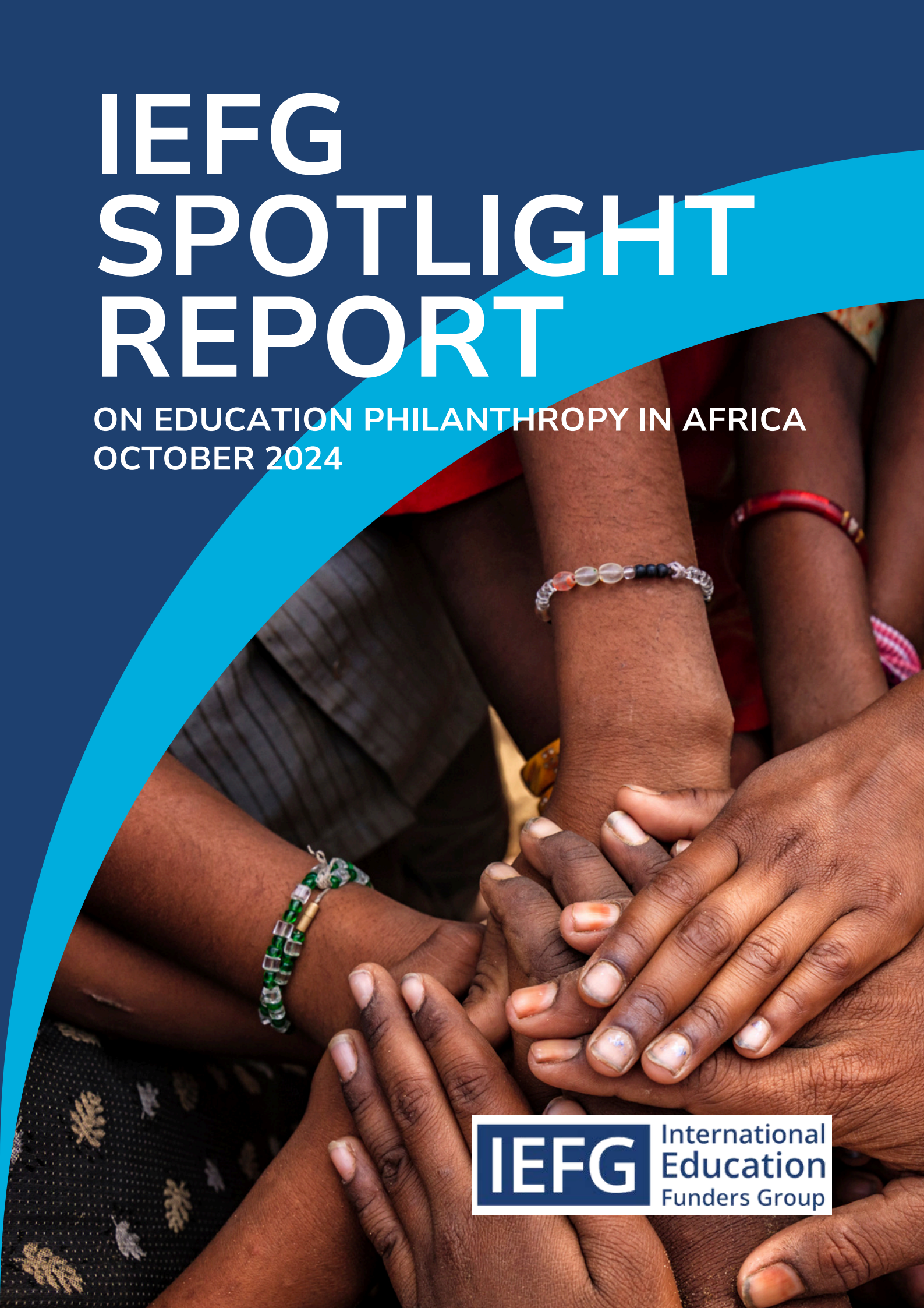


IEFG SPOTLIGHT REPORT

ON EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY IN AFRICA
OCTOBER 2024



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors and the International Education Funders' Group (IEFG) would like to thank the research partner group: Africa Philanthropy Network (APN), Africa Venture Philanthropy Association (AVPA), the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI), East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN), the Independent Philanthropy Association South Africa (IPASA), OECD's network of foundations working on development (netFWD) and Trust Africa for their strategic direction and sharing of knowledge, data and contacts which was central to the development of this report.

We would also like to thank our writing partners Better Purpose and all the research participants who generously contributed their time and insights, enriching this report and the ongoing dialogue on education and philanthropy.

FOREWORD

By Sophia Ndemutla Ashipala, Head of Education Division, African Union Commission



The African Union is delighted to present this Spotlight Report on education philanthropy in Africa, published by the International Education Funders Group (IEFG) in partnership with the Africa Philanthropy Network (APN), the Africa Venture Philanthropy Alliance (AVPA), the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment, (CAPSI), East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), IPASA (the South Africa philanthropy network), OECD's network of foundations working on development (netFWD) and Trust Africa.

The year 2024 has been unique as Africa Union's Year of Education. The theme of Africa's Year of Education was launched at a Heads of State summit in February 2024 and has been an opportunity to drive change in education across the continent. We acknowledge that the publication of this report shows the commitment of philanthropy to go beyond statements of intent at the 2022 Transforming Education Summit to supporting the transformation of education systems in Africa.

The findings of this report not only emphasize the diversity and breadth of support from corporate and structured philanthropy, but also the lack of data that would enhance policy-based decision making. Though we may all have some sense of the contribution that philanthropic giving is making to education progress in Africa, it is equally important to know more about who is doing what, where, how, and with whom, to make the most of these efforts.

The African Union hopes this report will bring domestic education philanthropy across Africa and the global education philanthropy community with footprints in Africa together as a first step towards collaboration and synergies. In this way, philanthropic investment in education will become even more impactful and strategic.

We also hope that the trends in education philanthropy highlighted by this report encourage education philanthropy to do more and do better, in particular by elevating the voice of local education actors into national education decision making. There is also need to build the evidence base and data systems that embed accountability for education outcomes, and working across silos and sector boundaries in an agile, risk-taking and constructively disruptive way.

One of the African Union's Year of Education's objectives has been to increase sustainable financing and systemic investment in education, and to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships for education. We encourage wider philanthropy and social investment to join us to bring ideas and innovation to catalysing more and better investment in education. We believe that philanthropy can catalyse, and bring new voice to education across the continent, and we look forward to taking part in the conversations and events that this report sparks.

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DEFINITIONS

The following section outlines the key definitions and acronyms used throughout the report.

We recognise that the definition of philanthropy is contended, fluid and broad, and that there is rich debate on the definitions and roles of philanthropy within and across African contexts. To quote a recent report: ***“Philanthropy is an intrinsic part of African identity. It is embedded in everyday practices, rooted in solidarity, reciprocity and collective humanity, and expressed in a variety of organic and institutional mechanisms. Despite considerable advocacy and knowledge building on the continent, the dominant global narrative of philanthropy – top-down, transactional, professionalised and monetary based – remains unchanged; and African philanthropic narratives continue to remain marginalized.”*** (Mahomed, 2023, p.4)

In this report, we focus on one component of this wider definition: the ‘formal’ philanthropic sector that channels the giving of high-net worth individuals (HNWIs), families and corporations. While there are several other important forms of giving, and many translations of the word ‘philanthropy’ across Africa,^[1] we focus on this institutional form of philanthropy. Several of the partners behind this report

are networks of institutional philanthropy, supporting organisations who choose to set up a philanthropic organisation to guide their giving and learn from each other. Among other things, we aim to contribute to the understanding of this form of giving, challenging ideas that such philanthropy is all top-down, transactional and money-based.

In our qualitative data collection, we kept an open definition of philanthropy, encouraging contributors to give us data, stories and evidence on all forms of giving to education (including, for example, religious giving, volunteering, social impact investing and diasporic giving). For our quantitative analysis, and for our consultations on the draft report, we focused on the institutional form of giving from HNWIs, family offices and corporations, which usually takes the form of a Foundation.

“ We recognise that the definition of philanthropy is contended, fluid and broad, and that there is rich debate on the definitions and roles of philanthropy within and across African contexts. ”

[1] As Mahomed explains in a recent report, there are many words across Africa that capture the essence of philanthropy: ‘terms in Swahili such as kufaana (to be of help), kujitolea (to volunteer or sacrifice), kusaidiana (assisting each other, kutoa (giving), kuchangia (to contribute) and harambee (all pull together); terms such as rubatsiro in Shona and ncendo (uncendo) in Ndebele which link help to a broader notion of humanity; Arabic terms such as takaful (mutual social assistance), al ata al ljtimaa (social giving), lillah (giving for the pleasure of God) or fard kifaaya (duties incumbent on the community as a whole); terms such as ubudehe, a Rwandan practice of collective action and mutual support, or the Setswana term letsema (contributing what you can to one in need) or expressions of volunteerism in terms such as undungo (brotherhood) and ujaama , used in Tanzania. These are just some of the ones reflected in existing philanthropic studies – there are many more and it is important for our narrative that we explore and make visible what these are. (Mahomed, 2023, p.9)

ACRONYMS

AI	AI Artificial Intelligence
AU	AU African Union
AUYoE	AUYoE African Union Year of Education
APN	APN Africa Philanthropy Network
AVPA	AVPA Africa Venture Philanthropy Association
CAPSI	CAPSI Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment
CSOs	CSOs Civil Society Organisations
EAPN	EAPN East Africa Philanthropy Network
ECD	ECD Early Childhood Development
GPE	GPE Global Partnership for Education
HE	HE Higher Education
HICs	HICs High-income Countries
HNWIs	HNWIs High Net Worth Individuals
IEFG	IEFG International Education Funders' Group
IMF	IMF International Monetary Foundation
IPASA	IPASA Independent Philanthropy Association South Africa
LICs	LICs Low-Income Countries
LMICs	LMICs Low- and Middle-income Countries
NECT	NECT National Education Collaboration Trust
netFWD	netFWD Network of Foundations Working for Development
NGOs	NGOs Nongovernmental Organisations
ODA	ODA Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPP	PPPs Public-private Partnerships
SSA	SSA Sub-Saharan Africa
UNGA	UNGA United Nations General Assembly

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“ *...without increased dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, philanthropies can run the risk of both reproducing inequalities and not leveraging lessons learned or existing evidence from the sector.* ”

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In light of the 2024 African Union Year of Education, the International Education Funders' Group (IEFG) in partnership with the African Union (AU), Africa Philanthropy Network (APN), Africa Venture Philanthropy Association (AVPA), the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI), East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Independent Philanthropy Association South Africa (IPASA), OECD's network of foundations working on development (netFWD) and Trust Africa have come together to develop a spotlight report on trends in education philanthropy in Africa.

The research explores the current trends in education philanthropy in Africa across geographies, domestic and international sources, and levels of the education sector. It also explores which forms of philanthropy have shown the most promise and the ways in which funders can better collaborate to catalyse change in education philanthropy in Africa.

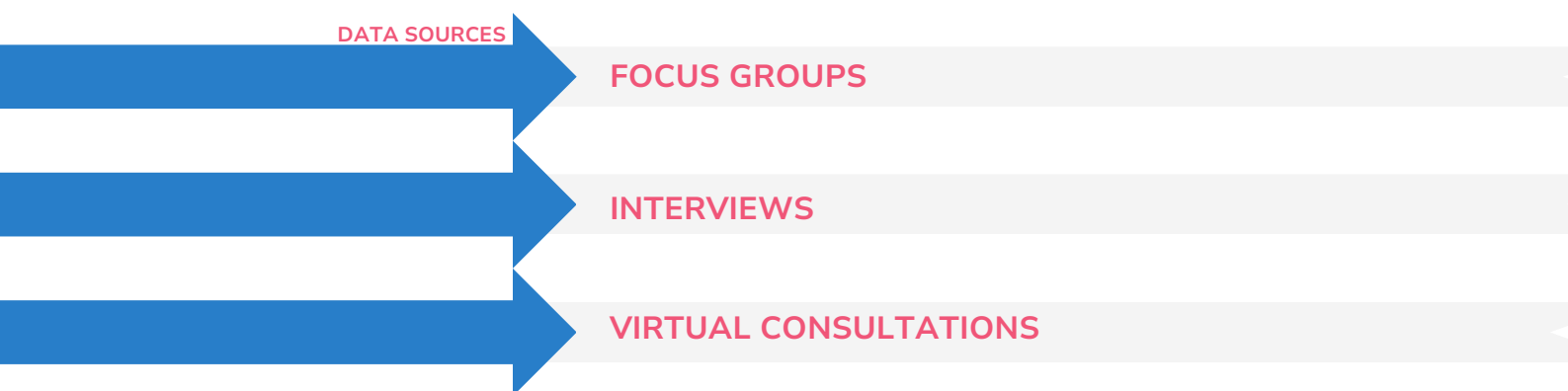
The report recognises that whilst philanthropic giving is a small component, it is an increasingly important and strategic part of international education funding. However, without increased dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, philanthropies can run the risk of both reproducing inequalities and not leveraging lessons learned or existing evidence from the sector. This research seeks to contribute to that dialogue and move towards greater collective action.



METHODS AND SAMPLE

The research was largely qualitative with analysis drawing on primary data from focus groups, interviews and virtual consultations conducted with over 100 participants from across sub-Saharan Africa between May and August 2024.

This data was complemented by OECD sources on philanthropy, which present some qualitative insights to support some of the trends we witness in philanthropic funding to the continent.



KEY FINDINGS



There is a significant lack of available data on some of the key trends in philanthropic giving, particularly quantitative data.

Accessing comprehensive, up-to-date and comparable data was difficult. Where datasets existed, they were not always open access and used a wide variety of categorisations of what constituted philanthropy and/or education, thus resulting in low comparability and an incomplete picture of the key trends. OECD data provided the most comprehensive data set available but naturally had a bias in sampling towards larger international philanthropic funders thus resulting in a scattered picture of the philanthropic landscape on the continent, particularly when seeking to explore more domestic trends.



