



# AFRICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH FUNDING CONSORTIUM

(2024) Member's Grantee Mapping Analysis

## Members' grantee mapping

22 April 2024

### Key takeaways related to each of the 5 recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Long-term (over 5 years) commitments are decreasing, but funders still favour mid-term (2-4 years) commitments. Notably, North American grantees receive longer-term grants than African-based grantees.
- Recommendation 2: While the majority of the grantees are still based in Africa, most funds go to North American (US and Canada) organisations - with the average grant size to North American organisations increasing significantly.
- Recommendation 3: There is still a greater emphasis on implementation and research than on communication and use of evidence.
- Recommendation 4: There is limited data on the inclusion of women, young researchers, and other disadvantaged groups in education research in Africa.
- Recommendation 5: Data collection to monitor the recommendations is still unevenly collected and reported.

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## Introduction and how to use this analysis

The primary objective of this analysis is to highlight where members allocate their funding, potential overlaps in their funding practices, and to uncover any opportunities or gaps in their alignment with the [five recommendations](#) promoted by the consortium. It is important to note that the data used in this analysis doesn't include all members and their grantees (refer to methodology and limitations). Nevertheless, it serves as:

- A reference point for discussions among consortium members and within their respective organisations.
- An invitation to update their database based on the recommendations from the previous analysis/the instrument used to collect this data for future analysis and to help the consortium make sense of how their grantmaking action the five recommendations.

Hence, we encourage members to contemplate the findings presented in this document and to assess their portfolios:

- Do the funding patterns reflect their own portfolios and funding practices?
- If they do, what factors might account for this outcome?
- If not, how do their portfolios compare?

Furthermore, we urge members to reflect on the recommendations and consider whether:

- They resonate with their objectives.
- They could explore additional actions either individually or collectively to better align with the five recommendations.

## Methodology

Data collection for this study is from secondary sources, which include members' publicly available reports and grant databases. The representative(s) of member organisations were included in the data collection process to help make sense of the data and ensure accuracy in grant/grantee representation. Overall, we reviewed information on 245 grants from ten different funders.

Our analysis of the consortium's portfolio attempts to assess members' alignment with these [five recommendations](#) and identify potential areas for discussion. This exercise presents some limitations:

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

## Findings

### Who are the consortium's grantees and where are they based?

As of April 2024, we collected data on 245 grants awarded to 184 grantees located in Africa, North America, Europe, Asia, and Latin America by ten funders<sup>1</sup>. This is an increase from the 192 grants awarded to 134 grantees by nine funders in 2023. This analysis presents final results based on updated data from February 2024 and the feedback from members. For this analysis, North America refers to the US and Canada.

**NGOs are still the most common type of grantees:** Out of the 184 grantees, 45% were classified as NGOs, as shown in Figure 1 below. This was followed by higher education institutions/universities at 15%, consultancies at 11%, research centres/think tanks at 10%, networks and multilateral organisations at 5% each, philanthropy at 3%, and other organisations at 6%. Compared to 2023, the total percentage of funds received by NGOs and research centres/think tank grantees slightly decreased by 9% and 5%, respectively. However, universities/higher learning institutions and consultancies witnessed an increase of 4% and 5%, respectively.

