

Inside **Philanthropy**



**The State of
American Philanthropy**

**Giving for Global
Health**

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ABOUT INSIDE PHILANTHROPY

Inside Philanthropy is a digital media site that covers the world of charitable giving. We report daily on foundations, major donors, and trends in philanthropy. Through our GrantFinder resource, we also profile and track thousands of funders working across key issue areas and geographic regions. Inside Philanthropy is supported by reader subscriptions and advertising. We do not receive funding from any other source. Learn more at insidephilanthropy.com

ABOUT THE STATE OF AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY

The State of American Philanthropy is a series of background papers on important topics and trends in U.S. philanthropy. The papers draw on past research and reporting by IP writers, as well as new interviews, grantmaking data, and other sources. Learn more at insidephilanthropy.com/state-of-american-philanthropy.

AUTHORS: Elizabeth Chute with Fundraising Now by Sandra Lundgren

EDITOR: Michael Hamill Remaley

COPY EDITOR: Chris Packham

GRAPHICS & DESIGN: Sue-Lynn Moses

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Casual observers of philanthropic support for global health might think that it's all about eradicating malaria, slowing the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and heading off the next Ebola virus outbreak in developing nations, but global health funders are doing that and so much more on every continent. While communicable diseases are still a huge concern, especially in the COVID era, leading funders prioritize many aspects of public health as complex as in the United States, including non-communicable conditions; medical specialties; reproductive health, rights and care; and healthcare administration and financing, to name just a few. Among the largest and most consistent philanthropic sources, funds focused predominantly in the low- and middle-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa and grants are also directed to developing countries in Latin America and Asia.

Similar to the discussion of healthcare in the United States, funders are gaining more understanding of the contributing causes and effects of social, economic and political determinants on health, and as a result, grants are being directed to interrelated and complex concerns that affect population health, such as climate change, nutrition, healthcare delivery, access to treatments, and equity of care for marginalized populations.

This change in more interconnected approaches follows several decades of progress in fighting infectious diseases around the world. Many funders have also turned their attention toward reducing the preventable causes of deaths, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease, which are becoming more prevalent around the world as people live longer lives generally.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 amplified the needs and challenges in global health, influenced a shift in priorities for some donors, and highlighted the need for the global community to work together to address the vast scale of human suffering and loss. The crisis has also exposed the deep inequities in health across many dimensions, particularly, the consequences of food insecurity, which have been exacerbated by both the climate crisis and COVID.

Giving for global health concerns from U.S. funders experienced a downturn in the several years before the onset of the pandemic. While some philanthropic and fundraising professionals report that philanthropic interest and funding levels have increased, others claim it has remained about the same or decreased in the current funding environment. Traditional global health funders have stepped up their giving in response to COVID, and numerous other foundations and organizations have become major funders for both pandemic relief and longer-term needs.

The largest funders in global health are mainly large, private foundations, including the nation's biggest private foundations. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is the largest funder by a substantial margin, though a comprehensive look at who is giving for global health also reveals public and corporate donors and donor-advised funds as substantial forces in giving, the latter in individual giving.

Overall, the COVID pandemic has spurred a broader imagining of public health, exposing what many in the field know: Public health is inextricably linked with social, economic and healthcare systems. To make progress, all aspects of society must be addressed.

Who's Giving

- Philanthropic giving for global health from U.S.-based funders is dominated by large private foundations, with corporate foundations, smaller private foundations, and community foundations making up a balanced mix of donors.
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has dominated global health philanthropy for over the past 20 years, has been a field-leading presence, but also one that is increasingly being critiqued. Other key funders work in this space and play important roles in specific niches.
- Among the largest nongovernmental donors is the United Nations Foundation, which is supported by a mix of individual, corporate, and government donors, and as a strategic partner of the U.N., is focused on the institution's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Who's Getting

- Much of the funding for international work in health from the U.S. is given to U.S.-based affiliates and intermediary organizations, which distribute resources and operate programs through partnerships and alliances they form with the communities they serve, as well as local governments.
- Two of the largest recipients—the World Health Organization and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria—mobilize resources globally to support local experts in countries, and in partnership with governments, civil society, technical agencies and the private sector.
- Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance leads global efforts in vaccines and vaccine distribution for infectious diseases, including COVID-19; the alliance's core partners are the WHO, UNICEF, World Bank and the Gates Foundation; among large pharmaceutical companies, Pfizer works with Gavi to fund humanitarian relief for women and children and provide vaccines for the world's poorest countries. Pharmaceutical companies are major players in global health philanthropy.

Big Issues and Funding Trends

- Progress in the fight against infectious diseases has been substantial over the past two decades and has enabled a shift in global health funding to other serious challenges, including preventing NCDs, strengthening health infrastructure, and funding for other contributing factors to health such as food insecurity and nutrition.
- With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a continuing need to fight infectious diseases worldwide, including COVID, and this remains a high priority for many funders.

- Greater cooperation, including at the community level, is necessary to combat the urgent threats to global health, which include the climate crisis, healthcare delivery in areas of conflict and crisis, healthcare equity, access to treatments, infectious disease prevention, epidemic preparedness, unsafe products, and underinvestment in health workers.
- Strengthening health systems and improving data are emerging as priorities to address the challenges of improving equity and access to healthcare globally.

Equity in the Sector

- With improving access to healthcare for the world’s populations at the core of global health, advancing equity and promoting racial (and ethnic group) justice are critical priorities.
- The COVID crisis has highlighted and accelerated the fight to achieve equity, with vulnerable populations worldwide assuming great health risks and marginalized communities bearing a disproportionate share of the pandemic’s burden.
- Women’s and girls’ health generally, and sexual and reproductive health in particular, are key areas of funding that have been a priority for many funders in supporting children, families and communities.
- Funding for HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases focuses on health and gender inequities and human rights barriers such as the criminalization of key populations, often specific to individual countries.

Fundraising Now

- Fundraising for most global health nonprofits, based on a small set of interviews, seems to have held steady or increased over the pandemic era.
- There is increasing “zoom fatigue” and a strong desire to return to in-person fundraising activities.
- Fundraisers continue to experiment with new strategies and tactics like advertising on podcasts, acting as “myth-busting” fact checkers for media stories and lifting up donors on video campaigns.

The big issues that affect global health—climate, poverty, housing and food insecurity—can seem insurmountable, but those who formulate strategies based on these interconnected goals and work within them will have the ability to make an impact with their grantmaking. Funding strategies that encompass partners on the ground in grantee countries and locales are more likely to be effective in identifying and meeting the unique needs of communities.

The COVID crisis has exposed more clearly than ever before the major fault lines in global health: the lack of access to vaccines, medicine, and care; and the inequities in healthcare between the wealthier developed nations and the low- and middle-income countries of the world. This crystallization of the inequities during the pandemic can serve as a catalyst for global health funders.

Introduction

Grants for global health from U.S. based funders are focused predominantly in the developing countries of the world, with Sub-Saharan African countries the biggest priority and funding also directed to low- and middle-income countries in Latin America and Asia.

A look at the leading global health funders and grantees reveals that the priorities for global health funding are public health, diseases and conditions, medical specialties, reproductive healthcare, and healthcare administration and financing. Increasingly, however, with a deeper understanding of the causes and effects of social, economic and political determinants on health, grants are awarded to related areas including climate change, nutrition, healthcare delivery, access to treatments, and equity of care for marginalized populations.

While combating infectious diseases remains a major priority in global health philanthropy, many funders have also turned their focus in recent years toward reducing the preventable causes of deaths, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.

And following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a look at overall giving for global health by U.S. funders must include giving in response to the pandemic—funding that has amplified the needs and challenges in global health and influenced a shift in priorities for some donors.

Overall, addressing global health is primarily a function of government, with philanthropy representing just a small fraction of total support. As such, it is necessary for donors to partner with

governmental and state-supported agencies in order to achieve goals.

Giving from funders based in the United States for global health had declined in the several years before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cumulative funding increased to a high of \$4.05 billion in 2015 and decreased in each of the next three years, reaching only \$1.71 billion in 2018, according to IP's review of Candid data on giving for global health from 2014 to 2018.

