



INSTITUT DE HAUTES
ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES
ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT
GRADUATE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Paying for Multilateralism: Taking Stock on the Financing of International Organisations in Geneva, 2000-2020

By Livio Silva-Muller & Remo Gassmann

With a Preface by Marie-Laure Salles and a Commentary by Achim Wennmann

This report was produced by the Geneva Graduate Institute
with the generous support from the Republic and State of Geneva



REPUBLIQUE
ET CANTON
DE GENEVE

POST TENEBRAS LUX

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Preface

By Marie-Laure Salles

In 2021, while drafting the Cantonal Report on International Geneva, the Republic and State of Geneva asked the Geneva Graduate Institute to help answer a simple question: Who are the main donors allowing International Geneva to work and thrive and how has their support evolved over the last two decades? While the question seems simple enough, providing an accurate answer called for a structured research project. Naturally, we saw the strategic importance of such a study and accepted the challenge with great enthusiasm.

When exploring internally who could do the study, we discovered the exceptional work of Livio Silva-Muller, a Ph.D. researcher in our Anthropology and Sociology Department. Livio was utilising new methods to compile and harmonise historical data on financial flows to climate organisations in Brazil. He teamed up with his friend, Remo Gassmann—an alumnus of the Geneva Graduate Institute, who after graduating became the Head of the Global Development Policy Program at the Heinrich Boell Foundation in Washington, D.C.

Livio and Remo used small random samples to assess four distinct data collection strategies and propose an adequate methodology. Relying on multiple tools, the authors scrapped over 300 financial statements, amounting to over 30,000 transactions that funded work by large-scale international organisations over the last 20 years. Along the way, they unearthed intriguing data points, like organisations that, according to their financial statements, received a single donation of 630 billion - clearly a reporting mistake - multiple small Swiss cities participating in international development, or even the occasional donation from neighbourhood charities.

At a time where multilateralism is being questioned and is under financial stress it is important to re-affirm two fundamentals: The indispensable role of multilateralism as we face so many acute and urgent global challenges that we need to approach together, as an international community; and the importance of financing for the sustained role and impact of global governance. Having more transparency on who pays today for multilateral governance is an important step to a prospective reflection on where will / should the funding for tomorrow's multilateralism come from. This prospective conversation on the financial side has to connect with the larger discussion currently taking place in the context of the Summit of the Future of September 2024 – where the key is a projection towards a transformed multilateral agenda and possibly even of the architecture of multilateralism.

Let me finish by thanking Olivier Coutau, Delegate to International Geneva from the Republic and State of Geneva, for the initial idea behind the report and for the excellent collaboration on this and on so many other projects. I would also like to warmly thank Livio Silva-Muller and Remo Gassmann for their outstanding research and for a commitment to produce the study that went above and beyond the call of duty. I would finally like to express my appreciation to Professor Achim Wennmann, the Institute's Director for Strategic Partnerships, for supervising the report, project and publication.

This report is only the beginning of a conversation that needs to continue on the important question of how do we finance the multilateral collaboration of tomorrow. Financing collective mobilisation is key to preventing our world from falling prey to some of its old demons (inequalities, authoritarianism and nationalism, conflicts, hate and fear) as well as to new forms of existential threats (climate change and depletion of natural commons, a technological revolution that threatens rather than serves humanity). We owe this collective mobilisation to the new generations – the urgency to work together towards a more peaceful, just and sustainable world has never been so clear.

Paying for Multilateralism: Taking Stock on the Financing of International Organisations in Geneva, 2000-2020

By *Livio Silva-Muller & Remo Gassmann*

Executive Summary

This study charts the funding trends of 16 large international organisations in Geneva based on a unique data set that collects over 30,000 contributions from at least 1,146 funders in the period of 2000-2020. The study has the following key findings, reported in American dollars:

- There has been a steady increase in contribution to international organisations between 2000 to 2020. The increase evolved from annual contributions of \$4.2bn in 2002, \$6bn in 2005, \$12.1bn in 2010, \$14.9bn in 2015 and \$23.6bn in 2020. Total contributions amount to \$253.7bn between 2000 and 2020. It is likely that the 2008 financial crisis slowed the increase, but trends resumed to normality in the late 2010s.
- Public donors are responsible for 90.1% of all contributions to international organisations in Geneva for the whole study period. While private contributions increased from a relative share of 4.1% in 2007 to an overall high of 12.7% in 2017, they remain low and concentrated on organisations working on health. This is mostly driven by the Gates Foundation. In the last year of our sample, 2020, private donations amounted to 10.5% of the total contributions.
- The 15 top donors account for 75% of total contributions. Regarding public sources, the United States accounts for more than a quarter of all contributions (26.3%), followed by the UK (8.1%), the EU (6.8%), Germany (6.6%) and Japan (5.4%). The only private top donor is the Gates Foundation, ranked 8. Switzerland is ranked 13 (2.2%). All top donors show a clear upward trend in contributions between 2000-2020, except Australia that shows a downward trend after 2014.
- G7 and EU countries contributed the most to organisations in our sample, with yearly relative share ranging from around 87% to 95% for the period. G20 countries contributions, in turn, range from 2 to 3.8%. Finally, all other countries' contributions fluctuate between 2.6% and 8.4%.
- The five international organisations with the largest funding footprint in the period 2000-2020 are the Global Fund (\$57.9bn, 22.9%), UNHCR, (\$47bn, 18.6%), WHO (\$36.4bn, 14.4%), IOM (\$25.9bn, 10.2%), and ICRC (\$23.8bn, 9.4%), thus confirming the significance of the health and humanitarian sectors in International Geneva. Both sectors have seen an upward sloping trend of total contributions, with health exceeding \$10bn and humanitarian approaching it in 2020.
- The health sector forms a distinct financial ecosystem in International Geneva, as many organisations sub-grant donations to other organisations, blurring lines between recipients and donors. The sector attracted a total of \$112.5bn in contributions, about 48% of total contributions in the period 2000-2020. The three largest donors are the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Gates Foundation.
- Humanitarian organisations, in turn, attracted a total of \$99.1bn in contributions, about 39% of total contributions over the period 2000-2020. The UNHCR stands out as the largest recipient.

The study draws its findings on a purpose-built data set that exclusively stems from publicly available data. **All findings should be considered in combination with explanations in the methodological annex, particularly the data granularity plot.**

1. Introduction

This study sheds light on the financial contributors to organisations based in International Geneva in the period from 2000 to 2020. The organisations that compose our sample are the 13 largest international organisations with headquarter agreements with Switzerland and three international organisations in the health sector (number 14-16 in the list below):

1. World Trade organisation (WTO)
2. World Intellectual Property organisation (WIPO)
3. World Health organisation (WHO)
4. World Economic Forum (WEF)
5. United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)
6. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
7. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
8. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
9. International organisation for Migration (IOM)
10. International Labour organisation (ILO)
11. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
12. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund)
13. European organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN)
14. Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance (GAVI)
15. Global Antibiotic Research & Development Partnership (GARDP)
16. Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)

The report focuses on international organisations headquartered in International Geneva with more than 500 staff and a selection of institutions in the health sector. Thus, the authors do not produce a review of all financial flows to Geneva-based international organisations across all issues. For instance, institutions in Geneva's peace and conflict resolution sector do not pass the threshold of 500 people and have been excluded in the present report. It is very likely, though, that the dataset covers a substantial part of the funds that flow into International Geneva given the size of organisations in our sample.