Despite the lack of quantitative data, the available evidence indicated that education continues to be a high priority for philanthropic giving on the continent, in addition to health and agriculture. Key data from 2016 to 2022 suggested the following:

▶ Total philanthropic funding to education in Africa was approximately US\$ 290 million in 2019 and in 2022, this rose to US\$ 867 million, almost tripling over that time.

▶ The vast majority of philanthropic inflow stem from international funders (87%) as compared to domestic funders (13%). Similar trends were noted with most philanthropic funding going to Anglophone Africa (79%) vs. non-Anglophone Africa (21%).

▶ Sector-wise, post-secondary education (US\$ 237 million) receives the most funding with vocational training (\$105.4 million) receiving the least.

▶ The biggest funders in the education sector include Mastercard Foundation, Roger Federer Foundation, Sawiris Foundation for Social Development, Gates Foundation, LEGO Foundation amongst others.



The definition of philanthropy remains fluid and philanthropy itself is contentious.

Though institutional giving on the continent may be a relatively new concept, the continent has a long tradition of other types of giving which, on the whole, is often overlooked in international discourse and should be considered. This might be through supporting extended family, volunteerism, donations and so on. Whilst some participants spoke of the positive experiences and opportunities related to working with/alongside philanthropies, others spoke of contentions in some philanthropies' ways of working and the ways in which this exacerbates power dynamics and undermines the impact local organisations can make. Others also spoke of the need for more trust-based, localisation approaches and the need for more African ways of giving rooted in local principles and methods of giving.



The nature of education philanthropy across Africa varies widely.

From informal and religious giving in The Gambia to private foundations and corporate giving in Kenya and established collaboration networks in South Africa, the face and nature of education philanthropy varied widely within and across contexts in this study. There is still much that is unknown about countries with less prominent philanthropic funding, for example those in Francophone Africa or the Sahel.



There are some strong examples of collaboration between philanthropies, governments, implementers and the wider ecosystem, particularly in South Africa and Kenya.

Though collaboration was described as difficult, and often slow, participants highlighted the necessity of thoughtful collaboration to truly impact system change and support long-term education goals. Some examples included the East African Philanthropy Network, based in Kenya, the National Education Collaboration Trust in South Africa and a more general upward trend in public-private partnerships. Some key principles of effective collaboration identified by participants were shared vision/goal, clear and structured governance structures/ accountability lines and patience.



The role of philanthropy is changing with philanthropies having greater influence in national dialogues in education.

Whilst philanthropies are often viewed for their financial contributions alone, in some contexts such as Ghana and Egypt, philanthropies are having increasing influence in sector and technical working groups and partnering with more established bilateral and multilateral organisations.



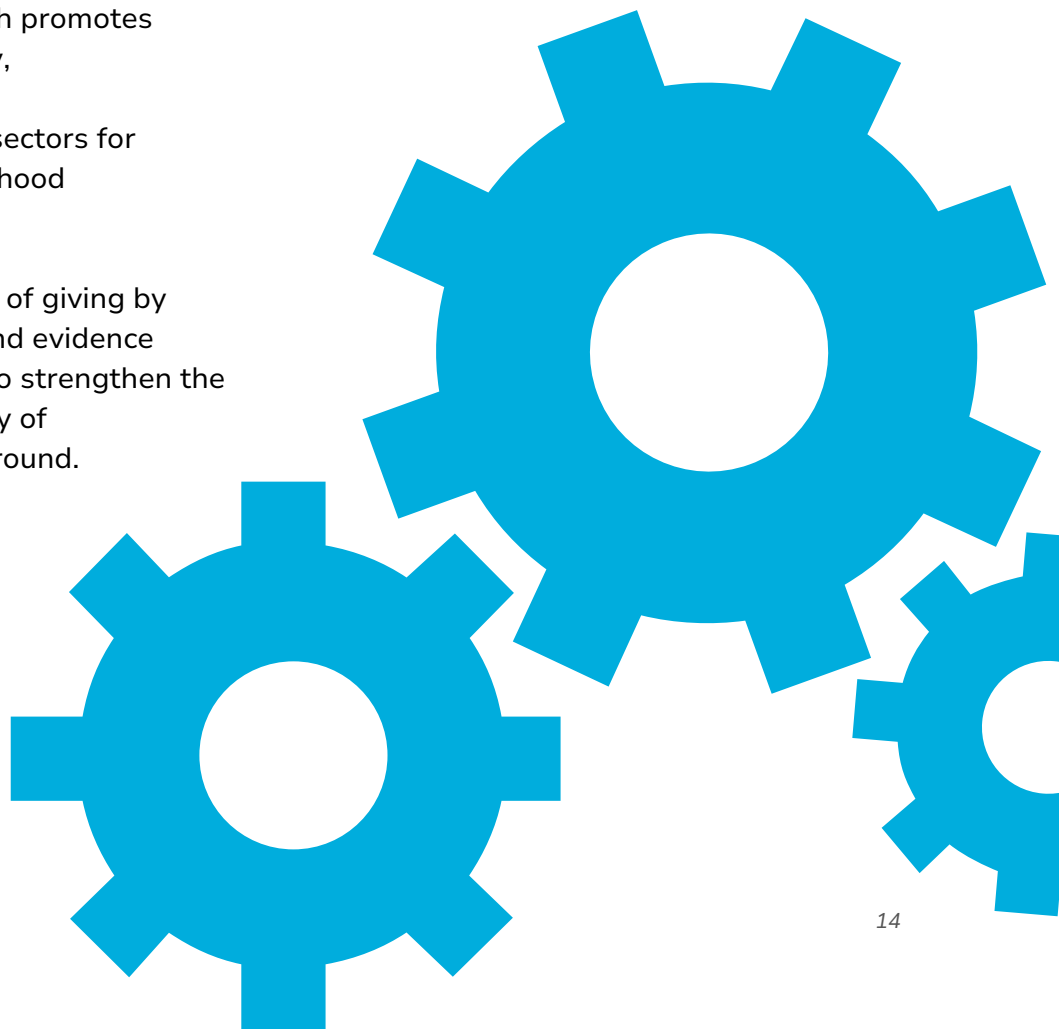
Grantees wish to collaborate beyond funding.

Grantees highlighted their desire for philanthropies to go beyond funding and collaborate with them in more capacity building and technical assistance activities to deepen their impact and sustainability.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AND BY PHILANTHROPY

Research participants spoke about a variety of key opportunities and ways forward for philanthropies to consider. This included:

- generating more evidence to better inform the sector and avoid duplication,
- harnessing diaspora remittances and giving more systematically,
- moving towards more unrestricted funding and truly adapting internal processes to embed localisation and trust-based approaches,
- harnessing the power of technology in a considered way which promotes equity and accessibility,
- addressing neglected sectors for funding e.g. early childhood development,
- amplifying other forms of giving by leveraging expertise and evidence within philanthropies to strengthen the operations and capacity of organisations on the ground.



CALL TO ACTION

The report highlights the following as key calls to action for philanthropic funders.

1 Listen to local voices and keep learning about what ‘local’ means.

There is an incredible range of voices and debate on what philanthropy means in, for and across African communities. Anyone funding in Africa should engage with this. To a lesser extent, there is debate on the ‘why and how’ of education across Africa. We urge funders to listen to this debate and to create spaces for this discourse to be heard.

2 Enable education change to be informed by evidence and debate.

Philanthropy is playing a role in improving the generation and sharing of research on Africa by Africans (such as the African Research for African Researchers consortium, the Education for Sub Saharan Africa database and the ADEA African research prize). There are also two or three efforts at establishing a regular forum for researchers, practitioners and policymakers to come together to share and learn but no committed funding for this to become a regular pan-African event. We recommend education philanthropy thinks about supporting a regular forum in Africa for debate on education.

3 Collaborate more, because you are stronger together.



There are several examples of collaboration between philanthropic organisations, which bring more voices and funding together and diminish fragmentation. We see fewer organisations identifying as collaboration enablers, creating the conditions for collaboration between education actors such as NGOs, researchers and government. We urge philanthropic actors to think about the potential for competition that the funding architecture can create, and to take steps to limit this.

NEXT STEPS

IEFG and partners enthusiastically welcome responses to this report, and ideas for how we might collaborate to take action on some of the recommendations above. Below are some concrete actions for education philanthropy to take:



ATTEND AN EVENT

Join us for a one-day one-off education philanthropy gathering in June 2025.



USE PLATFORMS

Make use of the existing platforms for education philanthropy.



CONTRIBUTE DATA

Contribute your data - a collated dataset on education giving would be directly useful to funders.



SHARE CALENDAR

Tell us about planned events on education across Africa in 2025 where we could spark action on issues raised in this report.

INTRODUCTION

“*The African Union’s Year of Education is an opportunity to drive change.*

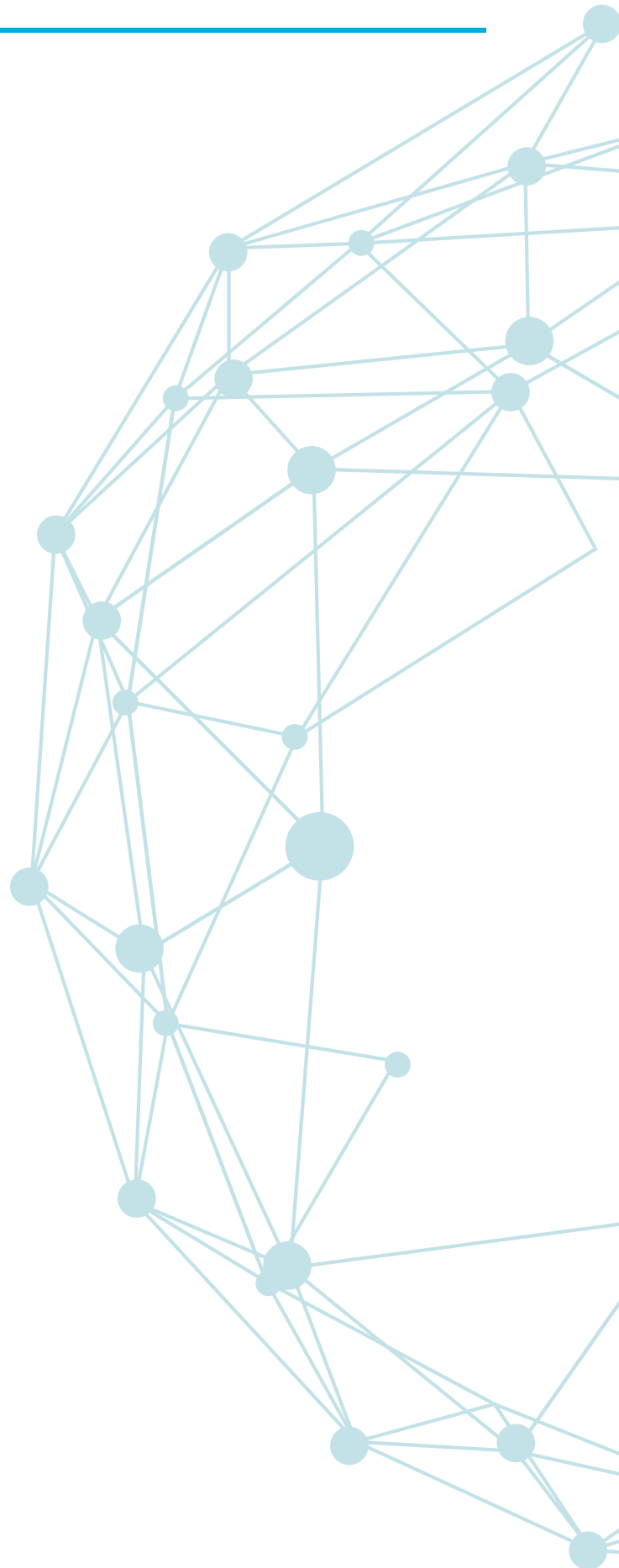
”

The International Education Funders' Group (IEFG) in partnership with the African Union (AU), Africa Philanthropy Network (APN), Africa Venture Philanthropy Association (AVPA), the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI), East Africa Philanthropy Network (EAPN), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Independent Philanthropy Association South Africa (IPASA), OECD's network of foundations working on development (netFWD) and Trust Africa (referred to as 'the consortium' henceforth) have come together to develop a spotlight report on trends in education philanthropy in Africa.

The research explores the current trends in education philanthropy in Africa across geographies, domestic and international sources, and levels of the education sector. It also explores which forms of philanthropy have shown the most promise and the ways in which funders can better collaborate to catalyse change in education philanthropy in Africa.

The aim of the research is to:

- Identify gaps, consolidate and analyse existing evidence.
- Connect philanthropic bodies, start a dialogue and work towards greater collaboration.



WHY THIS REPORT, AND WHY NOW?

In light of the African Union's Year of Education (AUYoE), the consortium is keen to contribute to evidence generation and meaningful discourse on what education philanthropy in Africa looks like, its impact to date and ways in which this avenue of funding can be catalysed for even greater impact in years to come. The AUYoE is an opportunity to drive positive change. This report seeks to support the AUYoE's objectives to increase sustainable financing and systemic investment in education, and to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships for education, through:

- 1 Consolidating information on trends and characteristics** of education philanthropy in Africa and presenting the range of contributions that education philanthropy makes towards education goals across Africa, on the basis that better understanding of this sector might lead to better harnessing of its potential;
- 2 Bringing together in community** the domestic education philanthropy across Africa and the global education philanthropy community who fund in Africa; and
- 3 Nudging and challenging education philanthropy** in Africa to 'do more and do better' – the tagline of IEFG, and the commitment made by 59 education philanthropy organisations that signed the 2022 statement^[2] to the Transforming Education Summit.

The inspiration for this report reflects our belief as IEFG, its members and partner networks which is that alongside any technical efforts, strategic and collaborative investment in education is crucial in driving broader change.

