa Prosperity Fund, a \$1bn development funding pledge compiled solely by African governments and launched jointly by the governments of Ghana and South Africa.

"I think Ghana symbolises so much about what is achievable," said Michael Sheldrick, Global Citizen's cofounder. "It's saying, listen, we as a community are willing to stand up, but we're looking for partnership, not token acts of charity."

Such sentiments were echoed on and off the red carpet, with festival attendees and celebrities urging others to reconsider their views of Africa.

Danai Guria, a star of the 2018 movie *Black Panther*, called on people to consider the power and potential of African women.

South African actress Nomzamo Mbatha had a simple message: Africans are economic assets, not economic burdens.

"Our culture is the current currency that is selling around the world," she said. "If we continue to invest in it, we will see how far it can really go."

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