

## Round 2, December 2023-August 2024

### **Think for Africa (TAP)-AAWE virtual mentoring program for African Women Economists.**

Prepared by

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This report summarizes the second round of the Think for Africa (TAP)—AAWE virtual mentoring program for African women economists.

The application portal opened on August 1, 2023, and closed on August 31, 2023. The program ran for nine months (December 2023 to August 2024), and selected mentees met with their mentors at least nine times (about once a month). All the applicants were African women, i.e., their country of origin was in Africa. Sixty-four women were selected out of the 158 applicants. The mentors' research interests guided the selection. The 64 chosen mentees were paired with 18 mentors. All the mentors are African women economists.

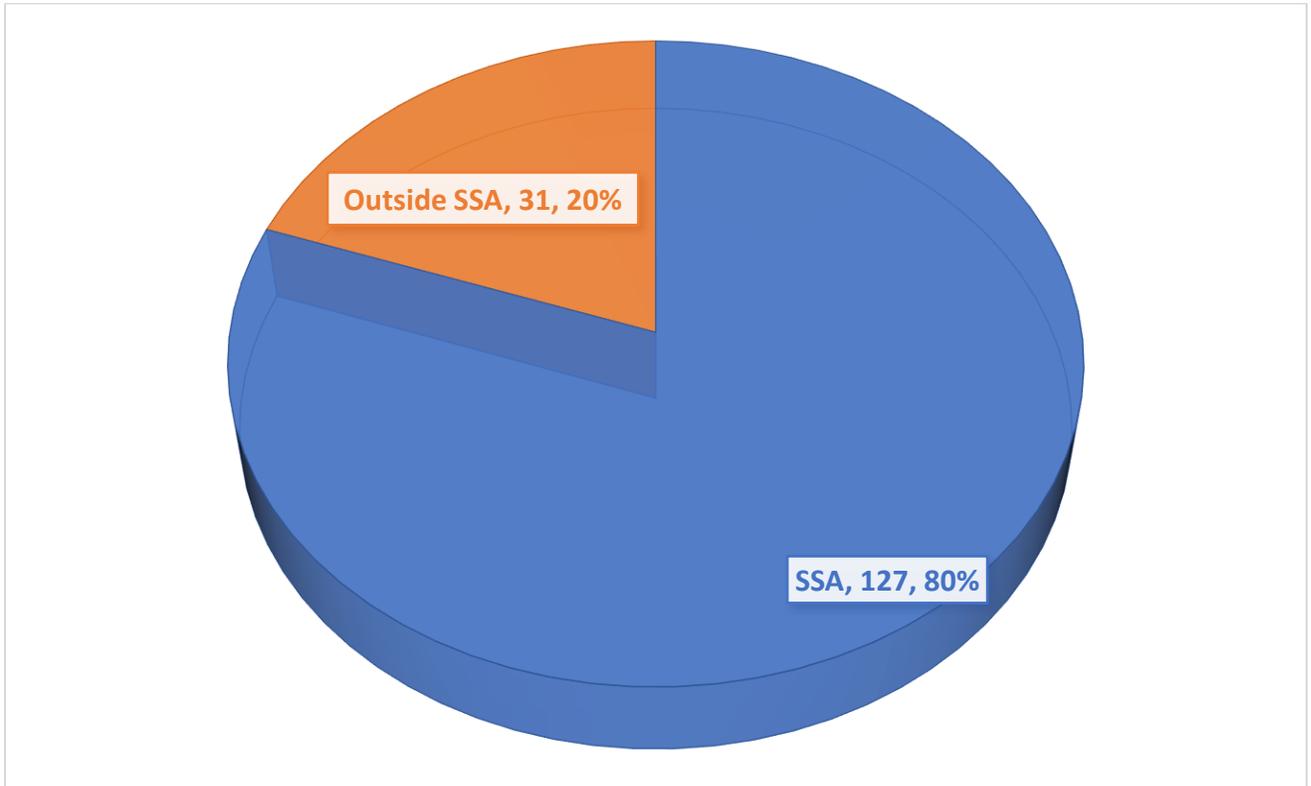
The report is organized into four sections. Section 1 provides an overview of the applicants' profiles; Section 2 outlines the profiles of the mentors and the selected mentees; Section 3 details the mentoring activities; Section 4 summarizes the feedback from the mentees about the program, and Section 5 discusses how the second round improves on the first.

