AFRICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH FUNDING CONSORTIUM

(2023) Member's grantee mapping analysis

Members' grantee mapping
24 February 2023

Key takeaways related to each of the 5 recommendations

- Recommendation 1: There appears to be a mid to long-term commitment to grantees
- Recommendation 2: Although most grants go to African organisations, most funds go to North American organisations.
- Recommendation 3: There is a greater emphasis on research and implementation than on communication and evidence use.
- Recommendation 4: There isn't enough data on efforts to involve women, young researchers, and other disadvantaged groups in education research in Africa.
- Recommendation 5: Minimum and comparable grant data is required to allow for learning.

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Introduction and how to use this analysis

The primary objective of this analysis is to identify where consortium members' funding goes, the possible overlaps in their funding practice, and what opportunities or gaps exist in line with the 5 recommendations. The recommendations made in the latter section of this report were determined based on these objectives.

The data used in this analysis does not include all funders and all their grantees (see methodology and limitations). However, it is both:

- A reference for a discussion both among as within members of the consortium; and
- An invitation to update the database and analysis during 2023.

We therefore invite members to consider the findings in this document and reflect on their own portfolios:

- Do these funding reflect their own portfolios and funding practices?
- If they do, what may explain this result?
- If they do not, how do they fare in comparison?

We also invite members to consider the recommendations and reflect if:

- They resonate with them; and
- They could consider other actions that they could take individually or collectively.

Methodology and limitations

Data collection for this study is from secondary sources, which include members' publicly available reports, grant databases, and grantee websites. The representative(s) of member organisations were included in the data collection process to help make sense of the data and to ensure accuracy in grant/grantee representation. Overall, we reviewed information on a total of 192 grants from eight different funders.[1]

Our analysis of the consortium's portfolio will attempt to access members' grant alignment with the 5 recommendations and identify potential areas for discussion. By reviewing the grants and highlighting the current funding practices, we can identify areas that require improvement and initiate discussions on potential solutions.

In a future exercise, we will review the members' strategies and plans that frame their grantmaking choices. This will add nuance and offer greater insights into this analysis.

This exercise presents some limitations:

- Funding practices vary among members. As a result, some data were not wholly captured. For instance, one member mentioned that approved funding is done annually even though they have funded the same grantee's program for multiple years. Another member was only able to provide a limited funding timeline and not the cumulative of total funding made to each grantee to date.
- Information was hard to gather because not all members have a public-facing grants database or collect information on their grants systematically. Relatively, those with large data grant databases complain of the "heavy lifting" it will involve due to the "uncoordinated" way the data was originally captured. This impacted the quality of data received.
- Due to the short data collection and analysis time frame, some members could not participate or provide some key information needed without going through lots of internal approvals. As a result, the Secretariat had to be flexible in its data collection and analysis.
- Definition of the categories of analysis was made using recognised definitions (UN regional classification for countries). However, some classifications are our own categorisation.
- This analysis does not provide a comprehensive view of all the funders' work. We recognise that the scope of the funders' work is much broader than what is shown here.

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[1]Funders' identity withheld for privacy reasons.

Findings

Who are the consortium's grantees?

We collected data on 192 grants that were awarded to 134 recipients located in Africa, Europe and North America (comprising the US and Canada for the purpose of this analysis).

NGOs are the most common grantee: Out of the 134 grantees, 54% (72) were identified as NGOs (Figure 1). The second largest group of grantees were identified as research centers and think tanks (15%), followed by higher learning institutions (15%), consultancy firms (6%), government entities (1%), and individual researchers/consultants (1%).