Many philanthropic and fundraising professionals reported that philanthropic interest and funding levels have increased while others claimed it has remained about the same or decreased in the current funding environment. In a survey conducted by Inside Philanthropy in August 2020, of the fundraisers and funders working for organizations focused on global health, about 4 in 10 said interest and funding levels were “gaining momentum—more funder interest and resources,” and about a quarter said it was “about the same – no discernible change in funder interest and resources.” Just over 2 in 10 of those respondents said interest and funding were “losing traction in [the] current funding environment – less funder interest and resources as a result of the current shifting of funds for COVID and racial justice.”

While data tallying COVID-related giving was not available at the time of publication, it is worth noting that in addition to traditional global health funders stepping up their giving in response to COVID, numerous other foundations and organizations became major funders for both pandemic relief and longer-term needs.

The largest funders in global health are mainly large private foundations, including some of the

most high-profile like Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and the Rockefeller Foundation, which has been funding public health and global health since its founding more than 100 years ago. However, a comprehensive look at who is giving for global health also reveals public and corporate donors and donor-advised funds as substantial forces in giving, the latter in individual giving.

When discussing [global health](#)—the health of the world’s populations, with a focus on study, research and practice that prioritizes improving health and achieving equity for all—it is necessary to consider the socioeconomic, cultural, and political factors driving the challenges of improving equity and health globally. These include reproductive rights, climate change, food security, housing and poverty.

As a result, global health funding is characterized by its intersection with other “big” issues and a variety of strategic approaches, with equity and improving access to healthcare at the core. Most top funders and recipients focus their work on specific issues, for example, strengthening health systems, promoting nutritious and healthy food, making streets and cities livable, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The COVID crisis has highlighted the need for the global community to work together to address the vast scale of human suffering and loss, according to the [“Development Co-operation Report 2020”](#) from the Organisation on Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). “The COVID-19 crisis is likely to be the biggest test of global solidarity we have ever faced. In addition to a health crisis that has claimed the lives of over 1.5 million people at the time of writing, the necessary measures taken to contain the virus have led to devastating social

and economic impacts, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Over 100 million additional people will be pushed into extreme poverty, and 270 million people will face starvation this year,” the report cites.

The crisis has also exposed the deep inequities in health across many dimensions, according to global health experts. Lana Dakan, MPH, deputy director of reproductive health at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, says structural inequities that prevent communities from accessing care and vaccines have become glaringly apparent, not just in the United States, but around the world (detailed further in this brief’s Perspectives on Equity section).

Overall, the COVID pandemic has spurred a broader imagining of public health on the heels of changes initiated before 2020 by World Health Organization Director General Tedros Adhanom, who encouraged forging new partnerships and working outside of traditional silos, says José Luis Castro, president and CEO of Vital Strategies, a leading nonprofit organization that is amongst the largest recipients of global health funding.

“The pandemic has exposed what those of us in the field already know: Public health is inextricably linked with our social, economic and healthcare systems. To go forward, we must build better systems that weave health into all aspects of society, from our workplaces to our schools to our businesses to every action of government,” he says.

The Lay of the Land

Who's Giving

The focus of this brief is private giving and the major donors fundraisers could turn to for support of global health nonprofits; however, any person new to the field should start with the knowledge that funding for global health is primarily a [government](#) function. Philanthropy represents only a small fraction of the solution. Donors generally need to partner with governmental and state-supported agencies to achieve goals—even the huge funders like the Gates Foundation.

Philanthropic giving for global health is dominated by large, private foundations, which comprise the largest funders in the sector. The 10 donors giving the most for global health, in total, provided approximately \$11.92 billion from 2014–2018, an IP review of Candid data indicates.

The largest funder, by a substantial margin, was the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which gave \$10.41 billion in the period. Other large, private funders were the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, with \$732.63 million; Bloomberg Philanthropies, with \$367.98 million; and the Rockefeller Foundation, Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Skoll Foundation, and David and Lucile Packard Foundation, with \$81.78 million, \$78.58 million, \$52.58 million, \$46.59 million, and \$30.97 million, respectively.

Also among the largest donors is the United Nations Foundation, which was founded in 1998 with a \$1 billion gift from philanthropist Ted Turner. It is supported by a mix of individual, corporate and government donors and provides

substantial private support to the U.N. The foundation gave \$48.8 million from 2014–2018, aligning with its mission as a strategic partner of the U.N. and focused on the [U.N.'s 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#), adopted to “end extreme poverty, reduce inequality, and protect the planet by 2030.”

As a large corporate donor, pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim gave \$73.54 million over five years through its Boehringer Ingelheim Cares Foundation, which makes philanthropic contributions and donates healthcare products and resources and has its employees engage in its programs to help nonprofits with their unmet needs.

Other large pharmaceutical company foundations are [major funders](#) in global health, mainly through product donations; they include Pfizer, which before COVID, gave nearly \$5 billion in 2018; post-COVID, it has committed \$40 million. It was followed by Merck at \$3 billion; and Gilead Sciences at \$1.6 million. Johnson & Johnson, Bristol Myers Squibb, and Amgen all topped \$1 billion each year.

Tax incentives play a particularly [important role](#) in pharmaceutical companies' giving, according to IP's Liz Longely. “Generally, companies that donate from inventory are limited to deductions based on the cost—or basis—of goods. But there's a more generous option for certain industries, like food and pharmaceuticals. There is some balance to the benefit equation... By advantaging the practice of charitable product donations, much-needed medicine avoids destruction. But in terms of tax benefits, marketing and market control, the other side of the scale weighs heavily in Big Pharma's favor.”

10 Institutional Funders to Know: Global Health¹

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Bloomberg Philanthropies

Co-Impact

GiveWell

Rockefeller Foundation

MacKenzie Scott

Kresge Foundation

Skoll Foundation

Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Wellcome Trust

Source: Candid

Other private foundations, corporations and corporate foundations, and a small number of community foundations, make up a balanced mix of donors in the global health sector, with their individual contributions ranging from \$7.35 million to \$24.91 million between 2014–2018, according to the Candid data.

Donor-advised funds, with a different model of philanthropy based on individual contributions to diverse global charities and nonprofit organizations, gave \$325.44 million in total for global health for 2014–2018. The top funders in this group were Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund, Foundation for the Carolinas, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, National Philanthropic Trust, and Schwab Charitable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has spurred additional contributions for global health from U.S. funders already present in Africa, also [reported previously](#) by Liz Longley in Inside Philanthropy. In 2021, ELMA Group of Foundations pledged \$137 million

to fight COVID in Africa; and Bloomberg Philanthropies, through its COVID-19 Global Response Initiative, and with its partners Vital Strategies and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, has expanded its work in Africa by \$40 million. The Rockefeller Foundation pledged \$55 million to help its partners in Africa, Asia and the U.S. fight COVID, \$1 billion over three years to end COVID in Africa, and another \$35 million for response efforts; and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has a \$1.8 billion global pandemic defense.

One of the single largest commitments to date for fighting COVID has come from the Mastercard Foundation, which announced in June 2021 it would deploy \$1.3 billion over the next three years. The Canadian-based foundation, which was created in 2006 by Mastercard International with the proceeds from its initial public offering, has assets of \$39 billion. According to [Candid's analysis](#), the size of the foundation's charitable commitment to fighting COVID is second only to that of mega-donor MacKenzie Scott, whose grants for COVID relief total \$5.04 billion and make her the largest funder for the response to the pandemic.

Who's Getting

Much of the funding for international work in health from the U.S. is given to U.S.-based affiliates and intermediary organizations, except for two of the three largest recipients: the WHO and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund), both based in Geneva, Switzerland. The distribution of global health resources and programs often occurs through partnerships and alliances formed by intermediary organizations, the communities they serve, and local governments. This is true for the largest international agencies and the smaller U.S.-based organizations that receive and distribute funds.

As the U.N.'s global health agency, the WHO—which works worldwide to ensure universal health coverage, protect against health emergencies, and provide better health and well-being—received \$849.13 million from private U.S. sources between 2014–2018, according to Candid; and the Global Fund received \$825.24 million. The Global Fund mobilizes and invests \$4.2 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in more than 100 countries, and in partnership with governments, civil society, technical agencies, and the private sector.

In 2021, the Global Fund [announced](#) it awarded \$4 billion to fight COVID-19; adapt HIV, TB and malaria programs, and reinforce systems for delivering health services, in addition to its \$4.2 billion a year to fight HIV, TB and malaria.

