

Jens Martens and Karolin Seitz

# Philanthropic Power and Development

Who shapes the agenda?



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## Preface

For the last several decades, increasing globalization of the world economy and waves of deregulation and privatization have facilitated the emergence and increased the power of private actors, particularly large transnational corporations. Companies with activities in dozens of countries and billion-dollar turnovers have acquired both great influence on the global economic system and significant political clout.

As they grow larger and increasingly powerful, transnational corporations have become influential actors in international policy debates, including, most importantly how to address poverty eradication, sustainable development, climate change and the protection of human rights. At a time when governments seem unable to resolve pressing global challenges in multilateral settings, business is positioning itself as an alternative, operating on a model that pretends to be more flexible, efficient and un-bureaucratic than is the case with states.

In the joint project “Counter-Lobby for Future Justice,” Brot für die Welt, Global Policy Forum and MISEREOR identified and analyzed different channels of corporate influence in international policy processes, paying particular attention to the risks, side effects and impacts such influence has had on global governance, democratic decision-making and economic and social lives of people in the global South.

The preliminary findings of this project were published in a series of working papers on corporate influence on (1) the Post-2015 process; (2) the Business and Human Rights Agenda of the United Nations; and (3) the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa.

However, it is not only “big business” but also “big philanthropy” that has an increasing influence in global development policy, particularly large philanthropic foundations. The scope of their influence in both past and present discourse and decision-making processes is fully equal, and in some cases goes beyond that of other private actors. Through the sheer size of their grant-making, personal networking and active advocacy, large global foundations, most notably the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have played an increasingly active role in shaping the agenda-setting and funding priorities of international organizations and governments.

So far there has been a fairly willing belief among governments and international organizations in the positive role of philanthropy in global development, one which often fails to differentiate among different foundations. But in light of experiences in the areas of health and agriculture,

a thorough assessment of the impacts and side effects of philanthropic engagement is necessary.

This Working Paper begins to examine the role and impact of philanthropic foundations in development. It cannot discuss all aspects and concerns in detail, but addresses some of them by taking a closer look at the priorities and operations of two of the most prominent foundations, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in two crucial sectors, health and agriculture.

The key message it seeks to get across is that governments, international organizations and civil society organizations must carefully differentiate among foundations in the philanthropic sector, assess the growing influence of the large global philanthropic foundations, especially the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, on political discourse and agenda-setting in targeted fields, and fully analyze the risks and side effects—intended and unintended—of these activities on sustainable development.

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# 1.

## Overview: Philanthropic foundations and development

On 5 June 2013 a remarkable event took place in the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations (UN) in New York City. Over 150 invited guests met for the second annual *Forbes 400 Philanthropy Summit*. The event was opened by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, attended by celebrated philanthropists, such as Bill Gates, Bono and Warren Buffett, and sponsored by Credit Suisse. According to *Forbes* magazine the attendees, who represented “close to half a trillion of the world’s wealth, discussed how they can use their wealth, fame and entrepreneurial talent to eradicate poverty.”<sup>1</sup> As follow up to this summit *Forbes* released a Special Philanthropy Issue under the headline “Entrepreneurs can save the world.”<sup>2</sup>

The event at UN Headquarters was a symbol for the rapidly growing role of philanthropists and their foundations in global development policy and practice. Hailed for their ability to apply their business know-how and resources to solving the world’s global problems, ranging from poverty to climate change, they have been embraced by governments as a way to ease pressure on their own budgets and responsibilities. This is particularly well documented in the areas of global health and disease eradication and nutrition, food and agriculture. Two foundations in particular have long been active in both fields: the Rockefeller Foundation and more recently the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, both of which are the focus of this study.

Where do these foundations fit in the global foundation landscape?

### The global foundation landscape

Foundations differ in type, purpose, the way they are funded, their thematic focus, geographic scope, their priorities, approaches and political orientation. Some work mainly at global level, others at regional, and still others at national or local level.

Among foundations with a global focus, their interests cover a wide range, from the science of climate change to global governance to eliminating poverty and hunger. Their activities range from grant-making, to their own operational and advocacy activities and new forms of venture philanthropy (see Box 1). What they share however, is a firm conviction

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1 [www.facebook.com/events/175793962627846/?ref=22](http://www.facebook.com/events/175793962627846/?ref=22).

2 Cf. *Forbes* (2013).

tion that the enormous global challenges facing the world today cannot be solved by governments alone, and indeed, can best be tackled by market-based, technological approaches, not unlike those many of their founders pioneered in the world of business.

This approach has characterized the operations of the largest philanthropic foundations from the earliest days, particularly those that operate in the global arena.

### Box 1

#### A typology of (philanthropic) foundations

There is no single valid definition of a *philanthropic foundation*. However, four criteria are included in most definitions: The organization must be

- (1) non-governmental;
- (2) non-profit;
- (3) self-managed by its own trustees and directors; and
- (4) promote charitable activities serving the common good.<sup>3</sup>

Generally, a distinction can be made between private and public foundations. Most private foundations have their own endowments provided by individual donors or families, while public foundations are funded by multiple sources, including public contributions.

The Foundation Center, a leading source of information about philanthropy worldwide, offers a typology, which distinguishes between four types of foundations:<sup>4</sup>

**Independent Foundations:** established by individual donors or donor families and engaged mainly in grant-making activities. The vast majority of foundations fall under this category, including the world's two largest foundations: the US based Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the London-based Wellcome Trust, a biomedical research charity set up by the founders of GlaxoSmithKline.<sup>5</sup>

**Operating Foundations:** run their own programmes, although some also make grants. They are generally established by individual donors or donor families. An example is the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Germany, which invests all of its financial resources in projects that the Stiftung initiates and executes itself.

**Corporate Foundations:** established by businesses ranging from major corporations to family-owned shops, but are legally separate entities. In the USA alone, there are more than 2,600 corporate foundations, such as the Coca-Cola Foundation and the Walmart Foundation.

**Community Foundations:** raise funds from public and private sources and engage in grant-making primarily within a limited geographic area. Examples are the Silicon Valley Community Foundation or the New York Community Trust.

3 Cf. [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/455867/philanthropic-foundation](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/455867/philanthropic-foundation).

4 Cf. Foundation Center (2014), p. 3.

5 Cf. [www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/16/what-is-the-wellcome-trust](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/16/what-is-the-wellcome-trust).

## How did it all begin?

The roots of modern philanthropy can be traced back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States when business tycoons John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie set up the first large American foundations, primarily as a way to shield some of their income from taxation but also as a way to garner prestige and influence in the US and world affairs.

The roots of modern philanthropy can be traced back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1911 Andrew Carnegie established the Carnegie Corporation of New York and gave it an endowment of US\$125 million, making it the largest single philanthropic trust ever established up to that time. A year before, Carnegie, who made his fortune in the steel industry, founded the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which became one of the leading foreign policy think tanks in the USA.

The Rockefeller Foundation was established in 1913, two years after the US Supreme Court ruled that John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, was an illegal monopoly and ordered it to be broken up into smaller companies. The dissolution of the then world's largest oil company made its founder and major shareholder John D. Rockefeller the richest man in the world. With the establishment of his foundation, he could insulate a large part of his fortune from income and inheritance taxes.

Two decades later, in the 1930s, high rates of income and estate taxes in the USA led to a proliferation of US foundations set up by wealthy individuals, including cereal magnate W.K. Kellogg and car manufacturer Henry Ford. In 1936, Ford and his son Edsel established the Ford Foundation, which became for years the largest, and one of the most influential foundations with global reach and programmes all over the world.

The trend of wealth concentration has accelerated in the following decades in the era of globalization and with the enormous increase in finance capital, not only in the USA but also in other high and middle income countries. Today, there are more than 200,000 foundations in the world. Over 86,000 foundations are registered in the USA;<sup>6</sup> another estimated 85,000 foundations are based in Western Europe and 35,000 in Eastern Europe.<sup>7</sup> The philanthropic sector is also growing in the global South, with for example, approximately 10,000 foundations in Mexico, nearly 2,000 in China and at least 1,000 in Brazil,<sup>8</sup> largely due to the rapidly increasing number of wealthy individuals in countries in the global South. According to *Forbes* Magazine, among the 1,826 world billionaires

Today, there are more than 200,000 foundations in the world.

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6 Cf. Foundation Center (2014), p. 3.

7 Cf. UNDP (2012a), p. 20.

8 Cf. UNDP (2012a), p. 20.

in 2015 are 213 from China and 90 from India.<sup>9</sup> There are 29 billionaires on the African continent with Aliko Dangote, a Nigerian businessman, ranked Number 1 in Africa with a net worth of US\$15.7 billion.

Already in 2006, the Hong Kong-based entrepreneur Li Ka-shing raised international attention when he committed to give one third of his wealth to his foundation, which to date has provided grants valuing more than US\$1.86 billion, most dedicated to grantees in China.<sup>10</sup>

In the same year, the British–Sudanese entrepreneur Mo Ibrahim, founder of the African telecommunication company Celtel, established his foundation. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation has a broader geographical scope, aiming to foster good governance and leadership across the African continent.<sup>11</sup>

Saudi Arabian Prince Alwaleed announced to pledge his entire fortune, valued a US\$ 32 billion, to philanthropy.

More recently, in July 2015, Saudi Arabian Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud announced to pledge his entire fortune, valued at US\$32 billion, to philanthropy over the coming years “ (...) to help alleviate poverty, eradicate diseases, provide electric power to remote villages, build orphanages and schools, provide disaster relief and empower women and youth.”<sup>12</sup> This donation will make his foundation, the Alwaleed Philanthropies, the second largest philanthropic foundation in the world (behind the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation).

Although philanthropy is not new to the global South, organized and institutionalized philanthropy is relatively recent.<sup>13</sup> In recent years, there has been a shift from personalized informal giving by wealthy individuals (to the family, religious institutions or the local poor) to more formalized structures of giving. This has also resulted in the formation of philanthropic associations such as the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists in 2008<sup>14</sup> and the African Grantmakers’ Network in 2009.<sup>15</sup> The first African Philanthropic Forum 2014 also showed the emergence of philanthropic foundations in Africa, especially in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Egypt.

9 Cf. Forbes (2015).

10 Cf. [www.lksf.org](http://www.lksf.org).

11 Cf. [www.moibrahimfoundation.org/](http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/). Ibrahim has become a prominent supporter of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility at the United Nations. He chaired, for instance, the third UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in December 2014 in Geneva.

12 <http://gulfnews.com/business/sectors/investment/why-saudi-billionaire-pledges-entire-wealth-to-charity-1.1544254>.

13 Cf. Grady (2014), p. 6.

14 Cf. [www.thewcnp.org/home](http://www.thewcnp.org/home).

15 Cf. [www.africangrantmakersnetwork.org](http://www.africangrantmakersnetwork.org).

## US philanthropy still predominates

Despite the rise of philanthropic foundations in all parts of the world, US foundations are still predominant, not only in terms of their number but also of their financial assets and annual giving. Although two of the world's top five foundations (in terms of assets) are based in the UK, 19 of the top 27 are based in the USA (see Table 1). By far the largest is the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, established in the year 2000 by Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, with an endowment of US\$42.9 billion (see Box 2).

**Table 1**

### The world's largest philanthropic foundations (by size of total endowment/assets, in US\$)

| Rank | Foundation                                   | Endowment/<br>Assets*                        | Annual giving/<br>expenditures*            | Year of<br>inception | Registered<br>in        |
|------|--|--|--|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1    | Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation              | 42.9 billion <sup>a</sup>                    | 3.9 billion <sup>a</sup>                   | 2000                 | USA                     |
| 2    | Wellcome Trust                               | 29.8 billion <sup>b</sup><br>(£18 billion)   | 1.1 billion <sup>b</sup><br>(£674 million) | 1936                 | UK                      |
| 3    | Howard Hughes Medical Institute              | 18.6 billion <sup>c</sup>                    | 917 million <sup>c</sup>                   | 1953                 | USA                     |
| 4    | Garfield Weston Foundation                   | 17.3 billion <sup>d</sup><br>(£10.5 billion) | 89 million <sup>d</sup><br>(£54 million)   | 1958                 | UK                      |
| 5    | Ford Foundation                              | 11.9 billion <sup>e</sup>                    | 570 million <sup>f</sup>                   | 1936                 | USA                     |
| 6    | Kamehameha Schools                           | 11 billion <sup>g</sup>                      | 378 million <sup>g</sup>                   | 1887                 | USA                     |
| 7    | The Church Commissioners<br>for England      | 11 billion<br>(£6.7 billion) <sup>h</sup>    | 354 million<br>(£215 million) <sup>h</sup> | 1948                 | UK                      |
| 8    | Robert Wood Johnson Foundation               | 10.5 billion <sup>i</sup>                    | 408 million <sup>i</sup>                   | 1972                 | USA                     |
| 9    | J. Paul Getty Trust                          | 10.1 billion <sup>j</sup>                    | 268 million <sup>j</sup>                   | 1982                 | USA                     |
| 10   | Lilly Endowment                              | 10.1 billion <sup>k</sup>                    | 326 million <sup>k</sup>                   | 1937                 | USA                     |
| 11   | Mohammed bin Rashid Al<br>Maktoum Foundation | 10.0 billion <sup>l</sup>                    | no information<br>available                | 2007                 | United Arab<br>Emirates |
| 12   | The William and Flora Hewlett<br>Foundation  | 9.0 billion <sup>m</sup>                     | 434 million <sup>m</sup>                   | 1966                 | USA                     |
| 13   | W.K. Kellogg Foundation                      | 8.6 billion <sup>n</sup>                     | 296 million <sup>n</sup>                   | 1930                 | USA                     |
| 14   | Li Ka Shing Foundation                       | 8.3 billion <sup>o</sup>                     | (1980–2015:<br>1.9 billion) <sup>p</sup>   | 1980                 | Hong Kong               |
| 15   | The MasterCard Foundation                    | 8.3 billion <sup>q</sup>                     | 175 million <sup>q</sup>                   | 2006                 | Canada                  |
| 16   | Robert Bosch Foundation                      | 6.7 billion <sup>r</sup><br>(€5.06 billion)  | 90.4 million <sup>r</sup><br>(€68 million) | 1964                 | Germany                 |
| 17   | David and Lucile Packard<br>Foundation       | 6.5 billion <sup>s</sup>                     | 288 million <sup>s</sup>                   | 1964                 | USA                     |
| 18   | Silicon Valley Community<br>Foundation       | 6.5 billion <sup>t</sup>                     | 957 million <sup>t</sup>                   | 2007                 | USA                     |
| 19   | Gordon and Betty Moore<br>Foundation         | 6.4 billion <sup>u</sup>                     | 315 million <sup>u</sup>                   | 2000                 | USA                     |

| Rank | Foundation  | Endowment/<br>Assets*                          | Annual giving/<br>expenditures*               | Year of<br>inception | Registered<br>in |
|------|---|--|---|----------------------|------------------|
| 20   | Andrew W. Mellon Foundation                         | 6.4 billion <sup>v</sup>                       | 233 million <sup>v</sup>                      | 1969                 | USA              |
| 21   | John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation       | 6.3 billion <sup>w</sup>                       | 228 million <sup>w</sup>                      | 1970                 | USA              |
| 22   | The Pew Charitable Trusts                           | 6.2 billion <sup>x</sup>                       | 259 million <sup>x</sup>                      | 1948                 | USA              |
| 23   | Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation                | 6.2 billion <sup>y</sup><br>(SEK 40.5 billion) | 249 million <sup>z</sup><br>(SEK 1.7 billion) | 1917                 | Sweden           |
| 24   | Bloomberg Philanthropies                            | 5.4 billion <sup>aa</sup>                      | 204 million <sup>aa</sup>                     | 2004                 | USA              |
| 25   | The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust | 5.4 billion <sup>bb</sup>                      | 228 million <sup>bb</sup>                     | 1999                 | USA              |
| 26   | Rockefeller Foundation                              | 4.1 billion <sup>cc</sup>                      | 156 million <sup>cc</sup>                     | 1913                 | USA              |
| 27   | Tulsa Community Foundation                          | 4 billion <sup>dd</sup>                        | 130 million <sup>dd</sup>                     | 1998                 | USA              |

\* Most recent available data (as of July 2015).