2. Overall Funding Trends

The 16 large-footprint international organisations studied received contributions of \$253.7bn in the period 2000-2020. This total is divided between \$225.5bn from public sources and \$25.3bn from private sources. These contributions accrued from at least 29,884 transactions including 1,146 unique contributors. Figure 1 (below) gives an overview of the global funding picture from 2002 to 2020.¹ This plot conveys three main messages: An overall increase in funding, a public-private divide, and the effects of the 2008 financial crisis.

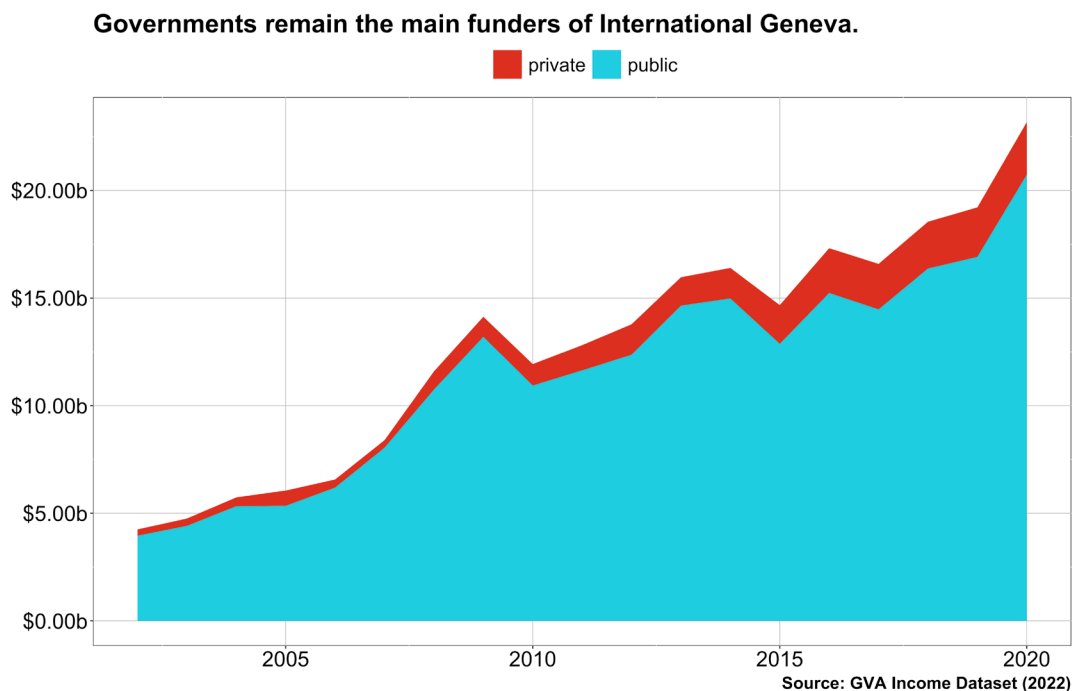


Figure 1: Total contributions per year

Firstly, the data shows a steady increase in funding over the period from 2002 to 2020. Starting at \$4.2bn in 2002, the total annual contributions rose to \$6bn in 2005, \$12.1bn in 2010, \$14.9bn in 2015 and ended up reaching \$23.6bn in 2020.

Secondly, most contributions stem from public sources, which means governments and other public entities such as inter-governmental organisations. We see private contributions become slightly more relevant over time, especially from 2013 onward. Until 2013, the relative share of public and private contributions remained approximately the same (3.5%), but then doubled (7%). In 2019, the year before the pandemic, the share of private donations was 11.9%. Within private contributions, two distinct groups stand out: for-profit corporations and non-profit foundations. While foundations make up a much larger share within this subgroup, corporations' contributions were steadier and increased over the period.

Thirdly, the trend of continuous increases in donor money available started dampening in 2009. Growth plateaued throughout the first half of the 2010s, except for minor movements. This most likely reflects the impact of the financial crisis that started in 2008-9. Both the full effect of the crisis and global recovery lagged. Correspondingly, the report sees overall growth picking up again in 2016.

¹ As the methodological appendix details, the authors collect data from financial reports. organisations report the total amount received by each donor each year rather than each single payment, so we opt for the vocabulary of “at least” transactions. Importantly, and also explained in the appendix, we build sub-samples for each figure to ensure real comparability (page 18).

The 15 most influential contributors in terms of overall sum donated per contributor (Figure 2, below) reflects the picture of total contributions listed above: 14 out of 15 contributors are public entities, 12 of them states, 2 supranational organisations (the European Union and the United Nations²). The Gates Foundation is the only private donor, ranked eighth on the list. While we identified over 857 private donors during the whole period, the Gates Foundation alone is responsible for 62% of the total private donations with a named donor.

The top donor across all organisations and years is the United States. Its donations amounted to a total of more than \$47.6bn in the period 2000-2020. This represents 26.4% of all contributions and 44.5% of the total contributions of the Top 15, more than the following four contributors together. Switzerland’s overall contributions reflect 2.2% of the total contributions, amounting to a total of \$3.9bn.

Many of the recipient organisations in our data set rely, at least partly, on assessed contributions. Assessed contributions are mandatory sums to be paid by member states of the respective international organisation according to an assessment key, which is designated by the UN General Assembly and relevant for all international organisations in the UN system. Although these payments are mandatory, various states do not pay on time (or not at all), which is reported in the respective organisation’s financial report; pledged but unpaid assessed contributions were not considered as payments in our data set.

According to this assessment scheme, the United States was assessed to pay 22%, which explains its dominant role in the data set. This assessment also helps explain the other public donors in our Top 15, assessed to contribute relevant percentages (the next five sovereign states in order of relevance for the data set: The United Kingdom assessed at 4.6% by the UN, Germany at 6.1%, Japan at 8.6%, Canada at 2.7% and France at 4.4%). It should be kept in mind, however, that not all sovereign states are members of the same UN agencies, and that many of them, especially the United States, increase their overall contribution with voluntary contributions. Voluntary contributions are not tied to the assessment scheme and can take any amount – our data set also includes such voluntary contributions.

