



# KEYSTONE'S EAST AFRICAN Grantee Feedback Report 2009

**THIS SAMPLE REPORT IS FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY.**

WHILE THE DATA IS BASED ON AN ACTUAL PILOT COMPARATIVE FEEDBACK SURVEY, THIS REPORT IS MADE UP OF SELECTED PAGES FROM THE REPORTS OF VARIOUS GRANTMAKERS, AND DOES NOT RELATE TO ANY SPECIFIC GRANTMAKER. THERE MAY BE MINOR INCONSISTENCIES IN THE DATA AS A RESULT.

# Introduction

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There are many ways in which a grantmaker can enable its grantees to be effective providers of services or agents of lasting change in communities. Equally, there are many ways in which grantmaker policies and practices can disable grantees from being as successful as they could be.

If grantmakers want to enable their grantees to become as effective as they can possibly be, then they need to learn from their grantees about how their policies and practices are affecting them now, and how they can best improve the support that they provide in future.

In 2008, a group of ten East African grantmakers contracted Keystone to conduct a comparative survey of all their current grantees. This report presents a summary of what 64 grantees of ABCD said about their experience of being a grantee of ABCD. The same survey instrument was simultaneously administered to the grantees of nine other East African grantmakers.

This report presents the responses of ABCD grantees alongside the responses of the grantees of the other grantmakers in the group. ABCD is thus able to compare the feedback it received from its grantees with how all the grantmakers were rated by their grantees. This makes it easier to identify areas of relatively strong and weak performance, and pinpoint potential areas for improvement for each individual grantmaker and across the entire field of grantmaking in East Africa.

Grantee responses are grouped into six separate sections, each describing a key area of grant-making practice:

- Nature of funding
- Application process
- Monitoring, reporting and evaluation
- Relationship during the grant period
- Non-financial support
- Grantmaker's knowledge and influence

## CHARTS AND QUARTILES

We have used a variety of charts to present the findings of the survey. Some are simple bar graphs that do not need much explanation. Sometimes we show the performance of the whole group of grantmakers alongside ABCD's performance by grouping the scores into quartiles.

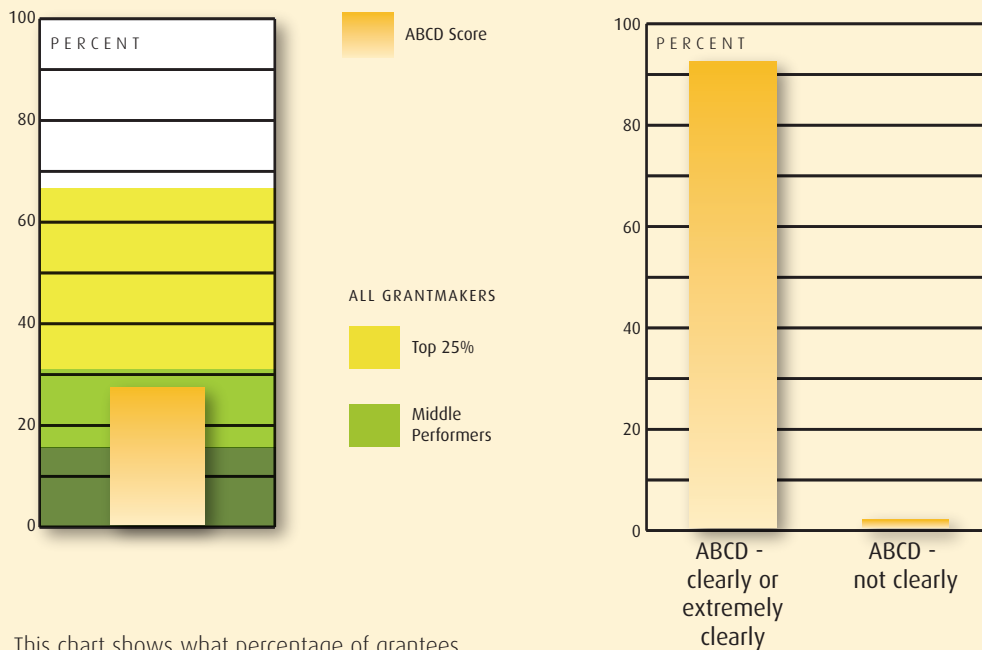
A quartile is a sub-group of 25% (or a quarter) of the whole group of grantmakers.

In these charts, a shaded background shows the performance of all grantmakers using quartiles. The top quartile shows the performance of the highest-rated 25% of grantmakers. It is shaded yellow. The lowest-rated 25% of grantmakers fall in the bottom quartile, which is shaded dark green. The middle performing group includes two quartiles, or 50% of the whole group. It is shaded light green.

When you compare ABCD's score to the shaded area, you will be able to see whether you are among the top 25% of performers, the middle 50% of performers, or the lowest 25% of performers of the whole group.

Quartiles are particularly well suited for comparing this type of perceptual data which is often subjective and not precisely accurate. Understanding which quartile we sit in gives us a reasonably accurate basis for comparing our performance against that of other grantmakers. Quartiles also help to reduce distortions that can be caused by single data points that are very different from the rest of the group.

## AN EXAMPLE OF USING QUARTILES



This chart shows what percentage of grantees rate ABCD as excellent or competent in a specific area of performance (the yellow column) against a shaded background that shows the equivalent competency rating for all grantmakers grouped into quartiles.

This chart shows the percentage of grantees that rate ABCD's explanation as 'clear and extremely clear' (92%) and 'not clear' (only 2%).

In this chart, the top quartile of grantmakers is made up of those who were rated 'extremely clear' by between 32% and 67% of their grantees. These are the highest performing grantmakers in the group. However, in this area, even the top performers can clearly improve further.

The next 50% of grantmakers were rated as 'extremely clear' by between 17% and 31% of their grantees. These are the mid-level performers across the whole group of grantmakers.

The grantmakers in the bottom quartile were rated as 'extremely clear' by only 16% or fewer of their grantees. These are the lowest performing grantmakers. They have a long way to go.

So, you can see that ABCD's score of 27% of grantees who find its explanations extremely clear places it within the middle performers of the group of 10 grantmakers. ABCD might respond to this feedback by asking grantees what they found not so clear and seek to improve on it. But they would also know from looking at the right hand chart that they are performing quite well as over 90% of grantees think that their explanations are generally clear.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this survey, data was collected through an anonymous questionnaire, independently administered by Keystone with help from Allavida (a Kenyan civil society organisation based in Nairobi) from September to December 2008.

Every grantmaker was asked to supply the names and contact details of all of their current grantees. English versions of the questionnaire were sent by email, post or by hand to grantees that grantmakers indicated were proficient in English, and a Kiswahili translation was sent to the others.

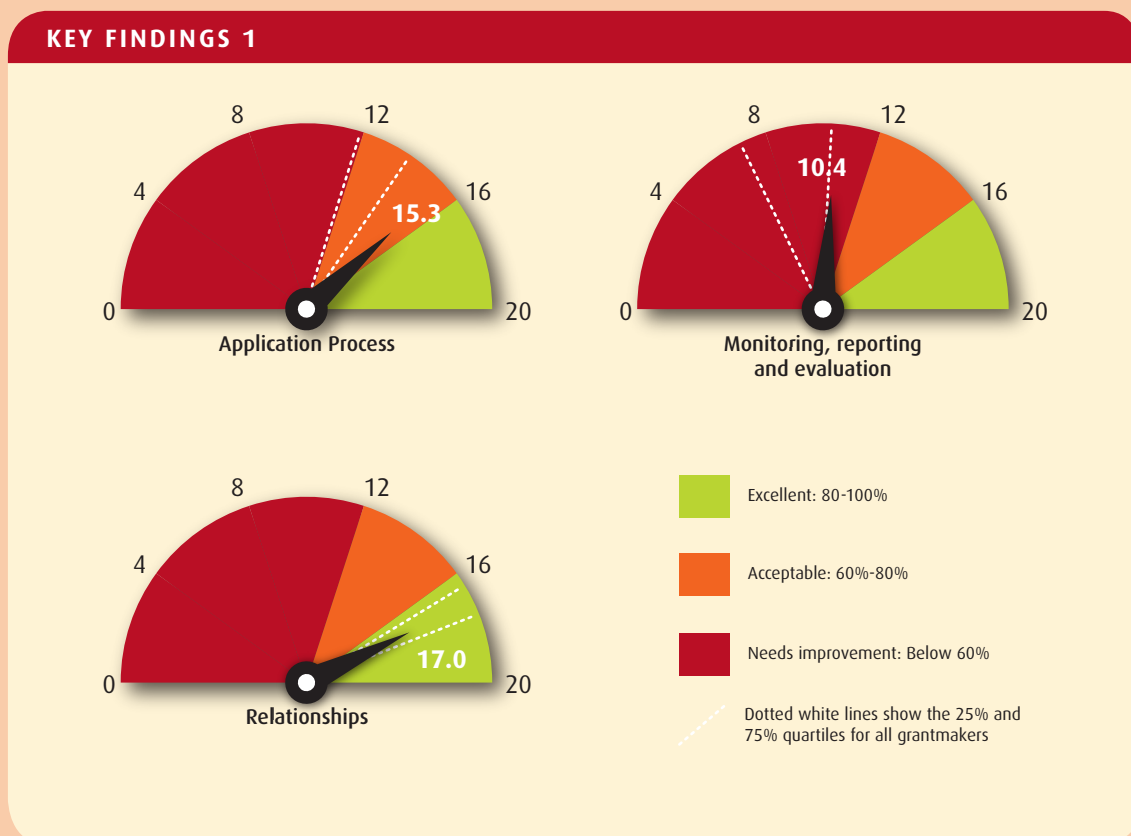
The survey questionnaire was designed by Keystone building on the model of the highly regarded Grantee Perception Reports of the Centre for Effective Philanthropy (CEP). The questionnaire was further refined in consultation with participating grantmakers, and drawing on Keystone's own extensive experience in the field.

A total of 661 questionnaires were sent out and 330 returned. This gives an overall response rate of 50%. Grantees were scattered all over East Africa from urban centres to remote rural villages. For ABCD, questionnaires were sent to 134 grantees, and 64 were returned giving a response rate of 47.8%.

Completed questionnaires were processed by a South African social research firm, Outsourced Insight. This included translating responses from Kiswahili to English, capturing the responses, coding open-ended responses, cleaning data, and statistical analysis.

Keystone gratefully acknowledges the inspiration and assistance of the Centre for Effective Philanthropy ([www.effectivephilanthropy.org](http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org)) in the design of this pilot survey.

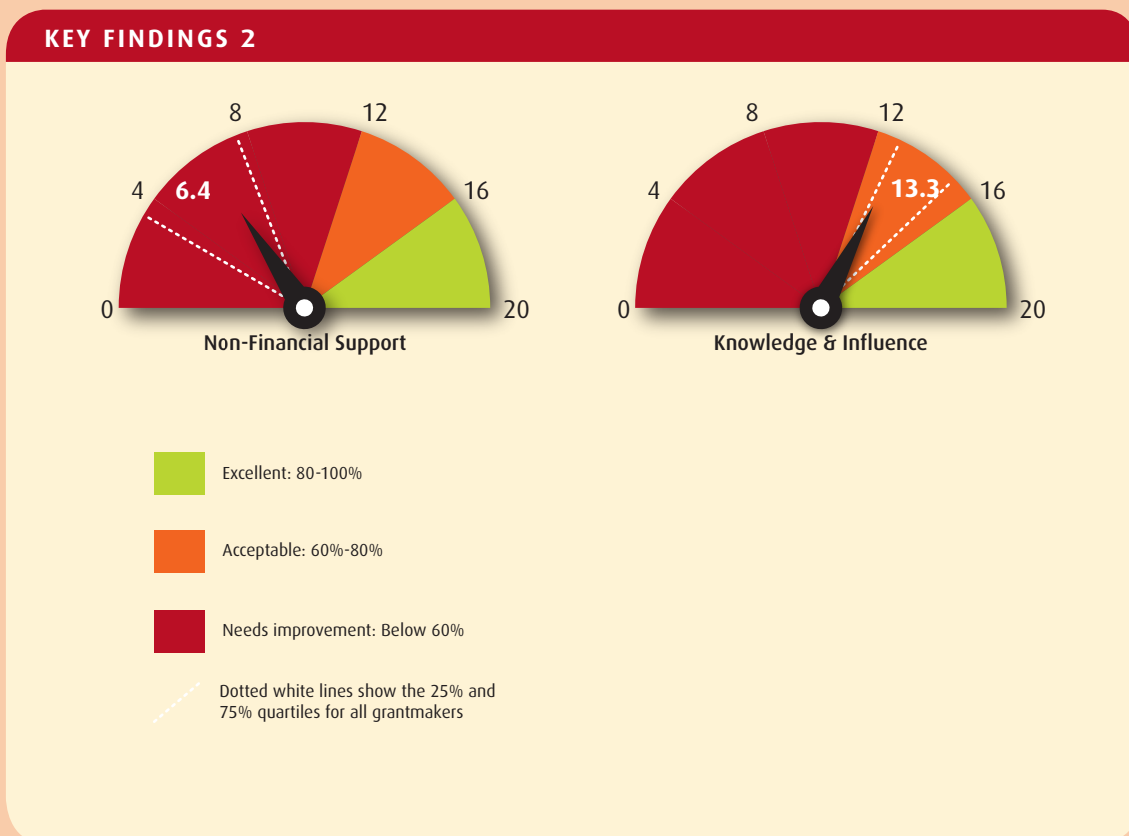
# Key findings



**This dashboard shows grantees' satisfaction ratings for five key areas of grantmaker performance. Each one converts responses to several specific questions into a single rating, between 0 and 20.**

- ABCD's grantees are very satisfied with ABCD's application processes, rating it 15.3 out of 20. This score places ABCD in joint first position in the whole group of grantmakers. ABCD keeps grantees better informed of progress and provides them with clearer information than most other grantmakers.
- ABCD's grantees rate ABCD's monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes at 10.4 out of 20, a step lower than the application process. But ABCD is still among the top grantmakers in the group. This is one of the areas in which grantees are least satisfied across all grantmakers. ABCD provides less funding for monitoring and evaluation than any other grantmaker.
- Grantees rated ABCD at 17.1 out of 20 for relationships. This suggests that ABCD communicates well with grantees, that it listens and responds to their concerns and that grantees feel they can be quite open and honest. ABCD was consistently ranked 6th and 7th (out of 10) in the detailed measures in this section. So it can still catch up with other grantmakers.

