SUMMARY

2009 Annual Retreat
Connecting Knowledge: Health, Education and Civil Society
The Africa Grantmakers’ Affinity Group is a membership network of grantmakers that are currently funding in Africa or are interested in funding in Africa. It was established as a forum where grantmakers can come together as a learning community to share information and work together.

The mission of AGAG is to promote increased and more effective funding in Africa through building and sharing knowledge. Membership is open to both new and experienced grantmakers that meet the membership requirements of the Council on Foundations, but membership in the Council on Foundations is not a prerequisite for membership in AGAG.

AGAG membership services include an active listserv of grantmakers, an annual meeting and organized in-person and virtual meetings on current issues relevant to the work of Africa grantmaking and grantmakers. AGAG conducts specialized research on foundation funding in Africa. The website features a searchable database of the geographic and topics interest areas of current AGAG members.

For more information, please visit the website at www.africagrantmakers.org

For more copies of this report, please contact info@africagrantmakers.org

Credits

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africa-photo.com; International Labour Organization;
page 3: Darling Wind Farm, Cape Town, South Africa. Photo: © Warren Rohner;
page 10: Gathering Corn, Kenya. Photo: © Curt Carnemark / World Bank
Each year AGAG organizes a retreat where funders supporting projects in Africa come together to share, learn and get to know each other. Africa funders occupy a small niche in philanthropy and this is one of the few opportunities designed specifically to address their interests. Over the years, the atmosphere of the Annual Retreat has grown to feel much like a reunion. Many members regularly attend and new members quickly become a part of the family. For Africa funders the AGAG Annual Retreat is the best way to reconnect with colleagues and meet new ones, learn about changes in the field and engage in spirited dialogue and debate about the issues they care about the most.

Over fifty participants representing thirty-two foundations gathered in the beautiful woodland conference center outside of Washington, D.C in Chantilly, Virginia. Five countries were represented—Ghana, South Africa, The Netherlands, United Kingdom and the United States.

The theme was “Connecting Knowledge: Education, Health and Civil Society.” The agenda included plenary and small group sessions on a range of timely topics. The economic crisis and its impact on our personal and professional lives was a thread connecting the discussions. On the opening morning, Todd Moss’s overview of its potential impact on Africa helped to set the context for the discussions that followed over the next two days.

The sessions organized by members provided an exciting mix of topics and formats. Participants had lots of choices, from a workshop on charting funders working in French-speaking countries to a panel on funding advocacy and a presentation on the lessons learned from a funding collaborative.

In addition to free time for networking, there was also time for more intimate chats with colleagues over coffee during a break or meeting for a drink while relaxing at the lobby bar.

The evaluation results are important to us and we take into account the feedback they provide when planning the next retreat. The feedback from the evaluations for these meetings indicated that there was a sufficient balance of informal and structured time and opportunities for networking and conversations among peers. Overwhelmingly, the participants found the retreat useful and would attend again. The majority (96%) met funders they did not know who are working in similar fields, and 70% scheduled follow-up meetings to discuss shared interests.

AGAG was formed by funders who wanted a safe space where they could come together in a supportive professional atmosphere and be a part of a learning community. So the retreat sessions are generally “off the record” to encourage colleagues to speak openly and candidly. This report contains a summary of the six formal plenary sessions to give you a flavor of the issues discussed. There are probably many gems of useful information from conversations that are recorded only in the memories of those who were there in person, which is an important reason I hope you will plan to join us next year.

Africa presents both challenges and opportunities for philanthropy to make smart investments that will reap returns in making the planet better for us all. I hope to see you at our next Annual Retreat.

Niamani Mutima  
Executive Director
Each year the Africa Grantmakers’ Affinity Group (AGAG) organizes a retreat for its members and other Africa funders, offering them an opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other on issues of common interest, with the goal of improving the effectiveness of their grantmaking strategies in Africa.

