

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) is an American private foundation founded by Bill Gates and his wife Melinda. Launched in 2000, the Seattle-headquartered foundation is the largest private foundation in the world with over \$46.8 billion in assets.

Overview of the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation

In 1994, the foundation was formed as the William H. Gates Foundation, named after the father of Microsoft's co-founder. During the foundation's following years, funding grew to \$2 billion. The prime focus of the organisation was to improve global health.

In 2000, the William H. Gates Foundation merged with the Gates Learning Foundation and became known as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Following an infusion of money from billionaire investor Warren Buffet in 2006, the foundation set up a separate Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Trust to handle foundation assets.

The foundation issues grants from endowments through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Trust. Bill and Melinda Gates are its sole trustees

Grantmaking areas include:

- Global Development Program
- Global Health Program
- Global Growth & Opportunity Program
- Global Policy and Advocacy.

Funding of the BMGF

The funding of the BMGF comes from the Gates' personal wealth. Contributions are held in an endowment in which 5% of its worth is given away for charity purposes while the rest is invested elsewhere.

In 2006, Warren Buffet (at the time the world's richest man) made a life pledge to the foundation in the form of approximately 10 million Berkshire Hathaway Class B shares. It would be paid in yearly instalments beginning in 2006. As of 2019 \$3.5 billion had been contributed. Overall, Warren Buffet has contributed about \$24.5 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Organisational Structure

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda Gates, are co-chairs and trustees for the Gates Foundation, as well as the foundation's main philanthropists.

Billionaire and philanthropist Warren Buffett is a Gates Foundation trustee.

Susan "Sue" Desmond-Hellmann was the Gates Foundation's chief executive officer from 2014 to January 2020, when she retired from the organization.

Mark Suzman is the chief executive officer of the Gates Foundation, a position he's held since February 2020. Prior to that, the South Africa-born Suzman was director of Global Development Policy and Advocacy for the Gates Foundation from 2007 to 2020.

Activities of BMGF in India

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has collaborated with the Government of India and alongside India corporate companies in the areas of improving nutrition, sanitation and overall healthcare.

It has collaborated with Indian biotech companies to create vaccines for major disease and illness in order to scale up the country's immunization programme. In the latest, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has provided funding for research and development of a vaccine against the novel Coronavirus, tying up with the Serum Institute of India for the purpose. Although the research in such a vaccine is welcome, governments of the world are concerned about any corporate or private foundations for that matter, should not hold on to patent. For this purpose, India has been working along with South Africa to suspend the global enforcement of intellectual property rights of a future COVID-19 vaccine.

Relevant Questions regarding Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

How is funding granted by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation?

Direct grants are awarded by Requests for Proposals (RFPs) published by the organizations in question.

What areas are the Prime Focus of the BMGF?

Most of the funding grants are given to global programmes prioritising over health and education. These areas have been traditionally the foundation's priority areas.