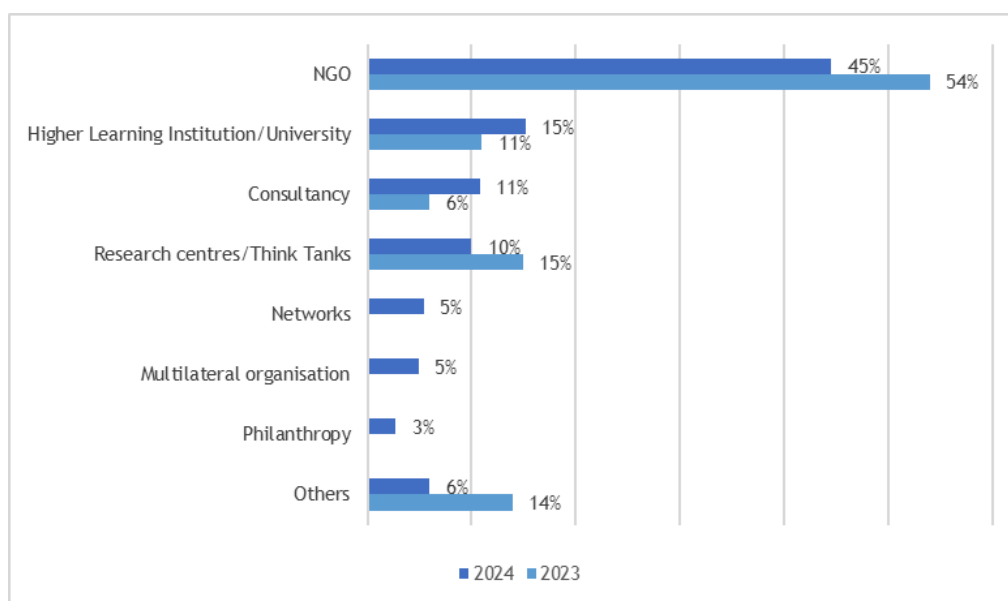


Figure 1: Types of grantees

**Majority of members' grantees are still based in Africa, but the number of grantees has decreased:** Out of the 184 grantees, 52% are based in Africa, 29% in North America, and 16% in Europe. Compared to 2023, this indicates a 17% decrease in the number of grantees based in Africa. Meanwhile, the number of grantees located in Europe and North America has increased by 5% and 9%, respectively, as shown in Figure 2.

<sup>1</sup> Funders' identity withheld for privacy reasons.

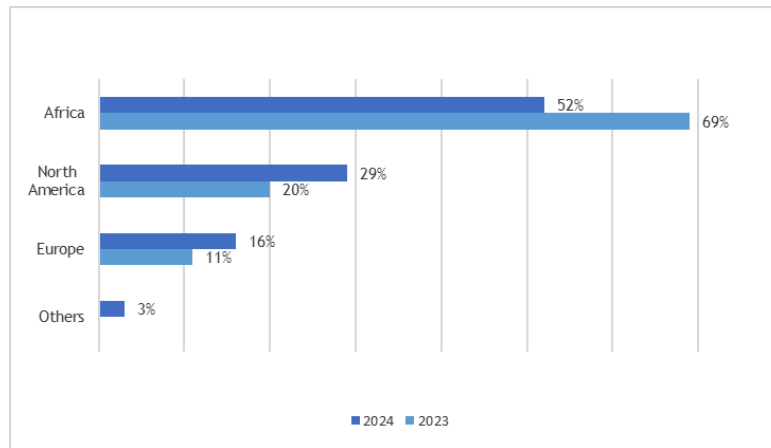


Figure 2: Location of grantees per region

**Most African grantees are based in Eastern and Southern Africa:** Of the 96 grantees based in Africa, 44% are located in Eastern Africa, 41% in Southern Africa, and 15% in Western Africa. Among the Eastern African grantees, more than half of them (55%) are based in Kenya, while nearly all (98%) of the Southern African grantees are located in South Africa. In Western Africa, almost half (38%) of the grantees are based in Ghana, as shown in Figure 3.

It should be noted that South Africa-based grantees are mainly (79%) funded by Zenex Foundation, a South African foundation.

