

Philanthropy in motion

Seven testimonials about
seven ways to get involved

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Foreword

Erienne Eichenberger & Maurice Machenbaum
Co-founders, WISE – philanthropy advisors

For the last ten years, we have been fortunate to work with individual donors, entrepreneurs, and foundations that are passionate about their engagement, and have helped them have a lasting impact. We have learned from them that the reasons to engage in philanthropy are perennial, but the ways to give have evolved significantly. Together they constitute a multi-faceted philanthropy.

We have witnessed how philanthropy has become more professional in recent years; this trend is increasing, which pleases us. Giving practices are stronger, and new techniques have developed, such as *venture philanthropy*. The many ways of giving and the increased expectations from donors have encouraged us to have a closer look at the current situation in terms of “*how to engage*”. Those who give wish to combine the impact of their action with an engagement that is meaningful to them.

This publication shares with you the faces and visions of those who have helped philanthropy grow. They all contributed to the success of the 9th annual Conference of the “*European Venture Philanthropy Association*” that we contributed to hold in Geneva. We thank them warmly once again for their trust in this project. Our hope is that through their testimonials, this publication will inspire you with your own ongoing and upcoming projects.

Enjoy reading!

Venture philanthropy

The term *venture philanthropy* describes grant-making and social investment that employs the following characteristics.

High engagement and hands-on relationships between the social enterprise or non-profit management and the venture philanthropists.

Organizational capacity-building of the portfolio organizations, by funding core operating costs rather than individual projects.

Multi-year support of a limited number of organizations for 3-5 years, then exiting when the supported organizations are financially or operationally sustainable.

Non-financial support through value-added services such as strategic planning to strengthen management.

Involvement of networks that make various and often complementing skill-sets and resources available to investees.

Tailored financing that uses a range of financing mechanisms customized to the needs of supported organizations.

Performance measurement that places emphasis on good business planning, measurable outcomes, achievement of milestones, financial accountability and transparency.

(ressource: www.evpa.eu.com)

A perspective on philanthropy

Etienne Eichenberger & Maurice Machenbaum
Co-founders, WISE – philanthropy advisors

Why do people give?

EE: This question is as old as the world itself, probably because it touches on the intimate sphere of any philanthropist. There are no rules or evolution, because it is a personal matter. I like to quote a friend: “Empathy comes from the stomach, generosity from the heart, and philanthropy from the mind.” Generosity can be tied into philanthropy without any value system. But to give means to make decisions: these decisions incur specific demands when expectations increase. The donor becomes a philanthropist when he wants a more structured and proactive process.

MM: The Rockefeller family had developed the “three S theory” regarding the meaning of money: *spending, saving, sharing*.” Family wealth always has multiple facets. Today, in our ever-changing world which faces many challenges, the philanthropist is increasingly eager to imbue a donation with both quanti-

fiable results and a search for meaning. If you give 100 euros or a million euros, the means that are deployed regarding these two criteria - result and search for meaning - are not always identical.

Is there a minimum amount to give in order to be called a philanthropist?

EE: Philanthropy represents only a drop in the bucket of what is needed in humanitarian, social or cultural aid. Donations are always fewer than actual needs. The question of amount is important, but falls short of explaining what a donation is. An entrepreneur told us, “it took me five years to make significant donations. I wanted to make sure that my money would be well spent and that I could have the most impact with the ones I am supporting.” The question, “*how to give?*” is the essence of philanthropy. The way to give better is a determining factor, and probably as important as the decision to give more.

Innovation in philanthropy therefore has to do with the way one gives?

EE: Yes, we believe so. New giving models are at the core of philanthropic innovation. What has changed has less to do with “why”, “how much” and “for whom.” New giving options are available: supporting associations or social enterprises; making a gift or a loan; defining performance criteria rather than supporting a cause without explicit expectations, getting involved in one’s lifetime rather than through a will.

Does this innovative approach make it easier to reach results and social impact?