The largest recipient of funding for global health from 2014–2018, according to the Candid data, was Gavi, which received \$1.79 billion from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in three grants. Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance protects people's health by increasing access to vaccines worldwide, in partnership with its core partners WHO, UNICEF, World Bank and the Gates Foundation.

Another major grant recipient from private sources, the Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute, received \$272.99 million from the Gates Foundation as a single grant.

Among the largest U.S. recipients of funding, global nonprofit organizations PATH (formerly known as the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health), Vital Strategies, Population Services International, Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, and Doctors Without Borders USA received \$652.61 million, \$298.89 million, \$236.87

10 Leading Grantees in Global Health¹

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

Bill and Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute

Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance

Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

International Women's Health Coalition

Partners in Health

PATH (formerly known as the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health)

Population Services International

Vital Strategies

World Health Organization

Source: Candid

million, \$233.48 million, and \$218.85 million, respectively, over 2014–2018, according to the Candid data. Johns Hopkins University received \$214.12 million for global health programs.

Of the top 50 recipients of funding, 24% were organizations and institutions based outside the U.S., including non-governmental organizations, companies, and investment and venture funds in the United Kingdom, France, Norway, Saudi Arabia and Japan.

Universities and research institutes also were among the largest recipients. These included Emory University; Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine (United Kingdom); California Institute for Biomedical Research; Stanford University; Oregon Health and Science University; Harvard College; Duke University; University of Oxford (United Kingdom); University of Maryland-Baltimore; Scripps Research Institute; and Rockefeller University. Each received funding

ranging from \$41.18 million to \$119.73 million over the period of 2014–2018.

Giving & Getting Deeper Dive

Fighting infectious diseases remains the largest global health funding priority worldwide, and as noted, is led by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which funded over \$10 billion in the five-year period 2014–2018. The single grant of \$272.99 million from the foundation to the Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institutes in Geneva, Switzerland, helps the institute with its mission of developing products to fight malaria, tuberculosis, diarrheal diseases, and improve outcomes in maternal and newborn health.

Other leading funders of global health have staked out niches based on specific categories of diseases and priorities. These include research, technology and global access to care for chronic diseases such as Type 1 diabetes (T1D), sexual and reproductive health, gender equity, and strengthening health systems and infrastructure.

Increasingly, the private foundations that are the largest funders often base their funding strategies

on cross-sector approaches, with an emphasis on partnerships with local communities served by the grants as well as with local and regional governments in the countries served.

The Helmsley Charitable Trust, which awarded \$78.58 million for global health from 2014–2018, works with partners such as global nonprofit organization Partners in Health and other countries to strengthen health systems and improve global access to prevention, treatment and care for people with T1D in low- and middle-income countries. Its focus on policies, supply chains and health systems, and improving access to insulin and promoting food security, reflects a holistic approach to a chronic disease challenge. Another program also provides funds for global health working closely in the area of water sanitation and hygiene, and building community resilience.

An example of [working with regional partners](#) is a new \$3-million grant from Helmsley to AMP Health, a nonprofit initiative with its hub in South Africa, and supported by the Aspen Institute. The initiative aims to strengthen leadership and management skills in teams that are responsible for managing T1D and other NCDs in Liberia, Malawi and Mozambique.

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, which gave \$30.97 million to global health efforts over 2014–2018, focuses its funding on advancing reproductive health and rights, working with research advocacy organizations and promoting messaging about reproductive health and rights at the regional and global levels. In 2021, the foundation expanded its global health funding with a \$20 million grant to partners toward the urgent needs of communities hit hardest by the pandemic, supporting essential treatment and care for

Candid Top 5 Funding Priorities: Global Health 2014 - 2018 ²		
Subject	Amount Funded	Grantmakers
Public Health	\$10.09B	2,028
Diseases and Conditions	\$6.53B	2,051
Medical Specialties	\$3.12B	672
Reproductive Health Care	\$2.17B	842
Healthcare Administration and Financing	\$1.54B	1,014

Source: Candid

communities in rural India, while helping strengthen vaccine infrastructure and distribution in Africa, according to Packard's Dakan.

The Gates Foundation makes grants for global health through its global health and global development programs, which often intersect. For example, it may award a grant toward polio eradication through its global development program, which, like its global health program, is broad; both include sub-programs including malaria, HIV, neglected infectious diseases, tuberculosis, vaccine delivery and family planning.

Bloomberg Philanthropies takes a “data-driven approach to global change,” working with nonprofit organizations and governments to “scale up proven interventions and rigorously analyze data to create significant results,” according to [previous coverage](#) by Liz Longley of Inside Philanthropy. Its Partnership for Healthy Cities, a collaboration between Bloomberg, the WHO and global health organization Vital Strategies, was established to prevent NCDs and injuries. Bloomberg’s funding in Africa accounts for [most of its \\$40-million](#) COVID-19 Global Response Initiative; \$32 million was deployed to Africa and the balance went to the WHO for global work.

The Mastercard Foundation [announced](#) it is awarding of \$1.3 billion over three years to fight COVID in partnership with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), and will acquire vaccines for at least 50 million people, support the delivery of vaccinations to millions more across the continent, lay the groundwork for vaccine manufacturing in Africa through a focus on human capital development, and strengthen the Africa CDC.

The mega-donor newcomer MacKenzie Scott has the potential to make a significant impact on advancing global health, generating excitement and momentum for change with grants totaling \$8.5 billion since 2020 for organizations and individuals around the world. The exact investments for global health are not known; however, [Longley writes](#), they “shine a light on the teams of nearly 40 organizations and the special struggles of women and girls in the Global South.” Most of Scott’s donations have been for work within the United States, but her global giving, to the extent it is known, has been directed mostly toward educational and economic development initiatives.

Bloomberg Philanthropies

“One of the lessons that we have seen is that NCDs need to be an even greater focus; they cause the majority of deaths worldwide, yet receive just a small fraction of global health spending. People with NCDs like diabetes have had much worse outcomes when it comes to COVID-19, which has strengthened our resolve to address them.”

—Dr. Kelly Henning, public health program lead, Bloomberg Philanthropies

The Big Issues & Beyond

There have been huge gains in the fight to combat infectious diseases globally in the past 20 years, highly associated with the leadership and dominance of the Gates Foundation, along with other major funders. This progress has aided the expansion of global health funding to other serious challenges such as preventing NCDs, strengthening health systems, and funding for other contributing factors to health. Meanwhile, with the continuing need to fight infectious diseases, including COVID, worldwide, this area remains a high priority for many funders.

The U.N. has also taken the lead in elevating the issue of nutrition in global health, hosting the inaugural [Food Systems Summit](#) adjacent to the U.N. General Assembly in 2021. The summit demonstrates a shift away from promoting SDG2, to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030, and addressing the consequences of food insecurity as exacerbated by both climate and COVID.

Some of the major issues funders are focused on in this era include:

Expanding Funders' Understanding of Health Challenges. In January 2020, the WHO released a list of the [most urgent challenges](#) to global health over the next 10 years, developed with the help of experts around the world, citing them as threats that require attention from more than just the health sector.

Beginning with the climate crisis, the list includes healthcare delivery in areas of conflict and crisis, healthcare equity, access to treatments, infectious disease prevention, epidemic preparedness, unsafe products, and underinvestment in health workers among the greatest threats to global health.

Increasing Cooperation at All Levels. In its [Development Co-operation Report 2020](#), the OECD reiterated the need for global cooperation on the big issues affecting health for populations around the world, with its directors writing that development cooperation “needs to do more to help partner countries transition to low-emission, climate-resilient economies. It needs to work with the private sector to stimulate job-rich growth. It needs to tackle rising and deep inequalities. It needs to invest more in conflict prevention and in peace. It needs to spend more on supporting refugees, on

health and education, on social protection, on enabling civil society. All this and more, while at the same time responding to food, health and other humanitarian crises.”

Cooperation is carried out also on the community level, say funders, which helps with building sustainability. “Funders want public health programs to proactively engage with affected communities in a meaningful way. After all, communities are ultimately their own agents of change, and outsiders can never understand a context and culture as well as the people who live in it. In addition, building local capacity creates a sense of shared ownership and increases the likelihood that change will be sustainable,” says Castro of Vital Strategies.

