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PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS AND GLOBAL HEALTH

Speaker

Dr. Patrick Kilby,
Australian National University

Date

Monday 01 June 2020, 3-4pm

Location

ONLINE Free and open to all.
Please register via contact email
to obtain Zoom link.

ANU College of
Arts & Social
Sciences

Philanthropic foundations are often overlooked in the development literature despite their influence. Gates', Ford, or the Rockefeller Foundations in the US, or even the Tata Trusts or Al Waleed Philanthropies in Asia. But it is the US foundations that have had a profound influence on international development and continue to represent 'private authority in global politics' (Fejerskov 2018).

The Covid 19 epidemic and the role of the Gates' Foundation in its response is but a recent manifestation of a long standing phenomenon in the field of global government. It is the scale of resources that foundations can throw at their work that make governments pay attention, so foundations drive and even set policy. The Gates' Foundation has an endowment in the order of \$50b, and is the second largest funder of the WHO as well many vaccine initiatives. The Rockefeller Foundation in the 1920s and 1930s was the largest funder of both global health programs, and the League of Nations Health Organisation, the forerunner of the WHO.

This seminar will explore the Rockefeller and Gates' Foundations in global health and their clear preference for private sector led technological solutions to health problems in the form of vaccines, over public health. This paper argues that while vaccines are important, they are part of a broader mix of public health initiatives. Both Foundations, even one hundred years apart, have had profound influence on health expenditure, and despite had some successes, they may have exposed populations to greater risks.

About the Speaker

Patrick Kilby is a Senior Lecturer and convener of the Master of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development Program. His research interests are: NGOs and NGO accountability; gender and development; managing international development programs; and most recently the story of foreign aid.

Contact

E soaa.admin.cass@anu.edu.au
W archanth.cass.anu.edu.au