AI for the SDGs: Leveraging AI and Social Investor Engagement

Maximilian Kessler
Sophia Sabardine
Xinyu Zhang

**Master in International and Development Studies,
Applied Research Project 2024-2025, IHEID**

Academic Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Jérôme Dubbery, IHEID

Acknowledgements

This report, "*AI for the SDGs: Leveraging AI and Social Investor Engagement*", is the result of an Applied Research Project (ARP) conducted by a team of Master's students from the Geneva Graduate Institute as part of the Interdisciplinary Master of International and Development Studies program.

We would like to sincerely thank the Geneva Graduate Institute for providing the academic environment that made this project possible. In particular, we are grateful to Prof. Dr. Jérôme Duberry, Managing Director of the Tech Hub at the Geneva Graduate Institute, and Claudia Seymour, Head of the ARP, for their guidance, support, and valuable feedback throughout the research process.

We also extend our appreciation to Nina Kiderlin from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), whose insights and feedback greatly enriched our research process. The project was initiated by the FDFA with the aim of exploring how AI can be leveraged to promote more equitable and responsible applications in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Finally, we warmly thank the eleven anonymous interviewees from philanthropy, public institutions, private sector, and impact investing for generously sharing their time and insights. Their contributions were critical to grounding this research in real-world practice.

We hope this report contributes to the ongoing conversation on AI for Good and encourages further research and collaboration in this evolving field.

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Term
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AI4SG	AI for Social Good (used interchangeably with AI for Good and AI for SDGs)
AI for Good	Artificial Intelligence for Good (used interchangeably with AI4SG and AI for SDGs)
AI for the SDGs	Artificial Intelligence for the Sustainable Development Goals (used interchangeably with AI4SG and AI for SDGs)
AWS	Amazon Web Services
EIF	European Investment Fund
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
EXP	Expert Interview Code
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIIN	Global Impact Investing Network
GPU	Graphics Processing Unit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT4D	ICT for Development
IO	International Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
ML	Machine Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLP	Natural Language Processing
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report explores how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be leveraged to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Drawing from an extensive literature review and ten semi structured interviews, this report investigates how different actors, including philanthropic organizations, public institutions, private sector companies and impact investors fund and implement AI for Good projects.

Key Findings

Public sector investment is critical but limited, especially for market failures and areas neglected by private capital due to low perceived financial return.

Philanthropies are shifting from traditional grants toward venture philanthropy emphasizing long-term partnerships, strategic funding, and measurable outcomes.

Co-financing models are expanding, with philanthropic, public and private actors blending resources to de-risk early stage AI for Good initiatives and increase scalability.

The digital divide remains a structural barrier, with access to data, compute infrastructure and local technical capacity limiting participation from Global South actors.

Recommendations

Promote Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: AI for Good projects should be co-designed and implemented through partnerships that ensure operational and impact continuity beyond initial funding.

Close Data Gaps and Strengthen Local Capacity: Funders should support localized data ecosystems and ensure that underserved communities are involved from the outset in project design and implementation.

Adopt Co-Financing and Venture Philanthropy Approaches: Philanthropic and social investors should blend grants with investments to de-risk projects and attract private capital, especially where market interest is low but social impact is high.

Align Projects with Strategic and Thematic Goals: Funders prioritize practical and scalable solutions that align with institutional missions. SDG framing is useful but not decisive.

Build Long Term Trust Based Relationships: Funding decisions are shaped by trust, team alignment and the potential for long-term collaboration. Organizations should view fundraising as relationship-building, not just grant-seeking.

Expand Public Sector Investment in Non-Commercial Use Cases: Governments and public agencies must lead in funding AI for Good initiatives that address market failures and ensure equitable access, especially in low-resource settings.

1. Introduction

Global progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is falling critically short. As of 2024, nearly half (48%) of SDG targets show moderate to severe deviations from their stated goals and 35% exhibit stagnation or regression (United Nations (UN), 2024). Compounding this challenge is a severe SDG financing gap, particularly in developing countries, where the shortfall is estimated between 15-30% of GDP (United Nations, 2024). Bridging this gap requires massive mobilization of capital, be it from private sector, public and philanthropic actors.

In this context, Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as a powerful tool with significant potential to accelerate progress toward these goals. For AI for Good, the specific intention is to use AI to advance development, holds the potential to rapidly advance the SDGs if implemented in the right manner. Although there are already examples of mostly private sector companies such as Microsoft or Google that engage in AI for Good, there are still few actors in the field. In light of the SDG funding gap, declining development aid from European and especially U.S. public entities and geopolitical competition over AI on the one side, and the potential of AI for Good to help close SDG gaps on the other side, understanding how AI for Good is financed is crucial.

Consequently, this study seeks to answer the following question: How are AI for Good Projects financed and implemented? Besides focusing on financing trends, the study will hence focus on the relationships between different stakeholders such as financiers, AI developers and beneficiaries of AI for Good projects. The study will furthermore touch upon variation upon which SDGs are advanced by AI for Good projects as well as questions of equal access and bias in AI (i.e. the digital divide).

Exploratory in nature, this qualitative study employs the following structure to answer this research question: After elaborating on the methodology, first findings of a desk research are summarized in the literature review. Then, findings from 10 qualitative interviews will be presented before an analysis section in which the findings of the interviews will be contrasted with the findings of the literature review. Before concluding, the study ends with recommendations and a discussion of its limitations and gaps.

2. Methodology

Before delving into the research design, it is warranted to define AI for the scope of this study. Our definition of AI is aligned with the updated 2024 definition of the OECD, which states:

> "An AI system is a machine-based system that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments. Different AI systems vary in their levels of autonomy and adaptiveness after deployment" (OECD, 2024, p. 4).

As AI for Good and AI for SDGs are often used interchangeably and interviewees as well as important stakeholders such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) more often speak of AI for Good than AI for SDGs we use the terms interchangeably as well unless stated otherwise.

As AI for Good[1], and especially the funding side of it, is relatively novel, this study employs a two-step, qualitative approach combining desk research with expert interviews to answer the aforementioned research question.

2.1. Desk Research: Interview Preparation and Contextual Mapping

In the initial phase from October 2024 to November 2024, desk research was conducted to inform the interview design and guide stakeholder selection which resulted in the literature review. This step focused on reviewing existing initiatives, identifying key actors, and understanding their roles in AI-related funding and implementation. Sources include both academic literature as well as grey literature. This background review informed the formulation of interview questions and helped prioritize stakeholders representing a variety of institutions, such as foundations, international organizations (IOs), development agencies, and impact investor firms.

2.2. Expert Interviews

The second phase involved conducting ten expert interviews with professionals engaged in funding, designing, or implementing AI for SDG-related initiatives. A semi-structured interview format was used to enable consistency while allowing flexibility for contextual depth (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Adams, 2015). Interviewees were selected based on their institutional roles, relevance to the study's focus and availability. After discussion with the academic supervisor it was decided that primarily interviewees from the Swiss and US-American context should be contacted to (1) understand the US context better since US companies are relatively active in AI for Good, (2) understand the local Swiss context better since the AI for Good Conference is afterall hosted by the ITU in Geneva, and (3) limit the scope of the research. Questions focused on funding criteria and funding models, stakeholder relations as well as challenges.

In total, ten interviews (see annex) were conducted with eleven experts representing a range of organizational types, including:

- Swiss-based foundations (four participants)
- International consultancies (two participants)
- IOs and public agencies involved in development (two participants)

---

[1] It has to be noted that AI for Good can also be seen as the next development stage of "ICT for Development" (ICT4D) or "Tech for Development". While analysing the funding mechanism in contrast to that constitutes a worthwhile academic endeavour this cannot be done in this report due to limited time and resources.

- An impact investor firm (one interview, with two participants)
- A public company (one participant)

The majority of interviewees were based in Switzerland and the United States, with one representative based in Rwanda. All interviewees identified as male, which was not intended.[2] Most Interviews were conducted in English (eight) and two in German (two). If German interviews were quoted the translation was made manually by the interviewer and is indicated after the quotation.

2.3. Considerations and Limitations

This study is limited by a gender biased and rather small interview sample, and its extreme geographical bias as key regions such as East Asia, South Asia, and Latin America, Africa are not represented. Additionally, the authors do not have a technical background in AI, which limits the depth of analysis on specific technologies.

3. Literature Review

3.1. The Origins of AI for Good

Before AI for Good gained traction, similar efforts under "ICT for Development" (ICT4D) focused on harnessing information and communication technologies (ICTs) to drive social progress (Ghimire, 2020). These initiatives laid the foundation for modern technological solutions in global development by improving access to the internet, mobile technologies, and communication tools (ibid.).

The terms AI for Social Good (AI4SG) and AI for Good are often used interchangeably and emphasize computation and the deployment of big data analytics, including machine learning (ML), to address a range of social and environmental issues (Holzmeyer, 2021, p. 95). More formally speaking, Cowls et al. (2021), Floridi et al. (2020), Vinuesa et al. (2020, p. 6) and Holzmeyer (2021) refer to the following AI4SG definition:

*"The design, development and deployment of AI systems in ways that help to (i) prevent, mitigate and/or resolve problems adversely affecting human life and/or the wellbeing of the natural world, and/or (ii) enable socially preferable or environmentally sustainable developments, while (iii) not introducing new forms of harm and/or amplifying existing disparities and inequities" (*Floridi et al. 2020, p.1773).