## Section 1: Applicants by country of residence

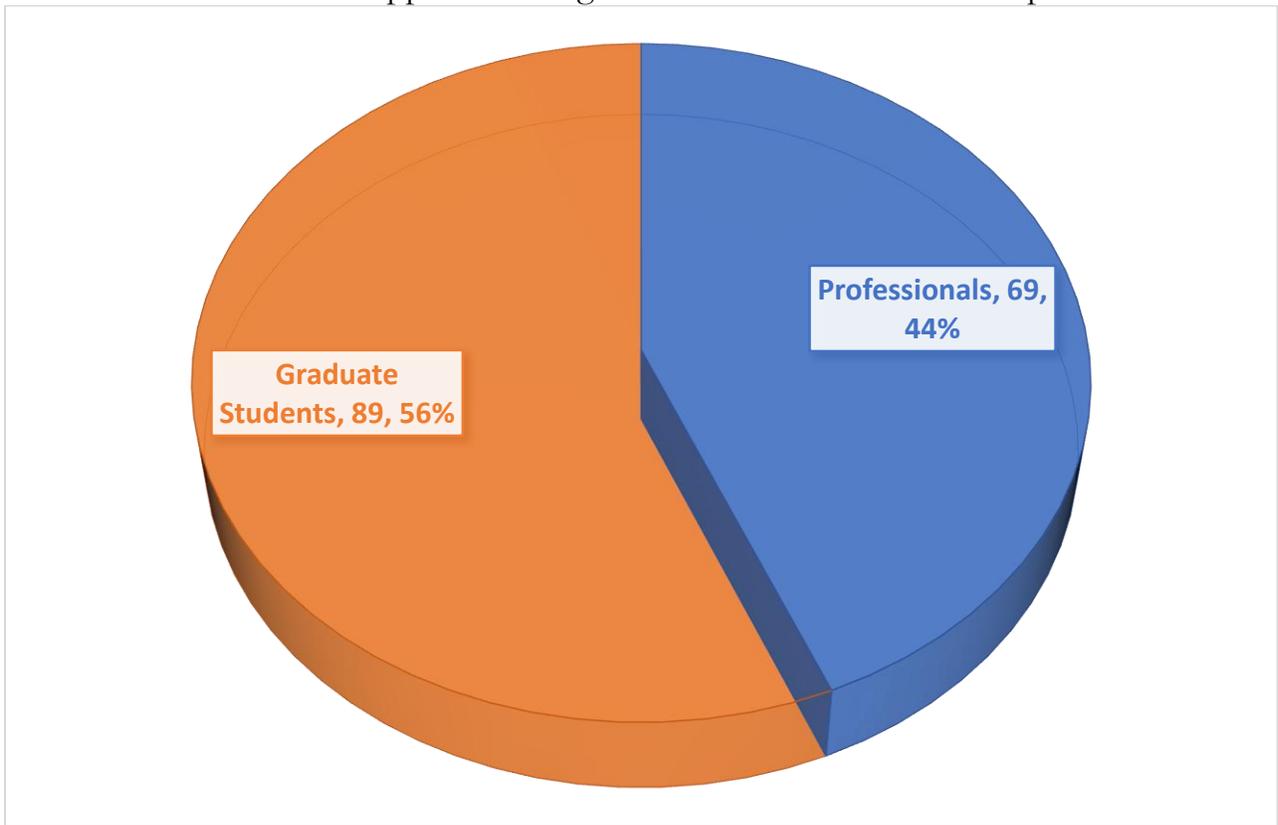
- There were 158 applicants from 34 countries (20 countries in SSA and 14 outside SSA)

Country of Residence of Applicants	Total	Professionals	Students
<b>All countries</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>89</b>
Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)	127	58	69
Outside SSA	31	11	20
<b>SSA Countries</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>69</b>
Benin	1	1	0
Botswana	1	1	0
Burkina Faso	8	3	5
Cameroon	11	3	8
Congo	3	2	1
Côte D'Ivoire	8	1	7
Ethiopia	2	2	0
Gabon	1	1	0
Ghana	5	3	2
Kenya	7	1	6
Malawi	3	2	1
Mali	1	1	0
Niger	2	1	1
Nigeria	42	26	16
Rwanda	1	1	0
Senegal	5	1	4
South Africa	17	5	12
Uganda	4	2	2
Tanzania	4	1	3
Zimbabwe	1	0	1
<b>Outside SSA</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>
Belgium	1	0	1
Canada	1	0	1
Colombia	1	1	0
Egypt	2	0	2
France	4	1	3
Germany	2	1	1
Japan	1	0	1
Luxembourg	1	0	1
Malaysia	1	1	0
Morocco	1	0	1
Netherlands	1	1	0
UAE	1	1	0
UK	4	1	3
US	10	4	6

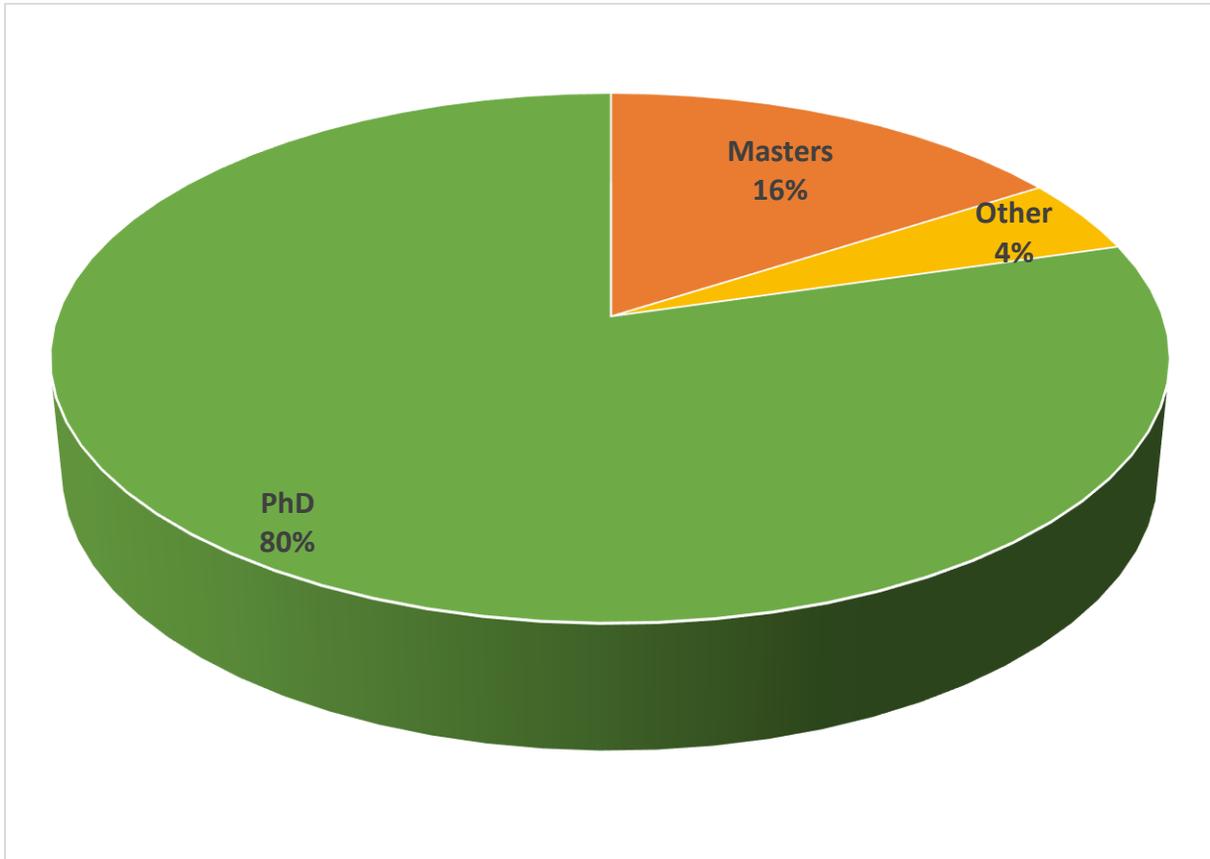
- About 80% of the applicants reside in SSA, and 20% live outside SSA.