# Key findings



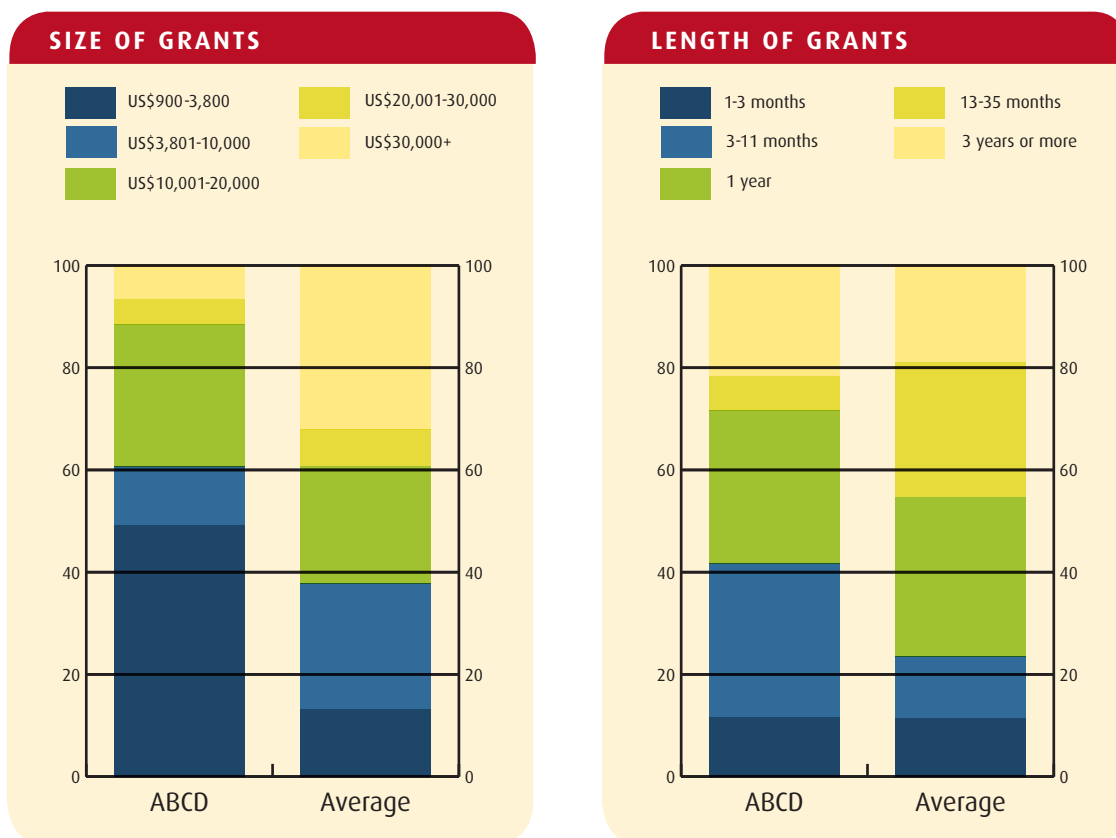
- ABCD's grantees rated it 6.4 out of 20 for non-financial support (e.g. capacity building or advice). This is very low. All grantmakers struggle in this area, and most are rated lower than ABCD. The detailed measures show that typically, around 40% of ABCD's grantees do not receive assistance in each area; and in some areas over 20% of grantees receive assistance that they do not find helpful.
- ABCD grantees are fairly satisfied with ABCD's knowledge of the contexts and fields they work in. They rate ABCD at 13.3 out of 20 here. This is close to the bottom performers in the group, 7<sup>th</sup> out of the group of 10. There is scope for improvement here.

## Section 1

### Nature of funding

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# Nature of funding



## SIZE OF GRANTS

- ABCD makes more small grants than most other grant makers in the survey. Average size of grants from ABCD was US\$9,989 compared with an average of US\$59,568 for grants made by all grant makers, and a median of US\$33,285.
- 49% of ABCD's grants were in the range US\$900 to US\$3,800. 39% were over US\$10,000.
- 13% of ABCD's grantees said that funding had been insufficient.
- 11% percent of the open comments claimed that the funding was inadequate.

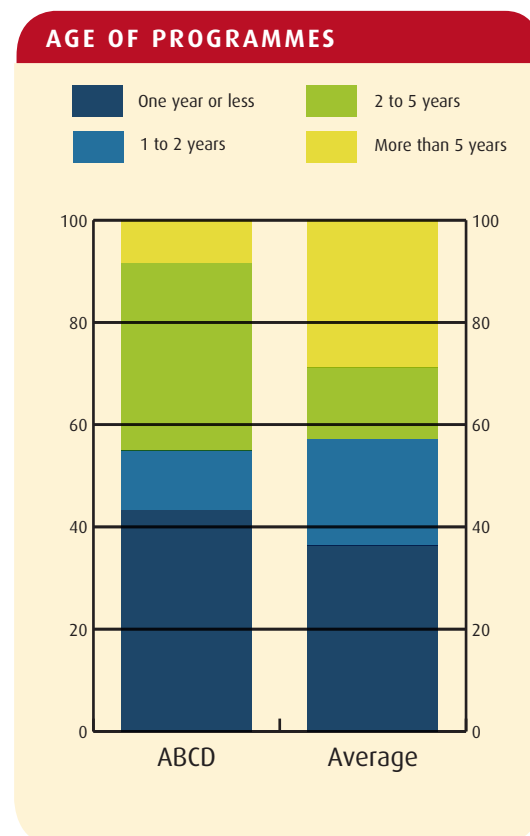
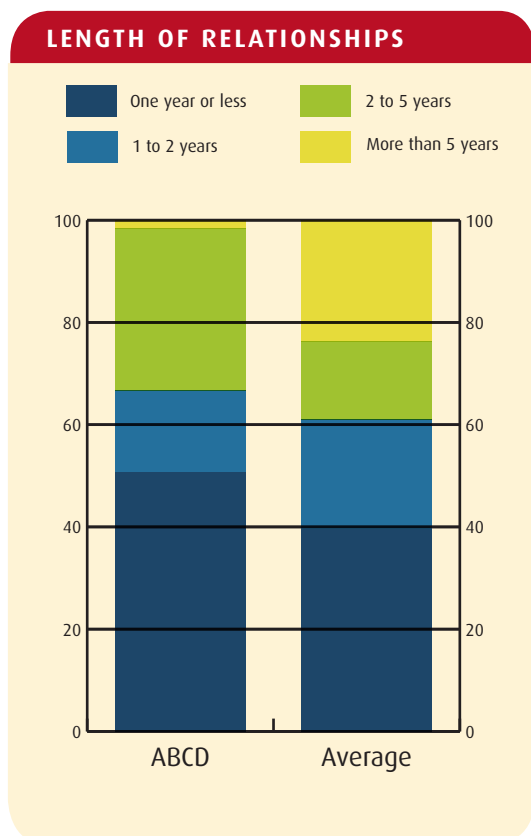
*"I had to adjust my project to fit the grant amount; that compromised the quality of my project and the overall effectiveness of my work". "(The) grant amount is too small to adequately support project co-ordination and implementation";*

## LENGTH OF GRANTS

- 72% of ABCD's grants are for one year or less. This is more than the average of 55%.
- 7% of ABCD's grants are for one to three years. This is less than the average of 26%.
- 22% of ABCD grants are for three years or more. This is more than the average of 19%.
- An interesting anomaly appears: Whereas all ABCD's very short term grantees (1-3 months) and longer term grantees (13-35 months) are very or extremely satisfied with their experience with ABCD, only two thirds of medium-term grantees (3 to 12 months) are as satisfied.



# Nature of funding



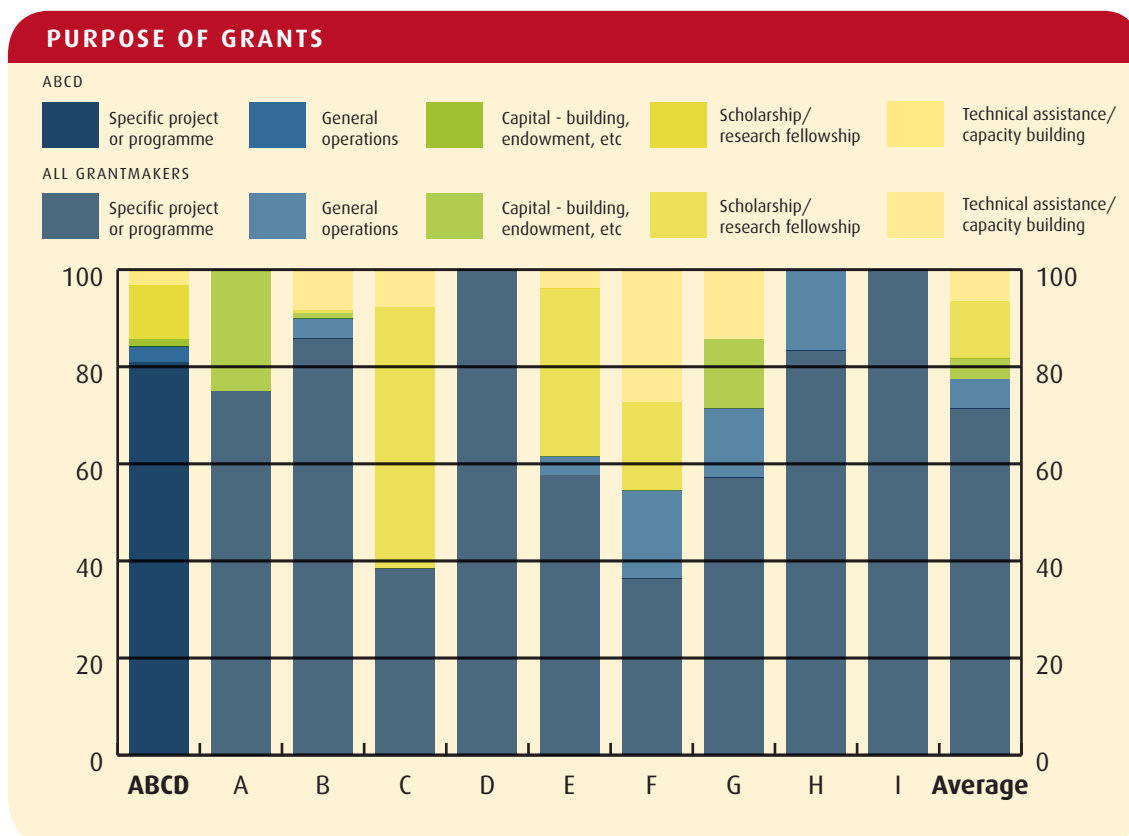
## LENGTH OF RELATIONSHIP

- ABCD has a very short relationship with about half of its grantees. 51% have received funds from ABCD for one year or less. This is higher than the average of 40% for all grantmakers in the survey.
- At the same time, 33% ABCD grantees have received funding for longer than two years, which is less than the average of 39% for all grantmakers.
- A common criticism of grantmakers is that short-term grants make it very difficult for organizations to plan sustainable developmental interventions, and makes them spend too much time fundraising. It might be interesting to compare the effectiveness of short-term vs long-term grants.

## AGE OF PROGRAMMES

- 45% of the projects that ABCD funds have been running for two years or more. This is similar to the average of 43% for all 10 grantmakers.
- The fact that most funded programmes are less than two years old could be a matter for concern. This could suggest that many projects start but cannot be sustained to the point where they have meaningful impact. Should grantmakers be asking whether the pattern of short-term project funding is a major contributor to the lack of sustainability among programmes (and even grantee organisations themselves) – especially at community level?

# Nature of funding



NOTE: this chart shows the single major purpose for each grant. It does not show a breakdown of purposes within grants.

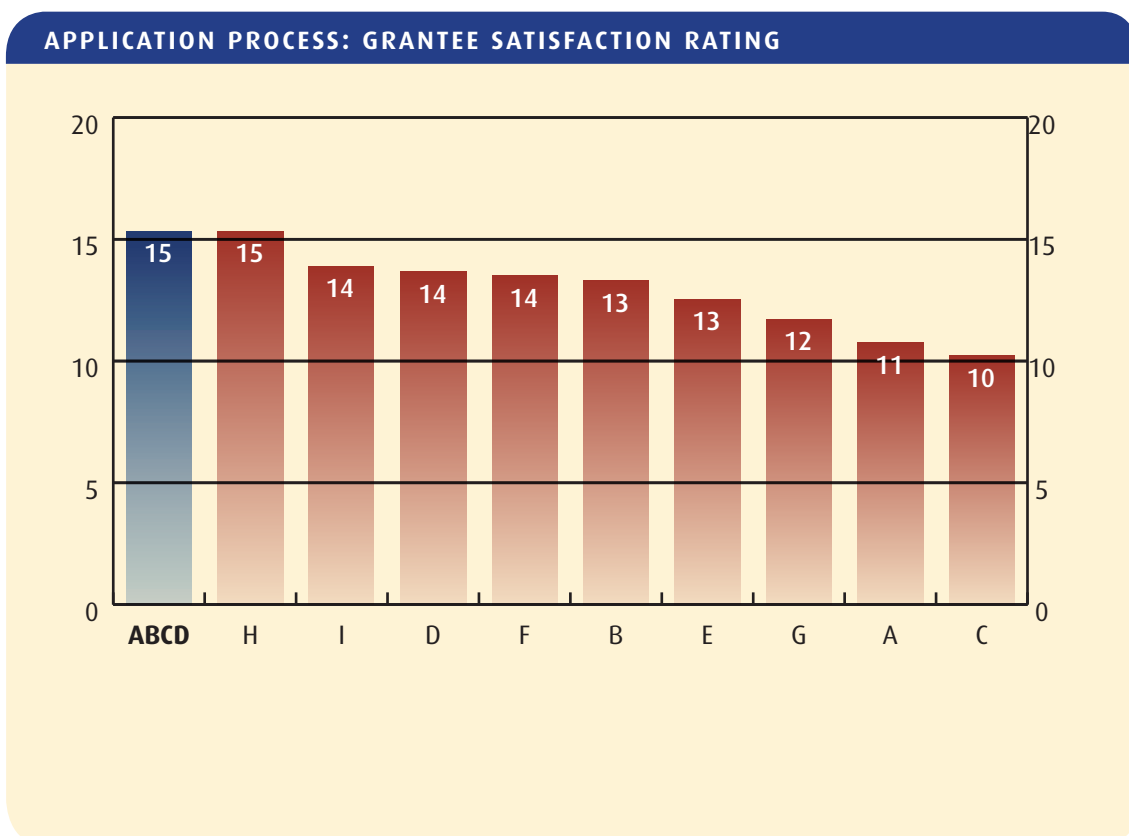
- 81% of ABCD grants were for specific projects or programmes; and 11% were primarily for scholarships or research fellowships. These proportions are similar across all grantmakers.
- Across the field, grantmakers typically made 6% of their grants for general operations (such as organization strengthening and capacity building). This appears low, and suggests that across the field, grantmakers may be under-investing in this area.
- From the perspective of its grantees, ABCD made proportionately fewer (3%) grants for technical assistance or capacity building than other grant makers (7%).
- Continuing low levels of support for organization strengthening could reduce the effectiveness of grantees – especially community-based organizations.
- Comments suggested that ABCD should: **“organize for special field-related assistance to provide insights into the field by experts”** and **“the grant maker can support us in capacity building and institutional strengthening”**.

## Section 2

### Application process

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# Application process



Note: This report only shows feedback from successful applicants. It does not include organizations which applied to ABCD for funding but did not get it.

- Grantees rated their satisfaction with ABCD’s application process at 15.3 out of 20. This is the highest rating from among all the grantmakers, and places ABCD equal 1 in the group.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from the questions in the survey, about the usefulness, demands and clarity of ABCD’s application and approval processes.
- 38% of ABCD grantees comments about the process were positive compared to the average for the group of 28%.
- Conversely, although ABCD grantees were less critical than average, one third (34%) said the process was too lengthy.