Moving Beyond Communicable Diseases. Many global health funders had turned their focus in recent years toward reducing the preventable causes of deaths throughout the world, particularly in low- and middle-income countries in Africa. NCDs including heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and chronic lung disease are collectively responsible for almost 70% of all deaths worldwide.

Due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on low- and middle-income countries, the COVID pandemic has only exacerbated the challenge of reducing preventable causes of death. “One of the lessons that we have seen is that NCDs need to be an even greater focus; they cause the majority of deaths worldwide, yet receive just a small fraction of global health spending. People with NCDs like diabetes have had much worse outcomes when it comes to COVID-19, which has strengthened our resolve to address them,” says Dr. Kelly Henning, public health program lead, Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Strengthening Health Systems' Capacity.

Strengthening the systems that deliver healthcare has also become more critical as a result of the pandemic, according to some experts. “Amid a pandemic that revealed deep cracks in our systems and made public health more visible in our daily lives, the world is opening its eyes to the benefits of investing in strong and effective public health systems—and the profound dangers of having social, economic and healthcare systems that marginalize public health,” says Castro.

Those systems include making programs stronger in order to sustain themselves, and perhaps the greatest need amplified by COVID, the sharing of data, according to Dr. Gina Agiostratidou, director of the Helmsley Charitable Trust’s Type 1 Diabetes Program. “This is the big trend we have discovered,” she says. “From COVID, we have learned a couple of things. Funders have seen that if we can all share what we know and what data we have, our work will be a lot easier.”

Project Spotlight



The Mercury Project combats the spread of public health mis- and disinformation by supporting interventions spreading accurate information. The \$10M+ research consortium provides 3-year research grants to organizations “estimating the causal impacts of mis- and disinformation on online and offline outcomes in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic” and groups “estimating the causal impacts of online or offline interventions in the United States, Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean to increase uptake of Covid-19 vaccines and other recommended public health measures.”

In one recent high-profile example, the European Union and the Gates Foundation [announced](#) financial support for nascent efforts to set up an African medicines regulator to boost the continent's pharmaceutical and vaccine production. Together, they pledged €100 million (\$113.93 million) to support the African Medicines Agency and African national regulatory agencies.

Addressing Misinformation. An increasingly critical challenge related to COVID, as reported by Liz Longley in Inside Philanthropy, is what the WHO dubbed the global “infodemic” that is spreading inaccurate and false information globally about the causes and treatment of the disease and threatening to undermine efforts to control the pandemic.

To address the infodemic, the Social Science Research Council has launched the Mercury Project, with seed funding from well-known funders the Rockefeller Foundation (\$7.5 million); the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (\$2 million); and Craig Newmark Philanthropies (\$500,000). The project will make awards through May 2022 and fund projects in the U.S., Africa, Asia and Latin America for up to three years.

Funder Strategies & Trends

There is a close connection between the big issues funders are discussing and the strategies they’re increasingly pursuing, including:

Resourcing Data Collection to Inform

Systems. In recent years, strengthening health systems and improving data have emerged as priorities to address the challenges of improving equity and access to healthcare globally, and many of the largest funders are acting upon this.

“We’re seeing that, in order to address health issues, including equity issues, there is a very clear need for data. Robust surveillance lets public health programs prioritize needs and solve the most pressing issues. We have to strengthen countries’ surveillance so that they can adopt population policies that ensure everyone has equal access to good health,” says Henning of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Improving infrastructure for better distribution of vaccines and other medicine is also a rising priority. “I think the discussion about supply chains and how to move vaccines to communities will help us in the future. How we improve supply chains to move antibiotics, insulin, and other medicines that require refrigeration will be critical,” says Agiostratidou of the Helmsley Trust.

Funders and grantees agree on the need to strengthen systems, particularly with regard to data, digital health platforms and other technologies. As one respondent in the 2020 Inside Philanthropy reader survey notes, the most important trends in grantmaking for global health are “the push for equity, especially racial equity, both in grantmaking and in philanthropy [and] the urgency related to C19 [COVID-19]... and then, once the response is in place, thinking about the recovery and setting up lasting change.”

Building Cross-Cutting Coalitions. As noted, the consequences of food insecurity globally have been exacerbated by both the COVID pandemic and the climate crisis. In response, funders have begun coalition-building; one example is Stronger Foundations for Nutrition, which, by the end of 2021, [as reported](#) in Inside Philanthropy, had pulled together a base representing \$1 billion in commitments. The coalition is a new community of

funders focused on financing the nutrition agenda globally; the idea behind it is that working together will enable them to achieve outcomes that can’t be achieved by working alone.

Yet another collective effort is a [philanthropic initiative](#) launched at last fall’s U.N. Climate Change Summit; the Clean Air Fund focuses on air quality and climate change and is the first pooled fund to approach solutions from both climate and health perspectives. The fund was initially able to raise \$50 million from foundations working in health, climate, children and mobility, with child welfare the common thread.

Funder Spotlight BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation

The Gates Foundation is among the largest private funders of global health issues in the world. In 2020, it awarded \$1.8 billion in grants to global health organizations—around 30% of its total grantmaking for the year. Recipients include Medicine for Malaria Venture (\$185 million), Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (\$63 million), and International AIDS Vaccine Institute (\$50 million).

Others are exploring the potential of engaging deeply with partners, [as reported](#) in Inside Philanthropy. The ELMA Group of Foundations, comprising six separate entities and a services group, engages in a wide range of partnerships with co-funders, governments, nonprofits, NGOs and educational institutions, taking a flexible approach to projects and “thinking like an investor” from the private equity world. Its services arm, ELMA Philanthropies, develops strategies, identifies and vets investment opportunities, monitors performance, and manages strategic partnerships for the six foundations.

[AbbVie Foundation](#), the philanthropic arm of the global biopharmaceutical and research and development company AbbVie, in Chicago, Illinois, prioritizes improving health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries, typically partnering with large international organizations to achieve its mission in HIV/AIDS, neglected tropical diseases, developing sustainable healthcare infrastructure, and improving access to quality healthcare. It works with community partners to improve and expand educational outcomes in underserved communities; its Building Strong Communities focus area prioritizes efforts to provide essential aid and basic needs services to low-income, underserved communities, including water, sanitation, shelter, and reliable food supplies.

Inside Philanthropy August 2020 Survey

“The world is rapidly changing-how combinations of capital can be leveraged for greater impact while addresses global crisis in health, racial justice, climate, education and inequity will change our future and the prioritization of philanthropic capital.”

—Fundraiser, United States

Integrating Equity Analysis into Delivery and Systems Improvement. Recently, more funders have begun to deepen their focus on equitable, scalable delivery of proven interventions. [Wellcome Trust](#), the world’s largest philanthropic health research funder, is working to turn research into support for vulnerable populations. [As reported](#) by Liz Longely in *Inside Philanthropy*, the trust quickly activated its research networks as the COVID pandemic spread, committing resources to treatment and vaccine research and development and expanding the capacity to scale and deliver them equitably. Wellcome’s COVID work is collaborative across sectors, engaging philanthropy, business, academia, government, world health organizations, and civil society.

Other trends identified in IP’s August 2020 survey ranged from broad issues like equity and racial justice to technology solutions. Two respondents cited global health security and climate change, data modernization, and health equity; and digital platforms for health, mobilization of community capacity and resources, and big data as the most important trends currently.

There are also lessons learned from the response to the COVID pandemic that will affect how funders make strategic decisions on funding in the future—for example, the growing use of telemedicine to provide care.

“COVID has shown the power of telemedicine,” says Agiostratidou. “Telemedicine is the kind of thing that can solve a lot of issues in the future. A lot of funders are looking into it.”

Data management has also proven to be critical during the pandemic. “Data management—especially improved cause-of-death data—has been enormously important during COVID-19. Measuring excess deaths in a country or city compared to historical levels has helped authorities understand the pandemic’s direct and indirect impacts,” says Castro.

Perspectives on Equity

Improving access to healthcare for the world’s populations is at the core of funders’ global health objectives, so equity and racial justice are critical priorities for funders. The COVID crisis has highlighted and accelerated the fight to achieve equity, and some say they will strengthen and grow their work to address the challenge.

