National/International Funding Sources and Founders Requirements

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Importance of Research Grants

• Research is critically important to generate new knowledge and to promote growth and development of any nation

• Many developed countries often provide substantial funds for research

• By contrast, many developing countries often fail to appreciate the importance of research and therefore, often allocate paltry sums for research

• In the face of dwindling official funds for research in Nigerian Universities, the importance of externally funded grants cannot be over-emphasized.
State of Externally Fund Grants in Nigerian Universities

In a paper published from a typical Nigerian University,

- Only 5% of staff have ever written an external grant application
- Only 3 of nearly 150 academic staff in one Faculty have ever obtained an international grant
- Only 10% of academic staff know a source of funding in their discipline; and
- Only 3% of staff have ever attended an international (or local) proposal writing workshop
By contrast, in the United States,

- All academic staff are actively involved in grants application
- Employments are based on ability to obtain grants and to fund raise
- The role of “no grants, no tenure” apply in some of the Ivy league Universities
- UP to 50% of funds used in running some universities are obtained from grants
Problems Associated with Winning External Grants in Nigeria

- Lack of a culture of grant application
- Lack of track records
- Inability to write good proposals that meet international standards
- Absence of local enabling factors
Lack of a Culture of Grant Application

• The tripod function of a University academic are Research, Teaching, and Service delivery in relevant areas

• Unfortunately, most Nigerian academics now focus on Teaching, to the neglect of Research and Service Delivery

• However, it is a well known dictum that a good teacher ought to be a good researcher

• Without the composite development of the three characteristics, an academic will be incomplete professionally
Developing a Culture for Grant Application

• This should be part of undergraduate and postgraduate training

• Indeed, proposal writing should be one of the modules taught at the course on Entrepreneurship to undergraduate students

• Thorough grounding on proposal writing should be part of postgraduate training

• Junior academics should begin early in their career to identify sources of funding in their areas of research, and to develop suitable grant applications
Track Record in Grant Application

- A successfully implemented project is an entry point to another grant

- Junior academics can begin by being mentored by those who have had successful projects

- Academics must seek and apply for external research grants as they are now widely available

- If unsuccessful, apply again. Every new grant application is often an improvement over the previous one
Writing Good Proposals

- A good proposal is key to obtaining an internationally funded grant

- Most external grants are competitive. Unless the proposal is “good” it will have no chance of success in the international market

- Review previously successful proposals in your discipline and use them as template for developing your own proposal
Qualities of a Good Proposal

• The idea must be new (innovative)

• It must be conceptually sound

• It must be do-able and replicable at individual and institutional levels

• It must be culturally and socially acceptable

• It must be ethically sound
Specific Elements of a Good Proposal

• Good justification for the project
• Specific and measurable objectives
• Clear description of Activities
• Clear project management plans
• A good monitoring and evaluation plan
• A well balanced budget
• A well written, and internally consistent proposal
Project Justification

- Must be clear, succinct and persuasive
- The writer must portray an acute need for the project
- It should be a new idea and not be duplicative
- The writer must show good knowledge of recent developments in the discipline
Statement of objectives

✓ Always differentiate between goals and objectives

✓ Goals are the ideal anticipated long term consequences of the project

✓ Objectives are the measurable outcomes of the project

✓ Both must be stated clearly
Statement of objectives

Specific objectives must be SMART

- S – specific
- M – Measurable
- A – achievable
- R – realistic
- T – time bound
Description of Activities

• Should be detailed

• Anticipated challenges should be mentioned with description on ways to mitigate the problems

• Local terms should be described

• Collaboration with other agencies and local organizations are particularly encouraged
Project Management Plans

• Identification of who would implement the project

• List of other collaborating partners and their roles

• A clear and well defined project time line

• Clear project management procedures
Project monitoring and Evaluation

- Clear M&E procedure should be described
- Both process and outcome indicators should be listed
- A log frame that will relate each specific objective with the indicators should ideally be provided
- Clear reporting dates should also be provided
Budget

• Should be consistent with the activities listed

• Arrange budget by expenditure items

• Support budget with narratives

• Keep overheads to the limits allowed by the funding agency
Internal Consistency of A Proposal

- Justification → Specific Objectives
- Indicators → Project Activities
- Project Management → M&E → Budget
What International Reviewers Consider as Good proposals

• Originality of thought
• Ingenuity – planning ahead
• Logical and clear thinking
• Currency of information
• Use of a simple, clear and good English language devoid of mistakes
• Analytical sense
• Recognition of limitation
• Managerial skills
• Taking care of small details
Other important details

• Make sure to follow the guidelines of the funding agency

• Keep the stipulated page limits

• Keep to the deadline for submitting the project proposal

• Put information where it belongs

• Use a check lists
Local Enabling Factors That Can Contribute to Winning grants

- A good and up-to-date library
- Ready and continuous access to the internet
- Attendance at conferences, where recent issues are discussed
- The role of a local coordinating committee to assist with proposal writing on an ongoing basis.
Examples:

- At Karolinska University, all academic staff have ready access to the virtual library in their offices.

- Harvard University has a special development office that assists staff with proposal writing.

- The University of London has an excellent interlink library resource that can provide any information or material needed within 24 hours.

- In all Universities mentioned, information on new grant requests are disseminated to academic staff by the University central administration as soon as they are available.
Nigerian Universities Can Do the Same

• Improve its internet connectivity so that all staff have ready access to relevant information

• Computerize its library holdings, so that library resources can easily be accessible to staff in their offices

• Each academic staff MUST own a computer that is hooked to an internet
Nigerian Universities Can Do the Same Contd.

- URPC can disseminate information on new external grants to staff

- Part of the mandate of the URPC should be to assist junior academics to write fundable proposals

- Each staff MUST endeavor to attend one or two international conferences each year

- Staff should endeavor to develop their capacity to write fundable proposals
Local Sources of Research Funding

- National Universities Commission
- Education Tax Fund
- Local/International NGOs
- Private Individuals/Companies
- Other Government Parastatals and Agencies
Local/International NGOs Funding Sources

• Country Chapters of International NGOs e.g. UN Agencies, USAID, WHO, FAO, etc

• Indigenous NGOs

• States and Local Government Councils
Private Individuals/Companies

- Individuals e.g. The Dangotes, The Otedola, etc
- Oil Companies – Shell, Chevron, NNPC, SPDC, NNDC, etc
- MTN, ZAIN, Globacom
- Banks and Financial Institutions – CBN, Zenith, Intercontinental Bank, NDIC, Insurance Companies, etc
Other Agencies and Parastatals

- Agencies such as NACA, NISER, etc
- IITA, etc
International Donor Agencies

- Bilaterals – USAID, DFID, NORAD, SIDA, JICA, CIDA, NORAD, etc

- Multilaterals – UN Agencies, e.g. WHO, FAO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNDP, World Bank, EU etc

- Foundations – Ford, Macarthur, Kellog, IDRC, Packard, etc
How to contact the Funding Sources

- Response to calls for Proposals

- Personal contacts/Recommendations, etc

- Submission of letter of inquiry/Concept letter

- Followed by development of full proposal following the guidelines of the funding agency
Thank you for Listening