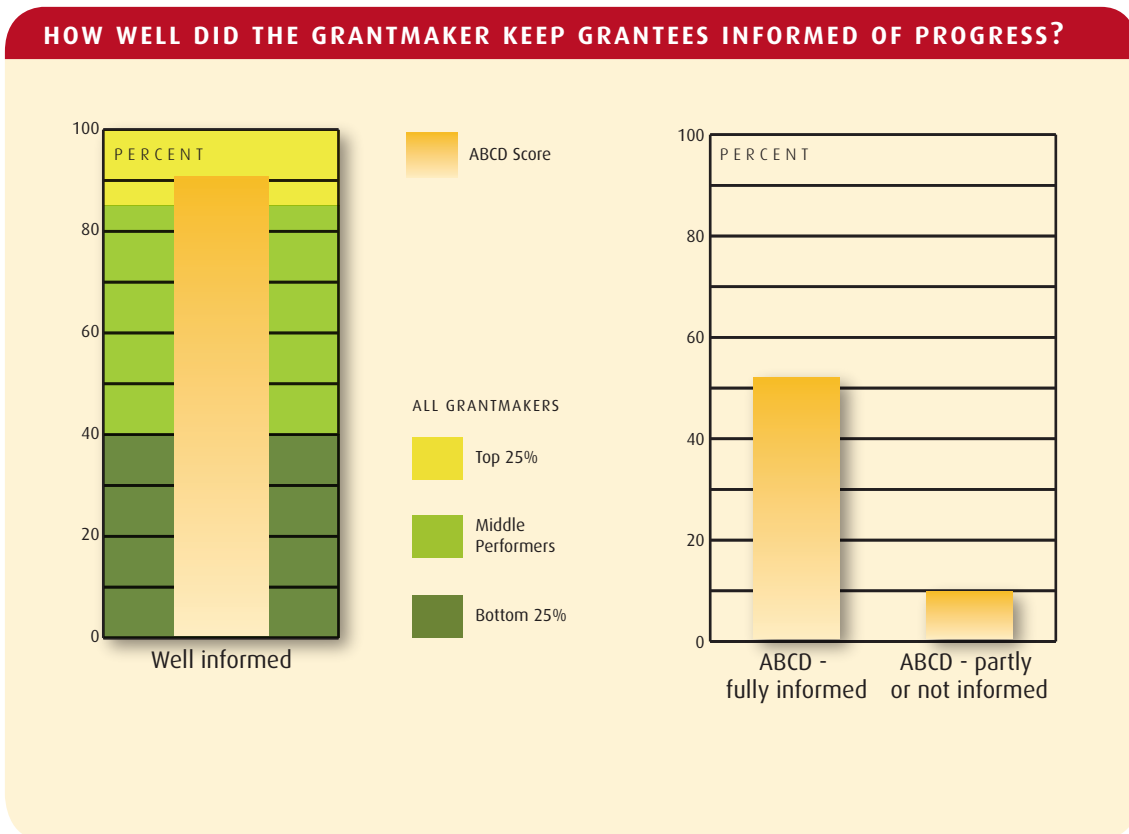
“the process should be easier as it is very easy to discourage one, considering the amount of time you spend in meeting the requirements”;

“the approval process was a bit tedious as there was a lot of re-doing the budget and explanation”.

“Throughout the application and approval process we learnt to be more organised, accountable and better stewards”;

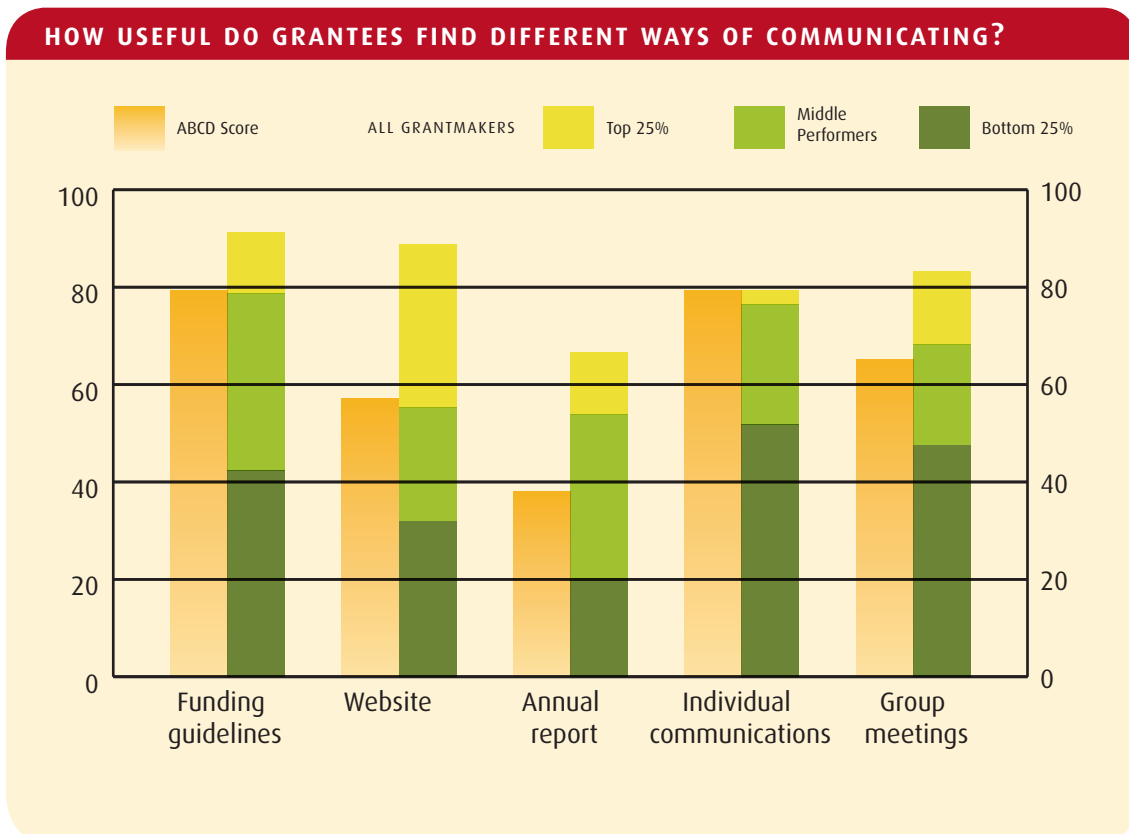
“the staff gave useful guidance and guidelines which made our work in planning, implementation and reporting easy”;

# Application process



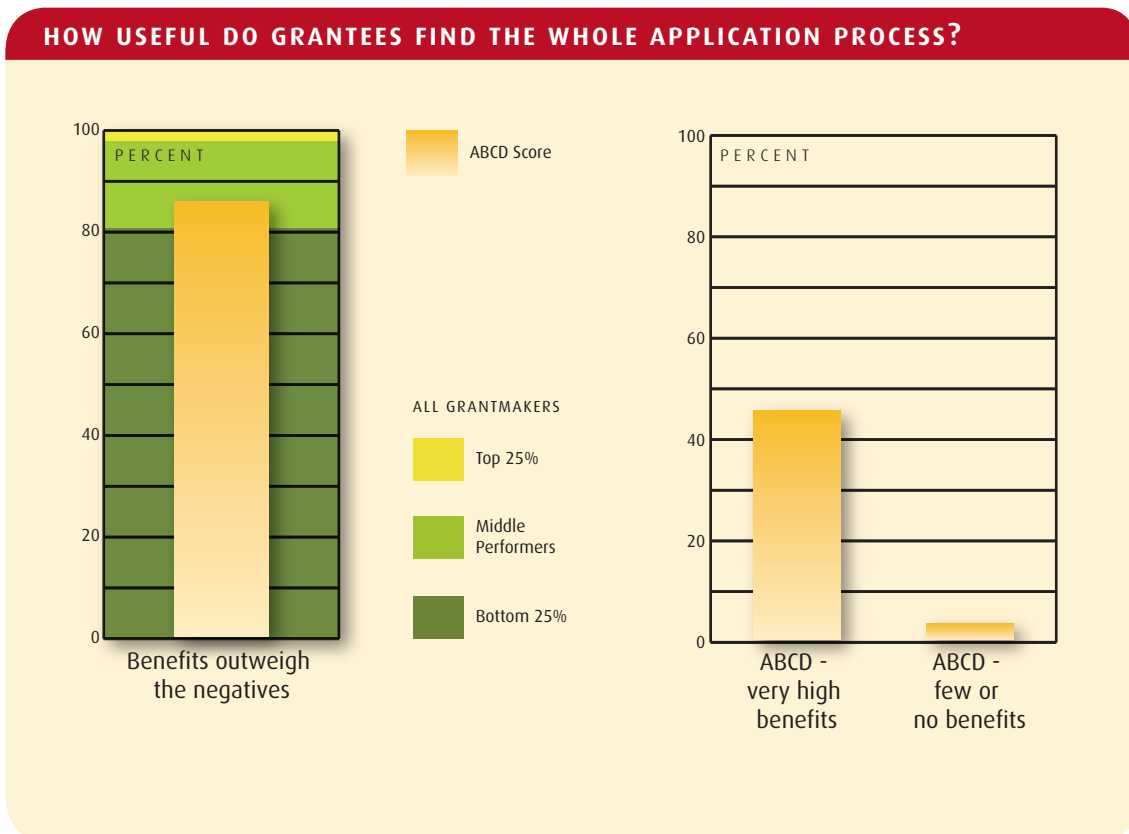
- 90% of ABCD's grantees said they were kept well informed of progress during the application and approval process. This is a high rating, that places ABCD among the top 25% of performers in the group of 10 grantmakers.
- Of these, 52% of ABCD's grantees said they were kept 'fully' informed.
- A separate 9% of ABCD's grantees said they were 'partly' or 'not' informed.

# Application process



- 79% of grantees rated both ABCD’s ‘fundraising guidelines’ and ‘individual communications’ as ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful. This places ABCD among the top 25% of grantmakers for both of these means of communication. ABCD is the top performer for ‘individual communications’.
- 57% of grantees rated ABCD’s website as ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ useful – well within the top 25%. However, over 40% of grantees do not find ABCD’s website very useful.
- On the reverse side, only 38% of grantees rated ABCD’s annual report as ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful. This is in the mid-level group of grantmakers. It suggests that almost two thirds of ABCD’s grantees did not find the annual report very useful.
- On a different but related point, 90% of grantees said ABCD’s communications were mostly clear and consistent.

# Application process

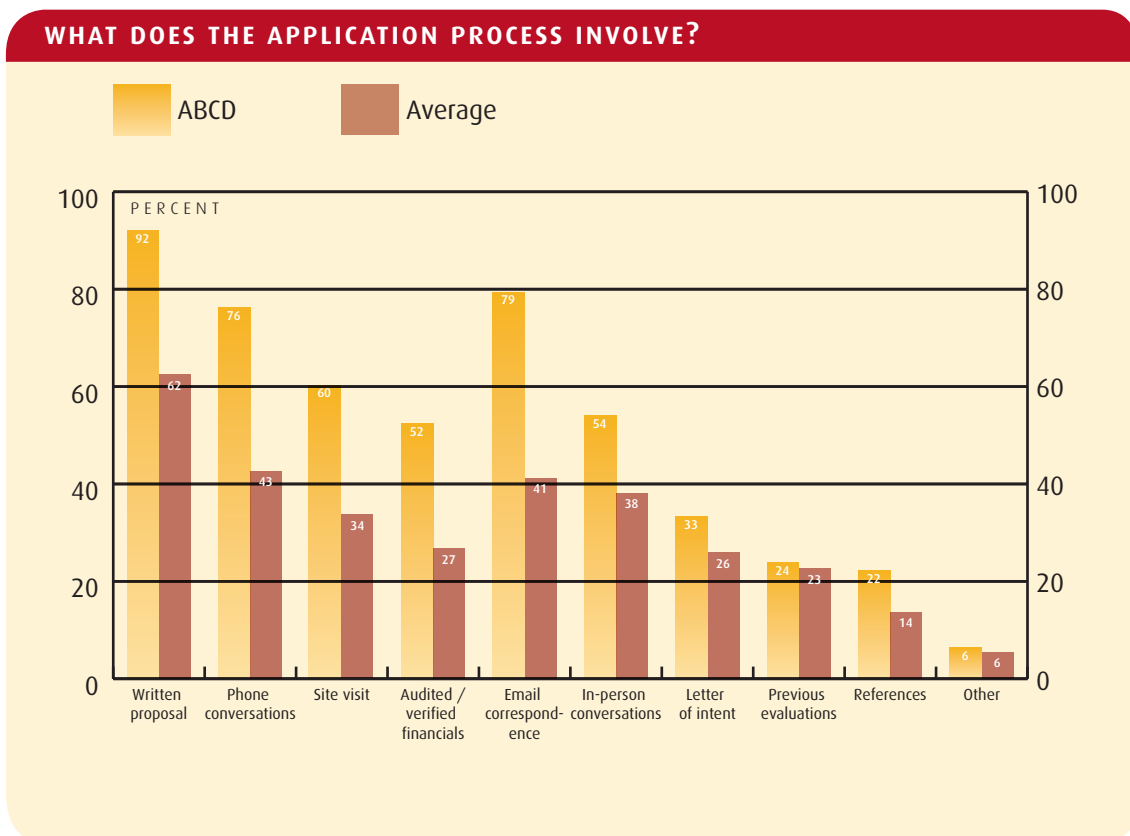


- 85% of ABCD's grantees felt that the benefits of participating in ABCD's application process outweighed the negatives. This rating places ABCD among the mid-level performers of the group of 10 grantmakers.
- Of these, 45% of grantees said that the benefits 'significantly' outweighed the negatives.
- 41% of ABCD's grantees made positive comments about their experiences with the application and approval process.

*"It has challenged us in terms of how we manage the whole project that is funded knowing clearly that anything short of the required responsibility will make us forfeit the subsequent funding" and "attained more skills in project fundraising, implementation and evaluation through the many sessions together".*

- 15% of grantees said that negatives equalled or exceeded the benefits or that there were no benefits. Almost all of these had grants of less than \$3800/Ksh300,000.
- Perhaps ABCD could consider whether small grants are an effective way to support change in communities, or pay more attention to the needs of grantees receiving smaller amounts?

