

# CHALLENGES OF MANAGING GRANTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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The World Health Organization in a 2001 report corroborated the relationship between poverty and disease and expounded the benefit of investing in health research in developing countries. Possible strategies proposed to help reduce the 90/10 divide include prioritizing funding for health research and also building capacities of research institutions in lower to middle income countries. This has led to many Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Africa setting up research management offices or units to cater for pre-and post-research contract award activities. This is because the lack of such systems in African HEI threaten to further their relative

disadvantage in securing and managing external funding. With the growth in university research management systems, there is the need to build the capacity of those who will run these units from top management to unit officers, to ensure the effective and efficient operation of these units to be able to sustainably compete in securing more external research funding.

## CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS IN MANAGING GRANTS

- Bulky size of policies/regulations of donor agencies e.g NIHGPS
- Issues with grants management portals of donor agencies e.g eRA commons, ASSIST, eBRAP
- Financial administration of grants e.g financial reporting, carryover requests, re-budgeting
- Audit requirements
- Inadequate staff skilled in grants management
- Bureaucratic internal policies
- Negotiating subcontracts
- Compliance issues

One of the main reasons that accounts for the very few successful competitive grants from institutions in low to middle income countries (LMICs), is the virtual non-existence of supporting offices and non-compliance of policies and regulations. These have resulted in the so called 90/10 divide whereby most successful applications originate from institutions in developed countries. Grants submissions to major funding agencies are mainly done online which can be complex requiring the knowledge and skills of experienced personnel.

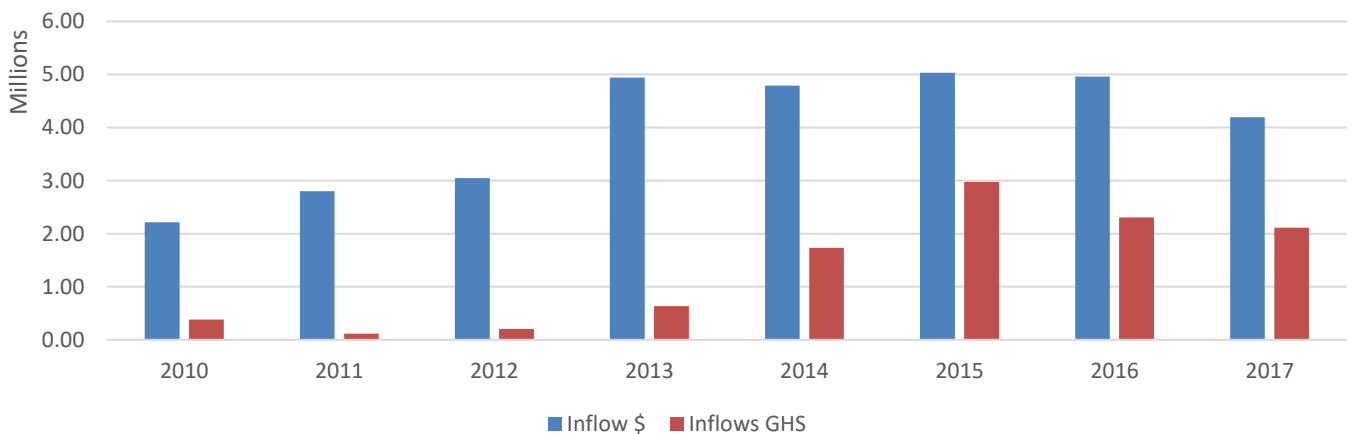
## ROLE OF A RESEARCH MANAGEMENT OFFICE

- Oversight of research grant submissions and management of pre- and post-award research grants;
- Build portfolio of funded research projects, ensuring compliance to all relevant policies of funding agencies;
- Prepare and review of contracts/MoUs.
- Contribute to overall capacity building for research through on-site training, workshops, etc
- Provide guidance to faculty members regarding the daily management of their research grants.
- Help in preparing and submitting reports of expenditures to funding agencies and assists with the closing out of contracts and grants.
- Improve and promote good quality research output

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF NOGUCHI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE (OFFICE FOR RESEARCH SUPPORT)

- Inflows have increased
- Efficient grants submission process
- NIH grant submission and award rate has increased
- Fellows adhere to the policy by Donor agencies
- Biannual training of research fellows
- Training of research support staff in the various department
- Increased external relations
- Expenditure according to budget lines

Noguchi Project Fund Inflows 2010 - 2017



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEI

- Create Awareness
- Educate management on the importance of ORS and of consequences of non-compliances
- Regular training for updates
- Participate in regional seminars, workshops and symposia, webinar training
- Participate in review of grants applications

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- NIH
- Yale OSP
- NMIMR
- UG