

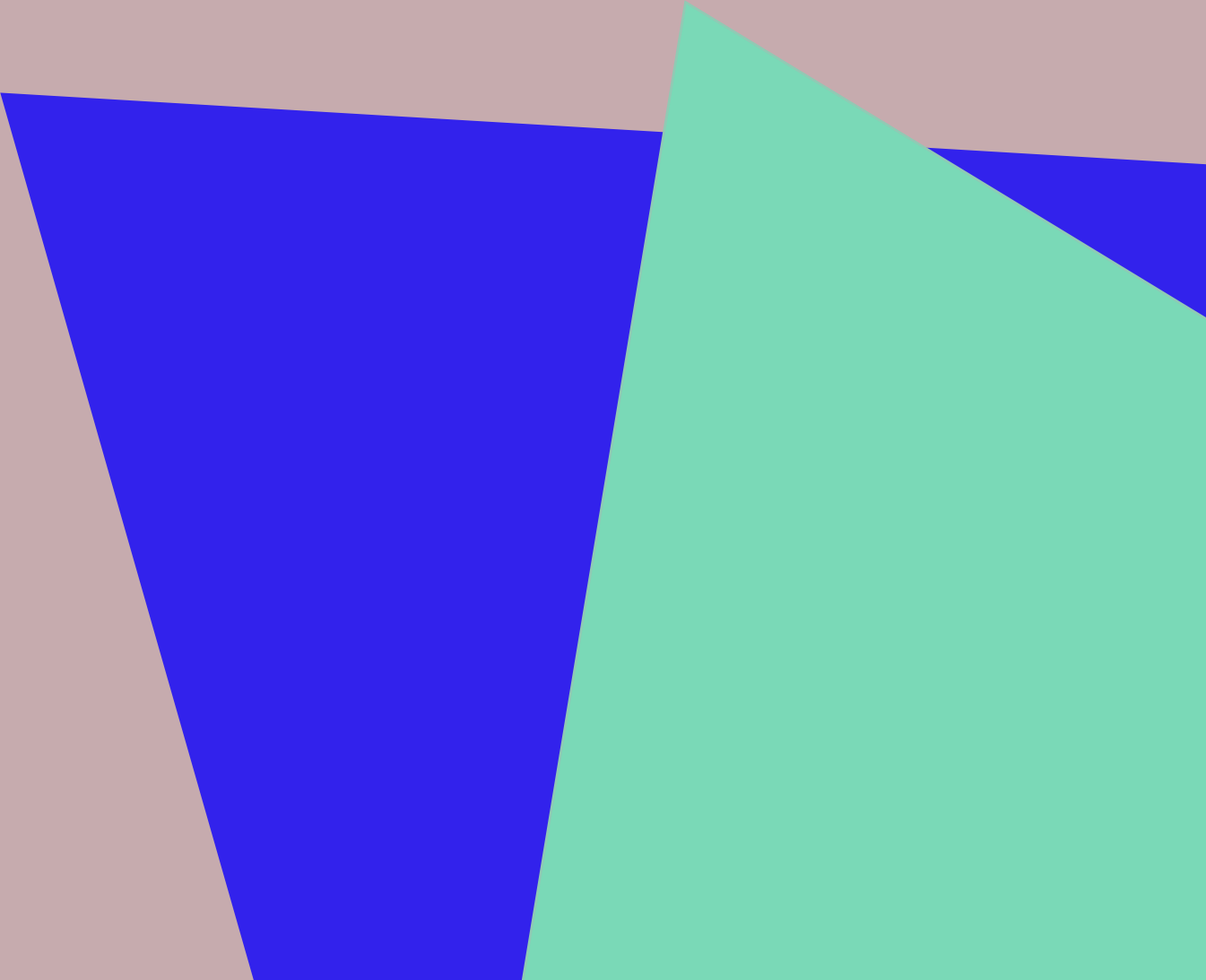
AZUR/T FOUNDATION



ANNUAL REPORT  
2023

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
2023 Reflections & Highlights	4
Our Grantmaking	7
Who We Are	13
Outlook 2024	14
Readings and Writings in 2023	15



## WELCOME TO OUR 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL REVIEW

2023 marked the second year of our grant-making journey and was full of energy and learnings! As a grant-making organization, the impact we create is through our partners. So, we want to thank them for their dedication, resilience, curiosity and power.

