



## 2014 Annual Conference Funding in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities

### Member Organized Sessions Funding Women, Youth and the Environment

- *Added Value: The Effects of Investing in Rural Women's Organizations*
- *Investing in African Youth: Developing Strategies for Funding a New Generation in Sub-Saharan Africa*
- *Network Mapping and Environmental Changes*

An important part of the annual meeting agenda is the space reserved for members of AGAG to organize and sponsor sessions to explore funding strategies and approaches related to their funding interests. These sessions were as organized part of the 2014 AGAG conference on “Funding in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities.” [Download the full report.](#)

#### ***Added Value: The Effects of Investing in Rural Women's Organizations***

**Session Organizers: Sarah Hobson (New Field Foundation) and Maudi Mukenge (Global Fund for Women)**

A panel of speakers highlighted findings from two studies on the effects of investments in rural women's organizations in four African countries. They provided practical recommendations for advancing sustainable agriculture and food systems with a gender perspective. The speakers were: Andrea Lynch, Program Officer for the Foundation for a Just Society; Annie Kinwa-Muzinga, Professor in the School of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin–Platteville; Tabara Ndiaye, Casamance Program consultant for the New Field Foundation; and Violet Shitvuse, Founder and Coordinator of Shibuye Community Health Workers.

The first study focused on Senegal where an independent assessment was done to understand the impact of grants to Senegalese rural women's organizations. Women were trained as radio journalists to interview people and then broadcast the survey findings on community radio stations. The survey found that grants increased women's roles as decision-makers and helped them gain access to fertile land. It also gave them greater freedom of choice in crop cultivation and improved their knowledge of farming practices. Grants also help women to increase land ownership and develop more effective and recognized leadership. Women reported improvements in harvests, revenue, food security, health and education for their daughters. The study concluded that funders must understand the local context and strive to learn from organizations at the local, regional and national levels. Local advisors are valuable in helping to guide the process and developing funding criteria and assessments. They can help connect organizations providing similar resources in the area and avoid duplication.

The second study focused on grants awarded to rural women's groups addressing sustainable agriculture in Kenya, Uganda and Burkina Faso. Country-based consultants provided technical support and annual meetings of the groups offered opportunities for capacity building and sharing. The study used focus groups and surveys to test the hypothesis that core support funding strengthens women's groups' abilities to generate information, tools, income sources and networks that improve agricultural productivity and alleviate poverty. The study found significant improvements in crop practices, production and daily diets. Women were able to channel more homegrown food into sales and to share financial decision-making with their husbands.

A key lesson from both studies is that patience is necessary in evaluating the impact of funding. Allow 18 months for an initial investment to develop and several years to see fulfillment. A good baseline study, a monitoring and evaluation plan, ongoing funding for institutional development and technical assistance will benefit everyone. Funders should adopt a policy of inclusion for all stakeholders from project conception through evaluation.

Resources: Community Grantmaking in West Africa 2006-2011: Assessing Impact - <http://bit.ly/1oVPHJi>  
Rural Women's Associations and Sustainable Agriculture in Casamance, Senegal - <http://bit.ly/1qYXOq8>

### ***Investing in African Youth: Developing Strategies for Funding a New Generation in Sub-Saharan Africa***

**Session Organizer: Amber Baker (MAC AIDS Fund)**

Young people are a growing percentage of Africa's population. Projections indicate that by 2020 on average 20 years old will comprise 75% of the population. Meeting the needs of this increasingly important demographic is a critical concern. Three panelists presented a snapshot of innovative programs that address youth health, education and employment.

Amber Baker, Manager of Europe, Middle East and Africa Programs for the MAC AIDS Fund, reported on Africa's youth population boom. From 2000-2008, Africa's working-age population grew by 25% and is projected to reach one billion by 2040, surpassing both China and India. This boom creates significant youth health concerns. MAC identified pediatric AIDS as a major gap and is funding programs that expand prevention, testing and treatment for youth.

Of the total population of people worldwide who are living with HIV, 70% live in Africa and youth are at particular risk. In Botswana, Zambia and Nigeria 90% of all new HIV infections in newborns are a result from mother-to-child transmissions and HIV positive youth frequently do not have access to treatment. In Zambia, one-fifth of all people living with HIV are under age 15 and in Nigeria 430,000 youth are living with HIV. In Botswana and South Africa, adolescent girls are more likely than boys to become infected, she reported.

"Soccer is the language of Africa and it's more than just a game," said Samuel Mayer, Director of Business Development and Strategy for Grassroots Soccer. This organization uses soccer as a vehicle to change a generation's future and educate, inspire and mobilize youth about AIDS and life skills. More than 750,000 youth have graduated from Grassroots Soccer programs. Thousands more are being tested for HIV and learning that the disease can be prevented and treated. Although impact has been widely demonstrated finding government "champions" at the national, district and community levels can be challenging.

Caitlin Mitchell, Program Associate for EMPOWER, the Emerging Markets Foundation, described how the organization links the resources of emerging markets professionals worldwide with the vitality of local organizations in emerging markets countries.

She described the Livelihoods initiative to help people in Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa see the link between education and employability. Education is a key building block for moving people toward employment. Consequently, the Livelihoods Initiative supports vocational training, financial literacy, and tutoring to help students succeed in high school and qualify for post-secondary education.

EMPOWER programs are enhancing students' English skills, preparing them for high school exit exams and offering skills training for girls in math, science and technology.

### ***Network Mapping and Environmental Changes***

**Session Organizers: Joyce Ashun (Christian Aid) and Janet Awimbo (Global Greengrants Fund)**

Harnessing the power of networks can inform and strengthen funding strategies. This session discussed how network mapping could provide an evaluation framework to gain insights on the impact of funding approaches.

How do community networks emerge and interact? Moderator Bess Rothenberg, Deputy Director of Research and Evaluation of Wellspring Advisors introduced Janet Awimbo, Coordinator of the Global Greengrants Fund's East and Southern Africa Advisory Boards who described a process of mapping relationships among NGOs and "influencers" in Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The maps depict visually how network members are interconnected, both geographically and by interests. The mapping process helps track the effectiveness of grants on building social movements and will be the framework for research in 2014-16.

"Once you have networks coming together, they can point you to other areas of need," said Abdoulai Darimani, Advisory Board Coordinator for West Africa for the Global Greengrants Fund. He described lessons learned from making small grants that strengthen community networks responding to environmental pollution, economic destruction, social disorganization, and human rights violations stemming from West African mining. By facilitating linkages and coordinated action among community groups, the capacity of grassroots organizations is strengthened and the people most affected by these problems gain a voice in decision-making.

Taking time to build networks and gain initial support is not a waste of resources, but rather is necessary for networks to survive, he said. Funders seeking to build community networks must recognize that a network and its individual members may have opposing interests. And networks tend to be most successful when they react defensively and to a common cause. Grants to networks are most successful when reporting and accountability mechanisms are flexible, and when the networks themselves define where support is most needed.

Joyce Ashun, Manager of Christian Aid, Ghana, described networking among civil society organizations to promote climate justice. Framing climate change as both an environmental and social justice issue, she said that citizen participation linked to capacity is the key to successful programs.

Numerous Ghanaian organizations focus on environmental issues. A grant fostered coherence and coordination among them, strengthened their capacity to interact effectively, and secured a strong civil society voice in Ghana's national climate change policy. The grant also increased visibility for the civil society movement and greater involvement in the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance.