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REPORT

Foundations and international solidarity

The National Council for Development
and International Solidarity (CNDSI)

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Working group report: "Foundations and international solidarity"

National Council for Development and International Solidarity (CNDSI)

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Introduction

Over 20 years, between 2001 and 2022, the number of foundations in France increased 2.5-fold, from 1,109 to almost 2,930.¹

This strong growth went hand-in-hand with increased philanthropy for sustainable development in France, in Europe and around the world. Through their influence, their flexibility and their financing and innovation ability, foundations provide essential support to their partners to promote good causes.

They have thus become essential to international solidarity and are fully contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs), in addition to the work of government and all civil society organizations (CSOs).

At the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in Paris in June 2023, philanthropic organizations demonstrated their full commitment to these issues and their ambitions to contribute to financing for development and global challenges.²

The objective to **scale up partnerships between the government and foundations** was already one of the recommendations of the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) of 8 February 2018, demonstrating their growing importance in the area of development.

The **MEAE's 2021 "Philanthropy and development" strategy**³ was an initial stocktake on the role of foundations in international solidarity and identified operational priorities for scaling up partnerships.

This strategy identified **five operational priorities** to that end:

1. Institutionalize relations between the MEAE and French philanthropic structures.
2. Foster and promote French and Francophone philanthropic action in the international arena.
3. Encourage cooperation between the MEAE and foundations at local level.
4. Develop cooperation with African philanthropic actors.
5. Enhance dialogue and means of action with European and international philanthropic structures.

This report is in the spirit of the 2018 CICID recommendations and **contributes to the implementation of the MEAE's "Philanthropy and development" strategy** aimed at **linking French foundations to development policy issues**, including within the National Council for International Development and Solidarity (CNDSI), a forum for dialogue and consultation between all development and international solidarity stakeholders.

In response to recommendation 1.2 of the strategy, **a four-member group of "foundation representatives" was created in 2021 to represent the philanthropic bodies at the CNDSI**. The presence of foundations within the CNDSI highlights their major role in development and international solidarity.

¹ "Foundations and endowment funds in France – sixth edition" from the Fondation de France Philanthropy Observatory: fondationdefrance.org/images/pdf/2023/Rapport_Fonds-fondations2023.pdf

² pactedeparis.org/pdf/communiqué_philanthropie.pdf

³ diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_drm_philanthropie_cle05117f.pdf

Overview

This report is the fruit of discussions within the CNDSI's "Foundations" working group, which aimed to propose concrete solutions to the government and civil society stakeholders, including those from the philanthropic sector, to **step up their cooperation**.

In addition to CNDSI members, the discussions brought together foundations, philanthropic organizations in the broad sense, associations, researchers and government and international organization representatives.

The following resulted from these discussions:

- **Increase the capacity for foundations to act, particularly during humanitarian crises**

The expertise of foundations is recognized as an asset for French humanitarian action. They have specific skills that may be used for technical and logistical support during humanitarian crises, as well as useful contact points (suppliers, companies and public authorities) in the relevant countries where their companies are present for business.

The Crisis and Support Centre (CDCS) of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is a well-known and trusted actor for foundations. Several of the foundations that took part in the working group have benefitted from its coordination mission to develop partnerships with French civil society organizations and countries eligible for official development assistance (ODA) during crises. The relationship between foundations and the CDCS, however, could be enhanced to improve the coordination and consistency of work.

The development of collective projects bringing together foundations and NGOs enables skills, knowledge, expertise and equipment to be shared. This sharing is **all the more necessary in times of crisis and emergency situations, when speed and agility are of the essence and solidarity action must take place in a coordinated manner**.

To encourage such interactions, **the visibility of the international solidarity stakeholders must be improved**. Similarly, it would be interesting **to produce tools presenting the work of the foundations**, describing their activity sectors and the human resource skills which they can deploy.

Support for international CSOs must be consistent with safeguarding local CSOs which can suffer the consequences, including with regard to their employees' job security, of funds granted from foundations being earmarked for international NGOs.

Furthermore, steps should be taken towards the simplification of the accountability procedures for small structures.