“The pandemic has illuminated deep structural inequities not just in the United States, but around

the world, that prevent communities from accessing vaccines, as well as other essential healthcare,” says Dakan of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. “Looking forward, the Packard Foundation will continue to deepen its work on racial justice and equity, examine where and how our funding can support more equitable vaccine distribution globally, and continue to be responsive to the complex challenges COVID-19 continues to pose to our grantees and communities around the world.”

The pandemic has highlighted the need to focus funding on addressing inequity in health for communities that have been affected to a greater degree, say others. “Until all people are protected equally, we must concentrate investments—not only for COVID-19 but also on the myriad health problems exacerbated by inequity—in communities that are disproportionately affected, and work proactively to address root causes of ill health,” says Castro of Vital Strategies.

Funder Spotlight



There are seven foundations under the ELMA Philanthropies umbrella. Many have multiple global health-focused programs related to vaccines, neglected tropical diseases, HIV/AIDS, and maternal and newborn health. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, ELMA pledged \$137 million to support multiple relief efforts including expanding testing, training healthcare workers in Africa, safety net support for vulnerable communities, protecting essential maternal and newborn health care, and supporting early childhood development learning and programs.

According to the WHO, gender inequity is linked to a long list of interrelated socio-economic and health concerns, and is thus a huge focus of the organization and its funders: “Gender inequity, poverty among women, weak economic capacity, sexual and gender-based violence including female genital mutilation (FGM) are major impediments to the amelioration of women's health in the African region. To ensure that women and men have equal access to the necessary opportunities to achieve their full health potential and health equity, the health sector and the community need to recognize that women and men differ in terms of both sex and gender. Because of social (gender) and biological (sex) differences, women and men experience different health risks, health-seeking behaviour, health outcomes and responses from health systems.”

WHO went on to note that “Women in the African region are more likely to die from communicable diseases (e.g., HIV, tuberculosis and malaria), maternal and perinatal conditions, and nutritional deficiencies, than women in other regions. Globally, about 468 million women aged 15–49 years (30% of all women) are thought to be anaemic, at least half because of iron deficiency, and most of these anaemic women live in Africa (48–57%). It's reported that 1 in 4 deaths among adult women are caused by NCDs such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Tobacco is a leading risk factor for NCDs and its use is increasing among young women in the region.”

As an area of inequity, funders prioritize women's health and reproductive rights. As noted, the Packard Foundation has the mission of supporting children, families and communities, and focuses much of its funding in the reproductive health sector. The Willam and Flora Hewlett Foundation's

Gender Equity and Governance Program

prioritizes women’s reproductive and economic choices and government responsiveness and policy; it seeks to “foster inclusive societies so that all people, and especially women and girls, are able to fulfill their life aspirations.”

The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation is the top private funder of sexual and reproductive health and rights work globally, with a focus on work in Mexico, South America and Africa. With grants to the International Women’s Health Coalition totaling more than \$11 million from 1986–2015, the MacArthur Foundation has supported consistently advancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and young people in the Global South.

As a major grantmaker in the HIV/AIDS field, the [Elton John AIDS Foundation](#) raises money from donors and distributes grants to nonprofit organizations worldwide; its focus is on fundraising as well as activism. It supports HIV efforts in Eastern Europe and Central Asia through Radian, in partnership with Gilead Sciences. The MenStar program works to diagnose and treat HIV in men in sub-Saharan Africa, and the UK Social Impact Bond focuses on the South London boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, and Lewisham, England.

In the pandemic, vulnerable populations worldwide have assumed the greatest health risks, [as reported](#) in *Inside Philanthropy* by Liz Longely, particularly women, who were often on the front lines in healthcare settings, supply chains and public-facing businesses. Vaccine equity has been a priority for some funders, including the Gates Foundation, which invested \$1.7 billion for the response, mostly for health equity.

ELMA Philanthropies, which works primarily in Africa, offered a \$137-million response to the pandemic, working across NGOs, governments and academia, and leveraged its local knowledge to support front-line responders in local communities through the ELMA Community Grants Program.

In November 2021, at the COP26 global summit in Scotland, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria approved a new [global strategy](#) designed to place “people and communities front and center of the fight against HIV, TB, malaria and accelerates the shift to more integrated, people-centered models of prevention, treatment and care.” The strategy will address health and gender inequities and human rights barriers such as the criminalization of key populations—all obstacles that affect the fight against these infectious diseases.

Grantee Spotlight



The International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC) focuses on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and young people, mainly in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Institutional funders supporting IWHC include the Hewlett, Susan Thompson Buffett, and Ford foundations, as well as, the Open Society Foundations.

Equity issues are defined and discussed in different ways around the globe, with extraordinarily different perspectives about societal obligations to different groups within countries, especially in regard to ethnic groups, rural populations and socio-economic status. Defining the parameters of equity has been debated in the regions and countries themselves for decades, as a [2011 article](#) from the

International Development Research Centre indicates: “The Regional Network for Equity in Health in Southern Africa (EQUINET) spent a fair amount of time in 1998 trying to define what equity means...The consensus definition arrived at has driven its work ever since. The first thing that springs out of that definition is that equity is a socially defined parameter that involves social values... so if it's considered to be unfair that rural people and urban people should have differences in mortality, then that is inequitable. If it's considered to be unfair that women and men should have different access to health services, then that, too, is inequitable.”

EQUINET was supported by Southern African institutions, by the IDRC, the Rockefeller Foundation, Oxfam GB and the United Kingdom's Department of International Development; and its main role has been to provide information, evidence, resources, capacity, mentoring, policy analysis, and networking support to equity in health work in the region.

The IDRC article notes that economic equity and health equity are largely inextricable in nations around the globe: “In addition to redistributing health resources, equity includes the redistribution of societal resources—of social and economic resources—to those with greatest need, as well as equity in political power.” It also quoted the director of the Training and Research Support Centre, Dr. Rene Loewenson, a Zimbabwean epidemiologist and a founding member of EQUINET, saying, “We consider that strengthening peoples' power to direct resources to their health needs is part of the equity framework and that you can have inequitable distributions of power and access to decision-making that are as important as inequitable

distributions of health workers or of drugs and so on... So our work is also looking at that area. And we consider all of that to be part of an equity agenda.”



Foundation Spotlight
WILLIAM + FLORA
Hewlett Foundation

The Hewlett Foundation's Gender, Equity and Governance program launched in 2021 and replaces its Global Development and Population program. Recent grantees include the Global Fund for Women, which received a \$2.1 million grant for its feminist-led abortion rights movements in Francophone West Africa; and DKT International, which received a \$1.3 million grant for its work promoting and distributing contraception and safe abortion products.

A Closer Look at Funder Types

Private Foundations

Large, private foundations dominate philanthropy for global health from U.S.-based funders. In addition to many of the largest foundations mentioned in this brief's Who's Giving section, including, for example, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Rockefeller Foundation, Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, and William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, several other private foundations stand out for their giving and approaches to addressing global health.

The Skoll Foundation, which gave \$46.59 million from 2014–2018, according to Candid, supports access to healthcare services, integrated health models and improved healthcare technology. The foundation's global health investments also focus on health delivery, clean water and sanitation. Funding is conducted through its annual Skoll Awards for Social Entrepreneurship, with each grantee receiving a three-year, \$1.25-million investment to scale their work.

The Ford Foundation, which gave \$17.22 million over the 2014–2018 period, works through its global reach and vast grantmaking to address inequality, social justice, freedom of expression, and workforce development. Its grants related to women and girls tend to focus on sexual and reproductive health rights, with an eye on empowering marginalized populations. In 2020, in an effort to support its grantees through the COVID-19 pandemic, Ford [announced](#) that it will “offer for sale \$1 billion of taxable Social Bonds, the

net proceeds of which will be used for grantmaking to help sustain and strengthen mission-critical social justice and creative expression organizations.”