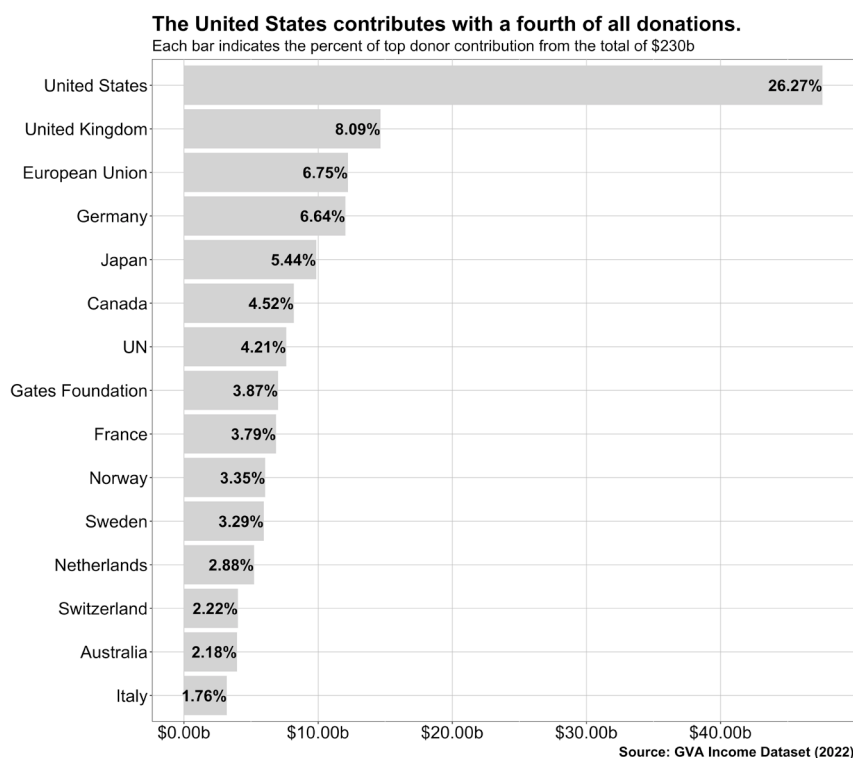


Figure 2: Top 15 contributors overall

² The donor “United Nations” includes all donations made by UN agencies such as UNICEF, UN Women, UN FAO etc. and money stemming from UN funding instruments such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) or designated Humanitarian Funds such as the one for South Sudan. It excludes donations made by UN agencies that are part of the 16 recipient organisations in our data set.

G7+ EU; G20; Other Countries

Noticeably, the overwhelming majority of the 15 donors include the US and a group of Western European countries. In figure 3, below, the authors clustered their data in terms of (in-)formal institutions. The first group is composed of G7 and remaining EU countries. The second group are the remaining G20 countries³, which includes, among others, BRICS. The final group contains all remaining countries.

Strikingly, the share of donations coming from the EU and G7 combined constitutes most overall contributions, averaging 91.96% overall. The figure portrays an increase in EU and G7 donations in the second half of the 2000s, a punctual decrease in the early 2010s, followed by a strong increase. While donations from G20 and other countries followed a similar trend, they were at a much lower level (scales of graphs differ). Importantly, the 11 countries that remain in the G20 group come close to matching the contributions of all other countries in our sample: \$5bn for the former and \$7.2bn for the latter.

The overall trend is a very slow increase in the share of non-western countries. If one were to assume an unchanged continuation of donor behaviour, non-Western countries' donations would soon hit the 10% mark. However, the pandemic, wars and global economic shocks that have occurred since 2020 will most likely disrupt those trends across all three groups of countries observed.

While G7 and EU are the main donors, remaining G20 countries contribute almost as much as all others.

Note: y-axes vary in each plot; percentages indicate annual share.

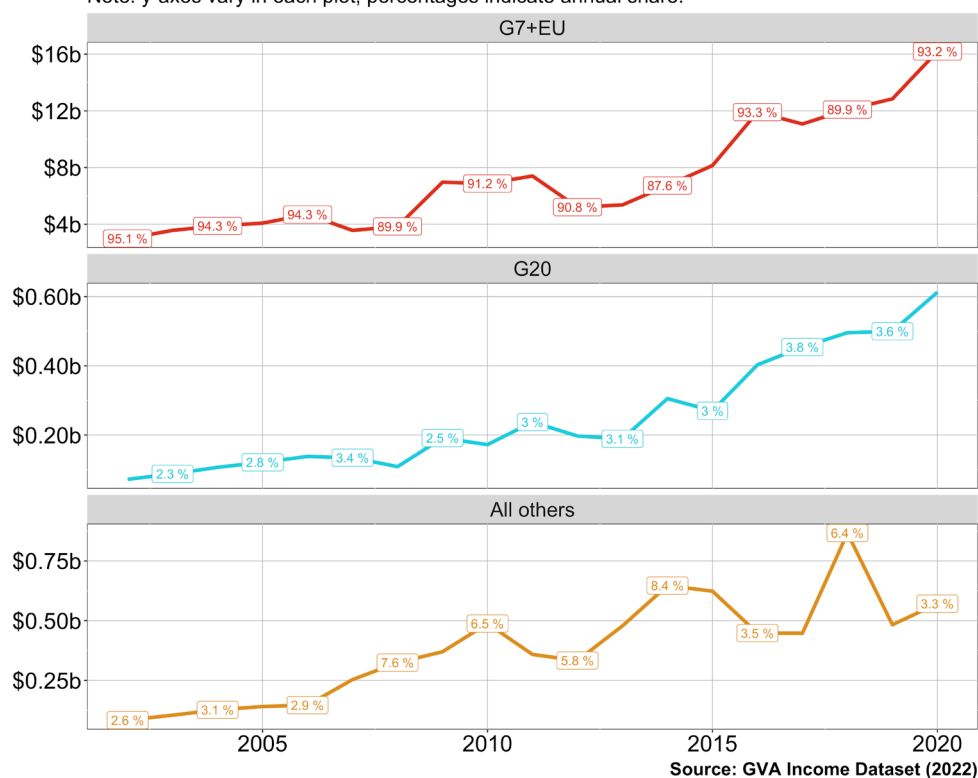


Figure 3: Contributions by (in)formal groups

³ Countries included here are Argentina, Brazil, China, Russia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, and Turkey.