- **Links and approaches between skills-based sponsorship and volunteering**

International civic engagement is increasingly important within companies. Skills-based sponsorship is one form of this corporate solidarity commitment. On multiple occasions, French corporate foundations have shown that they can mobilize their qualified professionals for partners who request them.

Skills-based sponsorship must be promoted to increase synergies among all international solidarity stakeholders. In addition to meetings between relevant stakeholders, they could also be promoted via a digital platform in order to raise awareness of their international skills-based sponsorship actions.

Support for employees throughout the volunteering process, whether it be for preparations for leaving, during the mission or returning home, is very important, especially in order to prevent practices such as "voluntourism" and to ensure employee safety. To do so, trusting relationships must be built between host associations and organizations which send volunteers. These can only be built over the long term as part of a shared monitoring of projects and continuous updating of needs, while ensuring that skills are not substituted in host countries.

- **Improve interaction between foundations and development NGOs and finance human rights actions**

Although financing of foundations for international development remains relatively modest, the flexibility of foundations compared to other donors is seen as a certain advantage by CSOs: they can adapt to rapidly-changing circumstances.

For NGOs which receive their support, foundations play a key role in co-financing projects supported by public donors. This financing from foundations helps **increase the sustainability of financed projects and the effectiveness of NGO action**.

Furthermore, although this is a minority type of financing, **foundations finance organizations' operating costs**. This type of support is not commonly used by other donors despite often being essential for many organizations, particularly national NGOs but also those whose main activities relate to human rights or training. It has been observed, however, that unlike Anglo-Saxon

NGOs, few French foundations fund CSOs involved in the area of human rights, often deeming that these issues, which are highly political, are not within their sphere of action.

For these reasons, NGOs and foundations must form a closer relationship so that financing models can be better suited to multi-annual funding and operational needs; and especially since foundations' financing is accessible via calls for projects which require a sufficient level of knowledge of foundations' expectations on the one hand, and of the skills of NGOs on the other.

The issue of measuring the impact of fundings is central in the relationship between NGOs and foundations, as the requirements of boards can be just as demanding as those of institutional donors. These measures can be excessively onerous and complicated to meet for CSOs in general and those taking action in the field of human rights in particular. Furthermore, the large increase in requested indicators, while remaining without harmonization, could place a burden on NGOs. This burden would also be felt by the foundations tasked with analysing them.

- **Increase the visibility of French foundations within multilateral forums.**

Philanthropy is increasingly recognized as an essential component of the 2030 Agenda and for achieving the SDGs, at both local and international level. However, few French foundations are active in the multilateral landscape, particularly during major international events.

Studies conducted by the OECD show that the low levels of financing granted by French foundations for international development restrict their international impact and visibility. The share of foundations' financing for development must thus be increased.

Although French foundations are under-represented internationally, they have a good reputation due to their recognized specialization. French foundations have recognized experience in international and humanitarian cooperation, including in the area of access to essential services, women's rights, health and understanding of local issues (particularly in South-East Asia and Africa).

This specialization can help them gain greater recognition and legitimacy within multilateral forums. It can also be optimized through involvement in donors' groups within steering committees.

Foundations must become organized and coordinate their work through shared initiatives within multilateral forums. They must also together work to gather information on philanthropy with regard to development, regardless of their extent or capacity.

Various international initiatives promote the philanthropic ecosystem within multilateral bodies. They can be led by international organizations or independent networks. Governments also have a role to play in supporting the international visibility of French and Francophone foundations.

Working group recommendations

PRIORITY 1. Increase the capacity for foundations to act, particularly during humanitarian crises

- Continue **building a coordination framework** between the CDCS and foundations for crisis response.
- **In times of crisis and emergency, notify** foundations of a single entry point to coordinate relevant and effective collective action, in collaboration with referenced local stakeholders.
- **Continue organizing operational meetings** between the CDCS and relevant foundations and NGOs to encourage project emergence.