We therefore call upon wider philanthropy and social investment organisations to join us, and to bring ideas and innovations to catalyse more and better investment in education. This report aims to better inform and educate the wider education sector on philanthropy, offering guidance on how to harness it effectively. It goes beyond financial contributions, highlighting how philanthropy can catalyse, disrupt, adapt and introduce new perspectives. The intended audience for this report is all stakeholders in the African education space, be they continent wide agencies, government, education sector leaders and practitioners as well as the wider philanthropic and international funding community.

This report is by no means exhaustive and there are still many unknowns in relation to education philanthropy on the continent and its characteristics within and across various African contexts.

Furthermore, the education landscape in Africa is deeply heterogenous, complex and varied even within countries/contexts. As such, the report does not seek to make any generalisations but to prompt discussion and debate. The next section provides an overview of the education context in Africa.

[2] https://media.unesco.org/sites/default/files/webform/ed3002/TESS6_Financing%20Education_Ct_A_8%20September_Web.pdf

OUR COLLECTIVE CHALLENGE – WHY AFRICA AND WHY NOW?

“ We, the philanthropy networks and support organisations that produced this report, believe that the onus is on education philanthropy to help change this. ”

19

AFRICAN MEDIAN
AGE

15-20m

NUMBER OF YOUNG
PEOPLE JOINING
AFRICAN WORKFORCE
EVERY YEAR FOR NEXT
3 DECADES

98%

% OF YOUNG PEOPLE
ENROLLING AT PRIMARY
LEVEL IN SSA

9%

% OF THOSE WHO
MAKE IT TO TERTIARY
EDUCATION

6%

% OF WHO GRADUATE

The evidence is clear - the global workforce will increasingly be African.^[3]

With a median age of 19, Africa is currently the youngest continent in the world and will continue to be for the next several decades.^[4] Due to increased enrolment and completion of primary school, demand for higher levels of education has inevitably increased.^[5] 15 to 20 million increasingly well-educated young people are estimated to join the African workforce every year for the next three decades.

Cultivating an enabling environment for high-quality jobs and future skills to match will be imperative to fully leverage the continent's demographic dividend and prepare young people to sustain a livelihood and lead meaningful lives as citizens of a global world.^[6] Despite that, of the 98% of young people who enrol at the primary level in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), only 9% make it to tertiary education and only 6% graduate.^[7] As such, the challenge of expanding access to high-quality, relevant education in Africa is unprecedented especially in light of rapidly evolving labour market needs, changes in technology and artificial intelligence.

[3] Williams (2012), World Economic Forum (2017), Gage (2018), Mastercard Foundation (2020), Page (2022), UNESCO (2022)

[4] Mastercard Foundation (2020)

[5] Lewin (2008), Bennell (2021)

[6] World Economic Forum (2017), Mastercard Foundation (2020)

[7] Mastercard Foundation (2020)

250m

CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL
GLOBALLY

30%

OF THOSE ARE IN SUB-
SAHARAN AFRICA (SSA)

1 in 5

AFRICAN CHILDREN DO
NOT ATTEND SCHOOL

70%

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN
GLOBALLY UNABLE TO
READ AND COMPREHEND
SIMPLE TEXT BY AGE 10.

90%

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN
IN SSA NOT ABLE TO READ
BY AGE 10.

Despite the significant improvement in access to education through various conventions such as the Millennium Development Goals, Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals, many children still do not have access to school.

According to UNESCO, 250 million children remain out of school globally. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) accounts for close to 30% of this figure with 1 out of 5 African children not attending school.^[8] For those attending, most are not learning with 70% of children globally unable to read and comprehend simple text by the age of 10 years old. In SSA, this statistic is even more concerning with 90% of children not being able to read by age 10.^[9]

Marginalisation further compounds this challenge with intersecting factors such as poverty, food insecurity, gender, disability, ethnicity and location deepening educational inequality among the most disadvantaged. For example, in Cameroon, only 5% from the most disadvantaged quintile of girls had learned enough to complete primary school, compared to 76% of girls from the richest quintile.^[10] The complexities of these challenges are deep-seated and systemic. These range from access and quality of initial teaching training and ongoing professional development to poor working conditions, funding constraints and political will.

[8] UNESCO (2023)

[9] World Bank (2022); UNESCO (2023)

[10] Patel & Sandefur (2020)

CHILDREN BORN ON THE
AFRICAN CONTINENT
TODAY WILL ONLY BE

40%

AS ECONOMICALLY AND
SOCIALY PRODUCTIVE AS
ADULTS COMPARED TO IF
THEY HAD FULL ACCESS TO
QUALITY EDUCATION AND
HEALTH SYSTEMS.

Fundamentally, our current education systems are not built for the success of African learners, and this must change for Africa's youth to unlock its potential.

Multiple studies and evidence point to the role that education plays in the social, civic, economic and political progress of a nation.^[11] For example, according to the World Bank and IMF, increased education outcomes are positively related to increased earnings, higher employment opportunities, increased social mobility and social cohesion. However, within SSA, under current conditions, children born on the continent today will only be 40% as economically and socially productive when they grow up compared to how they could be if they had full access to a quality education and quality health systems.

We, the philanthropy networks and support organisations that produced this report, believe that the onus is on education philanthropy to help change this.

There are many obstacles to the challenge, but we can and should leverage our collective philanthropic resources to listen to and collaborate with local partners in identifying and addressing the challenges they view as barriers to improved learning

outcomes for students across the continent. However, we first need to develop a clearer understanding of our collective giving and how it can be more effectively harnessed.

\$6,156

AVERAGE PER
CAPITA
GOVERNMENT
SPENDING IN
EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA

\$358

AVERAGE PER
CAPITA
GOVERNMENT
SPENDING IN
SOUTH ASIA

\$254

AVERAGE PER
CAPITA
GOVERNMENT
SPENDING IN SUB-
SAHARAN AFRICA

The gap in government spending on education between the richest and poorest countries is enormous and getting wider. In 2020, average government per capita spending overall in sub-Saharan Africa (\$254) and South Asia (\$358) was less than one-tenth of average per capita spending in Europe and Central Asia (\$6,156). This spending gap continues to underpin, drive, and exacerbate global inequality.^[12]

The COVID-19 pandemic reversed a steady upward trend in per capita real public spending on education. One-third of lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) and half of upper-middle-income countries (UMICs) spent less per capita on education in 2019-2020 than they did in 2014-2015. In 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, 40 percent of LICs and LMICs reduced their spending on education with an average decline in spending of 13.5 percent.^[13]

In 2022, LICs and LMICs, on average, spent just US\$55 and US\$309 per child annually respectively — far below what is needed to ensure quality education and address the learning crisis.^[14]

[12] Poulsen (2022); World Bank, The GEM Report and UIS (2022)

[13] Poulsen (2022)

[14] World Bank, The GEM Report and UIS (2024)

11.7%

SHARE OF TOTAL AID
ALLOCATED TO
EDUCATION IN AFRICA IN
2010

9.7%

SHARE OF TOTAL AID
ALLOCATED TO
EDUCATION IN AFRICA IN
2020

Official development assistance for education has also been constantly below other sectors such as health for the past 10 years.

Education's share of total aid has declined from 11.7 percent in 2010 to 9.7 percent in 2020, which is approximately half of the allocation to health, which often ranges between 18 to 20 percent. In comparison and unsurprisingly, health saw a stark increase in aid in 2020 due to COVID-19. The available data on government budgetary commitments suggest that education spending lost space in national budgets of low- and lower-middle income countries in 2021 and 2022. As the future of development aid remains uncertain — with a looming global recession, numerous natural and human-made disasters, and some key bilateral donors announcing budget cuts — organisations are increasingly looking to philanthropic foundations to finance projects.^[15]

[[15] Poulsen (2022)

\$10.7 bn

DEVELOPMENT SPEND
FROM PRIVATE
PHILANTHROPIC
PROVIDERS IN 2022

12.3%

INCREASE IN ODA FROM
2018 TO 2021

According to data from OECD, private philanthropic providers spent \$10.7 billion on development overall in 2022.^[16]

Although much lower than the \$185.9 billion official development assistance, some philanthropic funders have become household names in global development for example the Gates Foundation and the Mastercard Foundation. According to analysis from Devex based on OECD's grant equivalent methodology, ODA increased by 12.3% in real terms from 2018 to 2021 — or from \$165.6 billion to \$185.9 billion. Meanwhile, the grant spending of eight foundations^[17] increased by 52.2% in the same period — or from \$9.1 billion to \$13.8 billion.^[18]

Data from the OECD and previous IIEG reports^[19] from 2016 to 2019 show that education ranks as the second highest philanthropic priority for international funders and the top priority for domestic philanthropy, with both areas witnessing growth which we explore later in this report. Despite these important and positive trends, we recognise that philanthropy cannot address the wider funding gaps in the international education sector.

[16] The OECD's data covers approx. 40 large philanthropies, all of which report to the OECD Creditor Reporting System.

[17] Namely: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, Wellcome, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Ford Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, IKEA Foundation, and Oak Foundation.

[18] Devex (2023)

[19] OECD (2021); IIEG (2022)

US\$ 97 bn

ESTIMATED DIASPORA
REMITTANCES TO
AFRICA IN 2022

From the evidence available, the vast majority of education philanthropy in Africa is generated outside of the continent - but we know that Africans give generously with their time and resources both at home and abroad.^[20]

We know this anecdotally and it is illustrated by the size of diaspora remittances to Africa, estimated at US\$ 97 billion in 2022^[21] and reiterated by the Global Giving Index 2023. Though the Index's definitions of 'giving' are broader and encapsulate other forms of giving such as volunteerism, it points to different types of generosity in Africa that we should pay attention to when thinking about the future of philanthropy on the continent. All these factors and more are contributing to the vibrancy of debate on African giving - at philanthropy conferences on the continent, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) events and philanthropic discourse more broadly.

Nonetheless, whilst there are an increasing number of philanthropy networks and platforms for engagement generally, few specifically focus on education.

As such, there is no current platform or moment dedicated to uniting Africa-based or Africa-focused education philanthropy. There are opportunities for philanthropy to engage in national level platforms e.g. through education sector working groups which should be capitalised on. However,

it is unclear what role philanthropy currently plays and should meaningfully play in such forums and more dialogue is needed. What we do know is that dialogue and connection is the first step towards collaboration. To greater leverage philanthropic investment in education to become even more impactful, we must look at more strategic ways of engaging nationally, regionally and continent-wide together. The following section outlines the research questions, methods and limitations of the research study.

[20] The Bridgespan Group (2024); Charities Aid Foundations (2024); <https://www.cafonline.org/insights/research/world-giving-index>;

[21] The Bridgespan Group (2024)

METHODS

“ *...across the sector it has been extremely challenging to obtain up-to-date, comprehensive, open-access datasets on education philanthropy in Africa which represents a serious gap in itself.* ”

The questions framing the research were:

1

What are the trends in education philanthropy in Africa by sub-levels, type, thematic areas etc?

- a. Sub-levels within education e.g. early childhood education, basic education, secondary education, higher education etc
- b. Domestic vs. international funding
- c. Geographies/regions within Africa
- d. Thematic areas, e.g. gender, technical and vocational education and training, faith-based education etc
- e. What contributes to the trends we observe?
- f. Where are the gaps? Which of the above are under-served?

2

What forms of philanthropy have shown promise in supporting education in Africa?

- a. What has worked well and why?
- b. What hasn't worked well and why?
- c. What other avenues/opportunities should we consider?

3

In what ways can funders better collaborate to catalyse change in education philanthropy?

- a. What current forms of collaboration work well and why?
- b. What do philanthropic funders/organisations need to do differently to support greater change in the sector?

The research used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through focus groups and key informant interviews with philanthropy, education philanthropy and government representatives as well as grantees and research organisations. A total of 25 participants took part in the focus groups. Data collection / analysis also involved engagement in various sub-regional consultations in East (EAPN), West (Trust Africa) and South Africa (IPASA), a global virtual consultation led by IEFG and industry events with established philanthropy networks and experts to test, validate and challenge key themes and findings that emerged from the focus groups and interviews. Approximately 105 participants engaged in these consultations.

Secondary data included desktop research and analysis of existing/available quantitative data namely from the OECD, IEFG, EAPN and other open access sources such as the African Venture Philanthropy Alliance (AVPA), Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training (NORRAG), Africa Grantmakers Affinity Group, Trust Africa among others. The OECD's Private Philanthropy for Development data provided the basis for the quantitative figures presented in this report. It should be noted that the OECD defines education to broadly include basic, secondary, post-secondary education, and some unspecified education sub-sectors.^[22] These sub-sectors are broken down into 'Purposes' which include:

COUNTRIES FEATURED
IN QUALITATIVE DATA
COLLECTION

BURUNDI
EGYPT
ETHIOPIA
GHANA
KENYA
SIERRA LEONE
SOUTH AFRICA
TANZANIA
UGANDA
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE

- ▶ Advanced technical and managerial training
- ▶ Basic life skills for adults
- ▶ Basic life skills for youth
- ▶ Early childhood education
- ▶ Education facilities and training
- ▶ Education policy and administrative management
- ▶ Educational research
- ▶ Higher education
- ▶ Lower secondary education
- ▶ Primary education
- ▶ Primary education equivalent for adults
- ▶ School feeding
- ▶ Teacher training
- ▶ Upper Secondary Education
- ▶ Vocational training

[22] For more on their methodology and approach see here: [https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/philanthropy.html#:~:text=As%20a%20group%2C%20around%2040,2022%20\(USD%20211%20billion\);](https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/philanthropy.html#:~:text=As%20a%20group%2C%20around%2040,2022%20(USD%20211%20billion);) See also OECD (2021), Private Philanthropy for Development: Data for Action Dashboard, OECD Publishing, Paris and OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Within their categorisations, the OECD also includes activities such as convenings, health-related education initiatives, cultural education, scholarships etc. It should be noted that IIEG, its members and network partners would typically exclude these activities and some of the purposes listed above within their understanding and categorisation of education data.

It should be noted that across the sector it has been extremely challenging to obtain up-to-date, comprehensive, open-access datasets on education philanthropy in Africa which represents a serious gap in itself.