While AI for Good originated as more of a private-sector-driven initiative, largely initiated by tech companies to showcase AI's potential for social impact, McKinsey (2023) and Cowls (2021), emphasize that AI for SDGs emerged from the public sector, specifically by the United Nations, as a targeted effort to align AI initiatives with social and

---

[2] This circumstance arose from cancellation/non-availability of female interview partners.

humanitarian goals. Specifically, AI for SDGs draws on the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a robust framework to benchmark, guide, and assess AI's applications in socially and environmentally beneficial domains (Cowls et al., 2021, p. 111).The shift from AI for Good to AI for the SDGs marks a move from broad social aims to a structured, target driven agenda aligned with the UN's 2030 goals (ibid.). Central to this effort is the AI for Good Global Summit, launched in 2017 by the ITU in partnership with UN agencies and co-convened by the Swiss government, and brings together global actors to align AI innovation with sustainable development priorities (ITU, 2024a; ITU, 2024b). Because practitioners usually don't distinguish between AI4SG, AI for SDG and AI for Good, we also refer to all of them as AI for Good.

3.2. The Political Dimensions of AI for Good

While the previous section discussed the origins of AI for Good, funding alone does not guarantee inclusive or equitable outcomes. A deeper interrogation is needed: Who accesses AI, who benefits, and under what conditions? These concerns lie at the heart of ongoing debates around power, access, equity, and ethical impact.

Access remains a fundamental barrier. As van Dijk (2005, 2020) and Lutz (2019) argue, a "digital divide" has evolved: it encompasses disparities in AI-related skills, awareness, and participation. This gap is not merely technical but social, reinforcing existing inequalities in education, income, infrastructure and the fact that large models are largely trained on mainly English data and Western values. Limited access leads to limited literacy, creating a feedback loop of digital exclusion (Celik, 2023).

Beyond access and literacy, ethical concerns pose critical challenges. Scholars point to algorithmic bias, discriminatory profiling, data misuse, and misinformation as persistent risks (Gedrimiene et al., 2023; Ghallab, 2019; Kong et al., 2021; Wang & Siau, 2019). These structural issues are shaped by human judgment, institutional agendas, and historical inequities (Johnson, 2022; Cave, 2020). As Saetra (2023) and Izzolino & Stremlau (2024) warn, AI for Good initiatives often fall into "solutionism", offering tech-centric fixes that sidestep deeper political and systemic questions.

A growing body of critical scholarship interrogates the power dynamics behind AI for Good. Cowls (2021), Tomašev et al. (2020), and Vinuesa et al.(2020) highlight how these initiatives often centralize control within private tech corporations. Gerdes (2022) argues that large US companies have effectively "hijacked" the AI ethics debate, steering narratives toward corporate interests. In developing countries, AI for Good projects may serve as strategic door-openers for future commercialization, rather than addressing long-term social needs (Izzolino & Stremlau, 2024).

These critiques highlight a broader concern: AI for the SDGs must be understood not merely as a technological solution, but as a political and ethical project. Governance mechanisms remain limited, often reduced to opaque technical assessments rather than transparent, democratic deliberation (Schmitt, 2013; Ekelhof & Paoli, 2019; NATO,

2020; Tartaro, 2024). Calls for accountability, inclusion, and historical awareness are growing louder, especially as the colonial and racialized legacies of "intelligence" continue to shape who gets to define, develop, and deploy AI (Cave, 2020).

3.3. The Current AI for Good Landscape

There have been several undertakings by academia (Cowls et al., 2021), consultancies like McKinsey (Bankhwal et al., 2024) and foundations such as the Schwab Foundation (Reinecke et al., 2024) to map existing AI for Good Projects. While they have their limitations regarding funding sources they still provide a valuable overview over what is happening in AI for Good.

The distribution of AI-driven projects addressing the SDGs reveals a concentration around specific goals. SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) was targeted by the highest number of initiatives in all mappings (Cowls et al., 2021; Bankhwal et al., 2024; Reinecke et al., 2024). When it comes to the following four SDGs that have been addressed by AI for Good projects, the results are more varied: In Cowls et al. (2021, p. 113) SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 9 (Industry Innovation, and Infrastructure) come behind SDG 3. In contrast, Bankhwal et al. (2024, p. 4) map SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 13 as the top five together with SDG 3. Reinecke et al. (2024, p. 15) identify yet another pattern with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9, SDG 4, and SDG 13 as the next four most addressed SDGs.

When it comes to uneven geographical distribution, Reineke et al (2024, p.16) find that two-thirds of the projects focused on environment and sustainability are located in low/middle income countries reflecting their higher exposure to climate risk. At the same time, it "is apparent across all geographies that innovators seek to adopt AI to address multiple challenges within the area of healthcare." (ibid., p. 11). This is due to ample standardized data, promising high impact and potential perceived profitability.

Regarding the types of AI used in these projects, ML appears to be the dominant technology across the board. 53% of the social innovators working on AI for SDGs rely on ML techniques, with predictive analytics and natural language processing (NLP) following in frequency (Reinecke et al., 2024, p. 20).

In an analysis of grant data of 1000 foundations from 2018-2023 Bankhwal et al. (2024) found that SDG 3 (Health) received the most grant funding with $330 million over five years, followed by SDG 4 (Education) $130 million, SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption) $60 million and SDGs 10 (Reduce Inequality) and 16 (Peace) both $50 million. In contrast, private investments also allocate the most capital to SDG 3 (Health) ($112.27 billion), but then to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) ($67.6 billion), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) ($49 billion), SDG 13 (Climate Action) ($45.8 billion) (ibid. p. 15). With regards to the grant data, one should note that 55% of grants are below $250.000 and only 19 grants from 2018-2023 were higher than $5 million (ibid.,

p.17). They also observe geographical discrepancies in funding with only 10% of all grants from 2018-2023 flowing in low/middle income countries (ibid., p. 14).

3.4. Financing AI for Good

3.4.1. Context of Financing AI for Good

The previous section highlighted that data on funding sources for AI for Good projects is limited. As a result, this section explores potential funding sources for these projects. It is essential to first understand the context of the financing of the SDGs before exploring how AI can help drive their achievement. The financing context for SDGs has deteriorated (UN, 2024), for which several reasons are responsible:

> "These include the rise in systemic risks, above all climate and disaster-related risks; a sea-change in global macroeconomic and macro-financial conditions; dramatic changes in the international division of labour and the pace of global economic integration; rising and entrenched [...]inequality; enormous technological change, with digitalization in particular affecting all financing areas; and growing risks of fragmentation in the global economy. [I]n their totality, they have put national financing frameworks and the international financial architecture under severe stress" (ibid., p.2).

These challenges have been amplified by the cuts in development aid by the US administration. This deteriorating SDG financing context meets a challenging financing structure of AI which "often has large upfront costs and low ongoing or marginal costs" (Brockman et al., 2021). AI systems can be hard to design and operationalize, and they require an array of potentially costly resources, such as raw materials, training data, staff time, and high-quality data infrastructure, to get off the ground (Chui et al., 2018). In particular, costs for compute take up the bulk of investments with "companies spend[ing] more than 80% of their total capital raised on compute resources" (Appenzeller et al., 2023).

> "Compared to the upfront investment, the cost of reaching each additional user is small. For philanthropies looking to drive positive social impact via AI, this often means that AI solutions must reach significant scale before they can offer a substantial social return on investment." (Brockman et al., 2021).

These high-entrance barriers differ from ICT4D where costs could range from low to high, depending on the concrete project (for example, expensive broadband access as well as comparatively low-cost small-scale cloud programmes or e-government solutions would all fall under ICT4D) (see OECD 2009)). It is therefore unsurprising that AI changed the funding landscape in Silicon Valley where traditional venture capitalists simply have too little capital to fund AI firms, leaving the field to leading large tech companies such as Microsoft, Alphabet or Amazon (The Economist, 2024). Consequently, to overcome these challenges, AI research that targets the SDGs requires "a concerted effort from the public and private sectors to create collaborative

funding models, where investments are co-financed by government grants, private capital, and IOs, ensuring a balanced allocation of resources" (ITU, 2024c, p.24). This mirrors claims that ICT4D projects were also best conducted in public private partnerships (UN APCICT 2010, Elnaz Barjandi 2019).In the next sections possible (co-)funding sources, their characteristics and potential for AI will be discussed in more detail.

3.4.2. Public Sources of Funding

One way governments fund AI for Good research projects is through grants and awards by national research foundations. Governments in advanced economies have made heavy use of these foundations to fund academic AI research (Rahkovsky et al., 2021) with the US and China leading research funding, both in financial scale and the quantity of output (ibid., Abadi & He, 2020). However, this funding, although directed towards academic research, is not necessarily associated with AI for SDG projects. In fact, a lot of this research has been associated with paving the way for commercial applications in the US and Canada (Iori et al., 2021, Brandescu, 2021).

At the same time there have also been efforts from public entities to shape the use of AI for Social Good. The UK, US and EU have even started as early as 2016 but remained ambiguous and vague (Cath et al., 2018). An analysis of the investment plans in national AI strategies of EU countries revealed that this vagueness remains largely unchanged - while there is strong rhetoric, there are few concrete actions and when there are, they tend to focus on the education sectors of their respective countries rather than advancing development globally (Foffano et al, 2023). Singapore made AI for Good an important part of its updated AI Strategy in 2019 (Government of the Republic of Singapore, 2023) and created an AI for Good Research Center at National Singapore University (National University of Singapore, 2024). While these efforts can be regarded as earnest, they are ambiguous considering Singapore's track record on human rights (Frana, 2024).

