



...OPEN SOCIETY TIME▶



Open Society Foundations

George Soros, *Chair*  
Aryeh Neier, *President*

400 West 59th Street  
New York, NY 10019  
USA  
(212) 548 0600  
[www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org)

Open Society Institute–Brussels  
(32 2) 505 4646

Open Society Institute–Budapest  
(36 1) 882 3100

Open Society Foundation (London)  
(44) 207 031 0200

Open Society Institute–Washington, D.C.  
(202) 721 5600

Laura Silber, *Director of Public Affairs*

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TOP Fall of the Berlin Wall, East Germany, 1989 © Regis Bossu/Sygma/Corbis

BOTTOM Preparing an injection for multidrug-resistant TB, Lesotho, 2007

© Open Society Foundations, photograph by Pep Bonet



The Open Society Foundations are a family of more than 30 foundations created by philanthropist and financier George Soros. Active in more than 70 countries around the world, the Open Society Foundations support justice and human rights, freedom of expression, and access to public health and education. The Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens.







# OPEN SOCIETY TIME

SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT achievements of the Open Society Foundations took place in the early years. Foundations established by George Soros in Hungary, Poland, and the Soviet Union in the 1980s, when communist regimes still ruled those countries, and support that he provided to a few groups in the West working in the Soviet bloc countries contributed to the transformation of the region. In 1989–1991 with the collapse of communism, Soros moved rapidly to help develop civil society in places where it had been silenced or stunted. This contributed to the emergence of democratic governments and substantially more open societies in most countries of the former Soviet empire.

During the 1990s and in the first decade of the new millennium, the Open Society Foundations expanded their reach globally. We now play a role in every region of the world, though not in every country. In a substantial number of the countries where we are active, the Open Society Foundations are a leading supporter—and sometimes the lone supporter—of efforts to promote democratic governance, respect for the rule of law, protection of the rights of minorities, and civil and political liberties.

## **Access to Information**

An area where we have made great advances over the past two decades has been in promoting access to information. At the end of the 1980s, only some 13 countries worldwide had freedom of information laws. There are now more than 80 countries with such laws or regulations. Though the role played by the Open Society Foundations has varied greatly from country to country, and such laws were adopted in some places without our significant involvement, we have been a driving force internationally. In addition, we have been in the forefront in promoting implementation of these laws.

Some of the most dramatic advances in promoting freedom of information recently have taken place in Asia where laws or regulations are now in effect in such countries as India, Pakistan (where the right to information has now been incorporated in the constitution), Bangladesh, China, and Indonesia. Everywhere, the effect is significant. Even in China, where a regulation was adopted in 2008 so that the government could test its impact before adopting a law, the right to information plays an important role. Environmental activists report that they are now getting information that allows them to participate in public hearings on projects which they believe will affect air quality, the availability of clean water, and other matters of crucial concern.

In addition to promoting freedom of information, the Open Society Foundations have spearheaded efforts to get governments to make their budgets public and to disclose the revenue they receive from the extraction of natural resources and the uses that are made of that revenue. Large parts of the population of many resource-rich countries are impoverished at the same time that their governments divert revenues for corrupt purposes. The campaign that the Open Society Foundations have supported to secure transparency for these revenues has gathered momentum, however, and is playing an important role in many countries with high rates of poverty despite great natural resource wealth.

## **Mitigating Consequences of Conflict**

Another area where the Foundations have had a considerable impact is in mitigating the consequences of armed conflict. With a few exceptions, we have left it to others to support efforts to try to prevent military conflicts. Yet when they do occur, the Open Society Foundations have been a main source of support for activities to document

violations of the laws of war and hold accountable those responsible. More recently, we have supported the payment of compensation to the families of civilian victims of conflict and we have interceded directly with military leaders to try to limit civilian casualties. Our women's program in recent years has focused on efforts to reduce sexual violence in armed conflicts and in postconflict situations. Some of our work on budget transparency issues has addressed the problem of corruption and the misuse of funds in postconflict reconstruction projects. The Open Society Justice Initiative is bringing court cases against corporations that have sought to profit from conflict by engaging in the war crime of pillage.

## **Legal Assistance to the Poor**

A long-time priority for the Open Society Foundations has been legal assistance to the poor. We have supported programs to provide lawyers for defendants in criminal cases in such countries as Lithuania, Ukraine, Mexico, and Nigeria. We have also been a main supporter of grantees addressing the issue in such countries as China, Brazil, Nepal, and Afghanistan. We have developed clinical legal education in all parts of the world, which often is a way to provide legal assistance to the poor. In a country such as Sierra Leone, where there are hardly any lawyers outside the capital, we have established a program for paralegals to assist the poor both in criminal and civil matters. More recently, we have embarked on substantial additional efforts in support of legal empowerment of the poor, where the focus is on representation in civil matters.

## **Protecting Rights of Minorities**

From the start a strong emphasis of the Open Society Foundations was protecting the rights and promoting opportunities for members of minorities facing discrimination. We have placed top priority on efforts on behalf of the Roma minority in Eastern Europe dealing with education, health care, community organization, cultural development, and legal assistance. We have also worked in that region with people with mental disabilities. More recently, we have undertaken programs on behalf of the physically disabled. We have supported programs concerned with equal opportunities for racial minorities and in behalf of the rights of women in many countries. We have also addressed abusive practices against marginalized groups such as drug users, sexual minorities, and people living with HIV.