Sources:

- a [www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Foundation-Factsheet](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Foundation-Factsheet)
- b [www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Publications/Annual-review/index.htm](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Publications/Annual-review/index.htm) (average exchange rate of year ended 30 September 2014)
- c [www.hhmi.org/sites/default/files/About/Financials/hhmi-fy2014-audited-statement.pdf](http://www.hhmi.org/sites/default/files/About/Financials/hhmi-fy2014-audited-statement.pdf)
- d [www.garfieldweston.org/\\_common/updateable/documents/36f67817-df97-476a-8525-77efa4c8d6.pdf](http://www.garfieldweston.org/_common/updateable/documents/36f67817-df97-476a-8525-77efa4c8d6.pdf) (average exchange rate of year ended 31/12/2014)
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- y [www.wallenberg.com/kaw/sites/default/files/files/pdf/kaw\\_2013.pdf](http://www.wallenberg.com/kaw/sites/default/files/files/pdf/kaw_2013.pdf) (average exchange rate of year ended 31/12/2013)
- z [www.wallenberg.com/kaw/stiftelsen/knut-och-alice-wallenbergs-stiftelse](http://www.wallenberg.com/kaw/stiftelsen/knut-och-alice-wallenbergs-stiftelse) (average exchange rate of year ended 31/12/2014)
- aa [http://990s.foundationcenter.org/990pf\\_pdf\\_archive/205/205602483/205602483\\_201312\\_990PF.pdf?\\_ga=1.233614428.350385442.1437554025](http://990s.foundationcenter.org/990pf_pdf_archive/205/205602483/205602483_201312_990PF.pdf?_ga=1.233614428.350385442.1437554025)
- bb <http://helmsleytrust.org/about-us>
- cc <http://annualreport2013.rockefellerfoundation.org/financials/stewardship>
- dd <https://tulsacf.org/about-tcf/tcf-by-the-numbers/>

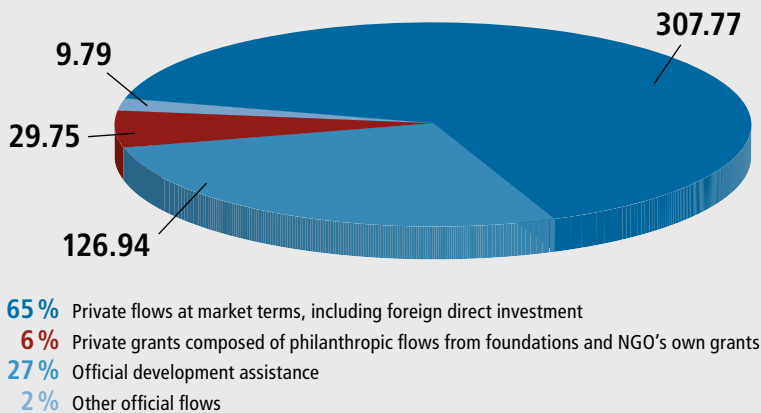
The total annual giving by US foundations is estimated at US\$54.7 billion (2013). Most of the grants are awarded to domestic activities, particularly in the areas of health and education,<sup>16</sup> but increasingly, some of the largest foundations are moving into global philanthropy, where their sheer size can give them enormous influence on global policy.

### Increase in global philanthropy

Global data on philanthropic contributions to international development is rarely available and not systematically collected, so estimates of the scale of these contributions vary. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports that in 2012, contributions from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private foundations represented 6 percent (US\$29.75 billion) of total flows from OECD-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) member countries to developing countries (see Figure 1).<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 1**

**Total net resource flows from DAC donors to developing countries in 2012 (in US\$ billions)**



Source: OECD (2014)

Since their early years, philanthropic foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation have been influential actors in global development, not only through their grant-making but also by shaping development concepts and policies, particularly in the areas of health (see section 2) and agriculture (see section 3).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. The Foundation Center (2014).

<sup>17</sup> The OECD does not provide any disaggregated amount for the contributions of NGOs and foundations.

What is novel is the scale of philanthropic funding available for development, the emphasis on international activities by leading foundations such as the Gates Foundation or the UN Foundation, and their influential role in shaping the development discourse and implementing development programmes beyond mere grant-making.

In 2012, the 1,000 largest US foundations gave US\$5.9 billion, or about 27 percent of their grants, to international activities. The major part of their total international giving was dedicated to health (US\$2.2 billion) and international development/humanitarian relief (US\$1.2 billion).<sup>18</sup> By far the largest donor has been, again, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with US\$2.6 billion (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

**Top 10 US foundations in terms of their international giving in 2012 (in US\$ millions)**

|    | Foundation                                    | Total international giving |
|----|---|----------------------------|
| 1  | Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation               | 2,600                      |
| 2  | Ford Foundation                               | 217                        |
| 3  | The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation      | 202                        |
| 4  | Susann Thompson Buffett Foundation            | 199                        |
| 5  | Walton Family Foundation                      | 167                        |
| 6  | Open Society Institute                        | 117                        |
| 7  | David and Lucile Packard Foundation           | 115                        |
| 8  | Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation             | 98                         |
| 9  | Foundation to Promote Open Society            | 92                         |
| 10 | John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation | 84                         |

Source: The Foundation Center (2014). The list includes indirect international giving through a national partner.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



**Box 2****The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is the largest philanthropic foundation in the world with an endowment of US\$42.9 billion (as of March 2015). The Gates Foundation describes its mission as follows:

“Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.”<sup>19</sup>

The Gates Foundation was established through a merger of the William H. Gates Foundation (established in 1994) and the Gates Learning Foundation (established in 1997 as Gates Library Foundation, renamed in 1999).<sup>20</sup> The Foundation endowment includes the combined donations of the Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, according to *Forbes* Magazine the richest man in the world,<sup>21</sup> and the No. 2 on the *Forbes* list investor Warren Buffet, owner of the conglomerate holding company Berkshire Hathaway. Warren Buffet joined the foundation in 2006, when he pledged over US\$30 billion to be disbursed in several installments to the Foundation. As of June 2015 he has contributed US\$15.11 billion in Berkshire Hathaway shares to the Foundation endowment.

Since 2006, the Foundation has been structured in two separate entities. One entity, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, distributes money to grantees. The other, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Trust, manages the endowment assets. This structure enables Gates to separate the programme work from the investment of the assets.<sup>22</sup> The total awarded grants since the Foundation’s inception was US\$33.5 billion (as of March 2015), with US\$3.9 billion spent in 2014 alone.<sup>23</sup>

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is organized in four main grant-making areas: the Global Development Programme; the Global Health Programme; the Global Policy and Advocacy Programme; and the United States Programme. Global Health has been the largest programme area so far with cumulative grants of US\$15.6 billion.

The Foundation is governed by the three trustees, Bill Gates, Melinda Gates and Warren Buffet and led by CEO Susan Desmond-Hellmann and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr. Its headquarters are based in Seattle, Washington. The Foundation has several regional offices, in Addis Ababa, Abuja, Johannesburg, Delhi, Beijing, Washington D.C., and London, with a total of 1,376 employees.

19 [www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Foundation-Factsheet](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Foundation-Factsheet).

20 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Leadership/Executive-Leadership-Team/William-H-Gates-Sr](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Leadership/Executive-Leadership-Team/William-H-Gates-Sr).

21 In June 2015, Bill Gates’ net worth was estimated US\$79.6 billion, cf. [www.forbes.com/profile/bill-gates/?list=billionaires](http://www.forbes.com/profile/bill-gates/?list=billionaires).

22 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Financials](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Financials).

23 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Foundation-Factsheet](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Foundation-Factsheet).

In 2009 Bill and Melinda Gates together with Warren Buffet started what the US magazine *Fortune* later called “the biggest fundraising drive in history.”<sup>24</sup> With their campaign *The Giving Pledge*<sup>25</sup> they asked the world’s wealthiest individuals and families to dedicate the majority of their wealth to philanthropy. By mid-2015 137 billionaires from 14 countries joined the Buffet-Gates *Giving Pledge*, among them former Mayor of New York City Michael Bloomberg, US filmmaker George Lucas, and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

The increase in philanthropic giving is just the other side of the coin of growing inequality between rich and poor.

If these and more ultra rich fulfill their pledges, many billions of dollars will be made available for charitable purposes. It must be noted, however, that the increase in philanthropic giving is just the other side of the coin of growing inequality between rich and poor. Linsey McGoey, lecturer in the Department of Sociology of the University of Essex, rightly explained:

”We have seen an incredible enrichment of the wealthiest individuals on a global level, and there is a direct correlation between increased wealth accumulation, regressive tax measures, and funding towards philanthropic activities. Philanthropy may be growing, but only in the context of rampant inequality.”<sup>26</sup>

### Foundations as emerging development actors

Estimates for foundations-only total spending on international development range from about US\$3 billion in the early 2000s, to US\$7–\$9.5 billion in 2009.<sup>27</sup> Since then the overall amount of philanthropic funding has further increased, and with it the role of private foundations in development cooperation and policy.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated in its response to an evaluation of UNDP partnerships with global funds and philanthropic foundations in 2012:

”In addition to committing much larger amounts of money, foundations have fundamentally changed the ways they operate and the roles they play in international development.”<sup>28</sup>

24 <http://fortune.com/2010/06/16/the-600-billion-challenge/>.

25 Cf. <http://givingpledge.org/>.

26 Linsey McGoey in an interview on “Philanthrocapitalism, the Gates Foundation and global health” in April 2013, cf. [www.hinnovic.org/philanthrocapitalism-gates-foundation-global-health-with-linsey-mcgoey/](http://www.hinnovic.org/philanthrocapitalism-gates-foundation-global-health-with-linsey-mcgoey/).

27 Cf. Edwards (2011).

28 UN Doc. DP/2012/24, para. 49.

The UNDP report concluded:

”Foundations see themselves as fully fledged development partners rather than donors, and expect close involvement in activities such as policy discussions, advocacy and problem analysis. They have become a source of valuable development knowledge. They run highly visible campaigns in the media and influence international development policy.“<sup>29</sup>

In a speech to the Global Philanthropy Forum Conference 2015, delivered by Amina J. Mohammed, UN Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon praised this development:

”I am heartened by the key role philanthropy has been playing as a driver of social, economic and political transformation. Philanthropy has flexible capital and can reach scale and greater impact by collaborating with official development actors and Governments. Yet, we need to go beyond viewing philanthropy as a gap-filler for Government. Philanthropy brings new actors and approaches. It can be innovative and path-breaking (...).“<sup>30</sup>

Another important player in terms of influencing global development policy is the UN Foundation. Indeed, the UN Foundation plays a particular role in this regard, due to its exclusive relationship with the UN and the UN Secretary-General, and is discussed in some detail in section 4.

### **The role of foundations in the Post-2015 process**

In terms of the UN development system, the activities around a new Post-2015 agenda provided a particular occasion for increased philanthropic engagement, joining corporate actors in promoting a market-based business model of development. The Gates Foundation and the UN Foundation, in particular, were actively involved in the debates on what a future UN development agenda could look like. They influenced the process not only through their funding but also through their advocacy activities and direct interventions—a role that is expected to continue through the process of implementing what is henceforth the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

**The Gates Foundation and the UN Foundation were actively involved in the debates on the future UN development agenda.**

In 2010, Bill Gates was appointed by the UN Secretary-General to his MDG Advocacy Group to support him in building political will, rallying additional support, and spurring collective action to achieve the

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., para. 54.

<sup>30</sup> [www.un.org/press/en/2015/sgsm16696.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sgsm16696.doc.htm).

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.<sup>31</sup> Three years later, Bill and Melinda Gates along with a youth representative were the only “civil society” speakers in the plenary of the Special Event of the UN General Assembly on the MDGs and Post 2015 in September 2013.

While advancing their business model, foundations joined rich countries in pushing a set of limited, and simplified goals, focused again on developing countries. In 2010, Mark Suzman, Managing Director for International Policy, Programmes, & Advocacy at the Gates Foundation, speaking at the UN on issues of health as well as hunger, food security and nutrition, called for simplicity and measurability of the new development goals and highlighted the need for technically feasible and “not pie-in-the-sky aspirational targets.”<sup>32</sup> He further stated:

”There is a danger that in trying to create the perfect framework that fully encapsulates global development challenges, we lose the power of the goals as a global collective agreement to address some of the most egregious contributions to and manifestations of extreme poverty in the world, including preventable disease and death.”<sup>33</sup>

Since then representatives of the Gates Foundation have repeatedly expressed their fundamental scepticism towards the comprehensive and universal approach of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An article by the *Humanosphere* blog reported that the SDGs were critiqued by various participants at the Gates Foundation’s 2015 Global Partners Forum, including Bill Gates and Mark Suzman.<sup>34</sup> Suzman stated: “The challenge of having 17 goals and 169 targets is that it’s very difficult to focus or set priorities.”<sup>35</sup>

The concern at the forum appeared to be that the SDGs were looking more like vague aspirational goals, and moving away from the allegedly successful strategy of focusing on a limited set of simple, easily identified goals. Instead of supporting the holistic approach of the SDGs, which, owing to the insistence of developing countries, are to apply to all countries, not just the developing ones, the Gates Foundation announced that it intends to keep its narrow focus on development and extreme poverty in the global South.

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31 Cf. [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/advocates/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/advocates/index.shtml).

32 [www.gatesfoundation.org/media-center/speeches/2013/03/high-level-dialogue-on-health-in-the-post-2015-development-agenda](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/media-center/speeches/2013/03/high-level-dialogue-on-health-in-the-post-2015-development-agenda).

33 Ibid.

34 Cf. Paulson (2015a).

35 Cf. Paulson (2015b).

“Our focus at the Gates Foundation is to finish the agenda set by the MDGs and to make sure the current momentum is not lost,” said Suzman, adding that the philanthropy continues to believe health goals should be prioritized as they were in the MDGs.<sup>36</sup>

In line with this strategy, the Gates Foundation approved, for instance, a grant of US\$6.5 million, in February 2015, to support the Global Poverty Project in building “a critical mass of global citizens who will campaign for and increase political support for the goals, particularly those that focus on reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health.”<sup>37</sup> The US-based Global Poverty Project “advocates and campaigns to enable a global environment in which nonprofits, corporates, and multi-laterals can work most effectively together to achieve an end to extreme poverty.”<sup>38</sup>

The UN Foundation was engaged even more actively than the Gates Foundation in the Post-2015 process, working closely with the UN Secretary-General, and is expected to continue this role in implementing the SDGs. At the request of the Office of the UN Secretary-General, the UN Foundation, with support from the Gates Foundation, provided the initial funds (through the UN Fund for International Partnerships) to support the position of the Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, Amina Mohammed.<sup>39</sup> In addition, the UN Foundation hosted several off-the-record meetings for UN Member States and other actors to informally explore ideas relating to the Post-2015 process. The UN Foundation describes its activities in the Post-2015 process as follows:

- » “Supporting the Secretary-General’s office and the UN system by convening forums for discussion and augmenting their capacity for outreach to key stakeholders. This includes connecting developing country think tanks, thought leaders, civil society, and private sector partners to the global dialogue.
- » “Serving as a resource by tracking and curating post-2015 conversations and analysis, including the dialogue in New York, online, and globally, and providing regular updates to interested partners.
- » “Convening informal meetings and workshops on thematic issues to foster constructive member state dialogue, including engaging the U.S. government and the Washington, DC policy community.”<sup>40</sup>

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36 Ibid.

37 [www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2015/02/OPP1126535](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2015/02/OPP1126535).

38 [www.globalpovertyproject.com/advocacy/](http://www.globalpovertyproject.com/advocacy/).

39 Cf. UN Secretary-General (2013), para. 35.

40 [www.unfoundation.org/what-we-do/working-with-the-un/post-2015-development-agenda/](http://www.unfoundation.org/what-we-do/working-with-the-un/post-2015-development-agenda/).

In order to engage the philanthropic sector even better in the Post-2015 Agenda and its implementation several foundations led by the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors created the Post-2015 Partnership Platform for Philanthropy (see Box 3).

### Box 3

#### The Post-2015 Partnership Platform for Philanthropy

In order to enable the philanthropic sector to play a more active role in the planning and implementation of the SDGs and to serve as a strategic partner to the UN system and governments around the globe, a Post-2015 Partnership Platform for Philanthropy was launched during the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in September 2014.<sup>41</sup> Initiators of this new platform were UNDP together with the Foundation Center, the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Ford Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, MasterCard Foundation and the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support.

At the UN General Assembly hearings on the Post-2015 Agenda in May 2015, Vice President of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors Heather Grady explained their expectations as follows:

“We don’t want to be just another ‘non state actor’, one not even mentioned within the Major Groups. And we see recognition in the High Level Political Forum and Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation processes as positive steps forward in this regard. (...) First, the UN and governments must open your arms and create a more enabling environment for philanthropy, domestically and across borders.”<sup>42</sup>

The four overarching objectives of the new Post-2015 Partnership Platform for Philanthropy are to:

1. Create a means for philanthropy to engage better as a partner in the Post-2015 Agenda.
2. Create new methods of outreach and engagement to connect philanthropy to development ecosystems.
3. Develop country-level structures that identify opportunities for philanthropy and partners to collaborate.
4. Make data on philanthropic investments more accessible to track progress, find partners, and tell stories about effective collaborative efforts.<sup>43</sup>

The initiators of the platform announced to launch the website [www.SDGFunders.org](http://www.SDGFunders.org) in September 2015 as “an entirely new, innovative, and responsive resource for all interested in these issues.”<sup>44</sup>

41 Cf. UNDP/Foundation Center/Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/Conrad N. Hilton Foundation/MasterCard Foundation/Ford Foundation (2014).

42 Grady (2015), p. 2.

43 UNDP/Foundation Center/Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors/ Conrad N. Hilton Foundation/The MasterCard Foundation/ Ford Foundation (2014), p. 3.

44 Business Sector Steering Committee (2015), p. 67.

## So, what's the problem?

Philanthropic foundations have been playing a growing role in global development policy. In times of stagnating official development assistance and underfunded multilateral organizations, the increase in philanthropic giving for development seems to be urgently needed. In addition, their advocacy for global causes puts pressure on governments and sometimes the private sector, to become more actively engaged, for instance in the fight against HIV/AIDS or the support of global vaccine campaigns.