Some recent developments in the past year show an important and noteworthy commitment to increasing public funding in the long term. In February 2025, the French government announced at the AI Action Summit in Paris, that it will receive more than €109 billion in AI related investments as part of the "Current AI" strategy (AI Action Summit, 2025). This demonstrates that public sector leadership in AI for Good is both possible and potentially gaining momentum.

Another possible public source of funding are national development banks or multilateral development banks because they generally have a development mission (Fernández-Arias et al., 2020). They also could bring different stakeholders together and lower the cost for individual contributions. In fact, they are already taking some action on AI. The European Investment Bank (EIB) already has several channels through which it funds companies that develop AIs that have a positive social outcome such as the €150 million worth Artificial Intelligence Co-Investment Facility of the EIB and the European Investment Fund (EIF) (EIF, 2020) or through its venture debt financing (EIB, 2023). The World Bank Group mentioned that it is "actively financing and

facilitating AI and digital transformation" but does not provide concrete data (Fan and Qiang, 2024). The African Development Bank partnered with Intel to train about 3 million Africans in AI skills (African Development Bank, 2024) but also does not provide concrete financial data on this project. Overall, while development banks remain important financiers for development projects, their influence on AI for Good projects is as of now limited.

3.4.3. Private Companies

Companies also play a significant role in the AI for Good landscape. Most big US tech companies have individual AI for Good programs with Microsoft's AI for Good Lab is certainly among the most well-known. There, Microsoft is partnering with academia, corporate or non-corporate organizations to advance the use of AI for development, and is using the SDGs as guidance on AI for Good research (Microsoft, 2024a). The projects and activities range from training people to develop and work with AI to working with stakeholders in the Global South to map biodiversity or glacier decline (Microsoft, 2024b). Alphabet has taken another approach and launched several funds between $10 and $15 million to train workers in the EU and the Global South with AI skills or to fund social entrepreneurs that use AI (Google, 2024a; Google, 2024b; Google, 2023). In total, Google announced a cumulative $120 in funding various AI for Good initiatives around the world in 2024 (WEF, 2024). Meta takes yet another approach and works towards making data and AI based data analysis tools accessible to humanitarian organizations or other development actors with its Data for Good Initiative (Meta, 2024).

Considering the financial and computing capabilities of the big US tech firms it is not surprising that in September 2024, the US government brought eight leading US companies (Amazon, Anthropic, Google, IBM, Meta, Microsoft, Nvidia, OpenAI) together under the "Partnership for Global Inclusivity on AI" in September 2024 (US Department of State, 2024). It aims to leverage a total of $100 million in public and private investment to make compute more accessible, to help create local datasets and to help train AI talent - all to foster sustainable development in the middle and low income countries.[3]

3.4.4. Philanthropies and AI for Good

Philanthropies now play an increasingly important role in development finance (Schuty et al., 2017; McGoey, 2014; OECD, 2021). In 2020, philanthropies had development aid outflows of at least $70 billion (IUPUI, 2023, far more than the $42.5 billion for 2016-2019 that the OECD (2021) reported). Globally active philanthropies have increasingly moved from simple grant making and technical assistance to market-based solutions such as social and impact investing (Salamon, 2014; Bishop & Green, 2015), something which has been critically described as "philanthrocapitalism" (ibid., Haydon et al., 2021) but is mostly referred to as "venture philanthropy" by practitioners.

With philanthropies either focusing on mitigation of danger of AI and/or in concrete funding of research or appliance projects, AI already received considerable attention by

---

[3] There haven't been any updates on the project since January 2025.

philanthropies (Dervishi, 2023; see also Ford Foundation, 2023). For example, Schmidt Futures launched a $148 million fellowship for AI researchers in 2020 (Schmidt Futures, 2022) while the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation gave grants to 50 AI appliance projects focused on health and development (Gates Foundation, 2023). The Rockefeller Foundation even has a team that is solely working on what they call "AI and Development" (Rockefeller Foundation, 2024).

The academic debate on philanthropies and AI is slowly starting to take off (see for example Ugazio and Maricic, 2024). While it is pointed out that philanthropies can play a considerable role in fostering equitable and ethical AI development and appliance (Botti-Lodovico & Dhar, 2024; Jha, 2024; Dotan, 2024; Jasper et al., 2024), there is consensus that they seldomly can act alone; rather they should seek collaboration with other public and corporate stakeholder as well as civil society since AI for Good requires resources that can seldomly stemmed by one stakeholder alone (see Botti-Lodovico & Dhar, 2024; Jasper et al., 2024).

At the AI Action Summit in Paris, a global public-private partnership with an initial €400 million investment was announced; it is led by France and supported by philanthropic partners including the Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Omidyar Group's AI Collaborative, and Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, as well as private actors such as Google and Salesforce. The partnership aims to raise $2.5 billion over five years, with 10 governments, including Chile, Finland, Germany, and Nigeria (Kahn, 2025; AI Action Summit, 2025). These efforts signal the possibility for a more coordinated global response.

3.4.5. Impact and Social Investors

The term impact investing has gained traction in the last few years to describe investors that invest in social and environmental causes but have a return expectation. Salomon (2014) and Clarkin & Cangioni (2015) describe how social investing was born out of philanthropy and evolved into impact investing. According to the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), the biggest network of impact investors worldwide, impact investing can be defined as "investments made with the intention to generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return" (GIIN, 2019, p.1). While a variety of stakeholders such as asset managers, foundations, family offices or banks are acting as impact investors, they increasingly try to align their impact investments with SDGs (GIIN, 2023).

This SDG alignment of impact investors makes it worthwhile to investigate their activities regarding AI for Good projects. Unfortunately, however, neither reports by GIIN, nor by academic literature, or by newspapers could be found on funding on AI for Good. The only sources that deal with AI and impact investing address questions of how AI could be implemented into the practices of impact investors (see for example Alaoui & Azdimouse 2023; Field, 2024). The reasons for this can be investigated by further research as well as an investigation of the conditions under which impact investors would be willing to fund AI for SDG projects.

3.4.6. Blended Finance

The ITU (2024c, p. 24) called for a "a concerted effort from the public and private sectors to create collaborative funding models", which is precisely what blended finance aims to achieve. While there exists no exact common definition for blended finance (Attridge & Engen, 2019; Habbel et al., 2021), it can be said that "in blended finance, private capital is "blended" with public or philanthropic capital, whose aim is to subsidize and de-risk private capital. As such, the blending can serve as a catalyst for private capital investments in projects that create societal value but would otherwise not be financed." (Flammer et al., 2024, p. 1).

Blended finance is still a small but rapidly growing form of financing SDG projects: In 2023 blended financing grew by 120% to 18.3 billion USD in new blended finance deals (Convergence, 2024a). In total about 231 billion USD have been mobilized for SDG related projects since 2015 (Convergence, 2024b). One strength of blended finance vehicles is that it "can be structured in different ways to address specific investment barriers, such as high risks, limited technical expertise, low returns, and high transaction costs" (Temasek Trust, 2024). Additionally, they can be tailored for specific purposes and can combine different financial (and non-financial instruments such as grants, debt at below-market interest rates, equity with asymmetrical returns, guarantees, insurance at below-market rates and technical assistance" (ibid., see also Grantham Research Institute, 2024; Habbel et al., 2021b). Blended finance is hence a versatile method which could be employed to tailor funding for AI for SDG research methods.

A common problem of blended finance is that concrete blended finance vehicles are complex and difficult to create due to the harmonization of interests and expectations of different stakeholders which can take several years (see Delmon, 2024). This might explain why it is acknowledged as an important instrument for financing SDGs but also why there is not yet a blended finance vehicle that finances AI for SDG research. The conditions for the creation of such an instrument could be subject to further research.

3.5. Summary and Implications for Interviews

The desk research conducted for this study reveals that US-based companies and philanthropies are the most active actors in financing AI for Good projects, be they research or appliance based. Public actors, while having played a significant role in funding early research through research foundations, have not stood out in financing AI for Good projects. However there are small signs of public momentum such as through large scale national strategies as seen at the Paris AI Action Summit in 2025. They remain one of the most important potential actors for financing, not only by the scale of investments, but also by lowering the risk for other smaller actors to finance AI for Good projects in collaborative funding models. Social and impact investors, as well as blended finance, haven't played a role yet in financing AI for Good research or projects, but because of their focus on development could play a role in the future.

At the same time, the literature review highlights key knowledge gaps: The operational perspectives of stakeholders remain underexplored, especially regarding how projects

are selected, evaluated, and sustained. Similarly, little is known about funding processes and criteria that led funders to fund a certain project or not.

While this study does not seek to fully address all of these gaps, it aims to explore them through qualitative interviews with stakeholders across sectors. The findings provide a preliminary, practice-informed view into how different institutions understand and engage with AI for the SDGs. The following chapter outlines key thematic findings that emerged from these conversations.

4. Interview Findings

4.1. Trends in AI for Good Implementation

Although AI is now "everyone's business" where AI is embedded in the operations of many organizations concerned with development with "even small NGOs using AI for grant assessment" (EXP10), the implementation of AI is still dominated by multi-stakeholder approaches led by big tech.