## Supporting Global Institutions

A significant aspect of the work of the Open Society Foundations during the past decade has been support for the development and operation of global institutions to deal with key public policy issues that must be addressed on a transnational basis. Three such institutions that were all established in 2002 are the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the International Criminal Court, and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Each has already made a major contribution. We also supported the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Council, though it has been a great disappointment since many of the countries chosen to serve as members have themselves committed severe human rights abuses. But we have not abandoned the struggle to improve the performance of the council. Going forward, it is also evident that a new global body will be required to deal with climate change, and we hope to play a part in creating and shaping it.

These are, of course, only a few highlights of our work. The following timeline and quotes from George Soros set forth some more highlights. They add up to a record in which we take great pride. I believe the Open Society Foundations are serving the purpose for which we are named. We are contributing to the development of more open societies.

ARYEH NEIER

*President*

*Open Society Foundations*

# OPEN SOCIETY

In my philosophy, open society is based on the recognition that we all act on the basis of imperfect understanding. Nobody is in possession of the ultimate truth. Therefore, we need a critical mode of thinking. We need institutions and rules that allow people with different opinions and interests to live together in peace. We need a democratic form of government that ensures the orderly transfer of power. We need a market economy that provides feedback and allows mistakes to be corrected. We need to protect minorities and respect minority opinions. Above all, we need the rule of law. Ideologies like fascism or communism give rise to a closed society in which the individual is subjugated to the collective, society is dominated by the state, and the state is in the service of a dogma that claims to embody the ultimate truth. In such a society, there is no freedom.

— GEORGE SOROS

# TIMELINE

1979

## Starting to build an open world

George Soros begins his philanthropy. His great success as a hedge fund manager allows him to support scholarships for black students at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. "I hoped to play a small role in helping to build a black elite," he says later. "I still think the creation of elites among persecuted people is the most effective way to overcome prejudice." He also gives scholarships to Eastern European dissidents to study abroad and support for dissident organizations such as Poland's Solidarity and Charta 77 activists in Czechoslovakia. His ambition is to establish open societies in place of authoritarian forms of government. "Open society is based on the recognition that our understanding of the world is inherently imperfect," Soros says. "What is imperfect can be improved."

Police with dogs push back demonstrators. Guguletu Township, South Africa, 1976. © Associated Press







1984

## Opening up information behind the Iron Curtain

Soros establishes his first non-U.S. foundation in Hungary. His signature move is to distribute photocopiers to universities, libraries, and civil society groups, breaking the communist party's grip over information. The new machines open the floodgates of dissent. In the coming years, Soros's Open Society Foundations expand people's access to information with support for independent media and Internet connectivity in Eastern Europe, Russia, and elsewhere.

Protest for more democracy and free elections. Budapest, Hungary, 1989. © Udo Weitz | Associated Press



1986

## Persevering in attempts to work in China

China becomes the site for Soros's second foundation outside the United States. The government's secret police infiltrate the foundation's activities, and the foundation closes in 1989, the same year as the government's brutal crushing of dissent in Tiananmen Square. In the early 2000s, the Open Society Foundations begin again in China with support for public defender services, fellowships for journalists, and advocacy for HIV and AIDS programs.

Students protest on Tiananmen Square. Beijing, China, 1989.  
© Stuart Franklin | Magnum Photos

# HUNGARY

My foundation in Hungary acted as a sponsor of civil society. The formula was simple: Any activity or association not under the supervision or control of the authorities created alternatives and thereby weakened the monopoly of dogma. One of our first projects was to offer photocopying machines to cultural and scientific institutions in exchange for Hungarian forints. We needed forints in order to give out local grants, but the photocopying machines also did a lot of good. The project was a perfect way to undermine communist party control of information. We carefully balanced projects that would annoy the ideologues in the party with other projects that they couldn't help but approve. We engaged in patriotic cultural programs and widely beneficial social programs to offset the distribution of copying machines. The foundation enabled people who were not dissidents to act, in effect, like dissidents. That was the most fantastic, marvelous time.

— GEORGE SOROS



1989

## Contributing to the collapse of communism

By the fall of the Berlin Wall, Soros has established two more foundations, in Poland and Russia. As communism collapses in country after country, Soros moves quickly to seize the revolutionary moment and foster open society throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Over the next five years, Open Society foundations are created in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, the Baltic states, Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine. “The collapse of a closed society does not automatically lead to the creation of an open society,” Soros says. “Freedom is not merely the absence of repression.”

Breaking through the Berlin Wall. East Germany, 1989.  
© Lionel Cironneau | Associated Press

1991

## Teaching future leaders open society values

To help train a new generation of political and economic leaders, Soros founds the Central European University as a center of research and policy analysis that promotes the principles of open, democratic societies. By 2010, CEU, with an endowment of about \$800 million, has educated well over 5,000 students from all over the world, mostly on full scholarships. The Open Society Foundations pursue the reform of higher education across Eastern Europe and beyond, advancing progressive humanities and social sciences teaching through support for new programs and departments as well as fellowships. Support for education programs, from early childhood to university, accounts for as much as half of the Foundations’ annual program expenditures.

