Background

Global private philanthropy is reshaping the development landscape like never before. This is particularly relevant in the 2030 Agenda which emphasises private philanthropy’s role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to dive deeper into philanthropy’s contributions to development, the OECD Development Assistance Committee and the OECD Network of Foundations Working for Development (NetFWD) have been working to update and expand the OECD 2003 report on Philanthropic Foundations and Development Co-operation. This exercise is part of OECD efforts to provide an overview of recent developments and the state of play of development finance flows in the framework of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on development finance, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement to combat climate change.

A major cornerstone of this work is the large-scale data survey on private philanthropy for development conducted by the OECD since September 2016. The objective has been to collect detailed (activity-level) information from the most active and influential philanthropic foundations, funds, trusts and corporations involved in development co-operation. This note presents the results of this survey as of June 2017. A more comprehensive data analysis will be included inter alia in a statistical report scheduled for autumn 2017.

Philanthropic giving for development amounted to USD 22.7 billion in 2013-15

The survey covers philanthropic giving for developmental purposes, extended either directly to citizens of developing countries or through implementing intermediaries such as NGOs, multilateral institutions, research institutes and private enterprises. The results indicate these flows amounted to USD 22.7 billion in 2013-15, or USD 7.6 billion per year on average. These figures are drawn from more than 100 private philanthropic foundations, notably from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Switzerland and other European countries, but also from other countries including India, Brazil and Mexico.

Figure 1. Largest foundations working for development per region, USD million, 2013-15

USA & CANADA (76%)  EUROPE (18%)  OTHER (6%)

11 627.2  747.9  366.2
724.6  666.4  303.5
613.4  405.8  192.6
533.0  393.7  156.3
361.5  270.8  64.5

*CIFF stands for Children’s Investment Fund Foundation and DPL for the Dutch Postcode Lottery

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1 All organisations included in this survey are referred to as ‘foundations’ without prejudice to their legal nature in respective countries.
2 Developing countries include countries on the DAC List of ODA Recipients. Developmental purpose means the economic development and welfare of developing countries is the main objective of the activity. The term “giving” in this note refers to all activities from philanthropic foundations, although a very small share of the total (0.6%) represents loans, equities and contingent liabilities.
3 In the case of foundations based in developing countries, the activities captured do not necessarily represent cross-border flows.
Main foundations

With over USD 11.6 billion of giving over 2013-15, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) was by far the most generous foundation in the world (52% of the total), followed by the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, CIFF (3%), the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation (3%) and the Dutch Postcode Lottery (3%). While the majority of philanthropic giving originated from North America (76%), the survey revealed that Europe-based foundations also played an important role, providing 18% of the total over the 3-year period. Giving by foundations located in other countries and regions (India, Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Hong Kong and Japan) represented a smaller share of the total (6%). However, data collection from Chinese foundations is still on-going.

Main sectors targeted

As shown in figure 2, philanthropic giving targeted predominantly the health and reproductive health & population sectors which together accounted for 53% of the total over 2013-15, followed by education (9%), agriculture (9%) and government & civil society (8% - including human rights, gender, civil society development and transparency & accountability). Health and reproductive health & population benefitted mainly from BMGF’s giving (76% of sector total), while the education, government & civil society and general environmental protection were mainly fostered by other foundations.

The survey also requested information on the foundations’ activities in relation to the SDGs. The sectoral analysis above suggests that private philanthropy can play a major role in funding and helping developing countries achieve at least SDG 1 (“end poverty in all its forms everywhere”), SDG 2 (“end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”), SDG 3 (“ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”), SDG 4 (“inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning”), and SDG 16 (“peace, justice and strong institutions”).

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4 United States and Canada.
5 United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium.
6 This covers mainly infectious disease control, provision of basic health, reproductive health care, family planning, malaria control, STD control and medical research.
Geographical and income distribution

In terms of geographical distribution, 29% of the total giving was targeted to Africa during the 3-year period, followed by Asia (16%), America (8%) and Europe (2%). A large share (45%) of the giving had a global or multi-continent scope.  

India was the largest recipient country of foundations’ giving over 2013-15, resulting from particularly significant giving by the BMGF, Tata Trusts and IKEA Foundation. Five of the top ten recipient countries were from the African continent: Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania (totalling USD 2.3 billion).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Amount (USD million)</th>
<th>% of the total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1,586.4</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>728.6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>565.2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>453.6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>428.2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>417.4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>391.1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>316.8</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>307.8</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>297.7</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of distribution per income group, two thirds of the allocable amounts benefitted middle-income countries (39% lower middle-income countries – LMICs – and 28% upper middle-income countries – UMICs), while only one third targeted the least developed countries (LDCs) and other low income countries (LICs).

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7 For example, cores support to organisations active on multiple continents or contributions to programmes benefiting citizens of multiple continents, such as health research, polio eradication, malaria control, global climate change action etc.
Modality of giving and channels of delivery

As shown in Figure 6, the survey further revealed that 81% of the philanthropic giving was channelled through third parties: 71% through NGOs, research institutes, think tanks, universities, networks, PPPs or private enterprises (63% as earmarked, and 8% in the form of core support) and 20% through multilateral organisations (13% as earmarked and 7% in the form of core support). Finally, 5% consisted of giving related to specific activities implemented by foundations (incl. direct charitable activities and programme-specific investments).

Figure 6. Channels of delivery and modality of giving, 2013-15

The top 15 most prominent channels of delivery, together accounting for over 27% of the total, were the following organisations and institutions (starting with the most significant):

- Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- PATH International
- University of Oxford
- ClimateWorks Foundation
- Population Services International (PSI)
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
- Clinton Foundation
- Marie Stopes International (MSI)
- Johns Hopkins University
- Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE)
- International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
- Save the Children
- United Nations Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Multilateral organisations are in orange and other channels of delivery (notably international NGOs, universities and research institutes) are in blue.

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8 Earmarked funding refers to contributions allocated for a specific purpose (incl. technical assistance and capacity building) or a specific country.