MM: Experience shows us that obtaining results is a process that begins with the definition of the strategy to support a cause. It is essential to identify the right partners and to agree on target results and the expected impact. As Alan Lakein said, “*Failing to plan is planning to fail.*” For a long time, not-for-profit organizations exclusively received donations in order to attain certain results. It is no longer taboo to make financial loans or to take shares in social enterprises. Philanthropists also consider that an administrative cost of 10 percent is an erroneous criterion for performance. It is more relevant to analyze and choose associations and social enterprises according to their performance and their real impact, rather than based upon their cost structure solely. “Ten percent or nothing” means nothing.

You often talk about “meaning” for philanthropists. Can you explain the idea?

EE: The importance of philanthropy and its concern about impact, reflect the responsibility of those who have succeeded in life, or those with a family estate. Philanthropists are interested in the whole process: can I engage family members, or outside collaborators? What collaborative models have the best leverage? For entrepreneurs, money only has value via projects that are developed or completed. We also know that money can divide generations within a family. Family values or

entrepreneurial spirit are not transmitted automatically. It is through lived experiences and through the examples they have that the next generations forge values.

How has philanthropy recently evolved?

EE: Philanthropy could be summarized as follows: a need to give of one’s time, to help someone or to give money. In the testimonials that follow, we read that philanthropists often make a commitment by providing their skills. For them, financial support goes hand in hand with a personal engagement that includes acquired skills and their wide network. *Venture philanthropy* includes many of these elements, as defined by the “*European Venture Philanthropy Association*”.

MM: I would like to add a nuance: what Etienne describes applies to some philanthropists, but we also see others who focus mostly on understanding the issues at stake, on meeting the organizations they support, and on being enriched by such encounters. Our clients often tell us, upon returning from a trip or after conducting a yearly evaluation, about their feeling of having received more than they have given.

Are foundations the only vehicle via which to give money?

EE: Foundations are trendy, but we need to put this fact into its proper context. Philanthropy is generally a world of too many solicitations and not enough listening. We see many foundations

that are created without a clear definition of their purpose. In Switzerland alone, one new public foundation is created every day! It is a good thing, but we should not neglect other aspects: the definition of objectives and strategy, process, identifying and selecting the organizations to be supported—all these steps require preparation.

MM: In this regard the facilitation and the expertise related to our business or the availability of independent structures for donors are new opportunities. At a time when we have so much access to raw information, advice and experience carry a growing importance. Let's look at the selection of partners: with the Internet, one would think that all the information required to form an opinion is available. But the web lacks the ability to measure the relevance of an organization that wants to improve healthcare in Tanzania for example, or support street children in Cambodia, without making the beneficiaries dependent on the organization.

People speak a lot more about philanthropy.

Is this a good thing?

EE: It is important to speak about what is well done. We could summarize the situation in these terms: philanthropists seek more confidentiality (vis-à-vis the general public) but less anonymity (vis-à-vis their peers or the organization they support.) This publication is not common outside the Anglo-Saxon world. You will read testimonials from people who agreed to share

what matters to them and how they engage in philanthropy. We are grateful for their trust, and hope that their commitment will inspire others.

