

THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS AND GEORGE SOROS

October 2023

The Open Society Foundations were founded by George Soros, one of the world's foremost philanthropists, who since 1984 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 societies that promote justice and equality.

Soros has experienced 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 was to make his fortune.

Soros began his international philanthropy in 1979, giving scholarships to Black South Africans living under apartheid. In the 1980s, he worked to promote a more open political climate in Communist Hungary; in the 1990s, he dramatically expanded his support for emerging democracies in Eastern and Central Europe and South Africa; during the Balkan Wars, he funded humanitarian assistance, including for civilians in the besieged Bosnian capital, Sarajevo.

Soros's philanthropy now extends across six geographic regions, supporting a vast array of new efforts to create more accountable, transparent, and democratic societies.

2021 EXPENDITURES

Africa		\$127.4M
Asia Pacific		\$59.9M
Europe and Central Asia		\$209.4M
Latin America and the Caribbean		\$111.2M
Middle East and North Africa		\$43.7M
United States		\$401.4M
Global		\$592.7M

Total 2021 expenditures:

\$1.5B

Total expenditures
to date:

\$19.1B

9 FACTS ABOUT OPEN SOCIETY AND GEORGE SOROS

- 1** The Open Society Foundations have more than \$22 billion in assets, and is one of the world's largest private philanthropic funds.
- 2** Today, Open Society works in the United States and in Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region. Our local knowledge helps shape our priorities.
- 3** Soros opened his first international foundation in Hungary in 1984, funding educational exchanges and other initiatives aimed at promoting free thinking under the country's then Communist rulers.
- 4** Our priorities have evolved with time: from supporting new democracies in the 1990s; to working on access to education and health care, racial justice, drug policy reform, and expanding human rights; and the current challenges of the climate crisis and the rise of new forms of authoritarianism.
- 5** Open Society has been the largest private funder of efforts to support Europe's Roma communities—work that continues through a Roma led foundation in Europe set up with Open Society's support in 2023.
- 6** Tens of thousands of young people around the world have benefited from college and university scholarships launched by Open Society, starting in the former Communist countries of Europe, and beyond; today, the Foundations continue to support higher education through the Open Society University Network.
- 7** Open Society provides no more than 33 percent of the funding to the vast majority of the organizations we work with, in order to ensure they maintain their autonomy and establish a sound financial basis for their operations.
- 8** Open Society has consistently 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 influence on our founder of the philosophy of Karl Popper. In his book *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.