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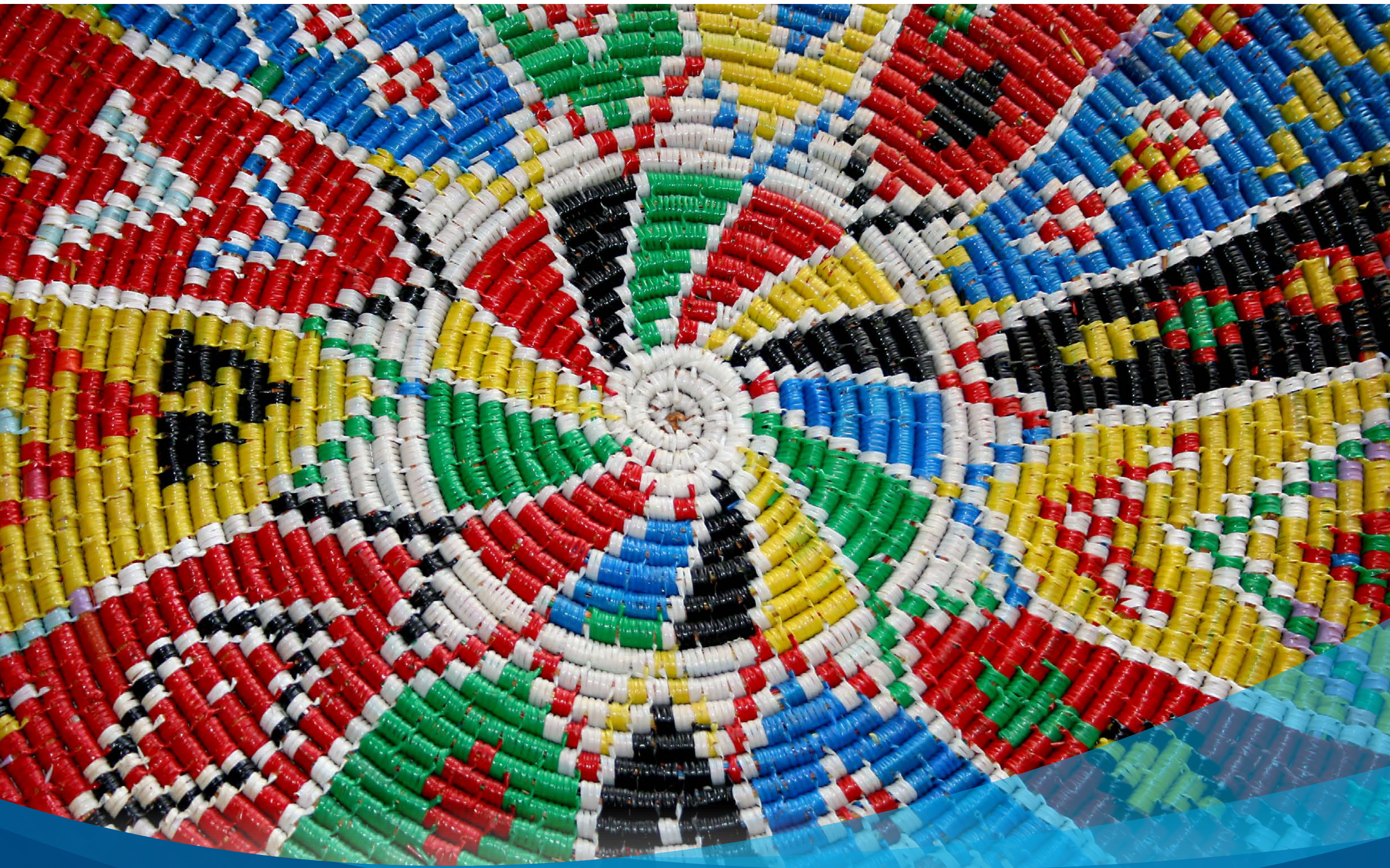

Strength in Numbers: Philanthropic Collaborations in Africa and Their Unique Potential

By Ansulie Cooper, Jan Schwier, Ntefeleng Nene, Hannah Benn, Fhatuwani Mabila, Cecilia Clarke, and Roger Thompson

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Philanthropic collaboration across Africa is robust and complex. In our research, we found that donors participate in over 130 collaborations, more than half of which work exclusively in Africa. Fuelling this growth is the continent's burgeoning prosperity and donors' growing acknowledgment that they need to work together to forge innovative ways to take on Africa's challenges in education, health, and economic development.

"Collaboration is a growing trend, and people are really just trying to think about how to do it," says Zimkhitha Peter, CEO of Cape Town–based Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy South Africa. "We've moved from informal sharing and coming together to trying to find how we co-create solutions together and who will fund them."

Collaboration in Africa is typically a multi-stakeholder affair, with different combinations of governments, businesses, nonprofits, and African and non-African funders joining together. "To scale, we need the government to come on board, and we need the banks to come on board, and we need other NGOs [nongovernmental organisations] to come on board," says Ashleigh Fynn Munda, head of philanthropies at Oppenheimer Generations Philanthropies in Johannesburg.

For all collaborative funders, pooling resources means that their money can go further and produce greater impact. African funders also emphasise the power of collaboration to develop and deploy new and better ways to scale solutions to pervasive societal needs. "Our starting point is the specific strategic opportunity that we are trying to realise," says David Harrison, CEO of Cape Town–based DG Murray Trust (DGMT).