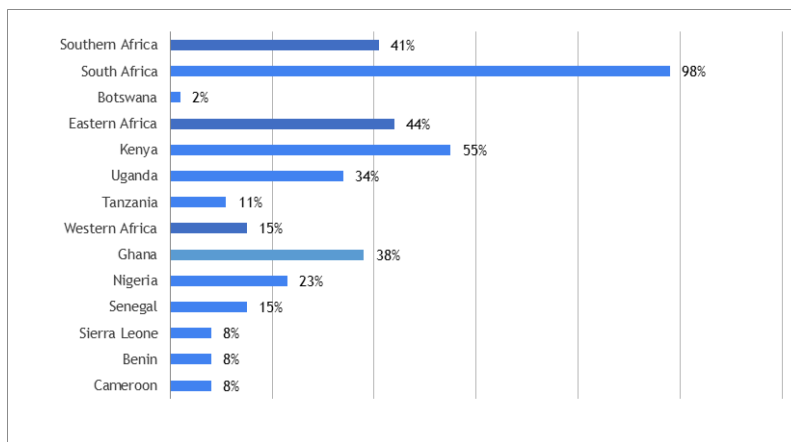


Figure 3: Location of grantees per country in Africa

### Who received the funds?

**Although African grantees receive more grants than European and North American grantees, most of the grant funds go to Europe and North America (again!):** Even though African grantees continue to receive the highest percentage of total grants (52%) aimed at supporting education work in Africa, our analysis reveals that North American grantees received most (63%) of the total grant value awarded as shown in Table 1. In 2024, the value of grants to African grantees reduced

from 37% in 2023 to 19%, while the number of grant values to North American grantees increased from 54% in 2023 to 63%, and European grant value increased from 9% to 16%.

Region	2024		2023		2024		2023		2024	
	No. of Grants	% of total Grants	% of total Grants	No. of Grantees	% of total grantees	% of total grantees	Grant Amount (USD)*	% of total grant value awarded	Av. size of grant (USD)	
Africa	127	52%	68%	96	52%	69%	70,966,118	19%	558,788	
Eastern Africa	58	24%	36%	43	24%	35%	30,848,557	8%	531,872	
Southern Africa	54	22%	56%	39	21%	55%	18,302,231	5%	338,930	
Western Africa	15	6%	8%	14	8%	10%	21,815,300	6%	1,454,353	
North America	77	31%	22%	53	29%	20%	235,127,744	63%	3,053,607	
Europe	36	15%	10%	30	16%	12%	57,872,550	16%	1,607,570	
Latin America	2	1%	–	2	1%	–	2,635,220	1%	1,317,610	
Asia	1	0%	–	1	1%	–	3,685,220	1%	3,685,220	
Unknown	2	1%	–	2	1%	–	–	–	–	
Grand Total	245	100%		184	100%		370,287,095	100%		

Table 1: Number of grants awarded vs. grant size in Africa, Europe, and North America

**North American grants are 5.5 times the size of African grants:** On average, North American and European grantees receive grants that are significantly bigger than the grants awarded to African organisations. Compared to the previous year, the average size of African grants compared to North America increased from 4.5 to 5.5.

**The average number of grants per grantee in Africa reduced from 1.4 in 2023 to 1.3 in 2024** and in North America from 1.6 in 2023 to 1.5 in 2024, while those in Europe slightly increased from 1.3 to 1.2. Within Africa, the average number of grants per grantee reduced in Southern Africa but the number remains the same in Eastern and Western Africa.

	2023	2024
Africa	1.4	1.3
Eastern Africa	0.5	0.5
Southern Africa	0.8	0.7
Western Africa	0.1	0.1
Europe	1.3	1.2
North America	1.6	1.5

Table 2: Number of average grants per grantee in Africa, Europe, and North America

### Who is pursuing the grants?

African grantees had more reactive grants: The majority (65.4%) of the 136 grants we had information on were proactive, while 34.6% were reactive. More than half (52.4%) of the total (84) African grants that we had information on were reactive, while nearly all (94%) of the North American and European grants were proactive, as shown in Table 5 below. Of the 47 reactive grants, African grantees had more reactive grants (94%) compared to North America's (4%) and Europe's (2%). However, Africa still had slightly more (45%) proactive grants than North America (39%) and Europe (16%).

This indicates that Global North grantees are more likely to seek unsolicited proposals for grants. While African grantees do pursue unsolicited grant proposals, they are more likely to react to calls for proposals.