Private Sector and Big Tech Leading Implementation
Private sector actors and big tech companies continue to drive the technical implementation of AI solutions. Companies like Microsoft, Google, and AWS (Amazon Web Services) dominate in areas like disaster response, using tools such as satellite imagery and geospatial analytics.

As one interviewee noted:
> "So if you can look at what Microsoft is doing, what Google is doing, what AWS is doing, because they compute, they don't worry about compute, right? So they can put a project, for example, Google, they have Google Maps. So if there's flooding, they can easily see what is happening, where, how people are being displaced and then they have Google search they can now start you know like people are searching about maybe flooding in this area or they are searching about rescue efforts in this area so they can pinpoint where exactly what is happening and how they can help in those kind of areas." (EXP6)

As a result of their capabilities, private capital still accounts for the majority of investments in AI, particularly in healthcare, energy, and climate sectors (EXP2).

A Multi-stakeholder Approach is Common
The interviews showed that AI for Good projects need different stakeholders working together in order for the projects to succeed. The reasons for this are various: For one thing, AI requires access to compute which is not always easily available (EXP1, EXP2, EXP4, EXP6). Another reason for a multi-stakeholder approach lies in the fact that for example foundations are often relatively small but also hope to actively engage and foster long-term relationships with other stakeholders (EXP5, EXP3, EXP9, EXP4). In the case of a Swiss foundation, the whole model of their AI program lies in aiming for public-private partnerships (EXP3). This is also due to the fact that sensible data (like for example health or tax data) which can be better analyzed by AI lies in the hands of

governments, but often these governments themselves lack the capability to make better use of them.

Emergence of "Small AI" for Greater Sustainability
There is increasing recognition of the potential of small, localized AI models. One expert explained:
"Large models require a lot of compute and resources, but 'small AI' runs on cameras, phones, and watches. It's cheaper, more sustainable, and can be used everywhere" (EXP6). Small AI models are seen as more feasible for developing countries and can democratize AI access across languages and regions that are traditionally underserved.

4.2. Project Funding Trends

Funding AI for Good initiatives today involves a diverse mix of strategies, financial instruments, and institutional approaches. Interview data revealed that while philanthropic, public, and private actors are all active players, each actor funds projects differently, depending on their risk appetite, strategic objectives, and financial models. Overall, AI for Good gets integrated into existing funding models.

Growing Pools of Purpose Driven Capital
Interviewees highlighted the emergence of new funding structures aimed at AI for Good. Experts anticipate that major AI firms like OpenAI and Anthropic will eventually launch large philanthropic foundations to promote "AI for humanity" (EXP2). "OpenAI and Anthropic will likely have billions to spend through foundations. It's a future funding source we expect." (EXP2)

There is also growing interest in using Public Benefit Corporations (PBCs) commercial entities owned by nonprofits to channel operating profits into social good initiatives. One expert cited Google's commitment to "spend one percent of operating profits on socially beneficial projects." (EXP2)

Institutional Models for Funding
While most funders have not fundamentally changed their financing models specifically because of AI for Good, some institutions are experimenting with different approaches to ensure greater sustainability and impact. For example, a Swiss foundation described its future plan to create a standalone spin-off company by 2027, transitioning away from project-based funding toward a self-sustaining consulting model: "The idea is to form an entity that can stand on its own within the system, with certain profit expectations once our engagement ends" (EXP3).

Similarly, some international agencies operate more as secretariats or conveners rather than direct funders or implementers. One such agency explained "We act as a secretariat and an advisory body; we curate work, convene stakeholders, and coordinate resources, but we don't execute projects directly" (EXP6). These models highlight that funding today is not only about direct grants, but also about building capacity, networks, and sustainable institutions.

Sources of Project Funding
Funding sources for AI for Good projects are fragmented. In IOs, project money often comes from two channels:

1. Core budget allocations from member states, allowing for longer-term planning and
2. External voluntary sponsorships from private sector actors or foundations (EXP6).

However, stakeholders consistently noted the dominance of private sector contributions. As one expert explained, "Right now, the private sector is contributing the most. If you want longer-term planning, funding from member states is easier and better because you can define the objectives by the countries, not by the industry" (EXP6). This tension between industry funding and sovereign funding influences who holds power over AI for Good initiatives and can contribute to the digital divide.

Role of the Private Sector
The private sector is now recognized as a major funder, especially in areas like healthcare AI, energy, and climate resilience. A private sector expert remarked "The biggest chunk of societal improvement and enhancement comes from the private sector. Everyone looks at grants, but the private sector plays a huge role" (EXP10).

Private companies fund AI projects through internal budgets, venture arms, and in house support. One private actor, for example, offers cloud grants to nonprofits, covering compute and storage costs so that nonprofits do not have to deplete their budgets every month. "Sometimes we give a $100,000 cloud grant to organizations that already have the data and technical expertise. It's about saving their operational budgets"[4] (EXP2).

Nonetheless, several experts warned about market failures, "Private companies aren't willing to invest in AI for tropical diseases or for hunger initiatives because there's no market for it. That's when philanthropy and government need to step in" (EXP10). Thus, commercial potential still heavily skews what gets funded privately, leaving critical gaps that require public or philanthropic intervention.

Philanthropic and Venture Philanthropy Approaches
Philanthropic organizations are adapting, blending grants with venture philanthropy and impact investing models. Some organizations use a two-pronged approach, "We primarily use grants and venture capital. Any return we get from our startup investments goes straight back into funding new impact projects." (EXP5).

Funding instruments vary from basic research grants to co-funding partnerships to equity investments in AI-focused startups. One funder noted that matching projects to strategic themes is essential, "We always look at proposals through a strategic lens. Open calls are important, but we need balance to avoid adjacency bias" (EXP5).

---

[4] Even when investment appears "free", private actors often gain value through data access, reputational benefits, insights into new markets or strategic positioning.

However, the open call system has its challenges. For example, one recent call offered $3.2 million in grants but received over $600 million in applications, highlighting the competition for philanthropic capital.

Some philanthropies also have impact investing arms offering equity and venture debt financing. One interviewee explained, "We review about a thousand ventures a year, conduct due diligence on 30-40, and invest in 5-7. We typically invest $100,000 to $500,000, predominantly in equity, sometimes in debt or grants" (EXP8). These investors also work long-term with entrepreneurs, typically over 7-10 years, to ensure donor organizations achieve self-sufficiency.

4.3. Criteria for Determining What Projects Get Funded

Interview data revealed that the objectives of each institution (philanthropic, public sector, private sector, or philanthropic impact investors) heavily determine the funding mechanisms and selection criteria.

Problem Relevance and Practicality
Across all stakeholders, a clear trend emerged: projects must address significant, real-world problems with pragmatic, implementable solutions. As one interviewee emphasized, funders "take into account what the problems are and whether there are practical solutions" and carefully consider whether "the problem [is] big enough for humanity to care about" (EXP2). This focus on problem scale and feasibility shapes which projects advance through selection processes, especially among private and impact-driven funders.

Strategic and Thematic Fit
Funders require that projects align closely with their institutional mission and strategic priorities. One interviewee described how project selection depends on fit with a clear thematic strategy, stating, "It must be around healthcare, and specifically linked to our guiding strategy" (EXP3). Strategic alignment extends beyond thematic focus to geographic targeting and co-funding structures, with one stakeholder explaining, "We never go alone. We always require a co-funding entity" (EXP3).

Similarly, funders prioritize partnerships that contribute to their core thematic pillars such as biodiversity, climate resilience, or disaster recovery (EXP1). Philanthropic Impact investors echoed this need for strategic alignment, noting, "It has to be a good fit with one of our four themes otherwise we don't move forward" (EXP8).

Team Competence and Partner Readiness
The strength and reliability of the project team were also seen as pivotal. Funders stressed the importance of selecting partners who are technically skilled, mission-aligned, and collaborative. As one interviewee articulated, "There needs to be a fit, dedicated team, subject matter experts guiding the project, and the willingness to build something together" (EXP1).

Similarly, a philanthropic actor emphasized relational aspects in the selection process, describing it as akin to "dating," where the goal is to "see if the team is willing to learn

and grow with you" (EXP8). Overall, funders seek committed, adaptable, and well-connected partners capable of co-developing solutions.

Proof of Concept and Track Record

A proof of concept is a critical consideration. One stakeholder explained, "We usually look for ventures that have been around for two to three years and have some revenue. We join at the early growth stage, not pure startup" (EXP8). Funders typically expect projects to have moved beyond the ideation phase, demonstrating operational maturity, financial stability, and early signs of scalability before committing resources. However, this tendency is not uniform across all funders. Risk appetite varies, while venture philanthropies seek partners with a proven track record to ensure a return on investment, philanthropic organizations tend to be more willing to support earlier stage or higher risk projects, especially if the potential social impact is significant.

Localization and Public Sector Engagement

Philanthropic funders emphasized the importance of local, relevance and public sector engagement. Projects must address genuine community needs and involve local stakeholders. As one interviewee explained, "We want projects that innovate but also are localized" (EXP5).

Furthermore, having co-funding partners such as local governments or other donors is often essential for approval. As another funder remarked, "Without a co-funding partner, it's unlikely a project would be selected" (EXP3). This ensures broader ownership and increases the chances of long-term sustainability.

In sum, funders consistently emphasized that project selection is multi-dimensional. While thematic alignment, technological feasibility, and data readiness are necessary, long-term sustainability, team strength, ethical compliance, and real-world impact potential are equally crucial. Institutions increasingly expect organizations to present a strong proof of concept, involve local stakeholders, and secure co-funding arrangements to successfully attract support in the evolving AI for Good financing landscape.