However, the rapidly growing role of philanthropists and their foundations might bring a number of risks and side effects that have not received careful consideration yet. The important role being allocated to the philanthropic sector in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda makes the discussion of its role a matter of urgency.

The influence of large foundations in shaping the global development agenda, including health, food, nutrition and agriculture, which are discussed in the following sections raises a number of concerns in terms of how it is affecting governments and the UN development system. As the UN accelerates its engagement with the business and corporate sector, as well as philanthropic foundations, it lacks the rules and tools needed to ensure it does not lose sight of its original mission. In this regard, several questions need further exploration, for example:

- » Growing influence: Do wealthy philanthropists and their foundations have undue influence over agenda setting, sidelining the role of governments and shifting the UN away from its mission to uphold global norms and standards?
- » Philanthrocapitalism: What is the impact of framing the problems and defining development solutions by applying the business logic of profit-making institutions to philanthropic activities, for instance by results-based management or the focus on technological quick-win solutions in the sectors of health and agriculture?
- » Fragmentation and weakening of global governance: How to challenge the power of foundations to influence countries to accept isolated solutions, which are poorly coordinated, hinder comprehensive development strategies, and contribute to the weakening of the United Nations and representative democracy (governments and parliaments)?
- » Unstable financing – a threat to the sufficient provision of public goods: Will the funding of the UN become increasingly privatized and dependent on voluntary and ultimately unpredictable channels of financing through benevolent individuals and private philanthropic foundations?

Do wealthy philanthropists and their foundations have undue influence over agenda setting?

- » Lack of monitoring and accountability mechanisms: What instruments should be put in place to guarantee that philanthropic foundations act in an open and transparent manner and can be held accountable for their actions?

This working paper cannot discuss all these questions in detail. The sections that follow will address some of them by taking a closer look at the role of philanthropic foundations, and particularly two of the most prominent ones, the Rockefeller and Gates Foundation, in two crucial sectors, health and agriculture.



## 2. Philanthropic influence and the global health agenda

Health and particularly disease eradication have been a major focus of philanthropic foundations from the beginning, going back to the 1930s. Combating diseases such as hookworm or yellow fever were among the first projects of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation. In the first half of the last century, especially the Rockefeller Foundation was influential in shaping the discourse around global health challenges and the institutional structure of global health governance. Comprehensively analyzing the Rockefeller Foundation's interventions, one public health expert concludes:

The Rockefeller Foundation was influential in shaping the discourse around global health.

“In sum, the RF [Rockefeller Foundation] was involved in all aspects of public health: ideas, theory, research, professional training, practice, implementation, organization and institution building. As the only health agency truly operating internationally until the founding of the WHO [World Health Organization] in 1948, it helped to shape global public health to a greater extent than any other organization of its day.”<sup>45</sup>

Since the turn of the millennium, however, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has grown to become the leading actor in global health. The Foundation spends enormous resources for global health programmes and exerts tremendous agenda setting power in global health governance. Since its inception, the Gates Foundation has provided more than US\$18.3 billion in grants to health research institutes, NGOs, public-private partnerships and international organizations such as the World Health Organization.<sup>46</sup>

In 2012 and 2013, the amount spent by the Gates Foundation on global health was half of WHO's total biennial budget (Gates Foundation: US\$1.98 billion; WHO: US\$3.96 billion).<sup>47</sup> The Gates Foundation was the second largest donor of development assistance to health in 2012–2013 (US\$1.74 billion), behind the USA (US\$6.98 billion).<sup>48</sup> The Gates Foundation is not only the largest donor for many of the global public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the health sector, such as the Tuberculosis (TB) Alliance, Medicines for Malaria Venture, the International Partnership for Microbicides, and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization

45 Birn (2006), p. 31f.

46 Cf. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Annual Reports 1999–2013.

47 Cf. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2013) and (2014) and WHO (2013c).

48 Cf. OECD-DAC (2015), p. 1.

(GAVI Alliance), but it has also become the driving force behind these initiatives bringing public and private actors together.

### **The early years: Rockefeller Foundation influence in shaping global health policy**

The first grantee of the Rockefeller Foundation was the American Red Cross in December 1913, symbolizing the Foundation's focus on public health in the early years of its existence.<sup>49</sup> Right from its start the foundation had an international focus. Already in 1914 it established the International Health Commission, which initially led overseas projects in China and several Latin American countries.<sup>50</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation opened regional field offices in Paris, New Delhi, Cali and Mexico, and stationed hundreds of officers around the world.<sup>51</sup>

The Foundation's approach to health challenges was mainly informed by Frederick Gates, a former Baptist Minister (no relation to Bill Gates), who became the principal advisor of John D. Rockefeller Senior, the founder of the Rockefeller Foundation. Gates was strongly convinced of the capacity of medical science to overcome disease, which he viewed as "the supreme ill in human life."<sup>52</sup> Throughout the years, science-enabled innovations based on a biomedical view of public health and the embrace of new technologies were key to the Rockefeller Foundation's approach to tackling global health problems. This was true despite the fact that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century public health improvements were mainly coming about through improvements in social conditions (e.g., hygiene, nutrition, improved housing and education).

Examples of the science-enabled innovation favoured by the Foundation included the first yellow fever vaccine, developed at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, and the eradication of the malaria vector, the *Anopheles gambiae* mosquito, in Brazil in the 1930s.<sup>53</sup> These successes helped the Rockefeller Foundation in its effort to spread its approach to tackling public health problems through large technically-based disease eradication and family-planning campaigns, integrating it into the newly emerging public health systems around the world. They did this not only by funding hospitals, universities and churches to support education, research and medicine, but also by creating an epistemic community around global health issues. The Foundation created post-secondary schools of public health in the USA and in twenty-one other countries,<sup>54</sup> supporting

49 Cf. The Rockefeller Foundation (1915), p. 198.

50 Cf. <http://rockefeller100.org/exhibits/show/education/china-medical-board>.

51 Cf. [www.rockarch.org/collections/rf/](http://www.rockarch.org/collections/rf/).

52 [www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/our-history/](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/our-history/).

53 Cf. <http://rockefeller100.org/exhibits/show/health/yellow-fever>.

54 Cf. [www.rockarch.org/bio/jdrs.php?printer=1](http://www.rockarch.org/bio/jdrs.php?printer=1).

advanced training to the future public health elite in these countries, and provided thousands of fellowships to public health students from around the world.<sup>55</sup>

Other successful Rockefeller Foundation campaigns have also been influential in shaping public health policies, notably the hookworm eradication campaign in Mexico in the 1920s. Rockefeller Foundation analysts Birn and Solórzano describe the hookworm programme's inherent aim as

“persuading government officials, the medical community, business interests, and the populace of the value of investing in public health as a means to improve social conditions, further a medical model of health and sickness, increase economic productivity, and promote good relations between the US and Mexico.”<sup>56</sup>

In the following years, most of the Foundation's health campaigns were implemented in close collaboration with governments, combining technical strategies with large-scale government policies. Often, these campaigns contained national co-financing obligations that typically went from 20 percent of the costs to 100 percent within just a few years, and subsequently were transformed into permanent national agencies.<sup>57</sup>

The Rockefeller Foundation was not only influential in embedding its science-enabled innovation approach into national health systems around the world, it also influenced international health organizations to do this. Following World War I, the Foundation was the largest contributor to the League of Nations Health Organization (LNHO), the first multilateral health institution, accounting for one third to one half of its budget.<sup>58</sup> It also supported the LNHO in staff recruitment, and many of the LNHO's staff were former Foundation fellows. It also seconded staff to the advisory board.<sup>59</sup> After the creation of the WHO in 1948, Rockefeller Foundation staff also got leadership positions there, as for example Paul Russell who became head of WHO's Global Malaria Eradication Programme. Many of WHO's programmes initially followed the Rockefeller Foundation's technical approach to health problems, often with unfortunate consequences, such as adopting the use of the pesticide DDT to battle malaria as done by the Rockefeller Foundation's malaria programme.<sup>60</sup>

Since the 1950s, the Rockefeller Foundation has established several global networks of health scientists and governments, such as the International

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55 Cf. [www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/our-history/](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/our-history/).

56 Birn/Solórzano (1999), p. 1210.

57 Cf. Birn (2014), p. 5.

58 Cf. Stevenson (2014), pp. 85–86.

59 Cf. Stevenson (2014), p. 87.

60 Cf. Stevenson (2014), p. 88.

Clinical Epidemiology Network (established in 1980), which focuses on disease research and the development of new treatment techniques.<sup>61</sup> Since the 1980s, it has played a leading role in creating novel institutional frameworks to address global health challenges. It initiated several product development oriented partnerships, so-called product development partnerships (PDPs), such as the Children's Vaccine Initiative (established in 1990), the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) (1994) and the TB Alliance (2000), bringing together international organizations, governments, pharmaceutical companies, NGOs and other philanthropic foundations, particularly the Ford Foundation. PDPs use public and philanthropic funds to engage the pharmaceutical industry and academic research institutions in undertaking research and development with regard to neglected diseases.

Already in 1977, the Ford Foundation had initiated the Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH, initially called PIACT). One of the first PDPs, the purpose of PATH is to accelerate innovation and technologies on vaccines, drugs, diagnostics, devices, health systems and services through public-private collaboration.<sup>62</sup>

### The entry of the Gates Foundation into the global health arena

The Bill & Melinda  
Gates Children's  
Vaccine Programme  
prepared the ground for  
the family's interest in  
global health.

In 1998, before the official establishment of the Gates Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates created the Bill & Melinda Gates Children's Vaccine Programme and equipped it with a donation of US\$100 million. This programme, administered by PATH's secretariat at its Seattle-based headquarters,<sup>63</sup> prepared the ground for the family's interest in global health and for the approach it followed in all of its activities in this area. One purpose of the Children's Vaccine Programme was the establishment of international consensus on recommendations for vaccine use. A Foundation press release states:

"Efforts will be made to support international conferences and the development and dissemination of strong international consensus statements and recommendations for use of the new vaccines. This is critical to empowering ministries of health, multilateral agencies and bilateral donors who can help to finance vaccines for poorer countries."<sup>64</sup>

61 Cf. <http://incentrust.org/inclen/page.php?id=190>.

62 Cf. [www.path.org/about/index.php](http://www.path.org/about/index.php).

63 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/1998/12/Bill-and-Melinda-Gates-Childrens-Vaccine-Program](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/1998/12/Bill-and-Melinda-Gates-Childrens-Vaccine-Program).

64 [www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/1998/12/Bill-and-Melinda-Gates-Childrens-Vaccine-Program](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/1998/12/Bill-and-Melinda-Gates-Childrens-Vaccine-Program).

Subsequently Gates sponsored several meetings that led to the creation of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) Alliance. The Gates Foundation provided an initial five-year pledge of US\$750 million as seed money to launch this global public-private partnership in 2000 and has remained its driving force and its largest donor. Between 2000 and 2014 the Gates Foundation contributed 23 percent (US\$2,287.94 million) of the total donor funding of around US\$9.9 billion.<sup>65</sup>

Overall, the Gates Foundation allocated US\$15.7 billion in grants to global health as part of its Global Health Programme (see Table 3). In addition, it spent US\$2.6 billion for activities with a health component as part of its Global Development Programme. Additional smaller grants

**Table 3**
**Gates Foundation health expenditures 1999–2013**  
 (in US\$ thousands)

| Year         | Global Health Programme | Global Development Programme—<br>health components |
|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| 1999         | 686,000                 | —  |
| 2000         | 554,466                 | —  |
| 2001         | 855,567                 | —  |
| 2002         | 507,040                 | —  |
| 2003         | 576,624                 | —  |
| 2004         | 442,000                 | —  |
| 2005         | 843,700                 | —  |
| 2006         | 916,339                 | 63,378 <sup>a</sup>                                |
| 2007         | 1,220,008               | 74,866 <sup>a</sup>                                |
| 2008         | 1,818,624               | 55,624 <sup>a</sup>                                |
| 2009         | 1,826,446               | 54,134 <sup>a</sup>                                |
| 2010         | 1,485,337               | 44,062 <sup>a</sup>                                |
| 2011         | 1,977,507               | 63,476 <sup>a</sup>                                |
| 2012         | 892,868                 | 1,030,859 <sup>b</sup>                             |
| 2013         | 1,088,000               | 1,191,930 <sup>c</sup>                             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>15,690,526</b>       | <b>2,578,329</b>                                   |

Source: Annual Reports of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (1999–2013) and Grants Database ([www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database)).

a includes the component water, sanitation & hygiene.

b includes the components polio eradication; vaccine delivery; integrated delivery; family planning; family health; and water, sanitation & hygiene.

c includes the components polio eradication; vaccine delivery; integrated delivery; family planning; maternal newborn & child health; nutrition; and water, sanitation & hygiene.

65 Cf. [www.gavi.org/funding/donor-contributions-pledges/](http://www.gavi.org/funding/donor-contributions-pledges/).

were dedicated to special health purposes such as the Vaccine Summit in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in April 2013.

### **Vaccines to the rescue: quick-win solution to global health challenges**

The Gates Foundation approach to global health challenges follows the spirit of the Rockefeller Foundation, focusing on biomedical solutions. The Gates Foundation's global health programme's declared aim is to:

“[H]arness advances in science and technology to save lives in developing countries. We work with partners to deliver proven tools—including vaccines, drugs, and diagnostics—as well as discover pathbreaking new solutions that are affordable and reliable. Equally important is innovation in how we bring health interventions to those who need them most. We invest heavily in vaccines to prevent infectious diseases—including HIV, polio, and malaria—and support the development of integrated health solutions for family planning, nutrition, and maternal and child health.”<sup>66</sup>

The Foundation considers vaccines as ‘catalytic’ interventions that can stimulate major progress in health. In December 2014, Bill Gates described “The Miracle of Vaccines” on his personal blog:

”Vaccines save lives, which is reason enough to make sure they get out there. But that’s not their only benefit. Healthy children spend more time in school, and they learn better while they’re there. When health improves, poor countries can spend more on schools, roads, and other investments that drive growth, which makes them less dependent on aid. Vaccines deliver all this for, in some cases, just pennies per shot. That’s why I say that if you want to save and improve lives around the world, vaccines are a fantastic investment.”<sup>67</sup>

“If you want to save and improve lives around the world, vaccines are a fantastic investment.”

Consequently, the Gates Foundation's grant-making focuses on programmes to discover, develop and deliver proven and new vaccines, focusing initially on malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. To date, the Gates Foundation has committed nearly US\$2 billion in grants to combat malaria and in addition more than US\$1.6 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, commonly referred to as the Global Fund.<sup>68</sup> At least 20 of the 50 largest grants in the field of global health awarded by the Gates Foundation focus on research and development of new vaccines and drugs, mainly against the three infectious diseases HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

66 [www.gatesfoundation.org/what-we-do](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/what-we-do).

67 [www.gatesnotes.com/Health/The-Miracle-of-Vaccines](http://www.gatesnotes.com/Health/The-Miracle-of-Vaccines).

68 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Health/Malaria](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Health/Malaria).

The GAVI Alliance is the most prominent example of Gates' engagement. Despite the undisputed increase in the number of immunized children, GAVI has been criticized by civil society organizations (CSOs) and researchers for following a "Gates-approach" on global health challenges, focusing on disease-specific vertical health interventions (through vaccines), instead of horizontal and holistic approaches (e.g., health system strengthening).<sup>69</sup> Responding to the criticism, in 2005, GAVI included a health system strengthening support window into its programme portfolio.<sup>70</sup> However, only 10.6 percent (US\$862.5 million) of GAVI's total commitments between 2000 and 2013 have been dedicated to health system strengthening, whereas more than 78.6 percent (US\$6,405.4 million) have been used for vaccine support.<sup>71</sup>

One of the key initiatives supported by the Gates Foundation is GAVI's Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) model. This seeks to incentivize manufacturers to increase production of pneumococcal vaccine (PCV) in order to meet developing country demand, and offer the vaccine at a lower price per dose than in rich countries.<sup>72</sup> Under the Pneumococcal AMC, for instance, companies sign legally-binding agreements to supply their vaccines at a price no higher than US\$3.50 for 10 years, to be paid by GAVI and the countries receiving the vaccine. For approximately 20 percent of the doses, companies also receive an additional payment of US\$3.50 for each dose they provide, which is paid out of AMC funds. AMC funds are managed by the World Bank and currently at US\$1.5 billion, including commitments from five countries (Italy, UK, Canada, Russia, and Norway) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (US\$50 million).<sup>73</sup> By March 2015, the two pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) had received US\$1.095 billion out of the AMC funds.<sup>74</sup>

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) states that, while GAVI has helped to lower prices of new and underused vaccines for eligible countries, the cost to fully immunize a child was 68 times more expensive in 2014 than it was in 2001.<sup>75</sup> It remains to be seen, however, how countries receiving temporary access to GAVI-subsidized vaccines will face the challenge of meeting the higher cost of new vaccines and fully self-financing their national immunization programmes after they lose GAVI support. For this reason, MSF is calling for the pharmaceutical companies to lower

The cost to fully immunize a child was 68 times more expensive in 2014 than it was in 2001.