Region	No. of Grants	No. of Grants with Information	Proactive	Reactive	% of total grants - Proactive	% of total grants - Reactive
North America	77	36	34	2	94%	6%
			39%	4%		
Africa	127	84	40	44	48%	52%
			45%	94%		
Europe	36	15	14	1	93%	7%
			16%	2%		
Others	5	1	1	0	100%	0%
			1%	0%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>35%</b>

Table 5: Proactive vs. reactive grants

### What do grantees do?

We organised the 245 grants into groups based on the areas they covered, using our own defined categorisation. The identified categories included grants that primarily focused on: 1) generating research and evidence (education research); 2) implementing initiatives that were not research-focused, such as the scaling of projects or implementation of good practices (project/programme implementation); 3) financing the monitoring or evaluation of initiatives (MEL programmes/projects); 4) evaluation; 5) a new category on evidence use; 6) capacity building (knowledge translation or dissemination), and 7) grants for advocacy. The rest were grouped into others, while for those grants where there was insufficient information to categorise - no data.

**Research is the most popular function in the portfolio:** Out of the 228 grants that had information on their function, research was the most popular function, accounting for 33% of total grants, followed by implementation at 25% and evidence use at 11%.

Notably, funding for grant implementation has reduced by 5% from 30% in 2023 to 25% in 2024, while capacity building and advocacy increased by 7% and 5%, respectively, in 2024. Research has seen a slight drop (1%).

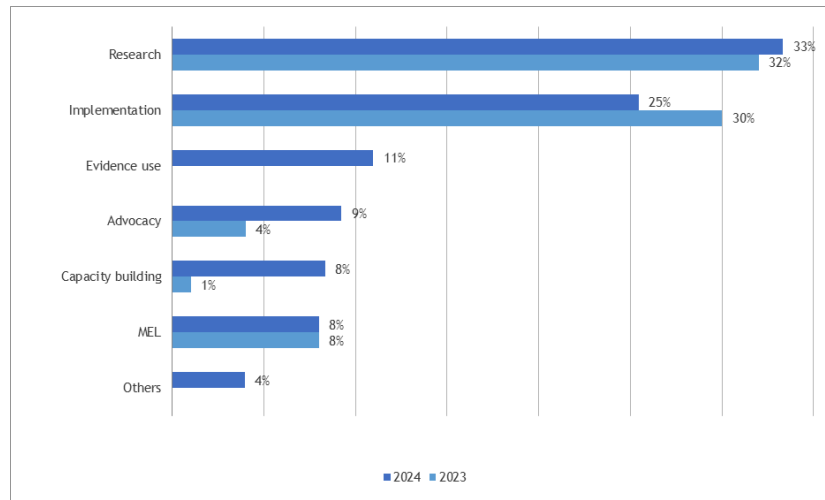


Figure 4: Number of grants per category/function

### How long are the grants and the relationship with the grantees?

**Long-term grant commitments are decreasing:** In our analysis, we noticed the number of long-term funding (5 years or longer) significantly decreased from 18% in 2023 to 5% in 2024. However, funders still tend to prioritise grants mid-term funding (2-4 years), as we saw an increase in the number of grants within this period from 55% in 2023 to 69% in 2024. Grants that were 1 year or shorter (less than two years) also increased by 3% from 20% in 2023 to 23% in 2024, as shown in Figure 5 below.