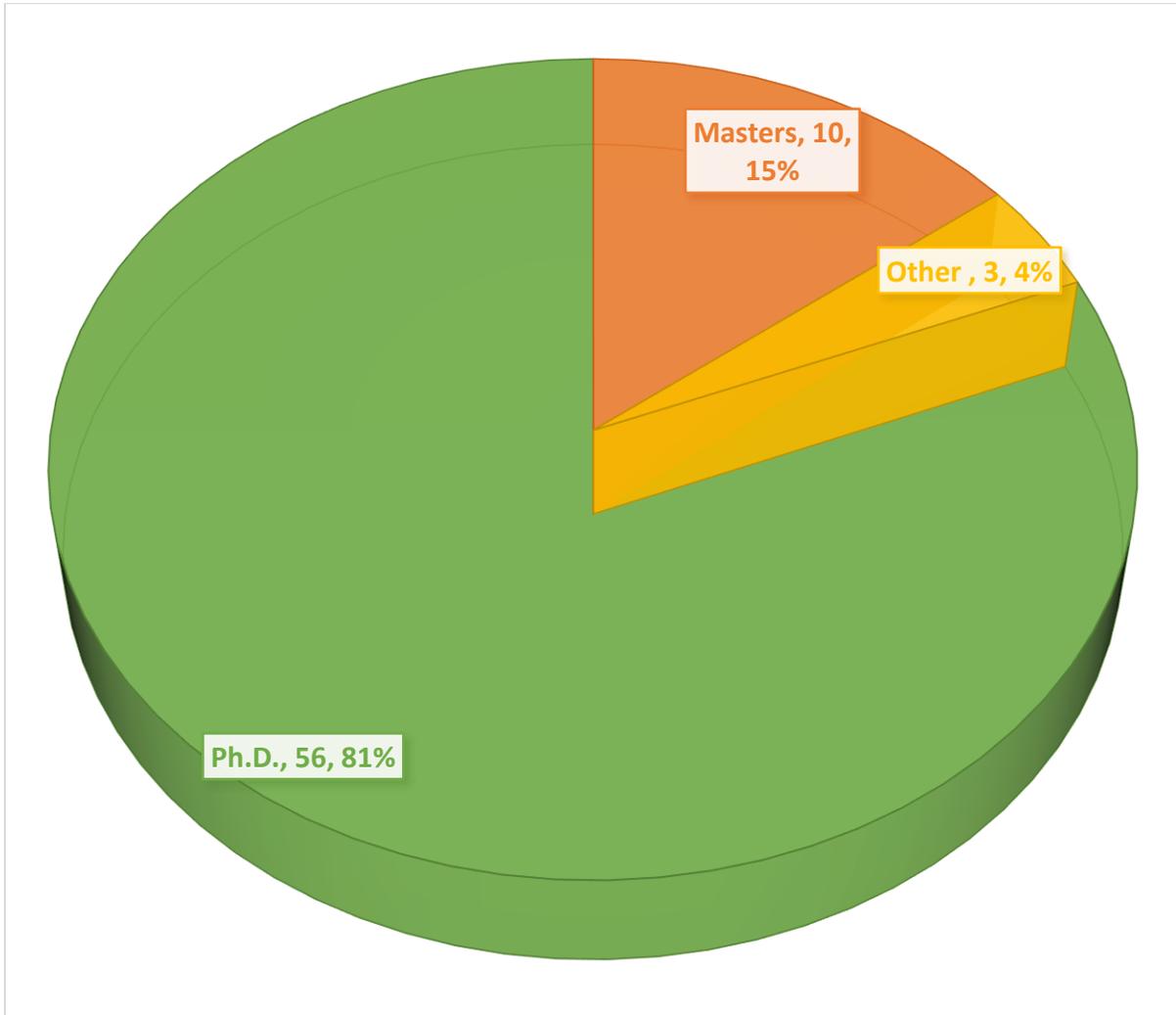
- About 56% of the applicants are graduate students and 44% are professionals