PRIORITY 2. Create links and approaches between skills-based sponsorship and volunteering

- **Continue work to promote existing mechanisms**, by creating several discussion spaces to be used by foundations, volunteer-sending organizations and more broadly all international solidarity stakeholders.
- **Create a digital space** to centralize skills-based sponsorship requests and offers.
- **Provide training and support for volunteers** before and throughout their missions, based on the principles of non-substitution, reciprocity and preventing voluntourism.
- **Encourage long-term relationships** between foundations and partner associations by developing dialogue spaces to discuss international solidarity issues.

PRIORITY 3. Improve interaction between foundations and development NGOs and finance human rights actions

- **Begin collective discussions on changes in project selection criteria** by foundations as well as the criteria for measuring project impact.
- **Encourage mutual knowledge among foundations and CSOs working on human rights** in order to build trust-based relationships.
- **Continue work to implement financing suited to the specific needs of CSOs**, including those relating to human rights: **flexibility, multi-year financing, coverage of operating costs.**

PRIORITY 4. Increase the visibility of French foundations within multilateral forums

- **Facilitate collaboration between French foundations and European and international actors** working in the area of development and international solidarity.
- Encourage foundations to take part in French **local development councils (CLDs)** in countries where they exist, an initiative which has already begun within the framework of the CFF, CNDSI, etc.
- **Promote partnerships based around the SDGs**, in the same vein as the Ouagadougou Partnership.
- **Encourage involvement from French foundations in international and European networks.** These networks can facilitate capacity building and the sharing of best practices.
- **Facilitate the presence of French foundations in major international events.** The French government and the EU could facilitate cooperation from foundations in a Team Europe approach, including as part of the Global Gateway strategy.
- **Clarify the eligibility of foundations for certain co-financing mechanisms.** French foundations can promote their technical expertise by participating in donors' groups, co-financing projects, etc.

Presentation of the working group

This report is the fruit of several months of discussions and proposes definitive solutions for the government and civil society stakeholders, including those from the philanthropic sector, in order to **step up their cooperation**.

Members of the working group held discussions over four meetings between May 2022 and January 2023 on the following priorities:

- **Increase the capacity for foundations to act, particularly during humanitarian crises;**
- **Create links and approaches between skills-based sponsorship and volunteering;**
- **Improve interaction between foundations and development NGOs and finance human rights actions;**
- **Increase the visibility of French foundations within multilateral forums.**

In addition to CNDSI members, the discussions brought together foundations, philanthropic organizations in the broad sense, associations, researchers and government and international organization representatives.

It should be noted that the legal framework can lead to a number of difficulties:

- **Uncertainty** as to whether **foundations qualify as CSOs**, which would give them access to financing mechanisms from donors.
- **The territoriality of donations and the actions of foundations** which limit certain investments in international projects.

Very little data on the international activities of French philanthropic organizations is available. Only the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Centre for Philanthropy Research and Studies (CerPhi) provide statistics on this issue. Mapping of French foundations working for international development shows that of the 5,300 foundations and endowment funds recorded by the Fondation de France, 165 are engaged in international development activities.⁵ Only 3.5% of the €277 million allocated to implementing projects of general interest by foundations hosted by the Fondation de France was channelled to international solidarity.⁶ Furthermore, the Fondation de France has observed that philanthropy is becoming increasingly localized, with almost 22% of foundations founded since 2018 working internationally compared to 62% working at regional level.

The legal framework of French foundations

Under French law,⁴ foundations are defined as “the act by which one or more natural or legal persons decide the irrevocable assignment of property, rights or resources to the realization of a work of general interest and not for profit”. Currently in France there are eight legal statuses governing foundations.

- 1) **Four so-called general statuses** public interest foundations; endowment funds, corporate foundations and hosted (or “under the aegis”) foundations.
- 2) **Four sectoral statuses:** scientific cooperation foundations, university foundations, partnership foundations and hospital foundations.

The report will focus on the contribution of “**general**” foundations.

⁴ Article 18 of Act 87-571 of 23 July 1987 on the development of patronage activities

⁵ CerPhi (2019), [Mapping of French foundations working for international development \(in French\)](#)

⁶ Fondation de France (2023), Activity Report 2022.