69 Cf. Storeng (2014).

70 Cf. [www.gavi.org/support/hss/](http://www.gavi.org/support/hss/).

71 In addition, of the total commitments of US\$8.2 billion, 4.4% have been dedicated to immunization services support, 3.6% to operational support, 1.4% to injection safety support, 1.1% to vaccine introduction grant, 0.3% to civil society organizations, and 0.02% to human papillomavirus demonstration project cash support. Cf. GAVI (2014), p. 6.

72 Cf. [www.gavi.org/funding/pneumococcal-amc/about/](http://www.gavi.org/funding/pneumococcal-amc/about/).

73 Cf. [www.gavi.org/funding/pneumococcal-amc/how-the-pneumococcal-amc-works/](http://www.gavi.org/funding/pneumococcal-amc/how-the-pneumococcal-amc-works/).

74 Cf. GAVI (2015), p. 6.

75 Cf. MSF (2015).

their prices for vaccines, especially for the PCV provided by Pfizer and GSK.<sup>76</sup> But Bill Gates dismissed this criticism, saying immunization “is the cheapest thing ever done in health”:

“This general thing where organisations come out and say, “hey, why don’t vaccines cost zero?” – all that does is that you have some pharma companies that choose never to do medicines for poor countries because they know that this always just becomes a source of criticism. So they don’t do any R&D [research and development] on any product that would help poor countries. Then they’re not criticised at all because they don’t have anything that these people are saying they should price at zero.”<sup>77</sup>

Another thing MSF pointed out was needed is greater transparency in the negotiations between GAVI and pharmaceutical companies regarding the prices for the vaccines distributed by GAVI,<sup>78</sup> calling for the elimination of conflicts of interest within GAVI by excluding pharmaceutical companies from the board of directors and from GAVI governance structures in general.<sup>79</sup> In fact, GAVI has adopted a hybrid governance structure, which includes non-state actors such as pharmaceutical corporations in its decision-making processes and allocates seats accordingly. Beside the 13 members from governments and international organizations, two representatives from the vaccine industry (Sanofi Pasteur and Serum Institute of India Ltd.) are members of the GAVI Alliance board.<sup>80</sup> In addition, several representatives from auditing companies, banks, investment companies, and foundations are among the nine “independent” board members “with no professional connection to Gavi’s work.”<sup>81</sup>

In contrast to the relative weight accorded to private-sector actors, only one seat in the GAVI Alliance board is reserved for a CSO representative (currently represented by Joan Awunyo-Akaba, Executive Director of Future Generations International). Together with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), WHO and the World Bank, the Gates Foundation holds a permanent seat at the GAVI Alliance board. It is currently occupied by Orin Levine, director of the Gates Foundation’s Vaccine Delivery Programme. In addition, the Gates Foundation is represented by Violaine Mitchell, Deputy Director of Country Immunization Programmes, in GAVI’s Programme and Policy Committee.<sup>82</sup>

76 Cf. [www.msf.org/article/access-msf-calls-gsk-and-pfizer-slash-pneumo-vaccine-price-5-child-poor-countries-ahead](http://www.msf.org/article/access-msf-calls-gsk-and-pfizer-slash-pneumo-vaccine-price-5-child-poor-countries-ahead).

77 Boseley (2015)

78 Cf. MSF (2015).

79 Cf. MSF (2011).

80 Cf. [www.gavi.org/about/governance/gavi-board/members/](http://www.gavi.org/about/governance/gavi-board/members/).

81 [www.gavi.org/about/governance/gavi-board/composition/independent-individuals/](http://www.gavi.org/about/governance/gavi-board/composition/independent-individuals/).

82 Cf. [www.gavi.org/about/partners/bmgf/](http://www.gavi.org/about/partners/bmgf/).



## Gates Foundation calls for a “Decade of Vaccines”

At the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2010, Bill and Melinda Gates called for the next ten years to be a “Decade of Vaccines.” They pledged US\$10 billion to prevent four million deaths a year by increasing access to effective but underused vaccines and introducing new vaccines.<sup>83</sup>

The Foundation accompanied this call with several communication and advocacy activities. In December 2010, the WHO, UNICEF, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) together with the Gates Foundation proclaimed the Decade of Vaccines Collaboration, designed to increase coordination across the international vaccine community and to create a Global Vaccine Action Plan.<sup>84</sup> Christopher Elias, former President and CEO of PATH and now director of the Gates Foundation’s Global Development Programme, was appointed co-chair of the Steering Committee and the Secretariat. Tachi Yamada, former President of Global Health at the Gates Foundation became a member of the Leadership Council. Foundation staff co-authored the Global Vaccine Action Plan, which was adopted in May 2012 by the World Health Assembly.<sup>85</sup>

## Gates Foundation support to the World Health Organization (WHO)

Since 1998, the Gates Foundation and its predecessor, the William H. Gates Foundation, have donated US\$2.1 billion by way of more than 200 grants to the WHO (see Table 4).<sup>86</sup> This makes the Foundation the largest non-state funder of the WHO and, in 2014, the second largest donor overall (after the USA). The Gates Foundation’s grants are earmarked contributions and as such influence, *de facto*, the priority setting of the WHO.

In 2014, the Gates Foundation was the second largest donor of the WHO.

Not directly referring to the Gates Foundation but to the general problem of earmarked funds, which are limited to specific programmes or programme areas, WHO Director-General Margaret Chan admitted as much when she said, “(m)y budget [is] highly earmarked, so it is driven by what I call donor interests.”<sup>87</sup>

So far, most of the Gates Foundation’s grants to WHO have been dedicated to polio eradication (US\$1,168,711,569), global policy and ad-

83 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2010/01/Bill-and-Melinda-Gates-Pledge-\\$10-Billion-in-Call-for-Decade-of-Vaccines](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2010/01/Bill-and-Melinda-Gates-Pledge-$10-Billion-in-Call-for-Decade-of-Vaccines).

84 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2010/12/Global-Health-Leaders-Launch-Decade-of-Vaccines-Collaboration](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2010/12/Global-Health-Leaders-Launch-Decade-of-Vaccines-Collaboration).

85 Cf. WHO (2013b).

86 Cf. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grants Database ([www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database)), as of the end of 2014.

87 Quoted in Fink (2014).

vocacy (US\$146,044,131), and maternal, newborn and child health (US\$132,010,782).<sup>88</sup>

**Table 4**

**Gates Foundation grants to the WHO 1998–2014 (in US\$)**

| Year             | Grants               |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 2009 and earlier | 1,306,365,195        |
| 2010             | 41,452,186           |
| 2011             | 69,723,900           |
| 2012             | 164,726,386          |
| 2013             | 343,100,855          |
| 2014             | 173,008,473          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>2,098,376,995</b> |

Source: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grants Database

In addition, the Gates Foundation also contributes indirectly to the WHO budget through its funding of the GAVI Alliance, PATH, the UN Foundation and the Global Fund, all of which provide substantial funding to WHO programmes. GAVI alone contributed US\$222.94 million to the WHO in the biennium 2012–2013.<sup>89</sup>

The important role the Gates Foundation plays in the WHO budget is due not only to the Foundation's determination to show the efficacy of its stepped up efforts to tackle disease eradication but also to the failure of WHO Member States to adequately support the organization's longer term budget proposals, particularly with regard to emergency preparedness. In order to allocate more resources to the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, the WHO budget allocations to outbreak and crisis response were reduced by more than 50 percent between 2012–2013 and 2014–2015—from US\$469 million to US\$228 million. WHO has laid off about a third of its emergency health staff since 2009, when funding shortfalls resulting from the global financial crisis first hit the emergency preparedness and crisis response department.<sup>90</sup>

88 Cf. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grants Database ([www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database)), as of the end of 2014.

89 Cf. WHO (2013a, 2014).

90 Cf. Adams/Martens (2015), ch. 3.

The funding shortfalls and shortage of staff with appropriate experience contributed to WHO's too-late and inadequate response to the Ebola crisis, as the organization has acknowledged in its recent statement.<sup>91</sup>

### Driving force behind global health partnerships

The Gates Foundation supports a wide range of actors in global health, from scientists to NGOs and international organizations. But its major support goes to public-private partnerships focusing on specific communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, all of which have received large Gates Foundation contributions (see Table 5). An analysis of twenty-three global health partnerships by political economists Buse and Harmer in 2007 revealed that seven relied entirely on Gates Foundation funding and another nine listed the Gates Foundation as the single largest donor.<sup>92</sup>

**Table 5**

#### **Gates Foundation grants to global health partnerships 1998–March 2015 (in US\$)**

| <b>Global Health Partnership</b>                          | <b>Amount</b> |
|---|---------------|
| GAVI Alliance   | 2,725,538,000 |
| Medicines for Malaria Venture                             | 541,117,507   |
| The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) | 320,973,861   |
| Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation                        | 308,601,409   |
| International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI)              | 231,752,872   |
| Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis       | 150,945,000   |
| PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative                           | 149,200,907   |
| Drugs for Neglected Disease Development Initiative        | 65,245,689    |
| Roll Back Malaria Partnership                             | 21,074,388    |
| Stop TB Partnership                                       | 8,837,150     |
| Institute of Medicine                                     | 900,000       |

Source: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grants Database

91 Cf. <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/joint-statement-ebola/en/>.

92 Cf. Buse/Harmer (2007), p. 267.

One of the most prominent United Nations global partnerships that the Gates Foundation supports is Every Woman Every Child (EWEC). UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched this initiative in September 2010 as an “unprecedented global movement that mobilizes and intensifies international and national action by governments, multilaterals, the private sector and civil society to address the major health challenges facing women and children.”<sup>93</sup>

EWEC was set up to put into action the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health, which was formulated by the UN Secretary-General in the same year. This strategy sets out key areas for action to enhance financing, strengthen policy, and improve service delivery for women’s and children’s health.<sup>94</sup> A team in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General heads the work of EWEC and ensures political support for the Global Strategy and its implementation. The EWEC team receives financial support from several governments (including Canada, Norway, and the UK) and the Gates Foundation.<sup>95</sup> The Gates Foundation is further supporting the initiative with advocacy and communication work. The EWEC Progress Report 2015 praises its “energetic, consistent and visionary support for the Global Strategy.” Bill and Melinda Gates had “tirelessly advocated on ‘family planning’, maternal, ‘newborn’ and child health issues.”<sup>96</sup>

Most recently, the Gates Foundation has been actively involved in the elaboration of a new Global Financing Facility (GFF) in support of the Every Woman Every Child initiative to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health. The GFF is expected to play a key role in reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health financing and will serve as a major vehicle for financing the SDGs on healthy lives. It is probably the most important new funding mechanism for the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, similar to the Global Fund or GAVI. The concept of the GFF was developed under the guidance of the GFF Working Group, which was chaired by the Government of Norway, the USAID and the World Bank, and had 28 members, including representatives of GAVI, the Global Fund, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the UN Foundation.<sup>97</sup> Only three governmental representatives from the global South were involved (Ethiopia, Burundi and DR Congo).

Decisions on the allocation of the GFF funds are taken in a small committee whose membership is limited to the donors, including private founda-

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93 [www.everywomaneverychild.org/](http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/).

94 Cf. UN Secretary-General (2010).

95 The working budget including details of financial contributions to the EWEC team is not publicly available.

96 EWEC (2015), p. 36.

97 Cf. World Bank (2014), Annex 1.

tions. This kind of global club governance by a limited number of players represents a major shift from the traditional practice of inclusive multilateral decision-making within the United Nations, causing Member States to raise a number of concerns, ranging from lack of accountability to conflict of interest.<sup>98</sup>

### **Gates' new vaccine funding window – mixing grant-making and profit-making**

In addition to its grant-making activities, the Gates Foundation has recently stepped up its support for the biotechnological industry directly, through a US\$1.5 billion funding window called the “Programme Related Investments.” This money is used to invest directly in private corporations.<sup>99</sup> As the *New York Times* points out, “Whereas most foundations use this kind of investing to provide loans for nonprofit entities, the Gates Foundation’s investment interests are primarily in the private sector.”<sup>100</sup> In February 2015, the Foundation made its largest investment to date, taking a US\$52 million equity stake in CureVac, a German biopharmaceutical company, backed (to the tune of US\$104.9 million) by software billionaire and co-founder of SAP Dietmar Hopp, through his biotech investment group dievini Hopp BioTech holding.<sup>101</sup> The collaboration aims to accelerate the development of mRNA-vaccines against various diseases, initially against rotavirus, HIV and respiratory syncytial virus.<sup>102</sup> As part of the deal, any Gates Foundation-funded products shall be made available by CureVac at affordable prices in poor countries.<sup>103</sup> The Gates Foundation now holds almost 6 percent of the CureVac shares,<sup>104</sup> and will further provide up to US\$2 billion for the development and clinical trial of future vaccines developed by CureVac.<sup>105</sup>

“(...) the Gates Foundation’s investment interests are primarily in the private sector.”

### **Vaccines vs. public health systems**

The Gates Foundation’s prioritization of vaccine solutions for multiple health problems reflects the foundation’s preference for interventions with quick, measurable and visible solutions. One of GAVI’s senior representatives reported that Bill Gates often told him in private conversations “that he is vehemently ‘against’ health systems (...) he basically said it is a complete waste of money, that there is no evidence that it works, so I will

98 Cf. Adams/Martens (2015).

99 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/how-we-work/quick-links/program-related-investments](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/how-we-work/quick-links/program-related-investments).

100 [www.nytimes.com/2015/03/13/business/from-the-gates-foundation-direct-investment-not-just-grants.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/13/business/from-the-gates-foundation-direct-investment-not-just-grants.html?_r=0).

101 <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/curevac-secures-eur80-million-in-series-d-financing-170137536.html>.

102 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2015/03/CureVac-Collaboration](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2015/03/CureVac-Collaboration).

103 Cf. Grover (2015).

104 Cf. [www.presseportal.de/pm/114920/2965786](http://www.presseportal.de/pm/114920/2965786).

105 Cf. [www.presseportal.de/pm/114920/2965786](http://www.presseportal.de/pm/114920/2965786).

not see a dollar or cent of my money go to the strengthening of health systems.”<sup>106</sup>

The Gates Foundation’s support of vertical funds has been undermining, directly or indirectly, more holistic approaches to health policy.

The Gates Foundation had never explicitly stated in public its scepticism about the effectiveness of efforts to strengthen health systems. However, critics have noted that the Gates Foundation’s support of vertical funds has been undermining, directly or indirectly, more holistic approaches to health policy, primarily by prompting governments to shift their priorities.<sup>107</sup>

However, it is possible that in the last few years the narrow focus of the Gates Foundation on improving tools, technologies and treatment may have gradually broadened towards more comprehensive health policy approaches. In 2010, Melinda Gates endorsed a more integrated approach to women’s and children’s health in a speech at the Women Deliver Conference, saying: “Women and children have a continuum of needs, and we must design health programmes accordingly.”<sup>108</sup>

Reflecting on the Ebola outbreak, Bill Gates wrote on his personal blog in October 2014: “Even as we do everything we can to stop this crisis, we should also be studying its long-term implications. It’s a reminder of the urgent need to strengthen health systems in the world’s poorest countries.” He added: “Health systems—which encompass everything from rural clinics to community health workers to hospitals—are the best protection against epidemics.”<sup>109</sup>

### Multiple channels of influence in shaping the global health agenda

Philanthropic foundations, above all the Gates Foundation and earlier the Rockefeller Foundation, have been shaping global health policies not only through their direct grant-making but also through the provision of matching funds, the support of selected research programmes, the creation of global health partnerships with Foundation’s staff in their decision-making bodies, and by direct advocacy at the highest political level.

An example of the Foundation’s success in using matching funds to influence government funding decisions is the GAVI Alliance. While in the early years of GAVI, support from donor countries remained low, once the Foundation declared the creation of the Decade of Vaccines at the World

106 Quoted in Storeng (2014), p. 869. Storeng’s study analyses how GAVI has become focused on targeted technical solutions with clear, measurable outcomes, contrary to a broader health system strengthening approach, that emphasizes social and political dimensions of global health problems. The Gates Foundation has inter alia played a critical role in this development.

107 Cf. David McCoy quoted in Hartmann (2014).

108 [www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2010/06/Melinda-Gates-Calls-for-Global-Action-to-Save-Womens-and-Childrens-Lives](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2010/06/Melinda-Gates-Calls-for-Global-Action-to-Save-Womens-and-Childrens-Lives).

109 [www.gatesnotes.com/Health/Ebola-Beyond-the-Headlines](http://www.gatesnotes.com/Health/Ebola-Beyond-the-Headlines).

