



# Africa Grantmakers Affinity Group

## 2005 Annual Retreat

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Dulce Hayes Mansion  
Conference Center  
San Jose, California  
January 17-19, 2005

## Credits

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## About the Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group

The Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group (AGAG) is a membership organization of foundations currently funding or interested in funding in Africa. AGAG has its roots in the South Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group, a loose network of donors involved in South Africa during the 1980s. In 2000, this group was reconstituted as the Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group and expanded its mandate to include all of Africa. In 2001, AGAG established an office and began the process of growing from a loose network of foundations into a formal organization.

AGAG carries out a range of activities to further its mission to promote increased and more effective funding by foundations for Africa. It has 37 private and corporate foundation members, primarily in the United States, but also includes foundations based in Europe and Africa. AGAG seeks to establish itself as a forum for foundations to build and share knowledge about grantmaking in Africa to assist grantmakers in their efforts to better address Africa's development challenges.

The AGAG Annual Retreat is an opportunity for grantmakers to network with each other, catch up on new developments at their respective foundations, and discuss issues of mutual interest. This report summarizes the discussions of AGAG's fifth annual meeting held in San Jose, California.

For further information on AGAG and its activities, please consult the AGAG website, [www.africagrantmakers.org](http://www.africagrantmakers.org). For copies of this report, contact [agag@africagrantmakers.org](mailto:agag@africagrantmakers.org).

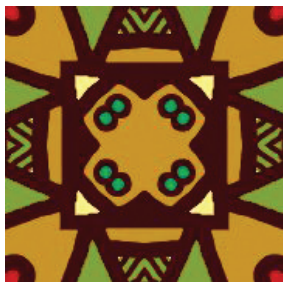
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# Introduction



The Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group (AGAG) annual retreat took place at the Dulce Hayes Mansion Conference Center in San Jose, California from January 17-19, 2005. The participants included grantmakers based in the U.S. and Africa who represented foundations with a variety of funding interests such as community development, health, women's issues, support for civil society, democracy and governance, culture, environment and education. They also represent a broad spectrum of funding approaches. Some of the grantmakers target a specific geographic region in Africa, some support activities in one or two countries, while others concentrate on funding initiatives related to certain themes or issues. These funders also support a wide array of institutions and organizations in Africa, ranging from universities, research centers and political think tanks to grassroots and community groups.

In keeping with the primary objectives of each annual retreat, the gathering in San Jose provided an opportunity for the members of AGAG to discuss their work in a supportive and open environment and to identify areas of interest to guide AGAG's knowledge building agenda. The diverse backgrounds of the grantmakers themselves and the range of thematic and geographic mandates of the institutions they represented set the stage for two days of lively discussion, both during and after the formal sessions since the format provided opportunities for informal and intimate exchanges. Each session began with remarks by grantmakers who related their experiences to the session topic and set the stage for the group discussion which followed.

During the opening dinner, AGAG co-chair, Akwasi Aidoo, invited participants to consider **"context, capacity, and change"** as the themes tying the sessions of the retreat together and to reflect on them against the background of their own unique and recent experiences. These themes resonated throughout the retreat's sessions, generated many questions, and led to spontaneous exchanges that often emerged as side paths to the main discussion. During the final session, participants reflected upon and revisited many of the issues previously discussed during the retreat and these topics were added to a list of possible topics for AGAG to explore as part of its new focus on capturing and analyzing the knowledge of AGAG members about their Africa grantmaking experience. 



## Identifying Opportunities in Times of Challenge

This session focused on the strategies for building a positive basis for work and opportunities to make an impact in African countries facing different types of challenges, including civil and political conflicts, migration of displaced populations, and the spread of infectious diseases. The discussion also included how the challenges themselves affects the relationship between grantmaker and grantee.

Moderator Andrea Johnson of the Carnegie Corporation invited Daniel Robbins of the J.F. Kapnek Trust and Julia Greenberg of the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) to begin the discussion by sharing their strategies for working with grantees in challenging environments. The J.F. Kapnek Trust focuses on pediatric HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, and works with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to tackle issues that directly affect those impacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The AJWS supports grassroots groups that organize around social justice issues throughout Africa and works directly with the groups they fund. Robbins began by outlining some of the challenges of working in Zimbabwe where the political crisis has negatively affected the capacity of civil society to mount a response to HIV/AIDS. Kapnek's response has been to build relationships with ministry officials who are in a position to affect projects that parallel and deepen the impact of its work. Although the situation in Zimbabwe was challenging, he said, times of crisis can present unique opportunities for grantmakers to work with visionary stakeholders to push for policy changes or attempt new approaches to traditional problems.

Julia Greenberg said that in the context of the HIV/AIDS crisis, access to funding is a major challenge facing the grassroots groups AJWS primarily supports. The AJWS strategic model was to make connections with local groups, research their activities and then provide training on how they can access funds from bigger foundations. Greenberg also spoke about the role of larger international NGOs in times of crisis and how their presence and approach can devastate a local structure where grassroots groups were already well-positioned to mobilize and act. She stressed the need for grantmakers to research the activities of local grassroots groups, especially during times of conflict or crisis, before designing or implementing any initiatives.


