

Philanthropy in the service of International Geneva

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A particular circle connects Geneva philanthropy and International Geneva. Private Geneva foundations finance international organisations, humanitarian programmes and initiatives of International Geneva, in a movement that gathered momentum with the freezes on public funding of 2025 described in Chapter II. The organisations, for their part, turn to foundations and private fortunes to supplement state contributions that have become uncertain.¹ A foundation created by the Geneva authorities and private partners supports the standing of International Geneva, and initiatives involve the banks of the financial centre in financing the organisations' projects.²

This relationship has a logic: International Geneva brings the financial centre an image, a clientele and skills, as Chapter I has shown, while the financial centre and its clients bring International Geneva resources when states withdraw. It also has its limits: private philanthropy does not replace state contributions, and an International Geneva dependent on private fortunes would lose part of its legitimacy. The role of the financial centre is to accompany this relationship with the restraint that the organisations expect of it, and that the criticisms of philanthropy examined above make necessary.

1 Notes

1. Wikipedia (en), art. "The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria": seed funding of USD 100 million provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Swissinfo (11 May 2021, updated 24 January 2024): the same foundation is the second-largest donor to the WHO, accounting for around 10% of the budget. ↩

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2. Fondation pour Genève (fondationpourgeneve.ch): foundation created fifty years ago, which works for the standing, attractiveness and openness to the world of Geneva in collaboration with the federal and cantonal authorities; it awards the Prix de la Fondation pour Genève, publishes studies on the economic weight of the international sector and runs a network comprising the Cercle International Genève, the Club Diplomatique and Geneva Accueil. ↩

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