

# University philanthropy: MasterCard Foundation

March 2023

## Key findings

The MasterCard Foundation was established in 2006 following the flotation of the payments technology company on the New York Stock Exchange. It has emerged as a major player in the global philanthropic landscape.

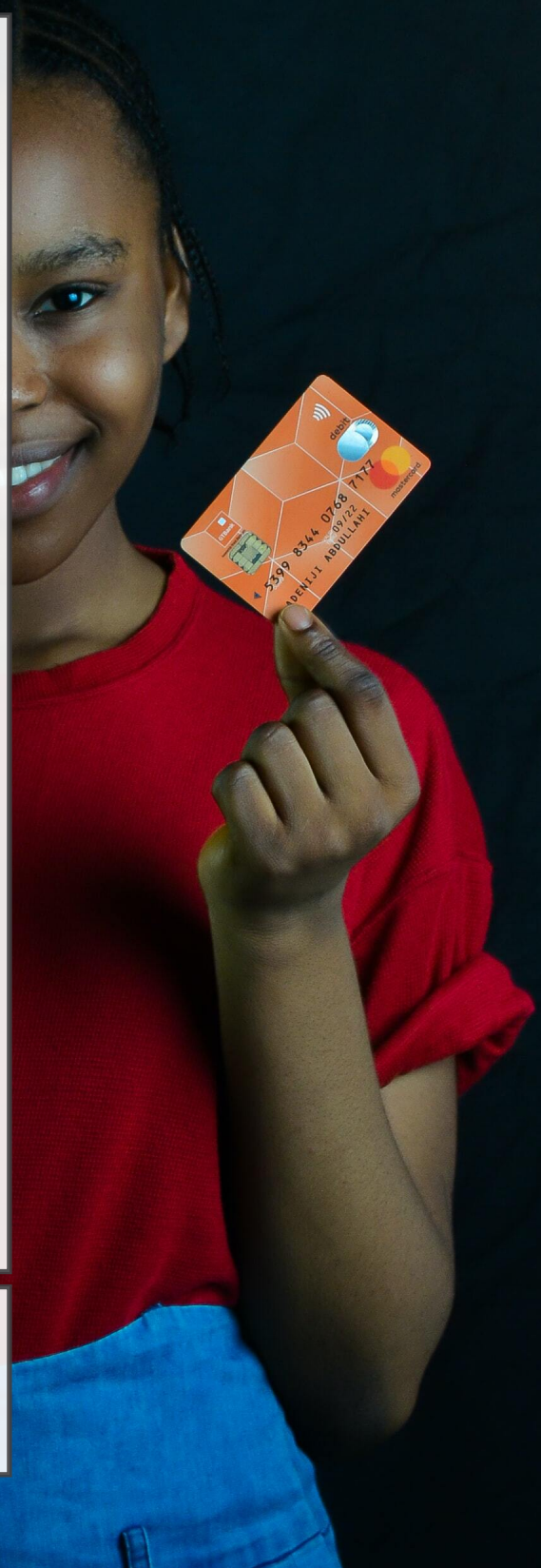
The MasterCard Foundation has awarded \$3.5 billion in grants in the decade 2011-2020. 36 percent (\$1.26bn) of that funding was awarded to higher education institutions.

According to our analysis of its university giving between 2011-20:

- MasterCard Foundation awarded \$1.26bn to 69 universities and higher education institutions in 17 countries.
- In 2011 the Foundation awarded \$42m in grants to six universities; by 2020 that number had increased to \$574m awarded to 27 universities.
- 77 percent of all HE giving between 2011-2020 went to just 10 universities.
- The Foundation is forging a reputation as a major funder of African universities. 55% of its university giving from 2011-20 went to African institutions.
- Between 2011-2020, the MasterCard Foundation awarded \$701m to 19 African universities across 11 countries – Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda.
- Five African institutions received half of all MasterCard Foundation university funding between 2011-20.
- In 2020 the MasterCard Foundation made its biggest ever higher education grant. It awarded \$350m to the Mauritius / Rwanda-based African Leadership University.
- The Foundation is also a significant funder elsewhere. 41 North American institutions received 32 percent of university giving (\$408m) from 2011-20.

## About UniversityPhilanthropy.com

UniversityPhilanthropy.com is the research arm of The Cape Partnership, a London-based public affairs and policy advisory firm. Our research looks at trends in philanthropy and giving to universities. Contact: [office@capepartnership.com](mailto:office@capepartnership.com)



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## Key facts

The MasterCard Foundation is committed to developing programmes primarily focused on reducing gender and economic inequality, expanding access to education, increasing the opportunities for decent work, and supporting economic growth. Today Africa is its core area of giving.

## Top 10 beneficiaries of MasterCard Foundation university funding (2011-20)

University	Country	Sum
African Leadership University	Rwanda / Mauritius	<b>\$350m</b>
Ashesi University	Ghana	<b>\$114m</b>
EARTH University	Costa Rica	<b>\$84.6m</b>
Arizona State University	US	<b>\$81.5m</b>
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	Ghana	<b>\$72.1m</b>
United States International University	Kenya	<b>\$63.2</b>
Carnegie Mellon University	US	<b>\$63.1m</b>
University of California, Berkeley	US	<b>\$56.8m</b>
American University of Beirut	Lebanon	<b>\$42.2m</b>
Michigan State University	US	<b>\$41.2m</b>



## Transformational investments in Africa

Throughout its 17 year history the Foundation has been a significant funder of higher education around the world. In March 2018, the Mastercard Foundation reset its overall strategy for 2018-2030, shifting its focus to Africa and creating the Young Africa Works long-term plan.

In step with the new strategy, it re-located much of the Foundation's resources to Africa, establishing offices in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Rwanda reflecting the emphasis of its funding.

Its recent pattern of funding can be characterized by a small number of transformational awards, with an apparent preference for funding newly established or fledgling institutions.

In 2020 it awarded \$350m (28 percent of its entire university giving from 2011-20) to the African Leadership University which is anchored between Rwanda and Mauritius and \$63m to the United States International University in Kenya.

## About our research

The purpose of this research was to identify university giving by the MasterCard Foundation. Data over the ten years (2011-20) used to compile this study has been drawn from the Foundation's IATI filings. For more information, contact: [office@capepartnership.com](mailto:office@capepartnership.com)