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, with \$9.69 million in funding from 2014–2018, devotes its global health dollars to medical research and strengthening health systems that link workforce training directly with primary healthcare delivery. The foundation's African Health Initiative maintains the broad goal of supporting the development of comprehensive health systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, investing in health infrastructure, healthcare access, and professional development programs. The foundation was set to [discontinue](#) its African Health Systems work in 2019, but as of the completion of this brief in 2022, its website still discusses it as current work.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation gave \$20.11 million for global health initiatives from 2014–2018. It generally makes these gifts to organizations that serve at-risk and underserved populations, but it also supports projects in new and innovative research. While the foundation is focused on a healthier U.S., it also funds grants that help it learn from and adapt global innovations from countries around the world.

Among the largest funders, Bloomberg Philanthropies' data-driven model drives its approach to global change. Its Public Health program funds a wide range of initiatives dedicated to reducing the preventable causes of death throughout the world, working with nonprofit organizations and governments to “scale up proven interventions and rigorously analyze data to create significant results.”

As noted previously, the Hewlett Foundation is a top funder of global health, giving \$52.58 million from 2014–2018. With a focus on sub-Saharan Africa, Mexico and the U.S., it makes grants to expand women’s reproductive and economic choices, increase governments’ responsiveness to the people they serve, and improve policymaking.

Corporate Funders

In the sphere of global health funding, corporate funders tend to be less prevalent than private foundations of all sizes. Pharmaceutical companies are huge donors in global health, in large part because of product and supply donations that receive especially generous tax treatment, but some also give significant financial resources, as well.

Food companies based in the U.S. are increasing their funding for nutritional health. Cargill, the largest privately held corporation in the country, has [increased its giving](#) to \$115 million, an increase of 90%, with \$35 million specifically directed to combat the pandemic. [General Mills](#) produced \$5 million worth of food in fiscal year 2020 for its donation to Feeding America. Its response to the pandemic and support for emergency food assistance resulted in 4.2 million meals.

M.A.C. AIDS Fund, with \$24.91 million in giving from 2014–2018, is the largest corporate-affiliated funder for global health, according to Candid data. A charitable project of M.A.C. Cosmetics, the fund makes numerous grants to global health projects

around the world empowering marginalized groups affected by HIV/AIDS and reducing the effects of poverty on people and communities with high rates of HIV/AIDS. The foundation's chairman, John Demsey, is also the group president of the Estee Lauder Companies, which counts cosmetic lines like Estee Lauder, M.A.C., Tom Ford Beauty, Bobbi Brown, Jo Malone, and La Mer among its brands. MAC was acquired by Estee Lauder, and as of 2019, no longer focuses solely on HIV/AIDS, moving to [broader LGBTQ+](#) issues.

As noted in the Who’s Giving section, pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim’s foundation, Boehringer Ingelheim Cares Foundation, which gave \$73.54 million over five years, is one of the largest funders of global health, making philanthropic contributions, donating healthcare products and resources, and engaging its employees in its programs to help nonprofits.

The Eli Lilly and Company Foundation (not to be confused with the Lilly Endowment, which derives its assets from the fortune amassed by the company’s founder and family), supports access to quality healthcare for low- and middle-income populations to address diabetes, cancer and tuberculosis, donating \$21.13 million from 2014–2018. The program stretches locally, nationally and globally. The company, founded by Col. Eli Lilly in 1876, was the first to mass manufacture the polio vaccine. Today, its products include medications for cancer, diabetes, pain relief and neurodegeneration.



After donating more than \$500 million over 25 years to help eradicate HIV/AIDS, the M.A.C. AIDS Fund rebranded itself. Now known as the M.A.C. Viva Glam Fund, it continues to support organizations working to eradicate HIV/AIDS but now with a stronger focus on LGBTQ+ equality. Through this new strategic focus, the fund aims to help those disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS through improved healthcare and stigma reduction.

The Amgen Foundation, the principal channel for corporate philanthropy for leading biotechnology and pharmaceutical producer Amgen, is a leading funder among pharmaceutical companies, giving \$17.08 million from 2014–2018. With a primary focus on science education, it also makes grants to local, national and international nonprofits reflecting its core values of inspiring the next generation of innovators and supporting the communities where its staff live and work.

The Baxter International Foundation, founded in 1982, is the philanthropic arm of the global healthcare product company Baxter International, Inc., based in Illinois. Its Access to Health Care program awards grants primarily to health systems, hospitals and health nonprofits globally. Among its grants are those for science research to individual investigators, healthcare professionals and academic and research institutions.

The GE Foundation (of the General Electric Company) supports education, health and disaster relief in the U.S. and abroad. The foundation works in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and partners closely with health ministries. With funding totaling \$17.94 million over the five years, the foundation emphasizes projects to improve technological capacities in hospitals and health centers around the world.

Johnson & Johnson Foundation focuses its global health grantmaking—which totaled \$7.4 million from 2014–2018—on a range of international health and development causes. It supports expanding reproductive health services for women and girls, eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and combating fistula. It also partners with organizations to combat communicable and non-communicable diseases and promote mental health.

With internal conflicts, climate change and the COVID crisis colliding in many regions, including Central America and the Middle East, the Global FoodBanking Network’s COVID-19 [Response Fund](#) is addressing food insecurity by providing food banks with technical support to reach at-risk populations, recovering agricultural surpluses, and enlisting governments and businesses in the fight; and it has a ton of corporate support, mostly from multinationals.

Inside Philanthropy August 2020 Survey

“I worry about US philanthropy becoming myopic and self-focused just when the risk and power of global interconnectedness has taken center stage in history. It would be a very bad moment for US philanthropy to lose sight of international trends, needs, ideas, and possibilities.”
—Foundation professional, Washington, D.C.

IP’s Longley reports, “From the financial services arena, it initially drew a half-million-dollar donation from BlackRock to meet emerging needs in Asia and Latin America, then an additional \$1 million to support the response in India. Bank of America gave \$1 million to support food banks in Mexico, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific. As schools remained closed, the Macquarie Group Foundation made a \$1.2 million investment in the network to provide meals for homebound children through more than 900 food banks.” The article noted that the PIMCO Foundation, Northern Trust, PepsiCo Foundation, Kellogg Company Fund, Ingredion and General Mills all made investments, along with founding member Cargill. Other support came from the foundations of property and casualty insurer Chubb and global construction and mining equipment leader Caterpillar.

Community Foundations

Geographically focused community foundations in the U.S., almost by definition, direct most of their resources locally, so they are not a significant factor in global health. Most of the funding for global health coming out of community foundations is from donor-advised funds (DAFs), which can generally be thought of as individual giving since they direct individual contributions rather than endowment-driven program funds.

U.S.-based DAF managers that were the top global health funders from 2014 to 2018, according to Candid, were Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund, with \$101.59 million in giving; Foundation for the Carolinas, \$71.28 million; Silicon Valley Community Foundation, \$70.72 million; National Philanthropic Trust, \$43.83 million; and Schwab Charitable, with \$38.01 million.

Population-focused foundations like the New York Women's Foundation also support organizations that have an interest in global health, but they are not particularly large funders in this area. More significant are population-focused public charity grantmakers that tend to be discussed as intermediaries. Funders in this category direct

Grantee Spotlight



Launched in 1977, PATH aims to accelerate health equity around the world with a focus on developing and least developed countries. The organization has received significant support from institutional donors for decades. In 2020, 52% of PATH's revenue was derived from foundations including the Gates and Hilton foundations, Wellcome Trust, and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation.

resources specifically to groups that have been marginalized, e.g., women's health and reproductive rights, and gender and sexual equality. A group that supports women's issues globally—the [Global Fund for Women](#)—gives funds and resources to feminist activists to drive gender equality around the world. It funds gender justice movements, provides crisis and innovation grants, and advocates for women's rights and equity, with 84% of its grants going to groups working in repressive societies.

Likewise, the [International Women's Health Coalition](#) works to advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and adolescent girls by funding feminist leaders, organizations and movements, primarily in the Global South; conducting advocacy; and generating knowledge and leading dialogues on critical issues.

Major Donors

Major donors—high-profile, wealthy individuals making gifts, often through their own living-donor foundations, or private family foundations with the living donor or spouse of the living donor as the primary decision maker—comprise a surprisingly large number of the funders for global health.

Of living major donors, the largest is MacKenzie Scott, whose wealth derives from Amazon, founded by her ex-husband Jeff Bezos. As noted previously, Scott's grants totaling \$5.04 billion for the COVID-19 pandemic response places her in the top position of all U.S. funders for COVID relief.