For example, though the OECD dataset is the most comprehensive, it requires updating and only covers a relatively small sample of philanthropies with a bias towards international organisations who have volunteered their data. Whilst IIEG have some data, this is an internal resource only to be published anonymously and does not allow for comparable quantitative analysis on who funds what and where, especially in Africa. Other datasets were simply confidential. This leaves us with several questions: How many education-focused foundations are there in Africa? What are the current patterns of HNW giving? How many corporations/banks (in Africa and beyond) have philanthropic arms? How much unrestricted funding do philanthropies give? What is the profile of typical grantees? How much total philanthropic funds flow to education in Africa overall? The short answer to these questions (and many more) is: we do not know. Yet we

know that this kind of data would be beneficial to us all as grant seekers, grant makers, governments and other organisations to better strategise and engage.

As a result of these challenges, the quantitative data presented in this report cannot give conclusive answers to the research questions, it is merely illustrative and points to some overarching trends witnessed in other reports and datasets. Likewise with the qualitative research, as it is small-scale research, the findings presented cannot be generalised to any given country, the continent or philanthropic space but nonetheless provides detailed insights and nuances to the research questions above and a basis for further discussion and debate. Both sets of data used convenience sampling due to the nature and timelines associated with the development of the report.



How many education-focused foundations are there in Africa? What are the current patterns of HNW giving? How many corporations/banks (in Africa and beyond) have philanthropic arms? How much unrestricted funding do philanthropies give? What is the profile of typical grantees? How much total philanthropic funds flow to education in Africa overall?



FINDINGS: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT EDUCATION PHILANTHROPHY IN AFRICA?

“ *...there is still the need for spaces/forums to collectively debate and apply evidence.* ”

TRENDS IN EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY IN AFRICA

The following section outlines the key findings from the research, including quantitative trends in education philanthropy in Africa, as well as insights from the five focus groups conducted with African philanthropy and education philanthropy representatives, government, grantees, plus key informant interviews and virtual consultations.

The lack of accessible quantitative data limits our collective, comprehensive understanding of trends in philanthropic funding in education in Africa and requires collective action on more transparent data-sharing to foster increased collaboration and strengthen our collective impact.

The section starts by sharing key trends in education philanthropy on the continent and then continues with some of the key qualitative themes from the focus groups. The findings conclude with key opportunities for philanthropy to consider, debate and action.

Despite this scarcity of data, there are a handful of sources that have provided useful information in understanding overarching trends within education philanthropy across Africa, such as the **OECD Private Philanthropy for Development data** (from 2016 – 2019 and 2018 -2022) which provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive analysis.^[23]

Some of the key findings are below.

[23] OECD data: Private Philanthropy for Development data

Education remains a high priority within the philanthropy sector both globally and in Africa specifically.^[24]

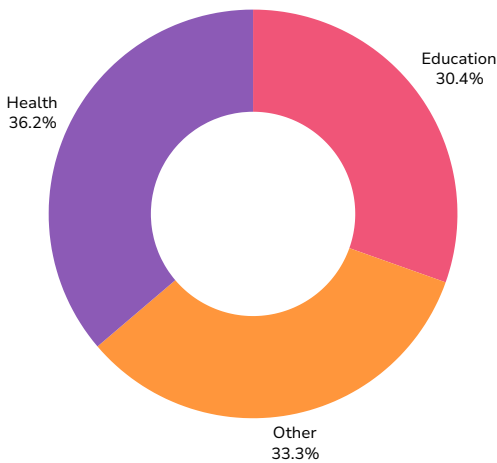


Fig 1: Top priorities for Africa collaborations 2021

Analysing top priorities for African collaborations, the **Bridgespan Group** (2024) found that in 2021, 21% of funding was allocated to education, following ‘other’ funding at 23% and health at 25%.

Similarly, **OECD data** reveals that between 2016 and 2019, the highest inflows of funding into Africa by sector are health (44%), agriculture (20%) and education (12%).^[25]

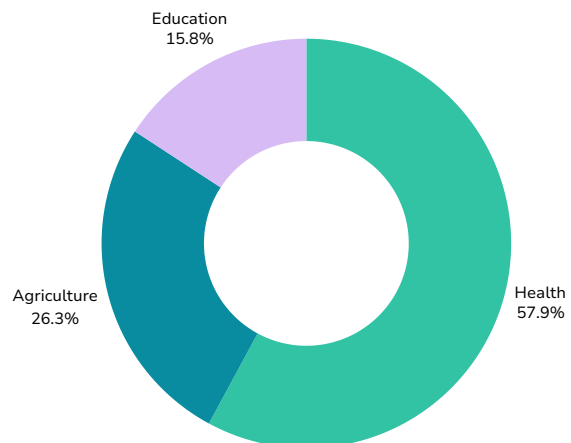


Fig. 2 Inflow of funding into Africa by sector 2016 - 2019

The focus group discussions also confirmed this, with the majority of participants relating these sectoral priorities to the **‘trajectory of Africa’s 2050 population’** and the need for **‘education interventions to leverage on its transformative and ripple effects in combating future economic hardship,’** thus highlighting the importance of education in supporting livelihoods. Other participants suggested that sectoral funding patterns on the continent can be

tied to the continent’s immediate needs i.e. for better quality sustenance, education and health, and this trend is likely to continue. Nonetheless, as seen below, the majority of this funding goes to post-secondary education and much less to supporting the foundational levels of education where many of the challenges we witness begin.

[24] [The Bridgespan Group \(2024\)](#), [Heriot Row Advisors & IEFG \(2022\)](#); [The Bridgespan Group \(2024\)](#), [OECD Data Explorer](#)

[25] [OECD \(2021\)](#), [Private Philanthropy for Development: Data for Action Dashboard](#), [OECD Publishing, Paris](#)

There has been an increase in education-related philanthropic support to Africa, especially within the last six years.

US\$771.8M

TOTAL SUM OF EDUCATION FUNDING WITHIN AFRICA 2016 - 2019

The **OECD Private Philanthropy for Development** data suggests that between 2016 and 2019, the total sum of education funding within Africa has been US\$ 771.8 million.

Positively, the data indicates that there is a growing trend of philanthropic support in education. For example, findings from the OECD show that total philanthropic funding to education in Africa was approximately US\$ 290 million in 2019 and in 2022, this rose to US\$ 867 million, an increase of almost 200%.^[26]

2019
2022

US\$ 290M

TOTAL PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING TO EDUCATION IN AFRICA

US\$ 867M

Fig. 3 Total philanthropic funding to education in Africa in 2019 and 2022

R2.31BN

PHILANTHROPIC FUNDS TO 10 SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES IN 2020

This increase is reflected at a national level, for example, in the South African higher education sector, philanthropic funds from both national and international funders to 10 specific universities totalled an estimated R2.31bn in 2020, almost double the amount received in 2019 by the same universities (**University of Witwaterstrand**, 2023).

[26] OECD (2023).

When exploring trends between domestic vs international funding from 2016-2019, OECD data reveals that the majority of philanthropy stems from international donors (87%) in comparison to domestic donors (13%).^[27]



DOMESTIC VS. INTERNATIONAL FUNDING

Fig 4. Sources of philanthropic funding, international vs. local, 2016 - 2019

In the same 2016-2019 OECD dataset South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria are the only countries that provide domestic funding with US\$ 67.9 million from South Africa, US\$ 34.2 million from Egypt and US\$ 1.9 million from Nigeria.^[28]

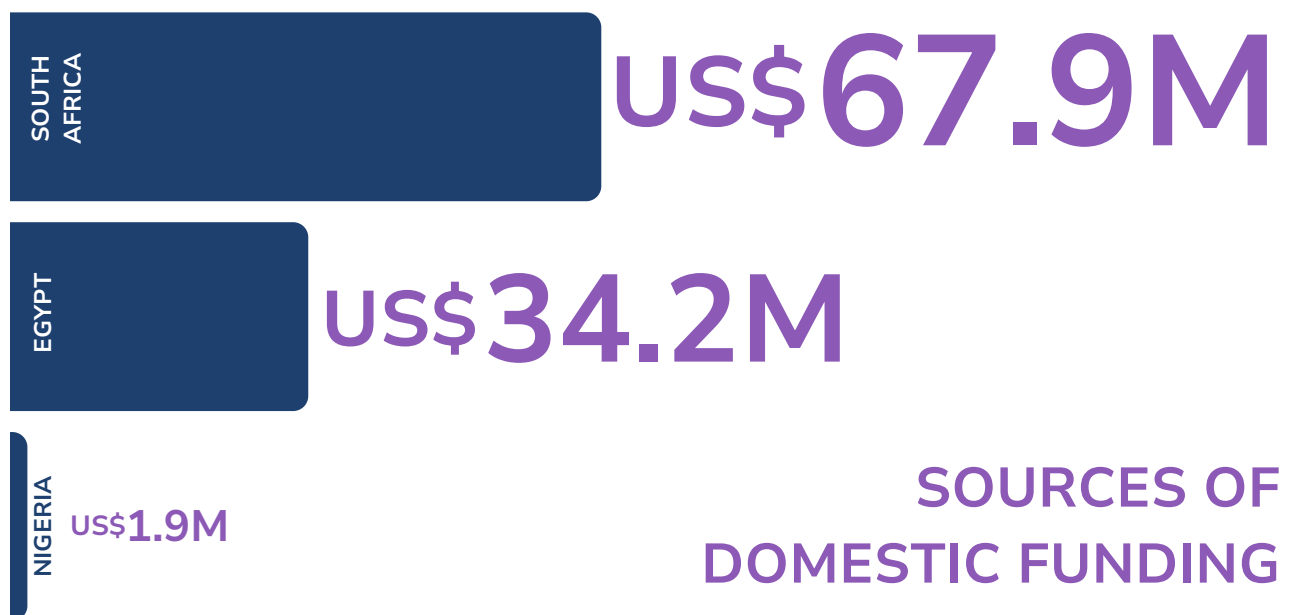
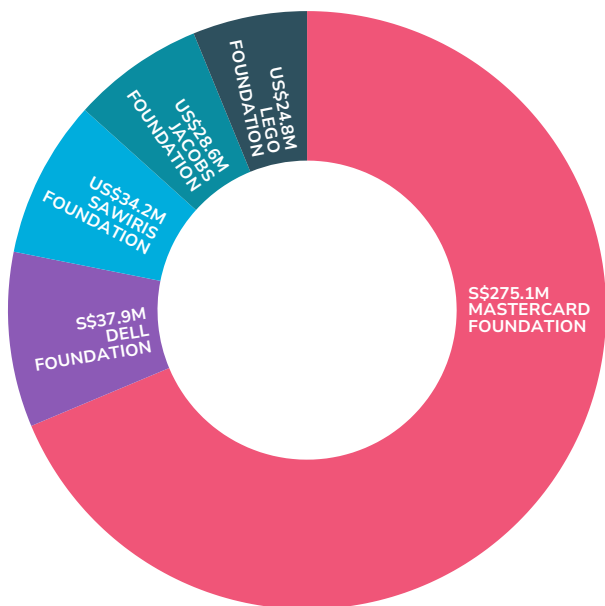


Fig 5. Sources of domestic education funding 2016 - 2019

[27] OECD (2021), Private Philanthropy for Development: Data for Action Dashboard, OECD Publishing, Paris
[28] OECD (2021), Private Philanthropy for Development: Data for Action Dashboard, OECD Publishing, Paris

Largest funders of education in Africa



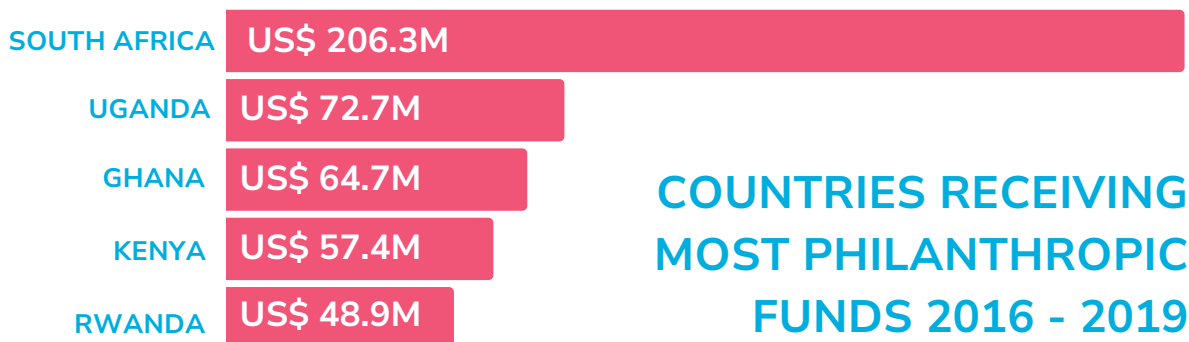
Across all education levels, the **largest funders** are: Mastercard Foundation (US\$ 275.1 million), Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (US\$ 37.9 million), Sawiris Foundation for Social Development (US\$ 34.2 million), Jacobs Foundation (US\$ 28.6 million) and LEGO Foundation (US\$ 24.8 million.)^[29]



Fig 6. Largest funders of education in Africa across all education levels.

The countries which receive the most philanthropic funds on the continent are typically in Anglophone Africa.

Between 2016-2019, the most funded countries overall were South Africa (US\$ 206.3 million), Uganda (US\$ 72.7 million), Ghana (US\$ 64.7 million), Kenya (US\$ 57.4 million) and Rwanda (US\$ 48.9 million).^[30]



COUNTRIES RECEIVING MOST PHILANTHROPIC FUNDS 2016 - 2019

Fig 7. Countries receiving most philanthropic funds between 2016 - 2019

Anglophone countries are vastly more funded than Francophone countries. Though there was an overall lack of data, it appeared from analysis that Francophone and by extension Lusophone Africa received significantly less philanthropic funds. Approximately 79% of funding is allocated to Anglophone countries in

comparison to 15% Francophone countries.^[31] Focus group discussions also confirmed this. Nonetheless, more robust statistics from Northern Africa could present a different picture.