Most grantees in the sample are based in Africa: Out of the 134 grantees, 92 (69%) are based in Africa, 15 are based in Europe (11%), and 27 (20%) are based in North America and Canada, as shown in Figure 1 (right).
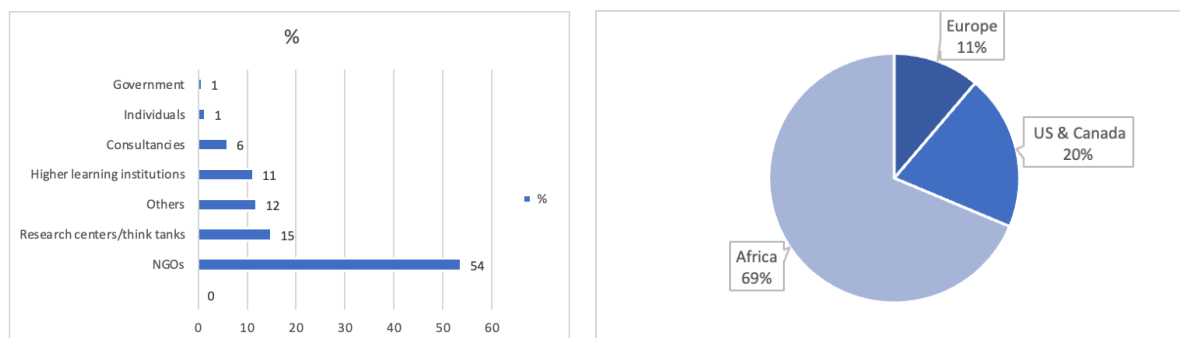

Figure 1. Type of grantees and where are they based

Most grantees are based in Southern Africa: Among the grantees based in Africa (92), 55% (51) are based in Southern Africa, mostly in South Africa; 35% (32) are based in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda); and 10% (9) in Western Africa. Table 1 below provides an overview of this data. The higher number of South African grants is partly explained by the inclusion of the Zenex Foundation, a South African foundation, in the sample.

African, European, and North American grantees get more or less the same number of grants on average: The average number of grants per grantee in Africa is about 1.4. For Europe, this is 1.3; for North America, it is 1.6.

Region	Number of grantees	% of total grantees	Number of grants	% of total grants	Av. grants per grantee
Africa	**92**	69%	**131**	68%	1.4
East Africa	32	35%	47	36	0.5
West Africa	9	10%	11	8	0.1
Southern Africa	51	55%	73	56	0.8
Europe	**15**	12%	**19**	10%	1.3
US & Canada	**27**	20%	**42**	22%	1.6
Total	**134**		**192**		

Table 1. Number of grantees vs. number of grants by region

Grant size

We analysed the number of grants awarded by region and compared it with the total amount of grants (value in USD) awarded in Africa, Europe, and North America.

Most grant funding awarded goes to North America: Despite 68% (131) of the grants went to Africa-based grantees, these grants only represented 37% of the total funding awarded in the three analysed regions (Africa, Europe, and North America). In contrast, although 32% of the analysed grants went to grantees based in Europe and North America, these represented 63% of the total funding awarded in the three regions.

North American grants are 4.5 times the size of African grants: On average, North American and European grantees receive grants that are significantly bigger than the grants awarded to African organisations.

Region	Number of grants	% of analysed grants	Aggregated grant value (USD)[2]	% of total grant value awarded	Av. size of grant (USD)
Africa	**131**	68%	**$56,043,094**	37%	$427,809
Europe & North America	**61**	32%	**$96,292,645**	63%	$1.578,568
Europe	19	10%	$14,279,669	9%	$751,562

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[2] This is an approximate USD value based on the data provided for this survey. In the cases where the information about the grant size was not provided in USD, we calculated exchange rates corresponding to February 2023.

US & Canada	42	22%	$82,012,976	54%	$1,952,690
Total	**192**		**$152,335,739**		

Table 2. Number of grants awarded vs. grant size in Africa, Europe, and North America