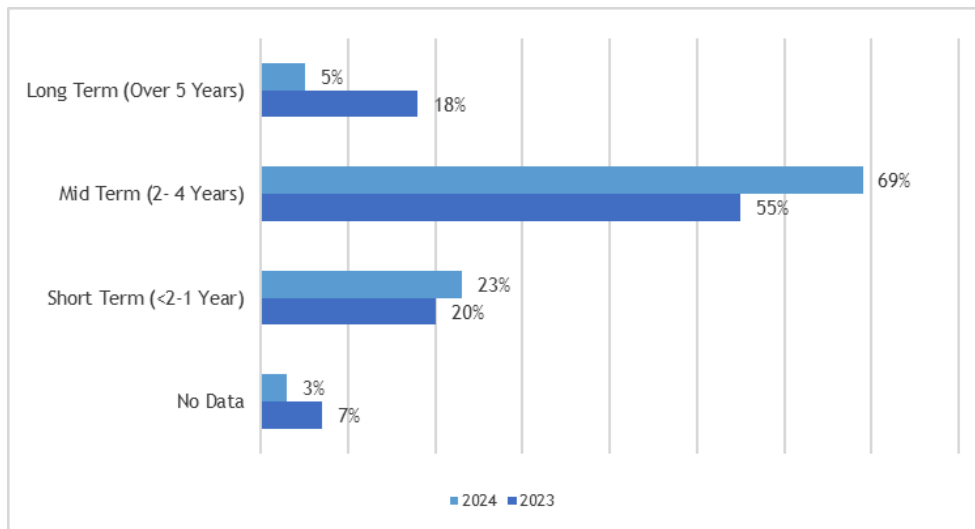


Figure 5: Grant length

North American grantees receive longer-term funding, which implies greater sustainability for grantees based in North America. Nearly all (82%) of the long-term grants are North American, while Africa has no long-term grant, as shown in Table 6 below.

Region	Short Term Grants (<2-1 Year)	Mid Term Grants (2-4 Years)	Long Term Grants (Over 5 Years)	No Data	Total Grants
Africa	38	85	0	4	127
	66%	51%	0%		
North America	8	58	9	2	77
	14%	35%	82%		
Europe	10	24	2	0	36
	17%	14%	18%		
Others	2	1	0	2	5
	58	168	11	8	245

Table 6: Grant length per region

Majority of the long-term granting in North America goes to Think Tanks/Research centres. Almost half (44%) of North American long-term grantees are think tanks/research centres, followed by NGOs and multilateral organisations at 22% each.

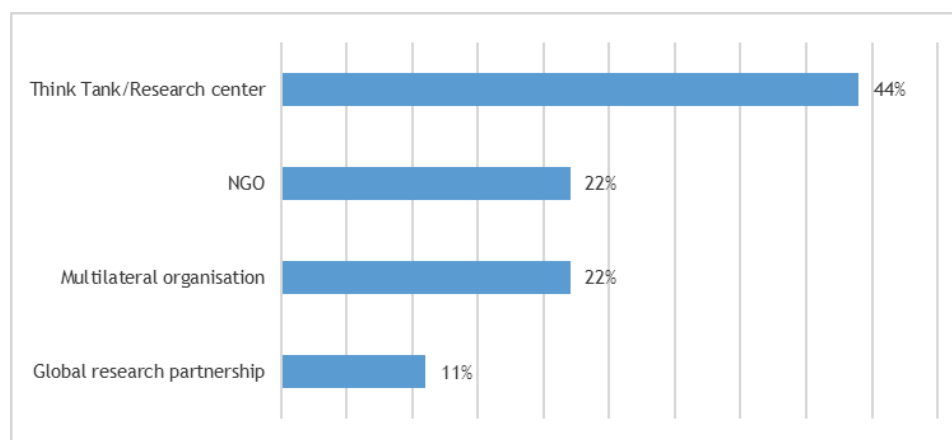


Figure 6: North America long-term grants vs. grant type

Mid-term funding receives the largest grants based on grant amount size. As shown in Figure 7 below, 2-4 year grants were more than half (63%) of the total value granted, whereas the short-term grants (<2-1 year) were only 5%.