ANGLOPHONE COUNTRIES
79%

FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES
15%

WHERE FUNDING GOES IN AFRICA

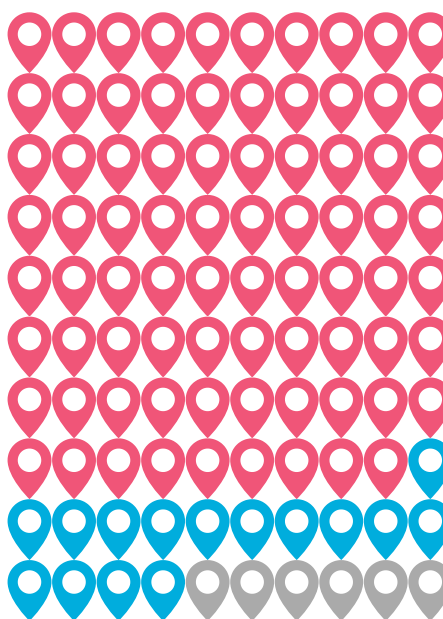


Fig 8. Allocation of philanthropic funds between Anglophone and Francophone countries. Grey colour indicates 'other/unknown' in data.

[30] OECD (2021), IEFG (2023)
[31] OECD (2021)

Philanthropic support tends to increase as income levels decrease.

Between 2016-2019, low-income countries received US\$ 273.8 million, lower-middle-income countries received US\$ 261 million and upper-middle income countries received US\$ 215.4 million.^[32]

TOTAL PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT BY INCOME LEVEL

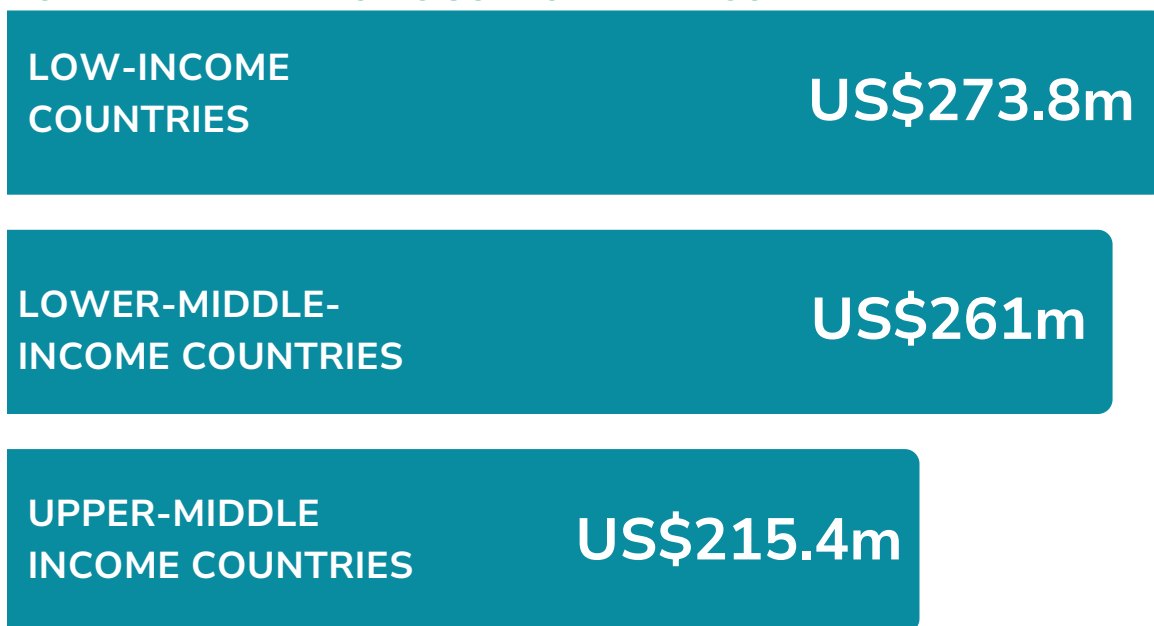


Fig 9. Allocation of philanthropic funds between low-income, lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income countries 2016 - 2019.

Between 2016-2019, OECD data indicates funding patterns to different sectors of education varied significantly across the continent and this was influenced by various continent-wide policies, national policies and demand. ^[33]

FUNDING BY EDUCATION SECTOR



By level of education, the most funded sub-sector of education is post-secondary education (US\$ 237 million). This is followed by secondary education (US\$ 190.3 million), education level, unspecified (US\$ 173.4 million), basic education (US\$ 172 million) and vocational training (US\$ 105.4 million). ^[34]

Fig 10. Allocation of funds by education level in Africa, 2016 - 2019.

BASIC EDUCATION LEVEL

At the basic education level, the largest funders are LEGO Foundation (US\$ 23.8 million), Charity Projects Ltd (Comic Relief) (US\$ 18.7 million), Roger Federer Foundation (US\$ 17.3 million), Conrad N. Hilton Foundation (US\$ 16.4 million), Sawiris Foundation for Social Development (US\$ 15.5 million) and Jacobs Foundation (US\$ 15.5 million).

LARGEST FUNDERS



Fig 11. Largest funders at basic education level in Africa.

At this level of education, the countries that are the highest recipients of philanthropic funds were South Africa (US\$ 28.6 million), Egypt (US\$ 18.2 million) Côte D'Ivoire (US\$ 16.6 million), Kenya (US\$ 16.4 million) and Tanzania (US\$ 15.1 million).

HIGHEST RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS



Fig 12. African countries that are highest recipients of philanthropic funds at basic education level.

[33] OECD (2021)

[34] Basic education consists of early childhood education, primary school, junior secondary school and basic life skills for youth. OECD data on early childhood education also encompasses broader early childhood development support.

SECONDARY LEVEL

At secondary level, the largest funders are Mastercard Foundation (US\$ 133 million), Sawiris Foundation for Social Development (US\$ 9.8 million), Jacobs Foundation (US\$ 7.6 million), Citi Foundation (US\$ 5.3 million), United Postcode Lotteries (US\$ 4.3 million) and Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (US\$ 3 million).

HIGHEST RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

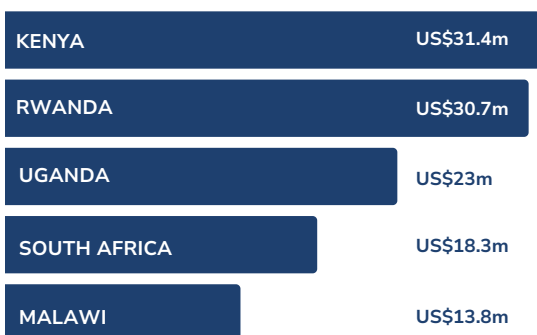


Fig 14. African countries that are highest recipients of philanthropic funds at secondary education level.

LARGEST FUNDERS

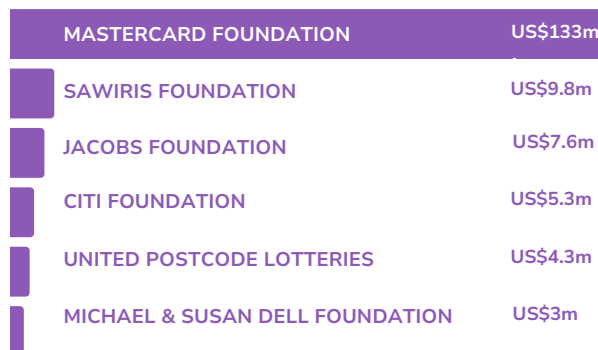


Fig 13. Largest funders at secondary education level in Africa.

By country, the most funded in this sub-sector were Kenya (US\$ 31.4 million), Rwanda (US\$ 30.7 million), Uganda (US\$ 23 million), South Africa (US\$ 18.3 million) and Malawi (US\$ 13.8 million).

POST-SECONDARY LEVEL

At the post-secondary level, the largest funders are Mastercard Foundation (US\$ 125.6 million), Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (US\$ 22.8 million), Moshal Scholarship Foundation (US\$ 16.1 million), Sawiris Foundation for Social Development (US\$ 9 million), Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (US\$ 8.3 million) and Jacobs Foundation (US\$ 5.2 million).

HIGHEST RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

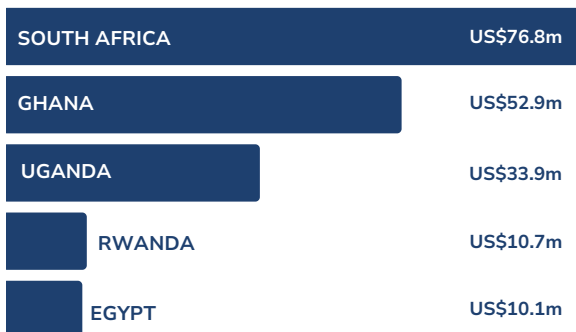


Fig 16. African countries that are highest recipients of philanthropic funds at post-secondary education level.

LARGEST FUNDERS



Fig 15. Largest funders at post-secondary education level in Africa.

By country, the most funded were South Africa (US\$ 76.8 million), Ghana (US\$ 52.9 million), Uganda (US\$ 33.9 million), Rwanda (US\$ 10.7 million) and Egypt (US\$ 10.1 million).

AFRICAN UNION LEVEL

At the African Union level, priority areas are driven by the African Union Year of Education (AUYoE) Roadmap^[35] with particular emphasis on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and its link to enhancing employability for the continent's youth. In Northern Africa, participants shared that the traditional focus from philanthropies and corporates was on early childhood development (ECD) and basic education with a more recent shift to TVET. Accompanying this shift to TVET are increased public-private partnerships (PPPs) to support greater collaboration and coherence between public sector goals and the labour market.

In South Africa, there was more perceived funder interest in the ECD, primary education and climate-related initiatives. Focus group participants also spoke of the 'funding crisis' in the higher education (HE) sector. In East Africa, there appeared to be a strong interest in basic education and youth employment more broadly as well as HE due to the challenges in access after students successfully complete secondary education. In West Africa, participants spoke to the prominence of basic education overall (ECD, primary and junior high school in many cases).

Organisationally, different philanthropies have stated specific areas of interest in education for their funding.

EXAMPLES OF AREAS OF INTEREST FOR PHILANTHROPIES

- ▶ YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
- ▶ FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES
- ▶ LITERACY
- ▶ NUMERACY
- ▶ SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS
- ▶ IMPROVING OUTCOMES IN AFFORDABLE NON-STATE SECTOR
- ▶ EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

This ranges from improving youth employment (Young Africa Works Strategy)^[36], foundational learning outcomes – including literacy, numeracy and socio-emotional skills (e.g. Gates Foundation and the Jacobs Foundation), improving outcomes in the affordable non-state sector (IDP Foundation), early childhood education (ELMA philanthropies) and so on.

[35] https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43425-doc-EX_CL_1476_XLIV_Rev_1_-_CONCEPT_NOTE_with_Roadmap_AU_Theme_E.pdf

[36] <https://mastercardfdn.org/our-strategy/young-africa-works/>

Thematically, there have been shifts to more holistic learning outcomes and an emphasis on quality in addition to access.

In East Africa in particular, participants highlighted a perceived increase in funding interventions which tackle issues of quality. Specific examples given included more funding for support to curriculum reform and teacher training as opposed to mainly school infrastructure and scholarships. In South Africa, this meant a greater emphasis on initial teacher education (and ongoing professional development) as well as ECD, foundational learning and remediation. There has also been an emerging holistic approach to education, life skills and socio-emotional learning to develop well-

rounded learners who are adequately prepared for 21st century life. Technology (digital learning tools, online resources for education, ICT in classrooms) and its role in improving learning outcomes is also a prominent theme in East African philanthropy, less so in South and West Africa. Recent government curriculum reforms (and other wider education reforms in East Africa more broadly) are said to be key influences/drivers of philanthropic interests and inform some of the shifts in trends that we are seeing.

Another key trend is the increased focus from philanthropies on grantees and potential grantees' use of evidence to maximise and demonstrate impact and value for money.

This trend was mentioned across the various sub-regions but was more pronounced in 'more mature' markets such as Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania, among others and less so in more nascent philanthropic spaces such as Sierra Leone. Though this increased appetite for evidence may relate to market maturity, it can also be related to the same emphasis in the bilateral/multilateral funding space. Participants however warned of rigidity in defining evidence and treating randomised control trials as a 'gold standard' as measuring impact in education often requires more nuance. Especially as real change in the sector is a long-term endeavour often in competition with short-term funding cycles. To capitalise on this, some philanthropies in Northern Africa are using this opportunity to position themselves as a 'learning foundation', championing openness, transparency and intentionally collaborating with research organisations such as J-PAL to inform the wider sector.

This has also captured the attention of UN agencies, leading to interest in co-funding, partnerships, and other forms of collaboration. Related to the increased focus on evidence is an increase in results-based financing (RBF) approaches in philanthropic and pooled funding such as the Education Outcomes Fund. Participants stated that, 'though RBF has been around for a while, it is becoming more mainstream.' In contexts like South Africa, more innovative funding mechanisms are being explored e.g. Impact Bond Innovation Fund (IBIF) for ECD^[37] and Greater Share.

Despite this trend however, there is still the need for spaces/forums to collectively debate and apply evidence. The following section further expands on the qualitative themes from the focus group discussions and interviews.

“ Without evidence, it remains a debate. ”
KEY INFORMANT

[37] <https://innovationedge.org.za/project/eecd-impact-bond-innovation-fund/>

THEMATIC FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

“ *The concept of philanthropy was difficult to define and somewhat contentious among participants.* ”

The analysis below is organised thematically and presents some of the key ideas, tensions and debates from our participants. The findings continue by exploring the following themes: definitions of philanthropy, the role and influence of philanthropies on the continent, working with governments versus NGOs^[38], tensions in localisation and trust-based giving and the power and challenges in collaboration. The findings conclude with opportunities for philanthropy as stated by research participants themselves.

WHAT IS PHILANTHROPY?

