

# An analysis of university giving by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

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## Key findings

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the world's largest family foundation, has disbursed over \$6bn in funding to 392 universities and higher education institutions in 51 countries between 2014-18.

- 29% of all Gates Foundation giving in the past five years (\$20.6bn) has gone to universities and higher education institutions. 90% of funding (\$5.4bn) went to North American and European universities.
- Giving to universities is weighted to US institutions. Funding to all universities by the Gates Foundation has declined over the past five years from 32% of total giving in 2014 to 27% of giving in 2018. However, the number of beneficiaries has jumped 27% from 192 institutions in 2014 to 243 in 2018.
- While there is a skew to US institutions, there has been an acceleration in the past five years in giving to non-US universities. In 2014, 43% of Gates Foundation university recipients were institutions outside the US. By 2018 56% of Gates Foundation university recipients were non-US institutions.
- However, overall funding to non-US universities as a percentage has declined from 32% in 2014 (\$355m) to 27% in 2018 (\$338m).
- 71% of giving from 2014-18 has gone to US institutions (\$4.27bn). UK institutions are in second place receiving \$744m (12%) while Canada is in third place receiving \$223 (4%).
- The University of Washington in Seattle is the biggest beneficiary, receiving 17% of all university giving, totaling over \$1bn.
- European universities are the second biggest group of beneficiaries after North America, receiving 16% of Gates university giving between 2014-18. 79% of that giving went to British universities.
- African universities are the third biggest regional beneficiary, receiving 4% of Gates university funding in the past five years.
- Giving to African universities appears to be in decline; giving has dropped by 21% between 2014 and 2018.
- From 2014-18 the Foundation has expanded its giving to universities in Asia (242%), Latin America (339%) and the Middle East & North Africa (104%) although overall sums remain relatively low.

## About UniversityPhilanthropy.com

*UniversityPhilanthropy.com is the dedicated research arm of The Cape Partnership, the London-based public affairs and policy advisory firm. Our research looks at trends in philanthropy and giving to universities.*

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## Giving by region

Foundation	Recipients	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
North America	177	\$795m	\$468m	\$1,471m	\$827m	\$929m	\$4,490m
Europe	85	\$175m	\$108m	\$261m	\$212m	\$184m	\$939m
Africa	43	\$72m	\$31m	\$47m	\$30m	\$56m	\$236m
Asia	40	\$12m	\$34m	\$71m	\$44m	\$41m	\$201m
Australasia	21	\$32m	\$8m	\$43m	\$23m	\$25m	\$131m
Mid East & N. Africa	8	\$3m	\$1m	\$5m	\$2m	\$5m	\$16m
Latin America	18	\$0.4m	\$1m	\$0.3m	\$2m	\$2m	\$4m

## Top 10 recipients of giving by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:

University	Country	2014-18
Washington	US	\$1,052m
John Hopkins	US	\$552m
Cornell	US	\$210m
Harvard	US	\$206m
California	US	\$203m
Manitoba	Canada	\$175m
Oxford	UK	\$167m
Duke	US	\$161m
Maryland	US	\$153m
Emory	US	\$147m

## Analysis

While the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has funded a very large number of universities, it is apparent there are a small number of preferred institutions that benefit significantly. The top four US universities are the beneficiaries of a third of all Gates university giving (\$2bn).

In Europe the five biggest beneficiaries - all British - have scooped \$550m in Gates funding, 59% of all European university giving. They are Oxford (\$167m), Imperial College (\$133m), London School of Tropical Medicine (\$131m), University of Greenwich (\$64m) and Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (\$55m).

Giving to African universities is heavily skewed to two South African institutions. \$155m (66%) of Gates Africa university disbursements have been shared between the University of Cape Town (\$81m) and Witswatersrand (\$74m). The third biggest African recipient is the Federal Agriculture University of Nigeria which received \$26m.

## About our research

The purpose of this research was to identify giving by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation between 2014-18. Our study drew on information filed in the Foundation's US tax returns. 2018 tax returns were filed November 2019. For more information, contact: [office@capepartnership.com](mailto:office@capepartnership.com)