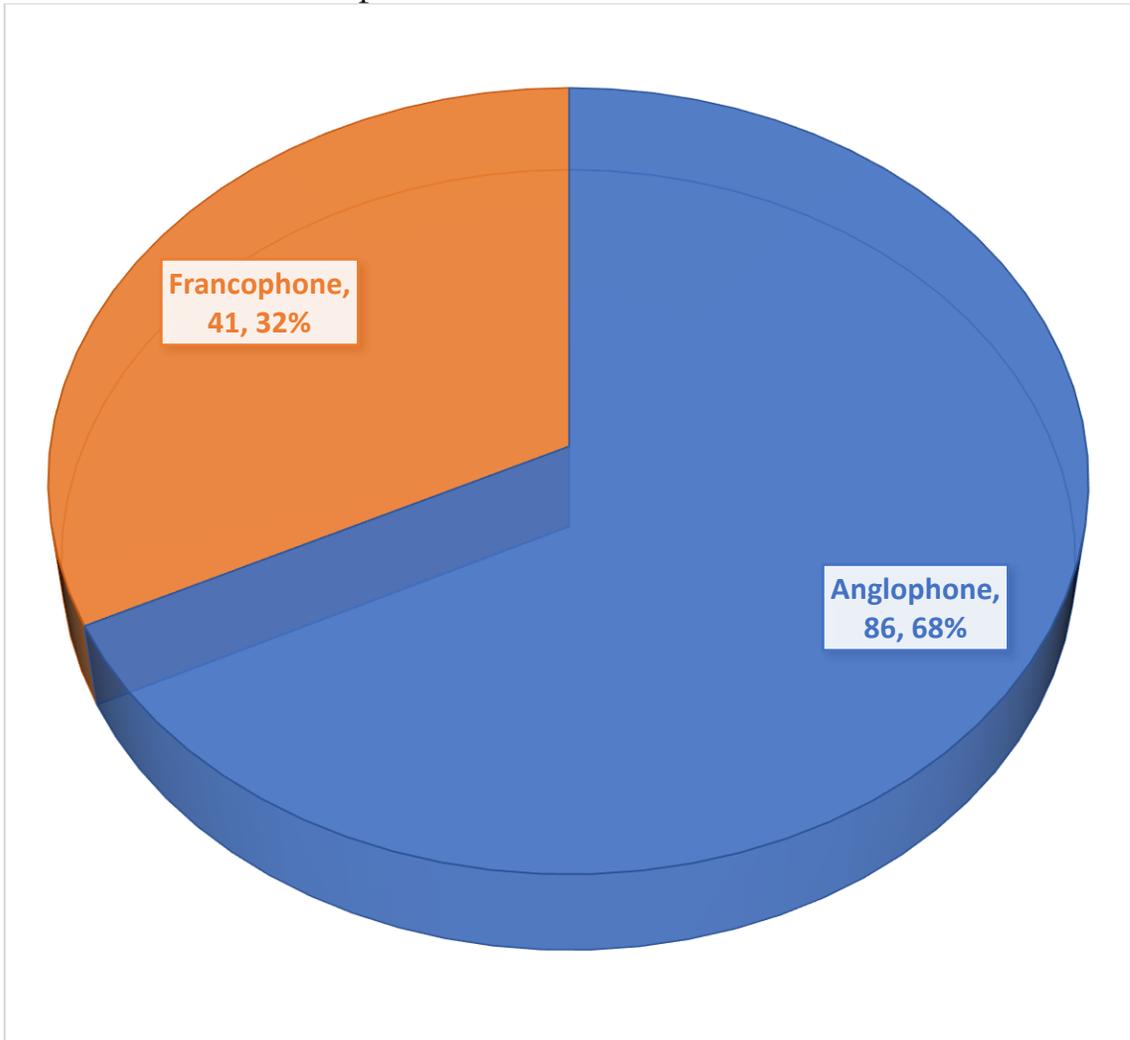
- Among the student applicants, 80% are in Ph.D. programs, and 16% are pursuing master's degrees.



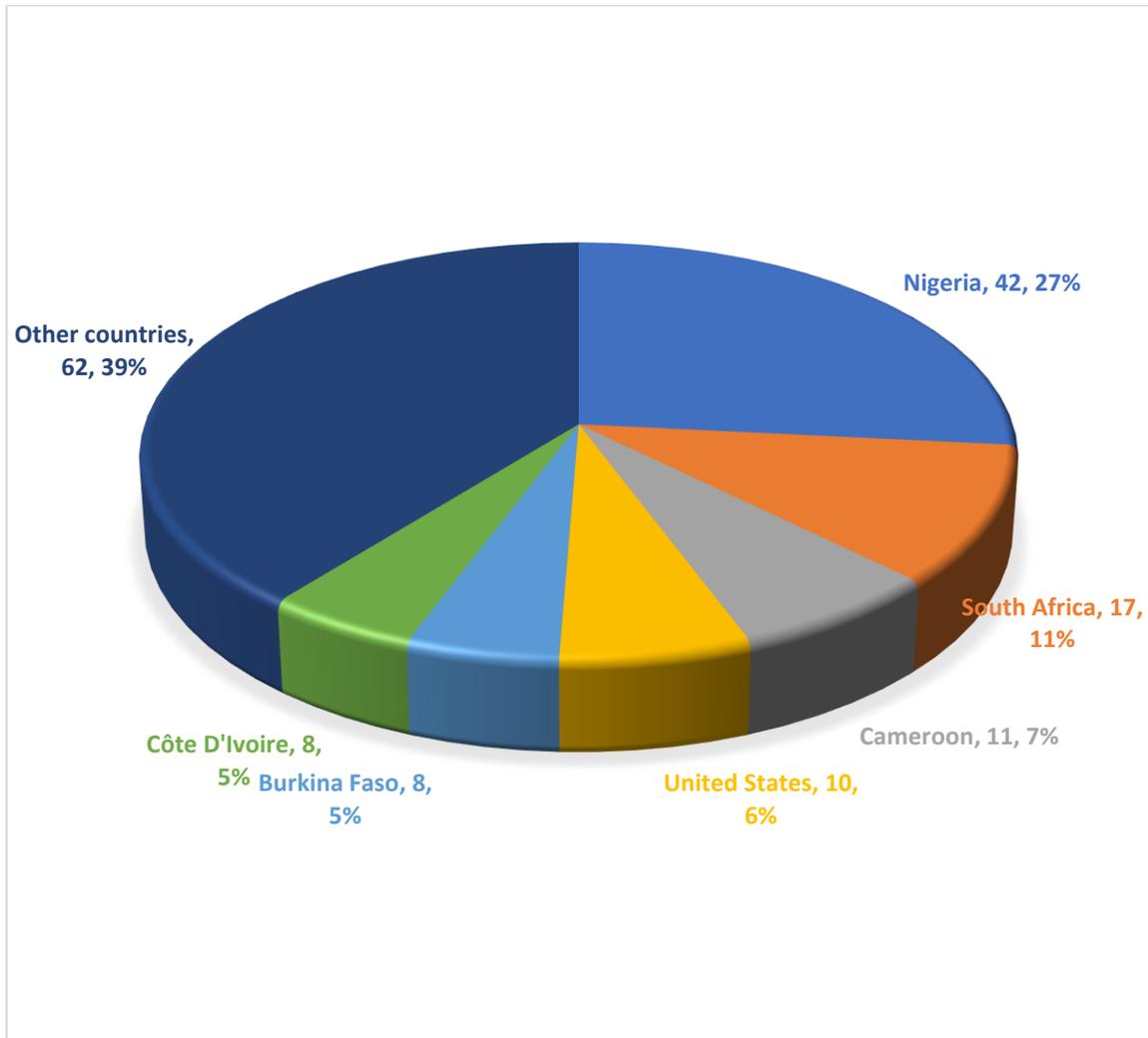
- Among the Professionals, 81% have PhDs and 15% have master's degrees.



