

# BRIDGING TODAY AND TOMORROW

Futures Philanthropy  
Case Studies

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Case Studies

**Philea**

Philanthropy Europe Association

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Philanthropy must step up – Not with caution, but with courage  
By Giacomo Pinaffo, Secretary General, MeSSInA Foundation

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## FOREWORD

# PHILANTHROPY MUST STEP UP – NOT WITH CAUTION, BUT WITH COURAGE

By Giacomo Pinaffo, Secretary General, MeSSInA Foundation

The world is changing at an unprecedented pace, confronting us with a complex set of deeply interrelated challenges: climate instability, economic inequality, democratic erosion and social fragmentation. For philanthropy, this means business as usual is no longer an option. To truly drive change, the sector must embrace futures thinking, a way of anticipating and shaping what comes next rather than merely reacting to the present.

**T**his publication, “Bridging Today and Tomorrow: Futures Philanthropy Case Studies”, explores how philanthropic organisations can integrate strategic foresight into their work, offering both practical tools and real-world examples of how long-term thinking is being applied.

The goal? To equip funders with a new mindset – one that moves beyond short-term interventions toward systemic transformation.

Like many other regions in Europe and worldwide, Sicily – home to the MeSSInA Foundation – is facing extreme challenges. More than 70% of our territory is at risk of desertification due to climate change; and it remains one of the EU’s “less developed regions”, grappling with some of the highest rates of unemployment, as well as people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, in Europe. This reality demands alternative solutions to mainstream economic models that have, in many ways, contributed to these very challenges.

The MeSSInA Foundation, created in 2010, aims to achieve exactly that, providing viable sustainable alternatives. Our foundation goes beyond the provision of “philanthropic” finance and builds interconnected responses that bridge welfare, culture, production, finance, research and technology, engaging a wide range of stakeholders.

Today, it leads an EU-recognised Cluster of Social and Environmental Innovation (CSEI), fostering sustainable development across Sicily.

We see ourselves not just as funders, but as enablers of systemic transformation, helping communities unlock their potential and design new, sustainable future “visions” and bring them to life. Through our approach, we have challenged both the economic status quo in Sicily and the traditional philanthropic approach in our context.

*To truly drive change, the sector must embrace futures thinking – a way of anticipating and shaping what comes next rather than merely reacting to the present.*

The case studies in this publication challenge that status quo as well. They highlight the following approaches that philanthropic organisations can take to go beyond immediate relief, and invest instead in futures where those historically excluded from decision-making have a central role in shaping policies, economies and social norms:

## 1 ADOPT A FUTURES MINDSET

Philanthropic organisations must embed foresight into their strategy. This means continuously scanning for emerging trends, questioning assumptions and integrating future scenarios into decision-making.

## 2 SHIFT POWER AND CAPITAL

Traditional funding models often reinforce existing inequalities. Philanthropy can play a role in redistributing decision-making power to underrepresented communities. More funders must follow suit, ensuring those closest to societal challenges have the resources and authority to drive change.

## 3 INVEST IN RESILIENCE

Philanthropy must commit to long-term sustainability rather than donor dependency by investing in building resilient organisations and movements, not just funding short-term projects. This means supporting core costs, providing flexible funding and taking calculated risks on innovative ideas.

## 4 REIMAGINE GOVERNANCE

Philanthropy needs more inclusive governance structures that bring in members of the communities it supports. If philanthropy is serious about intergenerational fairness, for instance, it must actively include young people in decision-making rather than treating them as passive beneficiaries.

## 5 COMMIT TO LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

Systems transformation is not a one-time effort: It's an ongoing process of iteration and learning. Philanthropy must cultivate a culture where failures are seen as opportunities for growth, and where adaptive strategies replace rigid funding cycles.

The lessons and approaches outlined in this publication are essential to confronting the existential challenges that threaten our communities today. As such, they can inspire foundations that are seeking new ways to achieve change.

In Sicily, we faced a similar moment of reckoning in the 1990s when the Mafia controlled much of the region with extreme violence. At the darkest moment, when the Mafia aimed to show its dominance over the state by assassinating judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, a powerful civic, non-violent movement erupted. This movement gave rise to political, social and cultural initiatives that promoted a culture of legality and an alternative future. It marked a turning point, weakening the Mafia's control and planting the seeds of social economy models that continue to thrive today. Those seeds, after years of incubation and growth, ultimately led to the creation of our foundation.

Today, the "dark moment" is no longer just a regional issue, it is global. This does not discourage us: Our foundation itself was born from crisis, proving that critical moments can spark new solutions. I believe that transformation is possible on a global scale and that philanthropy has a key role in this, provided it challenges the status quo and aims at systemic transformation, as the case studies in this publication show.