The theme for 2009, “Connecting Knowledge: Education, Health and Civil Society” explored the interconnection between education and health and the important role civil society plays in building strong communities. The retreat included presentations, panel discussions and small group work, as well as time for informal networking and meetings with colleagues. A brief summary of each of the six formal plenary sessions follows.

**Plenary Session 1
Weathering the Storm:
The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Africa**

The first plenary featured Todd Moss, Senior Fellow and Director of the Emerging Africa Project at the Center for Global Development, who shared his insights on the implications of the economic crisis on market growth and development in African countries.

Todd started by noting that in the last few years Africa has experienced a period of economic expansion (5–6%) that has attracted private capital by a broad range of investors. In the current downturn, private investments appeared to be contracting, which would begin to adversely affect venture capital and small businesses. He did not expect to see a regression in global trade and expected trading partners to remain engaged.

Aid support to Africa is expected to be steady in the short run as it has already been committed, but could decline as donor countries are forced to reduce their aid budgets. The financial crisis has worsened food insecurity, resulting in increased food prices that have particularly affected poor households and caused some instability.
He also made the following observations:

**On the private capital front**
Mining and oil investment will continue. China has slowed down its investment in them but the long-term (50-year view) of big infrastructure investments is still there. The banking business in Africa is fairly stable and conservative.

Recent improved policy environments and a new cadre of technocrats have put in place pieces of an economic growth package; but, the question of whether there will be financial and political support for them now looms. Those who have survived the contraction are okay—but if there is a weakness, if the large picture backtracks, democracies could suffer.

**On internal trade**
Trying to deal with so many small countries is difficult for the market and other countries. The total economy of all 48 African countries is still smaller than the economy of Chicago. The geographical constraints added by the Sahara Desert and the rain forest compound the trade barrier as do infrastructure problems. Trade with China is easier because there are sea routes. However, East Africa can be a viable fit as they trade many of the same goods.

**On the current China investment in Africa**
The China Export/Import bank is the largest in the world. There has been some discomfort that China was lending money to the Sudan and Zimbabwe under undisclosed terms. In Congo, the Minister of Finance announced a huge Chinese loan. On the African side there has been xenophobia because the Chinese are bringing in their own workers and in Zambia that has contributed to election platform and small business concerns.

**On Zimbabwe**
The power-sharing agreement is so flawed it cannot work. There are two options: Either President Mugabe shares power with Morgan Changaray and there is a new election in 18 months or Changaray tries to push the envelope and gets arrested or killed. It would be tricky for donors to engage and let the ones who created the current situation off the hook.

**On lack of electricity**
Every country has a power shortage. Almost nobody invests in infrastructure in Africa and that is the single biggest barrier to growth. Electricity penetration in Africa is very low. There are widely dispersed populations and wires are easy to blow up or steal. A more viable opportunity is in solar and wind power.

“Recent improved policy environments and a new cadre of technocrats have put in place pieces of an economic growth package; but, the question of whether there will be financial and political support for them now looms. Those who have survived the contraction are okay—but if there is a weakness, if the large picture backtracks, democracies could suffer.”

~Todd Moss
The Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (PHEA) is a joint project of seven foundations that have contributed more than $375 M toward higher education initiatives in nine African countries. In its first five years (2000–2005), the Partnership focused on the development of universities’ physical infrastructure and human and organizational capacity. Information technologies and Internet connectivity were at the core of these efforts, including establishing the first regional satellite bandwidth consortium in sub-Saharan Africa. Its current joint area of focus is developing a new generation of academics.

In this round table discussion, the panelists, Tade Aina, (Program Director, Higher Education in Africa, Carnegie Corporation); Andrea Johnson (Program Officer of the Carnegie Corporation) who is sitting in for Raoul Davion (Program Officer and Co-Chair, Higher Education Initiative in Africa, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation); Teboho Moja (Professor of Higher Education, New York University and Board Chair, Centre for Higher Education Transformation, South Africa) and Suzanne Grant Lewis (Coordinator, Partnership for Higher Education in Africa) engaged in a lively discussion of the Partnership’s progress and challenges to date.