- About 68% of SSA applicants are from Anglophone countries, and 32% are from Francophone countries.



- The top six countries with the most applicants were Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, South Africa, and the United States.



## Section 2 (Profile of Selected Applicants)

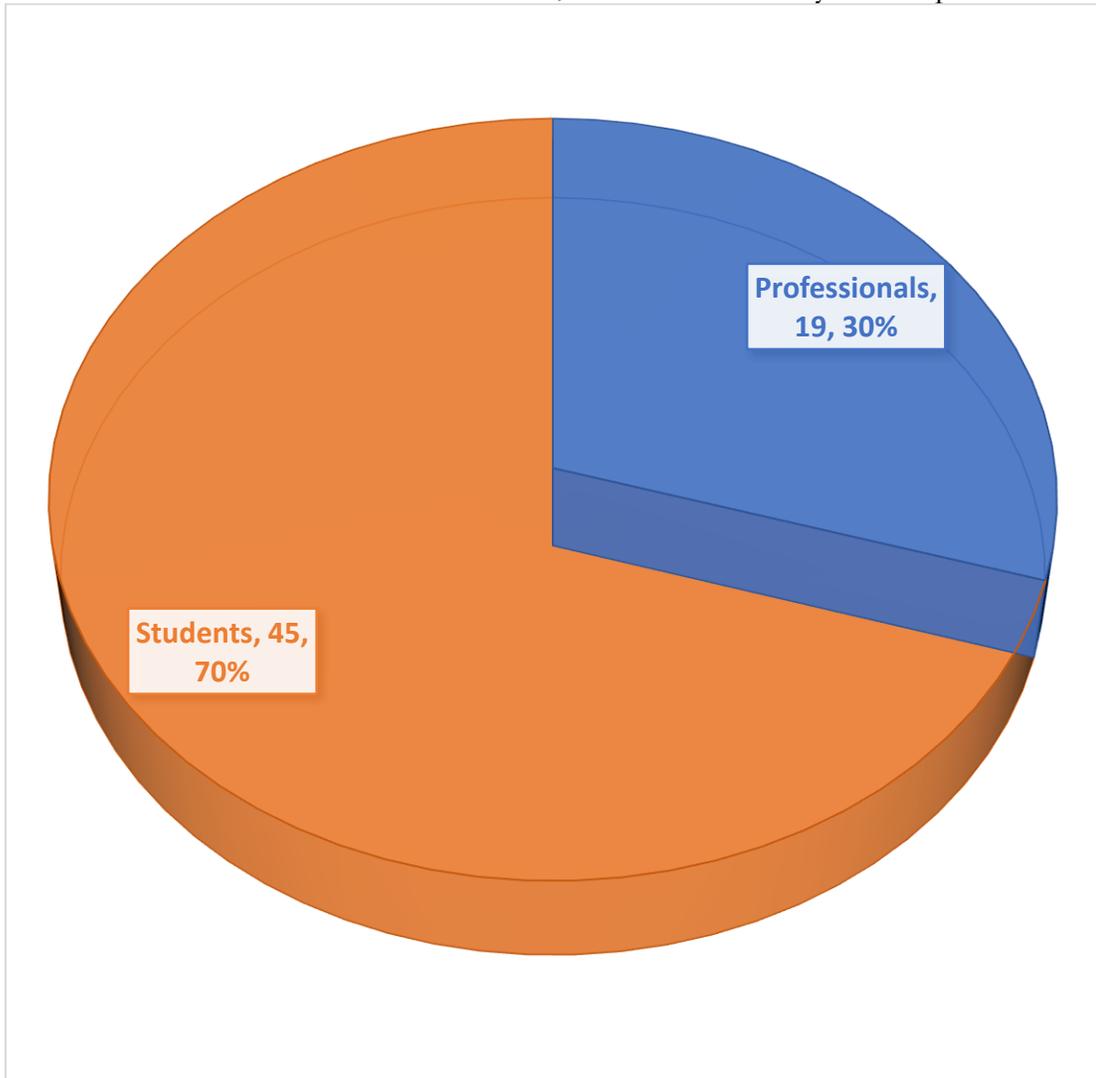
Sixty-four women were selected from the 158 applicants and paired with 18 mentors.

All the mentors are African women economists.