Thank you for taking an interest in our work. We hope you'll enjoy diving deeper into what we were up to last year. Your thoughts and feedback are highly valued and appreciated!



Lea Buck  
Managing Director

To view our 2022 Annual Review click [here](#)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- / **Refinement and strategic growth:** In 2023, we focused on refining our grant-making processes, enhancing internal governance, and building a stronger network. We achieved our portfolio targets of 100% African-led and 50% female-led new grantee partners.
- / **Localization and impact:** We continued to emphasize localization by supporting locally-led, evidence-based organizations in low-income countries.
- / **Network expansion and expert involvement:** 2023 marked significant progress in leveraging our growing network of experts, including piloting site visits by external experts, which improved the quality of our due diligences.
- / **Fundraising:** Although initially planned for 2026, the Foundation began exploring fundraising opportunities earlier, in 2023. The preparatory work we did this year has set the stage for further advancement in 2024.
- / **Grantee satisfaction and feedback:** With a 90% net promoter score in our second anonymous feedback survey, our grantee partners provided positive feedback, particularly in areas of partnership and support.

Our fundamentals haven't changed: we are piloting new grant-making approaches and giving flexible funding to organizations in low-income countries that are locally-led, evidence-based, and often early stage.

We believe that localized, impact-driven approaches play a central role in strengthening justice globally AND building effective mechanisms.

## WORKING AGAINST THE FUNDING INEQUITY

Statistically, local leaders are far less likely to access funding despite being in the best position to understand and respond to local needs and opportunities:

**0.6%**

was the average amount of German bilateral official development assistance (ODA) provided directly to Global South CSOs from 2009 to 2021 ([#ShiftThePower Movement 2024](#))

**10%**

of USAID funding went to local organizations in 2022 ([Unlock Aid 2024](#))

## CHARTING OUR COURSE: OBJECTIVES FOR 2023

In 2023, we set several key focus areas for our grant management and portfolio, along with internal strategy and operational improvements. Our objectives included assessing the need for a narrower focus, enhancing internal diversity and expertise-based decision-making, developing a more comprehensive exit strategy, and exploring additional funding opportunities to expand our reach and impact.

## UNPACKING 2023 AGAINST THE OBJECTIVES

We made substantial progress in these areas. Much of 2023 was dedicated to refining our processes, with significant behind-the-scenes work. We reviewed and adjusted our internal governance to strengthen expert decision-making while preparing to onboard additional supporters. This effort has laid a solid foundation for 2024. Additionally, we identified experts who will be more involved in our sourcing process from 2024 onwards, with our current grantee partners playing a crucial role in this endeavour.

The key elements of our exit strategy are transparency and support for grantees in securing follow-on funding. Our commitment to education as a primary cause area has been evident throughout 2023. We are considering further refinements in 2024. Our ongoing learning and adaptation process ensures that we continue to build upon the core pillars of our approach. We have fully achieved our portfolio targets of 100% African-led and 50% female-led for new grants.