For their part, non-African funders are the principal backers of about four out of 10 collaborations we identified, reflecting their long-standing commitment to investing in Africa. By "non-African funders," we mean those headquartered outside of Africa that invest in nonprofits across multiple continents. Notably, many have responded to criticism of their top-down practices with a new commitment to shifting decision-making to the communities and organisations they fund (see "Non-African Funders' Roles in African Collaboratives" below). It's a welcome change, says Degan Ali, executive director of Adeso, a Nairobi-based humanitarian and development organisation. "International funders should come alongside with humility and augment what is already happening," she observes.

Non-African Funders' Roles in African Collaboratives

Non-African funders are both essential players in the African collaborative landscape and are under pressure to change long-standing practices viewed as counterproductive and often harmful.

Non-African funders bring diversity of experience and outside perspectives that benefit collaborative work. And they lend a seal of approval. "Having well-known international funders [such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and William and

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Flora Hewlett Foundation] added to our credibility," says Marie Ba, director of the Ouagadougou Partnership Coordination Unit in West Africa. That credibility boost also can make a difference in persuading other hesitant funders to join an African-led collaborative, according to Anthony Hall, project lead for the Public School Partnerships programme at the DG Murray Trust in Cape Town.

At the same time, non-African funders often impose inflexible reporting requirements and restrict funding in ways that stifle innovation. African organisations point out that non-African funders exhibit a top-down management style, which often excludes the voices and participation of the people served.

A growing number of non-African funders, as well as international nongovernmental organisations, recognise the need to change and have committed to "localising" their operations, which includes lifting up the lived experiences of local leaders, organisations, and communities.[1] Although some large funders have indeed shifted their grantee portfolios towards African organisations, it's too soon to tell whether that represents a broader embrace of all that localisation entails.[2]

"My concern is that the philanthropic rhetoric is now about being proximate and locally led, but the structures of philanthropic institutions often don't support that in practice," says Ellen Agler, CEO of The END Fund, based in New York City. "We have seen in the past global commitments to localising humanitarian aid, for example, but still very small amounts of funding in emergencies go to community-based organisations. I am hopeful but know that sustained change will require radical self-inquiry at all levels of leadership and dramatic organisational changes that won't be easy to make."

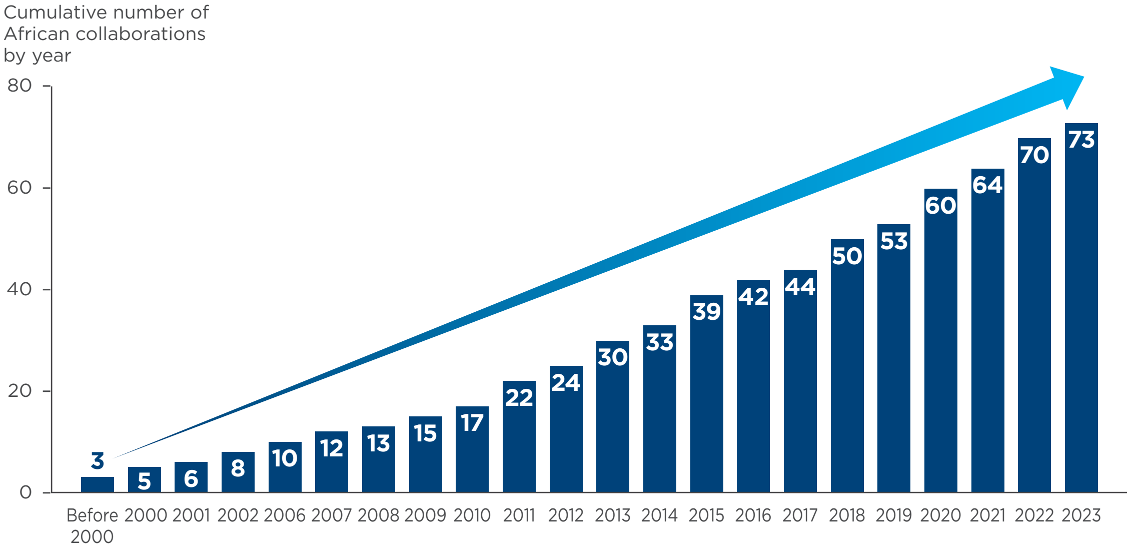
These are the high-level insights that emerged from The Bridgespan Group's research project, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which set out to understand the philanthropic collaborative landscape in Africa. Although we reviewed published reports and compiled a database of collaborations through desk research, we relied most heavily on information and experiences derived from interviews with more than 40 African and non-African funders, collaborative leaders, and sector experts with knowledge of collaboration taking place primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. From these interviews, we distilled practical recommendations for African and non-African funders to pursue more and better collaboration.

What we learned adds to, and often contrasts with, previous reports we have published on philanthropic collaboration in the United States[3] and India.[4] The African collaborative landscape reflects the uniquely African experience that informs and shapes collaborative efforts that are building momentum in a number of ways: (1) a growing number of models and case studies of collaboration across different parts of the continent; (2) a set of local anchor partners and bold leaders with implementation know-how, in-depth contextual knowledge, and local experience; (3) the harnessing of largely overlooked resources in diaspora giving. This report lays out this landscape with the goal of inspiring funders, both African and non-African, to co-create, champion, and capitalise on African collaborations.

Africa Hosts a Wide Range of Philanthropic Collaborations

We started our research by identifying 131 philanthropic collaborations active in Africa (admittedly, it's not an exhaustive list). Seventy-three focus exclusively on Africa and all but three of the collaborations we identified were founded after 2000 (see Figure 1). We call them "African collaborations" to distinguish them from those that are global in scope and *include* investments in Africa, such as The Audacious Project, the Black Feminist Fund, the Climate Justice Resilience Fund, and Co-Impact.[5] We call these "global collaborations."[6]

Figure 1. African collaborations have grown steadily since 2000



Note: Data are missing for 2003 through 2005.
Source: 2023 philanthropic collaboratives database compiled by the Bridgespan Africa team, accessed 7 December 2023.

