

University philanthropy: The Rockefeller Foundation

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Key findings

The Rockefeller Foundation has a significant reputation for international commitments and support, today focusing on social and environmental actions that include improving access to electricity, food, healthcare and economic opportunity.

- A study of its giving between 2014-18 has revealed that 8% of its total giving (\$788m) has gone to universities and higher education institutions around the world.
- Our analysis has identified \$65.6m has been disbursed in grants to 111 universities in 18 countries in the past five reported years.
- US universities are the biggest beneficiaries. 81 American universities received 80% of Rockefeller university giving, totaling \$52m. Year on year, giving to American universities has grown. In 2014, 58% of Rockefeller's university grants went to US institutions – by 2018, it had increased to 92%.
- UK universities are the next biggest beneficiaries. Seven institutions received \$5.2m in the past five years, or 8% of all Rockefeller university giving.
- South Africa is the next biggest group of beneficiaries receiving 4% of Rockefeller university giving.
- The single biggest university beneficiary of Rockefeller funding is Harvard. It has received \$9.7m between 2014-18 – 15% of all Rockefeller university giving.
- City University of New York (CUNY) is the second biggest recipient (\$9.6m) while Columbia University is third (\$4.2m).
- The top 10 university beneficiaries received 65% of Rockefeller university giving (\$42m). They include some of the biggest names in higher education – Harvard, Columbia, New York, Stanford, MIT, Cornell and Oxford.
- Regionally, Europe is the second biggest regional beneficiary – 90% of European giving heads to the UK.
- African universities are the third biggest regional beneficiary – eight universities in six African countries received \$3.7m. 68% of African funding goes to South Africa.

About UniversityPhilanthropy.com

UniversityPhilanthropy.com is the dedicated research arm of The Cape Partnership, the London-based public affairs and policy advisory firm. Our research looks at trends in philanthropy and giving to universities.

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Key facts

The Rockefeller Foundation is one of the great American philanthropic foundations. Established in 1913, the Foundation today has assets of over \$4bn, and is ranked in the US foundation top 50. Below is a regional breakdown of its university giving (2014-18):

	Recipients	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
North America	83	\$5.7m	\$7.8m	\$13.0m	\$10.1m	\$16.4m	\$53.1m
Europe	9	\$196k	\$745k	\$2.5m	\$739k	\$184m	\$5.2m
Africa	8	\$2.1m	\$250k	\$866k	\$428k	\$54k	\$3.7m
Asia	10	\$1.0m	\$199k	\$625k	\$236k	\$400k	\$2.6m
Latin America	1	\$700k	\$350k	-	-	-	\$1.1m

Top 10 recipients of giving by the Rockefeller Foundation:

University	Country	2014-18
Harvard	US	\$9.7m
CUNY	US	\$9.6m
Columbia	US	\$4.2m
New York	US	\$3.8m
Massachusetts	US	\$3.1m
Stanford	US	\$2.5m
Oxford	UK	\$2.5m
Cape Town	S. Africa	\$2.4m
M.I.T.	US	\$2.2m
Cornell	US	\$2.1m

Analysis

Like many of the best known US foundations, Rockefeller forged a reputation for its international work. As it has been eclipsed by larger foundations in recent decades, it had continued to be an important funder of higher education in the developing world.

According to this study of giving over the past five years awards to universities internationally appears to be in steep decline, especially to those in Africa and Asia. Equally, international giving is skewed to a number of favoured institutions. The University of Oxford received 48% of all giving to European universities while 65% of giving to African universities goes to the University of Cape Town. The top 5 non-US beneficiaries are:

- University of Oxford - \$2.5m
- University of Cape Town - \$2.4m
- Mahidol University - \$1.3m
- Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales - \$1.1m
- London School of Economics - \$965k

About our research

The purpose of this research was to identify giving by the Rockefeller Foundation between 2014-18. Our study drew on information filed in the Foundation's US tax returns. For more information, contact: office@capepartnership.com