Photo credit: Resonate

## LEVERAGING OUR GROWING NETWORK OF EXPERTS

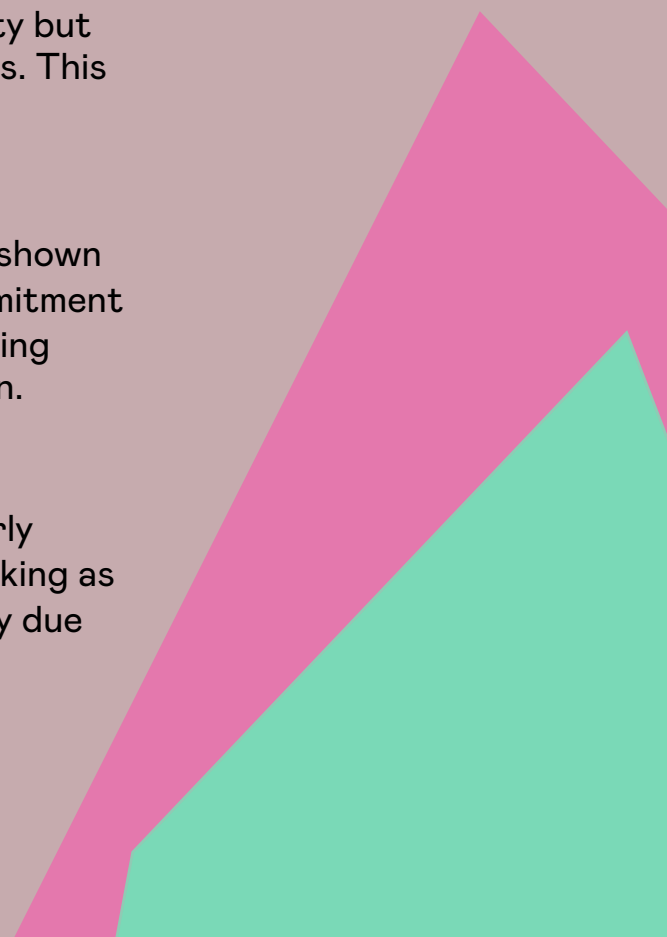
Expert-based decision-making is fundamental to our mission, and strengthening our network of experts has been a key objective. These efforts began to yield significant results in 2023. We became more targeted in sourcing high-quality grantee partners, a process we will formalize further in 2024. Additionally, we piloted site visits by external experts as part of our due diligence. Leveraging local expertise not only reduced resource intensity but also enhanced the quality of our assessments due to the deep understanding and proximity of these experts. This approach provided insights that we would not have gained through traditional methods.

## LOCALIZATION FOCUS

Our emphasis on localization has been validated by the data. The focus on low-income countries (LIC) has shown positive results, and we intend to reinforce this direction. Moving forward, we aim to strengthen this commitment not only through funding locally-led partners but also by reducing barriers for other funders and encouraging them to align with this direction. In Germany, our home country, we see substantial opportunities for action.

## FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

While we originally planned to start fundraising in 2026, we decided to initiate this process earlier. This early start allows us to build the necessary structures and uphold our commitment to expert-driven decision-making as we engage more funders. Progress in fundraising exploration was slower than anticipated in 2023, primarily due to more preparatory work. We look forward to advancing further in 2024.



## SHEKINAH GRADUATES

The first graduates of the Shekinah school can teach us more than one lesson through their journeys from being born to ultra-poor parents in Burundi to becoming university students and future leaders. Education is key, yet there is so much more to it than just attending school.

## AI AND LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

Our grantee partner Kabakoo fully embraced AI in 2023. They organized the month-long event Bamako.ai and integrated an AI mentor into their educational offerings. This did not only increase the engagement rates of learners but also contributes to bringing LIC perspectives into AI advancement (their AI mentor also speaks Bamanankan by now...).

## SEGAL FAMILY FOUNDATION AGM IN KIGALI

Through this event we met amazing new partners, and existing ones for the first time. It was encouraging to see so many funders whose values are aligned and that are ready to do things differently.

## WAKANDA BEYOND

Our grantee partner Drones Doing Good Alliance aims to level the playing field for local entrepreneurs in Africa with a highly systemic approach. In 2023 they started the Wakanda Beyond Action Group in which nine countries participate.

## RAPID RESPONSE GRANTS

As most funders we give some small grants outside of our core focus. In 2023, we supported the concept of steward-ownership as corporate structure, which we see as a contribution to a more purpose-driven economy. We also supported an initiative to activate dormant bank accounts in Germany to finance social innovation.

## ASHOKA EAST AFRICA VISIONARY JOURNEY

The meaningful conversations and insights from Tanzania and Uganda will have an impact long beyond the trip.

## PRAISE FOR OUR PARTNERS

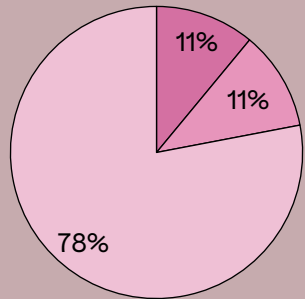
Our grantee partners received too many awards as that we could list them all. So, just one to exemplify: Gerald Abila, founder and ED of BarefootLaw, was nominated for the Social Innovation Award of the Schwab Foundation (teaser: he won it in January 2024...). Congratulations, Gerald!