Public resources, and political will, for social and environmental innovation are shrinking, so philanthropy must step up – not with caution, but with courage: It's time to take risks, explore new approaches and challenge outdated ways of thinking. Failing to act boldly would mean failing to be part of the solution.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We operate in an increasingly complex and fast-changing world. Every day, philanthropy leaders are facing infinite possibilities and, at the same time, the challenge of making strategic choices, often difficult ones. While uncertainty presents challenges, it also creates opportunities to rethink approaches, test new ideas, and build more adaptive and resilient ways of working.

**M**any donors, philanthropic organisations and wealth holders are radically rethinking their approaches, testing new ideas and building adaptive strategies to deal with uncertainty and complexity, allowing them to navigate change with greater clarity and purpose.

This collection of real-life case studies builds on the groundbreaking publication, [“Futures Philanthropy: Anticipation for the Common Good”](#), which identifies and formulates the need for futures thinking in the philanthropy field. This resource brings together the fields of foresight and philanthropy, highlighting an emerging ecosystem of organisations embedding futures thinking into their work. It also provides practical resources, including self-reflection exercises, key principles and frameworks that can be integrated into philanthropic practice such as megatrends, horizon scanning, causal layered analysis and ecosystem mapping.

The current publication complements the first one, offering practical insight into how funders and philanthropy networks are adapting their strategies, testing new funding models, embedding foresight and fostering cross-sector collaboration. While there are no simple solutions, these case studies highlight the concrete ways organisations are adapting, learning and preparing for the future – offering inspiration for funders, donors, philanthropy practitioners, researchers and advisors looking to integrate futures thinking into their work today.

*We will build the bridges,  
when we see the rivers.*

**Dr. James Motlatsi**, Trustee of the  
Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation

Mmabatho Maboya, CEO of the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation, shared this quote at Philea’s Futures Philanthropy gathering of leaders in April 2025 in Tilal Utique, Tunisia. Often, we are focused on coming up with solutions, without having spent enough time on understanding the issue we are trying to address. Seeing the rivers is the invitation to do exactly that – understanding the local context and the bigger picture of the change we seek. These bridges are intended to stand the test of time and serve today’s and tomorrow’s generations.

### Key findings

These case studies illustrate how philanthropic organisations are approaching systemic change, transformative decision-making and adaptability in practice. Rather than treating these as abstract goals, these examples show how philanthropic organisations are working to address root causes, engage diverse voices and remain flexible in uncertain environments. The following key findings demonstrate what is possible when long-term thinking, collaboration and responsiveness are embedded in philanthropic efforts; as well as the challenges of implementing these dimensions in the work of philanthropic organisations:

## 1. Systems practice and commitment to the long term

Foresight and futures thinking provide tools to anticipate and proactively shape the future of complex systems that philanthropic organisations engage with. These approaches require patience and trust in the process, as the first signs of change may only become visible years later. These case studies highlight how organisations are addressing root causes, fostering long-term resilience and shaping sustainable solutions. A key aspect of this work is influencing broader conversations and engaging stakeholders in transformative thinking.

The **Romanian-American Foundation** demonstrates this approach by supporting its partners with long-term funding commitments of 7 to 10 years, allowing them to pilot solutions to systemic challenges and scale them at the national level. The **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation** integrates intergenerational fairness into national discussions, encouraging a long-term perspective on sustainability. Similarly, the **Joseph Rowntree Foundation's** Emerging Futures programme advances systemic change by reimagining economic models and strengthening networks that support lasting, equitable transformation.

**Bikuben Foundation** also takes a systemic approach by committing to eradicating homelessness among young people. The foundation works towards structural change by rethinking service models; fostering innovation and ecosystem collaboration; and ensuring that long-term, sustainable solutions are embedded within wider social and policy frameworks.

## 2. Transformative decision-making

Decisions about the future are shaped by who participates in making them. Transformative decision-making in philanthropy involves rethinking traditional power structures, bringing in diverse perspectives and ensuring that those most affected by decisions have a voice in shaping them. This approach strengthens futures-oriented work by making it more inclusive, responsive and attuned to the complexities of social change.

**Leap Collective** takes transformative decision-making a step further by placing activists at the heart of funding decisions; challenging traditional power dynamics; and prioritising long-term, community-led solutions. **Assifero's** Future Chair initiative further demonstrates the value of integrating diverse voices, particularly from youth, in decision-making processes. This inclusiveness

ensures that philanthropic practices reflect a broader range of experiences, making them more attuned to the evolving needs of different communities.