Funded activities and areas of interest

We organised the 192 grants into groups based on the areas they covered, using our own defined categorisation. The identified categories included grants that primarily focused on: 1) generating research and evidence (Education Research); 2) implementing initiatives that were not research-focused, such as the scaling of projects or implementation of good practices (Project/Program Implementation); 3) financing the monitoring or evaluation of initiatives (MEL Programs/Projects); 4) core funding or institutional strengthening; 5) disseminating knowledge or evidence (Knowledge Translation or Dissemination), and 6) grants for which there was insufficient information to categorise (No Data).
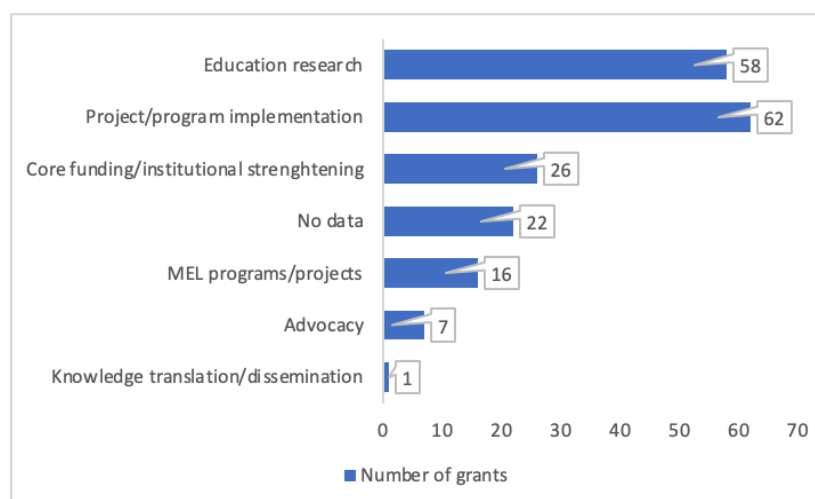

Fig. 2. Number of grants per category

Implementation and research are the most popular functions funded: Our analysis revealed that the two most funded categories were Project/Program Implementation and Education Research, accounting for 32% (62 grants) and 30% (58 grants), respectively.

Funding to communicate research accounts for a small portion of all funding: Grants categorised as Core Funding/Institutional Strengthening represented 14% (26 grants) of the total, while MEL Programs/Projects accounted for 8% (16 grants), Advocacy Grants for 4%, and Knowledge Translation Grants for 1%.

Please note that these results do not imply that grants categorised under one category do not contain elements that pertain to other categories. Rather, this is based on our evaluation of the available information in order to highlight the primary components of these grants.

In terms of funding awarded to each category (Figure 3), the analysed data shows that:

- Program/project implementation represented 32% of the grants and 29% of the funding.
- Education research represented 30% of the grants and 38% of the funding.
- Core funding/institutional strengthening represented 14% of the grants and 15% of the funding.
- MEL represented 8% of the grants and 3% of the funding.
- Advocacy was 4% of the grants and 3% of the funding.
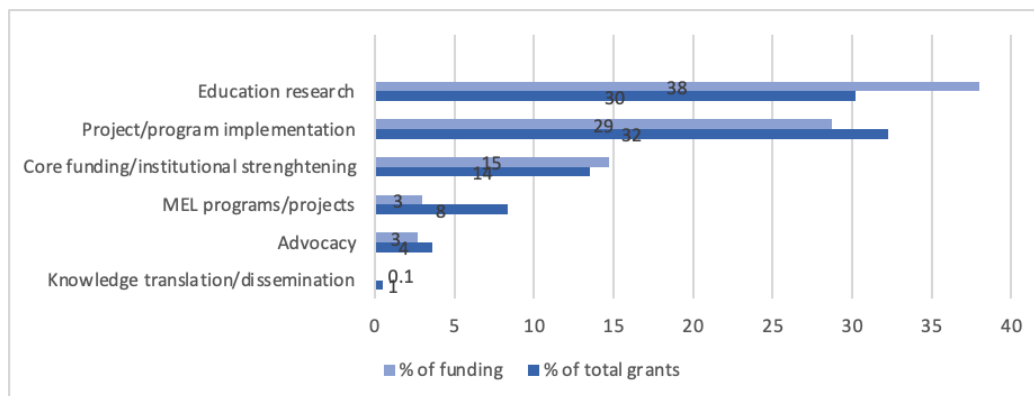- KT was 1% of the grants and 0,1% of the funding.