AZURIT

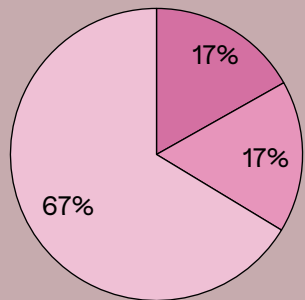
PARTNERS

# OUR GRANTMAKING IN 2023 / OVERVIEW

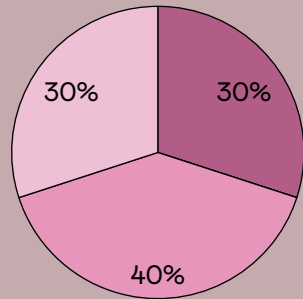
## AFRICAN-LED (% OF AFRICANS IN LEADERSHIP)\*



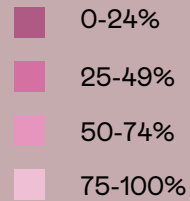
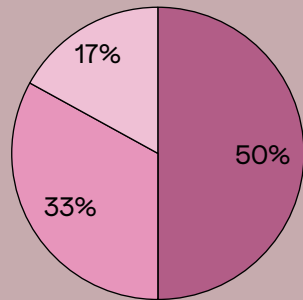
## PREVIOUS YEAR (2022)



## FEMALE-LED (% OF FEMALES IN LEADERSHIP)\*

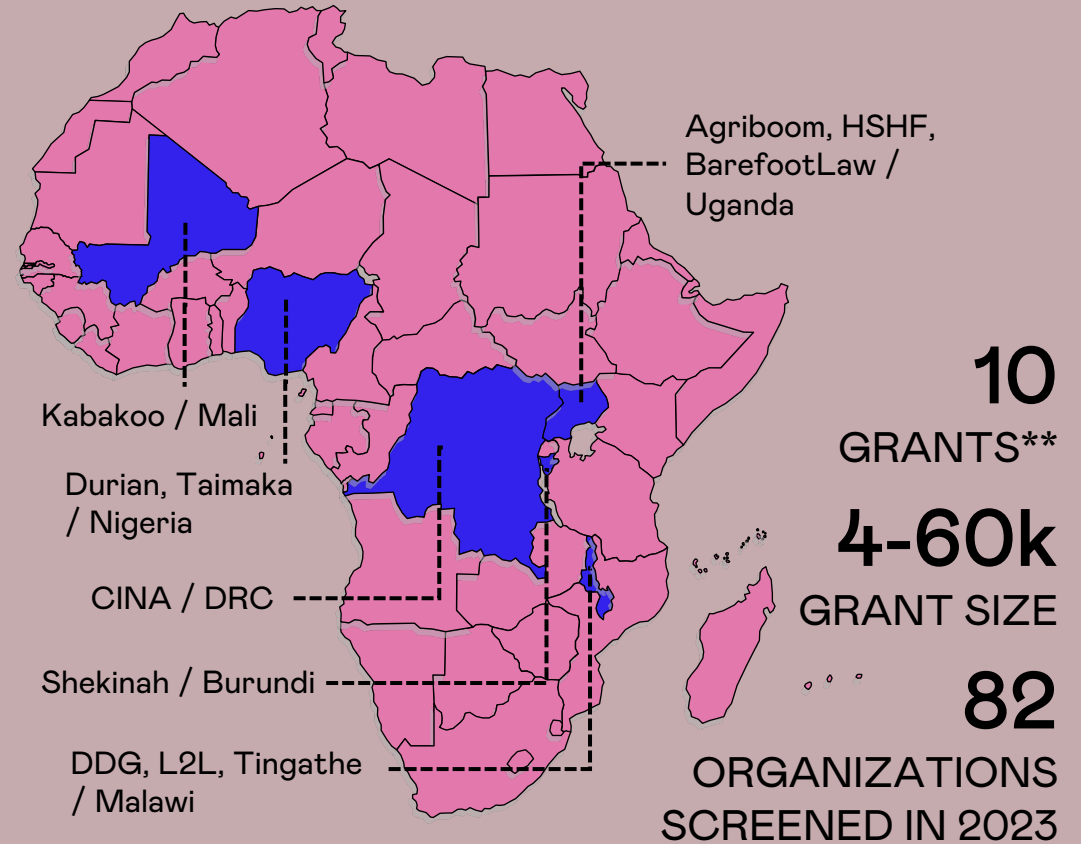


## PREVIOUS YEAR (2022)



\*Cumulative percentages; new grants in 2023 100% locally-led  
 \*\*Number of NEW grants in 2023 including Rapid Response Grants