## 3. Adaptive strategies

An adaptive strategy in the philanthropic context prioritises flexibility, responsiveness and continuous learning, allowing funders and donors to adjust their strategies and operations in response to changing circumstances and emerging challenges. **Laudes Foundation** has embraced adaptive strategies as a key learning from their initial strategy cycle, recognising the importance of evolving their approach to remain effective in a rapidly changing world.

The **Mercator Foundation Switzerland's** use of agile planning highlights a growing recognition of the need for adaptability and use of foresight. By responding to changing circumstances and remaining open to new possibilities, foundations can better navigate complexity and address emerging challenges by investing in innovative and alternative solutions.

**Mozaik Foundation** focuses on maintaining a clear mission while continuously adjusting its strategy to remain effective in shifting contexts and integrating voices of the communities it serves. The **Robert Bosch Foundation** also recognises the importance of flexibility in achieving sustainable systemic change. By adopting more open and adaptable funding models with fewer reporting requirements, it enables civil society partners to respond swiftly to urgent issues and future aspirations, strengthening their capacity to advance their missions.

The current context is rapidly shifting, calling on philanthropy leaders to embrace the large-scale transitions of our times – digital, green and social. “The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function”, wrote F. Scott Fitzgerald in an essay entitled, “The Crack-Up” (1936). Holding the two opposed ideas of addressing current urgent needs while anticipating future needs and aspirations – all while retaining the ability to function – is what philanthropy leaders are exploring and putting into practice in a multitude of ways.

We hope more philanthropic organisations will join this collective effort and vision and seek pathways to possible solutions and breakthroughs. The case studies in this publication offer inspiration and practical examples for how to do just that.

# SYSTEMS PRACTICE AND COMMITMENT TO THE LONG TERM

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# FROM DONOR TO PARTNER

How the Bikuben Foundation is embracing mission-driven systems change in philanthropy

## Case in brief

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| <p> <b>The issue</b></p> <p>Many of the societal challenges we face are complex, interconnected and require collective approaches. Addressing root causes effectively depends on evolving the power dynamics between funders and grantees to encourage greater collaboration and alignment. Focusing on shared missions and futures thinking, and taking collective responsibility, can lead to more lasting societal change.</p> | <p> <b>The context</b></p> <p>Foundations often focus on specific areas, limiting their ability to address complex issues such as youth homelessness, a growing problem in Denmark and other countries. While recent reforms have started reversing the trend, homelessness remains a critical issue. Tackling its root causes requires collaboration across civil society, government, businesses and investors.</p> | <p> <b>The path forward</b></p> <p>Achieving lasting impact requires moving beyond organisational logic to align efforts toward shared goals. Futures thinking, which focuses on the long term, provides a framework for reimagining collaboration between funders and partners, and placing missions – rather than organisations – at the centre. By focusing on shared responsibility and systemic challenges, this mission-driven approach fosters sustainable, meaningful change.</p> |
|--|--|--|

*“It lies in our DNA to take risks, being innovative, working together in partnerships and alliances with other actors. We have changed so much during these years, but these have been a constant.”*

Sine Egede Eskesen, Chief Visionary Officer, The Bikuben Foundation

## Bikuben Foundation: A Snapshot

Primarily active in Denmark and in Greenland, the Bikuben Foundation’s role is to catalyse systemic change. Established in 1857 as Sparekassen Bikuben to support Copenhagen’s working classes, [the foundation has evolved through mergers and takeovers](#). With a mission-driven approach, the foundation supports innovative, high-quality, and sustainable solutions by engaging a variety of stakeholders around common goals. It focuses on the fields of performing and visual arts, biodiversity and young people aged 13 to 30 who face significant social challenges or are marginalised.

## Mindset

- Enabling systems change
- Mission-driven strategy
- “Do-tank”, experiments and lab-based approaches
- Learning as mindset and culture
- Sustainability as foundational element
- Sharing as up-scaling strategy



## 1. Overview

Guided by a vision for a better future, the Bikuben Foundation focuses on systemic change. One critical area for the foundation is eradicating homelessness among young people in Denmark. Moving beyond short-term solutions, the foundation emphasises long-term strategies that address the root causes of issues by developing collaborative frameworks across municipalities, civil society, and other stakeholders, and aligning resources with specific societal missions. This holistic approach has led to tangible, lasting impacts, including a reduction in homelessness in Denmark and increased influence on national policymaking.

