

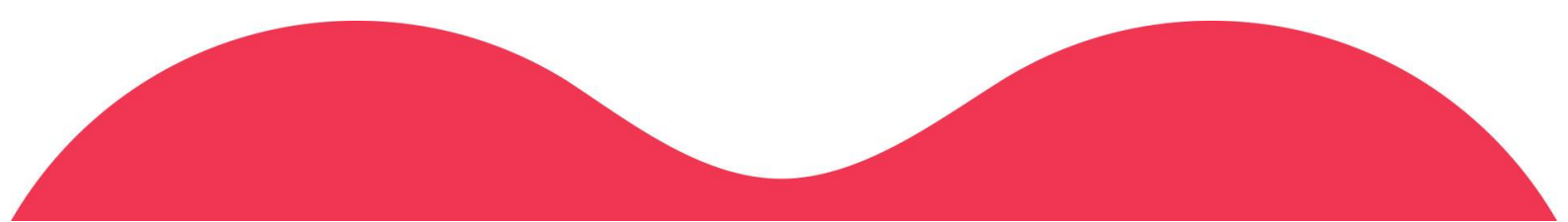
Unrestricted Funding: A Practical Guide for Funders

Case Study: Be for Education Foundation

Combining long-term commitment, expertise and flexibility

September 2026

Annex to: [Unrestricted Funding: A Practical Guide for Funders](#), Philea 2026



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About Be for Education Foundation

[Be for Education Foundation](#) is a family foundation established in 2019 and operational since 2020. Building on a long-standing family tradition of philanthropy, the foundation has chosen to focus exclusively on education, concentrating all its resources and activities on this field. At the heart of this choice is a simple conviction: Education is the cornerstone of society, a source of knowledge, learning, awareness, civic responsibility, dignity and development for people and their communities.

The foundation aims to support schools and, more generally, the education system in promoting knowledge and learning, combating educational inequalities, and developing the potential of every individual, operating with professionalism, independence and a willingness to experiment.

Its goal is to become a leading philanthropic actor in the Italian education sector, focusing on combating early school leaving and educational inequalities; promoting pedagogical models and teaching practices tailored to the different needs of today's schools; and promoting the role of teachers and educators.

In its first six years, the foundation invested approximately €30 million across its core educational programmes, knowledge development and dissemination activities.

Long-term horizon in a complex field

Educational change takes time. For this reason, most initiatives supported by the foundation are developed with a long-term horizon, typically spanning five to ten years or more. The foundation believes that structural issues such as educational disadvantage and social vulnerability can't be addressed through short funding cycles alone and require continuity, patience and sustained engagement.

This long-term perspective also allows programmes to evolve over time, generating evidence, strengthening partnerships, and adapting to changing circumstances without losing sight of their broader objectives.

Working through direct engagement

A defining feature of the foundation's model is its decision not to operate through traditional grants or open calls for proposals. This reflects a deliberate choice to move beyond standardised and competitive mechanisms in favour of a more collaborative approach. Initiatives are identified through research, dialogue and engagement with schools, non-profit organisations, researchers and practitioners, and are often co-designed and accompanied throughout their development and implementation. The foundation operates through a model of high direct engagement, combining programme work with significant investments in research and knowledge generation to inform decisions and strengthen interventions over time.

Funding practices and partner relationships

The foundation organises funding around specific programmes and initiatives rather than through fully unrestricted grants. At the same time, it seeks to ensure that partners have the conditions needed to implement activities effectively, including full cost coverage where appropriate, advance payments, support for organisational development and reduced administrative requirements. Trust-based relationships are central to this approach. Rather than relying primarily on extensive compliance procedures, the foundation seeks to build long-term partnerships grounded in dialogue, shared objectives and mutual accountability. For this reason, the foundation often allocates resources for capacity building and organisational strengthening beyond immediate programme needs. In such cases, funds may also support day-to-day organisational operations, with partners retaining the flexibility to adapt activities and allocate resources during implementation, in response to changing conditions and lessons learned.

Rather than viewing flexibility as a specific funding instrument, the foundation sees it as a broader way of working that recognises the complexity of social change and the need to adapt to evolving circumstances.

Knowledge development and learning

Alongside programme implementation, Be for Education Foundation invests significantly in research, knowledge development and dissemination activities. The foundation believes that philanthropy can contribute not only through financial resources but also through evidence, knowledge and opportunities for collective learning. Research findings, surveys, editorial initiatives and dissemination activities are therefore used to inform programme design, strengthen decision-making and contribute to broader discussions on education policy and practice.

Continuous adaptation

Flexibility and learning are central elements of the foundation's operating model. The foundation openly acknowledges that complex programmes may require adjustments, course corrections and continuous refinement. Data collection, evaluation, partner feedback and ongoing dialogue all contribute to decision-making and programme improvement.

The foundation therefore regards learning not as a separate activity but as an integral part of implementation. The ability to learn from experience, adapt interventions and refine programmes over time is considered essential when working on complex educational challenges.

Contact

Want to know more? Get in touch!

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For more information on the Be for Education Foundation, visit:

beforeducation.org

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