“ Philanthropy is an enormous word, a swear word to some. ”
GRANTEE

The concept of philanthropy was difficult to define and somewhat contentious among participants. For some, philanthropy was simply the act of giving, whereas for others, problematic power dynamics are inherent to the concept of philanthropy itself. Especially Western forms of philanthropy which were described ‘to be at odds’ with more rooted, African ways of giving. For the latter group, one participant stated that ‘philanthropy can feel like control in terms of how it has been practised before and a lack of genuine partnership with how philanthropies approach working with grantees.’ This raised questions such as, **“How do we really partner to achieve what we need to achieve, not only monetarily? How do we offer community support, care and belonging?”**

Participants stressed the need for individuals and philanthropic organisations to approach funding differently:

“ For Africans, we are not finding it easy to connect with the concept of Western philanthropy. The issue of power and power imbalances remain, and those two issues repel someone like myself, in terms of feeling at home with philanthropies and what they do. ”

[38] Defined as a non-profit organisation, group or institution that operates independently from a government and has humanitarian or development objectives.

“ We need to look beyond the formalised foundations of Western philanthropy and also look to the localised contributions of people based on relationships, generosity and ensuring they align with visions for the future.

”

GRANTEE

In this participant's view, philanthropic giving should go beyond monetary contributions and intentionally leverage relational support within local contexts in pursuit of improved learning outcomes for learners across the continent. This could be from high net-worth individuals, local businesses and/or school communities themselves. The next section describes some characteristics of different cultures of philanthropy across the continent.

As stated in studies by Trust Africa^[39], the concept of African philanthropy is not new. Like their studies, our participants confirmed that no single narrative can or should conceptualise philanthropy in Africa.

Some research participants highlighted that **“most people on the continent can be considered philanthropists”** once you include forms of giving such as child sponsorship, volunteering with schools, building schools or providing school supplies. This tallies with recent data from the 2023 Charities Aid Foundation World Giving Data Index^[40] with Kenya, The Gambia and Nigeria ranking second, fourth and fifth respectively (out of 142 countries) as the most generous nations globally. Criteria included helping a stranger, or

someone you didn't know who needed help, donating money to charity and volunteering for an organisation or within your local community. Our research participants also highlighted this and the importance of exploring more **‘horizontal ways of giving’** in discussions and debates on philanthropy i.e. where less well-off individuals give to one another rather than institutional giving from wealthy individuals, foundations and networks which this report focuses on.

[39] Trust Africa (2024)

[40] <https://www.cafonline.org/insights/research/world-giving-index>

Despite these various ways of giving, research participants highlighted that dominant existing understandings of philanthropy narrowly focus on Western framings which fail to account for context-specificities.

For example, research participants from Sierra Leone raised the point that many schools are not owned by the government. They estimated that 4 out of 5 schools are typically owned and run by missions - Catholic, Protestant and Muslim organisations and have various funding streams from local and international sources. This is also common across other neighbouring contexts such as Senegal and The Gambia through Madrasas and Wadaras. Thus, in this portion of West Africa, informal philanthropy, religious and traditional giving practices are prominent

features. In countries like Senegal for example, the institutionalisation of traditional and religious philanthropy through the establishment of community foundations was also said to be gaining prominence. Creating enabling environments for legal and regulatory frameworks as well as tax exemptions are crucial to enhance this. This is currently implemented inconsistently across the continent with stronger examples in Nigeria and South Africa and weaker examples in Burkina Faso and Ghana.

There is a growing number of high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) supporting education in Africa and this trend is expected to continue in the coming years.^[41]

In Africa, there are approximately 23 USD billionaires (approx. 0.8% of the global total) and 138,000 USD millionaires (approx. 0.2% of the global total)^[42] and this figure is expected to increase by 42% within the next 10 years.^[43] In 2020, there was a seven-fold increase in general giving by African philanthropists, in comparison to the average annual rate of giving over the last decade. Focus group participants also stated that though the continent does not have a long tradition of domestic philanthropy of this institutional form, the trend is changing and growing. HNWIs play a key role in that, and their role is increasing, particularly in East (Kenya and Uganda) and West Africa (Nigeria, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Ghana). Nonetheless, their

contributions tend to be 'very local' and leverage personal relationships and connections.

Often this type of giving is also related to their immediate business ventures (e.g. Aliko Dangote Foundation) which can boost and solidify their local standing. This tallies with findings from other recent reports^[44] and there were calls from participants for 'high net-worth individuals on the continent to do more,' calling for greater collaboration and support for education in Africa.

700%

INCREASE IN GENERAL GIVING IN 2020 BY AFRICAN PHILANTHROPISTS, IN COMPARISON TO AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GIVING OVER LAST DECADE.

[41] Trust Africa (2024)

[42] UBS (2024)

[43] The Bridgespan Group (2024)

[44] Trust Africa (2024); The Bridgespan Group (2024)



I've been in fundraising for 20 years and been fundraising in Africa for the last seven years. Up until two years ago, I'd heard very little about African philanthropy. We have fundraisers in-country, but it has always been difficult to find substantial amounts coming from Africa. In the last 18 months to two years though, it feels as though I'm hearing about African philanthropies a lot more – forums, platforms... on a weekly basis. It feels like an explosion which is exciting to see.



GRANTEE

Though the lack of available quantitative data did not allow us to explore this 'explosion', other research participants agreed with this increasing trend in more locally generated philanthropy.

In East Africa, and particularly Kenya, domestic philanthropy was described as “**two-pronged**” involving two main groups of domestic funders, in addition to international philanthropies:

1 Private foundations and corporates

This includes banks, financial technology companies and telecommunications such as Safaricom. Their funding has traditionally focused on infrastructure, scholarships and other forms of visible/tangible support and less so on the quality of education, a more complex, long-term dimension.

2 Individuals / HNWI's

One participant from the focus groups gave an example of a Kenyan individual who donated 100 million Kenyan Shillings (approx. USD 780, 000) to a university and noted this may be an interesting trend to follow in terms of HNWI's. This is supported by other research papers by Trust Africa and The Bridgespan Group.

In addition to the above, participants spoke about the importance of family-based giving in East Africa e.g. donations to support extended relatives to successfully complete school. This type of giving was said to be shifting to individuals outside of extended family networks for example, donating to schools directly. However, this area is largely under-researched in the East African context and the continent

more widely. Participants suggested that it would be interesting to understand the extent to which this is becoming more common, what it looks like practice and how it can be capitalised on. Domestic funders in Kenya specifically were also said to be increasing their focus on supporting more social-justice and equity focused initiatives.

In Kenya, technology is being leveraged to support more informal types of giving.

M-Pesa^[45] (mobile money transfers) is a key vehicle for this. M-Changa^[46] (Africa's largest online fundraising platform) is a relatively new form of collective contributing via an app. It builds on M-Pesa technology and allows individuals to give easily and effectively.

“ When a platform and the individual fundraising is trusted it can be a powerful way of giving. ”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

Another important form of giving is being catalysed through internal efforts by various nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) such as Zizi Afrique through staff giving. Building on the **'Tenda wema, nenda zako'** (AaSwahili proverb meaning 'Do good, go your way' in English) philosophy, staff members are committing portions of their salary to support their projects and strengthen different local forms of philanthropy, i.e. **'giving from the inside'**.

South Africa has 'always had a strong tradition of private philanthropy and corporate giving' and represents a more established philanthropic environment on the continent.

As participants mentioned, over time, the South African government has been intentional about encouraging this type of giving also through tax incentives, public policy frameworks and other policies to encourage such funding into education development and the social sector more broadly. Education has always been a key focus of philanthropic giving, with organisations like the Zenex Foundation estimating that 70 to 80% of their funding goes to education development. Though typical philanthropic initiatives support the higher education sector through scholarships and bursaries, there is also said to be an increasing focus on early

childhood development (ECD) and foundational learning.

The government have also been instrumental in institutionalising collaboration for example by setting up National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), an organisation dedicated to strengthening partnerships among business, civil society, government and labour in order to achieve the education goals of the country's National Development Plan. The next section describes the role philanthropies play in education in Africa.

[45] <https://www.vodafone.com/about-vodafone/what-we-do/m-pesa>
[46] <https://www.mchanga.africa/>

THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPIES IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS ON THE CONTINENT

The role and influence of philanthropies varied from context to context and can be enhanced.

In some contexts, such as Sierra Leone, the role of philanthropy was described as 'nascent', and philanthropies tend to work directly through NGOs to support education sector goals rather than engaging with government directly. In other contexts, such as Egypt and Ghana, philanthropies were demonstrating increasing influence in the wider education sector through increased participation in national education technical/sector working groups where membership had been previously denied.

This demonstrates increased recognition of the role of philanthropies to share data, learn and contribute to wider discourse and debates. Ghana had a similar example where private foundations have recently gained membership to the local education sector working groups to contribute to wider sector discourse, policy and implementation. Though funding and influence is increasing, one foundation noted that, '**we aren't there yet.**'

Interestingly, in contexts like Ethiopia, there appeared to be a mismatch in terms of understanding what philanthropies do, and not recognising the policy and advocacy roles that many philanthropies play. Some stated that they are '**not working with philanthropies directly as they wish to**' but recognise that philanthropies 'have been instrumental' in their work by supporting country education sector plans. This is despite the fact that they had recently organised and delivered policy forums together. Desired future philanthropic support from government participants included the joint curation, design, pilot and implementation of key projects/strategies in country.

For grantees, the majority expressed positive working relationships with philanthropies emphasising their ‘flexibility’ in comparison to bilateral/multilateral funders. However, this came with its own challenges and cautions.

Philanthropy was generally described by grantees as ‘**more accommodating**’ around pivots in education service delivery and their consideration of the complexities and constraints of their operating environments. In contrast, grantees described more ‘clinical transactions’ with government, corporate funders and bilateral funders.

“ Philanthropy recognises nuances. For example, Porticus gives us space [to pivot], USAID does not.

”
GRANTEE

Despite this, some other grantees suggested that the philanthropic funding environment can be ‘**quite fragmented especially among corporates and philanthropies,**’ and the occasional lack of clarity when working with philanthropies. For example:

“ Before there was a common understanding of how governments [bilaterals] work with one another and that’s changed. We haven’t pinned it down yet, in terms of the role of philanthropies in the last few years. How do you engage and what are the parameters? How do you uphold the ‘no harm’ principle? There are undue policy effects and practices – that space is not fully understood.

”
KEY INFORMANT

They continued by elaborating on the importance of these questions, which other participants resonated with:

“ Having resources is one thing but understanding how resources can be employed for the bigger picture is another thing. It’s important for philanthropies to understand this and build their capacity in this area. Deployment of resources without deeper development thinking can have negative consequences. If you deploy resource through the wrong people...e.g. deploying resources that negatively impact the environment. Philanthropies should be working intentionally to build government capacity also.

”
KEY INFORMANT

Here the importance and responsibility of philanthropy to better inform themselves on the most effective ways to give and support, not distract from, system goals is key.

Regarding funding strategies, philanthropies were described as ‘risk averse’ showing preference for ‘lighter’ and ‘less risky’ interventions.

One education philanthropy representative drew on their previous experience working with USAID, stating that USAID could request governments to set up governance structures as a funding condition and could be ‘pushier and more forceful’ in the pursuit of systemic change. In their view, philanthropies in contrast are set up to ‘do good’ and don’t have government backing to support system level change therefore want to avoid as much risk as possible. Related to this, other FGD participants described the inherent risk of investing in Africa and ‘getting people comfortable with the risk, especially with political challenges on the continent.’ They suggested that rather than focusing on one or two countries and ‘doing good’, cross-country investments and interventions might help hedge risk and be a more appealing strategy. Irrespective of risk, philanthropies were challenged to focus on what is being funded:

“ Sometimes in the ‘doing good’ you don’t tackle the root cause, for example, why are children out of school? ”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

Central to this is engaging with government and the wider sector in tackling system issues. The next section explores philanthropies and their working relationships with government.

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT, SYSTEMS AND SCALE

Another prominent theme was the perceived preference of philanthropies to work with NGOs and not governments.

“ One limitation of working philanthropy is that they say, ‘we don’t fund government’ so funding becomes projectized and ignores immediate needs. There are so many immediate needs that need to be addressed, some high impact needs can be addressed there e.g. infrastructure and staffing issues. Some organisations balk at that. ”

GOVERNMENT PARTICIPANT

“ If we are looking to scale and have impact, philanthropies need to look at working with government. However, pulling this off is very difficult. There are some good local organizations engaging with government who can act as mediators. ”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

There were mixed views on this position. Participants, including philanthropy representatives, overwhelmingly recognised the need to work with and through government to have any sustained impact. Nonetheless, they also recognised the inefficiencies and bureaucracies of working with government which may be less appealing to philanthropies. In that regard, working with NGOs was a prominent way of working with country partners.

“ Philanthropy is less bureaucratic and used to co-creation. They have a better understanding of the focus of civil society organizations, rather than working with governments who want to fulfil their own agenda. ”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

There are challenges with working through NGOs, however. Assuming alignment, working through NGOs should feed into the national education agenda as mandated by education sector plans (ESPs) and related policies, however governments ‘often do not know the extent of NGOs’ work so the impact of funding is not long lasting and integrated into the system’. It can also give rise to ‘donor darlings’ or ‘donor

angels’ who repeatedly receive funding thus cementing their position in the wider education ecosystem at the expense of smaller, less established entities. Where this approach works well, ‘philanthropies can achieve scale with government support, but without bottle necks. It’s a win-win.’ Where it does not work well, it can exacerbate power dynamics within local contexts and foster competition and stifle innovation.

TENSIONS IN 'LOCALISING' PHILANTHROPIC GIVING ON THE CONTINENT

Most FGD participants described the distinct shift in this over the past 10 years to a greater localisation approach with organisations like the Segal Family Foundation leading the way.