They acknowledged the benefits of working together across foundations despite their different geographic areas and interest levels. It was pointed out that as the partnership grew, its scope, scale and impact were broadened and other important players became involved. They also noted that larger projects that individual foundations can’t handle alone — like the Internet connectivity issue — can be launched and established effectively with results that will continue to evolve. The band-width consortium was a huge success, resulting in greater access with lower costs and an increase in computer learning and initiatives. Furthermore, because so much experience had been brought together, the Partnership was able to help universities address their institutional policies.

Their experience revealed that university leadership at the middle level was very important, and the success of many of projects depended on a senior person providing the political cover and allowing the younger cadre to make it work.

Some of the difficulties the Partnership encountered had to do with changes in leadership, both in the Partnership foundations and the African universities. In both cases, new leaders needed to be re-engaged in the project, which was sometimes difficult. Other problems were more easily solved, such as simplifying forms when an early evaluation showed that grantees struggled with rather complicated reporting requirements.

The band-width consortium was a huge success resulting in greater access with lower costs and an increase in computer learning and initiatives.
Plenary Session III
Conversation on Capacity Building

In this session Niamani Mutima, Executive Director of the Africa Grantmakers’ Affinity Group (AGAG), gave an overview of two important new AGAG projects. She was joined by Jennifer Astone, a consultant who is working with AGAG on one of the projects—a knowledge-building endeavor to gather information on approaches to capacity-building, including the impact of funding modes. The second undertaking, the Iroko Project, will develop a series of informative products created from interviews and meetings with funders and experts on specific topics of interest to AGAG members.

1. The Funding Modes and Capacity Building study will examine the impact, if any, between two funding modes—direct and through an intermediary—and the ability of African-headquartered organizations to build capacity. A recent study examined a sample group of grants dispersed between 2001 and 2005 to support health, education and comprehensive programs targeting children and youth in ten countries in Southern Africa. Among the findings was that African-headquartered organizations represented 90% of the implementing partners but received only 46% of the funding.

AGAG will test the notion that receiving funding directly or through an intermediary affects the ability of African-headquartered organizations to build their capacity and be viewed as strong and effective partners. The definition of capacity that is being used is their ability to implement a project, achieve its objective, attract and retain staff, and accurately track and retain results for program improvement and fiscal responsibility. Jennifer Astone, consultant for the project, explained the process and that she would be approaching people about participation in the study during the retreat.

2. The IROKO Project is named for the sacred African tree with many branches and many uses. AGAG members represent a diverse group of African funders and this tree symbolizes that variety of insights, activities and perspectives. The purpose of the IROKO project is to bring together funders with common interests in discussions where they can share insights and lessons learned, as well as seek advice. The IROKO Project will consist of interviews, meetings and follow-up, and the results will be summarized in a variety of media resources. The first phase will focus on health, education and civil society.
The report the Southern Africa Trust completed entitled *Aid Effectiveness: Trends and Impacts of Shifting Financial Flows to Civil Service Organizations in Southern Africa* (http://www.southernafricatrust.org/docs/Aid_Effectiveness_Final.pdf) examined support for civil society and poverty reduction in seven Southern African countries. It determined that traditional donor agencies are not always effective in providing direct support to strengthen the capacity of civil society to participate in poverty reduction activities or to make governments more accountable.

The report identifies several critical issues that need to be addressed by donor agencies and civil society organizations, including:

1. the role of NGOs in service provision and how this relates to sector wide programs and budget support;
2. the linkages between support to civil society and support to governments in poverty reduction and efforts to improve governance;
3. the scope for increased practical co-operation between donor organizations, including intermediaries;
4. the role of civil society in advancing regional co-operation and integration;
5. the tensions between support to advocacy versus support to organizational development.

The report also identifies a number of current and emerging trends in development assistance that impact the volume and quality of support provided.