1993

## Helping Sarajevo and South Eastern Europe survive

With Sarajevo under siege, the Open Society Foundations send disaster relief specialist Fred Cuny into the city to help restore vital services. Cuny and his construction crews brave sniper fire and artillery shells to connect residents to gas lines, electricity, and drinking water. The Foundations provide tens of millions of dollars for humanitarian aid and relief efforts during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two years later the Bosnia foundation's executive director writes: "Conditions are still far from normal, but to be able to work without grenades and snipers, with almost regular supplies of energy, and with the ability to move around free of checkpoints is something of a dream." From 1994 through 2009, the Open Society Foundations spend \$330 million in the countries of the former Yugoslavia to promote peace and tolerance, the rule of law, independent media, human rights, and democratic values.

RIGHT Bicycle of boy killed by Serb mortar round. Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1993/4. © Annie Leibovitz | Contact Press Images

BOTTOM Collecting water in besieged Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1993. © Beka Vuco | Open Society Foundations









1993

## Creating the Open Society Institute

George Soros establishes the Open Society Institute to support and oversee his foundations network and promote the development of open societies around the world. Aryeh Neier joins as president after heading Human Rights Watch and the American Civil Liberties Union. He brings an expertise in human rights, a drive to fight for justice, and experience running large, widespread organizations. Neier takes on the leadership of an expanding network of foundations whose expenditures by 1994 top \$300 million, compared to less than \$3 million in 1985. Years later Neier says the Open Society Foundations are an important part of his life's work because there is no other organization through which he has had a greater capacity to address issues that matter to him. During this expansion, the Foundations become known for their ability to respond rapidly with innovative programs to changing conditions.

1993

## Nurturing democracy in postapartheid South Africa

The Open Society Foundations in South Africa focus on the challenge of helping reform a society that for decades excluded the majority of its people from the rights and opportunities enjoyed by the white ruling class. The reform efforts include support for a truth and reconciliation commission that contributes to the low incidence of violence during the transition to black majority rule. The Foundations spend over \$100 million over the next 15 years to support reconciliation, law reform, education, public health, and independent media.

Presidential election campaign rally for Nelson Mandela. South Africa, 1994. © David Brauchli | Associated Press



1994

## Changing America's views on death and drugs

The Open Society Foundations Project on Death in America begins its work to improve care of the terminally ill and change the way people in the United States view death and dying. When the project ends nine years and \$45 million later, its faculty scholars have trained thousands of doctors, palliative care programs exist in more than 50 percent of the nation's teaching hospitals, and people no longer consider dying a taboo subject. A second program in the United States promotes harm reduction approaches to drug use and opposition to the ineffective U.S. war on drugs. Over the years, the Open Society Foundations efforts on palliative care and harm reduction expand to countries around the world.

An Easter picnic at the graves of relatives. Spring Valley, New York, 1997. © Bastienne Schmidt for the Open Society Foundations

# DEATH AND DRUGS

The denial of death in the United States makes dying more painful than it needs to be. That was the origin of the Project on Death in America, one of our most successful projects because it helped establish palliative care as an important medical protocol. Another issue was closely related. Drug addiction is a problem in society, but dealing with it, through the war on drugs, made the problem much worse. It is an area where America as an open society was at its most intolerant. And it is a problem that people don't dare touch. I am in a privileged position where I can actually afford to touch it. I took it on to encourage critical thinking about the issue. These two issues, drugs and death, were actually more connected than I thought: The severe restrictions on prescribing narcotics contributed to the lack of palliative care for dying patients in America.