“ There is increasing pursuit of localisation as trust-based giving cannot be done afar, you must understand the contexts you work in. ”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

“ Localisation requires real change in terms of philosophies, internal ways of working, strategies and approaches to work on the continent. ”

GRANTEE

“ There is something happening transitionally and this 'has to do with Africa's respect for itself, a new self-respect that is developing. We need to move away from 'philanthropy as control' and move towards 'philanthropy as respect.' Those of us on the ground are desperate to genuinely partner with such individuals and organisations. ”

GRANTEE

Most FGD participants described the distinct shift in this over the past 10 years to a greater localisation approach with organisations like the Segal Family Foundation leading the way. This shift was overwhelmingly well-received with participants asserting that when funders are based locally, they more meaningfully engage and support grantees than if located abroad. The Maitri Trust is another example of this through their membership in local networks like IPASA, engaging with other local funders and partners to better understand the context and hiring local staff. This trend was also related to a smaller associated shift towards more unrestricted funding which was deemed 'revolutionary' by grantees and some philanthropy representatives

but requested that this becomes a more established norm. This localisation and trust-based approach was said to be resulting in some examples of increased intentionality amongst some funders, for example LEGO Foundation in Kenya, to streamline their processes to support applicants/potential grantees. They were doing so by issuing similar proposal requirements, reporting templates and co-delivering convenings so that organisations can focus on their work rather than **'meeting cumbersome funder requirements'**. Though positive, some participants noted that this is still difficult as funder behaviour typically fosters competition so **'it is powerful when funders model collaboration themselves'**.

There are some critiques of the localisation movement particularly with discourse being incongruent with practice.

One grantee gave the example of being approached by a bilateral funder to engage in collaboration in the spirit of localisation. The grantee stated that they withdrew from this process as they felt that whilst the bilateral funder had good intentions the philosophy, approach and structures used did not adapt to the true principles of localisation i.e. empowering and trusting local partners:

“ We a poor organisation that refused the conditions were imposed [on us]. ”
GRANTEE

Another critique was the flow of funds from Northern organisations to organisations on the continent, as in the aid sector:

“ There are debates around the proportion of funding which goes to Southern organisations in contrast to Northern organisations. We need to question where funding is going to. ”
PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

In one philanthropy representative's organisational analysis, African organisations typically receive funding for implementation activities, but research funding typically goes to Northern-based organisations. According to focus group participants, in addition to funding dynamics it is equally important to localise the research agenda and knowledge generation from the continent.

There were also lively debates around the concept of trust-based philanthropy, another concept with various definitions. For example:

““ The concept of trust-based philanthropy is the ‘flavour of the month’ and it’s very relevant and important but like so many other concepts that emerge from a very considered and heartfelt space, when it gets into a more public domain it loses its essential component of what it means. Oftentimes, philanthropies’ engagement seems quite superficial. A real paradigm shift is needed. It’s not just the formula of what you give but how you choose to be especially as you step into this relationship with others. ””

GRANTEE

““ We need to build and strengthen relationships to the point where funders don’t need to police them [grantees]. Trust them to use the money to generate the impact they can believe in.” ””

KEY INFORMANT

Grantees desired a real commitment to sustained, ongoing long-term work to gain much deeper clarity, intent and true partnership within philanthropic partnerships. Other government participants reflected on this and highlighted that:

““ “Power dynamics and influence in practice is a lifelong challenge. I don’t have the answers but practically, it’s about just being aware that everything that we do is undergirded by some deep power transactions. Take for example how philanthropies pitch into national education plans, who they engage and how. It is important for the strategic level of philanthropies to engage with the strategic level of implementers to have a more constructive way of approaching power dynamics. ””

GOVERNMENT PARTICIPANT

The next section looks at collaboration – its drivers, its challenges and how it can be greater enhanced.

ON COLLABORATION

“ There is the recognition that collaboration is very important. However, the definition of collaboration is very vague and used very loosely. It is difficult to get formal collaboration going. Collaboration is very context specific. ”

PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

“ Many times, these partnerships can often be artificial rather than organic. Funders should look for existing collaborations and support them as a strategy rather than ‘forcing marriages’ together. ”

GRANTEE

Several sub-themes emerged from discussions on collaboration. These ranged from the difficulty of defining it, the prominent types of collaboration that exist, the often-overlooked importance of informal collaborations and the

challenging realities of collaborating in practice. There was consensus on the importance of strengthening collaboration in its various forms, however particularly through public-private partnerships (PPPs).

PPPs are becoming increasingly important in philanthropy on the continent with government becoming an increasingly important partner.

Some philanthropies stated they are cognisant that the main avenue to achieve systems change is through obtaining government buy-in and that working with government is indispensable:

Nonetheless, other philanthropy representatives stated the importance of maintaining clear responsibilities and accountability lines in PPPs to ensure each partner fulfils their role:

“ It’s almost out of necessity to partner with the private sector now. The sense of PPPs and collaboration has changed, it’s more exciting. Technology and flexibility crossing borders has made it more interesting in that perspective. ”

PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

“ It’s important to note that accountability lines should be bi-directional and multi-directional in driving development. It’s important that governments do not delegate their primary responsibility to drive responsibility, drive public services...It’s important for states to be aware of that and to provide a clear vision on how they plan to deliver. That will allow other players including philanthropies to think about how they can feed into that vision. ”

KEY INFORMANT

THEMATIC FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

As participants from South Africa stated, collaboration is often driven by government but not always, and this can also be said of other contexts such as Egypt and Kenya. NECT in South Africa was a strong example of effective, structured and nuanced collaboration. Similarly, early grade literacy and initial teacher education (ITE) stakeholders in South Africa were said to be working well together as they share a clearly defined and shared purpose as well as clear ways of working which makes it easier for stakeholders to stay engaged though the process might be slow.

The majority of participants stated that collaborative efforts among philanthropies themselves should be better harnessed, especially among African funders across the continent, outside of South Africa and Kenya which have stronger examples.^[47]

For example, one key informant stated that collaboration between international philanthropies is typically driven by the philanthropies themselves **'but when you come to the continent, the opposite is true.'** Government therefore becomes a critical stakeholder in three key ways: 1) By endorsing work to help gain credibility i.e. as a government backed initiative; 2) By funding work directly; and 3) By implementing and running programmes themselves. This raised some questions on the role of African philanthropic giving:

“ A question I have is, why aren't African-based funders driving collaborative work? What is preventing them from partnering without Gates being involved? ”

KEY INFORMANT

Challenges in collaboration

“ Collaborate to incubate, separate to accelerate. It's better to work together when addressing issues like system change. The minute you collaborate with others though, it's slow, hard, messy and difficult. ”

PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

Most participants highlighted the challenging nature of collaboration at times resulting in **'much slower'** impact. As another Philanthropy representative stated:

“ Generosity comes with strings attached, influence, focus and agendas so it's often difficult to collaborate and get on the same page. When bringing in expertise and different ways of doing things, this will inevitably increase the risk of having conflicting personalities, egos which can stand in the way of the greater good of collaboration. ”

PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

[47] For example see: IPASA Collaboration Case Studies.

Nonetheless, there are examples of strong pockets of collaboration in South Africa in particular and participants shared what they believed to be key ingredients for successful collaborations. This included:

1 A shared vision and clear objectives

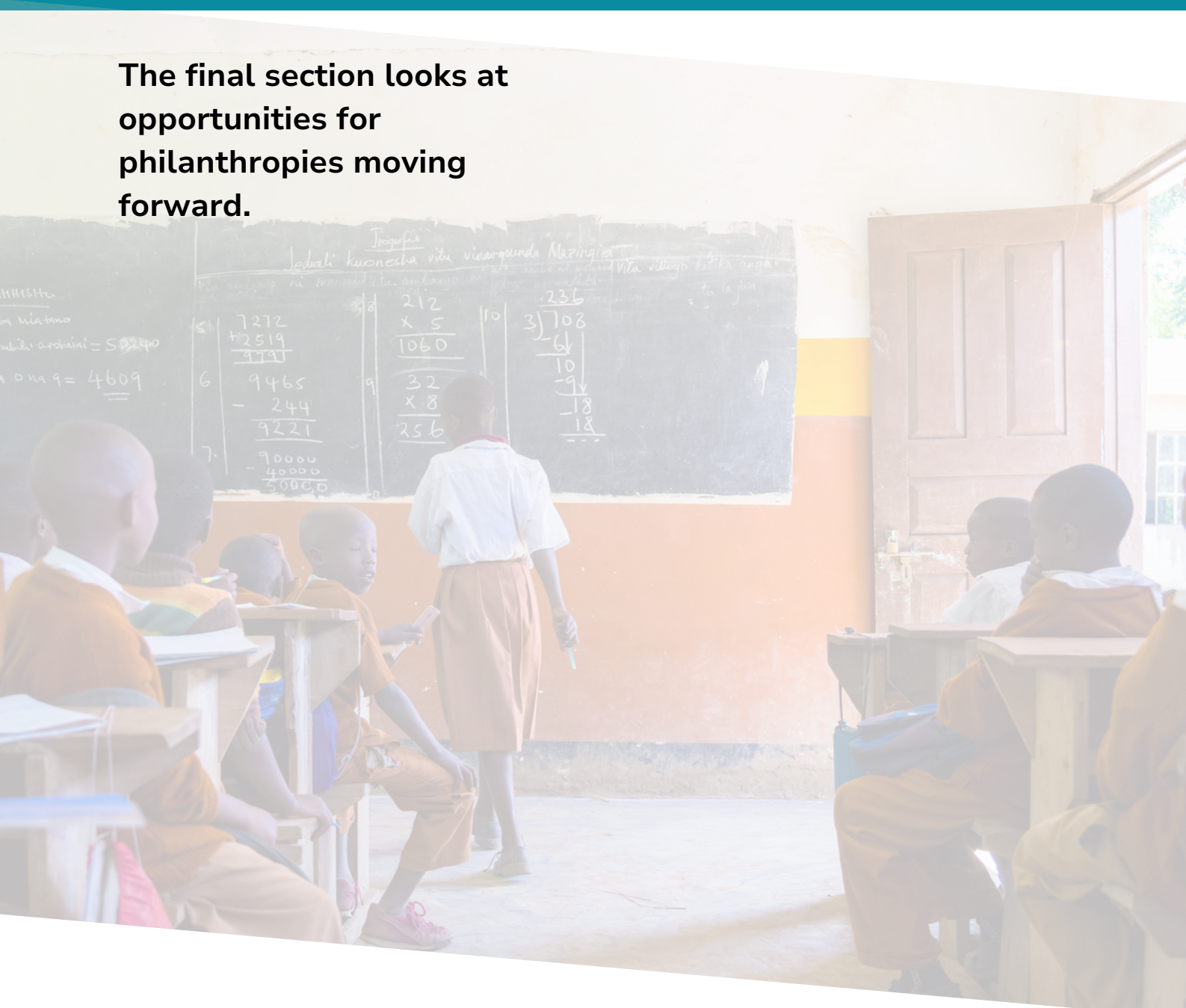
Finding overlaps in agendas and strategy supports more effective collaboration.

2 Good governance structures:

Clear ways of working, reporting, feedback loops and a champion/convenor to galvanise support before specific roles and responsibilities are agreed and decided upon is crucial to maintain momentum.

3 Patience

The final section looks at opportunities for philanthropies moving forward.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHILANTHROPIES MOVING FORWARD

The report has illustrated a number of key observations and findings concerning education philanthropy on the continent. This final section consolidates some key recommendations and opportunities identified by the research’s various participants via focus group discussions, interviews and virtual consultations in no particular order, in their own words.

1

HARNESS DIASPORA GIVING MORE SYSTEMATICALLY

“ Development aid is a third of inflows, but remittances are much larger and comes through love, care and relationship. Africa gets a bad rap about not being a philanthropic continent. ”

GRANTEE

“ Giving is ingrained in the culture of the African context. ”

KEY INFORMANT

As stated in other research^[48], diaspora giving is largely overlooked in the discussion on philanthropy despite being a large inflow into the continent, approximately US\$ 97 billion in 2022 alone.

Participants overwhelmingly agreed and stated the importance of harnessing these remittances and avenues to scale to support education. As stated in other reports^[49], many members of the African diaspora are keen to remit financially to their home countries, but the challenge is knowing which avenues and channels can be trusted for financial remittances.

Organisations like Kwanda^[50] are helping to address this information gap and provide more data, transparency and accountability in funding mechanisms for the diaspora. Similarly, the Ghana Union has previously hosted webinars to discuss the ways in which the diaspora can contribute to its education system.

[48]Trust Africa (2024); The Bridgespan Group (2024); KNOMAD - <https://www.knomad.org/data/remittances>

[49] Boateng, P., Dove, N., Kwarteng, K. & Addai, F. (2018) Second-Generation British-Ghanaians and ‘Home’: Identity, Engagement and Remittances. London, UK: Future of Ghana.

[50] <https://kwanda.co/>

2

GENUINELY PARTNER WITH GRANTEES AND KEY EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS

“ There is a new, developing concept around what it means to truly partner, and it requires a different mindset. ”
GRANTEE

In line with discussions on localisation and trust-based philanthropy, research participants acknowledged a growing shift in attempts by philanthropies at reducing power dynamics in their funding approaches. However, participants stressed the need for funders to genuinely reflect on what this means in practice and how their respective processes, approaches and systems need to adapt to embody this shift.

3

ADDRESS FUNDING NEEDS FLEXIBLY BY OFFERING MORE UNRESTRICTED FUNDING AND/OR FUNDING ORGANISATIONAL THEORIES OF CHANGE RATHER THAN JUST PROJECTS

“ Philanthropies are more independent in terms of their views, approaches and decision-making in the sector which is useful for organizations who need more flexible conditions for funding/their work. ”
KEY INFORMANT

“ ‘Following the money’ rather than following the cause is a huge distraction from the impact that is supposed to happen. It’s important if we want to see long-term change. ”
GRANTEE

“ You can’t projectise systems work. If funding is not responsive, it is near impossible to make any dent on systems change. ”
GRANTEE

“ One approach funders could consider could be funding a theory of change for a system change objective rather than projects. So, you’re not defining ‘to the last dollar’ how that money will be used but buying into the theory of change, people, organisations and the milestones and ways of working. ”
GRANTEE

There have been increasing calls for unrestricted funding, long-term funding and organisational support funding in philanthropic discourse. This was deemed important for research participants to give them the space to grow, deepen their own expertise and knowledge of the sector and to truly work towards system change as opposed to more compartmentalised approaches which may not contribute to wider education goals in the most impactful way. The concept of funding theories of change was particularly popular among research participants as a way of supporting locally-led ways of understanding and addressing issues for long-term impact.

