

University philanthropy: Silicon Valley Community Foundation

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Key findings

The Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF) is a community-based foundation headquartered in Mountain View, California. Established in 2007, it is one of the world's most well-funded foundations.

SVCF is an important barometer of giving because it reflects the choices of a wide group of philanthropists. It also provides some insight into emerging philanthropic trends such as *Next Generation* philanthropy and the appetite for greater risk. SVCF has also emerged as a major donor of non-US universities giving nearly \$100m in the past five years to HE worldwide. Non-US universities saw a 688% increase in their funding from SVCF between 2016-19.

According to our analysis of six years of its university funding:

- SVCF donors have disbursed \$874m to 566 universities in 65 countries.
- As the Foundation has grown, so too has university funding. It boomed from \$62.9m shared between 248 universities in 2015 to \$206m shared between 287 universities in 2019.
- There is also evidence of increased internationalisation of university funding by SVCF. In 2015, \$3.4m (5%) in funding was shared between 50 non-US universities; by 2019 \$26.9m (15%) in funding was shared between 71 non-US universities.
- 365 US universities shared \$783m (89%) of SVCF funding.
- European institutions were the second biggest beneficiaries. 92 European institutions in 19 countries received \$53.8m.
- Asian universities were the third biggest, receiving \$18.2m shared between 39 countries in 15 countries.
- In 2020, there was a 59% reduction in university funding, dropping from \$206m (2019) to \$122m.
- Funding to international universities dropped by 43% with Asian universities most affected. However, funding to European universities in 2020 increased by 20%.
- British, Israeli and Japanese universities are the biggest international beneficiaries of SVCF giving (2015-20).

About UniversityPhilanthropy.com

UniversityPhilanthropy.com is the dedicated research arm of The Cape Partnership, a London-based public affairs and policy advisory firm. Our research looks at trends in philanthropy and giving to universities.

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Key facts

Established in 2007 to help channel philanthropy for Silicon Valley's rapidly growing community, SVCF became the tech titans foundation of choice. Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and his wife rank among the Foundation's high profile donors. Others include Sergey Brin, Jack Dorsey and Dustin Moskovitz.

	Recipients	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
North America	365	\$59.8m	\$57.2m	\$177.7m	\$202m	\$179.2m	\$107.6m	\$784.0m
Europe	92	\$1.7m	\$1.8m	\$21.8m	\$6.7m	\$9.8m	\$11.8m	\$53.8m
Asia	39	\$595k	\$363k	\$5.3m	\$194k	\$10.2m	\$1.6m	\$18.2m
MENA	15	\$28k	\$47k	\$749k	\$5.3m	\$3.2m	\$0.3m	\$10.0m
Australasia	13	\$412k	\$408k	\$136k	\$385k	\$2.1m	\$1.2m	\$4.6m

Top 10 non-US recipients of giving by *Silicon Valley Community Foundation*:

University	Country	2015-20
Imperial College	UK	\$17.6m
UCL	UK	\$6.0m
Haifa	Israel	\$5.7m
Oxford	UK	\$5.7m
Peking	China	\$5.0m
Cambridge	UK	\$4.8m
Kyoto	Japan	\$4.4m
Edinburgh	UK	\$2.7m
Kyushu	Japan	\$2.5m
Weizmann	Israel	\$2.5m

Santa Clara: Surfing the Silicon Valley wave

In our analysis of university funding by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF), it should come as no surprise that a Californian university – and one in Silicon Valley – is the biggest beneficiary of the Foundation's philanthropy. What is surprising is that the institution to receive the most SVCF funding is not nearby Stanford or Berkeley, rather the small and much lower profile Santa Clara University.

A private Jesuit university, Santa Clara has the distinction of being California's oldest seat of higher education, established in 1851. With a student population of around 5,000, it is small. But what it lacks in size, it has made up amply by its ability to dramatically grow its SVCF funding.

In 2015, the University received \$810k in funding from the Foundation, well behind Stanford, Oxford, NYU and Berkeley. By 2019 it had stewarded the relationship to donations topping \$26.6m. Between 2015-20, it has received \$96.9m in SVCF funding making it the single biggest beneficiary of the Foundation's philanthropy.

About our research

The purpose of this research was to identify giving by the *Silicon Valley Community Foundation* between 2015-20. Our study drew on information available at the Foundation's website. For more information, contact: office@capepartnership.com