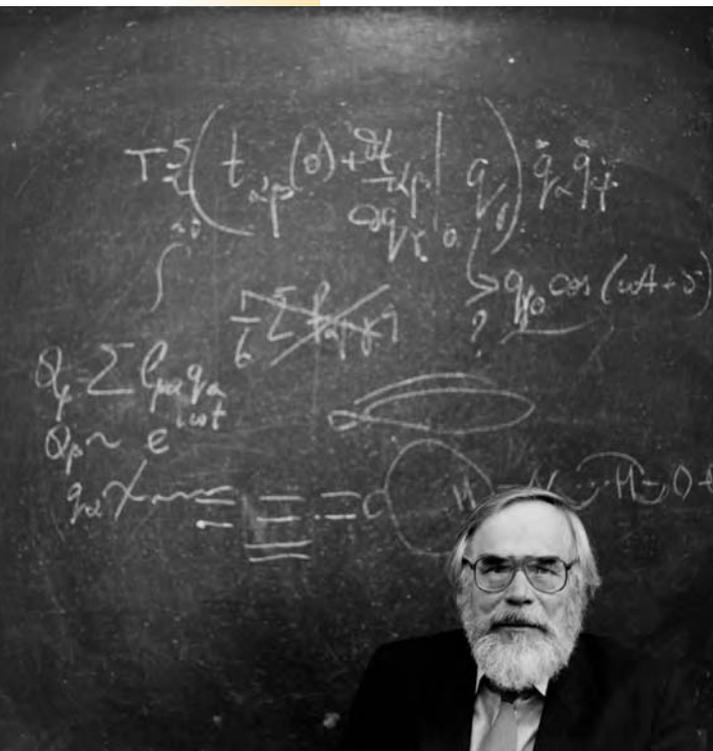
— GEORGE SOROS

1994

## Joining the long struggle for democracy in Burma

The Open Society Foundations' Burma Project begins its work increasing international awareness of the repressive military regime in Burma and assisting Burmese refugees and dissidents abroad and in border areas. The junta, however, remains in power and for much of the next 15 years Aung San Suu Kyi, whose party won free elections in 1990, is under house arrest. Bringing democracy to Burma is a long-term goal the Open Society Foundations continue to pursue with patient persistence.

Aung San Suu Kyi addresses crowd outside her home. Rangoon, Burma, 2003. © Nic Dunlop | Panos Pictures



1994

## Keeping former Soviet scientists at home

The Open Society Foundations dispense \$100 million over 1994 and 1995 in an effort to keep the former Soviet Union's outstanding (and often progressive) science establishment intact after the collapse of communism. Stipends to more than 26,000 scientists help prevent them from quitting science or leaving to practice elsewhere. More than \$100 million goes to professors, teachers, and students in the next five years for excellence in science education in Russia, Georgia, and Ukraine.

Science teacher in classroom. Russia, 1995. © James Hill | Contact Press Images



1995

## Housing the poor in South Africa

To help the fledgling majority-black government, the Open Society Foundations decide to support the building of low-cost housing for the three million and more people living in makeshift shacks and overcrowded city dwellings. With the government as a partner, Soros makes \$50 million available to guarantee loans for construction. A new organization, Nurcha, runs the program. Fifteen years later, Nurcha has helped contractors build over 250,000 homes, housing more than a million people. It has provided loans for roads, drainage, clinics, schools, libraries. Eighty-five percent of its clients are black-owned companies.

TOP Nurcha housing development in Northern Province, South Africa, 2000. BOTTOM Settling into a newly built home. Keiskammahoek, South Africa, 2000. © Siphwe Sibeko for the Open Society Foundations





1996

## Bringing the open society mission home to the USA

The Open Society Foundations establish U.S. Programs to address threats to open society in the United States. Earlier efforts focused on improving end-of-life care and reforming drug policies. New programs include major efforts to change the fiercely punitive criminal justice system: after-prison initiatives, sentencing reform, death penalty abolition, and eliminating the system's racial disparities. The Foundations begin challenging harsh immigration laws and practices, supporting groups working to protect the rights of immigrants and assist them in gaining U.S. citizenship. By 2010, U.S. Programs has spent over \$1 billion to fix the flaws that exist in America's open society.

An 11-year-old arrested for shoplifting and sent to a detention facility. Laredo, Texas, 2003. © Steve Liss

1996

## Supporting media through social investment

After years of providing direct support to independent media, the Open Society Foundations recognize the need to build sustainable media businesses by helping establish the Media Development Loan Fund. The investment fund provides low-cost capital and technical know-how to independent news outlets in countries with a history of media oppression. By 2009, over 35 million people in developing democracies get their news from 36 fund clients. One client, Radio 68H in Indonesia, has expanded its reach via satellite and the Internet to cover more than 650 radio stations and 10 countries, and, after the tsunami in 2004, provided a critical service, rebuilding radio stations, airing updates on relief operations, and running a missing persons bulletin.



1996

## Keeping Liberty's flame burning for U.S. immigrants

After welfare reform cuts off millions of immigrants from benefits, the Open Society Foundations establish the Emma Lazarus Fund with \$50 million in funding to assist the naturalization process for eligible immigrants and support advocacy to show the unfairness of the welfare cuts. By the end of 1999, the Foundations have distributed support to organizations that helped more than 500,000 immigrants negotiate the naturalization process and brought the restoration of Supplemental Security Income and food stamps for the most eligible immigrants.

TOP Riding a freight train from Mexico to look for work in the United States. Mexico, 2000. © Don Bartletti | Los Angeles Times

BOTTOM San Francisco, 1996. © Gigi Cohen



1997

## Expanding open society work in Africa and Central Asia

Regional initiatives for Southern Africa and later East and West Africa increase the Open Society Foundations' presence in Africa, supporting activities from legal and economic reform to human rights and sharing a common goal of reducing poverty, HIV and AIDS, and political instability. In Central Asia, first in Uzbekistan and Mongolia and later Tajikistan, the Foundations bring attention to priority issues such as protecting the rights of migrants and ending violence against women.