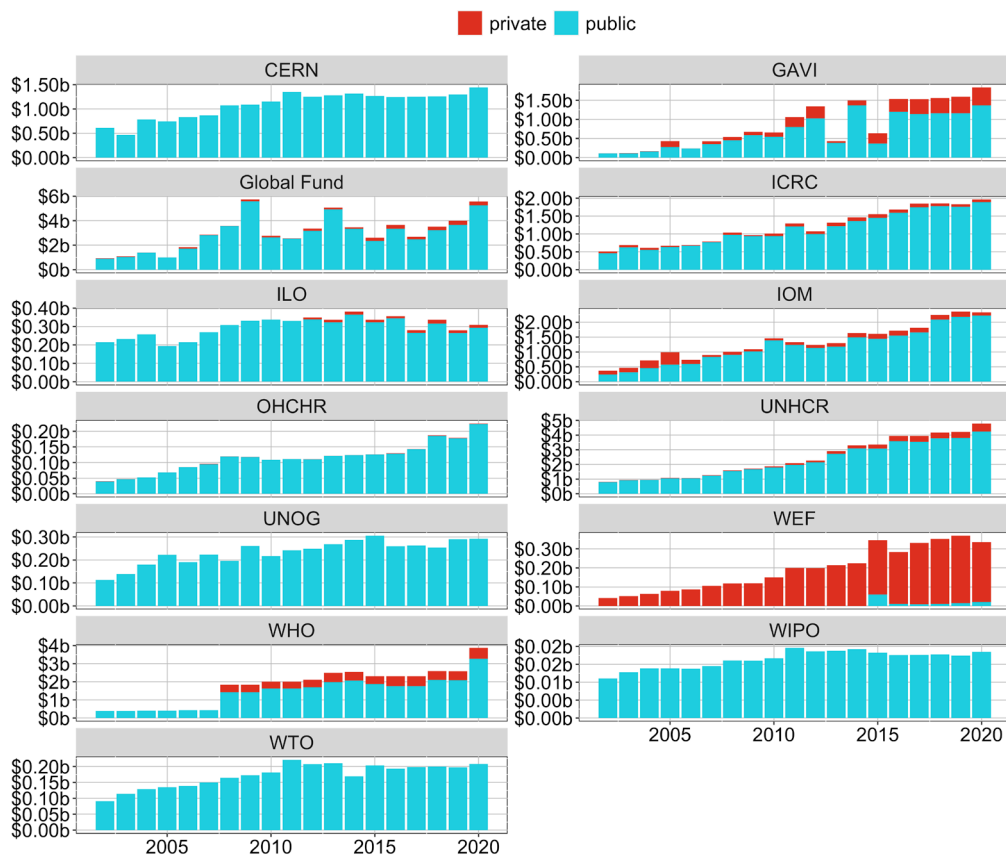
Top Recipients

The five international organisations with the largest funding footprint in the period 2000-2020 are the Global Fund (\$57.9bn, 22.9%), UNHCR, (\$47bn, 18.6%), WHO (\$36.4bn, 14.4%), IOM (\$25.9bn, 10.2%), and ICRC (\$23.8bn, 9.4%), as figure 4, below, suggests.⁴

All of these organisations work within the health and humanitarian sectors, which are traditionally costly and field based. Moreover, four of the five organisations employ more than 4,500 employees (except for the Global Fund with around 1,300 staff), which makes the comparison with smaller organisations more difficult. The Global Fund stands out for another reason: Founded in 2002, it became the most important organisation in terms of funding, starting with a budget of just under \$1bn in 2002 to raising almost \$6bn in 2020.

The main recipients work in the health and humanitarian sectors.

Note: y-axes vary in each plot.



Source: GVA Income Dataset (2022)

Figure 4: Yearly contributions received per organization

Growth dampens for many organisations in the early 2010s as the repercussions of the financial crisis lag on. Some organisations show additional strong movements that are noteworthy, such as GAVI and the Global Fund. These are related to the fact that both organisations pursue multi-year commitments: This led to parts of their funds not being replenished annually, but only in three-year (for Global Fund) and five-year (for GAVI) cycles.

⁴ WIPO requires some additional explanation: The organisation stands out as receiving the least amount of contributions throughout the entire period under review, totaling \$332.6m in contributions, with annual contributions staying below \$20m for the entire period. However, these numbers only account for the contributions donated to WIPO by member states, making up around 5% of its total budget; WIPO generates most of its income through the sale of products. The organisation is mandated to promote intellectual activity and promote technology transfer, something that it achieves through, among other things, its Global IP services. For these services, WIPO charges fees, which in turn are used to fund WIPO's activities. These fees generate a huge proportion of WIPO's overall funds – as a matter of fact, in 2020 more than 94.3% of its finances stemmed from such self-generated revenues, amounting to a total of around \$503.1m.

3. International Geneva Official Mandates

The share of contributions received by Health and Humanitarian organizations increased from 70% in 2002 to 90% in 2020.

Source: GVA Income Dataset (2022)

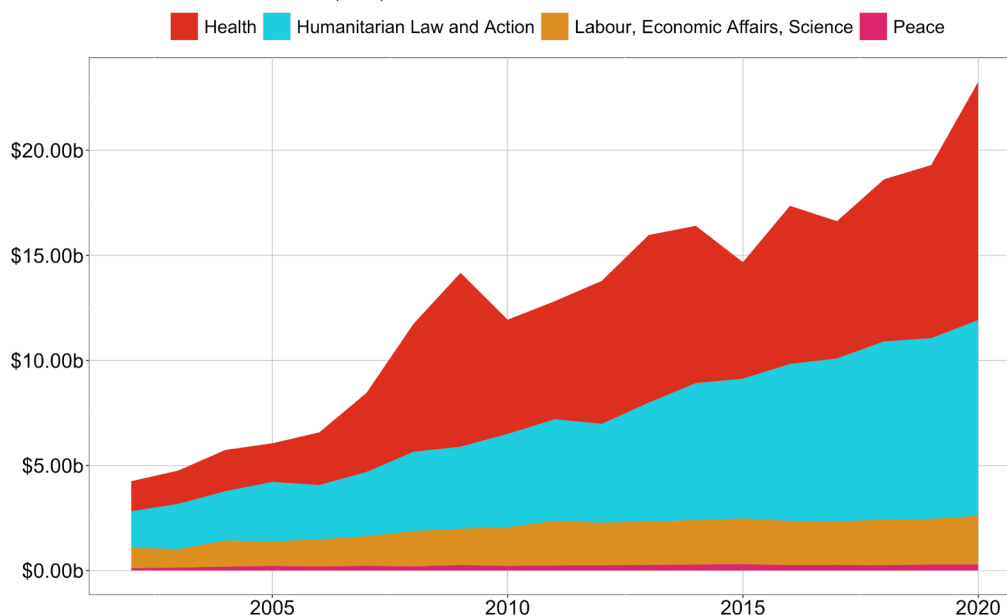


Figure 5: Total contributions by mandate

This subsection presents organisations according to their mandates. The authors group them into the five topics of International Geneva⁵, namely Environment and Sustainable Development; Health; Humanitarian Law and Action, Human Rights, Migration (henceforth Humanitarian); Labour, Economic Affairs, Trade, Science and Telecommunication (henceforth Labour); and Peace, Security and Disarmament (henceforth Peace). Figure 5, above, portrays overall trends that are visible when comparing different mandates. Global Health and Humanitarian, the two largest funding footprints of Geneva, deserve particular attention.

Global Health: Private Actors Matter

The organisations that compose this group are: WHO, GAVI, Global Fund, GARDP, and DNDi. They attracted a total of \$112.5bn in contributions, about 48% of total contributions in the period 2000-2020. This sum is composed of at least 7'539 contributions, from 696 unique contributors.

