



Management Response to External Evaluation

2021–2025

May 2026

ISSUED BY
WHO Foundation

EVALUATION BY
CCS Fundraising

Introduction

The past five years have marked a period of profound transition in global health financing. The WHO Foundation was established in 2020 at a moment of unprecedented global solidarity, when the international community mobilized extraordinary resources in response to COVID-19, building on decades of progress in disease control that saved tens of millions of lives and enabled the development and deployment of novel vaccines in under a year.

Today, the context is markedly different. Development assistance is under sustained pressure, with Official Development Assistance declining in real terms and further reductions anticipated. Donor funding is contracting—and lives are being lost as a consequence—while health needs are growing, and pressures on national systems are increasing in low- and middle-income countries. This shift from expansion to constraint underscores the need for a more resilient, diversified, and adaptive approach to financing global health.

It was precisely in anticipation of such shifts that WHO's leadership, under the guidance of its Member States, initiated reforms to strengthen its financing model. These include increases in assessed contributions, the launch of the Investment Round to align resources with outcomes over a multi-year horizon, and the establishment of the WHO Foundation to engage new sources of funding. Together, these efforts reflect a deliberate strategy to ensure that WHO can continue to deliver on its mission in a more complex and uncertain environment.

Central to this strategy is the opportunity presented by philanthropy. Globally, charitable giving represents one of the largest sources of capital for social impact, measured in the hundreds of billions annually, yet only a small share is directed toward global health. Increasing that share will require a different approach to partnership: one that translates WHO's technical priorities into compelling opportunities for philanthropic, corporate, and individual leaders to engage, shape solutions, and accelerate impact at scale.

The WHO Foundation was created to serve this role—as a bridge between WHO and the global system of charitable giving, connecting donor intent with evidence-based priorities and enabling new forms of collaboration that strengthen the resilience and diversity of global health financing.

Against this backdrop, this independent evaluation provides an important moment to reflect on the Foundation's first five years and to define the path ahead.

The Evaluation and its Findings

This independent evaluation, conducted by CCS Fundraising and finalized in March 2026, provides an evidence-based assessment of the WHO Foundation's first five years and informs its strategic direction for the next phase of growth.

The evaluation confirms that the WHO Foundation has established a credible, high-performing platform for fundraising at scale. In its first five years of operations, the Foundation mobilized approximately \$215 million, with a sustained growth trajectory and increasing average gift sizes, matching or exceeding comparable UN-affiliated entities despite the absence of early-stage investment typically available to peer institutions.

In 2024 and 2025 alone, the Foundation secured \$107 million in multi-year commitments to WHO, with a fundraising return of approximately \$4.4 for every \$1 of operating expenditure. Across its first five years, it has engaged 84 new donors, representing 59 percent of funds raised and reflecting a significant expansion into new donor segments for WHO.

These results reflect more than financial performance. They demonstrate the Foundation's ability to engage a more diverse set of partners by translating WHO's technical and normative priorities into clear, compelling, and fundable initiatives and connecting these to the priorities of the global philanthropic community. Stakeholders consistently affirm the Foundation's distinctive role as a bridge between WHO and the private sector, valued for its agility, responsiveness, and ability to align donor interests with high-impact opportunities.

At the same time, the evaluation highlights areas where the Foundation continues to evolve. Its identity and value proposition are becoming clearer, though expectations are not yet fully aligned across all stakeholders. Core systems, including Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and pipeline management, are in place but require further embedding to support consistent performance. Donor pathways, from acquisition through stewardship, can be strengthened to enable more predictable, multi-year growth, including repeat and longer duration gifts. Governance and coordination with WHO would benefit from continued refinement, while building additional managerial depth will be important to support the Foundation's next phase of scale.

Taken together, these findings confirm that the Foundation has successfully transitioned from an emergency response mechanism to a more structured advancement model, grounded in long-term relationships, disciplined systems, and alignment with WHO's strategic priorities.

Looking Forward: From Validation to Scale

The evaluation provides a clear and constructive roadmap for the Foundation's next phase. Its recommendations converge around a set of reinforcing priorities that will enable the Foundation to translate early success into sustained, scalable impact, many of which are already underway.

First, the Foundation is **sharpening its strategic focus and value proposition**. This includes clarifying its role within WHO's broader financing architecture and translating WHO's priorities into a focused set of flagship, donor-ready initiatives capable of attracting multi-year commitments at scale. A more clearly articulated, campaign-oriented narrative will be essential to engaging the global philanthropic community effectively.

Second, the Foundation is **strengthening the systems required for predictable fundraising performance**. This includes continued investment in data-driven fundraising, with CRM as a single source of truth, structured pipeline management, and clearly defined donor pathways that support acquisition, growth, renewal, and long-term partnership. Expanding the share of multi-year agreements and broadening the donor base across geographies and segments will be central to improving revenue predictability and resilience. These systems are foundational to consistent, high-performing major gift fundraising and to the Foundation's transition toward a campaign-oriented model, focused on larger, multi-year commitments and deeper partnerships.

Third, **governance and coordination with WHO will continue to evolve to support scale**. Establishing a more predictable and effective operating rhythm, with clear roles, stronger coordination, and shared accountability, will be essential to aligning the Foundation's work with WHO's priorities and processes.

Fourth, the Foundation will **invest in the organizational capacity required to operate at a significantly greater scale**. This includes strengthening managerial depth, expanding fundraising and support functions, and building the operational capabilities needed to sustain performance over time. These capabilities determine the Foundation's ability to operate and deliver at scale.

Underlying all of these priorities is a shared imperative: to build a WHO Foundation model that reflects how philanthropy operates: relationship-driven, outcome-oriented, and grounded in trust, while remaining fully aligned with WHO's mission and values and ensuring the integrity and independence of WHO's lifesaving work.

An Inflection Point

Five years on, the WHO Foundation has demonstrated that its model works. It has expanded WHO's reach into new donor communities, strengthened the diversity of its funding base, and delivered meaningful resources to support WHO's mission.

The question now is how this model is taken forward and at what scale.

As the global health financing landscape continues to evolve, the ability to engage the global system of charitable giving will become increasingly important. The WHO Foundation exists to enable this engagement, complementing other elements of WHO's financing strategy and helping to position WHO not only as a normative leader, but as a platform for scaling impact in partnership with a broader set of actors.

Realizing this potential will require more than continued growth; it will require embedding the systems, relationships, and operating model that allow this approach to function at scale and ensure that philanthropy can play a consistent, strategic role in supporting WHO's mission.

Conclusion

The actions outlined above are not an end in themselves, but a means to a far greater purpose.

This work is not ultimately about fundraising, but about what that funding makes possible: enabling the WHO to deliver life-saving interventions, strengthen health systems, and advance health equity for the most vulnerable communities around the world. Our work must ultimately be judged by lives saved, not funds raised.

The WHO Foundation exists to support that mission—connecting the commitment and resources of partners with the unique reach, authority, and impact of WHO. We look ahead with a clear sense of responsibility and opportunity: to build on what has been achieved and to contribute more meaningfully to WHO's ability to deliver transformative, world-changing impact at scale.

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Chief Executive Officer

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Board Chair