PRIORITY 1

Increase the capacity for foundations to act, particularly during humanitarian crisis

The expertise of foundations is a recognized **asset for French humanitarian action**. They have specific skills, which can be useful for providing technical and logistical support during humanitarian crisis. They provide professional expertise in various sectors, such as energy, water and sanitation, digital technology and telecommunications, and healthcare. Furthermore, they know the stakeholders and the situation on the ground, as the companies they are attached to are established within the country's business environment. As a consequence, they may rely on useful networks of contacts, such as suppliers, companies and public authorities.

The Crisis and Support Centre (CDCS) of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is a well-known, trusted stakeholder for foundations. It coordinates government emergency humanitarian action to help local communities. It mobilizes all logistical resources, provides staff and networks with various stakeholders on the ground. Several foundations which are members of the working group have benefitted from its coordination mission to develop partnerships with French civil society organizations and countries eligible for official development assistance (ODA) during crises. Furthermore, the CDCS's quick action and flexible access to financing facilitates work with foundations.

The relationship between foundations and the CDCS, however, could be enhanced to improve the coordination and consistency of its work.

Concerted action between foundations, the MEAE and French associations and local stakeholders is essential to increase effectiveness. Building a coordination framework between the CDCS and foundations is one avenue to explore in order to meet these criteria.

The development of collective projects bringing together foundations and NGOs enable skills, knowledge, expertise and equipment to be shared.

There is an even greater need to share in times of crisis and emergency situations, when speed, agility and coordination are of the essence for solidarity action. When foundations are urgently called upon to take the lead during severe crises, **lack of local knowledge and visibility** render

support choices less effective than if they had been taken collectively, in consultation with identified local stakeholders.

Furthermore, **support for international CSOs must be consistent with safeguarding local CSOs. We must not underestimate** the negative impact on local organizations caused by granting foundation funds to international NGOs, such as foundation employees leaving to join NGOs with more attractive conditions.

Furthermore, accountability procedures must be simplified for small organizations. According to the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), this is particularly true with regard to migratory crises.

Examples of CDCS partnerships with foundations

In 2020, **CMA-CGM Foundation** began logistical support by transporting humanitarian material to Lebanon following the explosion at the Port of Beirut, but also in India, in Tunisia and during the Russian invasion in Ukraine.

- **Airbus Foundation** has provided satellite images during food crises to map out high-risk areas for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The foundation set up helicopter surveillance of the areas devastated by Cyclone Batsirai, which hit Madagascar in February 2022.

- In 2021, **Decathlon Foundation** provided clothing and masks to refugees in Myanmar⁷.

- Since 1998, **Veolia Foundation** has been an operational partner of the CDCS to respond to humanitarian emergencies in the area of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The foundation has responded alongside the CDCS over 50 times, including in Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey and Ukraine since 2020. Furthermore, it signed two co-financing partnerships with the CDCS in 2021 and 2022 to undertake stabilization actions through access to water in several Sahel countries.

To encourage such interaction, **the visibility of the actions of the various international solidarity stakeholders must be improved.**

At working group meetings, foundations highlighted difficulties with identifying and targeting French and local NGOs. Stakeholders on the ground should be mapped out in order to resolve this issue.

Similarly, it would be interesting **to produce tools presenting the work of the foundations**, describing their activity sectors and the human resource skills which they can deploy. This is also recommended by the OECD⁸, which recommends that the development community set up **a platform encouraging greater transparency and dialogue among national leaders on the one hand and local and international philanthropic stakeholders on the other.**

Sharing data on the activities and geographical sources of philanthropic donations would help make better use of synergies with the various donors. Between 2 and 3% of donations from French foundations are invested in the most disadvantaged countries.⁹ Philanthropy is used in middle-income and upper-middle-income countries in which project infrastructure already exists.

The French Centre for Funds and Foundations (CFF), which groups together foundations and endowment funds without distinction and aims to help secure better knowledge of the philanthropic sector, could replace this mission.