## GRANTEE PARTNERS BY COUNTRY (SINCE 2022)





## SINCE 2022

- / **BAREFOOTLAW** - Providing easy and quality legal information and guidance in Uganda
- / **CINA** - Enabling youth with disabilities to become social entrepreneurs in Democratic Republic of the Congo
- / **DRONES DOING GOOD ALLIANCE** - Building local capacity in drones manufacturing in Malawi
- / **KABAKOO ACADEMIES** - Training youth to solve real-life problems blending high-tech and indigenous knowledge in Mali
- / **LADDER TO LEARNING** - Creating literacy hubs in public primary schools in Malawi
- / **THE TAIMAKA PROJECT** - Tackling acute childhood malnutrition in Nigeria

## SINCE 2023

- / **AGRIBOOM** - Supporting rural smallholder maize farmers in Uganda
- / **DURIAN** - Empowering women in rural communities to generate income from local waste and resources in Nigeria
- / **TINGATHE** - Training and assisting young people and women in entrepreneurship with an empowerment approach in Malawi
- / **HOPE SPRINGS HEALTH FOUNDATION** - Promoting health equity and youth empowerment through training in Uganda
- / **SHEKINAH CENTER** - Transforming rural communities through education, health training and savings groups in Burundi



Shekinah Center transforms rural communities through education, health training and savings groups in Burundi.

- / Covering the entire education path and taking the whole family into account
- / Formidable case study with longitudinal data on creating and understanding sustainable change for ultra-poor households

**IMPACT**

- / 25% average household income increase
- / Best performing school in the entire province

„Being alive isn't enough, making others to see a reason to live through our life is the most important.”

/ Micheline Barandereka, Founder & CEO



Durian is creating rural communities of the future in Nigeria: circular, creative, and empowered by rural women.

- / Using a three-pronged strategy of Education, Agriculture and Vocational training
- / Shifting the narrative within Nigeria about what rural communities mean
- / Staying within a community for 5 years

**IMPACT**

- / 100 tons of agri waste recovered
- / 60 of 150 trained women already make a living using their new skills

„My confidence level has greatly increased, and I can now earn my own income. I no longer have to rely on my spouse for every penny to run the house.”

/ Lucy, training participant





Tingathe trains and assists young people and women in entrepreneurship with an empowerment approach in Malawi.

- / Working highly community-oriented
- / Addressing confidence building, life skills and sexual health in addition to entrepreneurship
- / Ecological considerations are mainstreamed into all activities

**IMPACT**

- / 62% decrease in unemployment
- / 25-200% increase in income

"Overcoming acute poverty is a delicate balance of addressing physical and mental wellbeing, attitudes towards self, others and the environment as well as investments in knowledge and skills that build wealth that lasts."

/ Sarah Lindeire, Co-Founder & Executive Director



Hope Springs Health Foundation was started in 2023 and promotes health equity and youth empowerment in Uganda.

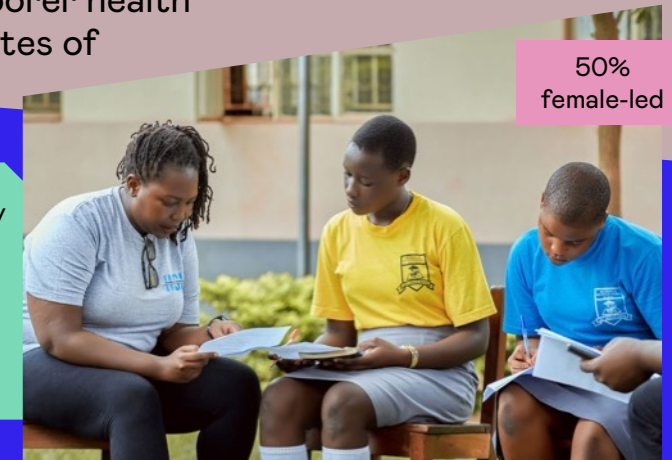
- / Delivering the evidence-based training: "Sugar Daddy Awareness Classes" to girls ages 12-14
- / Focusing on making positive decisions, self-esteem, assertiveness, and bargaining power
- / Teenage pregnancies correlate with lower school completion rates, higher rates of unpaid labor, poorer health outcomes, and higher rates of domestic violence

**IMPACT**

- / 660 girls trained
- / No reported pregnancies since training as of now

"I learnt that when you get any problem, report as the sugar daddy may spoil your future. I am more assertive now."