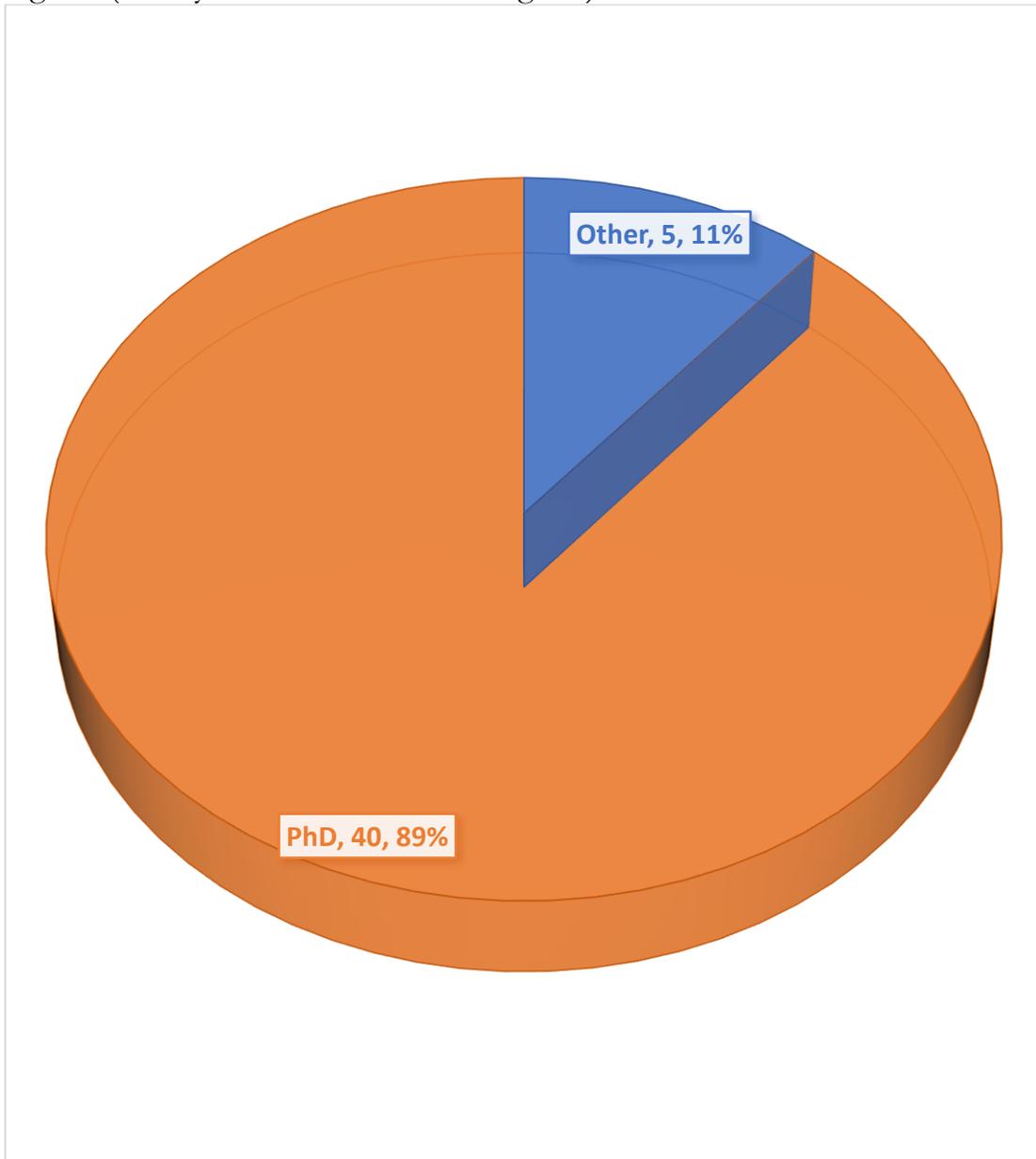
### Selected applicants by country of origin

Country of origin	Total	Professionals	Students
Botswana	1	1	0
Burkina Faso	6	1	5
Cameroon	7	0	7
Congo	1	1	0
Côte D'Ivoire	6	1	5
Ethiopia	1	1	0
Gabon	1	1	0
Ghana	3	2	1
Kenya	5	0	5
Malawi	2	1	1
Niger	2	1	1
Nigeria	13	6	7
Senegal	2	0	2
South Africa	10	2	8
Tanzania	2	0	2
Uganda	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>45</b>

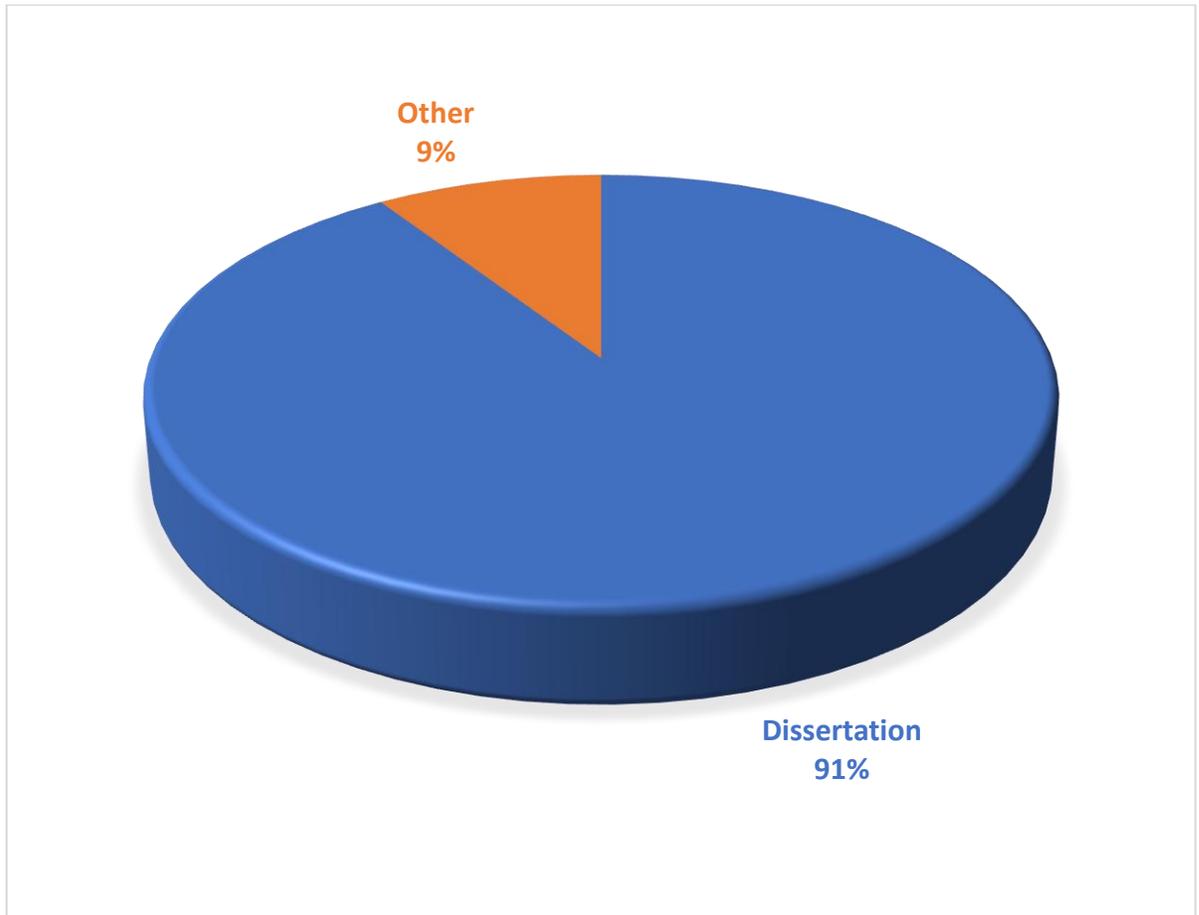
- About 70% of the women are students, and 30% are early career professionals.