Figure 6, below, shows the relative distribution of contributions to all actors within Health over the period under review. The main recipients in the health sector are the Global Fund (\$57.8bn), WHO (\$36.4bn), and GAVI (\$17.2bn). As for our overall dataset, public contributions outweigh private ones by far, although WHO shows a constant level of private funds of close to \$500m per year raised from 2008 onward.

5 We utilise the categories provided by the Genève Internationale's website: <https://www.geneve-int.ch/resources-topic>.

Public contributions to health remain higher than private, but both increased.

Note: y-axes vary in each plot.

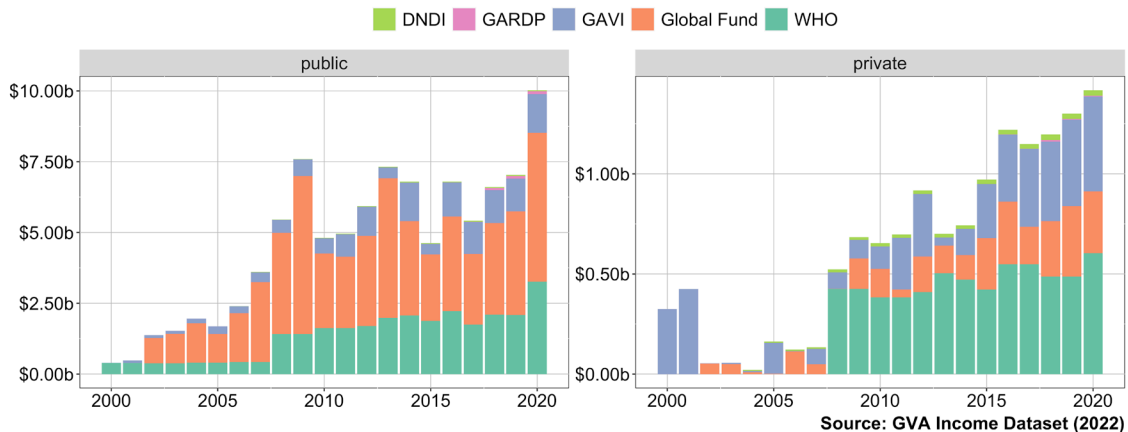


Figure 6: Total contributions received by health organisations

The organisations under the Health mandate form a particular ecosystem, which the authors plot as a network in Figure 7 (below). This figure comprises around 1'300 contributions from the main donors in the health sector, totaling 78% of the contributions to the sector. The aforementioned main recipients in Health – Global Fund, WHO, and GAVI – are not only recipients, but also donors: they re-grant a small amount of the contributions received to each other and to DNDi (donors and flows marked in yellow). The Gates Foundation is a notable exception in the overall study. It is by far the largest private donor: the authors identify about \$7bn donated by the foundation during the whole study period. The second largest contributor donated \$693m. Considering the health sector, the Gates Foundation is the third largest donor, only behind the United States and the United Kingdom. As with the other two countries, the foundation donates to all three organisations that re-grant their funds, and to the new health organisations such as DNDi.

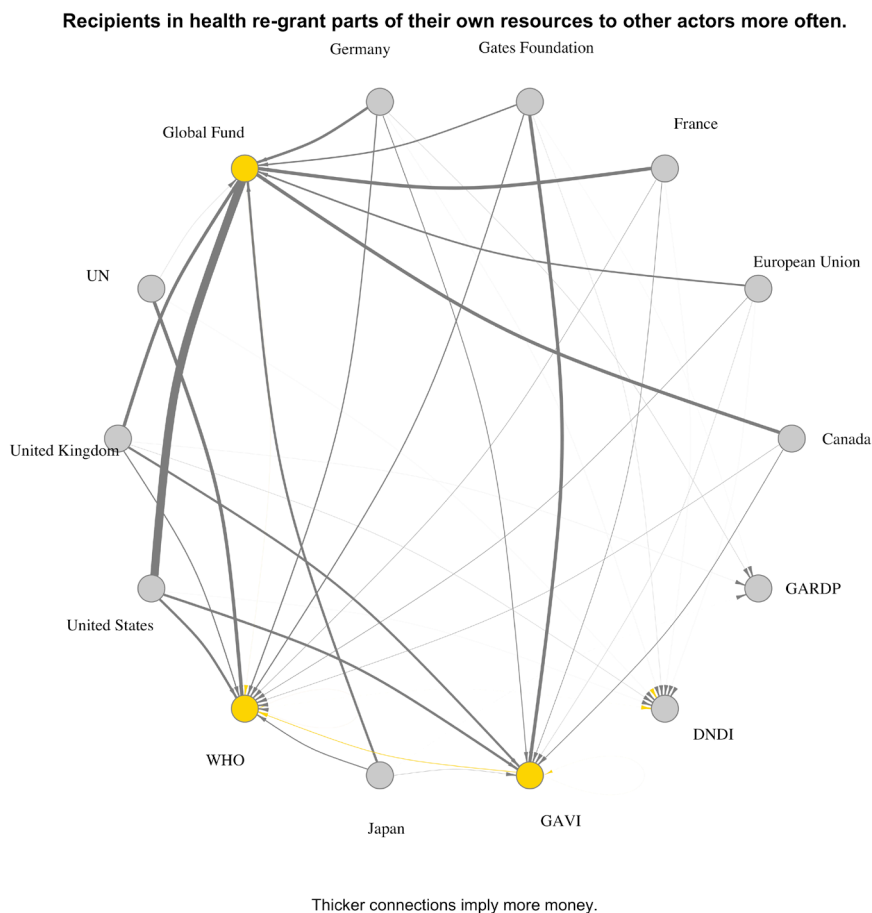


Figure 7: Funding flows within health organizations and donors

Human Rights & Humanitarian: Continuity at the Top, Change at the Bottom

The organisations that compose this group are: ICRC, IOM, OHCHR⁶, and UNHCR. They attracted a total of \$99.1bn in contributions, about 39% of total contributions over the period 2000-2020. This sum is composed of at least 9’743 contributions, from 606 unique contributors.