/ Student



Our goal is not just to claim to be a learning organization but to have mechanisms in place that make sure our guiding principles are reflected in our operations. An important element, given the power imbalance between funders and grantees, is anonymous feedback (although it's not the only element). In February 2024, we conducted our second feedback survey, covering 2023. The response rate stands at 83%, yet the statistical validity is extremely low with a sample size of 10.

In collaboration with other foundations, we worked intensively on our feedback mechanisms and developed a new questionnaire. This will allow us to make comprehensive comparisons starting next year.

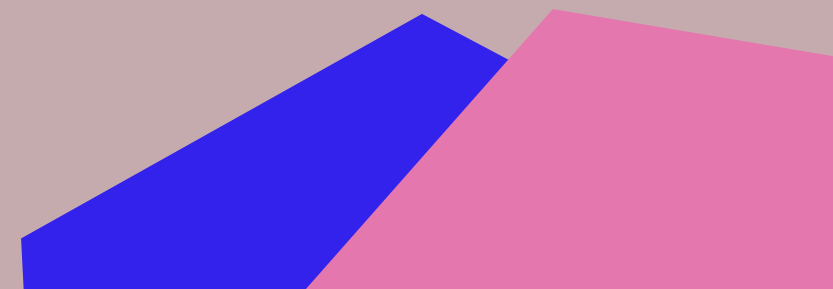
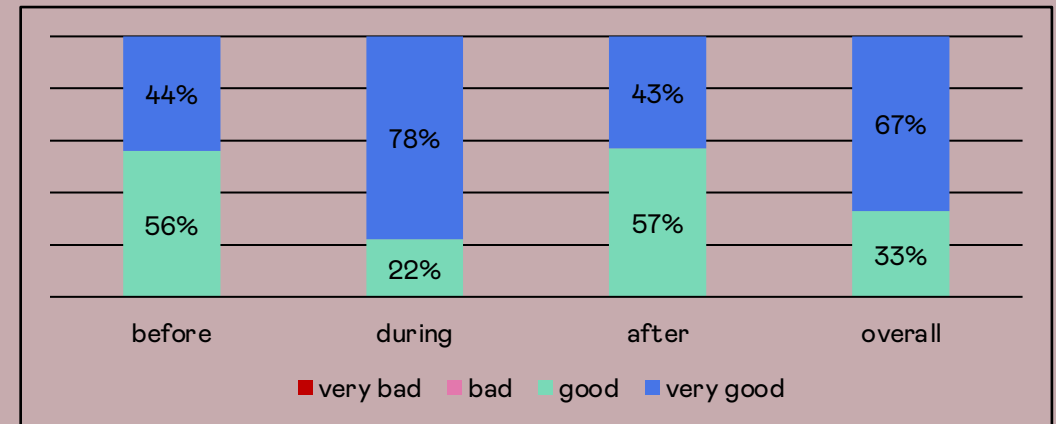
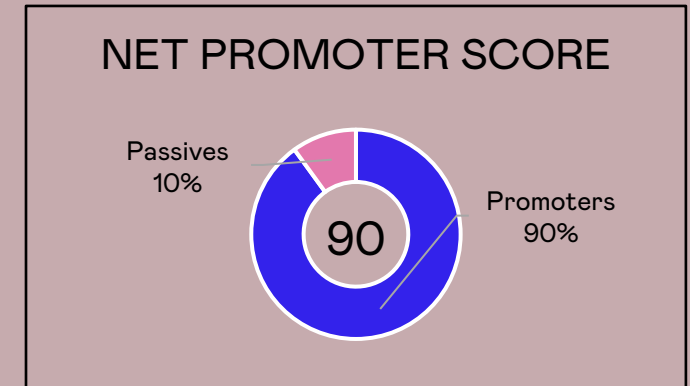
### OUR HIGHLIGHTS

All our partners feel comfortable (33%) or even very comfortable (67%) approaching us with problems. This makes us truly happy, as it indicates our focus on partnerships and trust seems to work. We need this in order to learn and improve. Also, our non-financial support ratings have clearly improved.