- About 89% of the students are pursuing a PhD, and 11% are pursuing other degrees (mostly master's and MPhil degrees).



- About 91% of the students are working on their dissertation, and 7% have not started dissertation work.



## Profile of Mentors

- All the mentors have extensive research experience and are originally from Africa.

Title	Affiliation	Country of Origin	Country of Residence
Associate Professor	Wellesley College	Ghana	US
Associate Professor	University of Ghana	Ghana	Ghana
Senior Lecturer	University of Pretoria	Zimbabwe	South Africa
Senior Lecturer	University of Pretoria	Ethiopia	South Africa
Senior Fellow	Center for Global Development	Nigeria	US
Researcher	United Nations University at Merit	Zimbabwe	Netherlands
Senior Lecturer	University of Johannesburg	South Africa	South Africa
Economist	Institute for Sustainable Development	Cameroon	France
Lecturer	Norbet Zongo University	Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso
Economist	Canadian Ministry of Health/World Bank	Cameroon	Canada
Associate Professor	University of Ghana	Ghana	Ghana
Assistant Professor	University of Ibadan	Nigeria	Nigeria
Senior Lecturer	University of Johannesburg	South Africa	South Africa
Associate Professor	University of Yaounde II	Cameroon	Cameroon
Lecturer/Researcher	Higher Institute for Population Sciences	Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso
Lecturer	University of Doula	Cameroon	Cameroon
Economist	UN Economic Commission for Africa	Cameroon	Cameroon
Associate Professor	University Thomas Sankara	Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso

## Section 3

### Mentoring Activities

**Meetings with mentors:** Mentors were assigned to 3-5 mentees with similar research interests. The mentors held group mentoring sessions at least nine times during the mentoring period. These sessions provided a platform for discussing research progress, offering feedback, and providing career development advice.

**Monthly Workshops:** The second phase included a series of virtual monthly workshops facilitated by Professor Nkechi Owoo and Professor Monica Lambon-Quayefio from the University of Ghana. The workshops were designed to provide in-depth training on specific topics relevant to the mentees' professional development.

The workshops covered grant writing, the publication process, some ethical issues, family/work-life balance, networking, and post-doctoral fellowships. The sessions were engaging, with 80 former and current mentees participating.

**Econometric Society Conference:** AAAWE organized two sessions at the Econometric Society Conference in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, from June 5-9, 2024. Additionally, 21 (13 Ph.D. students and eight professionals) from 10 countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote D’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, and Uganda) received funding to participate in the international conference as presenters/observers. For 30% of the participants, this was the first time traveling outside their home country and participating in an international conference. The titles of the papers presented are below:

Number	Title of Paper
1.	The Influence of Commercial Banks on Financial Inclusion in Cameroon
2.	The Impact of Migrant Remittances on Child Education in Burkina Faso
3.	Financial Regulation and Financial Regulation in Kenya
4.	How Do Savings Groups Affect the Development of Personal Wealth of Female Entrepreneurs
5.	Value Chain Management for Sustainable Catchups: Evidence from Staple Crop Farming Households In Nigeria
6.	Is Education the Solution to Gender Inequality in the Labour Market? Empirical Evidence from Developing Countries.
7.	Nutrition Education Effects on Household Food and Nutrition Security for Women Living With HIV/AIDS in Uganda
8.	Identification And Rural-Urban Decomposition of Vulnerability to Poverty in Togo
9.	Does Increasing Household Resilience Capacity Impact the Long-Term Result of Food Security for Households: Evidence In Nigeria's Regional Analysis
10.	Cash Transfers, Women's Bargaining Power and Labour Market Decisions of Couples: The Case of Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP)
11.	Monetary and R&D Policy on Inequality and Growth
12.	Entre Demande Locale Et Croissance Industrielle: Les Défis De La Côte d'Ivoire À L'ère De La Transformation.
13.	Political Business Cycles in The East African Community
14.	Between Care and Cost: Inequalities in Out-of-Pocket and Catastrophic Health Expenditures for Cesarean Surgery in Cameroon.
15.	The Effect of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) on the Mental Health of Children in IPV Households: Evidence from Ghana
16.	Women's Bargaining Power and Household Well-Being in Burkina Faso: An Endogenous Treatment Effect.
17.	Birth Order and Children Immunization in Ivory Coast

The feedback from conference participants highlighted a highly enriching and beneficial experience marked by extensive learning and valuable networking opportunities. Many expressed profound gratitude to AAAWE, particularly Prof. Asiedu and the organizing team, for facilitating their participation. The conference enabled attendees to connect with scholars worldwide, fostering potential future collaborations. The feedback from four participants summarizes the sentiments of the participants:

**Becky, Ghana:** The World Bank-AAAWE sponsorship has enabled me to travel out of the country for the first time. It has also enabled me to network with people from different countries, which will help me partner with someone during the publication of articles. I learned a lot from the presentations of members and was able to make comments. It was a great exposure and a wonderful experience. I am eager to learn more and benefit from such international conferences.

**Brendaline, Cameroon:** The conference was enriching. I interacted with scholars from various institutions around the globe, and we developed a good network for future collaboration. I am grateful to AAAWE Prof Asiedu, the vision bearer, for this rare opportunity and to all the board members who assisted in ensuring this became a reality. I pray and wish to attend many such conferences in the future.