Figure 3. % of grants per category/function vs. % of funding awarded

We looked deeper into two main categories, education research, and project/program implementation, from a regional perspective.

Grants and grant funds for research went mostly to North American and European organisations: The analysed data (Table 3) showed that 45% of the education research grants went to grantees based in Africa, while 55% of the grants went to Europe and North America-based grantees. However, when looking at the amount of funding, the data shows that 81% of the funding went to Global North-based institutions, while 19% went to African grantees.

North American research grants are 4.5 times the size of African grants: On average, North American and European grantees receive research grants that are significantly bigger than the grants awarded to African organisations.

Region	Number of grants	% of analysed grants	Aggregated grant value (USD)[3]	% of total grant value awarded	Av. size of grant (USD)
Africa	**26**	45%	**$11,014,567**	19%	$423,637
Europe & North America	**32**	55%	**$46,895,523**	81%	$1,465,485
Europe	10	17%	$4,887,999	8%	$488,800
US & Canada	22	38%	$42,007,524	73%	$1,909,433
Total	**58**		**$57,910,090**		

Table 3. Education research grants, number of grants vs. awarded amount by region

Grants for implementation went mostly to African organisations - but not funding: A different situation was found in the case of grants awarded for project/program implementation. According to the analysed data, 77% of the grants went to Africa-based grantees, and 23% of the grants went to Global North grantees. However, in terms of funding, 33% of the funding went to Africa, and 67% of the grants awarded went to grantees in Europe, Canada, and the US. (Table 4)

North American implementation grants are 8 times the size of African grants: On average, North American and European grantees receive implementation grants that are significantly bigger than the grants awarded to African organisations.

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[3] This is an approximate USD value based on the data provided for this survey. In the cases where the information about the grant size was not provided in USD, we calculated exchange rates corresponding to February 2023.

Region	Number of grants	% of analysed grants	Aggregated grant value (USD)[4]	% of total grant value awarded	Av. size of grant (USD)
Africa	**48**	77%	**$14,300,586.26**	33%	**$297,929**
Europe & North America	**14**	23%	**$29,513,176.54**	67%	**$2,108,084**
Europe	3	5%	$3,156,786.00	7%	$1,052,262
US & Canada	11	18%	$26,356,390.54	60%	$2,396,036
Total	**62**		**$43,813,762.80**		

Table 4. Project/program implementation grants, number of grants vs. awarded amount by region

Regarding the subjects that received funding, we examined the grants and determined the main topics that were prioritised (shown in Figure 4). Based on our analysis, the most frequently funded area was learning outcomes, encompassing numeracy and literacy skills at different levels. Teacher-led initiatives and promoting gender equality were also popular themes among the funded grants.
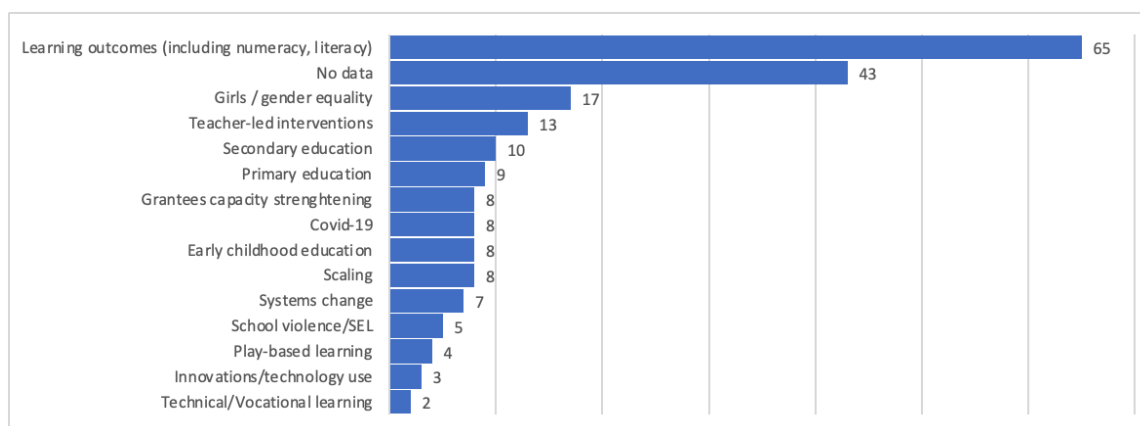

Figure 4. Number of grants awarded by topic of interest.

