

Abstract for review

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International philanthropy towards developing countries: three case studies.

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Abstract:

The increasing power of philanthropic and corporate foundations in the area of development assistance, both current and future, is bringing long term change to the official development assistance (ODA) landscape and prompting traditional aid actors, particularly bilateral donors, to position themselves with respect to these new entities and give thought to the partnership opportunities they represent.

Facing this new global trend and having already established pioneering partnerships with foundations, the French Agency for Development (AFD) commissioned in 2015 three studies to better understand the strategies of international foundations and philanthropists towards developing countries. One aimed at measuring the scope and main destination of these flows worldwide; the two others focused on the rapidly emerging philanthropic sectors in Asia and the Middle-East/Arab world.

Methodologies were mixed, drawing from both quantitative sources (i.e. measurement and mapping of flows) and qualitative ones (i.e. interviews with foundations executives).

A number of subsequent research questions were addressed in the 3 enquiries: How do foundations see themselves fitting into the world of ODA? What coordination, partnerships, position, influence do they possess with respect to the international agenda? What are their motivations and strategies for development? Do bilateral donors perceive them as threats or as potential allies? What complementary and what competitive dynamics do they create (amongst themselves and as regards public donors)? Might the growth in volume of funds contributed by philanthropic foundations encourage a progressive retraction of public funding? Could the revenue stream from private foundations compensate for the rarity of ODA? What possible knock-on effect and type of funding mix (foundations/donors) might develop? What can be learnt from pre-existing partnerships between foundations and other actors in traditional development (bilateral, multilateral), as well as from those with new actors (large corporations, NGOs, social entrepreneurs, etc.)?

The surveys will be completed by the Spring 2017 and will give lieu to a series of publications. The results are of seminal importance for scholars and practitioners alike, since the academic literature on this subject is quite scarce and meanwhile the interest is growing among the global community of development professionals.

Most important references:

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