Economic Forum in 2010, government funding for the Alliance increased significantly. As the Foundation's Director of Global Health Delivery stated, the announcement was intended to galvanize attention and support for vaccines across the global community so that others would step up and do their part.<sup>110</sup> Between 2006 and 2010, Germany, for instance, pledged only US\$22.1 million to the Alliance.<sup>111</sup> In 2010, following the Decade of Vaccines announcement, Germany increased its contributions from US\$5.1 million (2010) to US\$26.7 million (2011). Germany's commitment was then matched in 2011 with "catalytic" funding of US\$24 million from the Gates Foundation.<sup>112</sup> Other countries similarly increased their contributions to GAVI as part of the G8 commitment to the so-called Muskoka Initiative for Maternal and Child Health in June 2010. Overall contributions to GAVI almost doubled, from US\$641.8 million in 2010 to US\$1,046.6 million in 2011.<sup>113</sup>

The Gates Foundation is also member of the Health 8 (H8), an informal group created in 2007 in order to reflect and strategize on how to foster achievement of the health-related MDGs.<sup>114</sup> It is comprised of eight health-related organizations including WHO, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), GAVI and the World Bank. One of the high-level meetings in 2009 was hosted in Seattle, the Gates Foundation's headquarters. The content of the meeting has not been available for the public, nor has an agenda, or any issue statements been published in the aftermath of the meeting, indicating the less-than-transparent way in which strategic global health policy decisions are made.<sup>115</sup>

Funding selected research initiatives is another way of influencing health policies and shaping the discourse on global health. The Rockefeller Foundation and the Gates Foundation have been driving forces in establishing public-private partnerships, especially product development partnerships as the governance model in the approach to global health challenges.<sup>116</sup> The Gates Foundation has promoted this approach by, among other things, supporting evaluation and research on the effectiveness and benefits of public-private partnerships. It commissioned, for instance, several studies by McKinsey on the determinants of effective partnerships

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Gates Foundation have been driving forces in establishing public-private partnerships.

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110 Cf. GAVI (2010), p. 5.

111 Cf. [www.gavi.org/funding/donor-profiles/germany/](http://www.gavi.org/funding/donor-profiles/germany/).

112 Cf. [www.gavi.org/library/news/press-releases/2011/germany-increases-funding-for-gavi-to-%E2%82%AC30-million/](http://www.gavi.org/library/news/press-releases/2011/germany-increases-funding-for-gavi-to-%E2%82%AC30-million/).

113 Cf. [www.gavi.org/funding/donor-profiles/](http://www.gavi.org/funding/donor-profiles/).

114 Cf. [www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2011/february/20110223bh8](http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2011/february/20110223bh8).

115 Cf. Doughton (2009).

116 Cf. Ulbert (2011), p.10.

with the private sector.<sup>117</sup> In 2014, it awarded a grant of US\$7.5 million to Population Services International in order “to demonstrate the benefits of engaging the private sector to help achieve Family Planning 2020 goals and improve the knowledge of key influencers and decision makers in India for efficient public-private partnerships in family planning”.<sup>118</sup>

In February 2008, Dr. Arata Kochi, the former head of WHO’s malaria programme, complained in an internal memorandum to Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO, that the Gates Foundation was dominating research in the area of malaria treatment and risked stifling the diverse views held by others in the scientific community.<sup>119</sup> He argued that the Gates Foundation was undermining scientific creativity in a way that “could have implicitly dangerous consequences on the policymaking process in world health.” He expressed concern that Gates-funded studies were adopting “a uniform framework approved by the Foundation,” leading to homogeneity of thinking:

”Gates has created a ‘cartel,’ with research leaders linked so closely that each has a vested interest to safeguard the work of others. The result is that obtaining an independent review of scientific evidence (...) is becoming increasingly difficult.”<sup>120</sup>

Yet another channel of influence on the global health agenda is through the placement of Foundation staff in decision-making bodies of international organizations and global health partnerships. The Gates Foundation is a board member not only of GAVI, but also of the Global Fund, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, the Medicines for Malaria Venture, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, the TB Alliance, the Stop TB Partnership, and many others.

Revolving door  
between the Gates  
Foundation and  
pharmaceutical  
corporations.

At the same time, there is a revolving door between the Gates Foundation and pharmaceutical corporations. Many of the Foundation’s staff had held positions at pharmaceutical companies such as Merck, GSK, Novartis, Bayer HealthCare Services and Sanofi Pasteur. Just to give a few examples: Trevor Mundel, the president of the Global Health Division of the Gates Foundation, had a long career in pharmaceutical companies such as Novartis, Pfizer and Parke-Davis.<sup>121</sup> Mundel’s predecessor, Tachi Yamada, had been an executive and board member of GSK. Kim Bush, in the Gates Foundation responsible for partnership initiatives with healthcare

117 Cf. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation/McKinsey & Company (2005); Chaia/Schiff (2012); Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2002).

118 [www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2014/11/OPP1115856](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2014/11/OPP1115856).

119 Cf. McNeil (2008).

120 Quoted in McNeil (2008).

121 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Leadership/Executive-Leadership-Team/Trevor-Mundel](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Leadership/Executive-Leadership-Team/Trevor-Mundel).



industry sectors, had formerly worked for Baxter International Healthcare Corporation.<sup>122</sup> Penny Heaton, Director of Vaccine Development at the Gates Foundation since 2013, worked before for Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics and for Merck & Co.<sup>123</sup>

Personal relationships also play a part. In many cases, Bill and Melinda Gates deal directly with the leading scientific, business and political elites, establishing important ties, and often privileged access. In November 2014, for instance, when Bill Gates visited Berlin to campaign for the GAVI Alliance, he met the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Foreign Minister, the Finance Minister, the Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, the Minister of Health and several parliamentarians, all in an effort to prepare for the January 2015 Berlin meeting to replenish the GAVI Alliance resources. At this event, the German Chancellor announced a massive increase in Germany's contribution to the Alliance and pledged EUR 600 million for GAVI over the period 2016–2020.<sup>124</sup>

Through their multiple channels of influence, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Gates Foundation have been very successful in promoting their market-based and biomedical approaches towards global health challenges in the research and health policy community—and beyond. Many states, international organizations, and global health partnerships adopted their approach and adjusted their activities and funding accordingly, focusing on technical interventions. Without doubt, these interventions, particularly the immunization of children, are necessary. However, too often the underlying more complex socio-economic causes of health problems and the need to strengthen public health systems have remained neglected.

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122 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Leadership/Global-Health/Kim-Bush](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Leadership/Global-Health/Kim-Bush).

123 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Leadership/Global-Health/Penny-Heaton](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Who-We-Are/General-Information/Leadership/Global-Health/Penny-Heaton).

124 Cf. [www.gavi.org/funding/donor-profiles/germany/](http://www.gavi.org/funding/donor-profiles/germany/).

### 3. Philanthropic influence and global food and agriculture policy

Philanthropic foundations have been highly influential in shaping the discourse and governance of global food security and agricultural development. While other foundations, particularly the Ford Foundation, have been active in this field, the two most important players in this regard have been the Rockefeller Foundation and more recently the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In addition to shaping the priorities of global agricultural research and policy-making, they have exerted significant influence on governments and international organizations—including, importantly, UNDP and FAO—not only by providing money and human resources but also by promoting ideas and pursuing forms of private diplomacy.

While the Rockefeller Foundation started its activities in the agricultural sector in the first half of the last century, as of about ten years ago, the Gates Foundation has grown to become one of the most influential funders of agricultural development and research. Both foundations share the fundamental belief that hunger and malnutrition in the southern hemisphere are primarily caused by a lack of technology, knowledge and access to markets. Consequently, they regard technological innovation and close cooperation with the food and agricultural industries as key to overcoming hunger in the world.

#### **Driving force behind the “Green Revolution”**

The Rockefeller Foundation largely shaped the governance of agricultural development in the global South.

Beginning in the 1940s, the Rockefeller Foundation largely shaped the governance of agricultural development in the global South for the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its activities in this sector started in 1943 with its Mexican Agriculture Programme (MAP), which is now credited with laying the seeds for the “Green Revolution,” a term introduced in the 1960s to describe agricultural development strategies based primarily on new technologies and the expansion of industrial agriculture. Focusing on Latin America and Southeast Asia the Foundation focused on such things as the development of hybrid seeds, soil improvement methods, and the extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides as a solution to the problems of hunger and malnutrition.

The decision to become actively involved in this sector was also motivated by geopolitical considerations in the early years of the Cold War. In 1951, the Foundation’s Advisory Committee for Agricultural Activities stated in a strategy paper on agriculture and the world food problem:

”Whether additional millions in Asia and elsewhere will become Communists will depend partly on whether the Communist world or the free world fulfills its promises. Hungry people are lured by promises, but they may be won by deeds. Communism makes attractive promises to underfed peoples; democracy must not only promise as much, but must deliver more.”<sup>125</sup>

Consequently, the Rockefeller Foundation, sometimes in cooperation with the Ford Foundation, provided much of the initial funding for developing and proving the viability of the technologies upon which the Green Revolution was based. By initiating the establishment of several regional centres on agricultural research, the two foundations had direct influence on how the scientific community described and analyzed the major challenges related to agriculture, and on how governments and international organizations addressed these challenges.<sup>126</sup>

In 1970, the Rockefeller Foundation proposed the creation of an initial global network of four agricultural research centres under a permanent secretariat, an initiative joined by Ford and supported by the World Bank, the FAO and UNDP. In May 1971 the two foundations established the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), becoming members of the board of directors of what became one of the first global public-private partnerships. Today, CGIAR’s research is carried out by 15 member centres of the CGIAR Consortium, in close collaboration with hundreds of partners from development organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector.<sup>127</sup>

In 2006, the Gates Foundation joined with the Rockefeller Foundation to transfer their vision of a Green Revolution to Africa. Together they launched the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA),<sup>128</sup> based on the premise that hunger in Africa is mainly the result of a lack of technology and functioning markets. Accordingly, AGRA focuses on building partnerships with the private sector, fostering access to markets and finance, and developing and disseminating agricultural innovations to significantly boost farm productivity.

In 2006, the Gates Foundation joined with the Rockefeller Foundation to transfer their vision of a Green Revolution to Africa.

The creation of AGRA marked a noticeable change in the global governance of the food and agricultural sector. Since then the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has gradually taken over the leadership role of the Rockefeller Foundation in this field.

125 Advisory Committee for Agricultural Activities (1951), p. 4

126 Cf. Stevenson (2014).

127 Cf. [www.cgiar.org/](http://www.cgiar.org/).

128 Cf. [www.agra.org/](http://www.agra.org/).

## Growing influence of the Gates Foundation

Until 2006, the Gates Foundation focused primarily on health and education programmes. However, in 2001 it provided some initial funding in areas related to food and agriculture through the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), which was subsequently endorsed by a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children.<sup>129</sup> Fully in line with the Foundation's overall strategy,

“(T)he initial decision was to champion the concept of a major new push for improved nutrition on a global scale, initially through food fortification, working closely together with the private sector and leveraging partnerships to achieve the maximum possible scale of impact.”<sup>130</sup>

The Gates Foundation not only provided most of the initial funding, but has been by far the largest donor of GAIN. By 2014, the alliance had received US\$251 million from the Gates Foundation, while GAIN's cumulated expenditures were US\$294 million.<sup>131</sup>

In 2006 the Gates Foundation began to expand its funding for food and agriculture significantly, creating the Global Development Programme with agriculture as its first focus area.<sup>132</sup> Since then it has given more than US\$3 billion to support about 660 projects on agricultural development (see Table 6), as well as several hundred million US\$ for projects on nutrition.

CGIAR and its affiliated research centers have been amongst the major grant recipients of the Gates Foundation (US\$720 million). Vice versa the Foundation has become one of the major supporters of CGIAR. Its contribution of US\$82 million in 2013 was bettered only by the US\$114 million contribution from the USA, and was more than double the contribution from the third largest donor Australia (US\$36 million).<sup>133</sup>

Beside grants to CGIAR and AGRA (US\$414 million), major recipients of Gates Foundation agricultural grants have included NGOs, universities and national research centres, the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), and UN organizations such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the FAO. In addition, in June 2014 the Gates Foundation approved a grant of US\$745,000 to support the activities of

129 Cf. Moench-Pfanner/Van Ameringen (2012), p. 375.

130 Ibid.

131 Cf. the financial statements of GAIN 2003 to 2014 ([www.gainhealth.org/organization/financial-statements/](http://www.gainhealth.org/organization/financial-statements/)).

132 Cf. Stevenson (2014), p. 197.

133 Cf. CGIAR (2014).

the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). This Committee, initially set up as an intergovernmental body to monitor and review food security policy, was expanded in 2009 to include “all stakeholders” in food and nutrition.

The vast majority of the Gates Foundation’s agricultural development grants focus on Africa. However, over 80 percent of the US\$669 million to NGOs went to organizations based in the US and Europe, with only 4 percent going to Africa-based NGOs. Similarly of the US\$678 million grants to universities and research centres, 79 percent went to grantees in the US and Europe and only 12 percent to recipients in Africa.<sup>134</sup>

The first of the Gates Foundation’s principles for its Agricultural Development Program is “(l)istening to farmers and addressing their specific needs”:

“We talk to farmers about the crops they want to grow and eat, as well as the unique challenges they face. We partner with organizations that understand and are equipped to address these challenges, and we invest in research to identify relevant and affordable solutions that farmers want and will use.”<sup>135</sup>

However, GRAIN claims not having found any evidence of support from the Gates Foundation for programs of research or technology development carried out by smallholder farmers or based on their knowledge:

“The foundation has consistently chosen to put its money into top down structures of knowledge generation and flow, where farmers’ are mere recipients of the technologies developed in labs and sold to them by companies.”<sup>136</sup>

The Foundation argues that looking at their primary grantees does not give a complete picture, as many of these give sub-grants to local institutions. Its press secretary Chris Williams explained:

“Many local NGOs in Africa and south Asia are small organizations without the capacity to absorb large grants and often choose to partner with larger organizations to get work done most efficiently. But at the same time, we are also engaged in direct capacity-building funding to ensure these organizations will be more able to administer grants of this size on their own in the future.”<sup>137</sup>

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134 GRAIN (2014), p. 3.

135 [www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Agricultural-Development](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Agricultural-Development).

136 GRAIN (2014), p. 4.

137 [www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/nov/04/bill-melinda-gates-foundation-grants-usa-uk-africa](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/nov/04/bill-melinda-gates-foundation-grants-usa-uk-africa).

**Table 6****Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grants to agricultural development 2003–2014 (in US\$ million)**

| Grantee  | Amount       |
|--|--------------|
| CGIAR Consortium (incl. affiliated research centers) | 720          |
| AGRA   | 414          |
| International Organizations                          | 362          |
| African Agricultural Technology Foundation           | 95           |
| Universities and national research centers           | 678          |
| NGOs   | 669          |
| Corporations   | 50           |
| Advocacy & Policy                                    | 122          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>3,110</b> |

Source: GRAIN (2014).

**The Global Development Programme: prioritizing technological solutions**

The Global Development Programme identifies five strategic areas considered crucial to addressing the challenges and local realities faced by small farmers in the global South:

- (1) Research and development for more productive and nutritious crops and new farming technologies;
- (2) Agricultural policies, which means providing data, information and policy analysis to policy makers and farmers;
- (3) Improve the health and productivity of livestock, particularly chickens, goats, and cows;
- (4) Improving access and market systems for small-scale farmers, which includes providing access to improved seeds, new farming technology, knowledge, and management skills;
- (5) Engaging in strategic partnerships and advocacy work with donor countries, multilateral institutions, private foundations, and other organizations.<sup>138</sup>

138 [www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Agricultural-Development](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Agricultural-Development).

The fact that research and development heads this list of strategic priorities reflects the strong belief of Bill and Melinda Gates in innovation and technology as the most effective means to increase agricultural productivity. In their 2015 annual letter, they state:

“The world has already developed better fertilizer, and crops that are more productive, nutritious, and drought- and disease resistant; with access to these and other existing technologies, African farmers could theoretically double their yields. With greater productivity, farmers will also grow a greater variety of food, and they’ll be able to sell their surpluses to supplement their family’s diet with vegetables, eggs, milk, and meat.”<sup>139</sup>

Consequently, funding research and development of “modern” farming techniques and technologies such as hybrid seeds, biotechnology, synthetic fertilizers, and irrigation systems is a crucial part of the foundation’s grant-making.

For Gates, biotechnology and especially genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are important innovations in the fight against hunger. In a video published by the American technology news and media network *The Verge* in February 2015, Bill Gates stated:

“There is quite a bit of improvement still available with conventional breeding but in this timeframe the GMO derived seeds will provide far better productivity, better drought tolerance and salinity tolerance and if the safety is proven, then the African countries will be amongst the biggest beneficiaries. I think most of Africa will see this as a way of improving its productivity.”<sup>140</sup>

Bill and Melinda Gates also acknowledge other limitations “that keep Africa from feeding itself,”<sup>141</sup> including the lack of infrastructure, gender disparities, no access to markets, and government policies that do not serve the interests of farming families.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, they state that “wealthy countries also need to make policy changes, like opening their markets and cutting agricultural subsidies.”<sup>143</sup> However, in its grant-making, the Gates Foundation focuses on advancing agricultural technologies, whereas structural barriers to agricultural development in low-income countries, including trade liberalization agreements that remove import tariffs on agricultural products and enable rich countries to import these products at far less cost, are hardly addressed.

For Gates, biotechnology and especially genetically modified organisms are important innovations in the fight against hunger.

