

Donor Funding to International Organizations:  
Evidence from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation



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University of Pennsylvania  
IPES 2023  
October 27, 2023

Who writes the rules for international organizations?

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- ▶ Member states

Who writes the rules for international organizations?

- ▶ Bureaucrats

Who writes the rules for international organizations?

- ▶ Rival IOs

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- ▶ External donors?

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Does external donor funding alter the internal priorities of international organizations?

## Case: Gates Foundation

- ▶ Billionaire Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, and wife Melinda Gates
- ▶ Second largest philanthropy in the world
- ▶ Primarily funds health initiatives in the Global South
- ▶ Also major funder of the WHO, Global Fund, GAVI



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Tough case for crowd out because Gates priorities aligned with IOs (particularly health IOs)

# Data

Form 990-PF		BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION		56-2618866	Page 11
Part XV Supplementary Information (continued)					
3a Grants and Contributions Paid During the Year					
Recipient		If recipient is an individual, show any relationship to any foundation manager or substantial contributor	Foundation status of recipient	Purpose of grant or contribution	Amount
Name and address (home or business)					
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION 20 AVENUE APPIA GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 1211CH27			GOV; EXECUTIVE ORDER	EMERGENCY RESPONSE	617,687.
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION 20 AVENUE APPIA GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 1211CH27			GOV; EXECUTIVE ORDER	DISCOVERY AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCES	678,531.
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION CIT DU DJOU, PO BOX 06 BRASSAVILLE, CONGO (BRASSAVILLE)			GOV; EXECUTIVE ORDER	POLIO	536,654.

► Gates Foundation tax returns (2000-2021)



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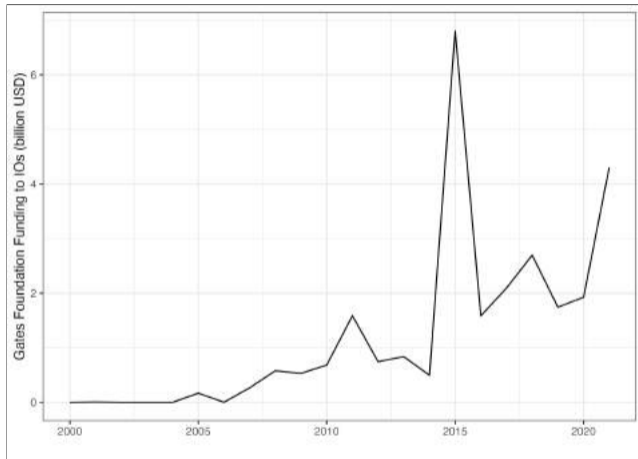
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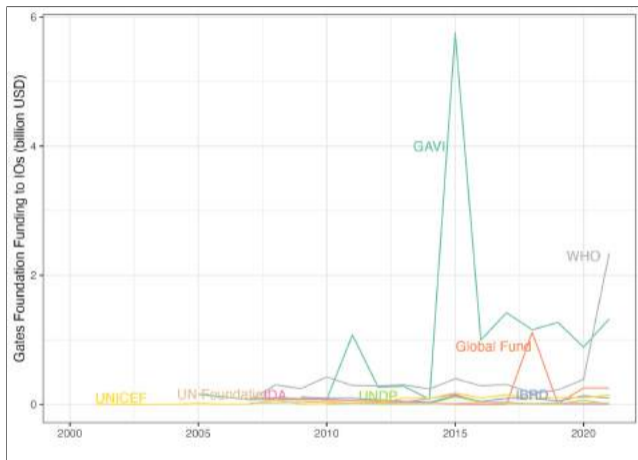
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  - ▶ 40 IOs
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  - ▶ 15 billion dollars total funding

# Descriptive



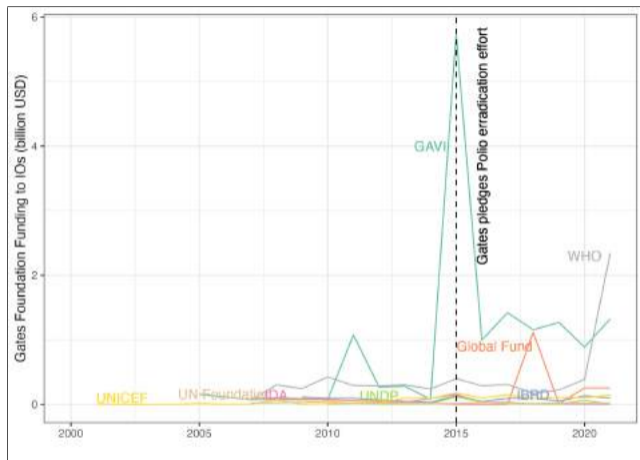
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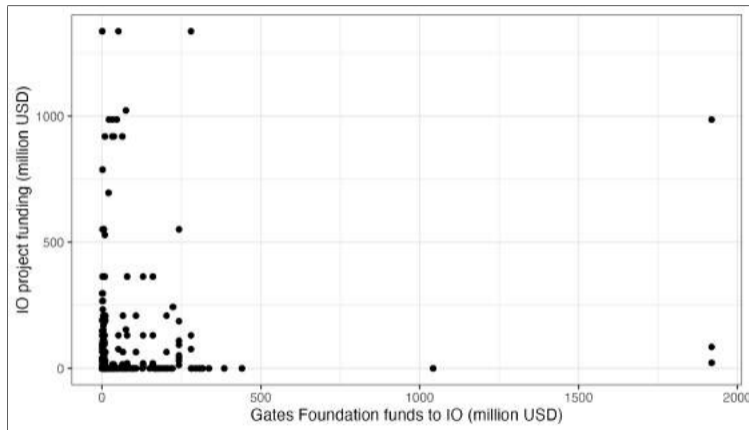
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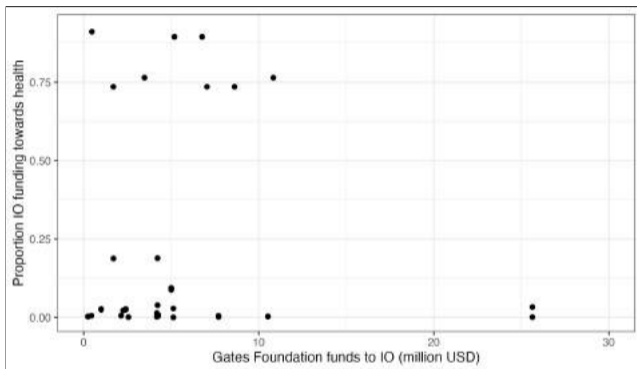
Gates  $\rightarrow$  IOs  $\rightarrow$  projects