Recommendations:

- **Continue building a coordination framework between the CDCS and foundations within crisis responses.**
- **In times of crisis and emergency, notify foundations of a single entry point to coordinate relevant and effective collective action, in collaboration with referenced local stakeholders.**
- **Continue organizing operational meetings between the CDCS and relevant foundations and NGOs to encourage project emergence.**
- **Map out and quantify the actions and professional skills of foundations in order to create a portfolio describing their areas of intervention and the staff skills which can be provided. Facilitate the identification of specific needs and trusted local mediators.**

⁸ "Private Philanthropy for Development – Second Edition" - OECD - December 2021

⁹ "Private Philanthropy for Development – Second Edition" - OECD - December 2021

PRIORITY 2

Create links and approaches between skills-based sponsorship and volunteering

International civic engagement is increasingly prominent within companies. **Skills-based sponsorship** is one form of this corporate solidarity action. It encompasses all practices which enable companies to make employees available to a general interest organization which will make use of their skills or workforce to serve a specific cause for a certain, generally short-term period (from a few days to a few months)¹⁰.

Various mechanisms enable companies to support their employees in their different solidarity activities, whether nationally or internationally: solidarity leave (Planète Urgence), international solidarity leave, or skills-based sponsorship. Many civil society organizations, such as foundations and associations, take the initiative to support people seeking to put their skills to use for a specific cause during their working hours and outside of their companies.

On multiple occasions, **French corporate foundations have shown that they can mobilize their qualified professionals for partners** who request them. The **MEAE's "Philanthropy and development" strategy** highlighted the need to assess possible synergies, particularly on the African continent. French foundations are thus invited to contact embassies in the countries where they are undertaking their skills-based sponsorship.

Skills-based sponsorship must be promoted to increase synergies among all international solidarity stakeholders.

For example: skills-based sponsorship at Veoliaforce

Within working hours, a Veolia group employee leaves on assignment on behalf of Veolia Foundation. Having received training in humanitarian emergencies and handling response equipment developed by the Foundation, they may be on the ground for several weeks or share their expertise remotely. The Foundation coordinates the assignment and covers logistics and travel expenses; the volunteer continues to receive their usual remuneration.¹¹

Promoting volunteering experiences and including international civic engagement in professional careers are also targets set by the MEAE in its "Civil Society and Civic Engagement" strategy (2023-2027).

To that end, on 31 May 2023, the MEAE organized a meeting entitled "How to support employees working internationally", for representatives of companies, associations and institutions to discuss the advantages and impacts of Volunteering for Exchange and Skills (VEC).

Such meetings **help encourage skills-based sponsorship**, which is not sufficiently known or recognized. They also help create forums for sharing best practice.

This work to promote existing mechanisms must be backed by both the government and all civil society stakeholders.

Regional multi-stakeholder networks (RRMAs), whose governance comprises international solidarity associations and an increasing number of companies, can play a major role in promoting these practices.

¹⁰ Office of the Minister of State for the Social, Inclusive and Responsible Economy Practical guide to skills-based sponsorship (2021).

¹¹ <https://www.fondation.veolia.com/en/news/veoliaforce-volunteers-trained-humanitarian-emergencies>

This promotion could also take place via a digital platform in order to raise awareness of international skills-based sponsorship actions.

In its capacity as the platform for **Volunteering for International Exchange and Solidarity (VIES)**, **France Volontaires** could include international solidarity skills-based sponsorship in order to create a forum for requesting and proposing skills-based sponsorship, whether it be North-South, South-North, or South-South.

Support for employees throughout the volunteering process, whether it be for preparations for leaving, during the mission or returning home, is very important, especially in order to prevent practices associated with “voluntourism” and ensure employee safety.

To do so, trusting relationships must be built between host associations and organizations which send volunteers.

These can only be built over the long term through shared monitoring of projects and continuous updating of needs, while ensuring that skills are not substituted in host countries.