*“We believe in being close to the people and organisations to succeed with our missions. If we succeed in transforming society into something better, we need to be in close dialogue and listen curiously to the sector and the people.”*

**Sine Egede Eskesen**, Chief Visionary Officer,  
The Bikuben Foundation

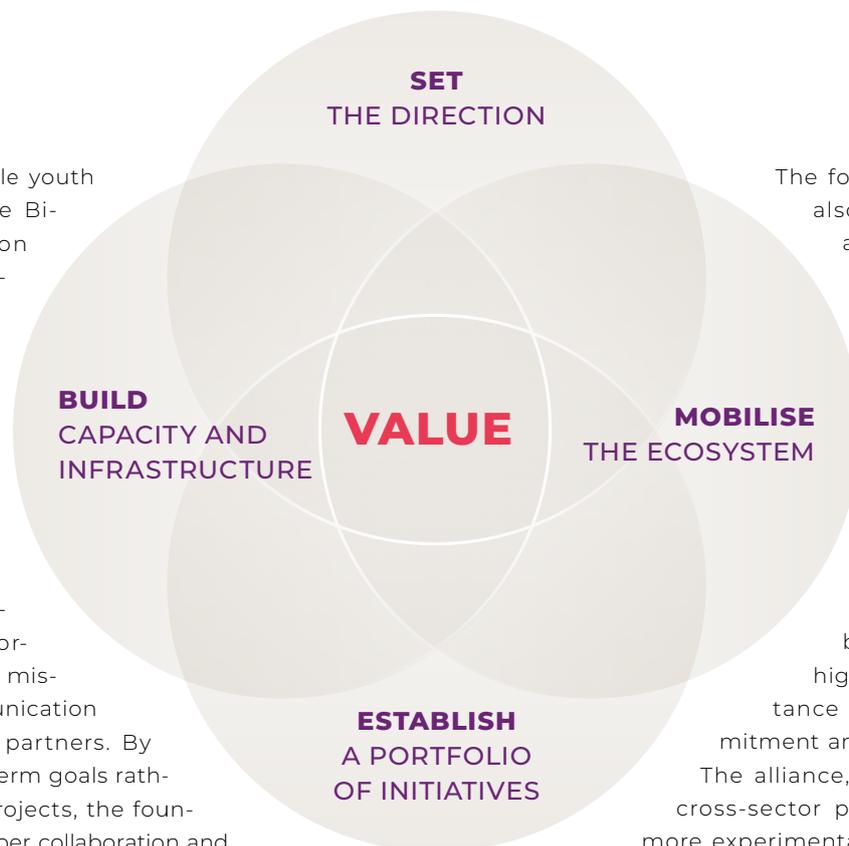
## 2. Challenge

The Bikuben Foundation addresses the entrenched issue of youth homelessness in Denmark, focusing on supporting marginalised young people who struggle with social and mental health challenges. According to the mapping [Home for All Alliance in Denmark, the Danish Centre for Social Research and Analysis 2024](#), there are 1,577 homeless individuals aged 18 to 29 in Denmark, making up 27% of the total homeless population. Root causes include disadvantaged family backgrounds; “dual diagnosis” of mental illness and substance abuse; housing insecurity; inadequate support systems; and economic challenges.

These individuals often face exclusion from education, employment and stable housing, putting them at risk of long-term vulnerability. The foundation works to prevent this by co-creating solutions with young people, fostering collaboration across sectors, and tackling the root causes of their difficulties.

Simultaneously, the foundation recognises the transformative power of art to stimulate reflection, debate and insight. By supporting innovation in the performing and visual arts; fostering artistic development; and promoting dialogue among artists, institutions and decision-makers, the foundation aims to contribute to both social change and cultural enrichment.

To get to where it is today, the Bikuben Foundation went through a journey of reflection and transformation. Eleven years ago, the funder’s approach was largely limited to providing grants for individual projects. While these initiatives often delivered meaningful results, it was challenging to see how they contributed to changing the larger context of the issues they sought to address. This sparked a critical re-evaluation of the foundation’s practices and a shift toward a more strategic and systemic funding approach.



To effectively tackle youth homelessness, the Bikuben Foundation shifted from a project-centred to a mission-driven approach, in line with the principles outlined in [Four Network Principles for Collaboration Success](#).

This approach emphasises the importance of a shared mission, open communication and trust among partners. By focusing on long-term goals rather than isolated projects, the foundation fosters deeper collaboration and coordination across sectors. This allows for the pooling of resources and collective expertise, as well as a more holistic response to the root causes of youth homelessness, ensuring sustainable and impactful systemic change.

