Twenty years after its first iteration, the sixth national survey on foundations and endowment funds sheds light on philanthropy’s vibrancy. In 2022, over 5300 Foundations and Endowment Funds (FEFs) are active, with growth mainly driven by donor-advised funds and endowment funds. The economic scope of philanthropy, reaching over 40 billion euros in assets and 15 billion in spending, is a testimony to its vigor.

What are the survey’s key takeaways? First, individuals (52%) are still the main initiators of philanthropic organizations, before companies and charities. Second, social justice and inclusion is their main focus. Third, half of the respondents says to be favoring a systemic approach. For the purpose of methodology, a systemic angle is generally used to understand and analyze the main focus of FEFs. A systemic approach also implies more trust-based, horizontal relationships with stakeholders, and more long-term, flexible funding arrangements.

For the first time, this study combines quantitative methods with interviews and a focus group with philanthropic actors. This approach sheds light on a range of strategies employed and on current considerations on the role and responsibility of philanthropic organizations in today’s social and political context.

### EIGHT LEGAL ENTITIES

There are eight different FEF entities in France

- Four general-purpose entities
- Four specific-purpose entities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Public utility foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donor-advised fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Corporate foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Scientific cooperation fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Partnership foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Endowment fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Hospital foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF FEFs IN FRANCE SINCE 2001

Over the past two years, the expansion in the number of philanthropic organizations has mainly been driven by donor-advised funds and endowments funds. In 2022, these two categories make up ¾ of French FEFs.

A GROWING ECONOMIC SCOPE

Key economic indicators and their growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>Average annual growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>29.43</td>
<td>40.44</td>
<td>+8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in billion euros)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>14.72</td>
<td>+8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in billion euros)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>50 124</td>
<td>97 129</td>
<td>108 194</td>
<td>+3 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. : Amounts for 2001 and 2017 were stated in euros as per 2021 to correct for inflation. Employment data on average annual employee headcount was provided by Urssaf.
INITIATORS AND STATED PURPOSE OF FEFS

While in 2018, over 48% philanthropic organizations were established by individuals, in 2022 this percentage rose to 52%.

An increasing number of companies are creating FEFs, particularly in recent years. Of all new philanthropic organizations created since 2020, 35% were set up by companies. As a whole, 30% of all philanthropic organizations have corporate origins.

N.B.: Totals exceed 100%, because each FEF may fall into more than one category.

The purpose of each philanthropic organization depends on the legal status and the founder’s identity (whether an individual, a company or a charity). However, they all share the same goal: to support a cause or a specific mission.

71% of founders across all categories state that the purpose of their FEF is to support a cause or a specific mission.
TWO OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

FEFs can operate in two distinct ways, while some may combine the two: 1) action-oriented organizations which set their own agenda and often operate through established structures (hospitals, retirement homes, museums, etc.) and 2) grant-making foundations dedicated to funding and supporting public service projects undertaken by third parties, such as charities.

Grant-making foundations are still predominant

FEFs created since 1970 are mostly distributive, and account for about 80% of the whole. Corporate foundations, donor-advised funds and endowment funds are mainly distributive in nature.

Public utility foundations favor action

A majority of public utility foundations is action-oriented (63%), like many scientific foundations (49%). Action-oriented philanthropic actors are the main drivers of the economic activity in this field.

PHILANTHROPIC WORK IN FRANCE IS GOING LOCAL

The focus of FEFs is increasingly local: 62% of FEFs established after 2018 have a regional/departmental scope, compared to 51% of those created before 2009. Similarly, 44% of FEFs created after 2018 have a local scope of action, compared to 40% of those set up prior to 2009.

63% of FEFs created after 2018 have a national scope

N.B.: Totals exceed 100%, as surveyed FEFs could provide more than one answer.
L’intervention à l’échelon local a également été plus forte pour les fondations créées entre 2010 et 2018 (29 %). Cette période de création est marquée par une plus forte proportion de fonds de dotation dédiés aux arts et la culture, avec des actions plutôt au niveau national.