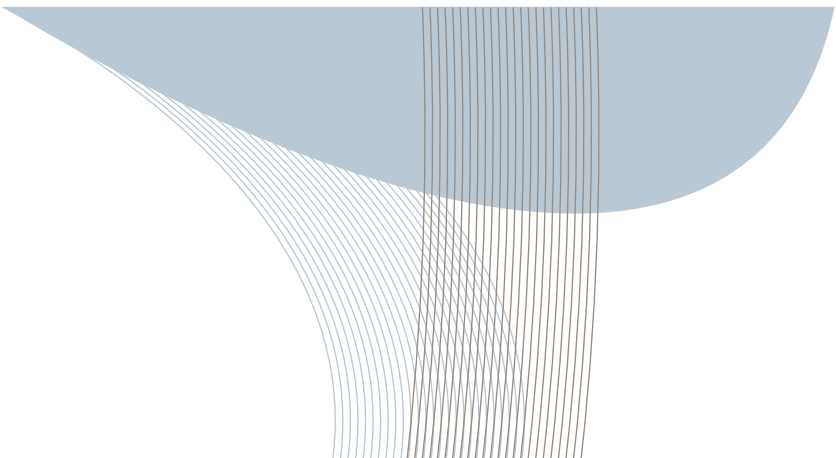
Valentine Collombin,

an engaged philanthropist, is director of operations at the Albatros Foundation, which is active in the field of education and youth. The Foundation, established by her family, also intends to share with the next generation its commitment to improve the world.


“The Foundation supports humanitarian and welfare organizations that are led by grassroots leaders so that they can implement their projects. Thanks to them, we are continuously learning. They help us hone our knowledge of the context in which we are engaging. The people who show us gratitude honor us with a great gift and strengthen our motivation.

One could think that those involved in philanthropy are idealists or dreamers, but actually they must conduct a rational analysis of the grassroots organizations and the ways in which they meet the needs. When they study the reality of the field or the country in which they wish to get involved, they quickly realize that without a rational approach, the project would perhaps not be durable or successful.

In the beginning, the Albatros Foundation chose to get involved in Cambodia and Vietnam. We started by working with professional philanthropic advisors who could share their contacts and



> thanks to them, we are
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experience, and who could guide us in this unfamiliar world. After meeting various stakeholders whose approach met our criteria, and after building a trusting network in these countries, we grew and established our own relationships.

For example, the Albatros Foundation has supported “*Pour un Sourire d’Enfant*”, (PSE) since 2008. This French humanitarian organization is based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Its approach combines both humanity and rationality, as does the Albatros Foundation. PSE’s latest project aims at offering its students the widest possible access to work opportunities. To achieve this, PSE is conforming to ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) standards, so that young Cambodians trained through PSE can have their diplomas recognized throughout the ten ASEAN countries.

In 2011, we wanted to get involved in Eastern Europe. After seeing images of state-run institutions for children that were publicly disclosed following the fall of Ceausescu’s regime, we chose to engage in Romania. After doing some research, we decided to work with “*Hope and Homes Romania*”, an organization that attempts to close these terrible institutions and find better solutions to foster children.

Choosing an organization or a specific program within an organization to support is a multi-step process. The Albatros Foundation first conducts research from abroad after which it selects a

number of candidate organizations. Then, we meet the organization leaders on the field to ensure that their approach is in line with ours. It is important for us to meet both the team members and the beneficiaries.

The Foundation favors multi-year commitments, in order for projects to develop in the long term. We travel to the field every twelve to eighteen months to follow up with existing projects.”

Three principles that give meaning to our philanthropic work

- > we put ourselves in our beneficiaries’ shoes and ask ourselves how we would like to be supported
- > we put ourselves in the shoes of the project leaders to understand the context and the challenges they face
- > we seek out the right balance between mind and heart.

Ivan Pictet,

a former senior partner with Banque Pictet & Co., has always been engaged in various projects involving philanthropy. For about ten years, he has presided over the Fondation pour Genève, and established the Fondation Pictet for Development. He is also a board member of many companies, including Symbiotics—a leader in microfinance—that reflect his support for social entrepreneurship.

“Philanthropy is a complex field that ranges from simple charity work to targeted support with impact measurement. Between the two, there are numerous nuances, with engagements that are very different from one to another.

We are witnessing increased professionalization in philanthropy today. It is an important stage, because we need to show management capacity in order to reach the results we expect. One thing is certain: everything I do is driven by a personal commitment and a strong interest. I had the privilege to head a foundation that fights drug addiction among young people internationally. I facilitated the establishment of a center in the Pâquis neighborhood in Geneva, to implement the measures advocated by the foundation. The project consists of providing a daily meeting place with a gym and meditation room for about 40 underprivileged youths. The goal is to help these youths regain self-esteem and improve their ability to protect themselves, also physically. I enjoyed going there myself as often as possible.