When the conversation was opened to the floor, the discussion began with a consideration of the importance of context. **Participants agreed that context, particularly challenging political circumstances, influenced not only how grantmakers operate, but also the activities of grantees that operate in highly politicized environments.** Issues such as what happens when grantees become overly politicized, which can result in some grantmakers deciding they cannot continue to support their activities, were discussed. One participant noted that in some countries political circumstances present too many obstacles for grantmakers and they may choose to suspend their activities until the situation changes.

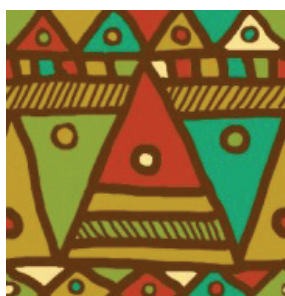
A major portion of the discussion focused on the role of grassroots groups. There was clearly no consensus among grantmakers who proved divided on the question of how best to support the work of grassroots organizations. Some view working with grassroots groups as the best approach to supporting the development process, while others disagree with assigning them such a central role. Grassroots groups are viewed as limited in their scope by some, but seen as powerful mobilizers who provide incredible sources of energy and action during times of crisis by others. Some participants felt that an “over-romanticized” notion of the capacity of grassroots groups led to an assumption that they want or should stay small to remain effective, thus inhibiting their ability to raise more funds to enable them to work on larger projects.

This session also raised the question of the evolution and long-term sustainability of grassroots groups and how it affects relationships with funders. Participants noted that **some groups are formed during times of crisis and do not have a long-term mission or plan while others have displayed great capacity for action but can “die on the vine” for lack of long-term support and planning.** Still other groups evolve from their original mission as service providers to become more active in and defined by advocacy activities. If a grantmaker is mandated to support service oriented organizations and a group’s focus changes over time to become advocacy oriented, then it can be difficult for the grantmaker to continue the funding relationship

Some participants defined their approach to grantmaking as relative flexibility and they actively encourage their grantees to develop an advocacy capacity beyond one that is solely service oriented. Others replied that responding to the changing orientation of their grantee is challenging because their institutional funding priorities do not facilitate this kind of flexibility.

Another participant suggested that grantmakers should focus less on their own mandates and more on how groups define themselves, for example some grassroots groups may actively seek to move beyond the survivalist stage and become advocates engaged in national or regional debate. **It was noted that grantmakers need to find better ways to respond to the changing aspirations of grantees, rather than trying to fit grantees aspirations into their own programmatic paradigms.**

The session concluded with a discussion of the challenges of comparing funding strategies and priorities among grantmakers with different thematic and geographic interests. 



## Strategies for Supporting Organizational Effectiveness

For many organizations working in Africa, a major challenge is how to design and implement successful programs to build the organization's overall health. This challenge affects the programs of those foundations who fund organizations in Africa directly and those who fund through intermediaries. This session examined some of the approaches and strategies foundations are using to support organizational effectiveness.

Moderator Don Lauro of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation invited Barbara Kibbe from the Skoll Foundation, Stephanie McAuliffe from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Russell Ally from the C.S. Mott Foundation to begin the session by discussing their different approaches to help grantees develop effective organizations. Barbara Kibbe shared some experiences from her fifteen years

of supporting organizational effectiveness grantmaking working at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Skoll Foundation. Among the lessons shared were that **funders should try to look for "in country" capacity to build effectiveness by hiring local expertise, as opposed to bringing in outside knowledge.** She also stressed the need for research to determine the organizational context of each grantee before designing or implementing a program, adding that no preparation could substitute for on-the-ground experience gained from local experiences and interactions with grantees.

Stephanie McAuliffe said that the Packard Foundation's strong emphasis on improving organizational output was rooted in the foundation's business origins and was reflected in their organizational effectiveness programs that have invested a large amount of resources over the last two years in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Sudan. Her presentation focused on two main



aspects of Packard's organizational capacity training: operational capacity development, to help organizations to carry out day-to-day activities, and adaptive capacity development, to help organizations to learn and change in response to changing circumstances.

Russell Ally, Director of the Mott Foundation's South Africa office, described Mott's approach of working directly with organizations in South Africa to strengthen the nonprofit sector. While many grantmakers list organizational effectiveness as one of their grantmaking objectives, Mott's work in this area in South Africa is distinctive because one of its core programs provides support specifically for developing the capacity of the non-profit sector by providing training and technical assistance. He urged grantmakers to be **proactive (introduce projects to support ongoing organizational development as opposed to reacting to crisis), holistic (treat all aspects of the organization's operations including administration, governance and program work), and integrated (include board and staff in all aspects of the project)** with approaches that support capacity-building projects.

