



THE ALLY FUNDER ALLIANCE: An initiative of Girls Education Collaborative

INTRODUCTION

Girls Education Collaborative (GEC) brings social change through the transformational power of girls education and our fight for global gender equality. We do this by linking arms in allyship with local change-makers in rural, under-served regions in developing economies where high rates of gender inequality and economic poverty persist.

Since its founding over thirteen ago, GEC has been an ally to a group of change-makers whose vision was to lift women out of poverty and from destructive gender-based cultural traditions by educating girls in their community. At the invitation of these leaders—a community of Tanzanian nuns from the Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa (IHSA)—GEC joined them on their journey to bring their vision to fruition. Their dream was to create a residential school for girls in a remote and underserved region of Tanzania. GEC has been a funder, advisor, co-developer, project-manager and friend in helping the IHSA build, open and now grow the Kitenga Girls Secondary School. **We call this allyship.**

From this experience, GEC has gained insight on how to successfully support and partner with proximal leaders creating and leading locally designed, girl-centered interventions for the purpose of uplifting girls and their communities out of poverty, vulnerability and gender inequity.

We link arms in allyship with local change-makers in the girls-education space.

We put trust in their ideas, ideals, and leadership.

THE ALLY FUNDER ALLIANCE

In 2022, GEC launched the Ally Funder Alliance (AFA) as an initiative **to accelerate the pace and volume of philanthropic funding directed towards authentic community-born development.** The AFA is our response to understanding that those most equipped to bring meaningful and sustainable change to a community are often the most disadvantaged when it comes to accessing the resources and tools needed to do so.

The AFA's goal is to help ramp up and accelerate already promising interventions that smash gender-based barriers and help equip underserved girls with the skills and tools needed to finish school, navigate their circumstances and fulfill their futures.

The AFA is a “Funding +” collaborative of like-minded philanthropists and organizations. The AFA invests in early stage, community founded & led organizations focused on girl-centered work that aims to help girls complete twelve years of education, develop agency and learn needed skills for navigating their futures.

The collaborative fund is managed by GEC and GEC serves as the ‘portal’ between the Funder Members and the ‘doers’, whom we call **Ally Organizations**.

“We have the passion, but we don’t always have the tools.”

Kellen Msseemmaa, Founder, Empowered Girls Africa

The Funding+ model we promote is one that is flexible and responsive to an organization’s or leader’s need at a particular point in time. The aim is to help early-stage work advance meaningfully forward. We do this by re-granting the pooled AFA funds in unrestricted, multi-year gifts that are proportionally significant for the Ally Organization (AO). **In addition to funding, GEC curates a network of resources and relationships that we leverage for the benefit of our AOs as they journey through both pain points and windows of opportunity.** In being an ally, GEC works to walk by their side and when invited, to help support their capacity development, expand their networks, shine a light on their work and make connections with other funders.

The AFA is designed to maximize returns on investment for all who are involved:

For the Ally Organizations: Emerging leaders and initiatives operating outside the traditional international development ecosystem often face steep challenges accessing the financial resources, expertise, and capacity support needed to realize their visions. These under-recognized efforts—many of which are community-rooted and off the typical funder radar—are, in GEC’s view, among the most promising for creating lasting impact. Yet they encounter significant barriers, including limited connectivity, remote geographic locations, and lack of access to established networks.

The AFA aims to be a non-burdensome funder, partner and ally, so AO capacity and efforts can be directed where needed most: their mission.

For the Ally Funder Members: *The AFA is a vehicle where they can invest directly in emerging leaders and initiatives that need it most, regardless of their USA non-profit status.* Funder members leverage GEC’s relationships, networks and earned experience to help them meet their philanthropic priorities and goals. As much as GEC’s work with Ally Organizations is trust-based, it is also true of the relationship between Funder Members and GEC. Yes, there is structured accountability and reporting within the AFA framework, but the model is dependent on Funder Members having good faith in GEC’s judgment and recommendations. A funder member’s yearly contribution is amplified by the power of all the funds working together. For example, a Funder Member may contribute \$20,000 annually, but that gift, now coupled with others, is creating what could be transformational funding for 3-9 organizations each year.

Ally Funder Members belong to a philanthropic collective led by Girls Education Collaborative. The collective pool of resources supports & catalyzes **Ally Organizations**.

Ally Organizations are led by proximal change-agents leading girl-centered initiatives in underserved and resourced areas.

Learn More: WWW.GEC.NGO