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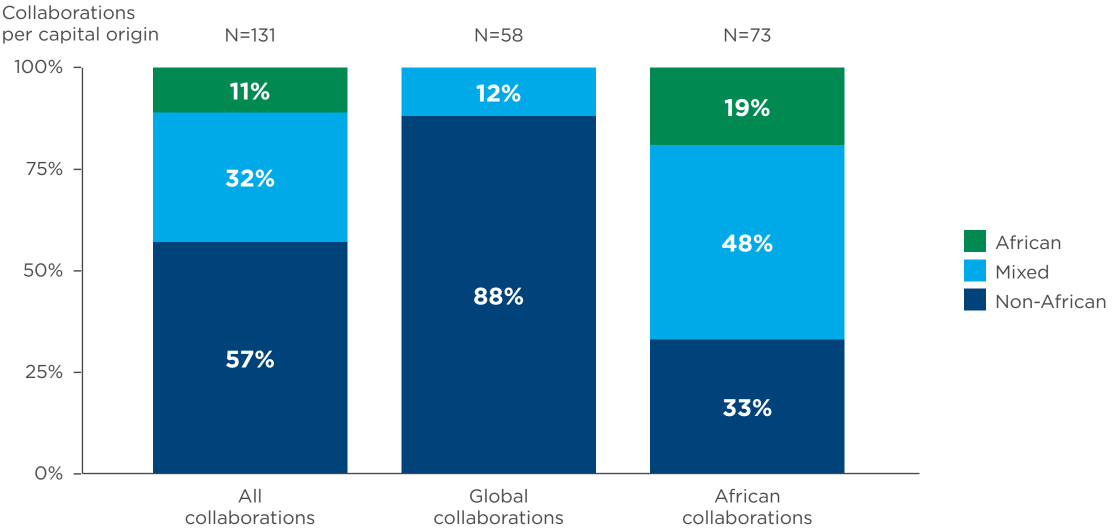
African and global collaborations differ on several dimensions. Nearly all African collaborations (63 of the 73) have headquarters on the continent, compared to just two for global collaborations that fund initiatives in Africa. By a large margin, African funders gravitate towards African collaborations (see Figure 2 on the next page).

More than half of African collaborations involve non-philanthropic collaborators, including corporations and governments. And they devote nearly two-thirds of their money to education, health, and economic development – themes that align with individual country development goals (see Figure 3 on the next page). However, they have much smaller budgets, on average, than global collaborations (see Figure 4 on page 6).

Figure 2. African funders participate at a higher rate in Africa-only collaborations compared to global collaborations



Note: "Global collaborations" refer to entities with a strategic focus on multiple geographies, including Africa. "African collaborations" focus exclusively on addressing social issues within the African continent.
Source: "Philanthropic Collaborations Database: 2021," The Bridgespan Group, accessed 25 October 2023; 2023 African collaborations list complied by the Bridgespan Africa team, accessed 25 October 2023.

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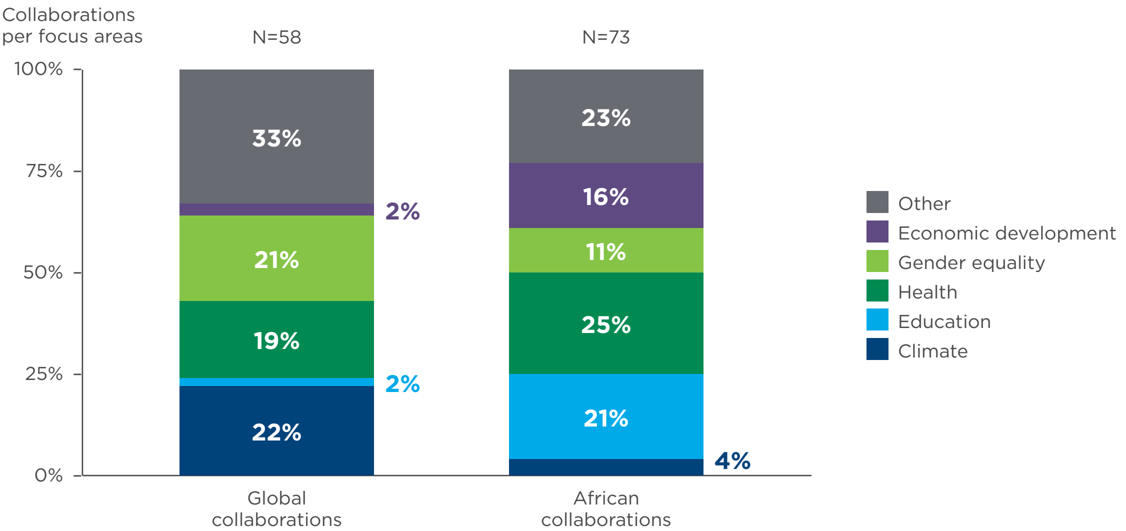
Figure 3. Education and health are top priorities for African collaborations, compared to climate and gender equality for global collaborations



Note: Percent figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: "Philanthropic Collaborations Database: 2021," The Bridgespan Group, accessed 25 October 2023; 2023 African collaborations list complied by the Bridgespan Africa team, accessed 25 October 2023.