Following the initial presentations, participants broke into small groups to discuss organizational effectiveness in the context of their own grantmaking and reconvened later to share their findings.

**The small group discussions revealed a positive response to the capacity building aspect of organizational effectiveness projects, and raised several concerns regarding process implementation and outcome.** For example, one group suggested that process recommendations could artificially affect an organization's evolution by leading to an exaggerated focus on its internal organization, away from its mission. Another group expressed concern with striking the right balance between supporting a grantee's efforts to develop capacity while avoiding a situation where the grantee becomes "donor driven" and organizational effectiveness grants are viewed simply as a conduit to funding.


There was a lengthy discussion on Identifying the best time during an organization's evolution to introduce an organizational effectiveness grant. Viewpoints included those of one group who felt that programs should be supported first and capacity building grants introduced at a later stage. This was countered by another group who said that **if an organization did not have an effective infrastructure to begin with, then no matter how clear their vision or mission, the group's efforts would be hampered.** Therefore, capacity building grants should be introduced first. Another group who had discussed this issue of timing felt that support for capacity building or organizational effectiveness projects should be positioned as part of an exit strategy for grantmakers. Although no consensus was reached as to when organizational efficiency planning could most effectively be introduced, one group did present the issue for consideration as to what form the

grant should take i.e., whether support for organizational effectiveness should be a distinct grant or a part of the core support so as to offer flexibility to the grantee when submitting proposals.

Finally, participants agreed that several considerations were common to the success of any organizational efficiency process and that when planning any course of action grantmakers should:

- Avoid blanket solutions as different organizations are at different stages of development
- Employ extensive planning and advance research to ascertain organizational needs
- Choose the right consultant with grantee's input
- Scrutinize the roles of both staff and board members
- Maintain confidentiality about the process and its outcomes
- Make additional resources available to implement the recommendations of the process

**In addition to articulating these components, participants agreed on the necessity of continuing to support grantees as agents of improvement once the process is completed.**

They suggested developing opportunities for networking between grantees who had gone through an organizational efficiency process and those who had not. The group also agreed on the need for mechanisms to assess the long-term effects of organizational effectiveness projects, both to monitor a grantee's development and to measure the effectiveness of the grantmaker's approach. 



## Pathways to Democracy: Reflections and Implications

The development of civil society through-out Africa has brought many changes in democracy building and government institutions over the past decade. As a result, partnerships between foundations and the organizations and institutions they support have also been affected. One example of such change can be seen in the growth and successes of the women's movement in recent years that are illustrative of changing power relations in Africa. During this session, Moderator Akwasi Aidoo of Trust Africa invited Bisi Adleleye-Fayemi, Executive Director of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) to begin the conversation by sharing how recent social and political changes have affected her work as a grantmaker working with women's networks and women's groups.

Adleleye-Fayemi began her comments with an overview of the growth of AWDF and how it has mobilized advocacy efforts, acted as a conduit for fiscal support, and provided a training ground for future change agents. One example of the increasing impact of networks like AWDF and of the women's movement in general, was their successful Africa-wide advocacy efforts to ensure equal representation of men and women in the leadership of both the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative.

Since for some grantmakers whose mandate is tied to a specific geographic area supporting sub-regional or regional network initiatives is difficult, this discussion explored how to find a useful middle ground upon which to build collaborative efforts that support networks, including women's networks, operating throughout Africa.

**Recent changes in civil society have spawned the growth of social movements as major players in Africa.** Their role in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns is one notable example. The question arose as to how grantmakers, working within limited mandates, could relate to these kinds of loose regional movements. Despite the challenges, participants expressed interest in pursuing the prospect of working with these groups. Some participants suggested supporting networking events to facilitate listening and learning opportunities between grantmakers, social network activists and the traditional NGO sector. Others suggested supporting more educational and capacity building opportunities for future social leaders.

Finally, participants addressed the question of how recent social and political changes had affected funding trends. Adleleye-Fayemi observed that some grantmakers tend to exhibit a "famine or feast" attitude in challenging circumstances i.e., **a tendency to steer clear of supporting initiatives in difficult environments but then to get involved with major funding programs once the political or social situation had improved.** Another participant noted an evolution from grantmakers supporting exclusively civil society institutions to an increase in grantmakers supporting the development of institutions of democratic government and pan-African intergovernmental institutions such as the African Union. A specific example cited was the case of South Africa where most foundation support had been directed towards civil society organizations during the apartheid years but in recent years the trends had changed and now more support was being directed towards developing post-apartheid governmental institutions. While there was no disagreement on the need to support democratic institution building, it was noted that this support should not come at the expense of supporting civil society organizations who occupy a different but vital space, fundamental to continue national and regional democracy building. 