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[4] This is an approximate USD value based on the data provided for this survey. In the cases where the information about the grant size was not provided in USD, we calculated exchange rates corresponding to February 2023.

Grant length

Funders prioritise sustained support: Regarding grant duration, our analysis suggests that grants tend to last, on average, between 2-3 years (51.56% of grants) (Figure 5). Grants that lasted 5 years or longer represented 18.23%, and grants that were 1 year or longer (but less than 2 years), represented 15.63% of the total analysed grants.
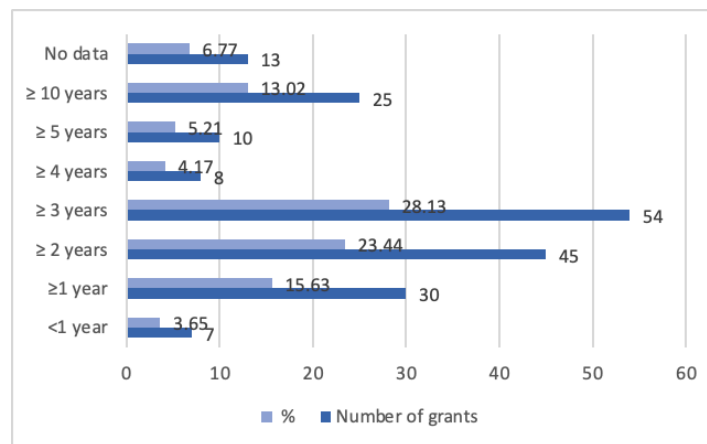

Figure 5. Grant length

Gender equality considerations

In our analysis of grants, we examined gender equality considerations. We asked the funders that provided data if the grants awarded aimed to achieve gender-related objectives or had a particular focus on women or girls. The information gathered for this category was self-reported by the funders.

We should note, therefore, that this indicator does not necessarily address Recommendation 4, to proactively support the involvement of women, young researchers and other disadvantaged groups in the sector. It does, however, offer a first indicator of the grants' explicit gender considerations.

Over a third of grants included gender considerations: Our data revealed that 36% of the grants included gender considerations. In 8% of cases, funders reported that gender considerations were not included in specific grants.

No data on gender, young researchers, and other disadvantaged groups: In the majority of cases, information was either not available or not provided.
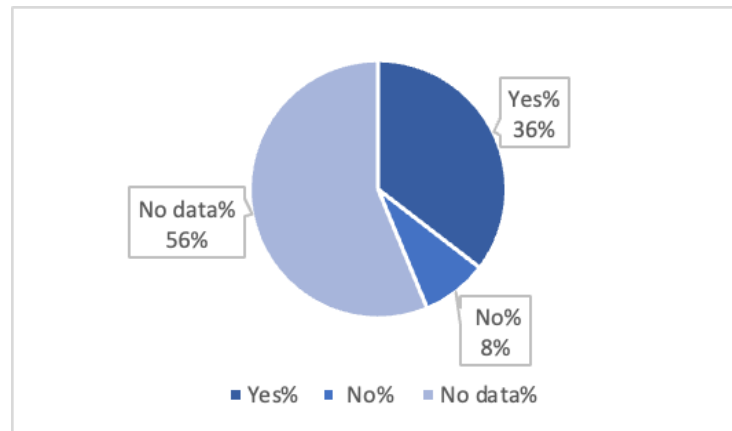
Figure 6. Percentage of grants that included gender considerations

Opportunities, gaps, and implications for funders based on the 5 recommendations

Based on the analysis above, we offer some initial implications for the members of the consortium to consider in their efforts to deliver the 5 recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Drive impact by supporting a long-term vision.

- The length of most grants, 2-4 years, suggest a reasonable long term horizon of funders support.
- More data would allow for a longer longitudinal analysis, for instance, to assess the overall length of funders' support to individual grantees, specific issues and sub-regional or national agendas.

Recommendation 2: Prioritise direct support and funding options to match local needs, agendas, and initiatives.

- There is space to assess the amount of funding that is being directed to Africa-based grantees vis à vis North American and European organisations. While grantees based in Africa surpass the number of grantees based in the Global North, the size of the grants awarded in Europe and North America is significantly higher than the grants awarded in Europe. Addressing this funding gap requires a concerted effort to identify and eliminate institutional barriers that limit access to funding and resources for researchers based in Africa.
- There may also be an opportunity to reflect on how funding to North American and European organisations could better align with the recommendations of the Forum.

- Due to the limited information available for this study, it was not clear what funders' grant process and strategies were. Therefore, it is not clear who was driving the grantmaking process. Were the grants/funds provided to African organisations offered in response to their own project designs?
- There are opportunities to diversify grant portfolios within Africa. Although the majority of the funders' grantees are African organisations, over 90% of them are based in Southern and East African countries, with large concentrations in Kenya and South Africa. The rest of their grantees are based in West Africa, and none are from Central or Northern African countries. In the same vein, there is an opportunity for funders to diversify their investment to Francophone African countries as the majority of their grants are directed at Anglophone African countries.

Recommendation 3: Support research, communication, and use of evidence.

- Although 68% of the total grants awarded by funders were awarded to Africa-based organisations, more than half of their grantees are NGOs. Research centers came second. Government agencies were only a small portion of the portfolio.
- Similarly, the functions that the grants support focus on implementation and research. Communication and knowledge translation were not prioritised. There is space to grow in these areas.
- While we recognise that NGOs can also communicate and use evidence there may be space for funders to consciously re-prioritise their portfolios to include more collaborations with organisations that communicate and use evidence in policy. More data on the grants will be necessary to determine if the NGOs are already fulfilling these functions.

Recommendation 4: Actively seek to support women, young people, and other disadvantaged groups in education research.

- Although gender equality was the second most common topic among funders' funding interests, their grant's DEI metrics weren't entirely clear due to limited data available.
- The limited data available suggests that these are probably not explicit objectives of the grants.
- More transparent and detailed reporting is crucial for accurate evaluation and reporting of the impact of such grants.

Recommendation 5: Capture data systematically and promote dynamic learning.

- More frequent updates of grantee data would help monitor progress to inform their future strategies and decision-making process.
- Because of the way grant data is captured by most funders, it required some "heavy lifting" on their part to share it, and there was a need to repeatedly provide context on

the requests so as to argue for the value and relevance of this exercise. This, especially, became a cumbersome task for funders with large portfolios. There is an opportunity for funders in this consortium to consider adhering to a common template (or a list of minimum indicators) for how grant data are captured.

- Funders can contribute to the 5 recommendations by being thorough in their data collection. We recommend that funders could –at a minimum –capture the following data/information per grant:
  - Grantee organisation name
  - Others (does it involve sub-contracting or re-granting)
  - Grant description (including topics and sub-issues funded)
  - Grantee location – Global/ African/ Non-African countries (North vs. South, sub-region, etc.)
  - Grant period (Grant start date/ Grant end date)
  - Grant number (is this the 1st, 2nd, 3rd grant to the same organisation)
  - Region/country of focus
  - Type of organisation (think tank, research center, NGO, consultancy, government, MDB/other aid agency, local foundation)
  - Grant Function (research, advocacy, implementation, MEL, evidence use)
  - Grant amount/ size of grant/contracts
  - Diversity Equity and Inclusion: Gender of organisation leader; is the principal investigator or team leader a woman, young researcher, member of a local minority and/or disadvantaged group?; Is the grant aimed at involving women, young researchers, members of a local minority, and/or disadvantaged group in the project?
  - Is the grant/contract reactive or proactive? (was the grant offered in response to a call for proposal made by the funder, or was the proposal developed by the grantee?)