A pivotal moment in this transformation came during site visits to the US, UK, and Canada, where Bikuben observed innovative models of collaboration and the power of working in alliances. Notably, its engagement with the Collective Impact Homelessness Alliance in Canada provided inspiration: This coalition-based approach demonstrated how foundations could work with other organisations to tackle complex, multi-sectoral challenges, such as homelessness, by addressing root causes through coordinated strategies.

The foundation's strategy also naturally evolved at the level of the board, which shifted from decision-making on individual initiatives to strategic discussions. This shift was further shaped by the Home for All Alliance, where the board's participation highlighted the importance of long-term commitment and systemic change.

The alliance, which involved 22 cross-sector partners, fostered a more experimental and collaborative approach, allowing the board to see firsthand the impact of long-term commitment and systemic change.

A key aspect of this shift for Bikuben was the importance of transforming the traditional application process into a genuine opportunity for innovation and development. Instead of merely evaluating requests for funding, the foundation reimaged these interactions as collaborative dialogues, focusing on capacity building and empowering partners to drive systemic change. In this way, Bikuben could support partners not only through funding but also by adding value in other ways, even when they could not provide financial support directly, encouraging partners to innovate and strengthen their impact.

“We have big societal problems we’ve tried to solve for decades without success. I grew up with a mom who was a social worker, and at dinner, she would tell me about kids living in homelessness, in foster care with a support system, which in far too many cases failed in getting young people on their way in life without major human and societal consequences. Now, as I sit at the table with my kids, I tell the same stories. Will it continue like that for their kids, too? This keeps me awake at night.”

Sine Egede Eskesen, Chief Visionary Officer, The Bikuben Foundation

### 3. Approach

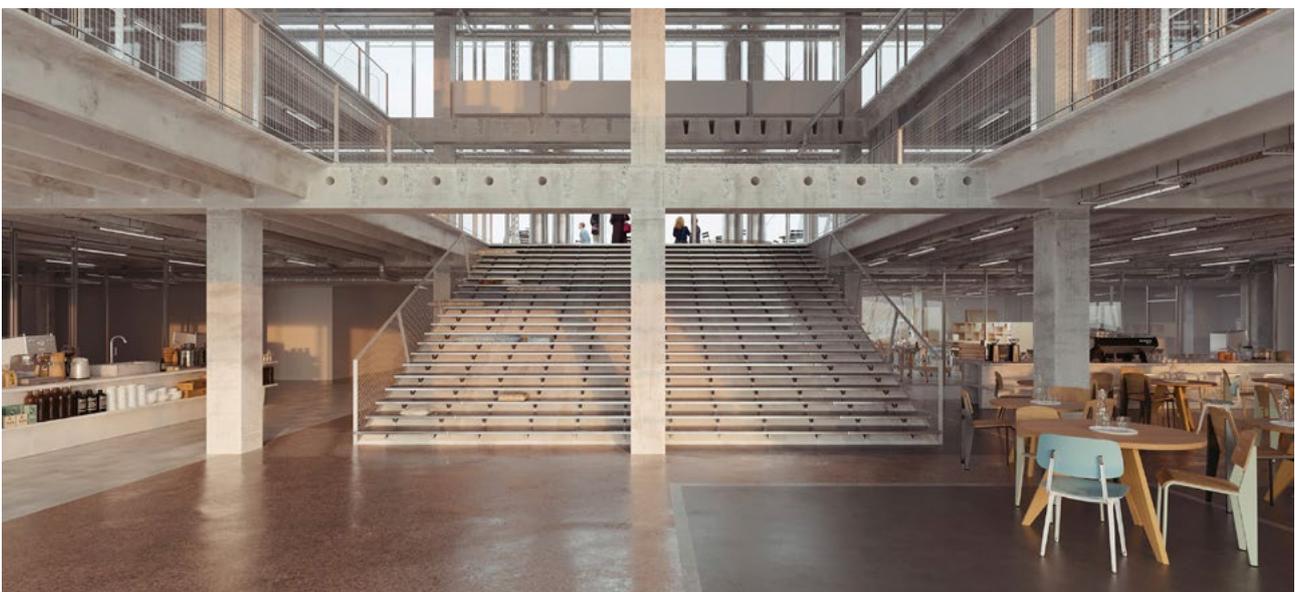
The foundation's approach in the area of youth homelessness extends to all areas of its work. Bikuben realises its vision of being a systems change funder through an expansion of its philanthropy toolkit. Apart from being a grantmaker and donor, Bikuben works in alliances by putting the mission at the heart through providing capacity building to its partners; initiating labs and social impact investments; and engaging in advocacy efforts and stimulating public debates. Bikuben's proactive approach to philanthropy has resulted in an intentional positioning of its role as a partner. It has embedded itself within the social fabric it seeks to transform by co-creating a physical community space, [Thoravej 29](#), in Copenhagen where people and organisations of different backgrounds come together in a professional network for forward-thinking individuals and organisations that are shaping our present and future.