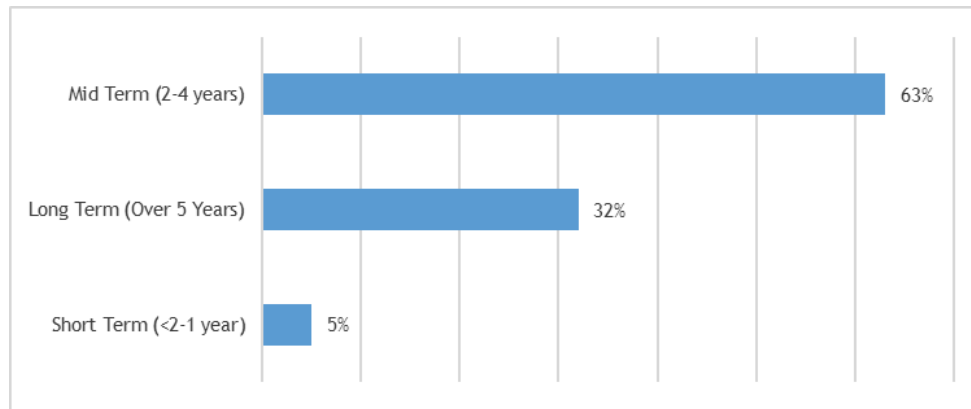


Figure 7: Grant length vs Grant size

Only 37% of the 118 grantees with this data are first-time grantees. Almost half (43%) have received a grant two or three times before, indicating that funders tend to repeat funding the same grantee.

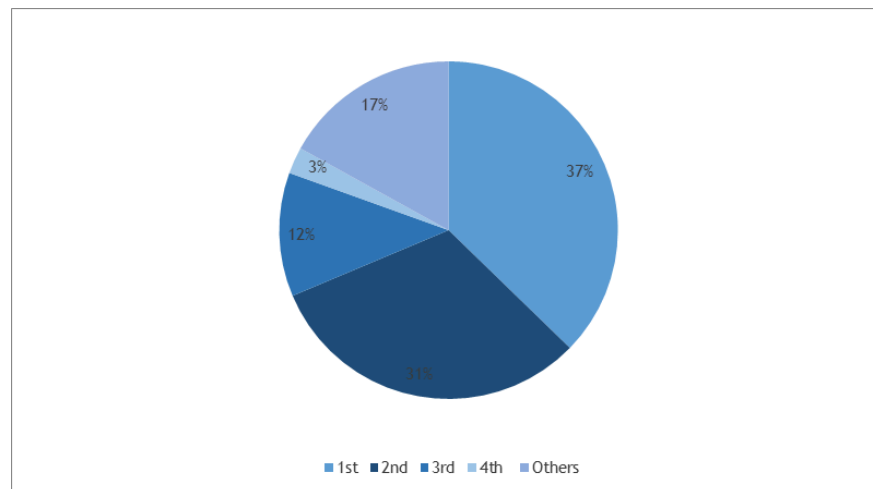


Figure 8: Number of grants by frequency

### Sub-granting and subcontracting

61% of the grants do not have information on whether they are subgranted or not. Of the 244 grants that were analysed, only 39% of the grants had information on whether they were subgranted or not. Of this number, 31% signified the grants were not subgranted, while 8% of the grants were subgranted. None of these sub-granted funds are from North to North.

Most funders do not have information on sub-grants. We recommend that in subsequent analysis, members should track information from their grantees.

### Women, early career researchers, and minority groups

In our analysis of grants, we examined gender equality considerations. We asked the funders that provided data if the grants awarded were aimed at involving women, young researchers, members of a local minority, and/or disadvantaged groups in the project. Funders self-reported the information gathered for this category.

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

**The majority of the grants<sup>2</sup> included gender considerations:** Although the grant information does not provide insights into whether and how women, young researchers, and other minorities were involved in the research work, 84% of the grants did include gender considerations. This is an increase from 36% in 2023.

We also asked funders whether the principal investigator or team leader of the grant is a woman, young researcher, or member of a local minority and/or disadvantaged group. Our analysis reveals that 74% of the grants are led by women, while 63.5% involve members of a minority group.

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<sup>2</sup> This is based on the information we collected. Note that not all members included information on gender considerations for their grants.

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

Based on the analysis above, we offer some initial recommendations for the members of the consortium to consider in their efforts to deliver the [5 recommendations](#).