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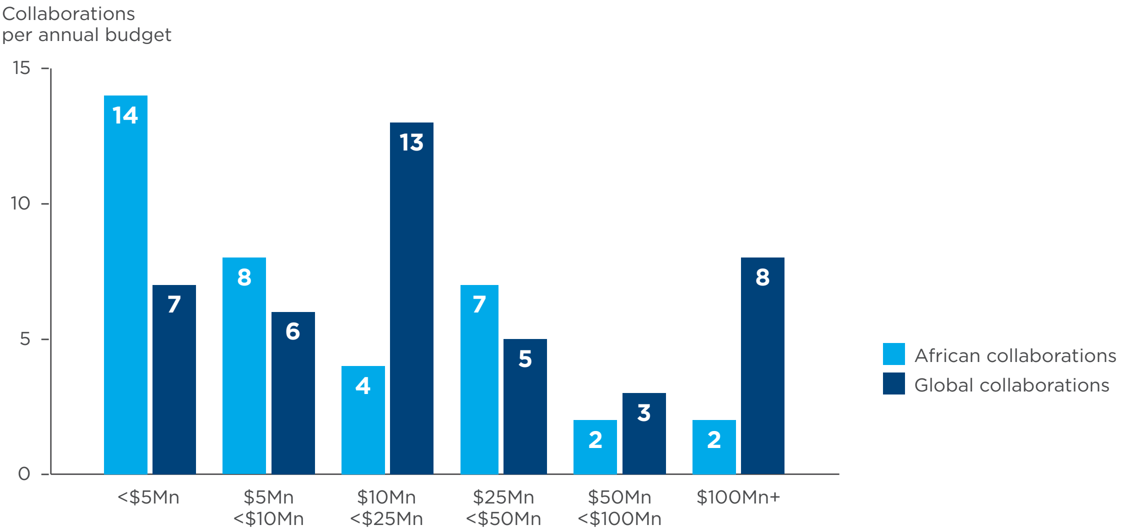
Figure 4. Sixty percent of African collaborations have annual budgets below $10 million, and 70% of global collaborations have annual budgets above $10 million



Sources: "Philanthropic Collaborations Database: 2021," The Bridgespan Group, accessed 25 October 2023; N=42, data not available for all global collaborations. 2023 African collaborations database compiled by the Bridgespan Africa team, accessed 2 November 2023; N=37, data not available for all African collaborations.

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From Informal Collaborations to Structured Collaboratives

With our starting point of 131 collaborations, we used an expansive view of collaboration, ranging from informal networking and knowledge sharing to more formal efforts that pool money to achieve specific results. "Some people collaborate to learn; some people collaborate to feel like they're part of a community; and some people collaborate, as in our case, to achieve a specific result," says Nicola Galombik, executive director of Yellowwoods Holdings, a Johannesburg-based investment firm active in the social sector.

We then dove more deeply into collaborations that were formal, structured partnerships. We call these partnerships "collaboratives" (as opposed to "collaborations") when they are co-created by three or more independent actors, including at least one philanthropist or philanthropy, that pursue a shared vision and strategy for achieving social impact, using common (pooled) resources and pre-arranged governance mechanisms (see Figure 5 on the next page).[7] This definition emerged from our research in India, where collaboratives typically include government and business partners. (By contrast, collaboratives in the United States are primarily made up of donors.)

Figure 5. There is a growing number of collaboration models operating in different contexts, regions, and focus areas, with a wide range of African and international partners

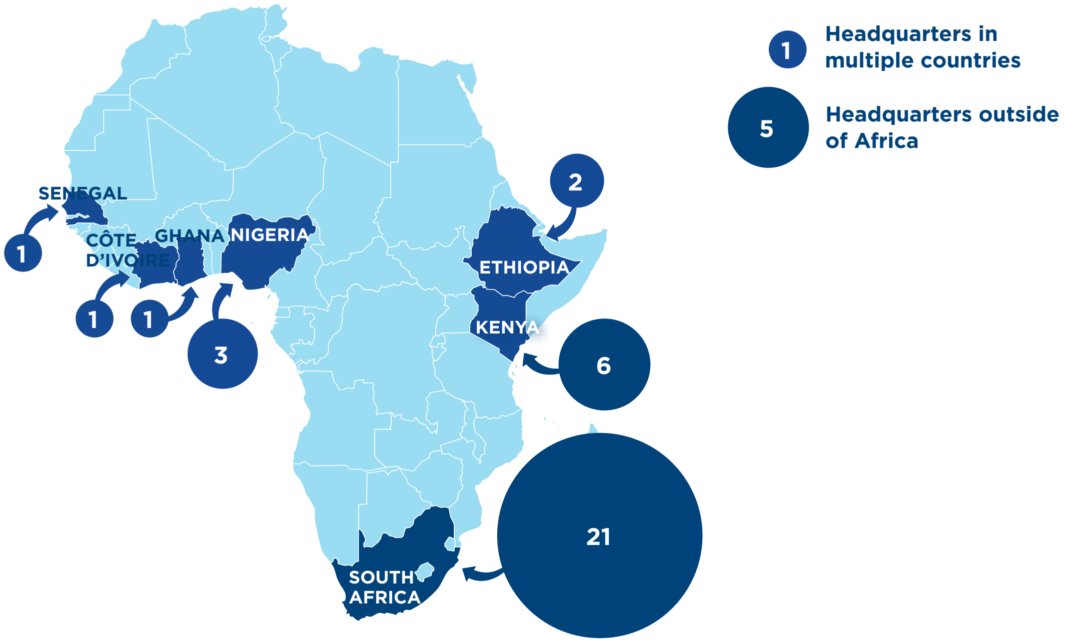
Collaboration model	Select examples		
Collaboration **Initiatives that involve multiple actors**	**Foundation for Civil Society (FCS)** Founded by multilateral and bilateral agencies, FCS is one of the biggest sources of funding to Tanzanian civil society organisations. Through strategic partnerships with community service organisations, community groups, and other development actors, FCS pursues inclusive development.	**African Culture Fund** Created by artists and cultural actors across the continent, the fund aims to stimulate new narratives and positive social change in Africa and professionalise the African cultural and creative sectors. It serves as a continental instrument for financing art and culture.	**Environmental Justice Fund** A civil society-led initiative that provides support to environmental and climate justice organisations in South Africa. The fund aims to strengthen the local environmental justice movement by supporting the operation of effective, resilient, community-led organisations.
Collaborative **Co-created by three or more independent actors – including at least one philanthropist or philanthropy – that pursue a shared vision and strategy for achieving social impact, using common resources and pre-arranged governance mechanisms**	**African Healthcare Funders Forum** A first-of-its-kind collaborative space that brings together funders and social entrepreneurs – operating across the entire health care value chain – to increase the flow of capital into African social innovations. Partners meet to advance innovative financing models and find ways to bridge the current health care funding gap.	**2030 Reading Panel** A South African civil society initiative comprising a panel of highly respected experts to provide long-term apolitical leadership to a national imperative to improve reading. The panel reviews reading progress annually and makes data-driven recommendations, ensuring the issue remains on the political agenda.	**Africa No Filter** Founded by a group of international philanthropic funders, Africa No Filter works to shift outdated perceptions of Africa by supporting the development of stories that represent Africa beyond stereotypes. The collaborative invests in research, grantmaking, community building, and advocacy.