4.4. Challenges/Barriers in AI-for-Good Funding and Implementation

Multiple challenges persist that threaten to limit the scalability, sustainability, and inclusivity of AI for Good initiatives.

Fragmentation and Lack of Scale

Many stakeholders emphasized the fragmented nature of funding and project development."There's not enough Series B, C, or D funding. Companies can build

prototypes but not scale sustainably." (EXP10). Without sustained growth capital, AI-for-Good initiatives often stall after initial pilot phases, limiting their real-world impact.

Market Failures in Critical Areas
AI for Good funding tends to flow toward sectors like healthcare, energy, and climate areas seen as profitable or scalable. However, market failures persist in less commercially attractive domains like hunger, neglected tropical diseases, and education. "Private companies aren't willing to fund AI for infectious diseases or zero hunger. There's no market for it." (EXP10). Experts agreed that philanthropy, grants, and government funding must complement private investment to address these gaps. Given the dominance of a few tech firms in AI funding, philanthropy and government funding must complement private investment to address these gaps.

Data Gaps and Measurement Challenges
Tracking the global flow of AI-for-Good funding is extremely difficult, particularly in the Global South (EXP4, EXP10). "It's hard to find global datasets on AI funding reporting standards are low outside of the US and Europe." (EXP10). Existing funding databases tend to skew towards large, developed markets, leaving emerging regions underrepresented.

AI Barriers and Digital Security
The adoption of AI in sensitive sectors like healthcare continues to be hampered by legal and ethical barriers. "Institutional legal sign-up is always difficult; getting access to medical data can take months" (EXP1). Additionally, trust in AI remains a barrier, particularly around data ownership and perceived competitive advantages among private investors. "There's no transparency and openness in everything. And so it means that every single firm rebuilds its value chain.If you can just use a common knowledge house like AI would provide, I think it would basically be only positives" (EXP7).

Concerns have also been mentioned related to AI risk and digital security. "I think we can't stop it. It's coming anyway. I believe that the technology itself does more good than [harm] if we know how to introduce it" (EXP8).

Lack of Public Finance
Several interviewees indicated that there is a need for public stakeholders to finance AI for Good projects through grants (EXP4, EXP9, EXP6). This is especially true for applications that don't have a commercial value (i.e., non-profits) are too irrelevant for big tech companies to develop (for example chatbots in low-resource languages) or benefit regions or countries that do not have means to finance relevant AI for Good projects on their own (EXP4). One interviewee working for a European development agency noted that the issue gained increased traction within his development agency and also finds resonance in receiving countries (EXP4). He contrasted AI for Good having a golden future within development cooperation with the recent funding cuts for

development aid (of course mainly driven by the shutdown of US AID but also eying general cuts to development aid in other countries):

> "What would you rather shut down? The chatbot project or the refugee camp? […] chatbots and AI are expensive. One of our GPU [graphics processing units] servers – how many HIV [Human Immunodeficiency Virus] medicines could you buy for that? […] I see that there is no money for HIV medicine for people but at the same time, I want a new supercomputer, in this case, I don't really know whether AI can compete with that" (translated, EXP4).

Other interviewees also mentioned the limited financial means of their organizations (EXP9) with some specifically stating that "national governments should play a role" (EXP2). The advantages of public funding are evident:

> "With money from member states you can plan long term. If governments come together to cooperate, it could solve some digital divide issues. Big tech only focuses on what makes the most business sense. Small industries cannot compete with big tech" (EXP6).

Digital Divide

The digital divide was referenced by several interviewees, particularly in relation to access barriers and data asymmetries in AI for Good implementation.

One interviewee(EXP4) highlighted the difficulty of initiating AI applications in low-resource settings: "The first chatbot is much more difficult than the second", underlining both the technical entry barriers and the lack of accessible, reusable AI infrastructure that could support local innovation. Nevertheless, he noted a relatively positive dynamic between funders and local actors, describing a cooperative atmosphere, albeit within an unequal power relationship.

Concerns about regional data bias were echoed by an interviewee from an international consultancy (EXP1), who observed: "If the data is better about the U.S. and Europe, you end up with a bias in the data set toward things that are being funded from the U.S. and Europe." This statement reflects how global AI development can overlook or misrepresent needs in underfunded regions such as sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia.

Other interviewees offered more optimistic perspectives. The CEO of an impact investment firm (EXP7) expressed confidence in the growing interest in AI for Good: "More things will happen, more people will engage." Another stakeholder (EXP2) also emphasized the value of a competitive and pluralistic ecosystem: "The more people that are doing this, the better... there's more being built for the organizations that need it."

Critique of AI for Good

Despite general enthusiasm for AI for Good among stakeholders, a few stakeholders also criticized the overall concept. One interviewee was sceptical about whether AI for Good can really contribute to the solution of societal problems. In his view, it is far more

important to create the right societal and legal circumstances first, before considering technical solutions:

> "[...] this idea 'we now have a new tool and with it we are practically saving the world'. We are simply very skeptical that these tools will change anything, because at the end of the day it is about attitudes and values, and a tool alone does not not change anything" (translated, EXP9).

5. Analysis

This section serves to synthesize the findings and contrast them with the literature review. We focused on the findings that we deemed crucial (the role of the public sector, digital divide, SDGs) and/or surprising in light of the literature review (philanthropic actors, impact investors). Since the interview findings on private companies mainly overlap with those of the literature review they are not discussed in the analysis.

5.1. Philanthropic Actors

Philanthropies are essential early funders of AI for Good initiatives because they can take on higher risks and support projects that serve the most vulnerable. As we have seen in the literature review, philanthropies now play an increasingly important role in development finance (Schuty et al., 2017; McGoey, 2014; OECD, 2021) and were also active in ICT4D (OECD 2009). This is further supported by interviews conducted with various foundations. At the same time it should be noted that their individual volume tends to be small compared to what governments and companies can fund.

In order to unlock greater impact, philanthropies are increasingly using not just grants but equity investments, which reflects a trend towards venture philanthropy. Venture philanthropy refers to the application of venture capital finance and business management principles to achieve philanthropic goals. It involves supporting innovative, growth-oriented, and risk-taking ventures that promote social or environmental good. Venture philanthropy emphasizes strategic funding, capacity building, and measurable impact (Fondation Botnar, 2025; Halman et al., 2010; OECD, 2014). The emphasis of all interviewees of foundations (EXP3, EXP5, EXP8, EXP9) on long-term relationships with recipients which often includes capacity building can be seen as an expression of this trend. Nevertheless, we see a risk that philanthropies are turning into "impact investors light" and leave areas of market failure to governments alone.

5.2. Role of the Public Sector

Interviewees consistently brought up the importance of public stakeholders engaging in funding in AI for Good projects (EXP1, EXP3, EXP4, EXP6, EXP9, EXP10). More explicitly than found in the literature review, it has been highlighted that public sector investment is not only needed to bridge the gap between research and application but to specifically target use cases that do not have a business case (or constitute market failures). As mentioned in the literature review (3.4.6 Blended Finance), public sector

funding can take away risk for other actors and crowd more capital in. In some cases, public sector funding was even required by funders (EXP3).

Despite increased attention for AI for Good, public funding is threatened by a worsening global context for development aid (EXP4). While this can be most clearly seen at the example of development agencies, the trend might also affect development banks which have been identified as possible funders in the literature review but couldn't be investigated on more thoroughly due to time constraints. Still, the findings from both interviews and desk research make a strong case that public funding is needed to advance the AI for Good field further and create more equitable access. Recent announcements such as those made by France are encouraging but time will tell how the landscape will be affected by governments identifying AI for Good as a powerful lever on the one hand and less inclination for development aid on the other hand.

It has also become clear through interviews that, as seen in the literature review, a multi stakeholder approach is needed and often actively sought after by governments. Governments often lack the technological capabilities for AI for Good sectors and seek private partner sectors. In these private-public partnerships there is a continuity with ICT4D.

5.3. Impact and Social Investors

Although impact investors constitute a small subgroup in the sample (one impact investing firm (EXP7, and one foundation that mainly engages in impact investing (EXP8)) the interviews still shed light on the field and confirmed the main findings from the literature review as well as from other interviews. It stands out that the investments of these actors are relatively small scale and highly focused on local partners (EXP8). Furthermore, the relative novelty of AI (for Good) is holding investors back to fund concrete projects (EXP7). This again underlines the importance of public sector investment. Through collaboration of multiple stakeholders (like in blended finance vehicles) impact investors could be led to move from using AI only to boost their internal operations to contributing to the wider AI for Good sphere.

5.4. Choosing Which SDG to Fund: Trends and Gaps

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that while the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a useful directional framework, funders do not always select projects explicitly based on SDG labels. Using SDGs to determine investments "is an imperfect but good framework to describe what it means to do positive things in the world" **(**EXP2). Instead, they tend to prioritize areas with the highest potential for impact, available data, pragmatic solutions and alignment with the organization's purpose/mission. "Investors/ funders likely do not look at the portfolio from an SDG perspective. More looking into the applications for funding and focus on whether the team is bringing a pragmatic pathway to impact"(EXP2**).**

Domains such as health (SDG 3) and climate resilience (SDG 13) consistently emerged as the most fundable. A public sector stakeholder described these areas as

"low-hanging fruit" because they offer mature AI use cases, strong data foundations, and visible urgency (EXP6). This is in line with the literature review, which suggests that healthcare, energy, and climate initiatives are attracting the bulk of both private and philanthropic investment. "It is a directional signal that these are better places to invest or have a higher potential to deliver real change. Investors are engaged in these conversations where people see the greatest potential." (EXP10).