> I cannot envision philanthropy
without a personal commitment <



It is important to invest locally; Geneva remains undoubtedly at the center of my choices. In addition to the major cultural and social institutions in Geneva, which require support and presence, philanthropy can provide the opportunity to enter into unfamiliar grounds. These experiences enrich your life, because I cannot envision philanthropy without a personal commitment. An investment in time is also part of the process; the satisfaction from a successful project makes this time investment worthwhile. I am aware that this type of philanthropy is an investment that seeks a return. The highest form of philanthropy would be to give with complete detachment, but that is very difficult to achieve. To give without expecting anything in return could be seen as the purest philanthropic gesture.

I am very fond of the center on “*Finance and Development*” of the Graduate Institute in Geneva, to which I have contributed by the endowment of three chairs. I believe it is important to provide finance training for people in developing countries. As such, giving to these types of institutions helps prepare the ground for social development. In developing countries, it is essential to establish a framework for the economic tissue to grow in the primary sector, and for the micro-enterprises, which are mostly family owned, to have healthy foundations to develop in. To support these growing organizations, in Africa for example, we can go through micro-financing, or take shares in companies and accept very low or zero yields. These are also ways to help socially and with a personal engagement, since we can follow the development of these businesses.

I also participate in the selection process of grant allocation of the “Pictet & Cie Charitable Foundation”. The Foundation’s mission is both local and international. Local grants are mostly attributed to cultural programs with innovative initiatives or to pillars of Geneva’s cultural landscape. Internationally, we mostly support projects that help the poorest.”

Three steps towards a meaningful philanthropic commitment (my personal perspective)

- > method to select projects and monitor impact
- > alignment with one’s personal goals
- > personal commitment.

Abdallah Chatila,

entrepreneur in jewelry and real estate, created the sesam Foundation in 2011 to structure his various commitments. The Foundation is especially sensitive to the problems that young and poor people face in the Geneva area. It also supports people with autism.



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“I was born in Lebanon and moved to Geneva at the age of 14. I am indebted to this city that helped me so much in my education and social relations, in starting a family, and developing my business. To give back to the community quickly became self-evident.

I have always supported organizations and people in need in the Geneva area, my host city. I was very amateurish in the beginning, but it came from the bottom of my heart. I think that we always begin this way. Emotions override reason. And I wasn't much aware of the real social problems in Geneva. With time, I decided to establish a serious and professional structure to create coherence among my various philanthropic activities. This is why I created the sesam Foundation in 2011. The idea was that in order to help beneficiaries more efficiently, we had to professionalize the selection process for projects, set goals, and get results. Disadvantaged youths have always deeply moved me.

Month after month, I see the objectives of the Foundation become clearer. Nevertheless external expertise is essential for a foundation to grow on a healthy base. Today, thanks to expertise and a better on-the-ground knowledge, we understand better the real impact of our actions. One should note that philanthropy is also made of rich experiences, discoveries and encounters.

A personal experience triggered me to think about the indebtedness of young people, and I committed deeply to this issue. As a result, today we work together with the “*Protestant Social Center*” to fight this scourge that can turn lives upside down, sometimes very early on.

Giving is a matter of finances, of course, but also a matter of time and listening skills. In order to carry out all the projects that are dear to me, I am thinking of engaging even more with the organizations. A foundation is all very nice, but without the trust you give to organizations, it is difficult for your philanthropic projects to reach their goal. I also hope to strengthen the Foundation board so that our young institution can mature.

In philanthropy, giving money is one tool among many others. With experience, you realize that you can help even more by sharing your network and finding the right contacts. This allows you to gain in efficiency, since you can quickly find someone who can give you a solution. Once the cause is selected, it is also

important to invest over time—at least for three years, so that the first results can be observed and felt. In philanthropy, it is important to be patient and pragmatic.”

My priorities for the future

In the future, I would like to do more co-financing of projects—partnerships with other public or private grant-making organizations. The experiences that we have had so far have been very positive. Proof, once again, that the more we are, the stronger we are.