139 Gates (2015), p. 11.

140 [www.theverge.com/2015/2/18/8056163/bill-gates-gmo-farming-world-hunger-africa-poverty](http://www.theverge.com/2015/2/18/8056163/bill-gates-gmo-farming-world-hunger-africa-poverty)

141 Gates (2015), p. 13.

142 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Agricultural-Development](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Agricultural-Development).

143 Gates (2014), p. 9.

Moreover, although the first of the Agricultural Development Programme principles is “listening to farmers and addressing their specific needs,”<sup>144</sup> critics have failed to find any evidence of Gates Foundation support for programmes of research or technology development carried out by small-holder farmers or based on their knowledge.

Michael Stevenson, author of a comprehensive analysis of the Rockefeller and Gates Foundations’ influence in the governance of global health and agricultural development, concludes: “In the eyes of critics, this preference for advanced technology demonstrates that the [Gates] Foundation remains informed by the erroneous assumption that if it primes the technology pump enough, solutions will present themselves.”<sup>145</sup>

As for global health problems, Gates believes that these can only be solved by cooperating with the business sector. Public-private partnerships are therefore heavily promoted at national, regional and international levels. Gates spoke about the need to get the private sector much more involved in development in a report to the G20 Summit in Cannes in November 2011, saying: “As a businessman, I believe the free market fuels growth.” While he acknowledged that the market often fails to address the needs of the poorest, he said that “when it comes to innovation, the real expertise lies with the private sector. And the private sector is the primary driver of economic growth. We must harness private investment so that it has greater development impact.”<sup>146</sup>

In that same speech he stated:

“The G20 countries should extend their leadership in this area by forming a public-private partnership to help developing countries conduct cost-benefit analyses—real-world comparative studies about the most effective ways of tackling development issues.”<sup>147</sup>

Consequently, the Gates Foundation strongly endorsed the heavily criticized G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition.<sup>148</sup> This alliance between the G8, ten African countries and more than 100 private sector companies was launched in 2012 “(...) to accelerate responsible investment in African agriculture and lift 50 million people out of poverty by 2022.”<sup>149</sup>

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144 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Agricultural-Development](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Agricultural-Development).

145 Stevenson (2014), p. 209.

146 Gates (2011), p. 11.

147 Ibid, p. 10.

148 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/media-center/press-releases/2012/05/bill-gates-statement-in-response-to-g8-food-security-commitment](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/media-center/press-releases/2012/05/bill-gates-statement-in-response-to-g8-food-security-commitment). For a critical analysis of the corporate influence through the G8 New Alliance see Obenland (2014).

149 Cf. <https://new-alliance.org/about>.



### **Programme Related Investments (PRIs): The Gates Foundation steps up its market-driven approach**

In November 2014, Julie Sunderland, Director of Program Related Investments for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation argued in the same line:

“One of the things that the Foundation is really excited about is how to leverage the private sector. And the reason that we’re really excited about that is that we know that markets don’t currently work well for the poor. But we really believe that markets can be made to work well for the poor (...). If we’re going to try to solve these problems, we’ve got to tap into the creativity and the capability and the innovation potential of the private sector (...). So one of the things that we’re doing is really thinking about how do we catalyse those multi-stakeholder discussions where we can bring together foundations, we can bring together governments, we can bring together the private sector such that those two cultures can begin to talk to each other and figure out how do they use the different resources to really tackle these big social problems in a way that has the potential to open up these markets for these companies and solve problems for the people that are really focused on the social problems.”<sup>150</sup>

While in its first years of operation, the Gates Foundation cooperated only indirectly with corporations, for instance by providing grants to public-private partnerships, in 2009, it started to invest directly in companies that could help to advance its goals, primarily in the areas of health and agriculture as well as banking for the poor. Its so-called Programme Related Investments (PRIs) (to date US\$1.5 billion)<sup>151</sup> are used as “high impact tools to stimulate private-sector driven innovation, encourage market-driven efficiencies and attract external capital to priority initiatives.”<sup>152</sup> The African Agricultural Capital Fund received such an investment of US\$25 million jointly from the Gates Foundation, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and USAID to support Pearl Capital Partners, an agricultural investment firm, to invest in at least 20 agriculture-related businesses in East Africa.<sup>153</sup> Health-related investments, as noted above, have been done mainly in pharmaceutical companies such as Bayer, Affinivax and CureVac.<sup>154</sup>

150 <http://bigthink.com/videos/why-private-and-public-sectors-need-to-work-together-with-julie-sunderland>.

151 Cf. [http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/03/13/business/from-the-gates-foundation-direct-investment-not-just-grants.html?referrer=&\\_r=3](http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/03/13/business/from-the-gates-foundation-direct-investment-not-just-grants.html?referrer=&_r=3).

152 [www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Program-Related-Investments](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Program-Related-Investments).

153 Cf. [www.feedthefuture.gov/model/african-agricultural-capital-fund](http://www.feedthefuture.gov/model/african-agricultural-capital-fund).

154 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Program-Related-Investments](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Program-Related-Investments).

### **The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the spread of genetically modified seeds**

Particularly through AGRA, the Gates Foundation as well as the Rockefeller Foundation are exerting massive influence on African governments' agricultural policies. Both foundations initiated AGRA and are major funders of the alliance. In 2013, 26 percent of the new contributions to AGRA came from the Rockefeller and the Gates Foundation.<sup>155</sup> Both foundations hold key positions within the alliance: Jeff Raikes, CEO of the Gates Foundation and Pamela K. Anderson, the director of the foundation's Agricultural Development Program are members of AGRA's board of directors, as well as President of the Rockefeller Foundation Judith Rodin. Adam Gerstenmier, a former high-level employee of the Gates Foundation serves as Chief of Staff of AGRA, and Mumukshu Patel, who most recently led the agricultural policy metrics and advocacy work at the Gates Foundation, is now Senior Advisor to the Chairman of the AGRA Board.

**Under the guise of eliminating hunger in Africa, AGRA is a tool to open African markets to US agro-business.**

Because of its focus on biotechnological farming methods, AGRA has increasingly promoted genetically modified seeds, more specifically "improved" genetically modified seeds. Critics claim that, under the guise of eliminating hunger in Africa, AGRA is a tool to open African markets to US agro-business, as one of the Alliance's major objectives is providing incentives for agro-business companies operating in Africa to develop private markets for seeds and fertilizers.

In a joint statement at the World Social Forum 2007, African CSOs accused AGRA of

"(...) shifting African agriculture to a system dependent on expensive, harmful chemicals, monocultures of hybrid seeds, and ultimately genetically modified organisms (GMOs). (...) This push for a so-called 'green revolution' or 'gene revolution' is being done once again under the guise of solving hunger in Africa. Chemical-intensive agriculture is, however, already known to be outmoded. We have seen how fertilisers have killed the soil, creating erosion, vulnerable plants and loss of water from the soil. We have seen how pesticides and herbicides have harmed our environment and made us sick. We know that hybrid and GM seed monocultures have pulled

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155 Cf. AGRA (2014), p. 60.

farmers into poverty by preventing them from saving seed, and preventing traditional methods of intercropping which provide food security.”<sup>156</sup>

One of the ways AGRA pursues its objectives is through the creation of “agro-dealer” networks. In Malawi, the Alliance provided a US\$4.3 million grant for the Malawi Agro-dealer Strengthening Programme (MASP), which supports small, private stock companies to supply hybrid maize seeds and chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers to farmers.<sup>157</sup> MASP has been implemented by the US-based development organization called Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA). CNFA, which is a Gates Foundation grantee,<sup>158</sup> promotes a market-driven approach to agricultural development focused exclusively on the private sector. It affirms:

“Underpinning all of CNFA’s work is a belief that leveraging the power of private enterprise—from large multinational corporations to local input supply stores—is the best route to sustainable, market-based development solutions.”<sup>159</sup>

One of the major beneficiaries of this programme is Monsanto, which supplies 67 percent of all products, specifically seeds and herbicides through the AGRA-supported agro-dealer network in Malawi.<sup>160</sup> Often corporate suppliers also provide training on product knowledge to the agro-dealers. These agro-dealers in turn are increasingly the main source of farming advice to smallholder farmers.

AGRA has also been intervening directly in the formulation and revision of African governments’ agricultural policies and regulations on such issues as land and seeds. It does so through its Policy and Advocacy Programme, which aims to advance particular policy changes to drive the adoption of improved agricultural technologies and farming practices.<sup>161</sup> To further these policy reforms, AGRA launched 19 Policy Action Nodes in Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and Tanzania. These have been instrumental in reviewing and amending policies and regulations regarding seeds, soil health, market access, land and property rights, and environmen-

156 Cf. “Africa’s Wealth of Seed Diversity and Farmer Knowledge— Under threat from the Gates/ Rockefeller ‘Green Revolution’”. Statement from African Civil Society Organisations at the World Social Forum, Nairobi, Kenya, January 25, 2007 ([www.grain.org/article/entries/3804-africa-s-wealth-of-seed-diversity-and-farmer-knowledge-under-threat-from-the-gates-rockefeller-green-revolution-initiative](http://www.grain.org/article/entries/3804-africa-s-wealth-of-seed-diversity-and-farmer-knowledge-under-threat-from-the-gates-rockefeller-green-revolution-initiative)).

157 <http://www.cnfa.org/program/malawi-agrodealer-strengthening-program/>.

158 [www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2009/02/OPP51902-](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2009/02/OPP51902-).

159 Cf. CNFA (2012): *Cultivating New Frontiers in Africa*. Fact Sheet. Washington, D.C.

160 Cf. Curtis/Hilary (2012), pp. 6–7.

161 Cf. [http://agra-alliance.org/what-we-do/policy-and-advocacy-program/#.U19W6cvW\\_IU-](http://agra-alliance.org/what-we-do/policy-and-advocacy-program/#.U19W6cvW_IU-).

tal policies. Since 2011, for example, the Ghanaian Policy Action Node has been very involved in reforming the national seed policy.<sup>162</sup> One result was the adoption of Ghana's Biosafety Act 831 in 2011, permitting the import and research of GMOs.<sup>163</sup> So far, South Africa, Egypt, and Burkina Faso are the only African countries that have legalized GMOs. But most countries across the continent are at various stages of GMO legalization, despite growing public concerns over genetically modified food. Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda are conducting field trials of GM crops.<sup>164</sup>

While AGRA is not distributing genetically modified seeds, it explicitly views biotechnology (including GMOs) as part of the longer-term solution to hunger and nutrition problems in Africa. In response to the question "Does AGRA support GMO in Africa?" AGRA's website states: "New varieties are needed because many of the seeds farmers use today are inherently low-yielding and vulnerable to crop diseases and pests."<sup>165</sup> George Bigirwa, an AGRA representative explains: "First of all Africa is not ready for GMO's. There are no laws, there are no frameworks and we can just take advantage of what we have like hybrids."<sup>166</sup>

AGRA plays down public concerns about this trend by stating: "There is growing public opposition to GM crops in Africa that is best described as a fear of the unknown."<sup>167</sup>

Bill and Melinda Gates are vocal supporters of GMOs. Bill Gates argues that using GMO-derived seeds would lead to increased food productivity faster than conventional farming techniques.<sup>168</sup> At an advocacy event in Brussels on 22 January 2015, Gates underlined the "sovereign right" of Africans to use "innovative farming techniques."<sup>169</sup>

Consequently, the Gates Foundation is actively funding institutions that are promoting new agricultural technologies. Some, such as the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), have become highly influential in regional and national policy-making, helping to smooth the regulatory environment for the introduction of GMOs.<sup>170</sup>

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162 Cf. AGRA (2014), pp. 38–40.

163 Cf. Parliament of the Republic of Ghana (2011).

164 Cf. [www.dw.de/can-genetically-modified-crops-end-hunger-in-africa/a-17385964](http://www.dw.de/can-genetically-modified-crops-end-hunger-in-africa/a-17385964) and [www.nepadbiosafety.net/subjects/biotechnology/status-of-crop-biotechnology-in-africa](http://www.nepadbiosafety.net/subjects/biotechnology/status-of-crop-biotechnology-in-africa).

165 Ibid.

166 <http://afkinsider.com/92428/why-are-more-african-countries-joining-the-gmo-bandwagon/>

167 AGRA (2013), p. 65.

168 Cf. [www.theverge.com/2015/2/18/8056163/bill-gates-gmo-farming-world-hunger-africa-poverty](http://www.theverge.com/2015/2/18/8056163/bill-gates-gmo-farming-world-hunger-africa-poverty).

169 [www.euractiv.com/video/bill-melinda-gates-advocate-gmos-brussels-audience-311502](http://www.euractiv.com/video/bill-melinda-gates-advocate-gmos-brussels-audience-311502).

170 Cf. Friends of the Earth International (2015), p. 12.

In 2009 Michigan State University (MSU) received a grant of more than US\$13 million from the Gates Foundation “to create a center in Africa that provides training, education, and technical support for African regulators to make informed decisions on how to use biotechnology while protecting farmers, consumers, and the environment.”<sup>171</sup> In 2008, following a recommendation of the UN High-Level African Panel on Modern Biotechnology, MSU established a long-term strategic partnership with the African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE), an initiative of the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). ABNE’s report, under the title “Freedom to Innovate” was supported by the Gates Foundation,<sup>172</sup> as was its institutional development plan and governing structure, which were developed by the Dai international consulting firm.<sup>173</sup>

In Mozambique ABNE reviewed issues of liability under Mozambique’s biosafety law and revised some articles in 2012.<sup>174</sup> In October 2014 Mozambique’s Council of Ministers approved a revised biosafety decree and implementing regulations; field trials with GM crops are expected to commence during 2015.<sup>175</sup>

In Nigeria, after several years of consultation, then President Goodluck Jonathan signed a new biosafety law in April 2015, allowing the use of GMOs. Four years before, after the biosafety bill had been adopted by the Senate but not yet signed by the president Bill Gates stated during a visit to Nigeria:

“We’re very impressed with Nigeria’s ambitious plans for agriculture and new leadership in agriculture, and the President’s strong support for agricultural transformation, I’m especially pleased by the recent change in laws regarding the regulation of seeds, and look forward to expanding our partnership with Nigeria and continued collaboration on this front.”<sup>176</sup>

This statement was criticized by the Association of Catholic Medical Practitioners of Nigeria in a letter to David Mark, Nigerian Senate President, which pointed out that the Gates Foundation through local partners like the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA),

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171 [www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2009/07/OPP49404\\_01](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2009/07/OPP49404_01).

172 Cf. Juma/Serageldin (2007). Calestous Juma, a former Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, is director of the Agricultural Innovation in Africa Project at the Belfer Center of Harvard University, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

173 Cf. Friends of the Earth International (2015), p. 18.

174 Cf. Esterhuizen/ Zacarias (2013).

175 James (2014).

176 [www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2011/09/President-Jonathan-Executive-Governors-tell-Bill-Gates-Ending-Polio-in-Nigeria-is-a-National-Priority](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2011/09/President-Jonathan-Executive-Governors-tell-Bill-Gates-Ending-Polio-in-Nigeria-is-a-National-Priority).

the Nigerian National Root Crop Research Institute, and BioCassava Plus Nigeria, had already introduced transgenic variants of cassava, rice, maize, yam, and sorghum prior to the legalization of genetic food bio-safety testing in Nigeria.<sup>177</sup>

Indeed, in September 2011, the Gates Foundation and the Nigerian government had signed a Memorandum of Understanding, followed by the opening of a Gates Foundation office in Abuja, the capital.<sup>178</sup> In August 2012, the Gates Foundation awarded a grant of US\$4.9 million to UNDP to provide capacity support to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for the implementation of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), designed to commercialize Nigerian agriculture.<sup>179</sup> ATA's driving force and a strong supporter of legalizing GM crops was then Minister for Agriculture and Development Akinwumi Adesina.<sup>180</sup> Adesina was a fellow of and later worked in a senior leadership position at the Rockefeller Foundation and as Vice President of Policy and Partnerships for AGRA. At the end of May 2015 he was elected to become the President of the African Development Bank.<sup>181</sup>

The Gates Foundation has been funding many other research and development projects with a GM component, such as the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) (see Box 4), a public-private partnership of AATF, USAID and Monsanto. According to an analysis by the African Centre for Biodiversity, about 49 percent of the Gates Foundation's funding for research and development under its Agricultural Development Programme went to projects with an explicit GM research component.<sup>182</sup>

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177 Cf. <https://kurunziafrika.wordpress.com/2013/11/15/nigeria-catholic-medics-want-bill-gates-out-over-gmo-cassava/>.

178 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/media-center/press-releases/2012/09/gates-foundation-to-open-office-in-abuja](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/media-center/press-releases/2012/09/gates-foundation-to-open-office-in-abuja).

179 Cf. [www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2012/08/OPP1060666](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2012/08/OPP1060666).

180 Cf. <http://saharareporters.com/2013/06/27/do-not-force-feed-nigerians-gmos-nnimmo-bassey>.

181 Cf. [www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/may/29/nigeria-agriculture-minister-akinwumi-adesina-african-development-bank-president](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/may/29/nigeria-agriculture-minister-akinwumi-adesina-african-development-bank-president).