Recommendations:

- **Continue work to promote existing mechanisms, by creating several discussion spaces to be used by foundations, volunteer-sending organizations and more broadly all international solidarity stakeholders.**
- **Create a digital space to centralize skills-based sponsorship requests and offers.**
- **Provide training and support for volunteers before and throughout their missions, based on the principles of non-substitution, reciprocity and preventing voluntourism.**
- **Encourage long-term relationships between foundations and partners from associations by developing dialogue spaces to discuss international solidarity issues.**

PRIORITY 3

Improve interaction between foundations and development NGOs and finance human rights actions

According to the study on the socio-economic model of international solidarity associations (ASIs) published by Coordination SUD in 2022,¹² the share of their financing from foundations remains low, although it is increasing. The resources of French NGOs received from foundations accounted for less than 10% of privately-sourced funds between 2016 and 2020, while public generosity accounted for much more. They did, however, significantly increase over that period (up 57%). **90 CSOs questioned as part of the study received total financing of €100 million from foundations over a five-year period.**

About 60% of this financing is allocated to “emergencies” and about 40% to “development”. Although this financing remains modest (tens of thousands of euros) in terms of volume per project financed, multi-year financing programmes to maintain this action over the long term are emerging.

The flexibility of foundations compared to other donors is seen as an advantage by CSOs: they can adapt to rapidly-changing circumstances, particularly in emergency situations.

Although this is a minority type of financing, foundations **finance organizations’ operating costs** (undesignated funds). This type of support is not commonly used by other donors despite often being essential for many organizations, particularly those whose main activities relate to human rights or training.

For NGOs receiving their support, foundations play a key role in **co-financing projects** supported by public donors. This financing from foundations helps increase the sustainability of financed projects and the effectiveness of NGO action. NGOs in the areas of development and human rights are particularly concerned about this issue due to the specific needs linked to their research activities on the ground and the knowledge production which requires long-term financing.

It has been observed, however, by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), that unlike NGOs from the Anglophone world (e.g. Open Society, Hope Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust), few French foundations fund CSOs involved in the area of human rights, often deeming these issues to be highly political and not within their sphere of action.

For these reasons, **NGOs and foundations must form a closer relationship so that financing models can be better suited** to needs in terms of multi-annual funding and operating costs.

This knowledge is especially important as financing for foundations is gained **via calls for projects which remain difficult to secure without sufficient knowledge** of foundations’ expectations on the one hand, and of the skills of NGOs on the other. **Often, the main issue for foundations is finding the right partners**, particularly against a background of highly regulated fund transfers. In order to encourage spaces for information-sharing and best practices between NGOs and foundations, the French Centre for Funds and Foundations (CFF) created a “Cercle Action internationale” (international action circle) and a directory of foundations to help donors and project leaders identify and contact each other. Such spaces should receive more support and be rolled out more extensively.

In 2023, the **AFD (French Development Agency)** launched a new initiative to attract foundations as partners, encouraging them to invest in the priority countries for French ODA. This pilot programme is a strong signal to encourage cooperation between the AFD and foundations. Its budget of €2.4 million, however, remains limited and would benefit from an increase.

At European level, in addition to Philea (Philanthropy Europe Association), the Network of European Foundations is a group of foundations for creating partnerships between donors in order to support foundations through shared projects.

¹² [MSE-Coordination-SUD study-1.pdf \(coordinationsud.org\)](#)

Furthermore, **responding to these calls for projects comes at a significant cost for organizations**, particularly due to the creation of applications which can be complex and more often than not vary from one to the other. It would be desirable for foundations to seek joint templates of grant applications in order to reduce costs.

The issue of measuring the impact of the financed action is an important point in the relationship between NGOs and foundations. Requirements of institutional donors remain strict, but this is also the case within foundations' boards of directors. These measures can be excessively onerous and complicated to meet for CSOs in general and those taking action on human rights in particular. Furthermore, the large increase in requested indicators, which are not being harmonized, can place a burden on NGOs. This burden would also be felt by the foundations.

Recommendations:

- **Begin collective discussions on changes to project selection criteria by foundations as well as the criteria for measuring project impact.**
- **Encourage mutual knowledge among foundations and CSOs working on human rights in order to build trust-based relationships.**
- **Continue work to implement financing suited to the specific needs of CSOs, including those relating to human rights: flexibility, multi-year financing, coverage of operating costs.**

PRIORITY 4

Increase the visibility of French foundations within multilateral forums

Philanthropy is increasingly recognized as an essential component of the 2030 Agenda and for achieving the SDGs, at both local and international level. However, few French foundations are active in the multilateral landscape, particularly during major international events. The low number of French foundations which are members of the OECD's Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD) demonstrates their weak presence within multilateral forums.