Eric de Turckheim,

born in a family of Alsatian industrialists, is co-founder of the Trafigura company and president of the Trafigura Foundation, which was established in 2007 to support sustainable development, education, social reintegration, and healthcare.

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“A one-time gift is a failure. If you want to fight social exclusion and promote reintegration, you have to make a long-term commitment. You also have to follow a strategic process and demand results; otherwise your philanthropic action may not reach the set goals. In our view, commitment and follow-through are closely tied with financial support. They make the donation more efficient. When we share our expertise, our experience, our network and our working style, our partners can develop a real vision rather than playing it by ear.

When selecting projects in a complex field, we sometimes ask some outside experts for advice. WISE – philanthropy advisors recently helped us identify a project in the Philippines. Without them, we would probably not have made the best choices. In the philanthropic world, just like in the business world, each person has his profession and his expertise. Those who give money are not exempt from rules of good governance. Even if some of our staff members submit projects

to us and personally engage in them, our team always conducts an impact analysis, whether internally or with specialized institutions.

The professional world has taught us to rationalize resources and to be perennial. Longevity is essential in philanthropy: it means that the project is viable and that the governance is adequate.

When the business world meets the philanthropic world, everybody wins: the donor and the beneficiary. It is a very rich and diverse experience with incredible encounters. We share experiences, energy, and emotions that you cannot always have in the business world alone.

With the Trafigura Foundation, we got involved in projects that help the social reintegration of disadvantaged youth. Reintegration means above all to help renew one's dignity and self-confidence. In Connecticut and in New Orleans, our Foundation has set up "*Work and Learn Centers*" for the social reintegration of 16 to 19 year-olds. Closer to us, in Geneva, we have committed to the project "*Bateau Genève*", which offers a space for the reintegration of socially excluded youth. The space includes a food and drink stand that generates income and helps self-financing. The goal is to help these youths be again in contact with the workplace; our reintegration rate

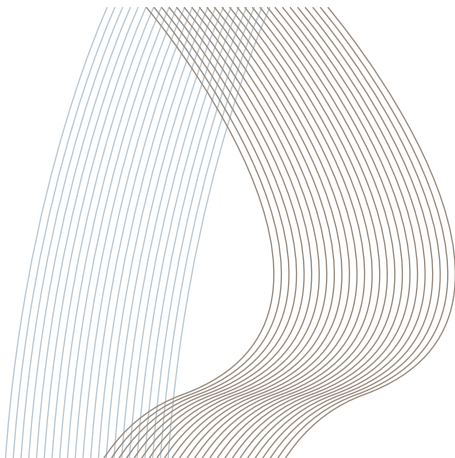
ranges from 60 to 70 percent. These philanthropic projects aim at giving new potential, hope and autonomy to socially excluded youths."

The three biggest challenges when selecting a project

- > measure and quality of the social impact
- > governance and long-term perspective
- > risk analysis and study of opportunities on the field; confirmation of social and cultural facts.

Yann Borgstedt,

a successful businessman, applies an entrepreneurial approach when supporting disadvantaged girls and women through the Womanity Foundation, which he established in 2005. Also engaged in developing the sector, he supports initiatives such as the organization Ashoka, which focuses on social entrepreneurship.



> to start young was my good fortune
and my personal choice <

“I didn’t become a philanthropist by chance. I had a good education and I was professionally successful at a relatively young age; I thus felt the need to contribute in making the world a bit more just. I believe that when life gave you a lot, it is normal to want to give back to people that were not as lucky.

I am motivated by striving for efficiency and by bringing a real added value. To start young was my good fortune and my personal choice. I believe that to give is good; but to give while going to the field and using one’s entrepreneurial skills is better. When I travel to visit projects, I meet incredible people who fight every day on the ground. I now spend half of my time on my philanthropic activities and the remainder on my professional activities. For me, it is a perfect balance.