5.5 Digital Divide

The literature review found that the digital divide is not merely about access to devices or infrastructure; it reflects deeper, accelerating societal asymmetries in digital literacy, institutional capacity, and technological benefit-sharing. Findings from the interviews confirm and deepen this view (EXP4) and highlight how the initial deployment of AI technologies in low-resource environments requires significantly more effort and reflects how gaps in infrastructure, and technical skills create entry barriers that are difficult to overcome. In addition, a private sector stakeholder (EXP1) commented on regional data disparities, which resonates strongly with critiques from Pasquale (2015) and O'Neil (2016). These scholars argue that algorithmic systems trained on skewed datasets can replicate and reinforce existing geopolitical power imbalances, serving the interests of funders and developers in the Global North while overlooking the priorities of underrepresented regions.

While these findings largely align with existing critiques in the literature, some interviewees also introduced a more optimistic tone (EXP2, EXP7), stressing the growing inclusivity and interest in the AI for Good space. This contrasts with more skeptical academic narratives and may signal a shifting dynamic in which digital inclusion is increasingly seen as both a moral imperative and a competitive advantage.

Nonetheless, as Bircan & Özbilgin (2025) caution, healing the digital divide will require more than voluntary efforts or good intentions. Effective responses must include regulatory frameworks that ensure transparency, accountability, and global ethical standards.

6. Recommendations

This section includes short recommendations for different types of organizations that could be deduced from our findings. Since our findings are limited by a small interview sample, so are the recommendations. Besides the short recommendations we decided to develop more concrete advice for different types of organizations. We developed three ideal types that we encountered the most in our primary and secondary research and are aware that for example the absence of Global South actors constitutes a regrettable and important gap. Furthermore, our recommendations should not be regarded in a strict sense but serve as impulses for organizations about how to approach AI for Good.

6.1 For all Organizational Types:

Organizations should embrace multi-stakeholder approaches for AI for Good projects. This is already a lived practice but could be deepened anymore. For the success of cooperation, it is crucial that partners are clear about distinct roles and the scope of cooperation. One question that needs to be addressed is in what form the project continues to live on after the end of a cooperation. It is important to make sure a project retains technical and operational functionality, as well as impact after the initial funding ends.

Make closing data gaps an explicit criterion in project selection and funding. All funders and implementers should systematically assess data gaps at the design phase and invest in data equity as part of AI for Good strategies. Any multi-stakeholder approach should also specifically include actors from the group benefitting from the AI for Good project to address Digital Divide issues.

Organizations should emphasize impact and scalability over solely using SDG labels. While aligning with the SDGs is helpful for signaling broader goals, organizations should prioritize real-world impact and the ability to scale solutions beyond pilots. Organizations should lead with the tangible social problem they are addressing, the measurable outcomes they aim to achieve, and a clear plan for how the project can expand sustainably. Referencing SDG alignment remains valuable to frame the project's relevance within global development priorities, but the focus must be on demonstrating practical pathways to impact.

6.2 For Organizations Seeking to Attract Funding such as NGOs, Smaller Philanthropies, or Not-for-Profits:

Organizations in need for funding should tailor their projects to the objectives of funders. One finding of the study has been that AI for Good does not necessarily change funding patterns and does not lead to new ways of funding but rather that AI for Good gets integrated into existing funding patterns and organisational goals. AI for Good is often seen as a tool to advance the overarching goals of organizations or foundations.

Organizations should prioritize relationship-building when seeking funding and treat partnerships like a long-term relationship rather than a transaction. Funders are not only looking for strong ideas but also mission-aligned teams that are collaborative, adaptable, and trustworthy. This highlights the need for organizations to approach funding as a process of cultivating fit and trust, rather than chasing quick grants. Especially in AI for Good, where technical complexity and impact timelines are long, partnerships work best when they're built on strong foundations.

Organizations should leverage venture philanthropy and pursue co-financing models for greater impact, when the topic concerned has a "business case".

Venture philanthropy offers an increasingly attractive funding model for organizations seeking to scale AI for Good initiatives. Rather than relying solely on traditional grants, organizations can position themselves as strong candidates for venture philanthropy by demonstrating both social impact potential and organizational growth capacity. Venture philanthropists not only provide financial support but also contribute strategic advice, mentorship, and operational support over multiple years. Funders practicing venture philanthropy look for ventures with promising models that can be strengthened and expanded through hands-on engagement and capacity building.

6.3 For Public Institutions such as Government Departments and Agencies or International Organizations:

Public institutions should mobilize more capital to fund AI for Good projects. This could help to crowd in other stakeholders and make overall more capital available. It is furthermore needed to address market failures and ensure equitable access. With public funding AI for Good can really contribute to more equitable AI that advances development.

Support grassroots data initiatives and community-driven AI projects. Governments should fund local actors to build context-specific datasets, ensuring that underserved communities are not excluded from AI-driven solutions. This also involves supporting data literacy and advocacy in regions with limited technical capacity.

6.4 Action plans for ideal types of organizations:

Ideal type 1: A Western philanthropy/NGO seeking to develop an AI for Good project

An NGO or a small philanthropy based in Europe or North America and seeking to develop an AI for Good project should first develop a clear understanding of the goals of the project. Should the project become a stand-alone in the long term (inhouse or outsourced), is it limited to a certain time period or will it be to assist another type of organisation, for example a partner NGO in a developing country? It is furthermore crucial to define measurable goals that the AI should achieve and check the technological and operational feasibility of these goals. The finance mechanism is vital. If the organisation needs outside funding it is important to align the goals of the AI with the goals of a potential (possibly philanthropic) funder. In that case, one can also profit from possible capacity building by the partner. Generally, one should acknowledge that an AI for Good project cannot be run alone. Even when one secures the support of a solvent financier who might also have access to compute (or can pay for it) a lot of time should be devoted to interactions with the people that will eventually benefit from the AI.

Especially when the beneficiaries of the AI share a different cultural and economic background they should be included in project planning from the beginning onwards to avoid digital divide issues.

Ideal type 2: A government agency/government funded agency from the Global North

Public actors from the global North have both the financial means and access to technology and human capital to address market failures that are not addressed by other actors because of the capital needed or the lack of profitability. Public institutions should devote clear, long term funding to AI for Good to signal certainty for other investors/actors. Public institutions should serve as platforms for bringing different stakeholders together. They should actively also bring stakeholders from the Global South to the table, collecting their needs and providing equitable capacity building. In a world imbued by AI applications aiming at profitability, public actors should explicitly fund non-profit AI for Good projects.

Ideal type 3: A Western tech company

Tech companies should make even more use of their technological inhouse capabilities and seek collaboration with governments and local communities. In public-private partnerships market failures could be addressed most efficiently with governments providing the funds and companies providing the technology. We also recommend using a fixed share of profits from AI business exclusively for AI for Good.

7. Conclusion and Further Research

This study gave exploratory, qualitative insights into current practices in AI for Good, especially the funding mechanisms and stakeholder relationships. Funding for AI for Good is expanding but remains fragmented and uneven, with SDG sectors such as health and climate as better funded compared to critical areas such as hunger and education. The most important funders are private sector tech-companies as well as philanthropies who highly engage in venture philanthropy. One of the main challenges lies in mobilizing more public financing for these and other underfunded areas. As with other SDG and development related finance, public funding however seems to be in short supply. On the implementation side of AI for Good projects, it has become apparent that multi-stakeholder approaches are the norm and are embraced by almost all actors.

While the research could offer some exploratory insights from common practices among different stakeholders there are several gaps that need to be addressed by further research:

1) More data is needed on different types of funders. On the public site no insights from development banks could be collected in the second phase of the research. This is significant given the financial means of these institutions and the role they might take in the context of diminishing development aid. In this vein, insights from other development agencies than the one interviewed as well as ministries would also be insightful. On the non-public site, more interviews with public companies engaged in AI for Good (for example through their philanthropic arms) as well as foundations and impact investors would enrich the findings of this study.
2) More data is needed to gain insight on the small yet growing role of impact investors which remain concentrated in developed markets.
3) Further research needs to include more female (and possibly non-binary) perspectives as all interviewees have unintentionally been male.
4) The geographical scope of the research should be widened and move beyond high-income countries such as Switzerland or the US. This would also be helpful to address "Digital Divide"-issues and financier-receiver relations more comprehensively.
5) The "small-scale AI" use cases mentioned by one interviewee (EXP6) deserve further research as they have the potential to be high impact and low cost. These localized AI models are seen as more feasible for developing countries as they are cheaper and do not require a lot of compute. It has the potential to democratize AI in regions that are traditionally underserved.
6) Also financing mechanisms could be analysed more accurately by defining different types of projects and taking different investment stages into account.