# Guest Speakers

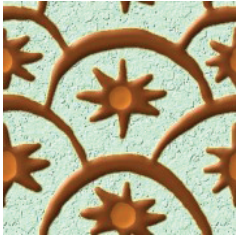


AGAG invited two special guests to participate in and provide a practical perspective to retreat discussions by locating discussion themes in the context of crosscutting development issues. Based upon their long experiences of working with and for African institutions, both Alice Dear and Ibrahim Gambari, directed their comments on promoting African capacity building and development.

Along with the added value of their experience to the retreat's discussions, their comments provided practical suggestions for grantmakers as to where their programs fit into the private and public sector development agenda. Two basic propositions were the focus of their remarks: women's access to credit, critical for women's economic development and by definition for African development in general, and supporting African institutions such as the African Union through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative, critical for promoting African development and capacity building on all fronts.

Ms. Dear's remarks on the role of women in the development equation reflected her experiences working in commercial development and investment banking, including a tenure as U.S. director of the African Development Bank. Ms. Dear's remarks reflected her experiences in working with women entrepreneurs at the grassroots level to promote legislative equality and women's access to political power. She emphasized the intricate relationship between women and development, as well as the obstacles that women face. She noted that different sectors are often inexorably linked; women entrepreneurs working in the formal sector are often involved in social issues using their income to supplement informal sector projects at the grassroots level. On every front, she said, and especially for economic development, women's access to capital is crucial. Ms. Dear challenged grantmakers to support African women's efforts to become equal partners in Africa's future through including a consideration of women's issues at every level of funding initiative development.

Ambassador Gambari's extensive experience of working with governmental, academic and international institutions and his recent appointment as Special Advisor to the Secretary General on Africa, provided him with a very pragmatic perspective on political change and capacity building in Africa. He highlighted the retreat themes squarely within the context of the need for grantmakers to support the development of institutions such as the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Throughout his remarks, he urged grantmakers to support institution building in Africa not as an afterthought to their traditional areas of engagement but as critical areas for future funding initiatives. Concluding his comments with a call for U.S. grantmakers to lend their support to the development agendas of pan-African institutions Prof. Gambari he quoted Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe "You and I have a different past but a common future. The era of separate destiny is over."



**The Honorable Alice M. Dear, President, A. M. Dear & Associates**

Ambassador Alice M. Dear, banker, businesswoman and Africa expert, is President of A.M. Dear & Associates, a business consulting and investment advisory boutique specializing in promoting private sector investment in Africa and strategies to support small and medium scale enterprises.

Ms. Dear summarized two “intersecting issues” on the development agenda: gender equality and the promotion of the private sector, particularly small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). While most governments have accepted private sector development as the main engine for growth “often the private sector does not include the woman’s face”. The only exception is the area of micro-credit, which has become synonymous with women’s enterprise in Africa. She illustrated how confining women’s private sector role to micro-finance ignores the potential, possibilities and changes that have taken place in many fields, traditional and non-traditional, where women have become increasingly active in recent years.

She spoke on some recent achievements of African women at the pan-African, ministerial, and development levels, making special reference to the outstanding achievements of Kenyan environmental activist Wangari Mutha Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and the first African woman to receive the honor:

- Gertrude Mongella is president of the Pan-African parliament
- 50% of African Union commissioners are women
- Mozambique’s Prime Minister, Luísa Dias Diogo is a woman
- National legislatures including the Rwandan parliament have increasing numbers of women
- Women have been instrumental in recent peace building processes throughout Africa

In addition, the growth of professional associations of African women has been vital for promoting women’s growth in the private sector. Ms. Dear cited the Kodak-supported American and African Business Women’s Alliance (AABWA) as a specific example of this trend. The AABWA was established to provide training, networking and to promote trade and investment among African women and between American and African women. Through these interactions and the work of grass-roots, national and regional networks, women have empowered themselves and promoted the knowledge building required for economic growth. In addition, she reminded the group, that the agricultural sector, where women have traditionally dominated, is yet another area where women can make a significant impact on economic growth.

Ms. Dear said that from her perspective private equity capital funds that further develop the capacity of established and viable businesses were the best model for engagement of capital in Africa. She welcomed the fact that many African women

who have worked in the private sector in the U.S. and Europe were now returning home empowered with substantial expertise in this field. She stressed how capital required to support economic growth in the private sector also needs to be matched by a political climate that favors entrepreneurs, and encourages those who operate in the informal sector to formalize their activities. Necessary changes in this domain include business friendly legislation and tax incentives.

Ms. Dear concluded her remarks by saying that despite the achievements and general movement forward for women, huge challenges remain. **The most important impediment to women's success is access to capital and this is compounded by various social and legislative obstacles.** However, these are areas where grantmakers can make a difference, she said. While foundations may not be in the business of establishing private equity funds there are many ways in which their support of capacity building and advocacy initiatives of the women's movement in Africa at the local and regional levels can be critical to an integrated economic growth process. These include:

- Capacity building projects in agriculture, politics and business
- Supporting access to technology and training
- Using AGAG as a forum to connect grantees with grantmakers
- Supporting advocacy efforts to promote equality especially in the legislative arena

Ms. Dear urged grantmakers to make gender considerations an overarching theme of any initiative they pursued in Africa. Without supporting women's empowerment in general, she said, economic growth and development in Africa cannot move forward.



**Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, Under-Secretary-General/  
Special Adviser on Africa**

Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari is Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa at the United Nations Secretariat in New York.

Professor Gambari's remarks touched on many of the retreat themes based on his work in challenging circumstances and times of political change to supporting capacity building and development in Africa. He began his remarks by saying that recent pan-African initiatives, namely the African Union and its various initiatives have provided a new framework for action on several fronts and augur well for Africa's quest for political stability, regional integration and economic development. For example, since the African Union's ratification in 2003 of the Peace and Security Protocol pan-African coalitions have been involved in peace-keeping and conflict resolution initiatives throughout Africa, most recently in Darfur. In addition, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a mandated initiative of the African Union, has developed action plans in several key areas including agriculture, infrastructure, environment, health and education.

Beyond conflict resolution and socio-economic development, another issue of great interest to many grantmakers who attended this year's meeting was his comments on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). He said that, to date, twenty-four African countries have signed on to this key NEPAD initiative that will provide a mechanism for self-scrutiny in several major areas including political representation and

rights, institutional effectiveness and economic management and governance. Ghana, Rwanda, Mauritius and Kenya will be the first group to take part in the process and under the current plan all signatories will be peer reviewed by 2006. He stressed that the APRM should be envisaged as a development aid for country support, borne of an Africa-led desire to move forward in a spirit of transparency and growth. Some of the main challenges facing the APRM project included ensuring:

- Country processes conform to high standards
- Processes are conducted with impartiality
- Review recommendations are acted upon

Commenting on changing political contexts, one of the retreat's main discussion themes, Professor Gambari said that although recent electoral experiences had not been perfect, much progress had been made in this regard, but he added that party agendas need to be accompanied by commitment to development goals to ensure electoral dividends with real impact.

Turning from pan-African institutions to the United Nations, Professor Gambari's outlined his role as Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA). This office was established to support NEPAD's implementation at the global level through reporting, advocacy and analytical work. One



of the most important functions of the office is to encourage policy coherence of development partners in support of Africa. Picking up the retreat theme of relationship building he said that his office provides an ideal mechanism for information exchange between AGAG members and African partners. He encouraged AGAG members to share their experiences of working in Africa with the Office of the Special Adviser in order to better inform its planning and perspectives moving forward.

Professor Gambari concluded that within these Africa led initiatives and frameworks for action there were many areas where AGAG grantmakers could become involved, especially in the areas of health, education and capacity building where many of the assembled participants have program expertise. He added that the support and involvement of the international private and non-governmental sector was vital to the success of Africa-led initiatives and he hoped to work with AGAG members on individual and collective collaborative projects in the future. 



## Shaping our Future: How to Build and Share Knowledge about the Africa Grantmaking Experience

During the next two years, AGAG's core program focus will be on building and sharing knowledge about the Africa grantmaking experience. The objective of the final session was to engage members in identifying some key issues and topics for exploration, and mechanisms through which their foundations could assist in gathering the relevant data.

The preceding sessions provided plenty of material, which fed directly into this exercise, highlighting the knowledge gaps in grantmaker information about each other's work and about

the contexts within which they work in Africa. Many of the topics included in this discussion arose during conversations summarized earlier in this report. Most questions tended to focus on building knowledge about grantmakers priorities and motivations, and the mechanics of their funding practices and interactions with grantees. What did not emerge from this session were many strategies for building knowledge about the context for working in Africa. One suggestion was that AGAG should hold a meeting in Africa and conduct site visits where these questions can be examined in the concrete and not the abstract.



An overarching theme of the final session was an attempt to define the role of AGAG as a “knowledge broker” i.e., how can AGAG facilitate knowledge-gathering and conversation and connections between grantmakers on the one hand and, in light of its limited resources, prioritize its next steps? This theme was addressed to some extent in the series of questions summarized later. Also emerging from the final session was **a clear mandate from members and an affirmation of the decision for AGAG to focus on developing a knowledge base that would serve as a valuable resource for its members and other grantmakers in pursuing more effective grantmaking.**

Several themes were discussed and refined into the following four discrete but related areas:

### **1 Building knowledge about each other’s funding mandates, priorities and practices, and the funding practices of non-AGAG members in Africa**

Throughout the retreat participants shared anecdotal experiences and examples. There was an obvious desire to hear and learn more, not just about each other’s strategic motivations and processes, but more importantly about the scope of their program work on the ground. Little work has been done in any substantive way to map donor activities in Africa. While AGAG has initiated work in this vast research area through mapping health funding trends of AGAG members<sup>1</sup>, there is a need for gathering more specific quantitative and qualitative data to build AGAG’s knowledge base.