Increase the share of financing for development from French foundations

Studies conducted by the OECD show that the low levels of financing granted by French foundations for development restrict their international impact and visibility.

From 2016 to 2019,¹³ European foundations provided \$9.4 billion for development (22% of all philanthropic financing for the period). France ranks sixth in Europe in terms of philanthropic financing for development. France's five largest foundations account for only 2% of European financing and Grameen Credit Agricole Foundation, which provides half of all France's financing, is only the 12th largest donor in Europe. The latter, however, is not representative of the foundation sector as it is a fund with a system of loans (microfinance) and investments.

The French tax system, which provides fewer incentives than others, as well as the culture of individual philanthropy in countries like the United States, may explain the emergence of specific independent structures for project financing.

Promote the expertise of French foundations

Although under-represented internationally, French foundations have a good reputation due to their specialized approach. French foundations have proven expertise in international and humanitarian cooperation, including in the area of access to essential services (water and sanitation, energy, telecommunications and digital services), women's rights, health and understanding of local issues (particularly in South-East Asia and Africa).

This specialization can help them gain greater recognition and legitimacy within multilateral forums. It can also be optimized through involvement in pool funds within steering committees, such as with the Bill & Melinda Gates and Scott R. MacKenzie Foundations.

Coordinate efforts around shared initiatives

Foundations must become organized and coordinate their work through shared initiatives within multilateral forums. They must also together work to gather information on philanthropy with regard to development, regardless of their size or capacity. Governments also have a role to play in supporting the international visibility of French and Francophone foundations.

Various international initiatives promote the philanthropic ecosystem within multilateral bodies.

¹³ "Private Philanthropy for Development – Second Edition" – OECD – December 2021

The Ouagadougou Partnership

The Ouagadougou Partnership was launched in February 2011 by the governments of the nine French-speaking West African countries during the “Population, Development, and Family Planning in West Africa” Conference in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), in collaboration with financial and technical partners (United States Agency for International Development (USAID), AFD, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), West African Health Organization (WAHO), Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), UK Department for International Development (DFID)).

Its goal was to accelerate progress in the use of family planning services in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

It is based on two principles:

- > **Better coordination among donors** to maximize support for countries and also collaboration.
- > **National and regional cooperation** to satisfy unmet needs in terms of family planning.

The Ouagadougou Partnership reached and exceeded its objectives by introducing over 3.8 million additional users to modern family planning methods in the nine member states in 2020.

They can be led by international organizations like the Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD), the International Education Funders Group (IEFG) and the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) which speak out for their members in various forums.

The latter receives support from the European Commission Department for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) in order to promote an environment conducive to philanthropy and to work on capacity building.

Collaboration between French foundations and European institutions, however, remains difficult due to the lack of harmonization regarding the legal status of foundations and restrictive legislation as regards the partnerships which can be formed by DG INTPA (development) and ECHO (humanitarian aid).

In France, the CFF has already set up various initiatives to work together with foundations (Philanthropy for Ukraine, French Coalition of Foundations for Climate, European Health Union).

These promising initiatives should be supported by governments. These mechanisms, however, are restricted to active CFF members and their scope is limited when compared to the landscape of foundations in France.

Recommendations:

- **Facilitate collaboration between French foundations and European and international structures working in the area of development and international solidarity.**
- **Encourage foundations to take part in French local development councils (CLDs) in countries where they exist, an initiative which has already begun within the framework of the CFF, CNDSI, etc.**
- **Promote partnerships based around the SDGs, in the same vein as the Ouagadougou Partnership (see box).**
- **Encourage involvement from French foundations in international and European networks. These networks can facilitate capacity building and the sharing of best practices. Foundations should become organized and coordinate their work through shared initiatives and statements within multilateral forums. Philanthropic stakeholders can invest in intermediaries and networks and take up positions on visible debates in order to increase their influence.**
- **Facilitate the presence of French foundations in major international events. The French government and the EU could facilitate cooperation from foundations in a Team Europe approach, including as part of the Global Gateway strategy.**
- **Clarify the eligibility of foundations for certain co-financing mechanisms. French foundations can promote their technical expertise by participating in donors’ groups, co-financing projects, etc.**