Philanthropy is a profession for which I have an entrepreneurial approach. The goal is to have an impact and especially to be able to measure that impact. I am not doing this to feel good but to

try to make the world a better place. In order to have the same impact as in business, I had to focus on one cause. I decided to focus on making girls and women more independent. In many countries, women do not have the same rights as men. How can a man tolerate the fact that one woman out of three will suffer in her lifetime from violence, traffic or abuse? I cannot tolerate that, and it is not a matter of women's rights but of human rights.

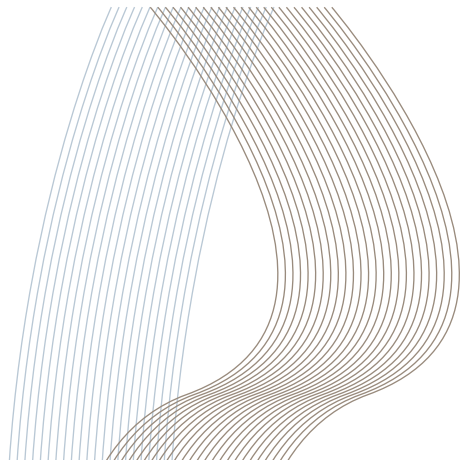
We are part of a larger world and I really want to bring an added-value. I like to find new ideas and help develop them. As an example, I have just returned from the West Bank. In 2010, we created in the Middle East a radio for women and entirely managed by women. It was a first! It was also a way to give a voice to women. Today, the results are there. Within three years, "*NISAA 96FM*" has become the third most listened to radio station in the region. This station is about to break even. Once implemented, this project has become financially independent thanks to the audience it captured.

I am convinced that you have to focus to be efficient and use your skills and network. It is not about you, it is about the people you want to help. A gift is a unique gesture. You cannot simply focus on what moves you. Emotion is not the only trigger. You have to ask yourself what cause you would like to fight for, and especially the ways in which you can be efficient. As an entrepreneur, I am convinced that you must take risks, find the

best partners, anticipate challenges, and avoid traps. You have to be ready to err, rethink your model, and sometimes start everything all over again."

Three mistakes to avoid when beginning in philanthropy

- > not wanting to take risks
- > wanting to do everything alone
- > believing that you know all the answers and not listen to what the beneficiaries need.



> we believe strongly in working
collaboratively with other foundations <



Kristian Parker,

a marine biologist by training, is chairman of the board of trustees of the Oak Foundation, which was established by his family in 1983. The Foundation is headquartered in Geneva, but has a worldwide mission. It offers its resources to address issues of global, social, and environmental concern, particularly those that have a major impact on the lives of the disadvantaged.

“The oceans and seas of the world are under great threat. If we continue to over-exploit and pollute our marine resources at this pace, we will exhaust them very soon. By very soon, I mean in about 15 years. That is why we support projects and organizations that aim to preserve ocean biodiversity and productivity, all over the world. Healthy oceans are crucial for the wellbeing of future generations, especially those that will rely on them as a major source of protein.

It is important to evaluate the impact of our donations. However, there are times when we cannot measure impact because we lack objective indicators to follow the course. We use indicators, instinct, and belief in the people we work with to insure the Foundation’s actions are on the right track. However, for much of our work, only future generations will truly benefit from the work of our partners. In the case of marine fisheries management, for example, the changes we support now will only have an impact in the decades to come. For our work on climate

mitigation, it will be our children's children that will benefit from our actions.

Climate change is an extremely pressing issue —one that has implications in all the other areas where we work. The concern is that the inherent ability of climatic and oceanic systems to function normally is being compromised. These systems will become less efficient at providing essential ecological goods and services that sustain livelihoods around the world. Changing rainfall patterns, reduced crop yields, collapsing fish catches, extreme weather patterns, and disease proliferation are just some of the challenges we face as a result of climate change. It is the most vulnerable, and least responsible, that will pay the highest price of inaction. Our only solution is to decarbonize the world's economy.