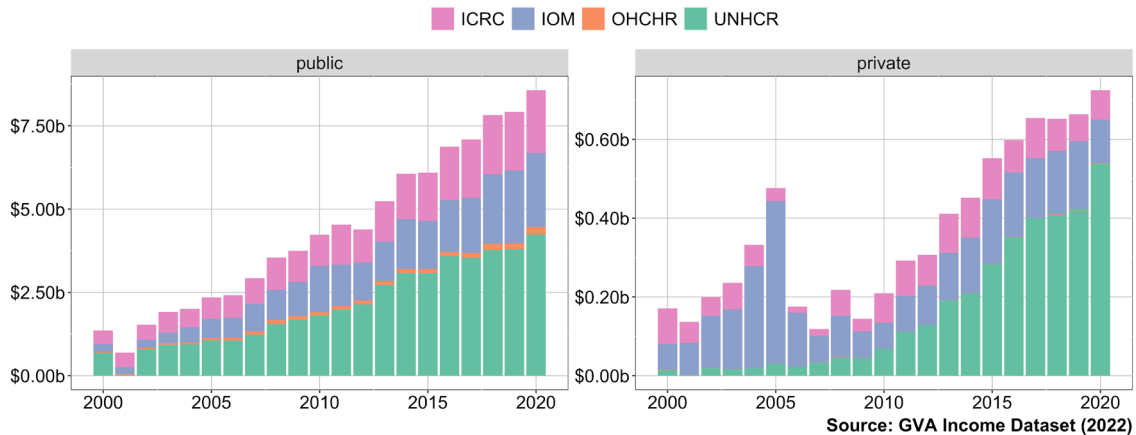
Figure 8 (below) shows the relative distribution of contributions to all actors within humanitarian and human rights sectors over the period under review. The main recipients in the humanitarian sector are UNHCR (\$47bn), IOM (\$25.9bn), and ICRC (\$23.8bn).

As in the overall dataset, public funding outweighs private contributions by far. Nevertheless, private funding increases strongly over time – especially UNHCR seems to have found ways to mobilise the private sector over the last decade: The organisation has voiced its intent of diversifying its fundraising repeatedly in the past. In 2014, UNHCR set itself a goal of raising \$500m per year from the private sector by 2018, envisioning long-term private sector contributions to reach \$1bn per year by 2025.

6 While OHCHR does not have a humanitarian mandate but focuses on the promotion and protection of human rights, it has been subsumed into the humanitarian mandate as defined by the official categorization of International Geneva’s website (“Humanitarian Law and Action, Human Rights, Migration”).

While public contributions prevail, humanitarian actors have taken successful steps

Note: y-axes vary in each plot.



Source: GVA Income Dataset (2022)

Figure 8: Total contributions received by humanitarian organizations

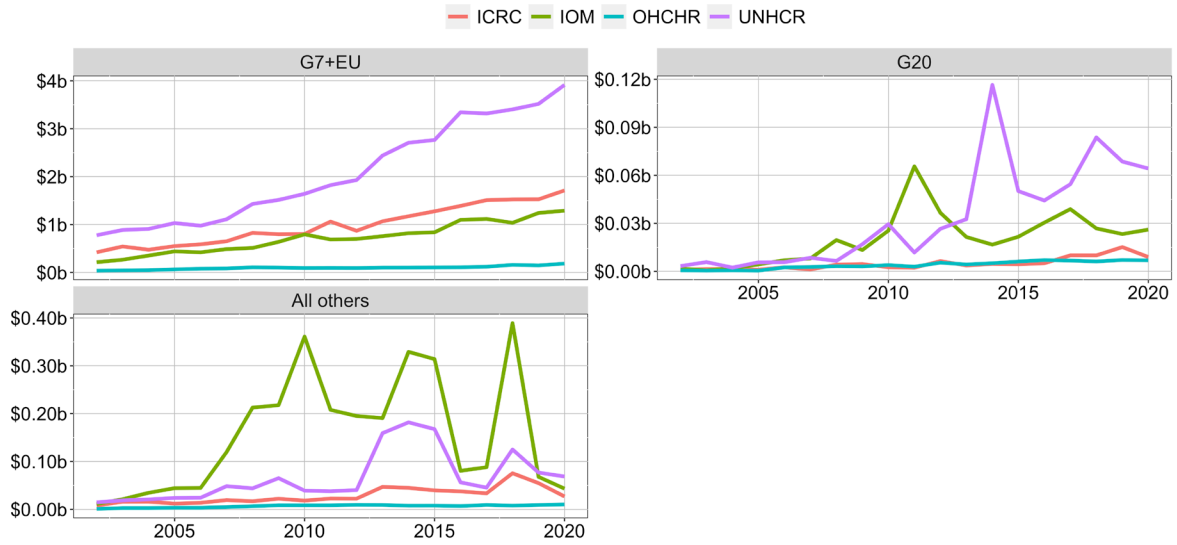
The majority of the activities of the organisations working under the humanitarian mandate take place outside of the EU and G7 countries. Similar to the overall split between different donor country groups on page 12 above, the EU and G7 countries⁷ combined provide for more than 90% of overall funding to this mandate, as Figure 9, below, portrays. It is noteworthy that the volatility of contributions under the humanitarian mandate, however, is much higher among G20 and other non-Western countries. While EU and G7 contributions increase consistently, the other two groups’ contributions fluctuate heavily over the two decades.

Two organisations merit specific attention — UNHCR and OHCHR. Contributions by all groups to UNHCR have increased drastically, with an equally drastic decrease in G20 and other non-Western contributions in the second half of the 2010s. OHCHR, on the other hand, is the only organisation to have managed a steady, albeit relatively small, flow of contributions across all three groups. This stems most likely from the fact that OHCHR relies heavily on assessed contributions from its member states and can fulfil its core mandate — the promotion and protection of human rights — at very low costs compared to other organisations grouped under the humanitarian and human rights mandate.

⁷ The majority of ICRC’s operations are based in conflict-affected countries and regions outside of EU and G7 countries (<https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work>). Out of IOM’s 9 regional offices, 7 are based outside of EU and G7 countries; as is the majority of its more than 550 field offices (<https://www.iom.int/where-we-work>). Out of OHCHR’s 18 country and standalone offices, 17 are based outside of EU and G7 countries; the same is true for 11 of the 12 regional offices (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/where-we-work>). From UNHCR’s presences in 137 countries, 90% of staff work in field offices, with only 10% of its staff working either at the headquarters in Geneva or the Global Service Centers in Hungary, Denmark and Jordan (<https://www.unhcr.org/us/about-unhcr/where-we-work>).

EU and G7 donors prevail, while contributions by others are more volatile.

Note: y-axes vary in each plot.



Source: GVA Income Dataset (2022)

Figure 9: Total contributions by (in)formal groups to humanitarian organisations

Commentary on the Financial Sources of International Geneva

By Achim Wennmann

The study of *Paying for Multilateralism: Taking Stock on the Financing of International Organisations in Geneva, 2000-2020* by Livio Silva-Muller and Remo Gassmann is a significant contribution to the study of international organisations, as well as to the discussions about the adaptation of International Geneva to a rapidly changing world. It builds on a new dataset of over 30,000 financial contributions from over 1,000 funders over the 20 year period between 2000 and 2020, and on a new methodology to study the funding sources of global governance institutions. The study focuses on a subset of 16 organisations with more than 500 staff. These organisations are part of International Geneva's total organisational environment of 39 international organisations, 181 government representations, and 461 non-governmental organisations.⁸ This commentary aims to place the report's key findings in contexts and explore implications for keeping International Geneva relevant as a global hub.

