

Emer Breen and Ramya Kumar

Private foundations and their global health grant-making patterns

A rapid analysis of the Rockefeller Foundation,
Wellcome Trust, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation



Imprint

Private foundations and their global health grant-making patterns

A rapid analysis of the Rockefeller Foundation, Wellcome Trust, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Published by

Global Policy Forum Europe e.V.
Königstr. 37a, 53115 Bonn
Germany
europe@globalpolicy.org
www.globalpolicy.org
Contact: Jens Martens

Authors:

Emer Breen and Ramya Kumar

Emer Breen's background is in general practice and public health. Her research interests have included refugee health, dengue, anaemia in infants, breastfeeding, engagement in physical activity, and medical education. Ramya Kumar teaches public health at the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Her interests include the politics of global health, decolonising global health, access to healthcare, gender and health, and health inequalities.

Editorial assistance:

Thanks to David McCoy, Emma Rhule, Tiffany Ansari-Nassiri, and Rifqah Roomaney for their helpful comments on earlier drafts.

Design:

www.kalinski.media

Cover Picture:

Nathan Dumont-Leblond created this image from the output of the AI art generator from NightCafé Studio. The image is an enhancement of an original picture created using the prompt "Hand cutting a pie made of money seen through a magnifying glass, digital art, futuristic" (DALL-E-2 model). The prompt "cutting a pie made of money" (SDXL 0.9 model) was used to obtain an intermediate image from the same generator, before manual photo editing was performed.

Bonn, October 2023

Table of contents

Summary	5
I. Introduction	7
II. Methods	8
1. Source of data	8
2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria	8
3. Data extraction	8
4. Coding	8
5. Data management	8
6. Analysis	8
7. Limitations	9
III. Findings	10
1. The Rockefeller Foundation	10
1.1 Background	10
1.2 Grant overview	10
1.3 Grantee locations	10
1.4 Types of grantees	10
1.5 Twenty biggest grants	10
1.6 Biggest grantees	11
2. The Wellcome Trust	15
2.1 Background	15
2.2 Grant overview	15
2.3 Grantee locations	15
2.4 Types of grantees	15
2.5 Twenty biggest grants	16
2.6 Biggest grantees	18
3. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	19
3.1 Background	19
3.2 Grant overview	19
3.3 Grantee locations	19
3.4 Types of grantees	19
3.5 Twenty biggest grants	20
3.6 Biggest grantees	20
3.8 Comparison with a previous review	24

4. Comparisons across the three private foundations	24
5. Emergent themes	25
5.1 Private foundations vary in size and influence	25
5.2 Reproducing power imbalances	25
5.3 Shaping the global health landscape	25
5.4 Favouring infectious diseases and health technologies	25
5.5 Funding the for-profit private sector	25
Literature	27
Abbreviations	29
Tables, Figures	
Table 1: Categories and system of classification for recipient location and organisational type	9
Table 2: Types of Rockefeller Foundation grantees, 2018–2020	11
Table 3: Twenty biggest Rockefeller Foundation grants, 2018–2020	12
Table 4: Twenty biggest Rockefeller Foundation grantees, 2018–2020	14
Table 5: Types of Wellcome Trust grantees, 2018–2020	15
Table 6: Twenty biggest Wellcome Trust grants, 2018–2020	16
Table 7: Twenty biggest Wellcome Trust grantees, 2018–2020	18
Table 8: Types of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grantees, 2018–2020	20
Table 9: Twenty biggest Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grants, 2018–2020	21
Table 10: Twenty biggest Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grantees, 2018–2020	23
Figure 1: Types of grantees, Rockefeller Foundation, Wellcome Trust, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2018–2020	25