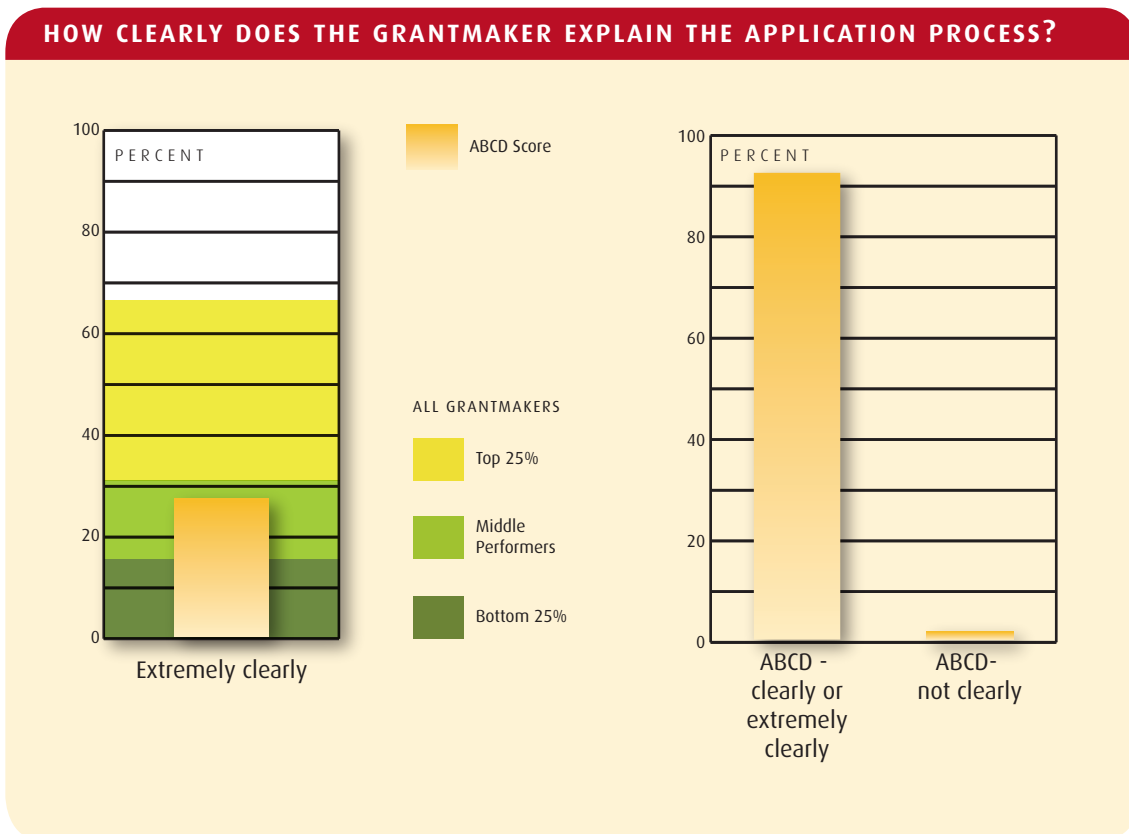
# Application process



- ABCD's application and approval process involves a lot more interaction and communication with grantees than most grantmakers.
- 92% of ABCD's grantees said they had to submit a written proposal, compared to the average of 62% for all 10 grantmakers.
- Similarly, ABCD's grantees were much more likely to have communicated with ABCD by email, telephone, in-person conversations and during site visits, than the average grantmaker. They were also more likely to have submitted verified or audited financial information.

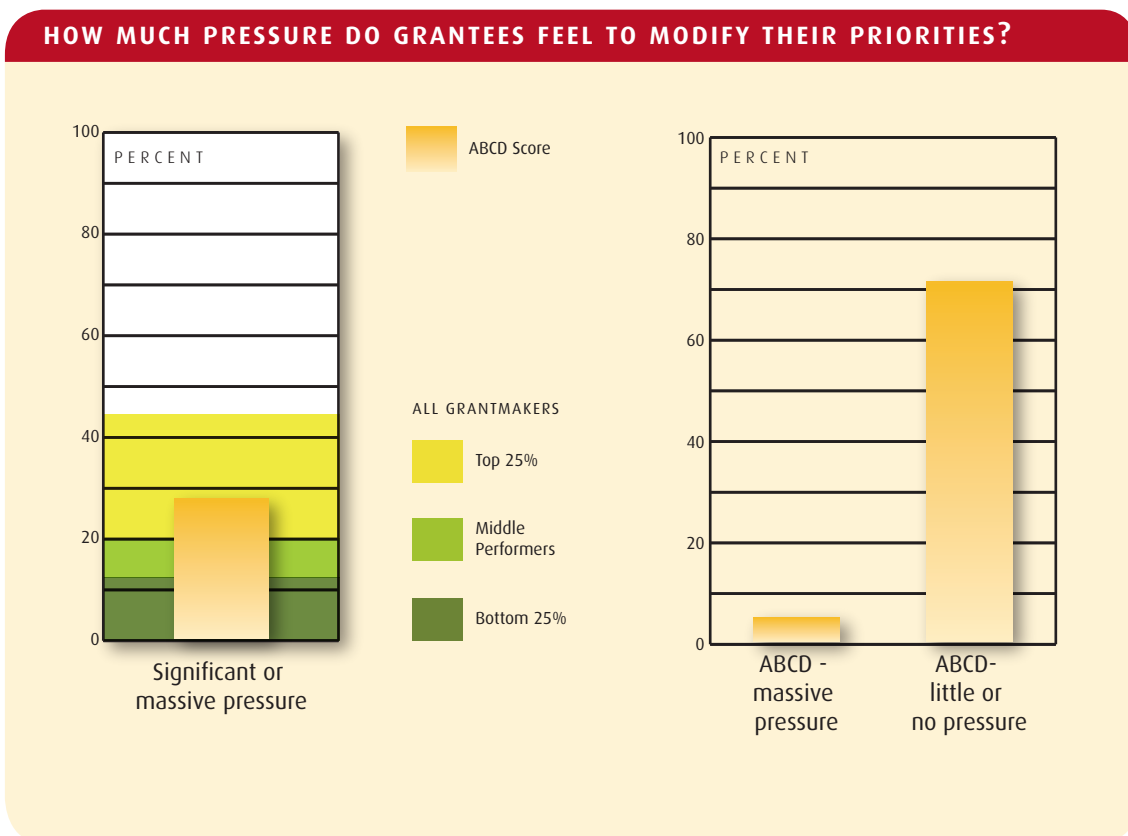


# Application process



- 27% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD explained their application process 'extremely' clearly. This places ABCD towards the top of the mid-level performers of the group of 10 grantmakers.
- A total of 92% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD explained their application process 'clearly' or 'extremely clearly'.
- Only 2% of ABCD's grantees said that the application process was not clear.
- All grantmakers could respond to this feedback and explain their application processes better. One grantee commented, "the application forms were simplified and enabled the group to zero in on the important issues of application with ease".

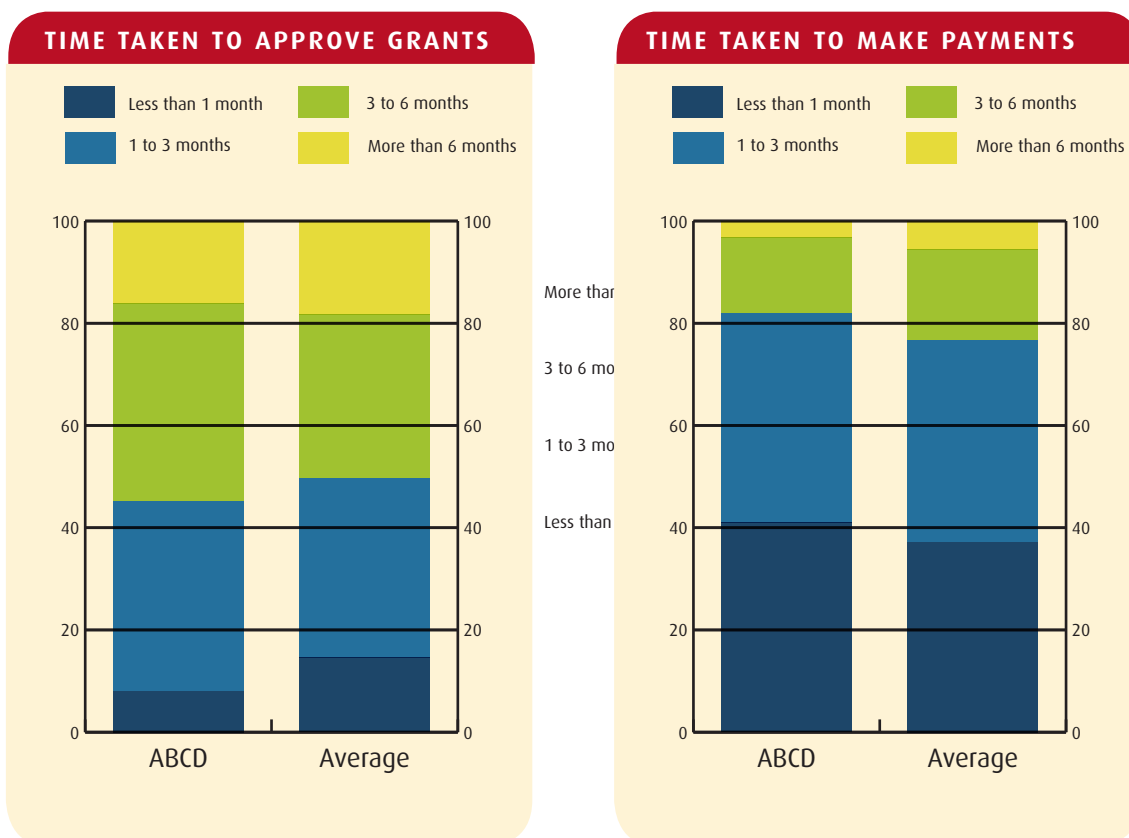
# Application process



- 27% of ABCD's grantees said that they felt 'some' or 'massive' pressure to modify their priorities, during the application process. This rating places ABCD in the top 25% of the group of 10 grantmakers.
- Of these, 5% said they felt 'massive' pressure.
- However 71% of ABCD's grantees said that they felt little or no pressure to change their priorities.
- So, although it is not a problem for most grantees, ABCD still puts more pressure on some of them to change their proposals than other grantmakers.
- One grantee suggested that the proposal had been changed by ABCD:

*"The grant maker should be a little more sensitive to our proposed budgets and seek clarification before finalising approval. When certain items in the budget have been overlooked and cut out, it becomes impossible to meet costs effectively and this has a negative effect on the whole strategy and implementation process".*

# Application process



- 37% of ABCD’s grantees reported that ABCD took 1 – 3 months to approve their grant. This is just below the average. Another 38% said that ABCD took 3 – 6 months. This is more than the average, of 26%.
- 16% of ABCD’s grantees said that they had to wait for more than 6 months, after submitting their proposal. This is a significant proportion but it is lower than the average for all grantmakers, of 21%.
- 40% of ABCD’s grantees received the first payment of their grant less than one month after the grant had been approved. Another 40% received their first payment 1 – 3 months after approval. 15% had to wait for 3 – 6 months. These figures are very similar to the average figures for the group of 10 grantmakers.
- 37% of ABCD’s grantees complained about the length of time taken for completion of the process, some requesting that the duration should be specified upfront, others mentioning increasing costs before funds arrived.

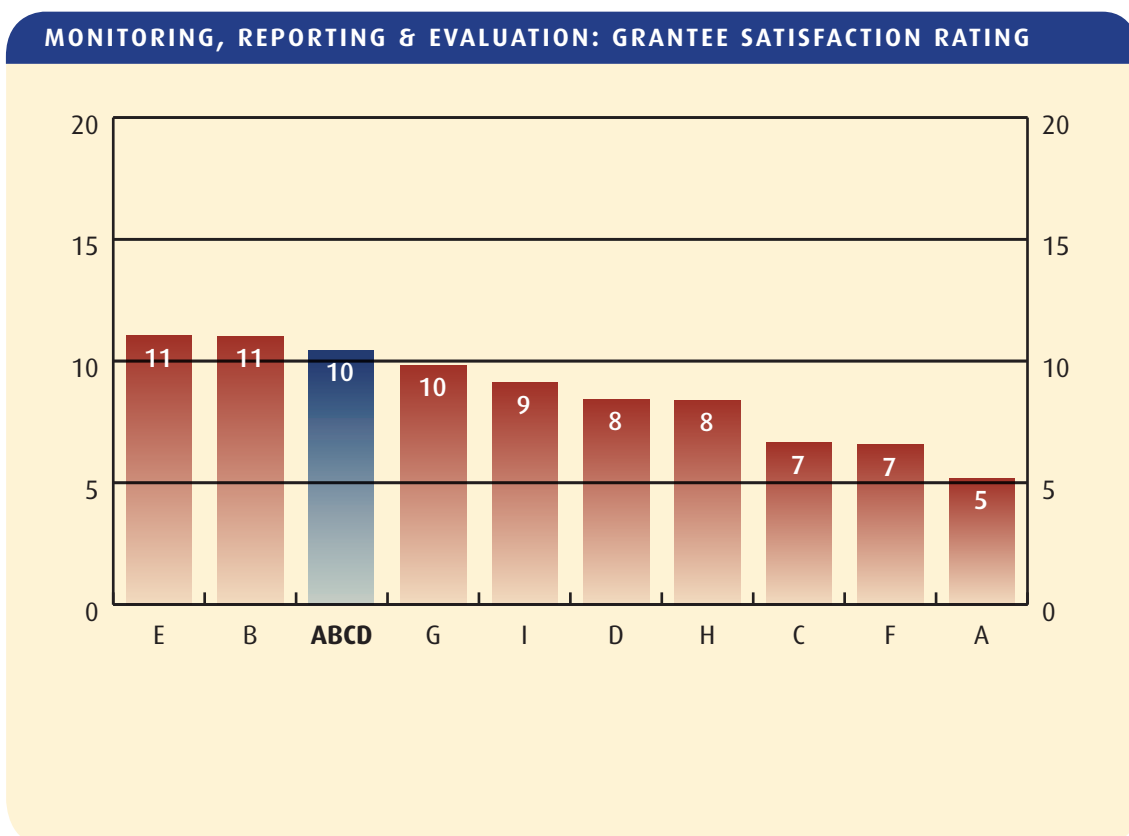
“Things change and the sooner an organisation gets funds, the sooner they will be able to address the problems faced by the community they serve”. Another said, “the approval process was a bit tedious as there was a lot of re-doing the budget and explanation”; “The response to proposals at times took long”

# Section 3

## Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

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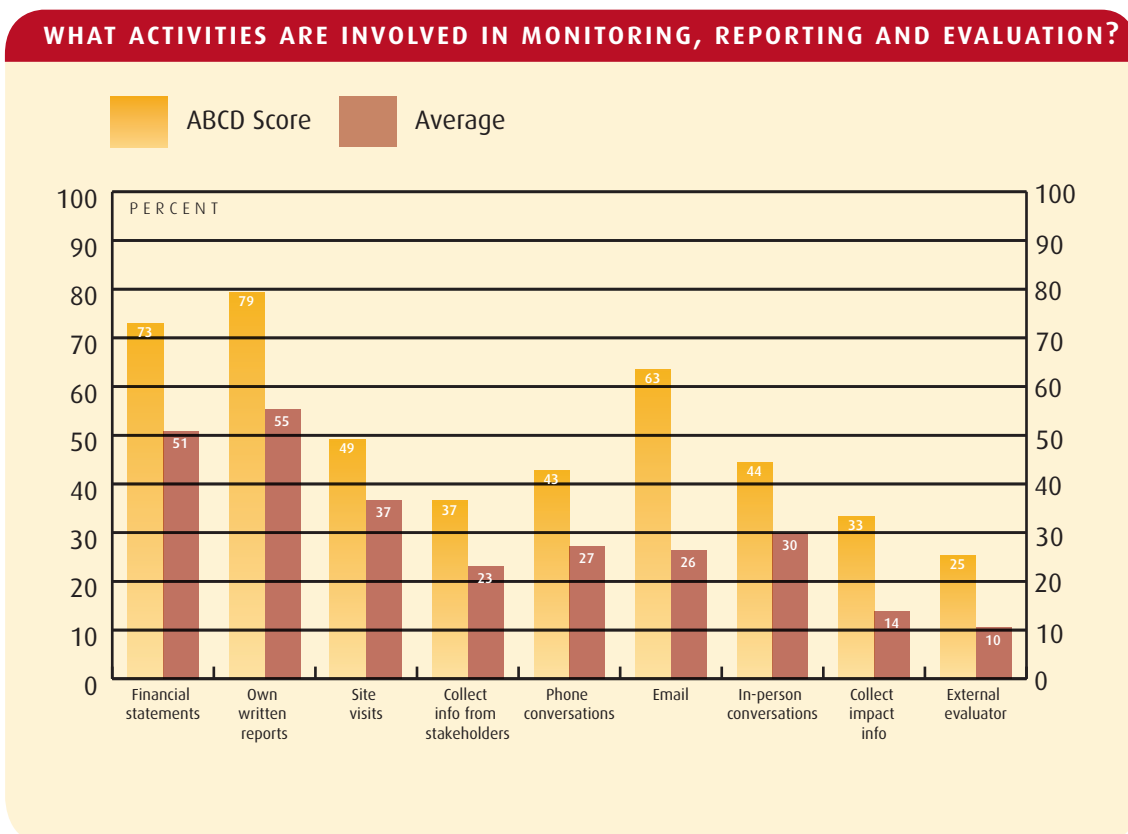
# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



The maximum value of these eight questions was standardised to 20.

