

THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS AND GEORGE SOROS

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Open Society Foundations were founded by George Soros, one of the world's foremost philanthropists, who has given away over \$32 billion of a personal fortune made in the financial markets.

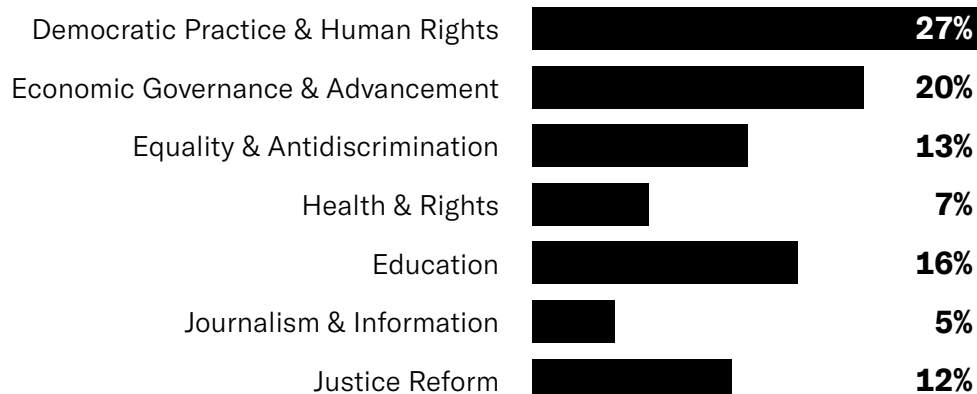
Open Society has supported individuals and organizations across the globe fighting for freedom of expression, transparency, accountable government, and for societies that promote justice and equality. This giving has often focused on those who face discrimination purely for who they are, such as Europe's Roma people, and others pushed to the margins of mainstream society.

Soros has experienced such intolerance first-hand. Born in Hungary in 1930, he lived through the Nazi occupation, which resulted in the murder of over 500,000 Hungarian Jews. In 1947, as the Communists took power, Soros left Budapest for London and then emigrated to the United States, entering the world of finance and investments where he made his fortune.

Soros began his philanthropy in 1979, giving scholarships to black South Africans living under apartheid. In the 1980s, he helped promote the open exchange of ideas in Communist Hungary; after the fall of the Berlin Wall, he sought to strengthen democratic practice and institutions across Eastern and Central Europe.

With the Cold War over, he extended his philanthropy to the United States, and to Africa, Asia, and Latin America, supporting a vast array of new efforts to create more accountable, transparent, and democratic societies.

2019 BUDGET BY SECTOR



Total Budget for 2019:

\$1.08B

Total Expenditure
since 1982:

\$15.2B

9 FACTS ABOUT OPEN SOCIETY AND GEORGE SOROS

- 1** The Foundations today include more than 20 national and regional foundations, each with its own local advisory board; these board members oversee the work and shape funding priorities to meet local needs.
- 2** The first foundation outside the United States was established in Hungary in 1984, and the newest opened in Myanmar in 2016.
- 3** Open Society provides no more than 33 percent of the funding to the vast majority of the organizations we work with. This ensures that they maintain their autonomy and establish a sound financial basis for their operations.
- 4** With an endowment of some \$18 billion, the Foundations are the world's third largest philanthropic fund, after the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the United Kingdom's Wellcome Trust.
- 5** Open Society has been the largest private funder of efforts to support Europe's Roma minority.
- 6** Beginning in 1993, we provided tens of millions of dollars for humanitarian aid and relief efforts during the wars in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, especially in the besieged city of Sarajevo.
- 7** We have been working in the United States since 1996. Our U.S. work accounts for just under 20 percent of our funding, which includes supporting reform of the criminal justice system and drug laws, strengthening democratic participation, and supporting humane immigration laws.
- 8** Again and again, Open Society has joined policy debates on controversial issues that other funders might avoid. We are proud to work with people who find themselves being shunned by society simply because of who they are.
- 9** Our name reflects the philosopher Karl Popper's influence on George Soros. In his book, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Popper argues that no philosophy or ideology is the final arbiter of truth, and that societies can only flourish when they allow for democratic governance, freedom of expression, and respect for individual rights.