Understanding the total figure

The study finds a total funding of USD 23.6 billion in 2020 for 16 large-footprint international organisations. This figure is rather moderate when compared to the herculean task of managing international cooperation. It is representing only about twice the annual budget of the Republic and State of Geneva in 2020,⁹ or about the amount of dividend payments of two major companies.¹⁰

It is important to recognise that the 'total figure' above is not the real total. The funding figure of USD 23.6bn in 2020 just represents a subset of actors, albeit an important subset. The funding of other institutions has not been included, such as smaller international organisations below USD 200m, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or the funding by UN Member States and other actors for their diplomatic representations in Geneva. Including the income sources from these actors would likely add several USD billion to the figure above.

The total figure, as well as the fact that levels of funding for international organisations have steadily increased in the period 2000-2020, might at first be reassuring in the face of the discussion on the 'crisis of multilateralism'. But as most of this increase occurred in the health and humanitarian sectors, it is also reflective of a world in crisis and at war. It might even be reflective of the nature of government behaviour that finds it easier to invest in the humanitarian response rather than in the necessary diplomatic resolve that prevents the next war.

By clarifying the financial sources of International Geneva, the report is also a contribution to put Switzerland's investments in support of its Host State roles in perspective. A recent study finds that a total of around CHF 1bn in host state and infrastructure investments have been made in 2019, which are distributed across the three levels of government – Swiss Confederation CHF 416.4m, Republic and State of Geneva CHF 553.3m, and the City of Geneva CHF 93.4m. About one quarter is recouped through fiscal revenue, which means the de-facto cost for Switzerland of maintaining International Geneva is of CHF 751.4m. This investment in turn enables the estimated USD 23.6bn total investment by other actors noted above.¹¹ In other words, this is about 3.2% invested by Switzerland to enable the total 100% of activities paid for by others, in addition to its own contribution as a member state of USD 342m in 2020 to the 16 large footprint international organisations studied. For a small country like Switzerland, these are important contributions to managing global challenges. It also enables Swiss diplomacy to punch slightly above its weight in multilateral

⁸ See official figures from the Republic and State of Geneva available at <https://www.geneve-int.ch> (accessed 5 May 2024).

⁹ <https://www.letemps.ch/suisse/letat-geneve-vaut-desormais-10-milliards>

¹⁰ In the case of Nestlé, for example, CHF 14.5 billion were returned to shareholders in 2020 through a combination of dividend and share buybacks. See <https://www.nestle.com/media/pressreleases/allpressreleases/full-year-results-2020> (accessed 5 May 2024).

¹¹ Fondation pour Genève (2024) *Étude sur l'impact du secteur international à Genève*. Geneva : Fondation pour Genève, p.93.

diplomacy in Geneva, New York and elsewhere; and it helps to brand Geneva as a global hub for international cooperation.

Diversifying top donors?

The study also underlines that the top donors are primarily ‘western’ states with the 15 top donors funding 75% of contributions to the large-footprint international organisations studied. In fact, 25% of the contributions are paid for by just one state, the United States of America. These figures reveal a certain vulnerability of the financing of Geneva-based international organisations when considering a political outlook in which changing governments within the top donors might change the way they relate to international cooperation and to supporting issues such as health diplomacy or humanitarian assistance.

There are two points worth highlighting in relation to the finding of a high concentration of funding sources within a small group of top donors.

The first point underlines the historical place of International Geneva as part of the American Century. The evolution of International Geneva accelerated after the First and Second World Wars and is associated with the global governance architecture developed as part of the global projection of the United States of America. Some observers might interpret this characteristic as reflective of a certain degree of strategic dissonance between Geneva’s place in a past, US-dominated international order, and its branding as global hub. As the world is currently shaped by “not a singular global order, liberal or otherwise, but a complex of crosscutting, if not competing, international orders and globalisms,”¹² the high concentration of funding sources on Western actors exposes Geneva to the view that it is not as global as it claims. Even the evolution of the humanitarian tradition before the American Century grows out of a fundamentally European experience of great power war in the 19th century that was then internationalised by the powers of that era.

The second perspective captures the implications of a diversification of funding sources for large footprint international organisations. From the perspective of top donors, there could clearly be a narrative that the time for freeriding is over and that other countries should pay up. This narrative is already applied at a regional level, for instance, by the United States of America in the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In the context of multilateralism, and from the perspective of countries that might be targeted to pay more, the question is what incentives they will receive to invest in a system that is controlled by others. A key issue for diversifying the funding sources of international organisations is therefore the balance that can be negotiated between the power and influence that Western states are willing to let go, in return for increased co-financing and co-ownership of the system.

The stakes for the outcome of this negotiated transition of global governance are high. For Western states, they might still be able to maintain a position of relative influence in just one co-owned system, if they gradually let go of their influence. The risk of not doing so is to dominate a system that becomes progressively less relevant, while new powers invest in their own multilateral institutions.¹³

Bringing in non-public funding

The study also demonstrates that International Geneva is a ‘public sector’ effort to manage global public goods. These include international regulation and cooperation in a variety of sectors. The Gates Foundation is the only private sector entity in the top 15 funders, even ahead of Switzerland.

12 Amitav Acharya *After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order*, available at <https://futurefastforward.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/After-Liberal-Hegemony-Multiplex-World-order.pdf>.

13 Kazushige Kobayashi (2021) *The Future of Translateral World Order: Rethinking Global Partnerships in the Era of Deepening Uncertainty*, available at <https://valdaiclub.com/multimedia/video/live-the-future-of-translateral-world-order-rethinking-global-partnerships-in-the-era-of-deepening-u/>

Expanding funding sources from the private foundations for investment in addressing global challenges represents a major strategic opportunity for International Geneva. While public debt accumulates rapidly, private wealth has increased to new heights and finding avenues for private wealth to contribute to finding solutions to global challenges should become a top priority for global governance. Several multi-stakeholder start-ups have emerged in Geneva that are ‘squaring the circle’ with innovative operational designs across diplomacy, field operations, and dedicated market-based funding instruments. One example is GIGA, the global initiative that aims to connect every school to the internet, another example is the Peace Dividend Initiative that cultivates peace-supporting economic opportunities in fragile and at-risk countries by combining economic dialogue, deal flow identification and the creation of a venture fund.

If the future is a more regionally balanced, multi-stakeholder system of governance, then not only is the diversification of funding sources between states important, but also diversification of funding source actors. A promising agenda for further research is to investigate the cross-sector mechanisms and ways of working that can contribute to the diversification of the funding for organisations that aim to address global challenges without the exclusive reliance on public funds.