The foundation is also committed to genuine reflection and transparency in its relationships with partners. By embracing a culture of openness, Bikuben ensures that partners feel comfortable sharing both successes and challenges, fostering trust and collaboration. This commitment to transparency extends to how the foundation views itself. In the [2024 Stakeholder and Development Partner Analysis report](#), Bikuben is described as an "ambitious partner" but also as "dominant". The foundation took this feedback seriously, reflecting on the power dynamics within its own operations and leading by example, recognising the need for change. Bikuben is now actively inviting other philanthropic organisations to reflect on these dynamics as well, [encouraging a broader dialogue around power and collaboration in systemic change efforts](#).

In line with their forward-thinking approach, Bikuben has introduced the position of Chief Visionary Officer to oversee the foundation's future direction and break down organisational silos. This role focuses on integrating foresight and futures thinking into the foundation's strategy and operations, ensuring that both the foundation and its partners are prepared for long-term challenges. As part of this, Bikuben and 20 partners are launching SOON Lab for Possible Futures, which intends to build anticipatory capacities among its partners and communities in the fields it works in. And all this with a clear intention to embed the future and future generations through different voices, methods, labs, art and technology at the Thoravej 29 community's physical space.

Experiment, learn, share is how the Bikuben Foundation operates. The foundation recognises that experimentation and learning are essential for driving long-term, transformative change. By showcasing alternatives and shifting mindsets, this work can inspire change at both national and political levels. A key part of its approach is working with MVPs (Minimum Viable Projects), which are used as testing grounds for new ideas and solutions. These projects serve as a platform for learning, where insights gained are fed back into future initiatives, creating a continuous cycle of improvement.

To facilitate learning loops and ensure that learning is not only shared but acted upon and feeds into strategic development, Bikuben launched a new position – the cross-organisational Director of Learning and Capacity Building – to facilitate lessons learned across both external and internal actors, experiments and initiatives. The intention is to ensure that learning helps define future action.





Team of **33** people



**€19,483,600**  
invested in 2023



Arts

→ **€7,289,600**



Social sector

→ **€9,313,000**



Other purposes

→ **€2,881,000**

(includes long-term investments  
in Kronprinsparrets Priser  
and Thoravej 29)



Geographic focus  
**Denmark & Greenland**

## WHAT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE



### Engage communities

Empower communities to drive systemic change



### Be a development partner and capacity builder

Move beyond traditional grantmaking by partnering with organisations to build their capacity



### Take responsibility for the entire partner journey

Provide holistic support to partners throughout their journey, from initial engagement to the realisation of their goals



### Embrace systemic responsibility

Focus on tackling systemic issues, not just isolated problems



### Create innovative physical spaces

Invest in physical environments that inspire creativity and collaboration



### Long-term view

Shift in funding principles from annual budgeting to multi-year funding

## 4. Results

### National impact on homelessness

The Bikuben Foundation's work within the "Home for All Alliance" has contributed significantly to shaping Denmark's approach to homelessness, particularly among young adults. The "Home for All Alliance" is a multi-sector collaboration formed in 2016 by the Bikuben Foundation, Realdania, Helsefonden and the City of Copenhagen to address youth homelessness through the Housing First model, which offers housing with support services.

The alliance of 22 partner organisations, mobilised and supported by a backbone office, has been an important advocate for the Housing First approach and has thereby pushed for the prioritisation of providing stable housing combined with intensive individual support, rather than focusing on emergency services such as long shelter stays. The alliance was instrumental in influencing a €134 million agreement for affordable housing and supporting legislative changes that urge

municipalities to adopt the Housing First approach. These initiatives have not only provided immediate housing solutions but have also begun the reshaping of the entire system surrounding homelessness with a stronger focus on prevention and intervention – a more sustainable and long-term recovery-based approach.

### Putting mission at the heart and acting in alliances

Bikuben has made collaboration and capacity building central to its strategy by actively fostering and supporting cross-sector alliances. Initiatives like the "Home for All Alliance" and "Policy Lab" demonstrate the foundation's commitment to bringing together diverse stakeholders – ranging from governmental bodies and NGOs to private sector partners – to address deeply entrenched social challenges. By facilitating these partnerships, the foundation not only enhances the collective impact of these groups but also strengthens their capacity to innovate and drive systemic change.

