

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

Arts | Children & Families | Environment | Region & Communities | Research | International

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe

ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

National NGOs and International NGOs

GRANT SIZE

Average grant size: US \$25,000–\$40,000 per year

GRANT PERIOD

1 to 3 years, with possibility for renewal

EXAMPLES OF GRANTS AWARDED:

Tanzania – Tanzanian Association of Foresters:
Jatropha cultivation and market development in Arumeru District

Uganda – St. Jude Family Projects and Rural Training Center:
Introduction of organic sustainable agriculture to rural women's groups in Masaka District

Zimbabwe – A Self-Help Assistance Program:
Promotion of women's savings clubs

Africa Grants Program

What is The McKnight Foundation?

Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the U.S.A., The McKnight Foundation is a private philanthropic organization founded in 1953 by William L. McKnight and his wife, Maude L. McKnight. The McKnight Foundation supports programs that provide community and family services for those in need; preserve the environment; support the arts; and promote scientific research in selected areas. Most of the Foundation's grants are awarded to organizations in the state of Minnesota.

What is McKnight's Africa Grants Program?

The Africa Grants Program is one part of The McKnight Foundation's modest international grantmaking. Its goal is to foster women's social and economic empowerment in Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. It seeks to increase women's access to skills and economic opportunities that will help them gain greater control over their lives and participate more fully in their households and communities as equal decision-makers. The Africa program awards a total of approximately US \$1.1 million per year to projects that support its overall goal.

What does the Africa Grants Program fund?

The Africa program seeks to support efforts that

- **Foster women's ability to start, develop and manage their own small and micro businesses.** Funded programs provide financial services as well as access to new skills or technologies that will improve productivity.
- **Enhance the ability of rural women to grow crops and raise livestock to achieve food security and increased income.** Farm-based programs promote sustainable organic agriculture, building household assets through animal husbandry, and women's entry to commercial farming through high value crops and access to new markets.
- **Build women's ability to actively manage natural resources in order to conserve or increase income, or save time or labor.** This category of programs supports business development around park land as an alternative to encroaching on protected areas; well-managed commercial responses to market demand for natural resources; and technologies that conserve both scarce resources and women's time.

What are the selection criteria?

Program staff use many criteria to assess applicants' projects. The most important are the extent to which the proposed program:

- **Directly benefits women.** The applicant organization must have a clear strategy to ensure women's participation in all phases of project implementation, although funded programs do not have to serve women exclusively. Projects must have a measurable economic impact on an identified group of women.
- **Links economic and social empowerment.** Women's greater access to resources usually enhances their status within their households and communities. Nevertheless, strategies for economic empowerment should include opportunities for women to find support among peers, gain new experience, build their confidence and develop leadership capacity.
- **Builds institutional capacity to support women's self-help initiatives over the long term.** Preference will be given to programs that strengthen the capacity of local organizations to provide services to women members or clients.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO DISCUSS A PROJECT, CONTACT:

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SEND LETTERS OF INQUIRY TO:

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What does the Africa Grants Program NOT fund?

The Africa program does not fund:

- formal education programs or scholarships
- conferences
- health programs
- building projects
- training projects that are not directly linked to economic opportunities
- policy advocacy
- projects that proselytize or discriminate on religious grounds

We discourage applications from organizations that have not received prior donor funding unless the project is being carried out by a partnership that includes a more experienced organization that does have a track record with donors .

What are the geographic restrictions?

Grants in Tanzania are made in a limited area: Zanzibar, Coastal Region, Dar es Salaam, and across the northern zone from Tanga Region to Kagera Region. For security reasons, the Foundation is not currently making grants in northern Uganda. In Zimbabwe, the Foundation considers only funding requests from intermediary organizations that offer offshore bank accounts and financial management and in-country supervision.

How does an organization apply to the Africa Grants Program?

You are encouraged to discuss your project with The McKnight Foundation before submitting a proposal. The first step is to send a letter of inquiry to the Foundation that includes all of the following information:

1. a brief description of your organization and its experience with the types of project activities proposed;
2. a summary of the project for which you are seeking funding, including the objective, activities, physical location, description of the beneficiaries, and duration of the project.;
3. contact information for other donors who have supported your organization;
4. the amount of funding requested from McKnight, as well as the total budget for the project;
5. your contact information, including telephone numbers (landline and cellular), postal address, and email address.
Applicants must have a working email address.

Your letter should be two to four pages long. Letters may be sent any time via mail, fax, or email. The McKnight Foundation carefully reviews all letters of inquiry. If the project you describe in your letter meets the Foundation's selection criteria, you will be invited to submit a full proposal by a specific date. The Foundation will provide proposal guidelines for you to follow. You can expect to hear from the Foundation within one month of receipt of your letter.

If your organization is invited to submit a full proposal, a representative of the Foundation will contact you to discuss your request in greater detail. A site visit is generally part of the review process. The representative will summarize the information gathered and make a recommendation to the Foundation's Board of Directors, which makes all decisions about funding.

When a proposal will be considered depends on several factors, such as when the initial letter is received and when a site visit can be scheduled. The decision process, from the receipt of your letter of inquiry to the final board decision, usually requires six to eight months.