Other specific information grantmakers would like to gather in this area includes:

- Who we are and what do we fund?
- Who are the other big grantmakers?
- What are the emerging trends in the donor community?.

### **2 Building knowledge about funding experiences in Africa and using that knowledge to improve program design and implementation**

Throughout the retreat, grantmakers considered their relationships with grantees and what could be learned from the grantee’s perspective. Some participants felt there was adequate information on project successes but that little data existed on errors of judgment or oversights.

Specific questions under this theme included:

- How can grantmakers get reliable feedback from the field about their Africa grantmaking practices?
- What strategies can be developed to hear about the impact or influence of grantmakers’ work?

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<sup>1</sup> The report entitled *Funding for Health in Africa: Mapping the United States Foundation Landscape 2000-2002* is available from AGAG via e-mail at [agag@agag.org](mailto:agag@agag.org) or by contacting AGAG at (212) 812-4212.

- What mechanisms can grantmakers put into place to share and learn from their mistakes?
- How do grantmakers develop strategies to respond to what they learn from their grantees and from one another?

### **3 Building knowledge about the social, political, and economic contexts of grantmakers' work in Africa.**


The need to understand and take into account the political, social and economic context of grantmakers' work and how those contexts can affect grantmaking was a theme that surfaced throughout the discussions. Questions under this theme included:

- To what extent are grantmakers taking emerging economic, social and political trends in Africa into account when designing their program and grantmaking strategies?
- To what extent do grantmakers take grantmaking trends, including those of non-U.S. grantmakers into account when designing their program and grantmaking strategies?
- How can grantmakers use this information to inform and improve their funding strategies?

### **4 Building knowledge on AGAG member collaboration and collaborative opportunities with non-AGAG members; the context of AGAG grantmaking in relation to other grantmakers in Africa**

A final series of questions framed a desire for AGAG members to continue to work collaboratively to share experiences. Participants also considered ways that AGAG members could think more broadly in terms of seeking alliances with similar groups based in other countries and with different kinds of U.S.-based grantmakers. Questions grouped under this theme included:

- How can AGAG help to facilitate relationship building between members with a regional mandate and those who work at the national level to learn from each other and to facilitate networking opportunities between their grantees?
- How can grantmakers explore more specific themes in working groups organized to explore geographic commonalities and thematic interests?
- How can AGAG collaborate with similar groups such as the European Foundation Center (EFC) to identify recommendations and strategies for members and grantmakers?
- What mechanisms exist for building relationships between AGAG members and other larger multilateral and bilateral agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID)?
- How can AGAG develop, integrate and leverage these relationships with other grantmakers to influence implementation of shared policies and initiatives in Africa?
- What strategies and partnerships can grantmakers develop to magnify and or extend the effects of their work?

The group acknowledged that it would be difficult to address all four areas in the immediate future with AGAG's current resources; however, one or two areas would be selected to explore. 



## Conclusion

AGAG is a network of grantmakers dedicated to promoting increased and more effective foundation funding in Africa. The annual retreat is a unique opportunity for members to come together to discuss issues that affect their work as grantmakers in Africa and to discuss how the AGAG Secretariat can assist them. Session themes are specifically chosen to encourage discussion and yet are general enough to allow for different interpretations among a diverse group of grantmakers. This year's retreat was no exception. Themes of context, capacity and change held different meanings for each participant who defined these themes in relation to their own unique experiences of working in Africa. And, the dynamic format of this year's retreat facilitated the sharing of many of these different perspectives.

How grantmakers can build collaborative efforts to bridge their different thematic, regional and philosophical perspectives was a major theme of this year's retreat. Discussions focusing on the interplay between local and regional e.g., groups and networks, or the role of pan-African organizations versus the work of civil society groups who work on specific issues, underlined some of the different perspectives of the assembled group. Despite differences, what emerged during the discussions was the desire to work effectively in challenging

circumstances as well as the desire to build collaborative efforts based on grantmakers' collective but divergent experiences and expertise to promote increased and more effective grantmaking.

Related to the idea of the collaboration was the theme of finding new and better ways to build relationships. The desire to build relationships with grassroots groups, with networks, with social movements, with civil society actors, with international organizations and most importantly, with pan-African institutions was expressed throughout all of the meeting's sessions.

**Different interpretations of the concept of change, one of the main retreat themes, also framed many discussions,** from a consideration of how grantmakers can function effectively when working in changing political contexts to a discussion of how grantmakers can relate to the changing orientations of grantees. Even change in the sense of developing an organization's capacity to function more effectively featured in one session. Finally, participants considered how they might work to support the emergence of agents of change across all their funding programs in Africa.

**Helping build capacity across the development spectrum from supporting the evolution of groups at the grassroots level to developing capacity building projects for established institutions was expressed as a major concern of the group.** This consideration

was reiterated during the remarks of guest speaker Alice Dear who underlined the link between capacity-building for African women and the future success of economic development in Africa.