A farewell to friends and families from migrant workers bound for Russia. Tajikistan, 2005. © Karen Robinson | Panos Pictures





1997

## Beginning the struggle against TB in Russia's prisons

By the mid-1990s, Russia's overcrowded, squalid prisons hold about a million people, 100,000 of whom have active, infectious tuberculosis. The Open Society Foundations, seeking access to reform the criminal justice system that abuses human rights and fuels the epidemic, offers to help eradicate TB among Russia's inmates and guards. The Foundations donate \$12.3 million for a program to treat tuberculosis in the prisons, only to find that many of the TB cases are resistant to ordinary treatment protocols. The experience in Russia leads the Open Society Foundations to push for the development of a global plan to stop TB. By 2005, the first declines in the incidence of TB are recorded, but the number of multidrug-resistant TB cases increases.

Hospital ward in Russian prison. Rostov na Donau, Russia, 1998.  
© John Ranard

# TUBERCULOSIS

We got involved in fighting tuberculosis because we wanted to get access to the prison system in Russia, and TB was particularly rampant in the prisons. The prison authorities were very receptive to our help because the guards, not just the inmates, were contracting TB. Our involvement was meant to eliminate or mitigate the tuberculosis threat and open up the prison system to reform. Then we ran into the unexpected difficulty of multidrug-resistant TB, which required a new treatment protocol. A program that was expected to cost a little over \$10 million would now require several hundred million dollars, which was beyond our resources, so we had to get the major global institutions, particularly the World Bank and the WHO, involved. Eventually, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was formed. AIDS got tremendous attention, malaria had its own champions, and we became champions of the fight against TB.

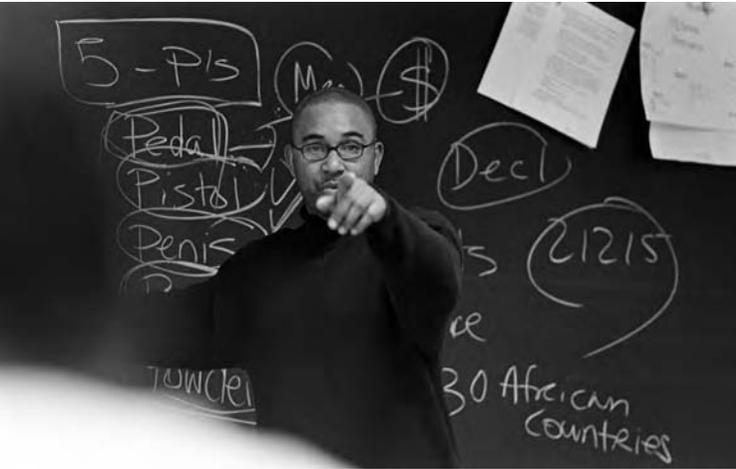
— GEORGE SOROS

1998

## Focusing on Baltimore to treat society's ills

The Open Society Foundations select Baltimore as the U.S. city where by 2010 they will invest more than \$60 million to address the most difficult urban social problems. The Foundations support projects that help boost reading and math test scores for public school students, expand after-school programs to more than 14,000 students, double the number of people receiving drug treatment and reduce the number of fatal overdoses, and increase the state's parole grant rate to over 40 percent. With its comprehensive approach to the root causes of poverty and injustice, the Open Society Foundations become one of the city's most visible and effective civil society groups.

TOP Violence prevention class for elementary and high school students.  
BOTTOM An after-school program filmmaking class. Baltimore, Maryland, USA, 2003. © Open Society Foundations, photographs by Joe Rubino



1998

## Keeping children busy and safe after school

The growing problem of children who are left to fend for themselves after school until their working parents return home prompts the Open Society Foundations to create The After-School Corporation (TASC) in New York City with an initial five-year \$125 million challenge grant. TASC partners with city agencies and local groups to promote sustainable universal after-school programs that increase children's chances of succeeding in school. In its first decade, TASC supports more than 150 community organizations working in 325 public schools, helps more than 300,000 children, and raises four dollars for every one contributed by the Open Society Foundations.



1999

## Promoting early childhood education and debate

The International Step by Step Program and the International Debate Education Association, with continuing support from the Open Society Foundations, are established as independent organizations to advance early childhood education and school debate activities, increasing a child's chances of success in school. Over 50,000 teachers and more than one million students have participated in Step by Step programs with some 100,000 students and more than 16,000 teachers in debate programs. Many of the students come from disadvantaged, minority communities. Urban debate programs are also a priority in the United States.

New York Urban Debate League awards ceremony. New York City, New York, USA, 1998. © Gigi Cohen



2001

## Fighting post-9/11 hostility toward Muslims

The terror attacks of September 11, 2001, bring a new wave of hostility and violence toward immigrants in the United States, especially members of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities. The Open Society Foundations spend the decade supporting efforts to protect their rights in court. In Europe, the Foundations report on Muslims living in 11 cities, showing how much residents feel a part of their communities despite the prejudice and discrimination they often face in employment and education.

TOP Going to Friday prayers.

BOTTOM Eid prayers. Queens, New York City, USA, 1995. © Ed Grazda



## Opening the books on natural resource revenues

To curb corruption and ensure that citizens benefit from their nation's natural wealth, the Open Society Foundations, inspired by the work of a few grantees, launch the Caspian Revenue Watch project. Five years later, the Foundations establish the Revenue Watch Institute to promote international efforts calling for the disclosure of payments that oil, gas, and mining companies make to governments, and to help citizens become effective monitors of government revenues and expenditures. Support for the Publish What You Pay coalition and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative contributes to a global movement for revenue and budget transparency in resource-rich countries.