**Milogo, Burkina Faso:** We sincerely thank the President of AAAWE and all her collaborators for the opportunity to participate in this international conference. Our participation was truly beneficial on several levels. Regarding the organization, we would like to take our hat off to Beckie, who managed the group and the various

activities very well. We look forward to participating in many AAAWE activities.  
Long live AAAWE!

**Ami, Togo:** This was a wonderful experience to be in the presence of the greatest in Economics. I got a chance to meet some of my idols, people that I have looked up to, and who are the reasons why I chose this field. AFES was my first conference, and the experience I gained there will remain with me for the rest of my life.

## **Section 4**

### **Feedback from mentees**

An end-of-program evaluation was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring program. Fifty mentees completed the survey. The results of the review were overwhelmingly positive. Most mentees reported high satisfaction with the mentoring program, noting that the mentoring sessions greatly benefited their professional growth. Many mentees highlighted significant improvements in their research skills, understanding of the publication process, grant application techniques, and balancing work and family. Additionally, the program facilitated valuable networking opportunities, connecting mentees with mentors and peers across the continent. The mentees suggested the following: provide comprehensive materials on econometrics and data analysis, organize combined workshops with multiple mentors and mentees to expand professional networks, fund connection costs, in-person meetings, and publication fees, extend the program duration to one year for deeper engagement, hold monthly virtual meetings for sharing progress and career updates, and establish a virtual community for ongoing support and collaboration. The feedback from four mentees summarizes these sentiments.

**Brendaline, Cameroon:** My experience with AAAWE has been mouth-watering. Below is just the tip of the iceberg. As a result of the mentorship program, my confidence in my abilities has increased significantly. The personalized guidance and constructive feedback I received from my mentor helped me recognize my strengths and identify areas for improvement. Through various exercises and discussions, I gained a clearer understanding of my skills, which boosted my confidence in tackling complex tasks and taking on new challenges. Learning practical strategies for maintaining a healthy work-life balance and enhancing my writing skills, especially crafting impactful articles, has made me feel more capable and prepared for my professional endeavors. Before the program, I knew little about how to seek and write a winning grant and little about how to look for postgraduate programs; research methodology was a great challenge for me, and even the aspect of balancing work and life, especially as a woman scholar. I can testify that this program has addressed most of these issues through online webinars and talks. I am particularly grateful to the facilitators, Mrs. Nkechi and Madam Monica, for their tireless and explicit explanations. I also want to thank the World Bank for supporting and contributing to the program. I won't end this testimony without thanking the brain and leader behind this beautiful initiative, Professor Elizabeth Asiedu. AAAWE is a platform anchored on quality and excellence, pushing women economists to achieve their academic dreams and passions. I will continue to speak positively about this initiative today and tomorrow and invite those who haven't yet joined to meet us while on our way up. It is a moving train for empowering women economists from Africa.

**Fydnness, Rwanda:** I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to Prof Asiedu for pioneering this program and also for granting us Dr. Tatenda Zinyemba, who happens to be a vigilant, pragmatic, and relentless mentor I have never seen before. She molded me and inspired me to finalize addressing external

examiners' comments on my PhD thesis as soon as possible in December 2023. By the end of January 2024, I had finalized and sent it again to my university (University of Rwanda). Within a short time, on April 19, 2024, I successfully defended my PhD thesis at the African Centre of Excellence, Energy for Sustainable Development, College of Science & Technology under the University of Rwanda. I am waiting for the University Senate Council to schedule my graduation date. I am forever grateful to Prof Elizabeth Asiedu, our dearest mentor, Dr. Tatenda Zinyemba, and my fellow mentees (Mabolaji, Nigeria, and Happyness, Tanzania. Ours was a formidable, awesome team, with authenticity and honest conversations often not seen in the workplace or African societies. Long live Prof Elizabeth Asiedu, and long live Dr Tatenda! May God Almighty reward you greatly forever for what you have done to me personally. I am short of words. Hopefully, we will meet face to face and share big hugs for everything one day.

**Tamika, Malawi:** The mentorship program has helped me achieve my personal and professional goals. Professionally, it provided me with practical insights and skills that have enhanced my understanding of economic analysis, governance, and program management. These new skills have directly contributed to my ability to perform better in my current role and have opened new opportunities for advancement in my career. Personally, the program has helped me build confidence in my abilities and encouraged me to pursue my aspirations with greater clarity and focus. My mentors' constructive feedback and guidance have been instrumental in refining my goals and creating actionable plans to achieve them. One of the most beneficial aspects of the mentorship program was the personalized guidance and the opportunity to learn from experienced professionals. The one-on-one mentorship sessions provided tailored advice that helped me navigate specific challenges and identify growth opportunities in my career. Additionally, the program's focus on practical, hands-on learning

allowed me to apply new skills and knowledge directly to my work, making the learning experience highly relevant and impactful. Networking with other participants and mentors was also invaluable, as it expanded my professional connections and opened doors to future collaborations. Through discussions with my mentor, I learned practical strategies for managing my time more effectively and setting boundaries between work and personal life, significantly enhancing my overall well-being and productivity. Additionally, the program helped me improve my writing skills, particularly in crafting articles. I received guidance on structuring my writing, refining my arguments, and making my content more engaging and impactful. These skills have been instrumental in helping me publish a well-researched and compelling article, contributing to my professional growth and establishing my voice in my field.

**Nonceba, Zimbabwe:** The program helped me realize my potential and that what I do isn't in a vacuum. Also, sometimes, I felt there was no progress, but after conversing with my mentor, I realized that the tiny bits of things I had done amounted to a lot of progress. Learning how to handle my academic pressures and have someone to talk to about it was helpful.

## Section 5

### Program Improvements

Based on feedback from mentors and mentees from the first round of the mentoring program, the following improvements were implemented in the second round:

- The number of selected mentees increased from 50 to 60.
- The duration of the mentoring program increased from six months to nine months.
- The number of mentors increased from 15 to 18, and the number of Francophone mentors increased from five to seven.
- Mentees participated in the Econometric Society conference in person and not online.
- Mentees participated in monthly workshops aimed at facilitating the professional development of the mentees.