Annex

Interviewee Codes in Chronological Order

Code	Type of Organisation	Interviewee Position and Occupation	Geographical Base of Interviewee	Gender
EXP1	International Consultancy	Partner	United States of America	male
EXP2	Public Company	Senior Product Manager	United States of America	male
EXP3	Foundation	Programme Director	Switzerland	male
EXP4	Development Agency of an European Country	Development Consultant	Rwanda	male
EXP5	Foundation	AI and Digital Innovation Lead	Switzerland	male
EXP6	International Organisation	Program Officer	Switzerland	male
EXP7	Impact Investor Firm	1st interviewee: CEO and founder of the Company 2nd interviewee: CTO of the Company	Switzerland	male (both)
EXP8	Foundation	Partner and COO	Switzerland	male
EXP9	Foundation	Project Manager	Switzerland	male
EXP10	International Consultancy	Partner	United States of America	male

References

Abadi HHN, He Z and Pecht M (2020) Artificial Intelligence-Related Research Funding by the U.S. National Science Foundation and the National Natural Science Foundation of China. *IEEE Access* 8: 183448–183459.

Adams WC (2015) Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews. In: Newcomer KM, Hatry HP, and Wholey JS (eds) *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 492–505.

African Development Bank (2024) Digital Future for Africa: African Development Bank and Intel to Train Millions in AI. African Development Bank Group. Available at: https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/digital-future-africa-african-development-bank-and-intel-train-millions-ai-71649 (accessed 16 May 2025).

AI Action Summit (2025) MAKE FRANCE AN AI POWERHOUSE. Government Report, February. Elysee.

Alaoui AA and Azdimousa H (2024) How Artificial Intelligence Combined with Blockchain Technology Could Accelerate Impact Investing. In: *International Conference on Advanced Intelligent Systems for Sustainable Development (AI2SD'2023)* (eds M Ezziyyani, J Kacprzyk, and VE Balas), Cham, 2024, pp. 419–426. Springer Nature Switzerland.

Appenzeller G, Bornstein M and Casado M (2023) Navigating the High Cost of AI Compute. Available at: https://a16z.com/navigating-the-high-cost-of-ai-compute/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

Attridge S and Engen L (2019) Blended finance in the poorest countries: The need for a better approach. ODI (Overseas Development Institute) Report.

Aydin M (2021) Does the digital divide matter? Factors and conditions that promote ICT literacy. *Telematics and Informatics* 58 (2021) 101536.

Bankhwal M, Bisht A, Chui M, et al. (2024) AI for social good: Improving lives and protecting the planet. McKinsey & Company.

Barjandi E (2019) Financing for ICT for Development (ICT4D) in light of delivering on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - A force to fund or a fight to find?. Master Thesis Copenhagen Business School.

Bircan T and Özbilgin MF (2025) Unmasking inequalities of the code: Disentangling the nexus of AI and inequality. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 211: 123925.

Bishop M and Green M (2015) Philanthrocapitalism Rising. *Society* 52(6): 541–548.

Botti-Lodovico Y and Dhar V (2024) From margin to mainstream: Moving philanthropy to reshape our AI-enabled future. In: Ugazio G and Maricic M (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy*. London: Routledge.

Brandusescu A (2021) Artificial Intelligence Policy and Funding in Canada: Public Investments, Private Interests. Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Montreal, McGill University.

Brockman B, Hersh S, Hoyer Gosselink B, et al. (2021) Investing in AI for Good. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Available at: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/investing_in_ai_for_good (accessed 16 May 2025).

Cath C, Wachter S, Mittelstadt B, et al. (2018) Artificial Intelligence and the 'Good Society': the US, EU, and UK approach. *Science and Engineering Ethics* 24(2): 505–528.

Cave S (2020) The Problem with Intelligence: Its Value-Laden History and the Future of AI. In: *Proceedings of the AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society*, New York NY USA, 7 February 2020, pp. 29–35. ACM. Available at: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3375627.3375813 (accessed 16 May 2025).

Celik I (2023) Exploring the Determinants of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Literacy: Digital Divide, Computational Thinking, Cognitive Absorption. *Telematics and Informatics* 83(2023) 102026.

Chui M, Harryson M, Manyika J, et al. (2018) Notes from the AI Frontier. Applying AI for Social Good. *McKinsey Global Institute Discussion Paper*.

Clarkin JE and Cangioni CL (2015) Impact Investing: A Primer and Review of the Literature. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal* 6(2). De Gruyter: 135–173.

Convergence Blended Finance (2024a) State of Blended Finance 2024:Climate Edition. Convergence Report.

Convergence Blended Finance (2024b) Blended Finance 101. Available at: https://www.convergence.finance/blended-finance (accessed 16 May 2025).

Cowls J (2021) 'AI for Social Good': Whose Good and Who's Good? Introduction to the Special Issue on Artificial Intelligence for Social Good. *Philosophy & Technology* 34(1): 1–5.

Cowls J, Tsamados A, Taddeo M, et al. (2021) A definition, benchmark and database of AI for social good initiatives. *Nature Machine Intelligence* 3(2): 111–115.

Crawford K (2016) Can an Algorithm be Agonistic? Ten Scenes from Life in Calculated Publics. *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 41(1): 77–92.

Delmon J (2024) Blended Finance. In: Delmon J (ed.) *Innovative Funding and Financing for Infrastructure: Addressing Scarcity of Public Resources*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 176–196. Available at: https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/innovative-funding-and-financing-for-infras

tructure/blended-finance/EEC765792C62FD7DF95D83377041091D (accessed 15 May 2025).

Dervishi K (2023) Foundations Seek to Advance A.I. for Good — and Also Protect the World From Its Threats. Available at: https://www.philanthropy.com/article/foundations-seek-to-advance-a-i-for-good-and-also-protect-the-world-from-its-threats (accessed 16 May 2025).

Dijk J van (2005) *The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dijk J van (2020) *The Digital Divide*. Cambridge, UK ; Medford, MA: Polity.

Dotan R (2024) AI and philanthropy: How can they elevate each other? In: Ugazio G and Maricic M (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy*. London: Routledge.

Edwards R and Holland J (2013) *What Is Qualitative Interviewing?* What is? Research methods series. London, New Delhi: Bloomsbury.

EIB (European Investment Bank) (2023) German AI frees doctors from paperwork. Available at: https://www.eib.org/en/stories/ai-artificial-intelligence-health-tech (accessed 16 May 2025).

EIF (European Investment Fund) (2020) EIB Group provides €150 million to support artificial intelligence companies. Available at: https://www.eif.org/what_we_do/equity/news/2020/eib-group-provides-eur150-million-to-support-artificial-intelligence-companies.htm (accessed 16 May 2025).

Fan Q and Qiang CZ (2024) Tipping the scales: AI's dual impact on developing nations. Available at: https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/digital-development/tipping-the-scales--ai-s-dual-impact-on-developing-nations (accessed 16 May 2025).

Fernández-Arias E, Hausmann R and Panizza U (2020) Smart Development Banks. *IHEID Working Papers*. IHEID Working Papers 06–2019. Economics Section, The Graduate Institute of International Studies.

Field A (2024) Impact Investors Are Larger, Skeptical Of AI For Now, Finds The GIIN. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/annefield/2024/10/31/impact-investors-are-larger-skeptical-of-ai-for-now-finds-the-giin/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

Flammer C, Giroux T and Heal G (2024) Blended Finance. *NBER Working Paper No. 32287*.

Floridi L, Cowls J, King TC, et al. (2020) How to Design AI for Social Good: Seven Essential Factors. *Science and Engineering Ethics* 26(3): 1771–1796.

Foffano F, Scantamburlo T and Cortés A (2023) Investing in AI for social good: an analysis of European national strategies. *AI & SOCIETY* 38(2): 479–500.

Foundation Botnar (2025) Foundation Botnar's Approach to supporting purpose led
    ventures. Available at:
    https://www.fondationbotnar.org/fondation-botnars-approach-to-supporting-purpo
    se-led-ventures/ (accessed 16 May 2025)

Ford Foundation (2023) Philanthropies launch new initiative to ensure AI advances the
    public interest. Available at:
    https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/news-and-press/news/philanthr
    opies-launch-new-initiative-to-ensure-ai-advances-the-public-interest/ (accessed
    16 May 2025).

Frana P (2024) Assessing Smart Nation Singapore as an International Model for AI
    Responsibility. *International Journal on Responsibility* 7(1).

Gates Foundation (2023) Gates Foundation Selects Nearly 50 Global Health and
    Development Projects That Will Contribute to Shaping Equitable Access to AI.
    Available at:
    https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/media-center/press-releases/2023/08/gran
    d-challenges-rfp-recipients-ai-large-language-models (accessed 16 May 2025).

Gedrimiene E, Celik I, Mäkitalo K, et al. (2023) Transparency and Trustworthiness in
    User Intentions to Follow Career Recommendations from a Learning Analytics
    Tool. *Journal of Learning Analytics* 10(1): 54–70.

Gerdes A (2022) The tech industry hijacking of the AI ethics research agenda and why
    we should reclaim it. Discover Artificial Intelligence 2(1): 25.

Ghallab M (2019) Responsible AI: requirements and challenges. *AI Perspectives* (2019)
    1:3.

Ghimire N (2020) Historical Development of ICT. *Researchgate. Uploaded Presentation*.
    DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.20337.92000.

GIIN (Global Impact Investing Network) (2019) Core Characteristics of Impact Investing.
    Available at: available at:
    https://thegiin.org/publication/post/core-characteristics-of-impact-investing/
    (accessed 16 May 2025).

GIIN (Global Impact Investing Network) (2023) 2023 GIINSIGHT IMPACT INVESTOR
    DEMOGRAPHICS.