Oil fields in Baku, Azerbaijan, 1996. © Jason Eskenazi

2001

## Partnering with Tifa to promote democracy in Indonesia

The Open Society Foundations join Indonesian civil society to establish the Tifa Foundation to address the country's problems, most notably the corruption that threatens every major institution. The Tifa Foundation develops anticorruption programs, monitors elections, coordinates NGO strategies to keep the military out of politics, and creates a coalition of migrant worker organizations. Toward the end of the decade, the Open Society Foundations increase their activities in Asia with the establishment of offices in Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight extremism and address the fallout from the war on terror.



# NATURAL RESOURCES

All over the world, countries with abundant natural resources remain poor. The ordinary people in these countries are mired in poverty while corrupt officials prosper. Money that could be used to reduce poverty and jump-start economic growth is stolen instead. Multinational corporations involved in extraction industries argue that the misappropriation of state revenues is beyond their control. Nevertheless, it is in the enlightened self-interest of these companies to ensure that their payments are not misappropriated. These payments should be made public. I am not talking about releasing commercially confidential data, but simply the basic figures—the taxes, fees, royalties and other payments—that companies are already required to disclose in many developed countries. If natural resource companies are to be good corporate citizens in this age of globalization, they have a responsibility to disclose these payments so the people of the countries can hold their governments to account.

— GEORGE SOROS

2002

## Prosecuting crimes against humanity

The establishment of the International Criminal Court, long supported by the Open Society Foundations, becomes a reality with more than 85 countries—but not the United States—ratifying the ICC to create the first permanent institution responsible for prosecuting genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

The Open Society Justice Initiative assists and promotes efforts to try leaders for war crimes in tribunals for Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Cambodia as well as at the ICC.

The Justice Initiative creates special websites to report on the proceedings at The Hague of the ICC's first trial, against Thomas Lubanga, a former rebel leader in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone's prosecution of the former Liberian president Charles Taylor. The websites let people in the affected countries follow the progress of the trials.

Child soldier biking back to base camp. Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2003. © Marcus Bleasdale | VII





2004

## Celebrating the expansion of the European Union

Eight Eastern European countries that the Open Society Foundations helped transform into democracies—the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia—are accepted into the European Union. Two more, Romania and Bulgaria, join in 2007. The Open Society Foundations and the lure of EU membership helped transform these once closed societies into open societies, advancing human rights, liberalizing economic policies, increasing government accountability, and invigorating civil society. Other countries where the Open Society Foundations work wait to achieve EU candidacy status and admission.

Watching a parade marking Poland's entry into the European Union. Slubice, Poland, 2004. © Sven Kaestner | Associated Press

## Closing the Uzbekistan foundation under government pressure

The Uzbek government shuts down the foundation by revoking its registration. The foundation's reform efforts, from governance to law to education to information technology, ran afoul of a repressive government that wanted to control all NGO activities. Earlier, in 1997, the Belarus foundation was similarly forced to close, falsely accused by officials of supporting opposition political parties. Over the years authoritarian regimes have attacked the Open Society Foundations for activities promoting human rights and access to information. Working without offices in Uzbekistan and Belarus, the Foundations continue to support civil society, including independent media, in both countries.

2004

2005

## Launching the Decade of Roma inclusion

To improve the lives and advance the human rights of the Roma, Europe's largest and most marginalized ethnic minority, the Open Society Foundations and the World Bank launch the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005–2015, with the participation of eight Eastern European governments. The Foundations are a leading supporter of Roma rights advocacy organizations and initiatives. Since the early 1990s, the Open Society Foundations have provided support for an unprecedented effort to combat discrimination against the Roma, halt their exclusion from society, and break the cycle of poverty that has entrapped them.

A Roma elder describes community struggles to candidates for Roma health scholarships offered by the Foundations. Romania, 2008.  
© Open Society Foundations/Pamela Chen





2006

## Reducing harm from drug use

At the XVI International AIDS Conference, the Open Society Foundations continue raising the profile of key issues—such as harm reduction measures for drug users and sex worker health and rights—that are often neglected in HIV and AIDS policy discourse. To curb the spread of HIV and other infections among injecting drug users, the Foundations promote human rights and health services, leading a global movement in support of needle exchange, substitution therapy, and demand reduction.

Needle exchange van. St. Petersburg, Russia, 2007. © Lorena Ros for the Open Society Foundations





2006

## **Bolstering Europe's leadership as an open society**

The Open Society Foundations create the European Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank and advocacy organization, to strengthen the role of the European Union in promoting open society values within its borders and on the world stage. The Foundations recognize the need for Europe to fill the leadership vacuum resulting from the tarnishing of the United States' reputation as an open society and champion of human rights.

2006

## **Recognizing the right to information**

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights becomes the first international tribunal to recognize access to government-held information as a basic human right. The eight-year-old case, in which the Open Society Foundations filed an amicus brief, involved the Chilean government's refusal to provide information about the environmental record of a U.S. logging company. The work of the Foundations helps bring the total of countries with freedom of information laws to more than 80 by 2010.

