

Libraries in Donor Portfolios: Methodology

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Private Grants

Who we researched

- 50 each of the largest foundations/ private grantmakers worldwide listed on the tab “Research List” (see exclusions below)

Where we sourced information

- For US organizations, we viewed a combination of their published grants databases, other website information, and public disclosure form (IRS Form 990 or 990PF)
- For British organizations, we viewed a combination of their published grants databases, other website information, and their reported info on 360Giving and similar platforms
- In other locations, we viewed information disclosed on their websites

Information we captured

- Grants awarded from 2017 (when available) until today where the funding recipient was a library, another funding institution that was funding a library, or an organization doing something on behalf of or in partnership with libraries (there were a few trends that were questionable, like where museums and libraries come together, and we decided to keep them in after digging into a few of them and assessing their relevance)
- Recipient, recipient location, year of award, amount of funding, funding period (when available), title, description

Information we excluded or removed

- Grants to higher education and university libraries [In our initial research, we limited the scope to public libraries or library funded projects that had a public element to them.]
- Grants for digital-only collections, except for the Digital Public Library of America
- Small matching grants (< \$10,000 USD) that were solely matching gifts (not awarded on merit of a project)
- Individual scholarships, fellowships and residencies, but we included grants that supported the development of these programs or that supported cohorts [For example, we included a 2019 grant from the Alford P. Sloan foundation to the Council on Library and Information Resources that supported a cohort of postdoctoral fellows in data curation for energy economics at three leading energy research centers,

rather than including fellowships to the individuals, as our focus was programmatic rather than scholarship funding.]

- Grants for tool and toy libraries
- We mostly excluded grants to primary schools for libraries, but we left in a batch of UK ones because it was difficult for us to rule out whether there's a public benefit/ use of the libraries

We did not research:

- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (given the sunseting of the Global Libraries Program)
- Organizations that primarily house Donor Advised Funds (a charitable vehicle under US tax code which does not have the same reporting requirements as charitable and philanthropic organizations) - data is not readily available concerning their practices, and so there is little to share
- Community Foundations as their funding is usually local, although we note these may be particularly useful for developing local libraries in some parts of the world. We found more than 4,000 in the US, more than 200 in Canada, and more than 40 in Australia.

How we built the data set

- For each funder, once we discovered projects / funding through a search, we then reviewed the source of the information to validate that the projects met our criteria
- Then we organized the information so that there are common data for each entry as much as possible. For example, not every funder uses project titles, some identify program or focus areas the funding aligns with and others don't or use different language to describe similar things. We've tried to make the information as close to "apples to apples" as we can.
- Then we coded each grant into a "type": General Operating/ Unrestricted, Program/ Project, Collections; Capital/ Building; Event Sponsorship; or Other.
- Finally, we coded to the primary SDG if there was obvious alignment (in almost no case did a private funder identify these as such).

Result:

- The initial data set shows 24 of 50 funders (48%) had evidence of at least one grant meeting our criteria
- 205 total grants were identified (an average of 8.5 per funder that had at least one project)

Development Aid Agencies

What we researched:

- We initially researched 49 national and multilateral government development agencies (listed on Tab "Research List"). A 50th required

additional parsing, as noted on the list, and will be updated when complete.

Where we sourced information:

- First, we prioritized the top 50 agencies where we suspected or had anecdotal information suggesting we might find evidence of library funding.
- We then went to each agency's website, searched for a database of projects, and searched accordingly. Where no database was available, we searched their website using keywords. In some cases, this took us to stories or press releases, and we followed those trails.
- If we could not find information directly on an agency's website, we conducted a Google search of the development agency's name together with key words looking for external evidence, such as a news site or library pages acknowledging an agency.

Information we captured:

- Projects since 2013 (when available) to the present day in which the funding recipient or implementation partner was a library, another funding institution that was funding a library, or an organization doing something on behalf of or in partnership with libraries
- Project year, title, type of funding (e.g. loan, grant, or technical assistance), status, project location, total funding amount (in the currency reported by the funding agency), link and summary if available of project description

Information we excluded or removed:

- Projects that were exclusively related to a private primary or postsecondary school where there was no evidence of general public or community benefit
- Projects that began or concluded before 2013
- We did not yet research the agencies listed on the tab "To Research"

How we built the data set:

- We categorized each project as best we could by SDG, indicating which SDGs the project self-identified as supporting when available, or making our own assumptions when it wasn't available. Unlike in the Private Grant data set, here we indicated all of the SDGs to which the project aligned. The primary reason for this difference is that the SDG framework is well understood by development agencies and already in use as a classification system for projects, whereas private philanthropy (particularly the large US-based foundations that dominate our list) have been slow to align their work to the SDGs.
- We identified as best we could the library's role in the project. In some cases this was clear, in others, we drew conclusions from the best information available.

- Note that agencies categorize projects in many different ways, and they don't all disclose the same data and information. We left a field blank if we couldn't reasonably find or validate the information (such as start or end date)

Result:

- We found clear evidence of funding that included libraries as beneficiaries or implementation partners at 18 of the initial 49 agencies researched (37%)
- We found there was no evidence at 6 of them (12%)
- Of interest, for 25 of the agencies, we found it unclear, either because they don't disclose funding data or because of how the data is searchable. For example, some have Transparency Portals that allow you to view data visualizations by SDG or other types of impact, but we couldn't find sufficient information to confirm they have or have not financed library related development projects. Crowdsourcing information may be especially helpful here.