- Grantees rated their satisfaction with ABCD’s monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes at 10.4 out of 20. This rating places ABCD 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 10 grantmakers. All the grantmakers were rated low in this section.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from eight questions in the survey, about the usefulness, demands and funding for ABCD’s monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes.
- 39% of grantees made positive comments, such as that capacity had been built or that the processes had been done well.
- Conversely, more than half of grantees (52%) made critical comments (some of whom had also made positive comments, there were multiple responses). These included regretting the lack of site visits.

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



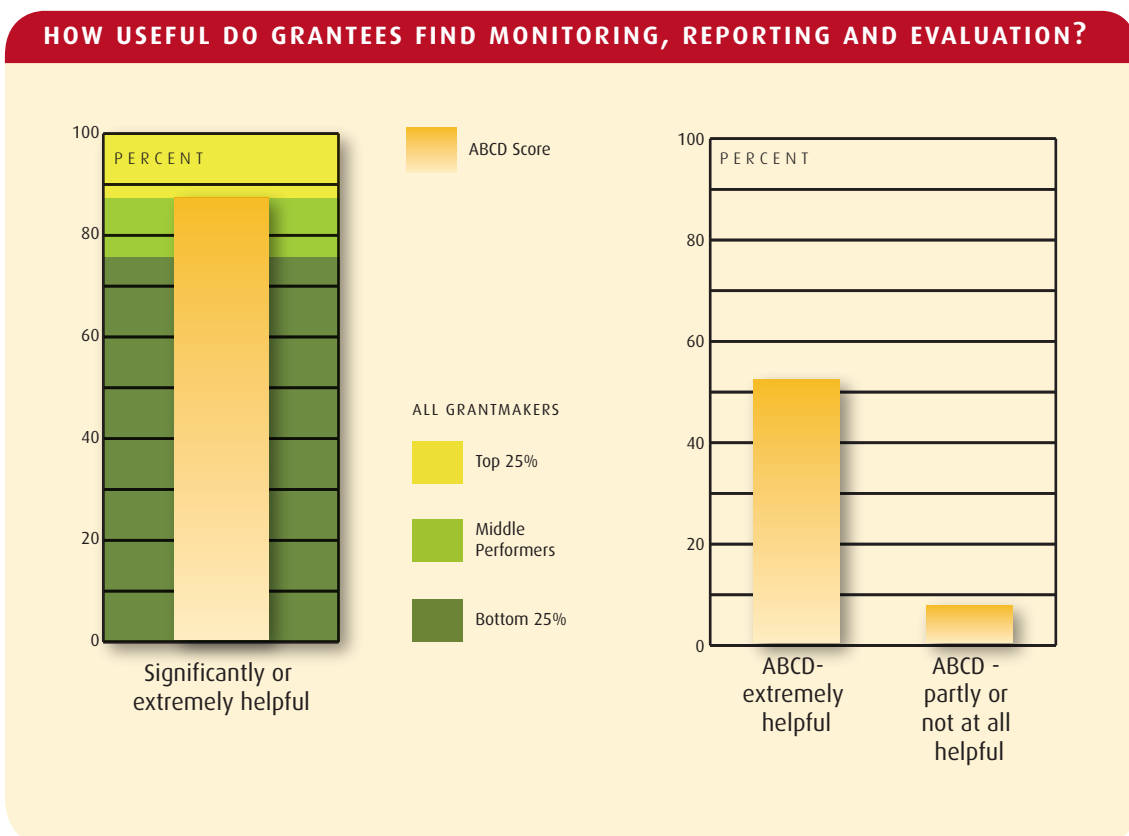
- ABCD requires more monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities than the average of the group of 10 grantmakers.
- In particular, ABCD relies more on grantees’ own written reports than other activities. 79% of grantees wrote reports, compared to the average of 55% across the group of 10 grantmakers.
- 73% of ABCD’s grantees reported submitting financial reports, compared to the average of 51% for all grantmakers.

Typical comments were: “we did not have enough experience in report writing but now we can write good reports”; and “the workshop the grant maker held expanded our abilities in project execution and reaching our goals”.

- Significantly, ABCD uses much more email interaction and in-person conversation with grantees than the average grantmaker.

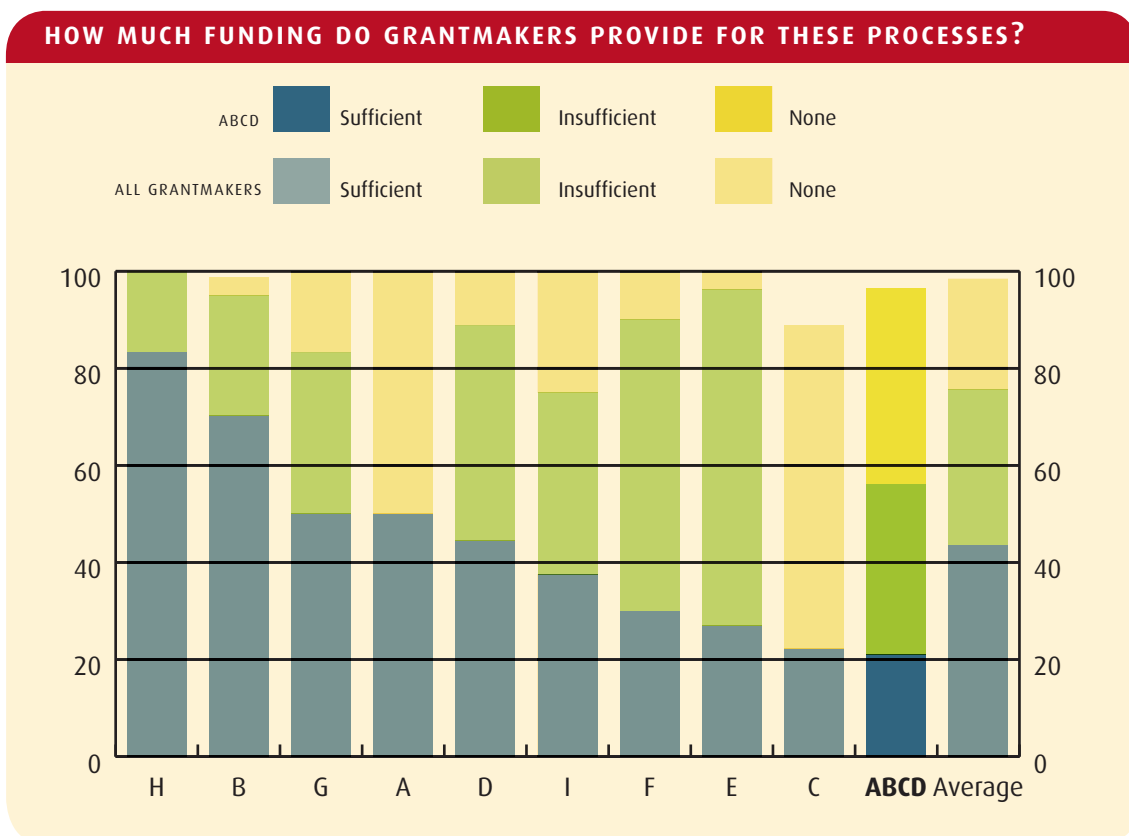
Some ABCD grantees commented: “monitoring in terms of field visits was minimal”; or that there is a “need for regular monitoring during project period”.

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



- 87% of ABCD's grantees said that they found ABCD's monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes 'significantly' or 'extremely' helpful. This places ABCD at the top of the mid-level performers of the group of 10 grantmakers.
- Of these, 52% of ABCD's grantees found these processes 'extremely' helpful in deepening their own learning and improving their work. (This sentiment was most common (67%) amongst those who had spent more than 15 days on the processes.)
- A separate 7% of ABCD's grantees found ABCD's monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes 'partly' or 'not at all' helpful.
- On a related measure, 83% of grantees thought that the demands made by ABCD on their organisations to monitor and report on their activities and performance were "just right".

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



- 21% of ABCD’s grantees said that ABCD provided ‘sufficient’ funds for them to meet ABCD’s monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes. This places ABCD lowest of all the 10 grantmakers in the group.
- A further 35% of grantees said that ABCD provides some but an insufficient amount of funds for these processes.
- 40% of grantees said that ABCD provided no funds for them. This is much higher than the average for the whole group of grantmakers, of 23%.

A typical comment was “M&E is a process that one needs to be fully committed with this connection when more time is spent and funds are mostly needed to make the process a success”.

- ABCD is at the bottom of the group of grantmakers in this area. Could ABCD consider providing more funds to grantees for monitoring, reporting and evaluation?

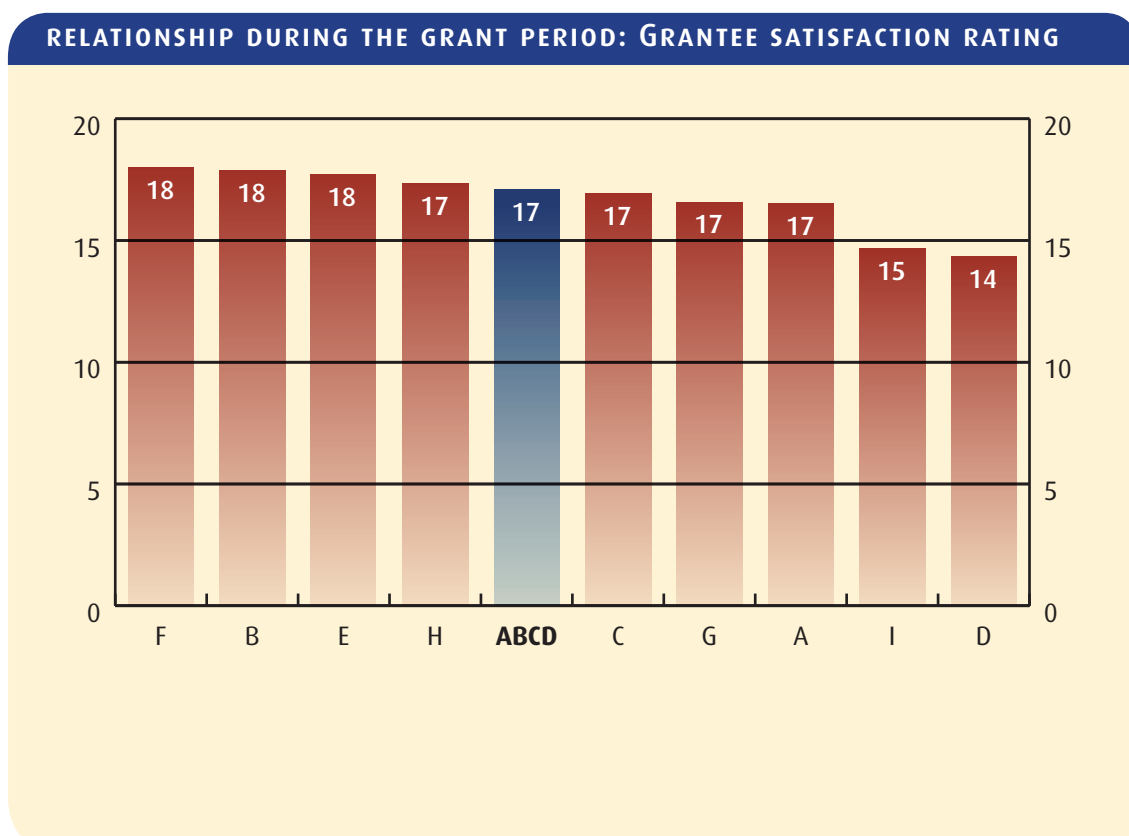


## Section 4

### Relationship during the grant period

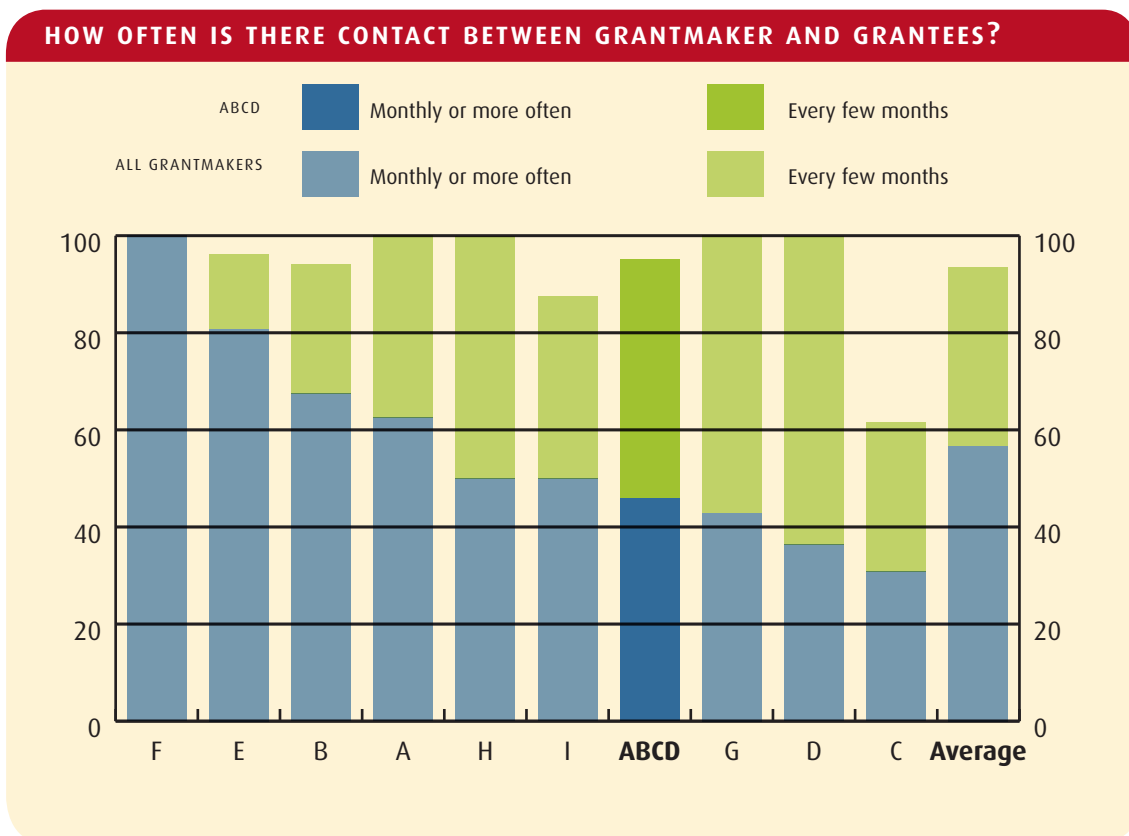
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## Relationship during the grant period