Some themes arose that focused on less tangible subjects such as the role of perception in grantmaking e.g., **how do grantmakers' perceptions of their own mandate and goals play out in grantmaking practices?** Also, the issue of how grantees perceive themselves, and how this informs their interactions with grantmakers was echoed throughout several conversations.

In many ways the final session on knowledge-building provided a suitable conclusion to the meeting. This session provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on some of the themes that arose during the discussions and attempt to distill them into specific questions or areas for further exploration. Some of the themes from the final session will be included in AGAG's future knowledge building projects.

As one participant remarked, **"when considering working in Africa we should not overemphasize the differences— they exist to be sure but there are also commonalities."** This year's retreat underlined the desire of funders to work together to share and learn from their different experiences and perspectives and in doing so to build mechanisms for collaboration. More often, the discussion returned to the restrictions in working within established funding mandates and the limited flexibility in responding to the needs of people who live in the fifty-four diverse countries that comprise the continent of Africa. One suggestion in response to the question of restrictive funding mandates was for grantmakers to reach beyond AGAG's membership base to pursue more regional initiatives in conjunction with the private sector to establish more flexible funding conduits.

AGAG's mission to promote increased and more effective funding in Africa faces the two-prong challenge of addressing the needs of grantmakers while exploring both the differences and commonalities that underlie their experiences of working in Africa. As part of AGAG's strategic directives to build and share knowledge about the grantmaking experience, AGAG will seek ways to capture, analyze, synthesize, and to inform grantmakers' knowledge and hopefully improve grantmaking in Africa practices going forward.



## Participants

### **Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi**

*Co-Founder and Executive Director*  
The African Women's Development Fund

### **Akwasi Aidoo**

*Director, Trust Africa*  
Ford Foundation

### **Dr. Russell Ally**

*Director, South Africa Office*  
C. S. Mott Foundation

### **Jennifer Anderson-Bahr**

*Senior Program Officer/  
Interim Executive Director*  
Firelight Foundation

### **Diana Aubourg**

Pan-African Children's Fund

### **Caitlin Brune**

*Program Officer*  
Firelight Foundation

### **Rob Buchanan**

*Director, International Programs*  
Council on Foundations

### **Ellie Clelland**

*Program Director*  
Global Catalyst Foundation

### **Hon. Alice M. Dear (Guest Speaker)**

*President*  
A. M. Dear & Associates

### **Deborah Diserens**

*Director of Program Development*  
Foundation for Advancement of  
International Medical Education  
and Research

### **Fiona Dunne**

*Rapporteur*  
Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group

### **Hon. Professor Ibrahim Gambari (Guest Speaker)**

*Under Secretary General and Special  
Advisor on Africa*  
United Nations

### **Andrea Gay**

*Senior Program Officer*  
United Nations Foundation

### **Nicole Gray**

*Program Officer*  
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

### **Julia Greenberg**

*Deputy Director, International  
Programs*  
American Jewish World Services

### **John Harvey**

*Executive Director*  
Grantmakers Without Borders

### **Sarah Hobson**

*Executive Director*  
New Field Foundation

### **Andrea Johnson**

*Program Officer, International  
Programs*  
Carnegie Corporation of New York

### **Don Lauro**

*Senior Program Manager*  
David and Lucile Packard Foundation

### **Stephanie McAuliffe**

*Director of Organizational  
Effectiveness*  
David and Lucile Packard Foundation

### **Malusi Mpumlwana**

*Africa Program Director*  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

### **Muadi Mukenge**

*Program Officer for Africa*  
Global Fund for Women

### **Niamani Mutima**

*Director*  
Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group

### **Candace Nelson**

*Manager, Africa Grants Program*  
McKnight Foundation

### **Ruth Oko-Ampofo**

*Administrative Assistant*  
Christensen Fund

### **Heather Plumridge**

*Assistant Program Director*  
Global Greengrants Fund

### **Jill Rademacher**

*Vice President*  
The Case Foundation

### **Daniel Robbins**

*Executive Director*  
J. F. Kapnek Trust

### **Dr. Gerard M. Salole**

*Representative for South Africa*  
The Ford Foundation

### **Barbara Sargent**

*Board President*  
New Field Foundation

### **Michael Jacob Sinclair\***

*Director*  
Manasseh's Children

### **Stephen Strickland**

*Senior Liaison Officer for Global  
Polio Eradication*  
United Nations Foundation

### **Elmar (Tom) Vinh-Thomas**

*Program Officer*  
David and Lucile Packard Foundation

### **Regine A. Webster**

*Fellow, Global Health Strategies*  
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

### **Penny Fujiko Wilgerodt**

*Vice President and Senior  
Philanthropic Advisor*  
Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors

### **Katherine Wilson**

*Assistant Program Officer*  
Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation

### **Kenneth Wilson**

*Executive Director*  
Christensen Fund

### **Jane Yett**

*Volunteer Advisor*  
Global Fund for Women

# Meeting Agenda

## MONDAY, JANUARY 17

6:00 pm – 10:00 pm **Opening Reception and Dinner**

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 18

8:00 am – 9:00 am **Breakfast**

9:00 am – 11:30 am **Session I: Identifying Opportunities in Times of Challenge**

*African countries are facing different types of challenges, including civil and political conflicts, migrations of displaced populations, and the spread of infectious diseases. These long and short-term challenges may call for certain strategies and approaches, while making others infeasible.*

*These circumstances raise important questions for funders that include how to identify the strategic timing, method of support, and types of interventions that meet both the aims of funders, and the needs of organizations on the ground. This session will explore the impact of some of the cross-cutting social and economic issues countries in Africa currently face, with an eye toward understanding and identifying opportunities where foundations can play an effective role.*

11:30 am – 12:30 pm **Break and Free Time for Networking**

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm **Lunch: Speaker, Hon. Alice M. Dear**

2:15 pm – 4:30 pm **Session II: Strategies for Supporting Organizational Effectiveness**

*The ability of organizations to manage both resources and change are essential aspects of organizational effectiveness. For many of the organizations working in Africa, a major challenge is how to design and implement successful programs and build the organization's overall health. This challenge also affects the programs of those foundations who fund organizations in Africa directly, and those who fund through intermediaries. This session will examine some of the approaches and strategies foundations are using to support organizational effectiveness.*

4:30 pm - 6:30 pm **Break and Free Time for Networking**

6:30 pm - 8:30 pm **Dinner: Speaker, Hon. Professor Ibrahim Gambari**

9:00 pm – 10:00 pm **How to Build and Share Knowledge about the Africa Grantmaking Experience**

*During the next two years, AGAG's core knowledge building projects will explore different aspects of working with organizations and institutions in Africa. This interactive session will engage members in identifying some key issues these projects should explore, and how their foundations can assist in both gathering the relevant data and making the necessary analysis.*

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19

8:00 am – 9:00 am **Breakfast**

9:00 am – 11:30 am **Session III: Pathways to Democracy: Reflections and Implications**

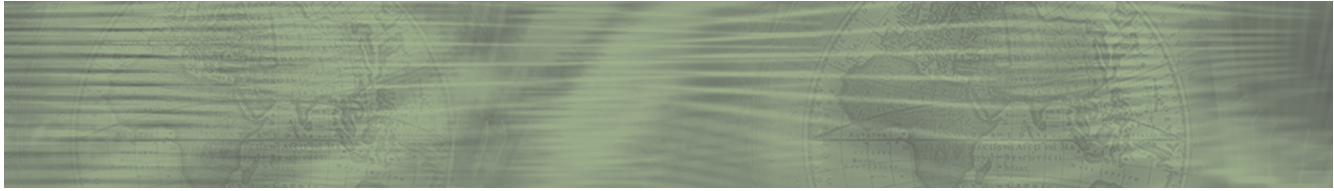
*Changes over the last decade have affected the partnerships between foundations and the organizations and institutions they support. In countries at various stages of democratic reform, both government and civil society are trying to come to grips with the challenge of a post-9/11 global environment. The interplay between and among national, regional, and local NGOs, and governments have changed the current landscape. This session will reflect upon the experiences of foundations with both a long and short history of working in Africa, and the impact and implications as foundations look to the future.*

11:30 am – 1:00 pm **Shaping our Future: AGAG**

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm **Lunch and Departure**







## VISION AND MISSION

AGAG'S VISION is to be a resource for foundations and their staff members to enable them to be more effective in their work so that they, in turn, can better serve their grantees in Africa.

AGAG'S MISSION is to encourage increased and more effective foundation funding in Africa.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2004-2006

### KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

AGAG is committed to creating knowledge about the grantmaking community, including mapping where foundations are working and analyzing strategic grantmaking approaches, with a primary focus on U.S. foundations. AGAG also strives to build knowledge within the organization about major development initiatives in Africa that affect the grantmaking context.

### KNOWLEDGE SHARING

AGAG is committed to creating networking opportunities for the staff of member foundations so they can more easily form professional relationships, share information, and explore opportunities for collaboration. AGAG will disseminate information about the field of foundation funding in Africa to the larger philanthropic community.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Akwasi Aidoo  
Ford Foundation

Jennifer Astone  
Firelight Foundation

Raoul Davion  
MacArthur Foundation

Andrea Johnson  
Carnegie Corporation

Patricia Langan  
International Youth Foundation

Don Lauro  
Packard Foundation

Gail McClure  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Joyce Moock  
Rockefeller Foundation

William Moses  
Kresge Foundation

Malusi Mpumlwana  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Nancy Muirhead  
Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Ray Murphy. *Ex Officio*  
C. S. Mott Foundation

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