Annex: Methodology

The Geneva Income Dataset contains yearly contribution-level data for 16 international organisations headquartered in Geneva since the year 2000. Given that not all organisations existed for the period covered (2000-2020), this creates a sample frame of 312 organisation-year dyads. The authors built the dataset by scrapping contributions from publicly available financial reports for each dyad (Figure 10, below). Where financial reports were not available, the authors used documents submitted to the assemblies of the organisation, or available data in online platforms. The authors define contribution (and donation) as the nominal amount contributed by an actor to an organisation each year (this includes voluntary contributions made but excludes pledges, intended donations, and commitments). As recipients might aggregate different donations by the same donor in their yearly financial report (i.e. they report total received rather than individual transaction-level data), the data reflects the minimal possible number of payments, but the actual value received. Because the authors do not have payment/grant level data, and recipients do not consistently report the currency of the donation, the report does not deflate currencies. This is not a problem per se, as most contributions are from countries with inflation-low currencies (CHF, USD, EUR). Thus, the authors report all trends in nominal American dollars.

Data Granularity in our Sample

Source: GVA Income Dataset (2022)

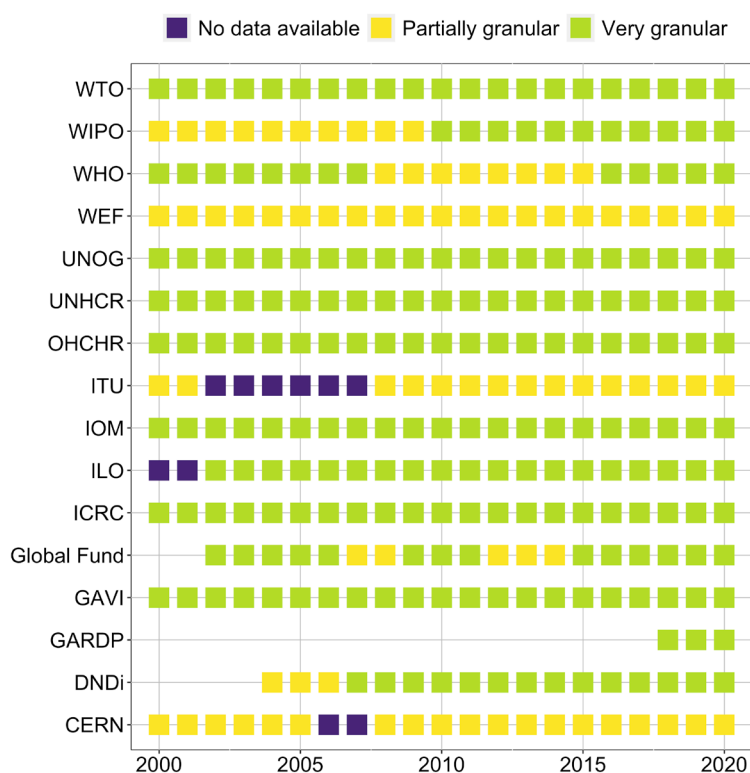


Figure 10: Data availability for full sample

The authors classified each contribution encountered by its granularity level.

- **Very granular:** observation contains the name of the contributor and the value of the contribution each year (e.g. Switzerland contributed with USD 150'000 in 2005 to CERN).
- **Partially granular:** observation contains the type of the contributor and the value of the contribution each year (e.g. a private actor contributed with USD 200'000 in 2010 to GAVI).

- **Aggregate:** observation contains the value of the contribution each year (USD 160'000 in 2006 to ICRC).
- **No data:** no observation for the dyad.

Figure 10 (above) indicates the most frequent level of granularity for each organisation-year dyad. The authors have encountered 30,062 contributions, out of which 28'601 are very granular, 1'377 are partially granular, and 84 are aggregate. Moreover, the report has identified 1'105 unique contributors in the last two decades.

In order to render the contributions at different levels of granularity comparable, the authors assume the sum of very granular (or partially granular) data equals the partially granular (or aggregate) data for a given organisation-year dyad. By way of illustration, our data from WIPO features very granular observations for the period of 2009-2020, but only partially granular data for the period of 2000-2008. Our WTO data features very granular observations for the entire period under review. Our granularity assumption allows for an overall analysis of WIPO funding trends both internally (across two decades at the partially granular level) and in comparison to WTO (across two decades at the partially granular level) and in comparison to WTO (and the other organisations in our dataset).

With the granularity assumption and the large availability of very granular data portrayed in Figure 10, the authors create sub-samples to reliably describe a specific trend. As a one-time illustration, for the overall trend of yearly income of International Geneva (Figure 1), the authors need to ensure each year has the same number of organisations. Hence, our sub-sample starts in 2002 (rather than 2000) because of (1) missing data for ILO for 2000 and 2001 and (2) the creation of the Global Fund in 2002. For Figure 1, the authors also removed smaller organisations that were created afterwards (DNDi and GARDP), as well as ITU because of missing data. This way the authors can trust that trends reflect differences in the data itself, and not in the data availability or organisational existence. We opt for not detailing all these choices along the report for readability issues. Where the authors believe data problems are still pervasive, we refrain from portraying trends.

Finally, a note on the compilation of data: To arrive at the data set, the authors analysed all publicly available documents related to the organisations' financial performance. This included annual reports, financial reports, UN General Assembly documents and the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Financial Statistics Database (in the case of UN entities), and organisations' websites. The authors also contacted staff of multiple organisations and asked them about financial reporting practices. In this process, the authors dealt with various issues related to differences in reporting. Some organisations were very consistent in their reporting — providing very detailed data on a consistent basis—, some unveiling very little data throughout the period under review, and some organisations seemed to change reporting standards from one period to the next.

Interestingly, some financial reports featured gross errors that seemed to go unnoticed: The authors uncovered cases where sums reported at the bottom of a tally did not equate to our calculations using the same numbers (the difference going far beyond rounding differences), cases where numbers were mistakenly multiplied by the factor of 1000, and cases where numbers from previous reporting years used to compare current numbers had changed inexplicably. The authors conducted multiple tests to detect anomalies: (1) overall sample outliers; (2) donor-level sample outliers; (3) recipient-level sample outliers; and (4) double-checking random samples of observations. Wherever the authors considered these issues to impact our data and create anomalies, the authors assessed additional sources or contacted the organisations' financial departments. In cases where the authors could not resolve the issues, they adjusted the granularity level for the data in question, ensuring that such anomalies would not distort our overall picture.

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Acknowledgments

The Geneva Graduate Institute would like to thank the Republic and State of Geneva for the generous support that made the present study on the financial sources of International Geneva possible. The report was produced by the Geneva Policy Outlook under the editorial guidance of Achim Wennmann. Thanks also go to Léna Rieder-Menge and Gabriel Gomes Couto communication and language editing and Oleg Smerdov for graphic design & layout.

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In times of rapid change and radical uncertainty, Geneva needs more than ever to reflect on how it remains a relevant global governance hub. The *Geneva Policy Outlook* is a community building and strategic analysis initiative that places its finger on the pulse of Geneva's global policy space to shape reflections and accelerate collaborative responses to global challenges.

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