2007

## **Fighting multidrug-resistant TB in Africa**

In Lesotho, a small southern African country, at least 25 percent of the people are HIV-positive, and TB has infected about 90 percent of them, lowering life expectancy to 35 years. The Open Society Foundations award a \$3 million grant to Partners In Health to help health care workers in Lesotho more effectively treat people infected with multidrug-resistant TB, a growing danger for people who are HIV-positive. The Lesotho work results in the release of new guidelines for the treatment of multidrug-resistant TB and the training of medical professionals from Ethiopia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Tanzania.

Preparing an injection for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. Lesotho, 2007. © Open Society Foundations/photograph by Pep Bonet

# ROMA

I have witnessed the sub-human living conditions that many Roma families are forced to endure. Since establishing my first foundation in Eastern Europe, we have sought to protect the human rights of the Roma, and enable them to participate in society on equal terms. Our main focus has been education. There is now a growing number of well-educated young Roma who are proud of being Roma and are willing and able to argue their own case. I consider this a major breakthrough because it breaks the prevailing stereotype about the Roma as uneducated and dangerous “gypsies.” In a Europe of falling birthrates, the Roma are one of the few fast-growing groups. The well-being of the Roma children who will be the European workforce of the future is therefore not just a question of human rights, but economic necessity.

— GEORGE SOROS



2007

## Litigating to end school segregation of Roma

In a landmark decision, the European Court of Human Rights rules that segregating Roma students into special schools violates fundamental human rights. The decision, which involved Czech schools, ended an eight-year legal case brought by the European Roma Rights Center, an Open Society Foundations' grantee, and argued by James Goldston, director of the Open Society Justice Initiative. The center's research showed that over half of Roma children were shunted into schools for children with learning disabilities. Two years later, the Open Society Foundations charge that the Czech government is not doing enough to comply with the court's ruling and end Roma school segregation.

Girls studying at a school for Roma children. Skopje, Macedonia, 1999.  
© Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert for the Open Society Foundations

## Monitoring military actions in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, the Open Society Foundations focus on a range of issues, including establishing an independent bar association and exposing the consequences of war on civilians. Foundations reports describe the erosion of Afghan confidence in international forces due to civilian casualties, abuses that occur during night raids, wrongful and inhumane detention operations, and the lack of accountability for these actions.

Taliban leader Mullah Omar's abandoned home. Kandahar, Afghanistan, 2001. © Gilles Peress | Magnum Photos

2008

## Securing fair treatment for U.S. detainees

The U.S. Supreme Court rules that foreign nationals held as “unlawful enemy combatants” at Guantánamo have a constitutional right to petition U.S. courts for release because their detention is unlawful. The Open Society Foundations joined an amicus brief with grantees who had worked on the effort for six years. The previous year, in another case brought by grantees, a federal district court judge upheld a nationwide injunction requiring the U.S. government to treat detained asylum seekers fairly. The government’s harsh detention practices were one reason for a decline in the international reputation of the United States.



## Advancing the rights of people with mental disabilities

The governments of Macedonia and Moldova take significant steps to end the exclusion of people with mental disabilities. In partnership with the Open Society Foundations, the Macedonian government agrees to move residents from a large institution marked by poor conditions and human rights violations into supported housing services. The Open Society Foundations and other NGOs sign an agreement with the Moldovan government to establish community-based services for children with mental disabilities. The Foundations are the leading supporter of programs for the benefit of people with mental disabilities, including efforts to promote educational and employment opportunities.

Couple who now live in their community after decades in an institution for the mentally disabled. Croatia, 2006. © Open Society Foundations, photograph by Damir Fabijanic

2008



## Supporting development in postconflict Sierra Leone and Liberia

BRAC, one of the world's largest antipoverty groups, receives \$15 million from the Open Society Foundations and other funders to rebuild war-torn Sierra Leone and Liberia. Microfinance, health, and agricultural programs are expected to help over 500,000 people. The Open Society Foundations are also working with the government in Liberia to improve education. Helping countries emerging from conflict is an important priority.

Using microcredit to build a business and support a family. Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2010. © Aubrey Wade/Panos Pictures for the Open Society Foundations

2009



2009

## Creating a mobile court for gender crimes in Congo

In response to the rape of thousands of women by soldiers during conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Open Society Foundations establish a mobile court for gender crimes that will travel to remote, war-torn regions bringing justice to women. In its first six months of operation, the mobile court hears the cases of 68 people charged with gender-based violence, convicting 51 to sentences ranging from three to 20 years. For the first time, victims and their families have access to justice.

Defense counsel, defendant, and mother of three-year-old victim appear before judge in mobile court for gender crimes. Idjwi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2010. © Antonin Kratochvil/VII for the Open Society Foundations





## Alleviating suffering caused by the global economic crisis

George Soros and the Open Society Foundations commit hundreds of millions of dollars to help nonprofits and people hardest hit by the global economic downturn. Twenty countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are to receive \$100 million over two years. In the United States, Soros begins a fund for poverty alleviation that by February 2011 spends nearly \$155 million, including \$50 million for the Robin Hood Foundation in New York City and \$35 million for the state's children on public assistance for back-to-school supplies. In 2010, the Foundations also help nonprofits weather budget shortfalls with \$11 million for New York City arts organizations and \$5.5 million to three groups working to strengthen communities and spur economic growth.