For an organization to receive our financial support, it has to fulfill criteria that depend on the nature of the work. The project must of course focus on the root cause of a problem. But it is also important that it uses a leveraged approach. For example, by supporting partners advocating for policy or regulatory change, we bet on lasting impact. If we are supporting a small-scale project, we expect it to be a replicable and scalable model that can be taken up by others, including governments. It is also essential to support projects and organizations for the long term—at least three to five years. Often we support organizations for longer periods, sometimes as much as ten years or more.

The Oak Foundation also requires co-financing. It is crucial for our partners to find matching funds, because we rarely fund projects alone. Additionally, we are sensitive to the fact that it is very helpful to share the same vision with both our funding partners and the organizations we support. By working closely with our partners we believe we can achieve maximum impact. Ultimately we believe strongly in working collaboratively with other foundations. Few of the world's problems can be addressed alone.

Since its founding, the Foundation has given 2,700 grants to non-profit organizations around the world. Although our headquarters are in Geneva we also have offices in eight other countries and our staff hail from over 20 countries. Our partners have been on the frontline of many struggles, from advocating for global agreements on climate change to promoting women's rights, child protection and an end to arbitrary detention.”

Three mistakes to avoid when beginning in philanthropy

- > don't rely completely on your own strategy. Flexibility is good (and often other people have better ideas)
- > don't be scared of taking risks. Change does not come easily or fast. Be patient
- > don't assume organizational overhead is wasteful. It is necessary; give organizations core support.

Guillaume Fatio & Didier Cherpitel,

respectively president and treasurer of the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, are engaged since 2008 in this umbrella foundation established in Geneva. This foundation is recognized amongst the key players in Switzerland and is the reference partner for the Transnational Giving Europe network (TGE).

> a tailored project that is stripped from administrative burden makes philanthropy more efficient <

“An entrepreneur wanted to get financially involved with his family estate and support projects for disadvantaged women. His decision was clear, but there were many unanswered questions, including the best structure and the most efficient governance to allocate his funds. He came to us for advice, and Swiss Philanthropy Foundation was able to give him the answers and the structure he needed. This is what we do.

Swiss Philanthropy Foundation offers alternatives to the classical model—the independent foundation—and helps anyone with a philanthropic project: thematic funds that allow for quick and simple donations; nominative funds that share features with foundations, without administrative or financial constraints. Swiss Philanthropy Foundation also offers innovative solutions, such as a collaborative fund that can multiply the impact of the project. In our model, flexibility is the first rule if we want to offer customized solutions to the donor. Our approach is simple: we listen and support the donor by being by his side.

We offer our know-how, our skills and our network to find the most fitting and economical solution for the donor; our approach is professional and consistent.

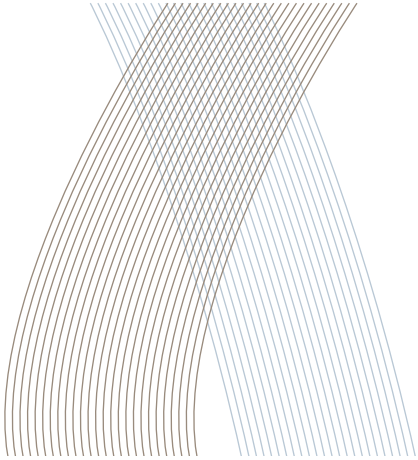
It is very important that the donor takes the time to choose the suitable procedure and governance for him to support the cause that matters to him. Together, we then look at all the elements that can make this philanthropic gesture as efficient and productive as possible. Once the donor has chosen the amount of capital to be donated, the time he is willing to invest in the project, his level of personal engagement (or his family's), the advice he needs to identify and follow up with projects, we select the best tools together. The nominative fund can be the best model, as in the case of the above-mentioned entrepreneur. What is certain is that the donor has the last word, and makes the decisions at every stage of the process. A tailored project that is stripped from administrative burden makes philanthropy more efficient.