4

AMPLIFY OTHER FORMS OF PHILANTHROPY SUPPORT

“ We need to move away from seeing philanthropy from large international organizations to more sustainable, locally based initiatives that go beyond money. ”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

“ For us, we place huge focus on providing additional resource support beyond grant monies to ensure that the overall organisational success of our partners is realised. This includes providing training on safeguarding, linking partners with consultants in need areas - M&E, fundraising, financial management... ”

PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

“ I'd be really interested to see a conversation on the critical importance of non-financial contributions for getting the work that needs to be done, done - so that the funding is seen as important but not the key determinant. Neither is more important than the other but it's how both work together. ”

GRANTEE

“ A lot of technical assistance (TA) that is offered is ill-designed. We need to demand TA that builds on existing conversations and not repetition in the sector by harnessing local expertise. ”

PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

“ It is not about how long you fund something but the impact of what you do ”

PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

Participants called for more intentional approaches by philanthropy to employ other types of non-financial support to their partners in SSA. As highlighted above, participants referenced MEL support, fundraising, operations and TA as some of the ways in which philanthropies can provide holistic support. One strong example of this type of overall capacity building support as well as unrestricted funding is the Daara Development Academy which is funded by the Gates Foundation.^[51] The programme aims to strengthen the capacity of local implementers within SSA, to champion and enhance their efforts in advancing learning outcomes at scale and provided a comprehensive curriculum focused on areas such as pedagogical excellence and managing organisational talent.

[51] The Daara Development Academy has five main goals: 1) Building pedagogical excellence; 2) Using and generating evidence; 3) Moving successfully to scale; 4) Managing talent to build the organisation; and 5) Strengthening fundraising capability.

5

EXPLORE OTHER FINANCING MODELS AND SUPPORTING GREATER FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

e.g. the growing interest in innovative funding mechanisms such as revenue generating activities, social investment bonds (SIBs) etc.

“ Within our portfolio, we’re seeing that partners are instituting a revenue-generating activity within their programs, ridding them of complete donor reliance. Additionally, with the flexibility of unrestricted funding, partners have managed to set up endowment funds which have given them enough cushioning.

”

PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

Research participants acknowledged the importance of grant funding in supporting them to achieve their missions however they stressed the need for other forms of funding and opportunities to support wider organisational goals, capacity building and embed sustainability and enhance their work in the communities they serve. Income generating activities were cited as one option however the tax implications related to this presented a barrier in many contexts represented in the research.

6

FUND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND ADDRESS GAPS IN PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING

As stated in the previous section, participants overwhelmingly advocated for increased localisation approaches in philanthropic funding by genuinely partnering with and empowering local partners through more trust-based approaches. This was particularly highlighted in West Africa and Francophone Africa where the philanthropic landscape was described as more fragmented than in other parts of the continent. Participants also noted sectoral gaps in philanthropic funding which run the risk of being ignored without more data, evidence and investment e.g. in early childhood education and development, upper secondary school as well as non-Anglophone African contexts.

“ Geographically, there needs to be more intentionality in funding locally-led organisations in Western and Francophone Africa. There needs to be deliberate action by philanthropic foundations, in the US, and Europe to fund in West Africa - we just need to get started!

”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

7 EXPLORE THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

“ Technology is changing very rapidly and that will change education in various ways and there will be high impact ways in which this can be used. ”

GOVERNMENT PARTICIPANT

“ We need to learn new things. The world is revolutionising everyday. ”

GOVERNMENT PARTICIPANT

The importance of technology cannot be understated, particularly in a post-Covid world, and with the rise of AI. In exploring technology, it is crucial that philanthropic investments centre accessibility, equity, quality and pedagogical rigour and avoid exacerbating existing inequality in digital access. This is crucial for three reasons. One, to support learners in the teaching and learning process. Two, to help teachers generate regular and meaningful data to adapt their practice as needed. Three, to generate data for education systems to support district or school-facing officials to support teachers and for the wider system to understand progress and where interventions might be needed.

8 COLLECT MORE DATA AND FUND MORE RESEARCH WHICH HARNESSES LOCAL EXPERTISE

“ Traditionally, research has been underfunded by philanthropies and this is probably similar across the continent. Where you have a high level of need, you must think about the long-term benefits like equity and social-justice approaches versus funding things that have a more immediate benefit. ”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

Whilst philanthropy-funded research is taking place across the continent, participants felt more could be done in this regard with more intentional research, knowledge creation and public goods being led, designed and produced by local voices on education specifically. As highlighted in this research, there are a number of areas which warrant further research. This includes quantitative trends in education philanthropy as well as trends and patterns in diaspora, HNW and domestic giving across the continent.

9 SHARE LEARNING TO BENEFIT THE SECTOR

“If funders have MEL data and are willing to share this, it can be a gamechanger in discussing successes, challenges and informing future approaches. Philanthropies have no requirement to invest in a corporate way so we should technically be more open but this transparency depends on an organisation's strategic approach and how they fund which is often quite directive.”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

Multiple participants spoke about the importance of generating more data e.g. through surveys and stakeholder mappings to understand what thematic

areas funders are interested in and in which geographies. In their view, this will help to avoid duplication and broaden our understanding of existing interventions and how collaboration between philanthropies, bilaterals, multilaterals, governments, communities and the international education community. Participants also spoke about sharing more about what we already know in the sector – what works, what does not, what shows promise to better drive and sustain improvements in learning collectively. For MEL data specifically, common definitions and indicators across projects could also allow for easier comparative evidence and analysis but this is a continually contentious area in the broader education sector.

10 INTENTIONALLY COLLABORATE WITH OTHER FUNDERS TO STREAMLINE GROWTH AND IMPACT OF PHILANTHROPY, ESPECIALLY AFRICAN FUNDERS

“How can we streamline and grow the impact of philanthropy on the continent? This is important because philanthropy often brings more flexible funding, and this flexibility is becoming very important. We need to develop broader frameworks to grow and transition the ways in which education programs are funded.”

EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVE

“There is a growing desire to see the emergence of Afro-centric funding that is being developed by Africans that has different philosophical underpinnings than Western funders for a thriving continent.”

GRANTEE

Grantees expressed a strong desire for philanthropy to consider greater collaboration and the development of frameworks to signal to partners what their distinct strategies are and how they hope to work with partners in country (through funding or otherwise) to work towards common goals. This would allow grantees to better understand how they can work with philanthropy more effectively. Similarly, some grantees called for more African funders to enhance their collaboration to create an alternative, more rooted approach to funding and to reduce reliance on international funds. This could involve creating more platforms to engage with Africans across contexts, the continent and the diaspora for example.

FINAL REFLECTIONS FROM IEFG

“ *What role does philanthropy have in improving equity and equality in and through education?* ”

This report is our contribution to the African Union’s Year of Education in 2024, a significant advocacy opportunity designed to spotlight and galvanise progress towards education.

In this report, we spotlight the contribution of philanthropy – or, at least, the form of it that is grantmaking by independent and corporate foundations. While only one of many forms of giving across Africa, this is a sector being turned to as national budgets are ever more stretched, and aid budgets decline. We know that philanthropy (including education philanthropy) is rising, but what is it being spent on? How is it being spent? What is it changing? These are the questions we set out to answer. We were surprised by how few of these questions we can comprehensively answer.

The International Education Funders Group is the largest global network of private foundations and grantmakers funding education. Around 60% of International Education Funders Group members give in Africa, whether as cross-border grantmakers or domestic. We, at the IIEFG, have a fantastic vantage point from which to observe trends and characteristics of education philanthropy. We see everything from first-funder grants to grassroots organisations all the way through to three-decade-long renewable grants. We see funding to everything from early childhood education to tertiary education, and the research and advocacy that is needed to underpin this. We see domestic philanthropy deeply engaged in supporting national dialogue and coalition building, often in strategic formal and/or informal alliances with cross-border philanthropy. We see a handful of organisations directly supporting government education plans, and more that are closely engaged with formal structures of education coordination. Several of our partners on

this report are also philanthropy networks (APN, EAPN, IPASA, netFWD) or coordinate them (Trust Africa). Daily, we see the rich diversity and unique potential that philanthropy brings to the education sector. We see this potential being both underappreciated, and underused.

In this spotlight on education philanthropy across Africa, we had expected to be able to identify trends in giving that would allow clear identification of gaps for funders to step into together, but we hadn’t anticipated how little concrete data exists, how fragmented education philanthropy is, and how small – relative to the funding gaps – these investments are when spread across geographies, target communities, education sub-sectors, and approach taken (e.g. a focus on teacher training, or structured pedagogy, or research, or low-cost private schools).



We anticipated that most education philanthropy goes to higher education faculties, school construction, and scholarships (secondary school or university, and we had a hunch that many of the latter were to Global North institutions). This trend is to be expected given the deep personal connections and/or corporate connections that drive philanthropy. But we were surprised that 'education' was assumed to mean 'higher education' by most people we talked to outside of IEFG members. We had anticipated that education philanthropic giving would be concentrated in a few countries, such as South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria, but had not anticipated quite how sparse philanthropic giving is to vast swathes of the African continent. We knew – from the OECD data and anecdotally – that education is among the top giving priorities across Africa, and yet we were surprised by the lack of opportunity for debate within those who do this giving, and that there is so little space for education philanthropy to come together.

As we spoke to more people, we realised the importance of this report as a conversation starter. The research and data here yields important questions for the education philanthropy community in Africa. What role does philanthropy have in improving equity and equality in and through education? What is holding philanthropy back from investing in countries where the tax base and aid are low and where wealth – in the form of individuals and businesses – is far off? Why do so few philanthropies engage with governments, or engage with some of the political and capability barriers to progress? How can philanthropy live up to its reputation for a high-risk appetite, while balancing this out against protection of its reputation? What would a more strategic, coordinated philanthropic sector

look like: one that enabled shared understanding of the root causes of education failure; sustained feedback loops bringing in local perspectives and a range of evidence to inform progress; and contributed to a sense of common education mission, while nurturing important critical debate on the purpose and process of education?

The report has prompted us to reflect on how we might help to provide a wider-landscape view that helps to join up some of this work – for there's no question, it's all needed and important. But how do we help add it all up to more than the sum of its parts? Networks are valuable spaces to challenge our own assumptions and explore views different to our own, but there are few dedicated spaces for cross-continental debate on education. IEFG does not need to start an African chapter: there are several brilliant existing philanthropy platforms, including our partners on this report APN, EAPN, IPASA and several national networks such as the Senegal Philanthropy Forum organized by Trust Africa. A point that we reflected on together as a group: why has it taken until now, this moment created by the AU, for us to create this education philanthropy moment – and what can we do together going forward?

WE CONCLUDE WITH THREE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHILANTHROPISTS AND PHILANTHROPIC ORGANISATIONS ASPIRING TO IMPROVE EDUCATION IN AFRICA.

IEFG RECOMMENDATIONS



LISTEN TO LOCAL VOICES AND KEEP LEARNING ABOUT WHAT 'LOCAL' MEANS

There is an incredible range of voices and debate on what philanthropy means in, for and across African communities. Anyone funding in Africa should engage with this. To a lesser extent, there is debate on the

'why and how' of education across Africa. We urge funders to listen to this debate and to create spaces for this discourse to be heard.



ENABLE EDUCATION CHANGE TO BE INFORMED BY EVIDENCE AND DEBATE

Philanthropy is playing a role in improving the generation and sharing of research on Africa by Africans (such as the African Research for African Researchers consortium, the Education for Sub Saharan Africa database and the ADEA African research prize). There are two or three efforts at establishing a regular forum for

researchers, practitioners and policymakers to come together to share and learn but no committed funding for this to become a regular pan-African event. We recommend education philanthropy thinks about enabling a regular form for debate on education in Africa.



COLLABORATE MORE, BECAUSE YOU ARE STRONGER TOGETHER.

There are several examples of collaboration between philanthropic organisations, which bring more voices and funding together and diminish fragmentation. We see fewer organisations identifying as collaboration enablers, creating the conditions for

collaboration between education actors such as NGOs, researchers and government. We urge philanthropic actors to think about the potential for competition that the funding architecture can create, and to take steps to limit this.

WHAT NEXT?

We at IEFG and our partners enthusiastically welcome responses to this report, and ideas for how we might collaborate to action some of the recommendations above. Below are some initial plans and concrete actions for education philanthropy to take:



JOIN US FOR A ONE-DAY ONE-OFF EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY GATHERING

Taking place in June 2025. IEFG and partners on this report recognize that there are too few moments for education philanthropy to gather, so we will create

this one-off in the hope that ongoing moments are possible in the margins of existing philanthropy forums in Africa.



MAKE USE OF THE EXISTING PLATFORMS FOR EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY

Join and use the [IEFG](#), the education group at the East Africa Philanthropy Network and others. At the very least you will gain shortcuts through experience and lessons learned, but these are spaces too for proactive partnership and joint action. Members of these networks have put

careful thought into important issues, such as how to listen to local priorities, how to fund in locally-led and evidence-informed ways, and how to work with the power dynamics that are inherent to any funding relationship.



CONTRIBUTE YOUR DATA

A collated dataset on educating giving is information that would be directly useful to you, as you scope and evolve your work. We can see here, for example, that there are massive geographic gaps where little to no philanthropy lands – and yet concentrations of investment in a few countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria. We can see in the IEFG database that 25 organisations fund one partner; this information could yield efficiency gains for all involved. We can see glimpses of information that could help you find allies

but could not answer the nuanced questions we wanted to – such as how much giving goes to local organisations each year. We, partners on this Report are committed to joining forces to make this easier for you, and to translating this data into actionable insights that advance your work. Reach out to IEFG (www.iefg.org) as a first contact point into this conversation. We will kick this effort off in December 2024 at the OECD Africa Philanthropy Day.



LET US KNOW ABOUT OTHER EVENTS YOU HAVE PLANNED ON EDUCATION ACROSS AFRICA IN 2025

Events at which we could spark action on different issues raised in this report.

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