Project inputs to IOs from Gates ( $t$ )  $\rightarrow$  Project outputs from IOs ( $t + 1$ )

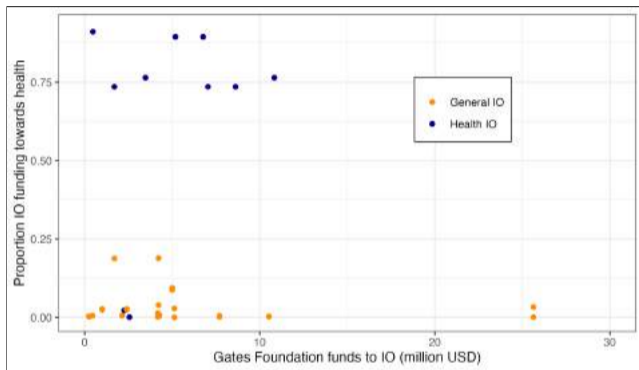


# IO project portfolio composition



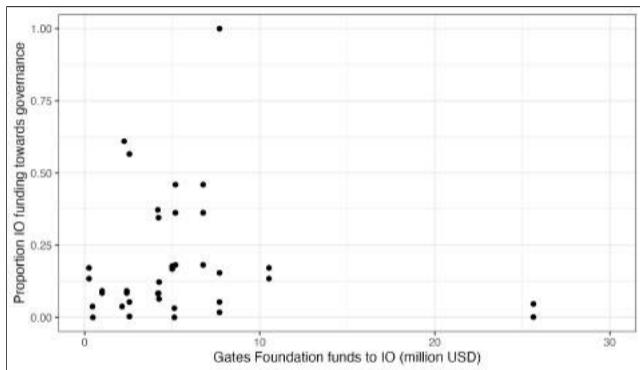
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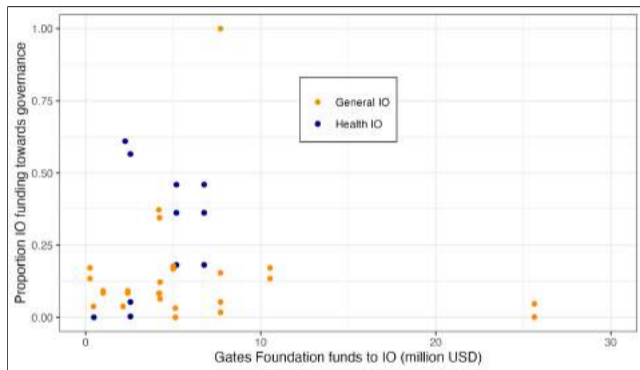
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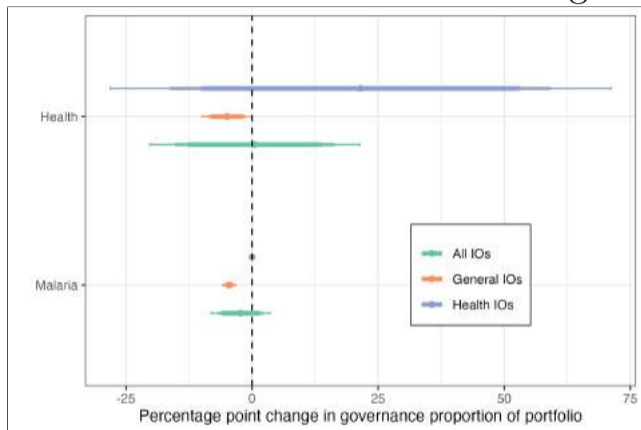
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## Within-IO variation associated with Gates Funding



Proportion of IO funding within an IO earmarked for governance issues in time  $t + 1$  given Gates Foundation funding for issue areas in time  $t$

# Technocratic solutions for governance issues?

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## Revealed: Gates Foundation's \$1.4bn in fossil fuel investments

**Analysis of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's most recent tax filing reveals huge investments in the world's biggest fossil fuel companies**



**📷** Toxic waste at an oil excavation mine in Alberta, Canada. A Guardian campaign backed by 95,000 people so far is asking the Gates to sell their fossil fuel investments. Photograph: Orjan F. Ellingvag/Corbis



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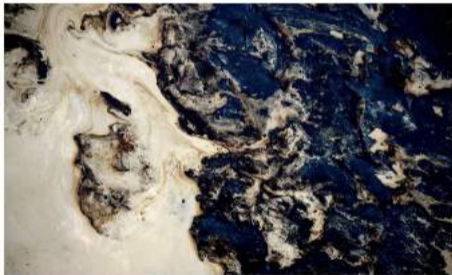
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**Agricultural innovation and improved nutrition are necessary for a climate-stressed world**

To address climate catastrophe, reducing emissions is not enough. New solutions must help smallholder farmers and families adapt to a changing world.

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- ▶ Gates Foundation fossil fuel investments vs climate investing

# Thank you!

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