As outlined in the foundation's [2024 Stakeholder and Development Partner Analysis](#), Bikuben Foundation maximises its impact by strategically engaging with policymakers and rapporteurs at favourable moments, fostering ongoing relationships that effectively advance its mission and align with key decision-making processes. This approach underscores the foundation's belief that lasting solutions to complex issues like youth homelessness and the transition of young people out of care require a coordinated and well-resourced effort that leverages the strengths and expertise of multiple actors.

### **Walking the talk and embodying collaboration**

In 2023, the Bikuben Foundation together with SUS – Socialt Udviklingscentre, Danish Social Innovation Academy og Modstrøm supported the [En Vej til Alle coalition](#), addressing the issue of 42,000 young people in Denmark excluded from education and employment. The coalition prioritises the involvement of young people in shaping policies, ensuring their voices guide the development of solutions. This approach aligns with the foundation's commitment to co-creating lasting change. Through events like the Youth Summit, where 120 young people participated in discussions and workshops, the Bikuben Foundation demonstrated its dedication to collaboration, empowering young people and working across sectors to create meaningful, sustainable solutions. By joining forces with a broad range of organisations, En Vej til Alle works to create lasting change, experimenting with new ideas and spotlighting successful solutions, all while embodying the principle of collaboration at every stage.



### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?**

“ Draw inspiration from the stories, successes, failures and learnings of other organisations. Engage in dialogue within your foundation to determine the most impactful path forward. Assess your willingness to adopt similar strategies and demonstrate your commitment.”

**Sine Egede Eskesen**, Chief Visionary Officer,  
The Bikuben Foundation



# A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

## The Gulbenkian Foundation advancing intergenerational fairness

### Case in brief

#### The issue

Fair policy and distribution of resources for all generations is an issue of concern for both policymakers and the public. Yet policy is always rooted in the present moment. The rights of young people and future generations are not always the highest priority. But current crises and uncertainties require a long-term view to ensure sustainability, societal well-being and fair opportunities for all. There is need for a more holistic approach to address the interests of both today's and tomorrow's generations.

#### The context

Changing demographics, economic challenges, environmental pollution and the climate crisis are placing heavy burdens on younger and future generations. Yet there is a lack of understanding of the problem, and no data on how different generations are affected by current decisions. Moreover, present conditions favour short-term thinking in policy and programme planning.

#### The path forward

Foundations should raise awareness about intergenerational fairness; promote research to offer adequate data and insights; think about the long-term impact of their own decisions; focus on prevention; and work in cooperation with local communities, policymakers and young people.

### The Gulbenkian Foundation: A snapshot

This international foundation, based in Portugal, promotes the development of individuals and organisations through art, science, education, and charity, for a more equitable and sustainable society.

#### Mindset

- Long-term thinking
- International impact
- Acting systemically
- Focus on cultural and scientific heritage
- Convening power and partnerships



“In our view, intergenerational fairness is the basis to create sustainability. We see it as a commitment between generations, a social contract that promotes fair distribution of resources among different generations – ones of today and tomorrow.”

Luis Lobo Xavier, Director of Strategy and Planning, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

## 1. Overview

The Portugal-based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation sees sustainability as closely linked to intergenerational fairness, a social contract that advances just distribution of resources between current and future generations.

In 2017 the foundation identified sustainability as a key pillar of its strategy. During this period of tectonic change when the foundation divested from fossil fuels by pulling [€636.1 million from oil and gas](#), the intergenerational fairness initiative was born. Since then, the foundation has placed intergenerational fairness on the national agenda and inspired a wide range of stakeholders to think and act long term. The initiative has prompted research, public debate and hands-on insights into what a new social contract between generations could look like and how policy can embrace a long-term view.

“The trustees of endowed institutions are the guardians of the future against the claims of the present. Their task in managing the endowment is to preserve equity among generations.”

James Tobin, American economist,  
“What is Permanent Endowment Income?”, 1974

## 2. Challenge

Future generations have the right to live in a healthy, vibrant environment and have access to adequate food, clean water and sound housing. Yet they cannot vote. They have no decision-making or financial power. They are not at the table when policy is being designed. **They have no voice in public debate.** While there are commitments and international declarations on upholding the rights of children, such as the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), there are no clear mechanisms and procedures to act on behalf of children and young people and take their interests into account, and to access the impact of policy. [The promises to those yet to be born remain unfulfilled.](#)

The common assumption that young people and future generations will be better off than their parents is cracking across Europe. The climate crisis, growing inequalities and ageing populations are putting current welfare systems under strain. The ratio of pensioners to workers is growing. The economic, environmental and social **challenges facing young people and next generations are becoming more salient across European countries.**

Already in 1987, [the Brundtland Commission's report “Our Common Future”](#) defined poverty, environmental challenges and population growth as **related cross-cutting issues that cannot be addressed in isolation.** They offered a definition of sustainability that centres current and future generations: “Sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs.”

