

# Bill Gates bankrolled select media outlets to the tune of \$319 million, including the UK's Guardian and the BBC - Gript

**Documents have been obtained that suggest that billionaires and green activists, Bill and Melinda Gates, have donated hundreds of millions of dollars to select media outlets worldwide to support the kind of journalism they approve of.**

The documents, obtained by *MintPress News*, **revealed** that a staggering \$319 million (€267 million) has been given to a range of high-profile media outlets from the Gates' Foundation, including **\$12.9 million to the UK's *Guardian*, and \$3.6 million to the UK's national broadcaster, the *BBC*. The *Daily Telegraph* also received \$3.4 million** in direct funding.

Alan MacLeod of *MintPress News*, said that the information was obtained through a review of over 30,000 individual grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's website database. Beneficiaries of sums of money from the Foundation included the UK's *Guardian*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *NBC*, *NPR*, the *Atlantic*, *New York Public Radio*, *PBS*, and others.

In his report published on 22 November, Macleod wrote: "The Gates Foundation money going toward media programs has been split up into a number of sections, presented in descending numerical order, and includes a link to the relevant grant on the organization's website."

The top three awards given directly to media outlets from Mr Gates' foundation include \$24.6 million to *NPR*, \$12.9 million to the U.K.'s *Guardian*, and \$10.8 million to Seattle, Washington-based *Cascade Public Media*, which owns local radio station *KCTS-TV*.

The *Guardian* often asks readers for donations with the claim that it is "fiercely independent" and has "no shareholders or billionaire owner".

Other direct awards were given to the ***BBC*, *CNN*, *Al-Jazeera*, France's *Le Monde*, Germany's *Der Spiegel*, *Education Week*, the *Conversation*, the *Financial Times*, the *Texas Tribune***, among others.

MacLeod states in the report: "The money is generally directed towards issues close to the Gates' hearts. For example, the \$3.6 million CNN grant went towards 'report[ing] on gender equality with a focus on least developed countries, producing journalism on the everyday inequalities endured by women and girls across the world."

He adds the funding means that propaganda may be "disguised as objective reporting," given the Gates' vested interests, writing: "Given that [Gates] is one of [...] charter schools' most fervent supporters, a cynic might interpret this as planting pro-corporate charter school propaganda into the media, disguised as objective reporting."

The report continues: "The Gates Foundation has also given nearly \$63 million to charities closely aligned with big media outlets, including nearly **\$53 million to *BBC Media Action***, over \$9 million to *MTV's Staying Alive Foundation*, and \$1 million to *The New York Times* Neediest Causes Fund."

MacLeod adds: "While not specifically funding journalism, donations to the philanthropic arm of a media player should still be noted."

According to the report, Gates continues to sponsor a wide network of investigative journalism centres as well, totalling just over \$38 million, more than half of which has gone to the

Washington-based International Centre for Journalists, with the direction to expand and develop African media.

The International Center for Journalists topped the list, receiving a staggering \$20.4 million, while the Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (Nigeria) received \$3.8 million, and the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting came in at third on the list, amassing donations of \$2.4 million.

In addition to this, the Gates Foundation “also plies press and journalism associations with cash, to the tune of at least \$12 million,” *MintPress* says. Macleod cites the National Newspaper Publishers Association — a group representing more than 200 outlets — as an example, which has received \$3.2 million from Gates. These organisations include the Education Writers Association (\$5.9 million), the National Newspaper Publishers Association (\$3.2 million), and the National Press Foundation (\$1.9 million), among others.

Bumping up the total further, the foundation also pumps money into the direct training of journalists across the world, through scholarships, courses and workshops.

“Today, it is possible for an individual to train as a reporter thanks to a Gates Foundation grant, find work at a Gates-funded outlet, and to belong to a press association funded by Gates. This is especially true of journalists working in the fields of health, education and global development, the ones Gates himself is most active in and where scrutiny of the billionaire’s actions and motives are most necessary,” MacLeod writes.

In the piece, MacLeod also notes that the list does not include sub-grants, which are monies given by recipients to media across the world:

“While the Gates Foundation fosters an air of openness about itself, there is actually precious little public information about what happens to the money from each grant, save for a short, one- or two-sentence description written by the foundation itself on the website,” he continued. “Only donations to press organizations themselves or projects that could be identified from the information on the Gates Foundation’s website as media campaigns were counted, meaning that thousands of grants having some media element do not appear in this list.”

He uses the foundation’s partnership with media empire *ViacomCBS*, which controls programming for *CBS News*, *Nickelodeon*, *BET*, and others, as an example. It was reportedly a Gates Foundation beneficiary in exchange for “inserting] information and PSAs into its programming and that Gates had intervened to change storylines in popular shows like *ER* and *Law & Order SVU*.”

“However, ‘*Viacom*’ and ‘*CBS*’ are nowhere to be found on BMGF’s grants database. The likely grant in question (totalling over \$6 million) is actually described as “a ‘public engagement campaign aimed at improving high school graduation rates and postsecondary completion rates specifically aimed at parents and students,’ meaning that it was not counted in the official total, Macleod explains.

Also not included are grants for producing articles for academic journals; although these articles are not written for mass consumption, they regularly form the foundation for stories in the mainstream media and help influence narratives around key issues. The Gates Foundation has given widely to academic sources, with a donation of at least **\$13.6 million directed toward the creation of content for the prestigious medical journal, *The Lancet*.**

Funding given to universities for research projects often eventually ends up in academic journals, and ultimately, into mass media, so it can be argued that even these sorts of grants, as well as grants funding the printing of books or establishment of websites, although not counted in the total, also constitute forms of media.

MacLeod also makes the point that, while the majority of media coverage of the Gates Foundation donations are painted in an altruistic and positive way, there are “inherent flaws” with the financial injections, including the idea that such enormous donations allow influential billionaires to help “set the public agenda,” which consequently allows them a free hand in determining what society as a whole consumes.

The article points out that there are “serious problems with objectivity” created by the Gates’ underwriting of a large part of the media landscape.

“That the Gates Foundation is underwriting a significant chunk of our media ecosystem leads to serious problems with objectivity. “The foundation’s grants to media organizations...raise obvious conflict-of-interest questions: How can reporting be unbiased when a major player holds the purse strings?” wrote Gates’s local Seattle Times in 2011. This was before the newspaper accepted BMGF money to fund its “education lab” section.”

*MintPress* said that it contacted the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for comment on the bombshell report, but did not receive a statement in time for publication. You can view the full report, including all lists, [here](#).