Source: The Bridgespan Group.

Forty-one African collaborations fit our definition, as did 34 global collaborations, leaving us with a set of 75 collaboratives. Amongst the 41 African collaboratives, half have headquarters in South Africa; this is due in large part to the country's more developed economy and public policy framework that encourage corporate investment in the social sector (see Figure 6 on the next page).[8] "South Africa is an outlier in terms of philanthropic environment and maturity of collaboration," says Nic Spaull, a senior programme officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Figure 6. South Africa is home to half of the 41 Africa-only collaboratives

Country locations of collaborative headquarters



Source: 2023 African philanthropic collaboration database compiled by the Bridgespan Africa team, accessed 25 October 2023.

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Characteristics of African Collaboratives

Of the 41 African collaboratives, only eight derive their funding exclusively from African sources. Seven of those eight are based in South Africa and focus primarily on education. Twelve have solely non-African funders; the remainder receive funds from African and non-African funders.

Regardless of funding source, African collaboratives share several operational characteristics, which we describe below.

African collaboratives seek government as a strategic partner. For many African collaboratives, government is a critical partner. It alone is positioned to adopt and spread successful collaborative-led innovations in areas such as education and health care, where government has extensive infrastructure. "In South Africa, it is very hard to imagine any systemic change will result *unless* government is involved," says James Keevy, CEO of JET Education Services, a nonprofit based in Johannesburg that promotes evidence-based approaches to improving education.

African collaboratives also seek private-sector partners. Multi-stakeholder partnerships dominate the collaborative landscape. "Partnerships are critical for achieving developmental goals," says Giles Gillett, CEO of the National Association of Social Change Entities in Education in South Africa. "The scope, scale, and complexity of the challenges require strong cross-sector partnerships involving deep collaboration between the public sector, private sector, and the NGO community." Peter of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy South Africa agrees: "We've failed more on our own than we have partnering with other people."

Private-sector or corporate giving, frequently channelled through corporate foundations or corporate social responsibility business units, is an important source of collaborative funding on the continent. At least 23 of the 41 African collaboratives in our data set include corporate social investment.

In South Africa in particular, business has played a critical role in the formation, financing, and management of leading collaborations, as the following examples show.

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>
> GILES GILLETT, CEO, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL CHANGE ENTITIES IN EDUCATION

- **The Solidarity Fund**: This collaborative was established soon after talks between Business Unity for South Africa (and specifically its platform, Business for South Africa) and the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition to augment the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic at national, provincial, and local levels. Prominent private-sector leaders led the fund and raised money from many local businesses. "The strategic and supportive role that Business for South Africa played in the establishment of the fund and in the fundraising efforts of the fund cannot be overstated," wrote Leila Davids, senior philanthropy advisor for Africa to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.[9]
- **National Education Collaboration Trust**: The trust is considered at the ministerial level as the "gold standard in public-private partnerships." It mobilises private-sector partners to implement recommendations in pursuit of South Africa's education development goals.[10]
- **Business Trust**: Between 1999 and 2011, business and government collaborated through the Business Trust to "accelerate the achievement of national objectives" related to job creation, service-delivery capacity building, and poverty eradication. Through a governance partnership including cabinet ministers and corporate leaders, more than 1.8 billion South African rand (approximately $95 million) was mobilised from 140 companies, at the time the largest sum assembled by a privately initiated programme in South Africa.

Business, government, and civil society continue to work together in South Africa in pursuit of shared objectives, most recently in the form of the Resource Mobilisation Fund, the Public Private Growth Initiative, and the Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Response Fund.

Examples of such multi-stakeholder collaborations are found elsewhere on the continent as well. In Kenya, the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund seeks to enhance water quality and ensure supply for millions of people who depend on the Tana River, including millions of Nairobi residents. Founded by The Nature Conservancy, the fund became an independent and locally operated NGO in 2021. Its funding comes from several non-African and African philanthropic, business, and government organisations. Without government support, however, the fund could not fulfil its mission "to secure the long-term conservation, protection, and maintenance of water quality in the Tana River watershed."