182 Cf. African Centre for Biosafety (2012), p. 37. This analysis covered the period until 2011.

**Box 4****The Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) project**

The Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) project was officially launched in Kampala, Uganda, in 2008, as part of an effort to introduce both conventional hybrid and GM drought-tolerant maize varieties for smallholder farmers in five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda). It is a joint collaboration involving the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), the National Agricultural Research Systems of the five WEMA countries and Monsanto, the world's largest seed and biotechnology company. The implementing agency is the Nairobi-based AATF. WEMA is heavily funded by the Gates Foundation (US\$85.7 million), the Howard G. Buffett Foundation (US\$7.9 million) and USAID (US\$7.5 million). WEMA's partners have made their maize germplasm lines available to the project, with Monsanto 'donating' the drought-tolerant gene while retaining complicated intellectual property rights on it. Much of the germplasm from CIMMYT is the result of another Gates funded initiative, the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) project, to which it has given US\$67 million.

The WEMA project is being hailed as a 'Climate Smart Agriculture' (CSA) success story, enabling countries to respond to the climate crises facing Africa. However, the long-term social and ecological impacts of this agenda are questionable, with concerns about loss of land, biodiversity, and sovereignty. A report by the African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and Bread for the World argues that Monsanto's GM drought-tolerant maize is likely to spell disaster for smallholder farmers as it will not perform predictably under conditions of environmental stress -exactly the kind of conditions it is meant to thrive in. Its author, Gareth Jones, notes, "The inclusion of Monsanto's highly compromised and controversial insect resistant GM maize MON810 into the WEMA project is astounding given that this variety has already dismally failed both commercial and smallholder farmers in South Africa." According to the report, the WEMA project, under the guise of philanthropy and fighting climate change, rather sits at the apex of efforts to completely transform African agricultural systems by exploiting decades-long public seed breeding and shifting ownership of maize breeding, seed production and marketing almost exclusively to the private sector. ACB director Mariam Mayet said that the project would reach only a "select subsidized layer of small-scale farmers," owing to the high costs and technical requirements which put GM and hybrid seeds beyond the reach of small African seed companies. She concluded that it therefore "will inevitably lead to industry concentration; enabling multinational agrochemical/quasi seed companies including and especially Monsanto, to dominate."

Source: African Centre for Biodiversity (2015a).

## Box 5

### The Gates Foundation and the commercialization of seed production in Africa

On March 23, 2015 the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID organized an invitation-only meeting in London to promote a report on seed production in Africa by the consulting firm Monitor Deloitte.<sup>183</sup> They had commissioned this report to develop models for the commercialization of seed production in Africa, especially early generation seed (EGS), and to identify ways in which the public sector could facilitate private involvement in African seed systems.<sup>184</sup>

The invited guests included development agencies such as the World Bank, big seed companies such as Syngenta, and public-private partnerships such as AGRA.<sup>185</sup> While the proclaimed general aim of the meeting was “to increase agricultural productivity among smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa,”<sup>186</sup> the report does not consider any potential role for farmers in the production or distribution of seed, and no farmer organizations were invited to attend.

The report recommends that in countries where farmers are using their own seed saving networks, NGOs and aid donors should encourage governments to introduce intellectual property rights for seed breeders and help to persuade farmers to buy commercial, patented seeds rather than relying on their own traditional varieties. It includes the following priority interventions:

“Contracting larger seed companies to produce foundation seed for sale to smaller companies; Establishing and supporting seed companies that produce solely foundation seed within countries or at the regional level; Developing the capacity of small- and medium-sized seed companies to produce their own foundation seed; Formulate and/or review national and regional policies to liberalize foundation seed production.”<sup>187</sup>

Various critics have described the report recommendations as “neo-colonialist plans” to make African farmers dependent on corporate interests.<sup>188</sup> Phil Bereano from AGRA Watch and Emeritus Professor at the University of Washington said:

“This is an extension of what the Gates Foundation has been doing for several years—working with the US government and agribusiness giants like Monsanto to corporatize Africa’s genetic riches for the benefit of outsiders.”<sup>189</sup>

183 Cf. Monitor Deloitte (2015).

184 Cf. [www.ipsnews.net/2015/03/gates-foundation-slammed-for-plan-to-privatise-african-seed-markets/](http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/03/gates-foundation-slammed-for-plan-to-privatise-african-seed-markets/).

185 Cf. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation/USAID (2015b).

186 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation/USAID (2015a).

187 Cf. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation/USAID (2015a), p. 2.

188 Cf. Community Alliance for Global Justice (2015) and African Center for Biodiversity (2015b).

189 Community Alliance for Global Justice (2015)



## Multiple channels of influence on agricultural development policy

Providing grants for specific projects is the most obvious way of influencing agricultural development, but it is not the only one. Foundations, especially the Gates Foundation, have far more channels through which to influence public discourse and policies.

One way the foundations do this is to cooperate with governments in high-income countries to augment their own grants by matching them with public money. In this way they leverage resources to advance favoured interventions and (re-)direct Official Development Assistance (ODA) into their priority areas. In Germany, for instance, the Gates Foundation and the German development ministry (BMZ) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to foster cooperation projects on food security and nutrition. A key element of this partnership is the active involvement of private companies.

In addition to money, another way of exerting influence is to place senior staff in key positions of international organizations, global partnerships, and even governments. A striking example is Rajiv Shah, who worked from 2001 to 2009 in various leadership positions in the Gates Foundation, including as Director of Agricultural Development, and immediately afterwards became Under Secretary of Agriculture in the Obama Administration. From January 2010 to February 2015 he served as Administrator of USAID and was most influential in shaping US development policy, particularly with regard to agriculture.

Current top-level employees of the Gates Foundation hold leadership positions in many international partnerships and initiatives in the field of food, agriculture and nutrition, including AGRA, CGIAR, GAIN, Scaling up Nutrition Initiative (SUN), and the African Economic Research Consortium. In addition, they are members of various advisory boards, for instance the Advisory Group of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and the Advisory Board of Cotton made in Africa. An example is Frank Rijsberman, who was the Gates Foundation's first director of the Water, Sanitation & Hygiene program and in 2012 became the CEO of the CGIAR Consortium.

Top-level employees of the Gates Foundation hold leadership positions in many international partnerships.

In turn, the Gates Foundation has attracted agricultural experts from international organizations and agro-business like a magnet—and has been influenced by their ideas and approaches. Pamela Anderson, the current director of Agricultural Development, joined the foundation in 2014 from the CGIAR Consortium.

Her predecessor Sam Dryden led two of the largest GM seed companies, Emergent Genetics and Agrigenetics Corporation, before he joined the Gates Foundation in 2010. In July 2012, *The Guardian* called him “a titan, possibly the most powerful figure in world agriculture today.”<sup>190</sup>

Rob Horsch, deputy director of Agricultural Development and head of the Agricultural Research and Development team, worked for Monsanto for 25 years. Prior to joining the Gates Foundation in 2006, he was Vice President of International Development Partnerships at Monsanto and involved in a number of public private partnerships for agricultural development. Horsch is regarded as one of the pioneers of genetic engineering, and was asked to join the Gates Foundation particularly for the purpose of continuing his Monsanto research on improving crop yields via biotechnology.<sup>191</sup>

Catherine Bertini, who was Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) from 1992 to 2002, was senior fellow in the Gates Foundation’s Agricultural Development team from 2007 to 2009, during which time she co-chaired the Independent Leaders Group on Global Agricultural Development, a group convened by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and funded by the Gates Foundation. As a response to the global food crisis 2007–2008 the group released a report entitled “Renewing American Leadership in the Fight Against Global Hunger and Poverty,”<sup>192</sup> outlining a set of five broad policy recommendations with twenty-one specific actions to refocus US development policy on agriculture. The key message of the report is: “Reducing large-scale hunger and poverty abroad as well as at home is consistent with America’s interests and values.”<sup>193</sup>

Fully in line with the philosophy of the Gates Foundation the report supports without any reservation the use of genetic engineering in agriculture, claiming that the genetically modified seeds have done well not only on large commercial farms but also in the hands of small farmers, especially in China and India. It states:

“All of the world’s most respected science academies, including those in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, have concluded in recent years that the genetically engineered crops currently on the market present no new documented risk either to human health or to the environment. (...) The United States should thus remain willing to support research on all forms of modern crop biotechnology

190 [www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/jul/06/sam-dryden-global-south-agriculture](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/jul/06/sam-dryden-global-south-agriculture).

191 Cf. for instance a few reflections of Rob Horsch at [www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/rob-horsch-reflections-of-science-pioneer.aspx](http://www.monsanto.com/newsviews/pages/rob-horsch-reflections-of-science-pioneer.aspx).

192 Cf. Independent Leaders Group on Global Agricultural Development (2009).

193 *Ibid.* p. 18.

by local scientists in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, while also providing technical assistance to help develop adequate regulatory and approval systems to protect the public interest.”<sup>194</sup>

The report underlines that its recommendations must not be understood simply as a US government programme but rather as a catalyst of public-private partnerships:

“Indeed, the recommendations extend far beyond the governmental sector. Their greatest promise derives precisely from the fact that foreign governments and nongovernmental institutions will be engaged, including universities, private companies, development organizations, and private philanthropies.”<sup>195</sup>

Parallel to the Independent Leaders Group, the Gates Foundation funded a similar initiative called the Montpellier Panel, comprising African and European experts from the fields of agriculture, trade, ecology and global development. Chaired by Sir Gordon Conway, former president of the Rockefeller Foundation,<sup>196</sup> the Panel recommends genuinely integrative public-private partnerships as key to overcoming food insecurity, and promotes AGRA as one of the success stories in this regard. Its first report advocates a strengthened commitment of European donors to support agricultural development and research, particularly in Africa.<sup>197</sup> Looking back at the first Green Revolution, it argues that advances in knowledge and technology will avoid the same problems:

“The technologies of the first Green Revolution were developed on experiment stations that were favoured with fertile soils, well-controlled water sources, and other factors suitable for high production. There was little perception of the complexity and diversity of farmers’ physical environments and farming systems, let alone the diversity of the economic and social environment. By contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa requires a variety of locally adapted interventions targeted on specific needs. It will take a combination of appropriate technologies and economic, social and institutional investments, involving both the public and the private sector.”<sup>198</sup>

The Gates Foundation frequently provides money, personnel and content simultaneously to influence discourse and policy-making. An example was the series of papers it funded on maternal and child undernutrition

The Gates Foundation frequently provides money, personnel and content simultaneously to influence discourse and policy-making.

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194 Ibid. p. 78.

195 Ibid. p. 21.

196 Cf. <http://ag4impact.org/montpellier-panel/>.

197 Cf. Montpellier Panel (2010).

198 Cf. *ibid.* p. 5.

published by The Lancet in 2008.<sup>199</sup> One of the papers, which examined the governance and funding of global nutrition policies, was co-authored by Saul S. Morris who at that time worked as senior programme officer at the Gates Foundation. He and his colleagues heavily criticized the international nutrition system as being “fragmented and dysfunctional” and stated that funding provided by international donors to combat undernutrition “is grossly insufficient and poorly targeted.” They concluded: “The international community needs to identify and establish a new global governance structure that can provide greater accountability and participation for civil society and the private sector.”<sup>200</sup>

The Gates Foundation has successfully positioned itself in the centre of an epistemic community that is promoting market-based techno-fix solutions to the complex global problems of hunger and malnutrition.

In short, through its strategy mix of grant-making, personal networking and advocacy, the Gates Foundation has successfully positioned itself in the centre of an epistemic community that is promoting market-based techno-fix solutions to the complex global problems of hunger and malnutrition. While without doubt this approach has contributed to the substantial increase in funding for food security and improved nutrition, it did not challenge the underlying structural impediments to the ability of countries to address these problems, most notably the trade and financial agreements that restrict their capacity to support local agricultural firms and smallholder farmers.

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199 Cf. [www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-undernutrition](http://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-and-child-undernutrition).

200 Morris/Cogill/Uauy (2008), p. 608.

## 4. Conclusion: How “philanthropic” is global philanthropy?

Over the last two decades, the philanthropic sector has grown in terms of number of foundations, the size of their annual giving, and the scope of their activities. While detailed information about their total annual spending on international development is not available, estimates range from US\$7 to more than US\$10 billion per year.

Spending concentrates on certain selected areas, especially the health sector, while other areas remain underfunded. In 2012, the largest 1,000 US foundations spent 37 percent of their international grants on projects in the health sector, 11 percent on environment projects, and only 4 percent on projects in the field of human rights.<sup>201</sup>

At the same time, philanthropic foundations have become increasingly engaged in UN system programmatic priorities and approaches. On 23 April 2013 the UN held a special event on the role of philanthropic organizations in the Post-2015 development agenda setting. Afterwards the organizers summarized:

“Philanthropic organizations are ever more active in international development cooperation and have recognized the great value of engaging with each other and other stakeholders. While their contributions are difficult to fully quantify, philanthropic organizations are well-suited to play an ever-more important role in addressing sustainable development challenges including through various innovative approaches. As such, they have the potential to play a critical role in implementing a post-2015 development agenda.”<sup>202</sup>

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation plays a special role in this regard, as its assets and annual grants exceed by far those of all other foundations. So too does the UN Foundation, particularly due to its special relationship to the United Nations and its close relationship to the UN Secretary-General.

Importantly, this increased engagement has been welcomed and indeed encouraged, not only by the UN Secretary-General and heads of UN agencies, but also by some Member States, seeing it as a recognition that governments alone cannot solve all of the world’s problems. Some of

Over the last two decades, the philanthropic sector has grown in terms of number of foundations, the size of their annual giving, and the scope of their activities.

201 Cf. Foundation Center (2014).

202 [www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf13/pcf\\_philan\\_summary.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf13/pcf_philan_summary.pdf).

course also see it as a way to relieve pressure on their own development budgets while continuing with tax and investment policies that privilege the rich. Even US billionaire Warren Buffett made this point. In a *New York Times* op-ed he stated:

“(...) while most Americans struggle to make ends meet, we mega-rich continue to get our extraordinary tax breaks. Some of us are investment managers who earn billions from our daily labors but are allowed to classify our income as ‘carried interest,’ thereby getting a bargain 15 percent tax rate. Others own stock index futures for 10 minutes and have 60 percent of their gain taxed at 15 percent, as if they’d been long-term investors. These and other blessings are showered upon us by legislators in Washington who feel compelled to protect us, much as if we were spotted owls or some other endangered species. (...) My friends and I have been coddled long enough by a billionaire-friendly Congress.”<sup>203</sup>

As the engagement of philanthropy, particularly the large global foundations, in development have become more active, it has also become more complex, giving them access and influence in many programme areas, with little or no governing framework or oversight to show how they operate or what results have been achieved. From the examination of the role of two global philanthropic foundations, Rockefeller and Gates in the areas reviewed in this paper—health and disease eradication, and hunger, food and agriculture—it is clear that three broad issues deserve attention.

One is the absence of any framework for measuring results, not so much in terms of how well the programme meets donor-defined goals, but in terms of how well it meets the broader, more long-term goals, such as improving health outcomes or ensuring nutrition for all. Donor agreements need to be reviewed and revised to fill this gap.

The second is the growing engagement on the part of foundations with the programmes and goals themselves, thereby increasingly influencing programme design and outcomes and running the risk of more serious mission distortion. Accountability is thus not just a technical matter but goes to the issue of the UN agency mandates. What kind of framework needs to be in place to make sure the money contributed by foundations goes to the agency’s programme goals, rather than, programme goals being shaped to meet donor interests?

A third issue goes to the impact on global governance. Does the creation of and support to multi-stakeholder partnerships, which no longer priv-

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203 Buffet (2011).

ilege the role of governments and intergovernmental bodies in setting standards and shaping the development agenda, risk undermining the credibility of publicly accountable decision-making bodies and weakening democratic governance?

The findings of the study and areas of concern can be grouped into four categories:

### **1. Philanthrocapitalism – applying a business model to the measurement of results**

One prominent feature of many private foundations is their practice of applying business and often market-based approaches to development. This includes a strong emphasis on results and impact. While this approach can be beneficial in terms of increasing accountability, it may also place grantees under strain to demonstrate donor-defined results, privileging interventions that produce short-term gains at the expense of investing in initiatives where benefits may be visible only in the longer term. Consequently, foundations may neglect investments in areas where impact becomes evident only over time.

Some philanthropic foundations, like the Gates Foundation, favour problem-oriented interventions that produce fast results. However, by focusing on quick-win approaches, such as developing vaccines or disseminating insecticide-treated bed nets, they tend to neglect structural and political obstacles to development (e.g. weak public health systems). Grant-making on the basis of cost-benefit analyses and social return on investment analyses risks not supporting those in real need, but rather, those who are able to deliver successful and cheap interventions. Foundations which are following a mere business logic have been criticized for “managing” the poor rather than empowering them.<sup>204</sup>

By focusing on quick-win approaches, some foundations tend to neglect structural and political obstacles to development.

While Gates’ long-term pledges to GAVI and the Global Fund have provided more sustainability than is generally true of government support, this also means that these partnerships are highly dependent on the continued benevolence of Bill and Melinda Gates.