Annexes

List of abbreviations

AFD: Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)

WINGS: Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support

ASI: International solidarity associations

CDCS: Crisis and Support Centre

CFF: French Centre for Funds and Foundations

CICID: Interministerial Committee on International Cooperation and Development

CIFF: Children's Investment Fund Foundation

CLD: Local Development Councils

CNDSI: National Council for Development and International Solidarity

CSOs: Civil society organizations

DFID: UK Department for International Development

DG INTPA: European Commission Department for International Partnerships

ECHO: Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

FDD: Endowment Fund

FE: Corporate foundations

FRUP: Public Interest Foundation

FSE: "Under the aegis" Foundation

IEFG: International Education Funders Group

IFRI: French Institute of International Relations

MEAE: French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

ODA: Official development assistance

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RRMA: Regional multi-stakeholder networks

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

VEC: Volunteering for Exchange and Skills

VIES: Volunteering for International Exchange and Solidarity

WAHO: West African Health Organization

List of speakers at the working sessions

- **Gaëlle Decouvoux**, *Private Partnerships and Philanthropy Associate, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency*
- **Matthieu Tardis**, *French Institute of International Relations (IFRI)*
- **David Poinard**, *Deputy Executive Manager of Veolia Foundation, Chair of the “WASH, Crises and Fragility in the French Water Partnership” working group*
- **Thierry Vandevelde**, *General Delegate of the Veolia Foundation*
- **Patrick Jabre**, *Director General of the Order of Malta Lebanon*
- **Hasna Oujamaa**, *Sponsorship and Partner Relations Manager, GERES*
- **Béatrice Garrette**, *Executive Director of Fondation Pierre Fabre, member of the CNDSI’s Foundations group*
- **Patricia Djosemu**, *President-Delegate, Women of Africa*
- **Eléonore Morel**, *Chief Executive Officer of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)*
- **Gaëlle Kergraisse**, *Head of Foundations and Programmes — International Solidarity and Emergencies Department at Fondation de France*
- **Julien No Mura**, *Head of project for the development of private partnerships, Action Éducation (AE)*
- **Francis Charhon**, *French Centre for Funds and Foundations (CFF)*
- **Issa Kamissoko**, *Association for Sustainable Development in Mali*
- **Philippe Lukanu Ngwala**, *Primary Health Care in Rural Areas (SANRU), Democratic Republic of the Congo*
- **Hawa Diallo**, *managing director of the Orange Foundation in Mali*
- **Cissé Assitan Traoré**, *President of the Soumaila Cissé Foundation for Hope and Excellence*
- **Marianne Eshet**, *President of the Alliance pour le Mécénat de Compétences*
- **Françoise Nepveu**, *Scientific Adviser, Fondation Pierre Fabre*
- **Benoît Miribel**, *former President of the French Centre for Funds and Foundations (CFF)*
- **Bénédicte Wallez**, *Partnerships Manager, Veolia Foundation*
- **Annie Evrard**, *Humanitarian and Stabilization Operations Department, CDCS, MEAE*

This report is the fruit of discussions of the “Foundations” working group set up within the National Council for Development and International Solidarity (CNDSI), co-chaired by Françoise Cosson, managing director of the Orange Foundation, and Marie-Jo Demante, IRAM-Groupe Initiatives.

The work concluded with a series of recommendations based around four priority areas in order to step up cooperation between governments, civil society organizations and foundations, by increasing their capacity to act, by creating links with volunteering mechanisms, and working alliances with civil society organizations in order to increase their visibility within international organizations.

The CNDSI is the key consultative body between non-government actors and the French government on issues relating to France’s development and international cooperation policy. It contributes to discussions on building and implementing the objectives, approaches and resources of French development policy.

The MEAE would like to thank the co-chairs for the work achieved in this working group, leading to the publication of this report. The recommendations of the working group, which were approved by the CNDSI board, are not binding on the government.

Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

**Directorate-General for Global Affairs
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