1. aid to civil society is significant and increasing.
2. the bulk of this aid is channeled through Northern or international NGOs with only a minor portion being disbursed directly from the embassy or agency mission to local civil society organizations.

One important point Neville made is that an effective strategy in getting money and aid where it can do the most good is one that matches the service delivery organization with the think-tank type groups that can articulate the issues in policy-influencing language. When those groups are then linked with a civil society group that can carry that message and policy forward it can be very effective at adjusting the way finances flow.
Plenary Session V
The Impact of Climate Change on Food Security and Agriculture in Africa

The two panelists brought together in this presentation discussed the key ways that climate change is affecting food security and agriculture in Africa. Bo Lim, Principal Technical Advisor; Chief, Climate Change and Adaptation, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Global Environment Facility Unit, started the session by noting that by the 2080’s in Africa, the decrease in the extent of rainfall-nourished land and the production potential for cereals will be abysmal. Crop production in Southern Africa could fall by up to 90%.

She focused the rest of her comments on the efforts of the UNDP, pointing out that 70% of their funds are now invested in Africa. The UNDP has been working with governments but now also works with grassroots groups and small groups within the ministries of the environment to help communities find ways to reduce their vulnerability to drought. UNDP works with existing projects and issues that communities have identified to add something that focuses on the climate change part of it. The UNDP teams also make presentations to committees in each country so they can select and design their own projects. She sees the UNDP niche in the rural, off-grid types of communities.

The remarks made by Independent Consultant and Former Senior Regional Advisor on Gender in Africa for the International Labour Organization Grace Hemmings reflected her experience studying the way societies change during droughts. She pointed out that at the macro-economic level, affects are seen in immigration, labor markets, high unemployment in urban areas and strain on the social environment of urban poor. At the micro-economic level, the rural subsistence economy loses labor and investments and food security and household nutrition is undermined, producing malnutrition and lower immunity to the spread of disease.

Prolonged crises generate social and economic transformation. In rural economies, women bear the immediate social consequences. At one time, both men and women were subsistence farmers. But after a drought, men migrated out for jobs and women were left on the farms shouldering 80% of this burden rather than their typical 60%.

It is important to focus on the subsistence economy and enhance farming skills and improve sustainability, which will help stem rural migration. The subsistence economy provides 80% of the food — people can still earn a living with farming.

Grace noted that much of the agricultural policy of Africa has been driven by global instead of local African farmers. The many types of seeds and cattle that were drought resistant have been replaced by globally focused varieties.
At this session, attendees were given the chance to request further action or study on issues of interest to them, which included:

- Supporting the Zimbabwe interest group that emerged during the Retreat with a listerv to share information.
- Continued discussion between funders working in French-speaking African countries.
- Thoughts on how to complement and leverage each other’s work.
- More opportunities to hear from grantees and the chance to amplify their voices at the global level.
- Ideas and information on how to engage with local knowledge and in local communities.
- Ideas on how to move the huge amounts of money that never make it to the community level into local communities and how to get money to small community groups that need $100,000 or less.
- More on what funding is going where in a community.
- How to create a forum in advocacy and service delivery to make sure that those two things are connected.
- More on reducing the emissions from deforestation.
- More on how to fund for sustainability in the face of climate change.
Agenda
Monday, February 23, 2009

6:00 – 9:00 PM  RECEPTION AND OPENING DINNER

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

9:00 – 9:10 AM  WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

9:10 – 10:10 AM  Plenary

Weathering the Storm: The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Africa

Guest Speaker: Todd Moss, Senior Fellow and Director of the Emerging Africa Project Center for Global Development

Todd Moss shares his insights on the implications of the economic crisis on market growth and development in African countries.