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

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

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

- There is space to assess the amount of funding that is being directed to Africa-based grantees vis à vis North American and European organisations. While grantees based in Africa continue to surpass the number of grantees based in the Global North, the size of the grant value awarded in Europe and North America is still significantly higher than the grants awarded for education research in Africa. Global or multilateral organisations make up for a part of this difference. Addressing this funding gap requires a concerted effort to identify and eliminate institutional barriers that limit access to funding and resources for researchers based in Africa.
- There is an opportunity to shift funding aimed at programme/project implementation from North American to African grantees.
- There may also be an opportunity to reflect on how funding to North American and European organisations could better align with the recommendations of the consortium.
- Due to the limited information available for this study, it was not clear what the funders' grant process and strategies were. However, it seems that most African grantees are reactive recipients, while Global North grantees are proactive recipients.
- There are opportunities to diversify grant portfolios across regions and countries. Although the majority of the funders' grantees are African organisations, 85% of them are based in Southern and East African countries, with large concentrations in Kenya and South Africa. The rest of their grantees (15%) are based in Western Africa, and none are from Central or Northern African countries. In the same vein, there is an opportunity for funders to diversify their investment to Francophone African countries as the majority of their grants are directed at Anglophone African countries.

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

- Although universities and higher education institutions witnessed an increase in grants awarded, from 11% to 15%, there was a decrease in funds received by research centres/think tanks while the majority of these grants are still awarded to national and international NGOs (45%). While we recognise that NGOs can also communicate and use evidence, there is space for funders to consciously re-prioritise their portfolios to include more collaborations with organisations that communicate and use evidence in policy. More data on the grants will be necessary to determine if the NGOs are already fulfilling these functions.
- Similarly, the functions that the grants support focus on implementation and research. Communication and knowledge translation were not prioritised. There is space to grow in these areas.

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

- Although 84% of grants with information include gender considerations, their grants' DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) metrics weren't entirely clear due to limited data available, and there was limited information on how women, young researchers, and other minority groups were represented/involved in the projects - not as beneficiaries.
- The limited data available suggests that these are probably not explicit objectives of the grants.
- More transparent and detailed reporting is crucial for accurate evaluation and reporting of the impact of such grants.

### Recommendation 5: Capture data systematically and promote dynamic learning.

- More frequent updates of grantee data would help monitor progress to inform their future strategies and decision-making process.
- Because of the way grant data is captured by most funders, it required some "heavy lifting" on their part to share it, and there was a need to repeatedly provide context on the requests to argue for the value and relevance of this exercise. This, especially, became a cumbersome task for funders with large portfolios. There is an opportunity for funders in this consortium to consider adhering to a common template (or a list of minimum indicators) for how grant data are captured.
- Funders can contribute to the five recommendations by being thorough in their data collection. We recommend that funders could - at a minimum - capture the following data/information per grant:
  - Grantee organisation name

- Others (does it involve sub-contracting or re-granting)
- Grant description (including topics and sub-issues funded)
- Grantee location - Global/ African/ Non-African countries (North vs. South, sub-region, etc.)
- Grant period (Grant start date/ Grant end date)
- Grant number (is this the 1st, 2nd, 3rd grant to the same organisation)
- Region/country of focus
- Type of organisation (think tank, research centre, NGO, consultancy, government, MDB/other aid agency, local foundation)
- Grant Function (research, advocacy, implementation, MEL, evidence use)
- Grant amount/ size of grant/contracts
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion: Gender of organisation leader; is the principal investigator or team leader a woman, young researcher, or member of a local minority and/or disadvantaged group?; Is the grant aimed at involving women, young researchers, members of a local minority, and/or disadvantaged group in the project?
- Is the grant/contract reactive or proactive? (was the grant offered in response to a call for proposal made by the funder, or was the proposal developed by the grantee?)
- However, operationalising this will require greater attention to the way in which funders collect and store this information.