Homeless woman collecting discarded cans for cash. New York City, 2009. © Andrea Star Reese

2009

2010

## Funding civil society's response to flooding in Pakistan

In response to the devastation and human suffering caused by the flooding in Pakistan, the Open Society Foundations contribute \$5 million for emergency provisions like food, clean water, tents and shelter, medicine and medical supplies. The Open Society foundation in Pakistan also hopes to support reconstruction projects such as restoring roads and bridges, repairing the electricity infrastructure, and rebuilding homes. Since 2004, the Foundations have spent several million dollars to bolster civil society in the country by supporting education, media, and the reconstruction campaign after the 2005 earthquake.



2010

## Helping Haiti recover from a devastating earthquake

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the Open Society Foundations donate \$5 million to five organizations doing life-saving work in the country. FOKAL, the Open Society foundation in Haiti, mobilizes to help their community and country. Michèle Pierre-Louis, FOKAL's former director and the country's prime minister until November 2009, is appointed the Open Society Foundations' director of reconstruction in Haiti. The Soros Economic Development Fund and the Haiti-based WIN Group partner in the development of a \$45 million industrial park that is expected to create 25,000 jobs. Since 1995, the Open Society Foundations have spent about \$50 million to support early childhood education, public libraries, community water programs, small businesses and agricultural cooperatives, and urban revitalization in Port-au-Prince.

Displaced Haitians living in Parc Martissant after the January 2010 earthquake devastated much of Port-au-Prince. © Ron Haviv/VII for the Open Society Foundations

## HAITI

I first went to Haiti almost 40 years ago. I went back once or twice to visit our foundation there, and I went with Hillary Clinton when she visited Haiti in the mid-1990s. Each time the country had deteriorated further. The last time I went was when Michèle Pierre-Louis was prime minister and hurricanes had struck the island. We flew in a helicopter to observe the damage and saw the most fertile land under water as a result of flooding caused by the hurricanes. I thought you can't go any further in terms of destruction, and then, in early 2010, came the earthquake. It is just incredible how conditions can keep deteriorating. We continue to work in Haiti because of the people who are devoting their lives—and also risking and sometimes losing their lives—to improving conditions. As long as they see some hope, I can't abandon them.

— GEORGE SOROS





2010

## Challenging Human Rights Watch with a \$100 million grant

The Open Society Foundations announce a challenge grant of \$100 million over 10 years to Human Rights Watch to expand its global presence and enhance the protection and promotion of human rights around the world. The grant plus matching funds from other contributors will allow Human Rights Watch to establish advocacy offices in key regional capitals and to strengthen research on countries of concern. “Human Rights Watch is one of the most effective organizations I support,” Soros says. “Human rights underpin our greatest aspirations: they are at the heart of open societies.”

Chadian girls walk through sandstorm near refugee camp. Bahai, Chad, 2004. © Lynsey Addario

**OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS**

# PRIORITIES

**Health** Throughout the world, people who face stigma and discrimination are often left with substandard or no health care. The Open Society Foundations work to establish health policies and practices that are based on evidence and promote social inclusion, human rights, and justice.

**Justice** The Open Society Foundations strengthen justice by supporting international tribunals, advocating on behalf of stateless people, and helping to institute national legal reforms that ensure freedom of information, promote sentencing alternatives, and protect the rights of criminal defendants.

**Media & Arts** A free, independent press and a dynamic arts sector are vital to any democracy, ensuring government accountability and a diversity of viewpoints. The Open Society Foundations support public access to knowledge, inclusion of minority voices in media, and the artistic expression of pressing social issues.

**Governance & Accountability** A cornerstone of an open society is a government accountable to its citizens that helps to ensure fairness, economic equality, and civic participation. The Open Society Foundations work with governments and businesses to advance transparency, rule of law, and good governance.

**Rights & Equality** The Open Society Foundations advance human rights and equality in law, governance, and society through programs that emphasize the rights of minorities and raise public awareness of issues such as gender violence and the treatment of people with disabilities.

**Education & Youth** The Open Society Foundations' early childhood programs advance a holistic approach to teaching while its advocacy and debate initiatives strive to ensure that young people of different backgrounds have equal access to education and individual expression.



George Soros's philanthropic activities, as well as his investment strategies, are guided by his conceptual framework, in particular concepts of fallibility and reflexivity, and his emphasis on the role of misconceptions in shaping history. Soros has written extensively about his philosophy and how it applies to open society. Two of his recent books provide more information: *The Soros Lectures at the Central European University* ([www.soros.org/resources/multimedia/sorosceu\\_20091112](http://www.soros.org/resources/multimedia/sorosceu_20091112)) and *The Philanthropy of George Soros*. Both are published by PublicAffairs ([www.publicaffairs.com](http://www.publicaffairs.com)). For more information on George Soros and his philanthropy, see [www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org).

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