L’intervention des fondations et des fonds s’inscrit majoritairement à l’échelon national (62 %) puis aux échelons départementaux et régionaux (55 %) et également à l’échelon local (37 %). Ces deux derniers échelons territoriaux (Département, région) accueillent les fonds et fondations créés depuis 2018, qui interviennent à l’échelle nationale, comme le montre la figure ci-contre. Les fonds qui ont été créés avant 2009 se sont surtout dédiés à des projets d’ordre local ou départemental/régional (51 %). Pour les fondations créées entre 2010 et 2018, à cette proportion s’ajoutent 29 %. Ces dernières ont principalement cherché à favoriser les arts et la culture, ainsi que la recherche académique. Enfin, depuis 2018, ce sont surtout les fonds qui ont choisi d’intervenir à l’échelle nationale (40 %), ainsi que pour la protection de l’environnement (19 %)

Les fonds et fondations agissent en premier lieu dans le secteur social (Social justice & inclusion) et de la culture (Arts & culture). Cependant, le secteur de la santé (Health & medical research) est également important, avec une part de dépenses de 15 %.

Enfin, il est à noter que la part des dépenses dans les domaines religieux (Religion) et de l’équité et du pluralisme (Justice, democracy & pluralism) est très faible, avec respectivement 1 % et 2 % des dépenses totales.
In recent years, a number of FEFs has been using a systemic angle to design and further their agenda. This holistic view of social and environmental issues helps identify and provide sustainable remedies by targeting both the symptoms and the causes of issues at stake.

Implementing a systemic approach

The systemic approach is gaining ground in philanthropic work. It is widely used as methodology to understand and analyze the main issues FEFs focus on (66%). Philanthropic organizations thus establish more horizontal, trust-based relationships with grantees (64%) and may choose more flexible long-term funding arrangements.
Philanthropy endorses a **unifying** role and helps **change attitudes** on social and environmental issues, which in itself is a key step for **sustainable** and deep social change. As such, philanthropy **complements government action**. Philanthropy's commitment to public interest requires its actions, roles, internal and outward-facing operations to be **consistent**.

“**Our social responsibility is increasingly clear.**”
(Fondation Demeter)

The values of philanthropy in today’s French national context

- **Public life**
- **Unifying responsibility**
- **Inclusion**
- **Fairer society**
- **Collective action**
- **Transformative action**
- **Public interest**
- **Non-partisan**
- **Collaborating with public authorities**
- **Raising awareness**
- **Changing perceptions**
- **Consistency**
- **Experimenting**
Methodolody

- National surveys have been conducted every 4 years since 2001, with the support of the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas Territories (Bureau des associations et fondations - Charities and foundations office)
- This 6th survey was carried out in 2022 based on 2021’s financial accounts
- The study collected data on 3060 FEFs through a questionnaire, the Official Journal of the French Republic, the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas Territories and 15 préfectures
- In-depth qualitative interviews and a focus group involving 23 FEFs were conducted

The Observatory of Philanthropy

Created in 1997 by Fondation de France, the Observatory of Philanthropy surveys FEFs, their strategies, operations, and examines the major social challenges philanthropy and civil society seek to address.

Fondation de France, the largest philanthropic network in France

Each of us can serve the common good. For more 50 years, Fondation de France has made this insight its driving force. Every day, it encourages and supports the will to take action and translates it into meaningful and effective projects conducive to a more peaceful, inclusive and sustainable world. Fondation de France developed a unique know-how by working alongside the best experts, hundreds of volunteers, and thousands of people on the ground, across all the dimensions of public interest: relief to vulnerable populations, medical research, environment, culture, education, etc. With 977 donor-advised funds under its aegis, Fondation de France supports every year more than 12,000 promising and innovative initiatives in France and abroad. As an independent and private organization, it relies on the generosity of its donors.

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All studies by the Observatory of Philanthropy are available at fondationdefrance.org