Good Ventures Foundation is one of many charitable ventures associated with Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz and his wife, Cari Tuna. It funded global health in the amount of \$22 million from 2014 to 2018, according to Candid,

and gives through the Open Philanthropy Project, a partnership that was formed between Good Ventures and the charity evaluator GiveWell in 2014. The project's four focus areas are global health and development, U.S. policy, global catastrophic risks, and scientific research.

Jody Allen, the sister of the late Microsoft co-founder, leads the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, which supported global health in the amount of \$15.22 million over the five years. The foundation tends to focus its global health giving on disease outbreaks and pandemics and employs research and policy change in its areas of interest "to solve some of the world's pressing problems concerning climate change and health."

The Simons Foundation, started by retired hedge funder and math genius Jim Simons and his wife Marilyn, gave \$12.53 million from 2014–2018 and is one of the country's largest foundations devoted entirely to science and math research. With its health grantmaking, it supports research into the causes, diagnosis and treatment of autism through the [Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative](#).

Bright Horizon Foundation, with \$9.5 million in global health funding over the five-year period, supports global security causes, as well as organizations that work in conservation, global health, and strengthening democracy across the U.S. and sometimes internationally. Its president, Lou Salkind, is the former managing director of multinational investment firm D.E. Shaw and Co., and currently serves on the board of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, which gave \$7.35 million for international health programs from 2014–2018, is one of the largest and

most active grantmakers in science philanthropy, funding basic research across the life and physical sciences. Its grantmaking prioritizes projects with rigorous scientific methods and the potential for impactful change in its interest areas. Other areas of interest include conservation, public health, and higher education in the STEM disciplines.

Intermediaries & Associations

With the diverse priorities in global health philanthropy, there are no large-scale funder affinity groups bringing together global health funders as there are for other domestic concerns in health and other issues. However, there are at least two smaller affinity groups for funders that address specific global health issues domestically and internationally. The [Funders Network on Population, Reproductive Health & Rights](#) is a network of funders that protect and promote sexual and reproductive health. [Funders Concerned About AIDS](#) mobilizes leadership and philanthropic resources to eradicate HIV/AIDS and address the resulting social and economic consequences.

Intermediary Spotlight

FCAA

Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA) was established in 1987 "to take bold actions and push philanthropy to respond to HIV/AIDS." The group's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan includes promoting HIV-informed philanthropy, connecting leaders in the field and supporting HIV funders. FCAA is comprised of over 45 nonprofit and philanthropic organizations including ViiV Healthcare, the Ittleson Foundation, Gilead Sciences, Third Wave Fund, the Ford Foundation, and many more.

Among multi-funder efforts driven by global health funders, the UN Foundation can be considered an intermediary and stands out for its scope and collaborative approach to funding and promoting public health globally. It brought together donations from government and philanthropic sources and gave \$48.8 million from 2014–2018, according to Candid, aligning with its mission as a strategic partner of the U.N. In response to the COVID-19 global crisis, the UN Foundation and WHO launched the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, in partnership with the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, as a way for individuals and companies everywhere to support the WHO’s global response. In its first six weeks, the fund **surpassed \$200 million** in donations from more than 500,000 individuals around the world and more than 150 global companies.

Co-Impact, a fiscally sponsored project of the New Venture Fund, is a global philanthropic collaborative that grew out of Rockefeller Foundation leadership. It has a growing community of funding partners and supports local organizations, mainly in the Global South, working to achieve impact at scale. Its goal is to transform large-scale systems in health, education and economic opportunity, and it has a particular focus on gender equity and inclusion for women and girls.

GiveWell, founded by Dustin Moskovitz and Cari Tuna, has received attention for its approach to evaluating the impact of individual donations, and is a vehicle for smaller donors as well as a funding vehicle for its founders.

As a global nonprofit working to improve public health, PATH, formerly known as the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health—which gave

\$22.85 million in funding over five years—takes a collaborative approach to working with partners in 70 countries, including governments, philanthropists, nonprofits and the private sector. With more than 40 years of experience forging multi-sector partnerships, it focuses on **vaccines, drugs, medical devices, diagnostics, digital tools** and innovative approaches to **strengthening health systems**.



“Funders want public health programs to proactively engage with affected communities in a meaningful way. After all, communities are ultimately their own agents of change, and outsiders can never understand a context and culture as well as the people who live in it.”

—José Luis Castro, President and CEO, Vital Strategies

Fundraising Now

The COVID pandemic has elevated global health needs to the top of donors' minds, while raising the profile of the underlying systems and science that address such needs, according to fundraisers IP spoke with recently. There are virtually no organizations that take on the entire scope of what global health encompasses—improving health for all people in all nations by promoting wellness and eliminating avoidable disease, disability and death. While some organizations focus on big-picture health systems and strategy work, it is much more common for an organization to select just a sliver of this pie, which has direct implications for fundraising strategies.

To provide a snapshot of global health fundraising these days, IP connected with nonprofits at four points along the spectrum, charities whose approach to the issue and to fundraising vary quite a bit—Global Health Ministries (GHM), with 2020 revenue of \$5.5 million; Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi), with total revenue of \$64 million, Partners In Health (PIH), with revenue of \$217 million, and the GiveWell Maximum Impact Fund (MIF), which disbursed \$560 million in 2021.

Steady to Elevated Fundraising Numbers.

Fundraisers who rely heavily on personal interactions say it's been a challenge to attract new supporters; some reported difficulty raising funds for non-COVID-related causes. While bottom lines have been steady or risen, it is mostly thanks to loyal friends already in the fold.

Ceallagh Anderson Smart is director of philanthropy at Global Health Ministries, an independent Lutheran nonprofit that specializes in

capacity-building for Lutheran health systems in 13 countries where churches manage hospitals, clinics and community-based outreach. Smart says the biggest negative impact COVID had on GHM was in early 2021, when in-kind stockpiles got very low. But in the last quarter of the year, despite loud concerns about supply chains, supplies poured in, and GHM ended up exceeding previous totals.

Similar to other charities in the \$5 million budget range, GHM places a heavy reliance on traditional direct-mail campaigns. Since February 2020, she overhauled and increased direct mail efforts, adding new appeals and emphasizing segmentation and targeting. Plus, Smart added monthly asks for specific countries and projects, such as their clinic in Liberia, targeted to donors who had supported those efforts in the past. Despite tripling their asks, Smart is not observing any donor fatigue.

In 2020, GHM raised \$2.2 million in cash donations, 15% more than in 2019. In 2021, they raised 4.5% more than 2020, including 21% more for general operating contributions—some of the toughest to land. She's aiming for 8% year-over-year for the next three years, with positive results speaking to the benefits of a dedicated fundraiser.

Partners In Health is “a social justice organization dedicated to providing high-quality healthcare to those who need it most,” with programs in 10 countries, plus two in the U.S. Andy Wilson, chief development officer, said PIH is ahead of its goals in every individual giving revenue stream, thanks in part to a strong pandemic response from institutional donors.

“We are doing well with our current donors, who already know and understand our work,” he says. Another factor is the strength of the stock market's

performance during this time. But it has been “tougher in the early stages of cultivation and acquisition to not be able to interact personally.” Still, PIH’s donor base in 2019 was 29,000 and it has increased each year since.

GiveWell’s Maximum Impact Fund stands apart from other organizations featured here, for a few reasons. For one, it’s at the upper end of the dollar range, with giving increasing from \$243 million in 2020 up to \$561 million, thanks primarily to an influx of donations from Open Philanthropy (backed mainly by Dustin Moskovitz and Cari Tuna) totaling \$91.8 million. It does relatively little small donor cultivation (see more in Reassessing Tactics section below)

What GiveWell’s MIF has in common with global health causes at the other end of the dollar spectrum is that they increased their donor pool across all levels of giving and are not finding that the pandemic has negatively affected giving.

Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative is another global health charity that has no structured direct marketing program. Joelle Tanguy, director of external affairs, is the former executive director of Doctors Without Borders, which started DNDi in 2003 in response to the frustration their physicians experienced when they succeeded in identifying diseases but had no good way to treat them.

DNDi funding comes from government and philanthropy, with multiple grants from agencies in 26 countries and international bodies, as well as from several dozen private foundations around the world. “Our philanthropic funding is healthy,” Tanguy says, “but because of COVID, we were not able to expand our work on Dengue, river blindness and other neglected tropical diseases.”