This multi-stakeholder approach has not been adopted by most global collaboratives operating in Africa. For many non-African funders, "there's a separation of business and philanthropy, and a separation of market activity and philanthropy," says Galombik of Yellowwoods Holdings. "That separation is an import in my view and isn't always a useful or relevant approach in our world."

African stakeholders champion collaboration to scale solutions to difficult social problems. Systems change is a common aspiration amongst African collaboratives. "The types of issues that are being confronted are complex, with multiple drivers. And the only way to address these challenges is with a collaborative approach," says Francis Kiwanga, the former executive director of the Foundation for Civil Society in Dar es Salaam.

For example, the Tony Elumelu Foundation's Entrepreneurship Programme, supported by African and non-African funders, has surpassed its 10-year target of training and funding 10,000 entrepreneurs across the continent. By year eight, the programme had benefited more than 18,000 individuals. "That's what partners can do," says Benjamin Okonkwo, senior monitoring evaluation research learning and adapting manager for the Lagos-based foundation. "We have maximised the impact of our intervention in Africa and surpassed our targets by combining forces with partners across the world."

African collaboratives often set up independent entities and implement their own programmes. Stand-alone entities have the advantage of putting the collaborative's brand name front and centre, effectively eliminating potential funder recognition battles. "In our collaborations, we have a commitment from all of the partners that it's the initiative's brand that gets used, not partner brands," says Harrison of DGMT. "Inevitably, funders do get recognition when people ask who's behind an initiative."

There are other benefits to independence. "Setting up a collaborative as an entity makes it less constrained by any partner's strategy and allows newness and innovation," says a non-African fund's programme officer. Collaboratives also benefit from having dedicated staffing rather than being one more item on a foundation programme officer's long list of grantees requiring support.

Independent entities established by collaboratives frequently serve as programme implementers rather than cheque writers to nonprofits. Harrison explains DGMT's reasoning: "We typically seek to establish joint ventures in areas where we don't think that there is an implementing partner who can receive the funds. … So, 70 percent of our funds are proactive, where we are trying to generate new initiatives where we think there are no existing partners, and 30 percent is reactive, where we'll give grants to nonprofits that are strategically aligned."

Six out of 10 African collaboratives only work within the country where they are located. Given the diversity in social, economic, and political environments across the continent, most collaboratives focus their activities on the country they know best. Financial considerations also come into play.

The philanthropy that flows from Africa's high-net-worth individuals comes primarily from the country-specific businesses they own. "They tend to prioritise very local philanthropy in order to maintain their local credibility," says Bernadette Moffat, executive director of The ELMA Philanthropies Services in South Africa. From year to year, the amounts they have for philanthropic purposes vary with the success of their businesses. “When those businesses aren’t doing well and they face cash constraints, the amount of money that’s available for philanthropy becomes more limited,” Moffat notes – another reason to keep the money close to home.

The difficulty of transferring money across borders also discourages funders from supporting regional or pan-African collaboratives. Tsitsi Masiyiwa, executive chair and co-founder of Delta Philanthropies and Higherlife Foundation, has experienced this problem while raising money for the Africa Gender Initiative, which she launched in October 2022. “Current funding mechanisms typically make no sense,” she told *Quartz*, an online business publication.[11] For example, a funder who wants to write a cheque for $1 million to a collaborative based in a different African country typically sends the cheque in local currency to a bank in the United States, where it is converted into dollars, she explains. The bank then sends a dollar-denominated cheque to the collaborative’s bank, where it is converted into that country’s currency. Along this cumbersome route, transaction costs eat into the total amount. “Those inefficiencies are cogs in the system that make it difficult for African philanthropists to partner with people in the Global North,” she observed.

Despite these obstacles, a third of African collaboratives work across borders. In West Africa, the Ouagadougou Partnership (Le Partenariat de Ouagadougou) unites nine French-speaking West African governments around the goal of increasing access to high-quality family planning services and improving the quality of life of women and young people. The mission transcends national boundaries in a region characterised by high fertility rates and low access to contraceptives. A common language has helped collaboration amongst partners, but it has also limited the organisation’s visibility within the English-speaking international community.

The END Fund, which delivers treatments for a variety of neglected tropical diseases that cause more than 170,000 deaths annually, is perhaps the highest-profile pan-African collaborative. Between 2012 and 2022, the fund delivered more than 1.5 billion treatments to individuals across the countries it serves, including 25 African countries. It works with governments, NGOs, pharmaceutical companies, and academic partners and receives funds from dozens of non-African and African philanthropic sources.

Keys to Successful African Collaboratives

Interviewees put strong leadership from a local anchor partner at the top of their list of must-haves for a successful collaborative. They pointed to the trust an anchor partner engenders and its ability to facilitate a clear agenda for the initiative.

In South Africa, for example, a group of leading funders, including DGMT and The ELMA Foundation, has been responsible for initiating and anchoring a number of collaboratives to fill gaps in the government’s early childhood development programmes. This group has also consolidated uncoordinated philanthropic efforts. Amongst their initiatives, Ilifa Labantwana (founded in 2007) works on systems change, Innovation Edge (founded in 2014) promotes new ideas, SmartStart (founded in 2015) focuses on early learning, and the Grow Great Campaign (founded in 2018) champions good nutrition.