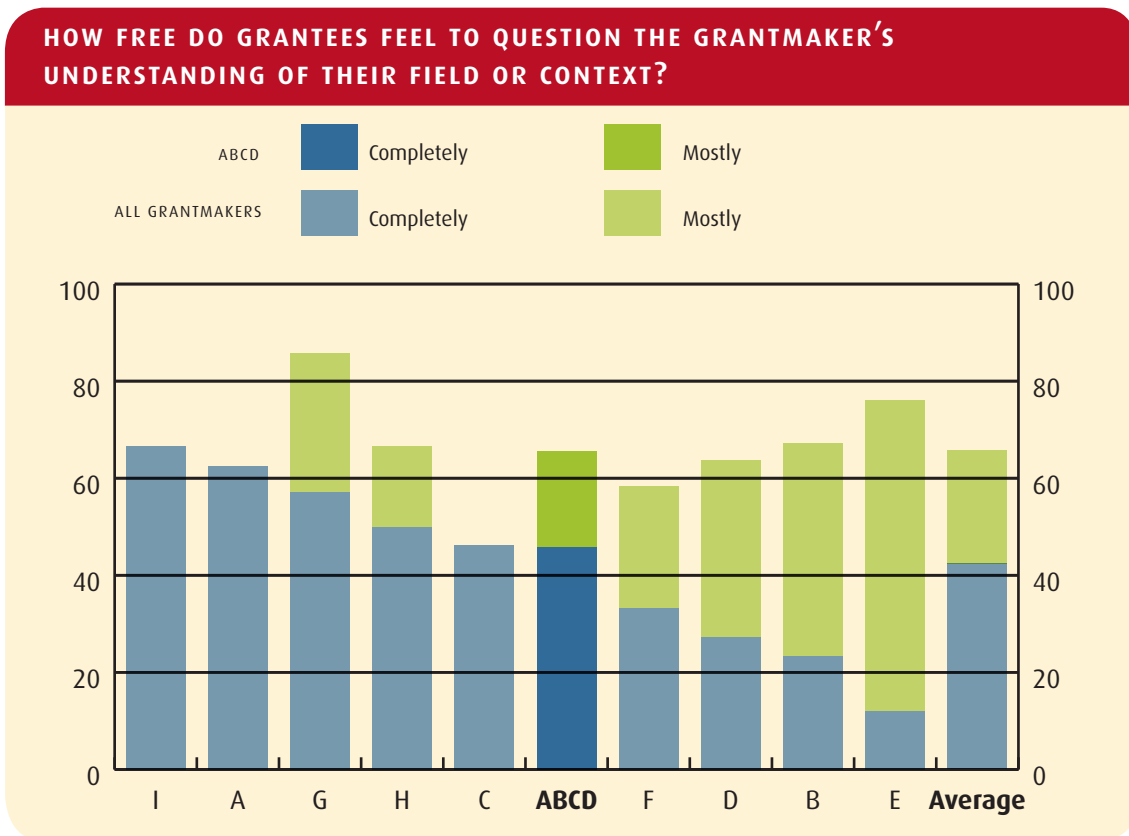
- Grantees rated their satisfaction with their relationship with ABCD at 17.1 out of 20. This is a high figure. ABCD is placed 5<sup>th</sup> out of the 10 grantmakers.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from seven questions about the relationship between the grantmaker and grantees. It includes areas like communication, responsiveness and how open and honest grantees feel able to be. These are essential for an equitable, mutually respectful and trusting relationship in which the balance of power is addressed and learning can take place.
- Most (74%) of the comments grantees made about their experiences of interacting with ABCD were positive. About one-quarter (24%) of the comments made described communication problems.
- Typical comments were: “very efficient when it comes to giving feedback”; “the partners are free to air their views, thus better co-ordination”; “the communication was good because they listened to what we had to say and they believed in our project and the ideas that we brought, we used to ask questions and they got answered”; “lessons learnt and challenges faced can be used to address future plannings”; “needs improvement in terms of person-to-person meeting”; “project period too short to have known one another adequately and establish strong communication process”.

# Relationship during the grant period



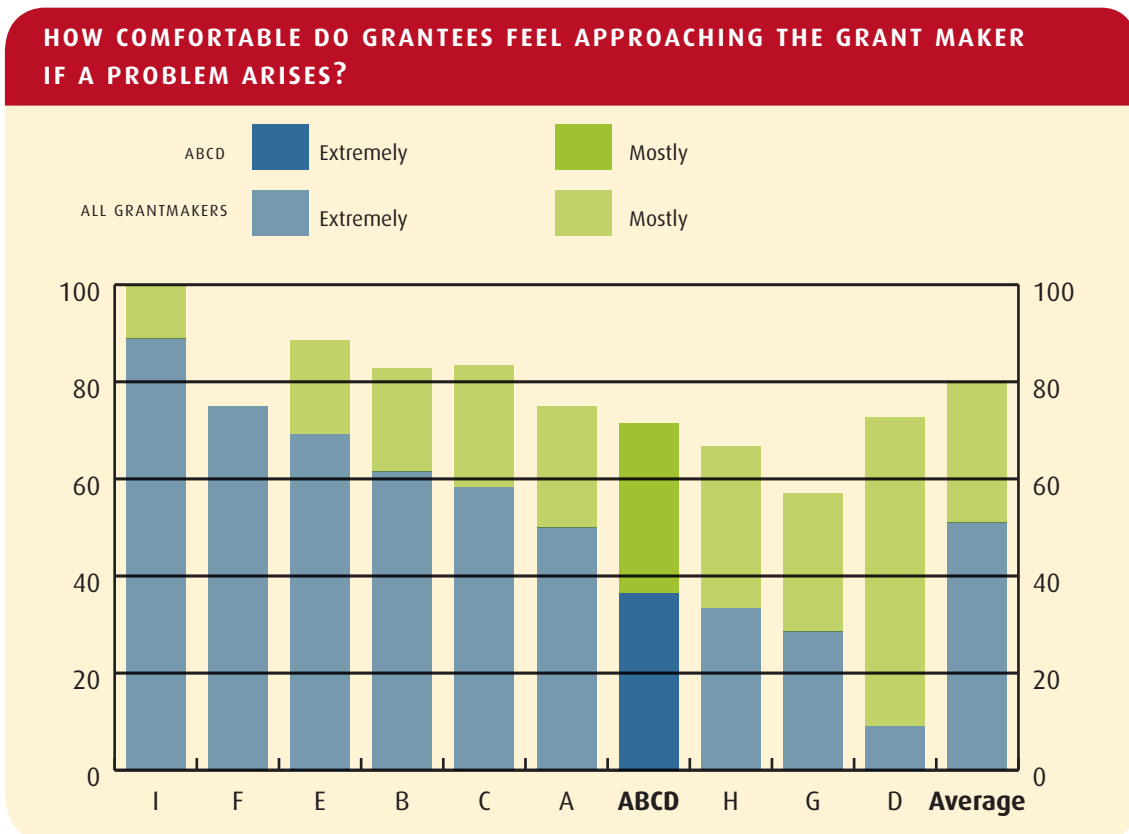
- 46% of ABCD’s grantees reported that they had contact with ABCD every month, or more often, during the grant period. This places ABCD 7<sup>th</sup> out of the group of 10 grantmakers. It is less than the average (57%) for all grantmakers.
- Another 49% of grantees reported contact with ABCD once every few months. This is higher than the average (37%). Perhaps ABCD may have focused more attention on some grantees than others?
- There is a very strong correlation between grantees’ overall satisfaction with ABCD and the frequency of contact during the grant period. 84% of grantees who said they were less satisfied (partly or little satisfied) only had contact with ABCD every few months.
- Contact was initiated equally by ABCD and the grantees in 68% of cases (mean 71%).
- 73% of ABCD’s grantees received a site visit from ABCD during the course of the grant, which is higher than the average (63%). 27% were not visited or did not know whether this happened.

# Relationship during the grant period



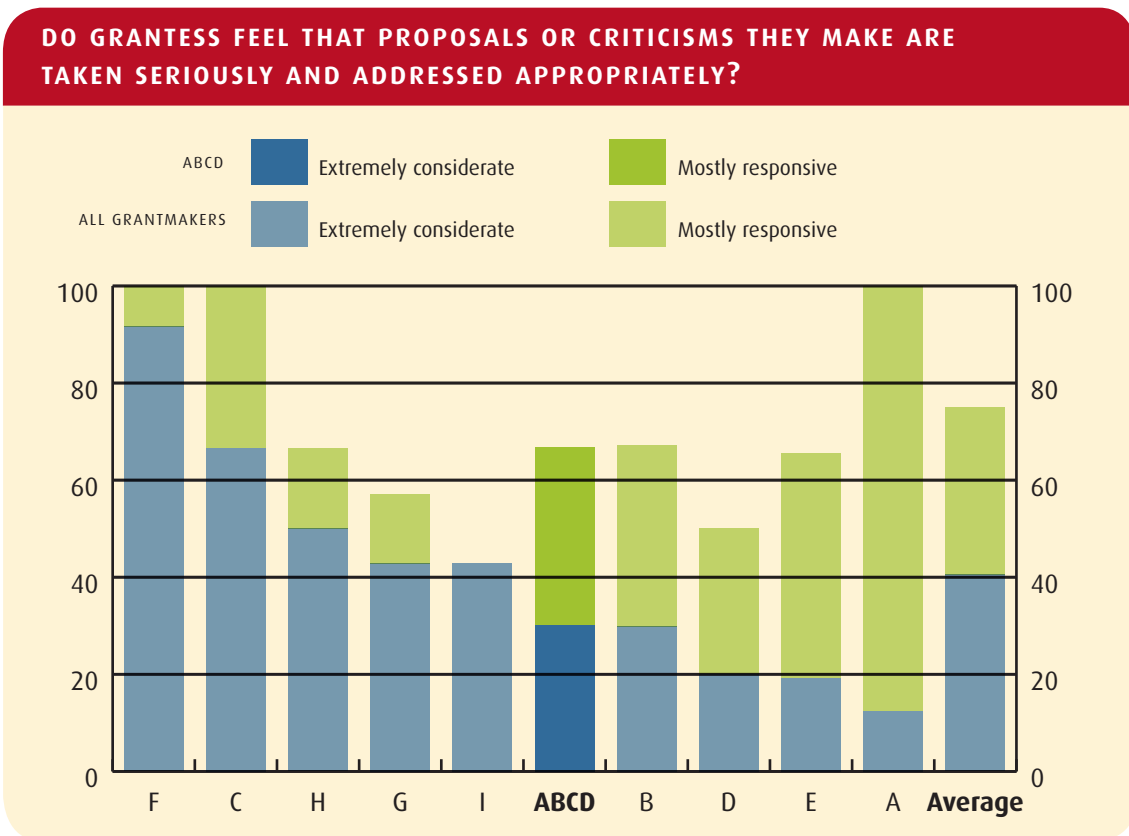
- 46% of grantees said they felt completely free to question ABCD's understanding of their field or context. This places ABCD 6<sup>th</sup> out of the the group of 10 grantmakers.
- This score is significantly lower than the highest performer, which was rated this highly by 67% of their grantees. But it is above the average for the group, which was 42%.
- A further 20% of grantees felt they could challenge some areas of ABCD's understanding, but not all.
- This means that over half of ABCD's grantees may want to challenge some parts of ABCD's understanding of their work, but feel nervous about being honest. ABCD is sometimes seen as unapproachable, and may not be learning about important issues which affect field work or working relationships.

# Relationship during the grant period



- 37% of grantees said they felt ‘extremely’ comfortable approaching ABCD if a problem arises. This places ABCD 7<sup>th</sup> out of the 10 grantmakers. It is lower than the average rating of 51%, and a very long way below the top score of 89%.
- A further 35% of ABCD’s grantees feel ‘mostly’ comfortable approaching ABCD with problems.
- ABCD is performing less well than most of the group on this measure. A high proportion of grantees do not tell ABCD about some of the problems they are facing. This could mean that projects go off track, and cause difficulties later on. It also means that ABCD and grantees have fewer opportunities to learn from mistakes as well as successes about what is really going on, on the ground.

# Relationship during the grant period



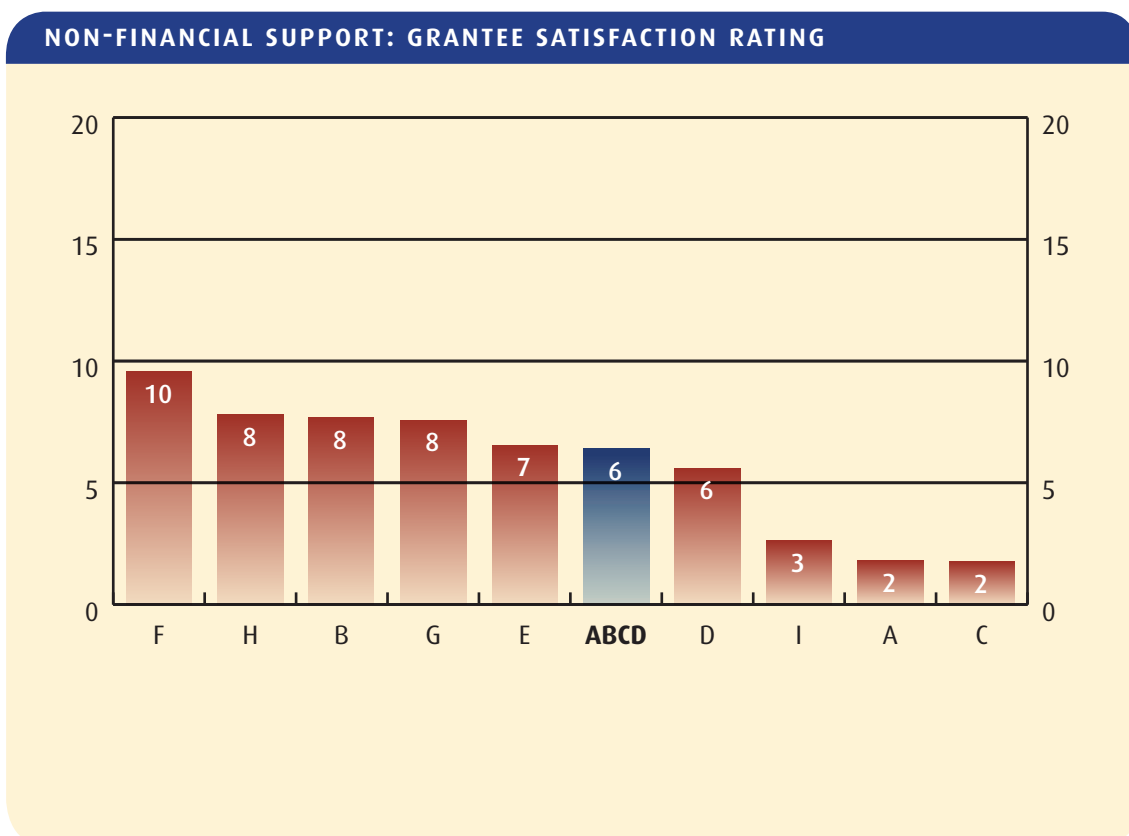
- 30% of ABCD’s grantees felt that ABCD addresses their suggestions in an extremely considerate and responsive way. This places ABCD 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 10 grantmakers. It is below the average of 41%.
- A further 37% of ABCD’s grantees felt that ABCD ‘considers and responds thoughtfully to most proposals and criticisms’.
- This means that, on the reverse side, one-third of ABCD’s grantees do not feel that ABCD considers and responds to their suggestions seriously.