Zoom Fatigue, Looking Toward In-Person Connections. On the more positive end of the online fundraising experience, GHM’s Smart said, by necessity, she transformed a longstanding in-person conference for GHM providers into a virtual symposium with guest experts from around the world, yielding added credibility for GHM’s work. In the past few years, their donor base has evolved to the point that 50% are not in its headquarters state of Minnesota. She also took their gala online, enabling them to include donors scattered throughout the Upper Midwest and even farther afield. In 2022, it will be hybrid.

While GHM has added to its donor pool during the pandemic, it was not by as much as they would have liked. Smart’s next target is younger donors. She aims to appeal to them by creating on-the-ground video stories.

Fundraiser Spotlight



The humanitarian aid organization Direct Relief’s mission is to “improve the health and lives of people affected by poverty or emergencies without regard to politics, religion or the ability to pay.” Its work in humanitarian medical aid has numerous areas of focus including community health, disease prevention, maternal health and health equity. Direct Relief receives support from a wide variety of funders including the AbbVie Foundation, the Cathcart Millenium Foundation and the Skoll Foundation. In 2020, the organization received a \$50 million donation from a single anonymous donor.

Partners In Health’s Wilson said he finds the virtual environment to be more of a challenge these days than it was in 2020. “People are tired of it,” he says. The organization has two tracks in its fundraising strategy. For the personal-relationship-based fundraising model upon which Wilson relies for outreach with foundations and corporations, the pandemic has, indeed, created a challenge.

DNDi relies on media coverage and word-of-mouth to find likely prospective donors. Tanguy hopes to move to a stage of the pandemic soon in which they can resume one-on-one dialogues. “We have few resources to spread the word,” Tanguy says. “In fact, we’d love some help with that.” The most traditional fundraising activity that DNDi had was a gala. With nine offices worldwide, they held it in New York City for just two years, raising \$1 million a year before the pandemic forced its cancellation. They did not hold virtual events. “We can’t wait for ‘virtual’ to be over so we can meet new supporters,” Tanguy says.

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“In current circumstances, it seems likely that preoccupation with domestic issues will grow and international giving by U.S. philanthropy will contract.”

—Foundation professional, Washington, D.C.

Reassessing Fundraising Tactics. GHM’s Smart, who was new to her role just as the pandemic took hold, said the organization changed its fundraising tactics. It added more touchpoints with postcards and calls to major donors. However, she says that with the number of major donations increasing among their 8,000 active donors, she may have to reassess who gets personal calls.

PIH’s Wilson says its new individual donors are thanks, in part, to pandemic-related advocacy and elevated visibility, which is translating into greater interest and support. Another factor was the tremendous response of donors to the tragic earthquake in Haiti, where PIH has been working for 30 years. Laura Soucy, PIH director of marketing and donor support, explained that at the beginning of the pandemic, they sent out emergency messaging, increasing their direct mail and email cadence, and started texting to add urgent tones. Then they transitioned to working COVID messaging into all of their campaigns.

An immediate goal for PIH is to deepen engagement through the use of field videos to tell stories, similar to GHM’s effort. But in the COVID era, that comes with its own set of challenges. While there is currently less urgency, there seems to be no donor fatigue, with COVID messages still driving the most engagement. “For example,” Soucy said, “an email for myth-busting about omicron garnered one of our highest open rates ever. People look to Partners In Health as a trusted source, and feel compelled to give extra.”

GiveWell engages in few of the traditional fundraising activities associated with smaller donors. They don’t run Google or other web advertising or email, and they dabbled in direct mail for the first time in 2021, unenthusiastically describing their results as mixed at best. They rely heavily on peer-to-peer word of mouth—GiveWell has become well known among tech industry and other donors, landing widespread media coverage—and employ a team of advisers who share results of research about organizational effectiveness with prospective donors.

The exception, since 2019, has been advertising on podcasts. The ads stick to the core GiveWell message of helping donors ensure their charitable dollars do the most possible good. Ads are placed on podcasts suggested by their current donors, which seems to be effective due to the high levels of trust involved. Podcast advertising has created successful entrée to new donors, with GiveWell Philanthropic Advisor Taylor Caldwell describing the response as “enormous.” Based on that success, they are now considering advertising on YouTube videos.

DNDi’s Tanguy said that while the pandemic accelerated giving, ironically, it exacerbated one of their key issues—restricted donations. As experts in drug development for infectious diseases, DNDi was immediately invited to engage on COVID. “But,” Tanguy explains, “we decided not to refocus on COVID alone, but also to advance our traditional portfolio of work on neglected diseases. That was tough, because the public focus on COVID overshadowed these other life-threatening epidemics.”

She adds, “The practice of earmarking funding for hot issues is not necessarily a healthy way to do philanthropic support.” DNDi’s current ratio of unrestricted to restricted gifts is about 50/50, but traditionally, it has been closer to 70/30. Tanguy hopes the talk of shifting to unrestricted funds to enhance the resilience of nonprofits translates into action.

Fundraising Spotlight



The main goals of Partners in Health (PIH) are “to bring the benefits of modern medical science to those most in need of them and to serve as an antidote of despair.” In 2021, PIH received over \$313 million in revenue, 48% percent of which came from individuals, family foundations, and corporations. A number of institutional funders support PIH, including the Gates Foundation, Open Society Foundations, and the Skoll Foundation.

An Analysis of Opportunities & Challenges

Global health has traditionally delivered the most “bang for the buck” for funders and nonprofit organizations in terms of philanthropic dollars directly saving lives. However, it is also a fairly technical area of philanthropy, one that relatively few funders engage in. The special considerations and legal hurdles to giving to nonprofits outside of the United States are not huge, but can seem daunting to smaller foundations and individual donors.

While the big issues that affect global health, including climate, poverty, housing, and food insecurity, can seem insurmountable, those who formulate strategies based on these interconnected goals and work within them can make a real impact with their grantmaking.

New funders to the space can and should look to intermediaries to connect, learn the lay of the land, and help move money to grantees. For smaller nonprofits, there will be more opportunities to raise money with the continuing shift away from a narrow focus on infectious diseases, which require technical solutions, to areas such as improving health systems and working on the ground in countries to improve access to care in communities.

As cited by some surveyed by Inside Philanthropy, innovations such as those that create partnerships among public entities and governments, health systems, and local programs will uncover new and more effective ways of working together. Funding strategies that encompass partners on the ground in grantee countries and locales are more likely to be effective in identifying and meeting the unique needs of communities.

Above all, as many experts point out, the COVID crisis has exposed more clearly than ever before the major fault lines in global health; specifically, the lack of access to vaccines, medicine and care; and the inequities in healthcare between the wealthier developed nations and the low- and middle-income countries of the world. This crystallization of the inequities during the pandemic can serve as a catalyst for global health funders—it is a clarion call for those working in the sector to rededicate and accelerate their efforts to improve health and healthcare for all.

On a hopeful note, there is relatively good alignment between the big issues identified by leading funders and intermediaries interviewed by IP and the strategies and trends they say are becoming more prevalent in the field. That’s not always the case. Funders of global health are recognizing the importance of addressing systems that lead to unequal access to healthcare and recognizing the need to work with partners to address the complex determinants of health, especially equity issues related to women’s health, rural poverty, nutrition and societal treatment of minority populations, LGBTQ+ people, migrants and others. Supporting data collection and analysis and broadening efforts beyond communicable diseases have been important contributions of private philanthropy, which, in collaboration with intermediaries and national and local governments, is shaping new approaches to public health around the world.

Resources: Giving for Global Health

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Joelle Tanguy, director of external affairs, Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative

Andy Wilson, chief development officer, Partners In Health

¹Based on available grantmaker data from Candid. Excludes federal funding and funding by higher education institutions

²Based on available grant recipient data from Candid. Excludes government organizations.

Feedback?

The State of American Philanthropy is an ongoing project. Each SAP brief will be updated periodically to integrate new information, additional data and evolving perspectives. This brief was originally posted to Inside Philanthropy in March 2022. It has not yet been updated. If you have comments or information you'd like to share with us, please email us at managingeditor@insidephilanthropy.com.