89% of grantee partners believe that the Azurit Foundation makes a relevant contribution to systemic change in their field of work. Our sector knowledge is rated at 3.13 out of 4.

### SATISFACTION

Our grantee partners rate the experience of working with us well, especially during the funding period.



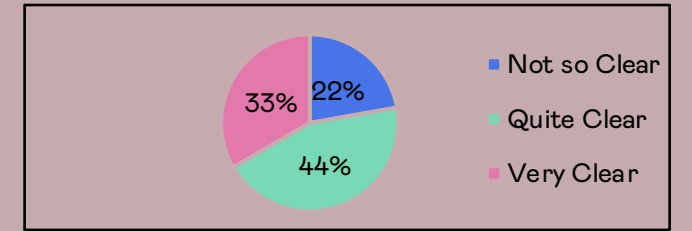
LEARNINGS

- / We have made significant strides in **communicating our strategy**, with 33% of respondents rating it as "very clear," an improvement from 14%. However, we recognize there is still room for further enhancement.
- / The results on whether the Azurit Foundation provides **risk capital** varies widely, with responses ranging from "never" to "very often".
- / Regarding **pressure** to modify organizational priorities to receive funding, 44% of respondents reported feeling "minimal pressure," and 11% felt "moderate pressure."
- / Our **reporting** process and requirements are generally viewed as appropriate to the grant amounts. Nevertheless, we can improve in terms of goal-orientation and structure.
- / One key piece of feedback from our grantee partners is a desire for **more contact and involvement** from the Azurit Foundation. We take this as a positive sign of engagement and will strive to allocate more time to our partners in 2024. While we must be realistic about our capacity as a lean team, we are exploring ways to involve individuals from our network to provide additional support.

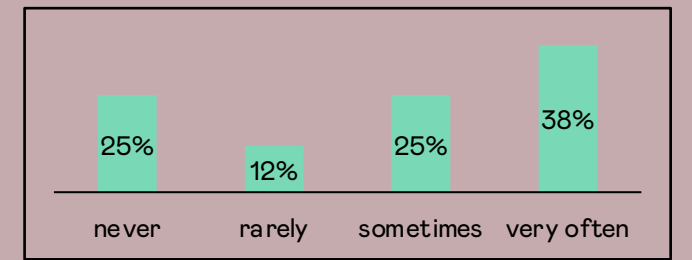
ACTIONS

- / Communicate our strategy more clearly
- / Understand & ideally reduce pressure to modify organizational priorities to receive funding
- / Improve goal-orientation & structure of our reporting process
- / Allocate more time to our partners

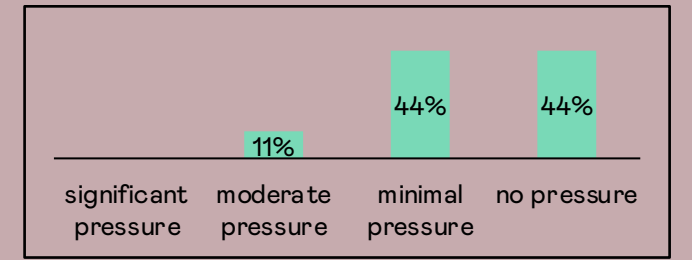
STRATEGY COMMUNICATION



RISK CAPITAL



PRESSURE



The Azurit Foundation was set up by a small group of people with a similar mindset. Our advisory board is responsible for grant decisions and challenges and approves our strategic focus.



**Lea Buck**  
Managing Director

Lea spent many years working with foundations and social enterprises on their strategies and operations. She cares about many things, but women empowerment and participatory grantmaking in particular.



**Noémie Bricard**  
Project Manager

Noémie studied politics, philosophy and economics and previously worked with locally-led organizations in Tanzania and Bolivia. She is inspired by founders who create sustainable & impactful organizations to improve the lives of others.



**Anton Hieber**  
Advisory board

Anton's core fields of interest are human rights, environment, and education and he is inspired by the contagious power of social entrepreneurs working towards sustainable and equitable future societies across the globe. Anton is a trained lawyer and works in the public sector.



**Yanick Kemayou, PhD**  
Advisory board

Yanick is an Academic turned EdTech entrepreneur with a deep motivation for life-long learning. He is the co-founder, CEO and Chief Learning Officer of Kabakoo Academies, one of our first grantee partners. Yanick holds a PhD from Paderborn University, Germany.



**Josephine Nzerem**  
Advisory board

Josephine is a social entrepreneur. She co-founded Human Angle and is Director, Venture & Talent at Ashoka Africa. Her passion is to build an Africa where everyone is a changemaker by inspiring all of Africa to take the initiative to solve social problems.



**Gregor Singer, PhD**  
Advisory board

Gregor is passionate about socio-economic progress in societies. He works as an academic at the the London School of Economics and completed a PhD in Environmental Economics in 2019.

## SOURCING

We aim to further strengthen and formalize our sourcing process via experts. We aim to add at least 5 new partners and stay within our portfolio impact targets.

## EVIDENCE

We fund evidence-based interventions, yet we also want to contribute to creating this evidence. We are exploring several topics, especially around localization and effectiveness, and would like to (co-)fund a collaborative projects in which we contribute to research and knowledge creation.

## FIELD BUILDING

We approach our work from a truly global perspective, given the interconnectedness of today's world and our general belief in universal human rights. Yet, we still feel the responsibility to contribute to field building in our home country Germany: we'd love to see more foundations with an international focus and shifting towards grant-making approaches that are less about control and more about learning.

## FUNDRAISING

In 2023 we laid the foundation and in 2024 we want to get serious and increase our supporter base. If you feel you want to become part of our journey and mission: let us know!

MILESTONES	DUE
Formalize nominating process	Q1
Two grants based on nominator recommendations	Q4
Achieve portfolio targets	Q4
Identify partners for research project	Q1
Finalize concept note	Q3
Facilitate/co-host at least 2 events	Q2
Share learnings in one publication	Q4
Raise 150k from new funders	Q4
Reach three new supporters	Q4

## WRITTEN BY AZURIT & PARTNERS

- / Gaming the System: How Games Can Help Policymakers Shape Regulations for Frontier Technologies  
Our partner Tendai Pasipanodya from Drones Doing Good Alliance explores the innovative use of games to help policymakers improve regulations.
- / Beyond the Formal: A New Paradigm for Socioeconomic Prosperity in the Africas  
Our new advisory board member and co-founder of Kabakoo Academies Yanick Kemayou challenges the traditional development narrative by advocating for the recognition and support of Africa's informal economies as vital and resilient sectors.
- / Evidence-based, impact-driven... what does it all mean?  
Our Managing Director Lea Buck unpacks the intricacies of evidence-based and impact-driven approaches highlighting the importance of flexibility, critical thinking, and tailored impact assessments.

## SELECTED READING RECOMMENDATIONS

- / Adomako, M. & Cohen, M (2023). Funding the localization agenda. Oxfam.
- / Albinsky, V. (2023). Are education interventions as cost effective as the top health interventions? Five separate lines of evidence for the income effects of better education. Effective Altruism Forum.
- / Angrist, N et al. (2023). Building resilient education systems: Evidence from large-scale randomized trials in five countries. CSAE Working Papers 2023-02. Centre for the Study of African Economies. University of Oxford.
- / Chidzero, B. et al (2023). Closing the Capital Gap on Impact Investment in Africa. The Bridgespan Group.
- / Innovation for Poverty Action (2023). Best Bets: Emerging Opportunities for Impact at Scale.
- / Thorstad, D. (n.d). Reflective Altruism Blog.
- / Nwuneli, N. (2023). Shifting power to African organizations. Stanford Social Innovation Review, Spring 2023. Online.



# AZURIT FOUNDATION

Azurit Foundation gGmbH

Ohmstraße 5  
80802 München, Germany

hello@azuritfoundation.org

[www.azuritfoundation.org](http://www.azuritfoundation.org)