# Section 5

## Non-financial support

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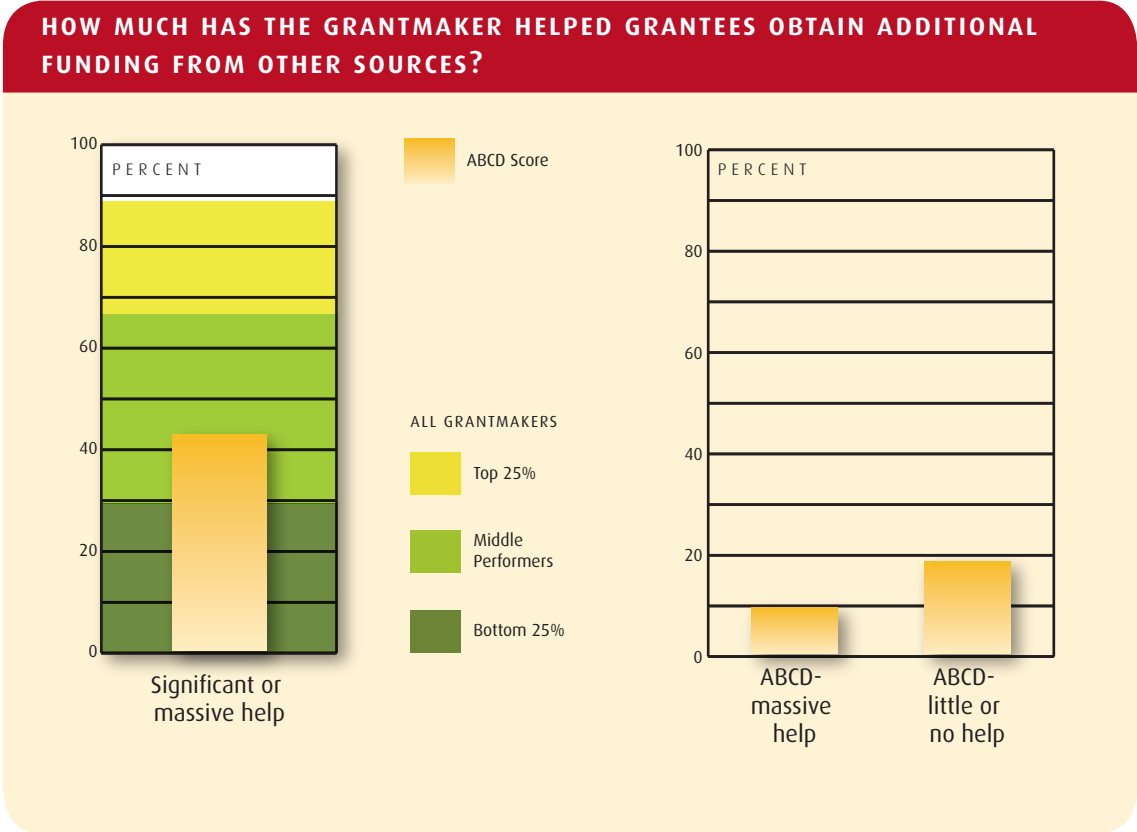
# Non-financial support



- Grantees rated their satisfaction with ABCD’s non-financial support at 6.4 out of 20. This places ABCD 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 10 grantmakers. All grantmakers scored low ratings for this measure. ABCD’s rating is just higher than the average of 5.7.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from questions about sixteen forms of assistance, covering: management issues, field-related issues and other issues. It measures how useful grantees found the actual activities that took place (like advice, capacity building and networking).
- These low ratings suggest that grantees do not find grantmakers’ non-financial activities very useful.

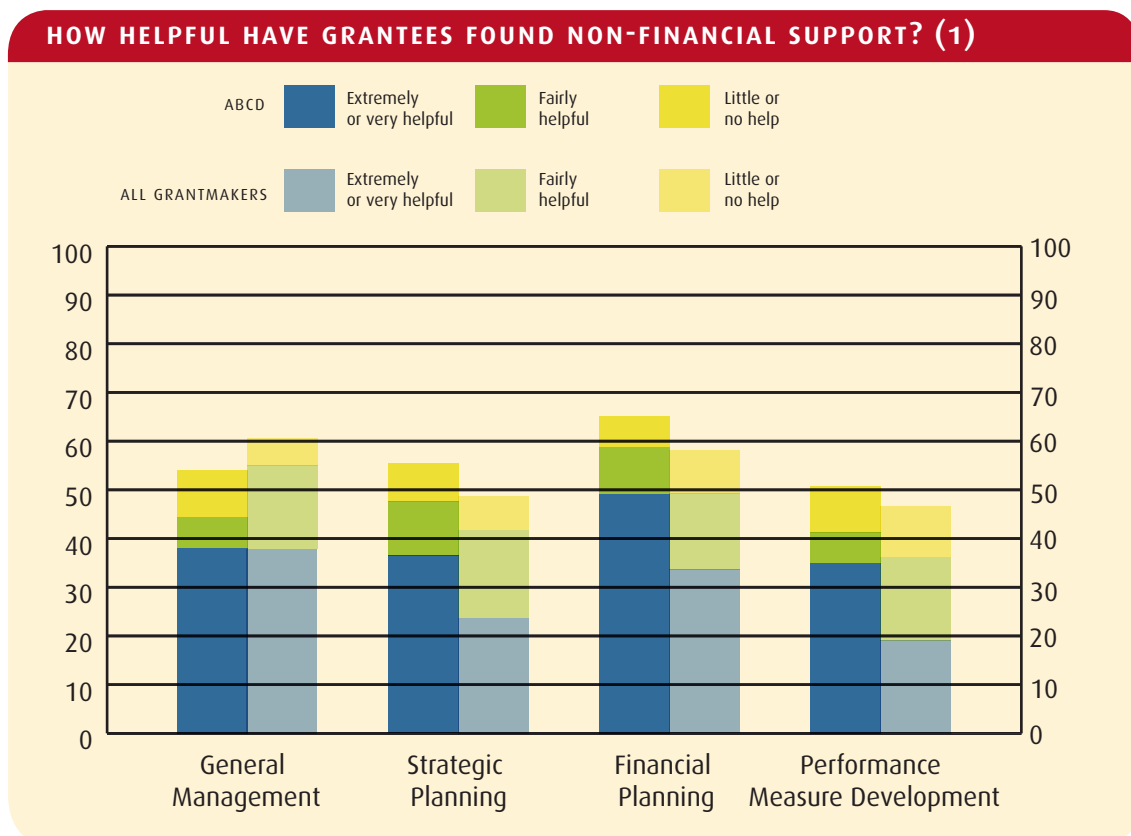


# Non-financial support



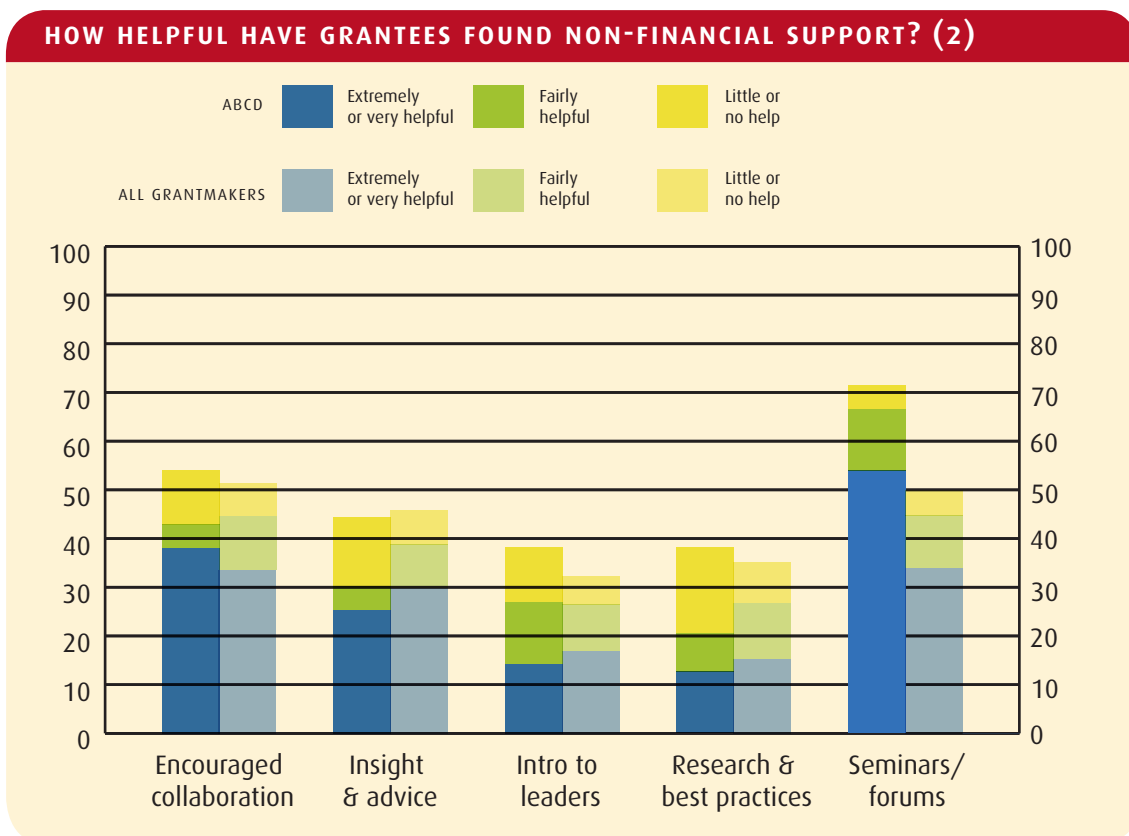
- In response to another question, 48% of ABCD’s grantees said that ABCD actively attempted to help them obtain additional funding from other sources. This is higher than the average for the group, of 41%.
- The chart above shows that 42% (of that 48%) found ABCD’s assistance ‘significantly’ or ‘massively’ helpful. This rating places ABCD among the mid-level performers in the group of 10 grantmakers.
- 9% (of the 48%) said that ABCD provided ‘massive’ help.
- 18% (of the 48%) said that ABCD’s efforts provided little or no help to their ability to obtain more funds. This looks quite high.
- Could ABCD look at ways of improving the fundraising support that it offers, or offering this support to more grantees?

# Non-financial support



- Between 35% and 49% of ABCD’s grantees received ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful assistance from ABCD in the four areas of management assistance, above. In general, this is higher than average across the group of 10 grantmakers.
- About 10% of ABCD’s grantees received assistance that they found little or no help. This is similar to the average for all grantmakers.
- Also between 35% and 49% of ABCD’s grantees did not receive assistance from ABCD in these four areas. In general, ABCD provides support to more of its grantees than the average of all grantmakers.
- Almost one-quarter of ABCD’s grantees suggested that more capacity building would be helpful. A typical comment was: *“Grant maker should consider building the capacity of the organisation’s staff in the sustainability of the project, information technology advice, fundraising skills and linkages to other funders”*.
- The most common form of management assistance provided by ABCD and other grant makers was in financial planning and accounting. One ABCD grantee commented: *“The training for Board members on management skills, financial management and other trainings on resource mobilisation and community enhancement on the programme has given our organization strong credibility in our performance and we advocate a continuous process on such trainings”*.

# Non-financial support



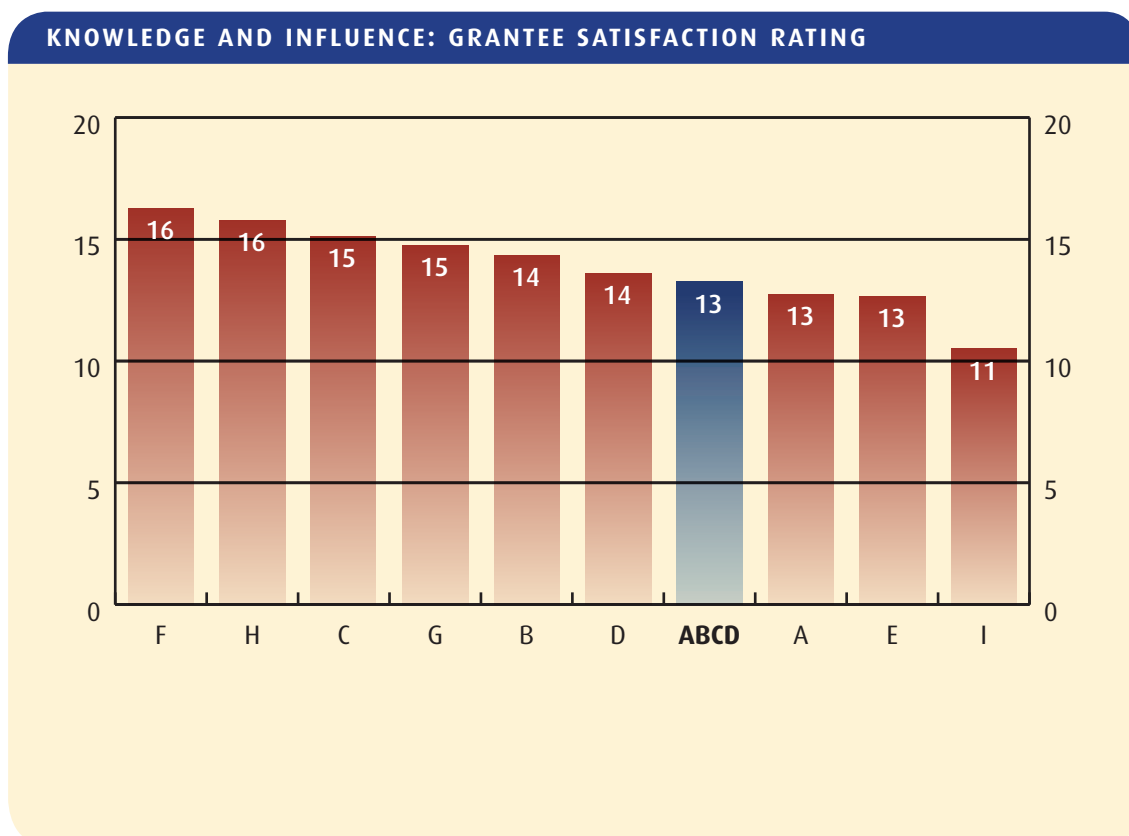
- ABCD grantees were much more likely (71%) than grantees of the other grantmakers (50%) to have received assistance in the form of seminars or meetings, and also more likely to have found them very or extremely helpful.
- One of ABCD's grantees said "... we have learned how to work with local area parliamentary representatives to support the bright, needy and well behaved students. Previously the gap between our organisation and the elected political leadership was wide, partly because we did not take the initiative to link up".
- However, half or less than half of ABCD grantees reported receiving other forms of field support. Where ABCD facilitated collaboration with other grantees (54%) this was highly appreciated by 70% of those involved.
- Other forms of field assistance received were generally much less valued by grantees across the whole group of grantmakers. The least valued was 'research and best practices'. 46% of ABCD's grantees who were involved with this found it little or no help.