“First-mover” funders typically take on the role of local anchor partner, bringing their deep contextual knowledge and local experience to bear on leading a successful collaborative. As widely respected organisations, their seal of approval serves to attract others to join. Anchor partners don’t just contribute money; just as importantly, they bring implementation know-how. This often includes a commitment to longer funding cycles, a greater appetite for risk, a capacity to innovate, and a specific leadership style conducive to partnering. “I haven’t seen a collaborative that has worked without having an anchor philanthropy,” says Peter of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy South Africa.

One vital yet intangible quality anchor partners bring to a collaborative is trust. They are able to bring partners on board because these partners know and trust the anchor organisation’s leaders, experience, and advice. “Collaborations are the manifestations of networks, and the role of social capital in collaboration formation is critical,” says Godwin Khosa, founding CEO of the National Education Collaboration Trust, a South African partnership with a primary aim of promoting implementation of the education goals of the National Development Plan. Davids, the senior advisor to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, agrees. During the pandemic, “the importance of existing networks and personal connections [could not] be underestimated from a fundraising perspective, especially when it [came] to decision making by ultra-high-net-worth and high-net-worth individuals and corporate leaders,” she wrote.[12]

For example, trust in the family and senior leadership of Oppenheimer Generations Philanthropies means other funders answer their call to join collaboratives, says Fynn Munda of Oppenheimer Generations Philanthropies. “They’re very trusted in the environment, so when they said they’re going to do X, all the existing stakeholders believe it’s going to be done.”

A successful African collaborative also needs a clear agenda that describes how it will achieve impact beyond what individual funders could achieve alone and what goals it will pursue over a specified period of time. “If a collaborative is just open-ended and there’s no clear agenda, no clear outcomes, even no clear timelines, it just becomes an exhausting exercise,” says Peter of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy South Africa.

When it comes to timelines, too many funders have unrealistic expectations, says Harrison of DGMT. “That has been one of the challenges. So many philanthropists are so process-focused on their three-year funding cycle or their one-year cycle that it becomes dominant in their minds,” he explains. “While DGMT has a three-year funding cycle, we are making 10- or 15-year commitments to projects. We are designing for scale, and we are designing for longevity.”

(See “Practical Advice for Successful Collaboration: Voices from the Field” on page 16 for more thoughts shared by interviewees.)

The Hidden Potential of Diaspora Remittances

Giving by African funders totals less than $3 billion annually, says Alan Fowler, honorary chair and advisory board member at the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment. By contrast, in 2022, the African diaspora sent $97 billion in remittances to the continent, according to the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development, or KNOMAD, which is supported by the World Bank. Remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa accounted for just over half that amount.[13]

It's hard to overstate the importance of remittances. They are a critical source of money needed to sustain daily life for more than 200 million Africans. "For many households, [remittances] are the difference between survival and destitution, between going to bed on an empty stomach and having a meal," wrote Kavazeua Katjomuise and Liwaaddine Fliss, who work with the United Nations Office of Special Adviser on Africa.[14]

Masiyiwa, of the Higherlife Foundation and Delta Philanthropies, called diaspora remittances "the biggest funder of change on the continent" in *The East African.*[15] Although remittances are informal, Masiyiwa believes African funders should seek opportunities to collaborate with the diaspora to amplify the impact of their collective giving. "Members of the African diaspora have often shared with me their desire to expand their giving beyond their immediate family or community," she wrote. "The problem, they explain, is that they do not know which local organisations they can trust. That is why credible actors should be connecting the diaspora with community-based organisations that need and deserve support."

For their part, most African grassroots organisations have not invested in the fundraising capabilities and global branding needed to reach more overseas givers. To close this gap, Masiyiwa recently collaborated with The ELMA Philanthropies to create the Masana wa Afrika foundation, which was spun out of The ELMA Foundation's Community Grants Program.[16] Its mission is to provide community organisations with small grants and tailored support. "What if – through Masana wa Afrika or a similar organisation – members of the African diaspora could find out about such organisations and support them directly?" she asks. "More efforts of this type are needed."

A number of African funders we spoke with view support for African-led community development as essential for sustainable progress. "The potential of community and diaspora philanthropy is significant; it can rival Global North philanthropists' giving," says Adeso's Ali.

"Community initiatives are an important tool to decolonise development – not just rich white people giving money. These initiatives are more sustainable because they are community driven."

DR COLIN ALMELEH, DIRECTOR, ILIFA LABANTWANA

Dr Colin Almeleh, a director at Ilifa Labantwana, agrees: "Community initiatives are an important tool to decolonise development – not just rich white people giving money. These initiatives are more sustainable because they are community driven." To this end, diaspora remittances could emerge as an important source of funding.

Leaning Into African Funder Collaboratives

The African Union is made up of 55 countries covering an area roughly the same as size China, Europe, India, and the United States combined. This diverse set of countries represents vastly different stages of economic, social, and political development. Growth and development – raising standards of living and improving access and quality in key sectors such as education and health – dominate national agendas. But African governments don't have the resources to deliver at the scale of the need, so they welcome partnerships initiated and driven by philanthropy.

A growing number of funder collaboratives have answered the call. We identified dozens of examples supported by African and non-African funders. In particular, the number of African philanthropists is on the upswing as wealth across the continent grows. Today, Africa is home to 23 billionaires and 138,000 millionaires, with the latter figure expected to rise by 42 percent over the next decade.[17]

Within this context, African funder collaboratives likely will continue to increase in number and ambition. Doing so, however, will require concerted efforts on the part of all the players involved. From our interviewees, we distilled a range of advice for both non-African and African funders.