Nevertheless, as private foundations invest most of their assets on the financial markets, their income from interest and dividends is dependent on the overall economic situation —and so is their grant-making. During the recent world economic and financial crisis, international funding by the largest 1,300 US foundations dropped dramatically (by 32% between 2008 and 2010).<sup>205</sup> Therefore, not only is philanthropic giving generally

204 Cf. People’s Health Movement/Medact/Global Equity Gauge Alliance (2008), p. 245.

205 Cf. Foundation Center (2012).

unpredictable, at least over the long term, it also tends to decline in times when it is most needed.

## 2. Influence on policies and agenda-setting

The Gates Foundation influenced priority setting in the WHO and the political shift towards vertical health funds.

Philanthropic foundations can have enormous influence on political decision-making and agenda setting. This is most obvious in the case of the Gates Foundation and its role in global health policy. Through the sheer size of its grant-making, its practice of providing matching funds, and its active advocacy, the Gates Foundation influenced priority setting in the WHO and the political shift towards vertical health funds. The Gates Foundation's increased influence on the priorities and operations of the WHO is also due to changes in the funding patterns of its traditional state donors. Because in recent years the WHO has faced a serious lack of resources, which stands in stark contrast to the enormous and growing funding needs in global public health, including emergency preparedness and crisis response, the increasing imbalance of voluntary in relation to assessed contributions has led the WHO to "attract new donors and explore new sources of funding."<sup>206</sup> As the influence of these sources increased, so too have gaps in the WHO ability to respond adequately to global health emergencies, as seen in the case of its response to the Ebola outbreak in 2014.

The same has been true of the influence of the Rockefeller Foundation on agricultural policy in the context of the Green Revolution and the Gates Foundation's push for "modern" farming technologies, including genetically modified seeds in African countries, despite growing public concerns over genetically modified food. In contrast, with its focus the Gates Foundation undermines pro poor and bottom up approaches and important alternative concepts to handle the world food crisis and the global food and agriculture agenda, as described in the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD).<sup>207</sup>

Foundations exert influence not only through their grant-making. The UN Foundation, for instance, has been contributing to shape the discourse in the UN through advisory support to the UN Secretary-General, convening informal meetings with Member States, and providing extensive communications and media support (see Box 6). The UN Foundation has been a driving force behind multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as Every Woman Every Child and Sustainable Energy for All, and just recently launched a global media campaign on the SDGs ([www.globalgoals.org](http://www.globalgoals.org) and <http://globaldaily.com>).

<sup>206</sup> WHO (2010), p. 7.

<sup>207</sup> Cf. International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) (2009).



Indeed it is important to learn from the experience of the UN Foundation, which began as a vehicle to accept a one-time, multi-year contribution from Ted Turner to advance UN causes but has also expanded its activities in various ways, raising money from public and private sources and running programmes under the UN banner but outside the UN system.

## Box 6

### The UN Foundation

The UN Foundation was created by US billionaire, CNN founder and then Co-Chairman of Time Warner, Ted Turner in early 1998. On 18 September 1997 Turner had announced his intention to make a US\$1 billion gift in support of the UN and its causes. However, he did not give this extraordinary donation in cash but in 18 million shares of Time Warner stock.

Soon after Ted Turner announced his donation to the UN, the value of Time Warner shares decreased dramatically. In order to keep Turner’s US\$1 billion promise, the UN Foundation started to raise additional resources from other donors. At the end of 2013, the cumulative allocations to the UN reached approximately US\$1.3 billion, of which only US\$450 million came from core Turner funds and US\$850 million was mobilized as co-financing from other donors.<sup>208</sup>

A large share of the UN Foundation’s revenues from other donors came from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Between 1999 and 2014 Gates gave US\$231 million in grants to the UN Foundation, mainly for projects in the areas of health and agriculture.

In order to broaden its funding base, the UN Foundation has actively explored ways to raise funds directly from governments. In the last decade the UN Foundation received direct funding from a number of governments or governmental agencies, inter alia the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Department for International Development of the Government of the UK (DFID), the European Commission, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In addition to individual governments, the UN Foundation is now actively exploring opportunities for building so-called “anchor partnerships” with multinational corporations and corporate philanthropic foundations as an important element of its long-term sustainability strategy. This intention caused concerns in some parts of the UN because of the potential reputation risk involved. The UN Foundation lists currently (July 2015) 23 corporate partners, such as Exxon Mobile, Shell, Goldman Sachs, and the Bank of America.

The mission of the UN Foundation and its relationship with the UN has changed significantly in the last 15 years. The Foundation started in 1998 primarily as a grant-making institution, with its sole purpose being to channel Ted Turner’s money to the UN. Since then its focus has shifted more and more towards launching its own initiatives outside the UN, such as the Energy Future Coalition (see [www.energy-futurecoalition.org](http://www.energy-futurecoalition.org)), brokering between donors and implementing agencies (inside

208 Cf. UN Doc. A/69/218.

and outside the UN system), and campaigning and advocating in support of the UN Secretary-General and his key priorities and strategies—including its stated goal to “scale up UN capacity to engage in transformative multi-stakeholder partnerships with the private sector, civil society, philanthropists and academia (...).”<sup>209</sup>

The UN Foundation has been a driving force behind some of the global partnerships initiated by the UN Secretary-General since 2010. It is working closely with the UN to support the UN-Secretary-General’s Sustainable Energy for All initiative, and particularly to support the Secretary-General’s Every Woman, Every Child multi-stakeholder movement, not only through donations but also “through global advocacy, communications, and managing private sector engagement (...).”<sup>210</sup>

Representatives of the UN Foundation have become close advisors to the UN Secretary-General and are participating regularly in internal meetings convened by the Office of the Secretary-General. In addition, the Foundation has provided resources to hire additional UN staff and has become a key outreach and campaigning arm for UN senior staff. The Foundation provided, for instance, “external communications, media and executive team support” around the official launch of UN Women in February 2011.<sup>211</sup>

According to the UN Secretary-General the relationship agreement between the UN and the UN Foundation has been reviewed and amended to ensure that it reflects this evolution of the Foundation’s mission and approach. The new agreement was signed in October 2014. But instead of providing a solid basis for effective and transparent governance, the new agreement seems to reinforce the exclusivity of this relationship and the preferential treatment of the UN Foundation by the UN Secretariat. The drafting of the most recent agreement took place behind closed doors without any intergovernmental oversight or transparency, and in contrast to the two earlier agreements, has not been made public.<sup>212</sup>

### 3. Fragmentation and weakening of global governance

Philanthropic foundations, particularly the Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the UN Foundation are not only major funders but also driving forces behind global multi-stakeholder partnerships. In fact, many of these partnerships, like the Children’s Vaccine Initiative, the TB Alliance, the GAVI Alliance, and Scaling up Nutrition (SUN), have been initiated by these foundations.

The mushrooming of global partnerships and vertical funds has led to isolated and often poorly coordinated solutions.

But the mushrooming of global partnerships and vertical funds, particularly in the health sector, has led to isolated and often poorly coordinated solutions. These initiatives have not only contributed to the institutional weakening of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, but have

209 UN Secretary-General (2012).

210 UN Doc. A/69/218, para. 21.

211 UN Doc. A/67/165, para. 28.

212 For further information see Adams/Martens (2015), chapter 3.

also undermined the implementation of integrated development strategies at national level.

Supporters see the variety of global initiatives as a strength and as a possibility to maintain political flexibility and to mobilize a broad range of different actors. However, it in fact results either in duplication and thematic overlap, or in high transaction and coordination costs at international and national levels.

The Gates Foundation heavily criticized the weakness and fragmentation of the global nutrition system and was instrumental in creating the SUN movement. But SUN has not worked to overcome this fragmentation. Rather it has added to the proliferation of global partnerships on food security and nutrition, such as the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the Micronutrient Initiative (MI), the Flour Fortification Initiative (FFI), the New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition and many others. Meanwhile the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition, which claims to be “the food and nutrition policy harmonization forum of the United Nations,”<sup>213</sup> remains weak and underfunded.

Furthermore, inasmuch as partnerships give all participating actors equal rights, the special political and legal position occupied legitimately by public bodies is sidelined. Multi-stakeholder partnerships implicitly devalue the role of governments, parliaments and intergovernmental decision-making bodies, and overvalue the political status of private actors, including transnational corporations, philanthropic foundations, and sometimes even wealthy individuals like Bill Gates and Ted Turner. Whether or not partnerships actually undermine democratic decision-making depends entirely on who selects the participants, how transparent the partnership is, how representative its composition is, and how accountable the partners are to their own constituencies, as well as to public mandates. If members are handpicked or self-nominated, then the partnership simply gives the illusion of democratic participation and cannot purport to be democratically legitimate.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships implicitly devalue the role of governments, parliaments and intergovernmental decision-making bodies.

#### 4. Lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms

While foundations like the Gates and the Rockefeller Foundations have significant influence on development policies, they are not accountable to the “beneficiaries” of their activities, be it governments, international organizations or local communities. Generally, they are only accountable to their own boards or trustees. This can be a quite limited number of people, as in the case of the Gates Foundation, where three family members and Warren Buffett act as trustees and co-chairs.

Foundations have to meet only limited public disclosure requirements. In the USA philanthropic foundations are obliged to file annual returns and have to make them available for public disclosure (the form 990 PF). They contain basic information on finance, investments, and grant-making. Some foundations provide basic information about their grants and grantees on their website, like the Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.

However, most foundations do not report in accordance with global reporting standards. Only seven foundations participate in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), among them the Gates Foundation and the Hewlett Foundation. Only a few foundations, if at all, make impact assessments and project evaluations publically available.

## Conclusion

So far there has been an often undifferentiated belief among governments and international organizations in the positive role of corporate philanthropy in global development. Most recently, in the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (13–16 July 2015), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, governments declared:

“We welcome the rapid growth of philanthropic giving and the significant financial and non-financial contribution philanthropists have made towards achieving our common goals. We recognize philanthropic donors’ flexibility and capacity for innovation and taking risks and their ability to leverage additional funds through multi-stakeholder partnerships. We encourage others to join those who already contribute.”<sup>214</sup>

A thorough assessment of the impacts and side effects of philanthropic engagement is necessary.

But in light of experiences in the areas of health and agriculture, a thorough assessment of the impacts and side effects of philanthropic engagement is necessary.

Governments, international organizations and CSOs should take into account the diversity of the philanthropic sector and assess the growing influence of major philanthropic foundations, and especially the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, on political discourse and agenda-setting. They should analyze the intended and unintended risks and side effects of their activities, particularly the fragmentation of global governance, the weakening of representative democracy and their institutions (such as parliaments), the unpredictable and insufficient financing of public goods, the lack of monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and the prevailing practice of applying the business logic to the provision of public goods. In

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214 UN General Assembly (2015), para. 42.

light of these problems, CSOs engaged in joined initiatives with corporate philanthropy should carefully evaluate the impact and side effects of these initiatives and potentially reconsider their engagement.

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## Abbreviations

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>AATF</b>     | African Agricultural Technology Foundation   |
| <b>ABNE</b>     | African Biosafety Network of Expertise   |
| <b>ACB</b>      | African Centre for Biodiversity (formerly African Centre for Biosafety)                    |
| <b>AGRA</b>     | Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa  |
| <b>AMC</b>      | Advanced Market Commitment   |
| <b>ATA</b>      | Agricultural Transformation Agenda   |
| <b>BMGF</b>     | Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  |
| <b>BMZ</b>      | German Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development                           |
| <b>CEO</b>      | Chief Executive Officer  |
| <b>CFS</b>      | Committee on World Food Security   |
| <b>CGIAR</b>    | Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research                                  |
| <b>CIDA</b>     | Canadian International Development Agency  |
| <b>CIMMYT</b>   | International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center   |
| <b>CNFA</b>     | Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture   |
| <b>CNN</b>      | Cable News Network   |
| <b>CSA</b>      | Climate Smart Agriculture  |
| <b>CSO</b>      | Civil Society Organization   |
| <b>DAC</b>      | Development Assistance Committee   |
| <b>DDT</b>      | Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, Insecticide   |
| <b>DFID</b>     | Department for International Development   |
| <b>DTMA</b>     | Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa  |
| <b>EGS</b>      | Early Generation Seed  |
| <b>EWEC</b>     | Every Woman Every Child  |
| <b>FAO</b>      | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations                                    |
| <b>FFI</b>      | Flour Fortification Initiative   |
| <b>GAIN</b>     | Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition   |
| <b>GAVI</b>     | Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation  |
| <b>GFATM</b>    | Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria  |
| <b>GFF</b>      | Global Financing Facility  |
| <b>GM/GMO</b>   | Genetically Modified Organism  |
| <b>GRAIN</b>    | Genetic Resources Action International   |
| <b>GSK</b>      | GlaxoSmithKline  |
| <b>HIV/AIDS</b> | Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome                          |
| <b>IAASTAD</b>  | International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development |
| <b>IATI</b>     | International Aid Transparency Initiative  |
| <b>IAVI</b>     | International AIDS Vaccine Initiative  |
| <b>IITA</b>     | International Institute of Tropical Agriculture  |
| <b>LNHO</b>     | League of Nations Health Organization  |
| <b>MAP</b>      | Mexican Agriculture Programme  |
| <b>MASP</b>     | Malawi Agro-dealer Strengthening Programme   |
| <b>MDGs</b>     | Millennium Development Goals   |
| <b>MI</b>       | Micronutrient Initiative   |
| <b>mRNA</b>     | Messenger Ribonucleic acid   |

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>MSF</b>             | Doctors Without Borders   |
| <b>NEPAD</b>           | New Economic Partnership for African Development  |
| <b>NGO</b>             | Non-Governmental Organization   |
| <b>NIAID</b>           | National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases   |
| <b>OECD</b>            | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development  |
| <b>ODA</b>             | Official Development Assistance   |
| <b>PATH/<br/>PIACT</b> | Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (formerly Programme for the Introduction and Adaptation of Contraceptive Technology) |
| <b>PCV</b>             | Pneumococcal Vaccine  |
| <b>PDP</b>             | Product Development Partnership   |
| <b>PMNCH</b>           | Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health  |
| <b>PPP</b>             | Public-Private Partnership  |
| <b>PRIs</b>            | Programme Related Investments   |
| <b>R&amp;D</b>         | Research and Development  |
| <b>RF</b>              | Rockefeller Foundation  |
| <b>SDGs</b>            | Sustainable Development Goals   |
| <b>SUN</b>             | Scaling Up Nutrition  |
| <b>TB</b>              | Tuberculosis  |
| <b>UK</b>              | United Kingdom  |
| <b>UN</b>              | United Nations  |
| <b>UNAIDS</b>          | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS  |
| <b>UNDP</b>            | United Nations Development Programme  |
| <b>UNFPA</b>           | United Nations Population Fund  |
| <b>UNICEF</b>          | United Nations Children's Fund  |
| <b>US/USA</b>          | United States of America  |
| <b>USAID</b>           | United States Agency for International Development  |
| <b>WEMA</b>            | Water Efficient Maize for Africa  |
| <b>WFP</b>             | World Food Programme  |
| <b>WHA</b>             | World Health Assembly   |
| <b>WHO</b>             | World Health Organization   |

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## Further Reading



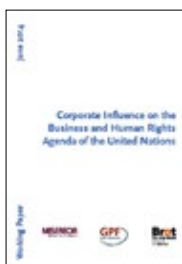
### **Corporate influence in the Post-2015 process**

#### **Working Paper**

Author: Lou Pinget

Published by Brot für die Welt/ Global Policy Forum/ MISEREOR

Aachen/Berlin/Bonn/New York, January 2014



### **Corporate Influence on the Business and Human Rights Agenda of the United Nations**

#### **Working Paper**

Author: Jens Martens

Published by Brot für die Welt/ Global Policy Forum/ MISEREOR

Aachen/Berlin/Bonn/New York, June 2014



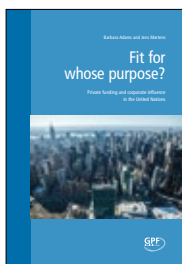
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Author: Wolfgang Obenland

Published by Brot für die Welt/ Global Policy Forum/ MISEREOR

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### **Fit for whose purpose? Private funding and corporate influence in the United Nations**

#### **Report**

Authors: Barbara Adams and Jens Martens

Published by Global Policy Forum

Bonn/New York, September 2015

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# Philanthropic Power and Development

## Who shapes the agenda?

For the last few decades, increasing globalization of the world economy and waves of deregulation and privatization have facilitated the emergence and increased the power of private actors, particularly of large transnational corporations.

However, it is not only “big business” but also “big philanthropy” that has an increasing influence in global (development) policy, particularly large philanthropic foundations. They have become influential actors in international policy debates, including, most importantly, how to address poverty eradication, sustainable development, climate change and the protection of human rights.

The scope of their influence in both past and present discourse and decision-making processes is fully equal to and in some cases goes beyond that of other private actors. Through the sheer size of their grant-making, personal networking and active advocacy, large global foundations, most notably the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have played an increasingly active role in shaping the agenda-setting and funding priorities of international organizations and governments.

So far, there has been a fairly willing belief among governments and international organizations in the positive role of philanthropy in global development. But in light of experiences in the areas of health, food, nutrition and agriculture, which are discussed in this working paper, a thorough assessment of the impacts and side effects of philanthropic engagement is necessary.

The important role being allocated to the philanthropic sector in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda makes the discussion of its role a matter of urgency.