Google (2024a) Google.org-Workforce-AI-Opportunity-Fund. Available at:
    https://aiopportunityfund.withgoogle.com/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

Google (2024b) Our new report on AI's opportunity for developing countries. Available
    at:
    https://blog.google/outreach-initiatives/public-policy/google-ai-developing-countrie
    s-growth/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

Goolge (2023) Empowering social entrepreneurs in Europe: Introducing the Google.org
    Social Innovation Fund on AI. Available at:

https://blog.google/outreach-initiatives/google-org/googleorg-social-innovation-fund-ai/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

Government of the Republic of Singapore (2023) NAIS 2.0. Singapore National AI Strategy. AI for the Public Good For Singapore and the World.

Grantham Research Institute (2024) How can 'blended finance' help fund climate action and development goals? Available at: https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/how-can-blended-finance-help-fund-climate-action-and-development-goals/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

Habbel V, Jackson E, Orth M, et al. (2021) *Evaluating Blended Finance Instruments and Mechanisms: Approaches and Methods*. OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers, No. 101. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Halman L, Gemelli G, Duten A, et al. (2010) Venture Philanthropy. In: Anheier HK and Toepler S (eds) *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*. New York, NY: Springer US, pp. 1604–1608.

Haydon S, Jung T and Russell S (2021) 'You've Been Framed': A critical review of academic discourse on philanthrocapitalism. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 23(3): 353–375.

Holzmeyer C (2021) Beyond 'AI for Social Good' (AI4SG): social transformations—not tech-fixes—for health equity. *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 46(1–2). SAGE Publications: 94–125.

Iazzolino G and Stremlau N (2024) AI for social good and the corporate capture of global development. *Information Technology for Development* 30(4): 626–643.

Iori M, Martinelli A and Mina A (2022) The direction of technical change in AI and the trajectory effects of government funding. In: *LEM Working Paper Series*.

ITU (International Telecommunication Union) (2024a) About us. In: *AI for Good*. Available at: https://aiforgood.itu.int/about-us/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

ITU (International Telecommunication Union) (2024b) ITU: Committed to Connecting the World. Available at: https://www.itu.int:443/en/Pages/default.aspx (accessed 16 May 2025).

ITU (International Telecommunication Union) (2024c) AI for Good-Innovate for Impact. Final Report 2024.

IUPUI (Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy) (2023) Global Philanthropy Tracker 2023. *Indidana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy*.

Jasper U, Jha S and Germann S (2024) Shaping the ethical and inclusive AI revolution: Five roles for philanthropies. In: Ugazio G and Maricic M (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy*. London: Routledge.

Jha R (2024) Navigating risk complexity associated with data philanthropy for AI. In: Ugazio G and Maricic M (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy*. London: Routledge.

Johnson J (2022) The AI Commander Problem: Ethical, Political, and Psychological Dilemmas of Human-Machine Interactions in AI-enabled Warfare. *Journal of Military Ethics* 21(3–4): 246–271.

Kahn, Jeremy (2025) France, funders launch $400 million public interest AI initiative. Philanthropy News Digest (PND), 12 February. Available at: https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/france-funders-launch-400-million-public-interest-ai-initiative (accessed 16 May 2025).

Kong S-C, Cheung WMY and Zhang G (2021) Evaluation of an artificial intelligence literacy course for university students with diverse study backgrounds. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence* 2: 100026.

Long D and Magerko B (2020) What is AI Literacy? Competencies and Design Considerations. In: *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, Honolulu HI USA, 21 April 2020, pp. 1–16. ACM. Available at: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3313831.3376727 (accessed 16 May 2025).

Lutz C (2019) Digital inequalities in the age of artificial intelligence and big data. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 1(2): 141–148.

McGoey L (2014) The philanthropic state: market–state hybrids in the philanthrocapitalist turn. *Third World Quarterly* 35(1): 109–125.

McKinsey (2023) AI for social good in sustainable development goals. Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/quantumblack/our-insights/ai-for-social-good (accessed 16 May 2025).

Meta (2024) Data for Good at Meta: Über uns. Available at: https://dataforgood.facebook.com/dfg/about (accessed 16 May 2025).

Microsoft (2024a) The 2024 Impact Summary. Meeting the Moment.

Microsoft (2024b) AI For Good Lab. In: *Microsoft Research*. Available at: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/research/group/ai-for-good-research-lab/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

National University of Singapore (2024) NUS sets up AI Institute to accelerate frontier AI research and boost real-world impact for public good. Available at: https://news.nus.edu.sg/nus-sets-up-ai-institute/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

NATO (2020) *Science & Technology Trends 2020-2040_Exploring the S&T Edge*. NATO Science & Technology Organization.

OECD (2009) *ICTs for Development: Improving Policy Coherence*. The Development Dimension. OECD. Available at:

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/icts-for-development_9789264077409-en.ht
ml (accessed 16 May 2025).

OECD (2014) *Venture Philanthropy in Development: Dynamics, Challenges, and
Lessons in the Search for Greater Impact*. OECD. Available at:
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/venture-philanthropy-in-development_62c2
19a9-en.html (accessed 15 May 2025).

OECD (2021) *Private Philanthropy for Development – Second Edition: Data for Action*.
The Development Dimension. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at:
https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/private-philanthropy-for-development-s
econd-edition_cdf37f1e-en (accessed 16 May 2025).

OECD (2024) *Explanatory Memorandum on the Updated OECD Definition of an AI
System*. OECD Artificial Intelligence Papers 8, Available at:
https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/explanatory-memorandum-
on-the-updated-oecd-definition-of-an-ai-system_623da898-en (accessed 16 May
2025).

O'Neil C (2016) *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and
Threatens Democracy*. New York: Crown.

Pasquale F (2015) *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money
and Information*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Rahkovsky I, Toney A, Boyack KW, et al. (2021) AI Research Funding Portfolios and
Extreme Growth. *Frontiers in Research Metrics and Analytics* 6(630124).
Frontiers.

Reinecke Y, Sunku S, Nowack D, et al. (2024) AI for Impact: The Role of Artificial
Intelligence in Social Innovation. White Paper. The Schwab Foundation.

Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Development. In: *The
Rockefeller Foundation*. Available at:
https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/initiative/ai-for-development/ (accessed 16
May 2025).

Sætra HS (2023) *Technology and Sustainable Development: The Promise and Pitfalls of
Techno-Solutionism*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge. Available at:
https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781003325086 (accessed 16 May 2025).

Salamon LM (2014) The Revolution on the Frontiers of Philanthropy: An Introduction. In:
Salamon LM (ed.) *New Frontiers of Philanthropy: A Guide to the New Tools and
New Actors That Are Reshaping Global Philanthropy and Social Investing*.
Oxford University Press. Available at:
https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199357543.003.0001 (accessed 16 May
2025).

Schmidt Futures (2022) Schmidt Futures Launches $148M Global Initiative to Accelerate
AI Use in Postdoctoral Research. Available at:

https://www.schmidtfutures.org/schmidt-futures-launches-148m-global-initiative-to-accelerate-ai-use-in-postdoctoral-research/ (accessed 16 May 2025).

Schmitt MN (2013) Autonomous Weapon Systems and International Humanitarian Law: A Reply to the Critics. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2184826.

Schuyt TNM, Hoolwerf BLK and Verkaik D (2017) Better together? A Study on Philanthropy and Official Development Assistance. *Agence Francaise du Dévelopment. Papiers de Recherche*.

Tartaro A (2024) Value-laden challenges for technical standards supporting regulation in the field of AI. *Ethics and Information Technology* 26(4): 72.

Temasek Trust (2024) Three Wallets, One Goal for Good: How Blended Finance can Create Meaningful Change. Available at: https://www.temasektrust.org.sg/what-we-do/impact-hub/article-details/blended-finance-meaningful-change (accessed 16 May 2025).

The Economist (2024) OpenAI's new fundraising is shaking up Silicon Valley. *The Economist*, 19 September. Available at: https://www.economist.com/business/2024/09/19/openais-new-fundraising-is-shaking-up-silicon-valley (accessed 16 May 2026).

Tomašev N, Cornebise J, Hutter F, et al. (2020) AI for social good: unlocking the opportunity for positive impact. *Nature Communications* (2020)11: 2468.

Ugazio G and Maricic M (eds) (2024) *The Routledge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy*. London: Routledge.

UN APCICT (2010) Options for Funding ICT for Development. United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development. Briefing Note. Available at: https://www.unapcict.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/BriefingNote-8-web_0.pdf (accessed 16 May 2025).

UN (United Nations) (2024) Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024. Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development. United Nations. Available at: https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789216040031 (accessed 16 May 2025).

Van Dijk J (2005) *The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Van Dijk J (2020) *The Digital Divide*. Cambridge, UK ; Medford, MA: Polity.

Vinuesa R, Azizpour H, Leite I, et al. (2020) The role of artificial intelligence in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *Nature Communications* 11(1): 233.

Wang C-H and Wu C-L (2022) Bridging the digital divide: the smart TV as a platform for digital literacy among the elderly. *Behaviour & Information Technology* 41(12): 2546–2559.

Wang W and Siau K (2019) Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Automation, Robotics, Future of Work and Future of Humanity: A Review and Research Agenda. *Journal of Database Management* 30(1): 61–79.

WEF (World Economic Forum) (2024) Tech leaders and social innovators are using AI for social good. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/06/collaborating-for-impactful-ai-tech-leader-meets-social-innovators/ (accessed 16 May 2025).