## Section 6

# Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field

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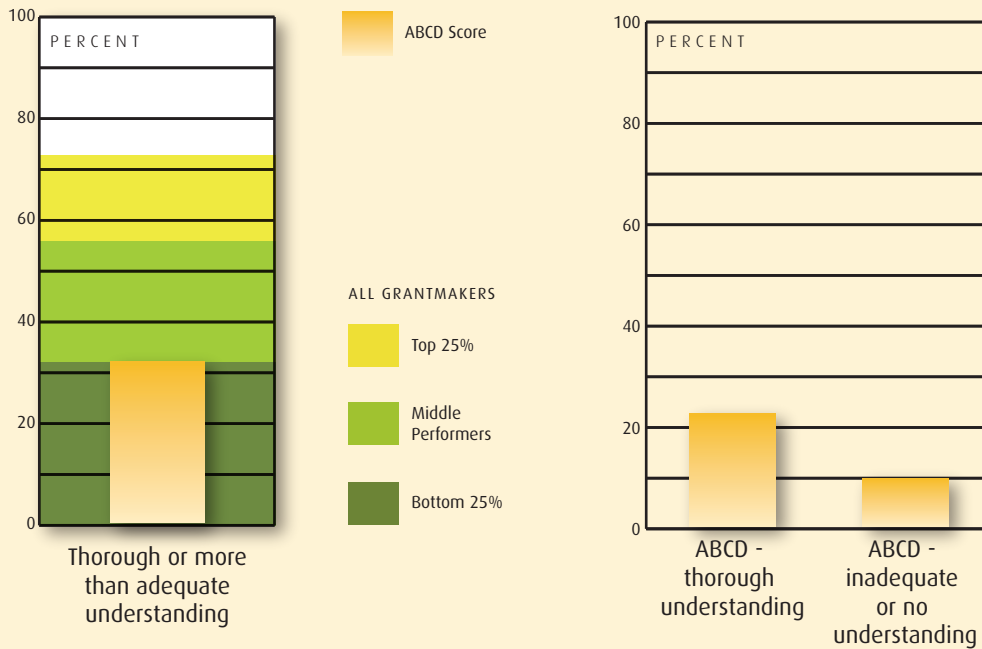
## Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field



- Grantees rated their satisfaction with ABCD's knowledge and influence at 13.3 out of 20. This rating places ABCD 7<sup>th</sup> out of the 10 grantmakers.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from six questions about two areas: (a) how well ABCD understands grantees' goals, contexts and the people they serve, and (b) how much ABCD has influenced wider learning and practice in the field.
- It suggests that ABCD could improve its understanding of grantees' work and its wider influence.
- On a related measure, 79% of ABCD's grantees see ABCD as a 'team player' that is open to collaborative ventures with other grantmakers and grantees. This is higher than the average for the whole group of 58%.

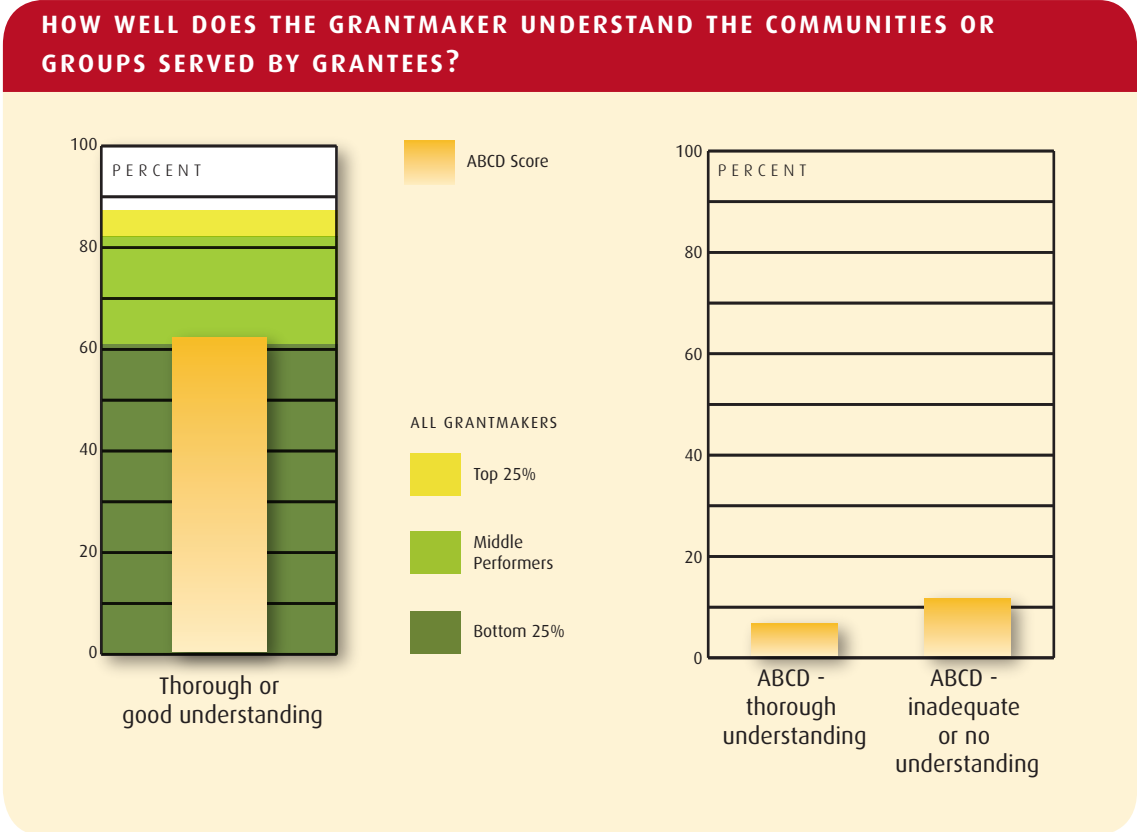
# Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field

## HOW WELL DOES THE GRANTMAKER UNDERSTAND GRANTEE'S STRATEGIES AND GOALS?



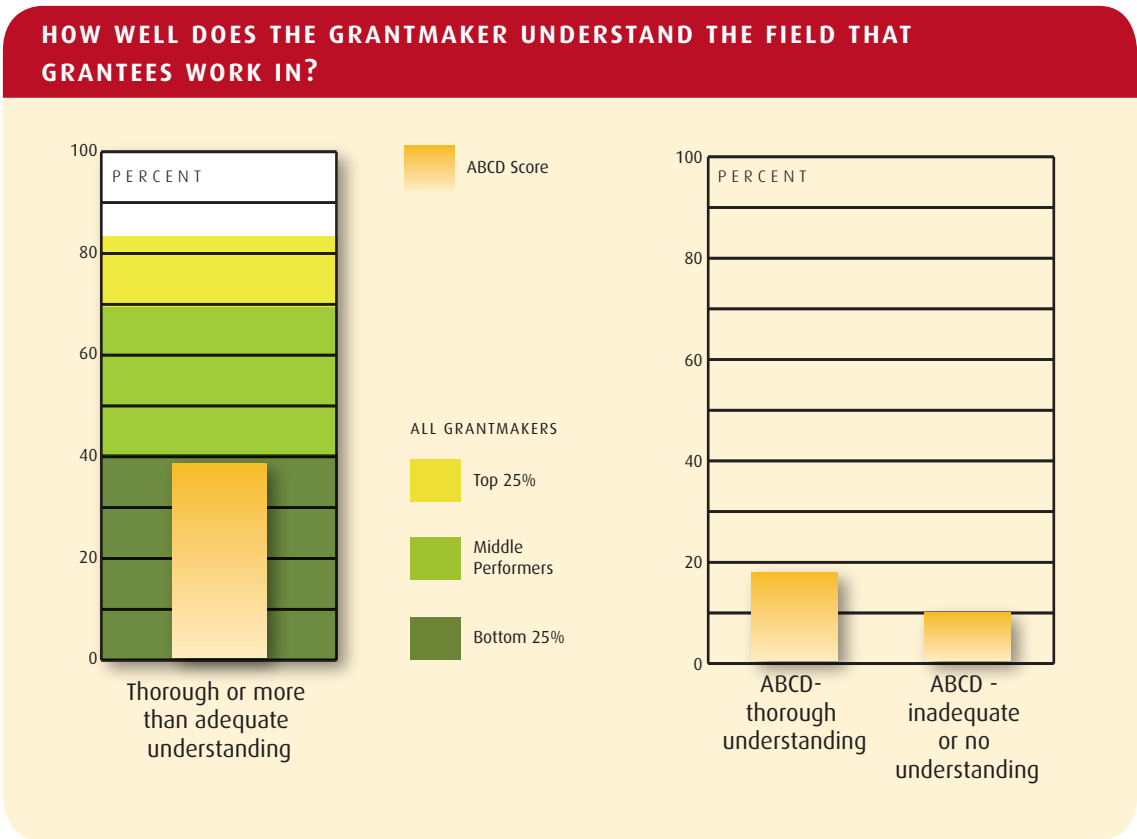
- Only 32% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD has a 'thorough' or 'more than adequate' understanding of their strategies and goals. This rating places ABCD in the bottom 25% of all 10 grantmakers.
- Within this, 22% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD has a 'thorough' understanding.
- A separate 10% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD has an 'inadequate' or 'no' understanding.
- This suggests that over two thirds of ABCD's grantees feel that ABCD could understand their strategies and goals better.

# Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field



- 62% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD has a 'thorough' or 'more than adequate' understanding of the communities or groups that grantees serve. This rating places ABCD at the bottom of the mid-level performers in the whole group of 10 grantmakers.
- Of these, just 6% said that ABCD has a 'thorough' understanding.
- A separate 11% said that ABCD has an 'inadequate' or 'no' understanding.
- This appears to be an area where ABCD is lagging behind most of the other 10 grantmakers.

# Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field



- 38% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD has a 'thorough' or 'more than adequate' understanding of their field. This places ABCD just in the bottom 25% of all 10 grantmakers.
- Of these, 18% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD has a 'thorough' understanding.
- A separate 10% of ABCD's grantees said that ABCD has an 'inadequate' or 'no' understanding of the field they work in.
- So, almost two thirds of ABCD's grantees believe that ABCD could understand their field better.



# Conclusion and follow up

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There are many ways in which a grantmaker can support and enhance the effectiveness of their grantees beyond just providing money.

The feedback from this survey provides a number of opportunities for ABCD to engage with grantees about how it can improve the way it works. But this need not be a one-way process. If for, example, ABCD is willing to consider longer-term less restrictive funding agreements, then it is reasonable to demand a higher level of transparency from grantees, and more responsiveness to their beneficiaries.

In other words, engaging in dialogue for improvement can and should be a two-way process that can lead to better relationships and greater effectiveness for both participants. Grantees will appreciate ABCD's willingness to listen and make improvements in response to feedback, and they will be motivated to raise their game as well.

## **NATURE OF FUNDING**

Because of their focus on community-based development, ABCD gives more small grants than most other grantmakers. More than half of ABCD's grantee's programmes are less than two years old, which might suggest that few are able to sustain themselves for a long enough time to be effective. Short-term grants can also make it very difficult for organizations to plan sustainable developmental interventions, and makes them spend a lot of time fundraising.

Could ABCD:

- Explore what grantees and their beneficiaries say about the merits of short-term vs longer-term grants?
- Explore to what extent this practice might contribute to a lack of sustainability among many community-based programmes and how this affects community development in East Africa?
- Pay more attention to the specific needs of grantees receiving smaller amounts.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Grantees are very satisfied with ABCD's application processes and generally have found them very helpful. ABCD also keeps grantees better informed of progress and provides them with clearer information than most other grantmakers.

ABCD's application and approval process involves a lot more interaction and communication with grantees than most grantmakers. In other words, more grantees spend more time completing ABCD's approval process than they do for other grantmakers – often for less money.

Could ABCD:

- Explore ways of improving its application and approval process in consultation with grantees?
- See whether staff can provide more support for grantees during the application process?
- Review its communications – especially web site and its annual report as communication tools?

# Conclusion and follow up

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## GRANT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This is one of the areas in which grantees are least satisfied across all grantmakers. ABCD and all grantmakers could explore practical ways of making monitoring and evaluation more useful to grantees and grantmakers.

Grantees clearly value interaction with ABCD in the monitoring of their projects.

Could ABCD:

- Consider more site visits, and discuss with grantees what would be most valuable to do on a site visit?
- Consider more funding and capacity-building for monitoring and reporting activities so that they become more useful to grantees and their stakeholders?
- Consider asking grantees to report independent feedback about how satisfied their beneficiaries are with their services?

## RELATIONSHIPS

While most Grantees are generally happy with their relationship with ABCD, there are still many (almost half) that find ABCD sometimes unapproachable and fear being completely honest. In the eyes of more than half of its grantees, ABCD does not take much account of their views.

Could ABCD:

- Think about improving the way that it listens and responds to feedback from grantees (discussing the feedback from this survey together with them could be a good start).
- Create opportunities for grantees to question ABCD's understanding, policies and practices and offer solutions.
- Create incentives and conditions for grantees to feel safe enough to be completely honest in reporting if they have a problem or if things are not going well.

## NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT

All grantmakers scored low ratings for this measure. Continuing low levels of support for organization strengthening could limit the effectiveness of grantees – especially community-based organizations.

ABCD's non-financial support, where it was received, was highly appreciated and valued. Nevertheless, grantees rated their satisfaction with ABCD's non-financial support at only 6.4 out of 20.

Could ABCD:

- Discuss with grantees the quality and quantity of non-financial support that it offers – and what their needs and preferences are in the future?
- Look at ways of improving the fundraising support it offers, if this is requested by grantees? Options to consider could include making their organisational assessments and monitoring reports available to other potential grantmakers, recommending effective grantees and introducing them to other funders, capacity-building in proposal writing and fundraising, facilitating more collaboration with other NGOs.
- Improve or increase the management advice and training it offers, if this is requested?
- Facilitate more collaborative projects?

# Conclusion and follow up

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## **PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE AND INFLUENCE**

ABCD grantees are fairly satisfied with ABCD's knowledge of the contexts and fields they work in. But ABCD is rated only 7th out of the group of 10 in this area.

Could ABCD:

- Develop its staff's understanding of developmental issues and create opportunities for learning from constituents?
- Invest more time in learning what works in East African community development and share these experiences widely to increase the knowledge of the field as a whole?

# Glossary

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**Average** The average score is the score for a typical, mid-level member of the group. In this report, it is calculated by adding together the scores for all ten grantmakers in the group, and dividing the total by ten.

**Context** The environment in which an organisation works. This normally includes factors like: physical conditions, peoples' skills, politics and relationships between people, the attitudes and values of people, other organisations' work and many other things.

**Field** An area of work that an organisation is working in e.g. the field of early childhood development, or the field of agricultural development, or the field of grantmaking.

**Grantmaker** An institution that gives money and other support to civil society organisations, government agencies or individuals that work for the public benefit.

**Grantee** An organisation that receives funding from a grantmaker.

**Performance** How well somebody does a job. Usually used when making a judgement – has someone performed well or badly?

**Quartile** When you divide a set of statistical information into four equal parts, each of these parts is called a quartile.