How non-African funders can partner with African collaboratives

African funders recommended several practical steps for their non-African counterparts:

- Fund Africa-based and African-led collaboratives.
- Learn from African partners how grassroots organisations can be agents of change, and resist assuming that what works elsewhere will work in Africa.
- Invest in convenings of African and non-African funders to facilitate knowledge sharing, and nurture the informal networks that are the seedbed for future collaboratives.
- Invest in helping network organisations, such as the Africa Philanthropy Network or the African Philanthropy Forum; develop the tools, systems, and people needed to support a growing ecosystem of collaboration.
- Invest in telling the stories of successful collaboratives, which is essential to inspiring others to pursue such partnerships.

As non-African funders advance their work in Africa, our interviewees pointed to three principles – equity, additionality, and sustainability – that would go a long way to correct past missteps:

- **Equity** speaks to the movement to shift power and money to local organisations that have lived experience with community needs and that hold a wealth of cultural knowledge along with deep community relationships. Equity also means non-African funders partnering with African funders on an equal footing, co-creating solutions rather than co-opting African funding for overseas solutions.

- **Additionality** refers to the value added by a collaborative. What will it accomplish that the sum of individual funders could not accomplish acting alone?
- **Sustainability** challenges funders to commit for the long haul to support African development agendas at the local, national, and regional levels.

What African funders can do to build the collaborative ecosystem

New and established wealth holders who seek to have greater impact with their philanthropic giving may find funder collaboratives attractive. Our interviewees suggested practical ways for African funders to pursue more and better collaboration:

- **Join a networking organisation** such as the Independent Philanthropy Association South Africa, the African Philanthropy Forum, or the Africa Philanthropy Network. These organisations provide a platform for donors and the professionals who manage the day-to-day operation of collaboratives to gain knowledge, share experiences, build relationships, and establish trust amongst like-minded individuals.
- **Champion African collaboratives**. Partnering with an African collaborative helps to eliminate costly, duplicative, individual interventions. Collaboration also enables learning and co-creation of new solutions.
- **For corporate funders, get comfortable with long-term commitments**. Collaboratives typically require years to show substantial progress. Although internal corporate guidelines may not provide for multi-year grants, companies can give on an annual basis in the context of an ongoing commitment.
- **Facilitate convenings of African funders** to network, share experiences, and build the basis for the trusting relationships needed to make existing and future collaboratives successful.

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There is a strong and growing sector involving African and non-African funders, businesses, nonprofits, and governments frequently working together across the continent. Despite enormous economic and social diversity amongst African nations, these collaborations share a common commitment to advancing education, health, the environment, and economic development – goals that invite continued philanthropic collaboration.

Many have also come to embrace collaboration as an on-ramp to understanding issues in a local context. Some are newer to an issue or a region; they use collaborations to learn from, build relationships with, and embrace the skills and experiences of collaborating partners who are on the ground. Others have the experience to know that their resources can go further when working together – that one plus one can equal three. All appreciate that collaborations are a means of amplifying resources and knowledge – and impact – beyond what they could accomplish alone. The insights and advice we distilled from more than 40 interviews are a peek at how non-African and African funders can do more and better collaborate over the years ahead.

Practical Advice for Successful Collaboration: Voices From the Field

Our interviewees brimmed with tips for things to do and things not to do. Below is a sampling.

Think through governance, operating structures, and processes.

“Thinking about a structure too late, or the lack of clear roles and responsibilities, makes for a bad marriage in collaboration.”

MOSUN LAYODE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY FORUM

Embrace compromise and let go of power.

“Your resources will be used in ways that will no longer be in your total control.”

OLWETHU SIZANI, PROGRAM ASSOCIATE, FORD FOUNDATION SOUTHERN AFRICA

Be realistic about progress.

“Having a high tolerance for failure in pursuit of innovation is important.”

BETTY KIBAARA, DIRECTOR IN THE FOOD INITIATIVE, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION, AFRICA REGION OFFICE

Be aware of potential disincentives to collaboration.

“Sometimes NGOs that are all essentially doing the same thing are collaborators in a broader funder programme, and this type of competition-oriented collaboration can be problematic.”

GILES GILLETT, CEO, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL CHANGE ENTITIES IN EDUCATION

“When implementers feel they have to fight for the same funding, it’s difficult for them to collaborate.”

ZIMKHITHA PETER, CEO, ALLAN & GILL GRAY PHILANTHROPY SOUTH AFRICA

Invest in productive government partnerships.

“Learn when to push and when to leave a specific matter. In working with government, you cannot win every time.”

MARIE BA, DIRECTOR, OUAGADOUGOU PARTNERSHIP COORDINATION UNIT

“Build strong and lasting government relationships at the policy level – with bureaucrats, not political appointments.”

DR KENNEDY MUBAIWA, CEO, HIGHERLIFE FOUNDATION

Be practical about power dynamics.

“On the continent, it is generally better to have a noncompeting, objective intermediary to instigate and drive collaboration.”

GBENGA OYEBODE, FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN, AFRICAN PHILANTHROPY FORUM

“Those who are closest to the problem often have the greatest insight about how to solve it, and intermediaries are a powerful bridge in elevating the expertise of change-makers while also facilitating appropriate spaces for donors to learn.”

ADRIENNE DICASPARRO, MANAGING DIRECTOR, DONOR COMMUNITY, THE AUDACIOUS PROJECT

Explore the potential of diaspora giving.

"Africans give in their own way – through local economic transactions, community support, and remittances."

DR STIGMATA TENGA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AFRICA PHILANTHROPY NETWORK

"Diaspora giving is philanthropy – but it doesn't have a voice."

DR KENNEDY MUBAIWA, CEO, HIGHERLIFE FOUNDATION

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Endnotes

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