10:15 – 11:30 AM  Plenary

Strengthening Higher Education in Africa: Reflections on the Partnership for Higher Education

Panelists: Tade Aina, Program Director, Higher Education in Africa, Carnegie Corporation of New York

Andrea Johnson, Program Officer, Carnegie Corporation will present remarks from

Raoul Davion, Program Officer and Co-Chair (Higher Education Initiative in Africa), The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Teboho Moja, Professor of Higher Education, New York University, Board Chair, Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), South Africa

Suzanne Grant Lewis, Coordinator, Partnership for Higher Education in Africa

In 2000 several foundations launched the Partnership to coordinate their support for higher education in Africa. In this round table discussion, foundation and university staff share their reflections and insights.

11:45 AM – 12:30 PM  Plenary

Conversation on Capacity Building

Presenters: Niamani Mutima, Executive Director
Jennifer Astone, Consultant

This session will give an overview of the exciting knowledge building project AGAG is undertaking to gather information from the field on approaches to capacity building including the impact of funding modes.

12:30 – 2:30 PM  LUNCH AND FREE TIME FOR NETWORKING

2:30 – 3:20 PM  Plenary

Civil Society and Poverty Reduction

Presenter: Neville Gabriel, Executive Director, Southern African Trust (SAT)

This session will draw upon the findings of the 2007 report on aid effectiveness and flows to civil society in Southern Africa, highlight some of the key issues in poverty eradication and challenge the impact and efficacy of support for civil society in the region.

3:30 – 4:30 PM  Concurrent Sessions

MEMBER ORGANIZED SESSIONS I

• Use of Innovation to Respond to HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone
• Funders Supporting Social Change: The Case of Harmful Traditional Practices
• Open Space

These sessions were organized by AGAG members to share information and interests with their colleagues. The Open Space sessions are for members to self-organize sessions.

4:45 – 5:45 PM  Concurrent Sessions

MEMBER ORGANIZED SESSIONS II

Lessons from Working Together: Case Study of FCFC

• Supporting Education and Health in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings
• Open Space

These sessions were organized by AGAG members to share information and interests with their colleagues

6:30 – 7:00 PM  NETWORKING RECEPTION

Join your colleagues for a glass of wine and relax.

7:00 – 9:00 PM  DINNER
Wednesday, February 25, 2009

**The Impact of Climate Change on Food Security and Agriculture in Africa**

*Panelists: Grace Hemmings,* Independent Consultant; Former Senior Regional Advisor on Gender in Africa, International Labour Organization  
*Bo Lim,* Principal Technical Advisor; Chief, Climate Change and Adaptation United Nations Development Program (UNDP)  
Global Environment Facility Unit  
This session will highlight some of the key ways climate change affects food security and agriculture in Africa.

**MEMBER ORGANIZED SESSION III**  
- Funding for Health, Education and Civil Society in French-Speaking Africa  
- Funding for Impact: Effective Support for Advocacy and Activism  
- Open Space  
These sessions were organized by AGAG members to share information and interests with their colleagues.

**OPEN DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS: Moving Forward**

**CLOSING REMARKS**

**LUNCH and DEPARTURES**
Use of Innovation to Respond to HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone
Christian Aid supports a group of 20 out-of-school youth peer educators associated with the Methodist Youth Resource Centre in composing twelve HIV songs in three languages in the style of Sierra Leonean pop music. These youths also produced video animations to accompany the songs, enhancing the dissemination of their message. Modern technology, allied with innovative thinking, has enabled the youth to reach over 25,000 people with essential public health messages in a country with a literacy rate below 30%. This panel will explore lessons learned from implementation of a non-traditional HIV public message program in Sierra Leone and make recommendations for innovating HIV programs.