The Foundation also has as its mission the promotion of philanthropy. We have established a fund to promote philanthropy, so that its stakes and its professionalization are better understood. We also want to position the excellence of Switzerland in this field. In one of the initiatives, we have partnered with others to host in Geneva the 9th annual conference of the "*European Venture Philanthropy Association*" (EVPA), which brings together key players of *venture philanthropy* from 25 countries.

Through its services offered to founders and donors, Swiss Philanthropy Foundation supported projects in 2012 for a global amount of SF 5.5 million in various areas: philanthropy development, medical research, youth and education, environment protection. The Foundation is also doubling its commitments in the next two years. We keep growing thanks to the renewed trust from donors in our umbrella funds and to those who are joining us. We are also strengthened by our close collaboration with many experts: banks chosen by donors, attorneys, lawyers, and European foundations that partner with TGE. At each stage, the donor feels secure given the trusted relationship that has been established."

Conscious generosity

Rodrigo Jordán is a Chilean alpinist who teaches team building, leadership skills, social entrepreneurship and other important competences by taking people on expeditions to the Everest, Antarctica and other peaks. He was recently appointed by President Sebastian Piñera to the board of the Foundation for the Alleviation of Poverty, which looks at new ways of measuring poverty in Chile, such as housing, work, access to education, and not only income.



> an exceptional team is a combination of conscious generosity, purpose and skills <

What does mountain climbing have to do with leadership, responsibility and poverty issues?

When I came back from the Everest, I followed the example of Sir Edmund Hillary, who was a mountain climber and a philanthropist. Twenty-one years ago, I founded Vertical, a foundation that allowed young children to trek and climb, but also to learn social skills, leadership, and conflict resolution.

You frequently talk about “conscious generosity.”

What do you mean?

When I took four people to Antarctica, to explore Ellsworth Mountain for the first time, we had to be very specific in our preparation and the choice of our equipment. But we were roped to each other, and slept under the same tent. We realized that generosity was at the heart of the relationship. We were thinking of the others, prepared tea for the others. We controlled our temper and showed higher consideration. Generosity is not always obvious. It is not enough to be unconsciously good.

In a stressful environment like Antarctica, you can only make it work if you trust that you are generous to the others as they are to you. You have to be conscious about generosity.

Can you give an example of this human component?

In the West, you focus on the hard knowledge to solve issues: after the earthquake in Chile, we talked about the number of houses, bridges, and roads that needed repair. We forgot the human component. Three years after this tragedy, people in the communities say that we took very little time, if any, to sit down with them, share some tea and lend our ears. They needed fellow human beings they could relate to.

Aid and philanthropy are heavily influenced by efficiency, measurable tools and results. Yes, we were able to reconnect all of Chile in 7 days, and phone lines in 3 days, which is amazing! But we failed in the humane dimension.

What makes and exceptional team?

It is a combination of conscious generosity, purpose and interlocking skills. By interlocking skills, I mean technical skills (knowledge), social skills (communication, conflict resolution), and personal skills (perseverance, dealing with frustration, etc.). There is a leader of the team, but leadership is shared by all.

How can philanthropy be responsible?

Philanthropy is not about writing a check. You have to do some research about the project you want to support. We have

standards of excellence in business, we need to apply the same standards in philanthropy: conduct due diligence, understand what an NGO is doing, and be conscious about what you are doing. The poor cannot complain; they will accept anything. They are not customers. We cannot bring a business mindset to philanthropy.

I also believe that philanthropy is not about giving a lot of money to an institution at the end of the world, while ignoring one's children's needs. You should do philanthropy everyday with the people you live with. That's another dimension of being conscious of what I am doing.

WISE – philanthropy advisors

Established in 2004 in Geneva, WISE is now one of the most recognized philanthropic advisory firms in Europe. For about ten years, it has supported individual donors, entrepreneurs, and foundations, from the development of their strategic engagement to the implementation of their project, while optimizing the social impact of their action. By offering a personalized and customized service throughout the various steps of the process, WISE enables its clients to live their engagement fully.

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Empathy comes from the stomach,
generosity from the heart, and
philanthropy from the mind.