Presenter: Susanne Wesemann, Head of Funding, Africa Christian Aid

Funders Supporting Social Change: The Case of Female Genital Mutilation/ Cutting (FGM/C)
The Donors Working Group on FGM/C estimates that some $23 million was invested in programs targeting FGM/C in 2007. However, despite the efforts of international funders, national governments, local grassroots activists and others, the practice persists. FGM/C is a deep-rooted cultural practice and social convention. While funders have succeeded in supporting people in their local communities in their efforts to challenge FGM/C and other harmful traditional practices, the role of funders can be challenging when weighing in on a divisive social issue that is so highly contested. This session will use FGM/C as a case study to explore the complex questions raised when funders seek to facilitate deep-rooted social change. Rather than shine a spotlight on a handful of “model” FGM/C projects, panelists will reflect on lessons learned across diverse community settings and discuss the challenges—and rewards—inherent in this work.

Facilitators: Susan Gibbs, Wallace Global Fund
Adisa Douglas, Funders Network for Population, Reproductive Health and Rights

Panelists: Maryam Sheikh Abdi, Kenya Field Office, Population Council
Zeinab Eyega, Executive Director, Sauti Yetu, the Center for African Women

Lessons from Working Together: Case Study of Fcfc
Working in a collaborative of grant makers can sometimes feel like playing a game of snakes and ladders. There can be steady progress, but also crises that set you back and “that’s it!” moments when things surge forward. This presentation will take participants on the journey of a collaborative of four UK-based grantmakers (Comic Relief, Elton John AIDS Foundation, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation and Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund). They pooled their funds, energies and creativity to amplify their impact on access to quality health care and basic education for children affected by HIV/AIDS.

Presenter: Richard Graham, Head of International Grants, Comic Relief

Funding for Impact: Effective Support for Advocacy and Activism
This session will use specific examples to explore the challenges and opportunities for funders to support health and education advocacy and activists. Discussions will include issues such as working with partners to determine their readiness to take on advocacy initiatives (understanding of context and root causes, appropriate tools/messages for specific audiences, organizational risk assessment, etc.); constraints in funding of advocacy and lobbying activities; mechanisms for evaluating advocacy; and how funders can effectively leverage their investment.

Moderator: Zanele Sibanda Knight, Interim Director of Programs, Firelight Foundation

Panelists: Stuart Schear, Communication and Policy Executive, Atlantic Philanthropies
Andrea Rogers, Senior Program Officer, American Jewish World Service
Sahlu Haile, Senior Program Advisor, David and Lucille Packard Foundation

Funding For Health, Education and Civil Society in French-Speaking Africa
There is a growing interest among U.S. funders in French-speaking countries in Africa, with some significant grant allocations beginning to change the funding landscape. This session will identify new and existing sources of funding and initiatives through a participatory group process. Panelists with significant experience funding in French-speaking countries in Africa will provide insight into the challenges and opportunities they face and will summarize key lessons for participants to reflect on. We will conclude with critical issues and initiatives emerging from these in the areas of health, education and civil society that need strategic support and investment.

Facilitator: Sarah Hobson, Executive Director, New Field Foundation

Supporting Education And Health in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings
This session will explore how funders can support development efforts in conflict and post-conflict settings, with attention to the continuation of education and health services. Panelists will provide examples of how funders can help build security and develop effective strategies and mechanisms to support communities.

Panelists: Bukeni Tete Waruzi, Program Coordinator for Africa and the Middle East, WITNESS
Zanele Sibanda Knight, Interim Director of Programs, Firelight Foundation
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Program Director</td>
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<td>Linda Campbell</td>
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<td>Deborah Dizerens</td>
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<td>Adisa Douglas</td>
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<td>Elan Garonzik</td>
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<td>Chet Tchozewski</td>
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<td>Fanta Toure</td>
<td>Program Officer</td>
<td>American Jewish World Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Scott Wallace</td>
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<td>Christy Wallace</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>Susanne Wesemann</td>
<td>Head of Funding Africa</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Jennifer Wilen</td>
<td>Assistant Program Officer, Francophone Africa</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>Gitta Zomorodi</td>
<td>Africa Program Associate</td>
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<td><strong>AGAG STAFF</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Niamani Mutima</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Talaya Grimes</td>
<td>Communications and Program Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Leslie Smith</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Jennifer Astone</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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