The Gulbenkian Foundation launched the intergenerational fairness initiative at a time when it felt that the **broken social contract** had started “foreshadowing a conflict between generations, which represents great danger for democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, and that it was imperative to take an intergenerational approach (“[A Commitment with the Future](#)”, Gulbenkian Foundation, 2023). However, at the time there was a **lack of data** on how different generations were affected and on which aspects of intergenerational fairness were particularly challenging.

### 3. Approach

- In 2017, the foundation **identified sustainability as a key pillar of its strategy, and linked this to intergenerational fairness**, a social contract that advances just distribution of resources between current and future generations. Part of this was the decision to divest from fossil fuels and pull [€636.1 million from oil and gas investments](#).

- The foundation conducted a broad study on the presence of the topic in the public realm and **reviewed the perceptions and opinions of citizens and policymakers on intergenerational fairness**.

- To close the research gap in Portugal, the foundation **commissioned a number of studies on intergenerational fairness** to understand major sources of inequality in Portugal. Four key areas with high impact on people's lives were identified: housing, public finances, the labour market and the environment. Furthermore, a study was developed to identify the social, economic and political conditions that allow the implementation of long-term policies.

- The foundation cooperated with the School of International Futures to **develop a framework for intergenerational fairness** to ensure fair policies in the future. The framework is an innovative tool to assess the impact of public policy on different generations, measuring all the costs and benefits. It was accompanied by a detailed how-to guide with step-by-step instructions for assessing a policy (see framework below).

- An **Intergenerational Fairness Index** was developed in cooperation with partners, which includes two additional measurement areas: health and poverty.

**1,5** positions dedicated internally to the initiative as well as other teams involved:

- Comms
- Events
- Marketing

 **€1,25 million budget**

**72%** of the funding was provided to:

- **Authors**
- **Peer reviewers** of commissioned studies

Cooperation with **external stakeholders**  **SUCH AS**

- Universities
- Think tanks
- Consultancies

**Focus group discussions with over 100 young people in Portugal**



#### WHAT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

-  **1. Understand the problem and engage with a wide range of stakeholders**
-  **2. Initiate internal discussion and think of the long-term impact of your decisions**
-  **3. Identify major sources of inequalities and provide real-life data**
-  **4. Offer concrete proposals and solutions**
-  **5. Walk the talk** and regularly assess your own practices

## 4. Results

### Impact on the national agenda

In 2022, the current President of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, announced his intention to champion intergenerational fairness, while his staff received capacity-building training in May 2022 to learn how to assess the long-term impact of policy. The intergenerational fairness framework is now accessible to policymakers in Portugal to review the long-term impact of their decisions on future generations. In collaboration with universities and think tanks, the Gulbenkian Foundation provided accurate data illustrating the need to act to ensure the sustainability and well-being of the Portuguese society over the long term. Several other organisations were trained to apply this tool to their own areas of work and to real questions of high priority to Portugal. Among them the Bank of Portugal, the Public Finance Council and the Court of Auditors.

### Groundbreaking research

The research commissioned by the Gulbenkian Foundation painted a bleak picture for the most educated generation ever. From housing and public finance to employment, taxation, social benefits, housing costs and environmental degradation, young people are under increasing pressure and carry the burden of an ageing population. The meagre economic and employment opportunities prove that the life chances of young people are worse than those of previous generations.

The intergenerational fairness initiative has also prompted academic research. While in 2018 there was only scarce academic research dedicated to the topic, there is now a network of academics advancing this agenda. The Intergenerational Fairness Index, released in September 2023, provides necessary metrics for Portugal to compare data and track improvement over time.

### Ripple effects across the foundation

Furthermore, the initiative led to internal discussions within the foundation: How future-proof and long-term were its own decisions? Sustainable Gulbenkian emerged within the context of these discussions, aiming at aligning internal processes and practices with the values and goals set for external programmes and cooperations. Gulbenkian, an operating foundation, reviewed its energy consumption; use of water and plastics; food supply; and transport, and improved its sustainability practice. The decision to divest from fossil fuels, made by the board of trustees when the discussion about sustainability and intergenerational fairness was starting, had a profound impact not only on the foundation's investment strategy but also its commitment to address the climate crisis.

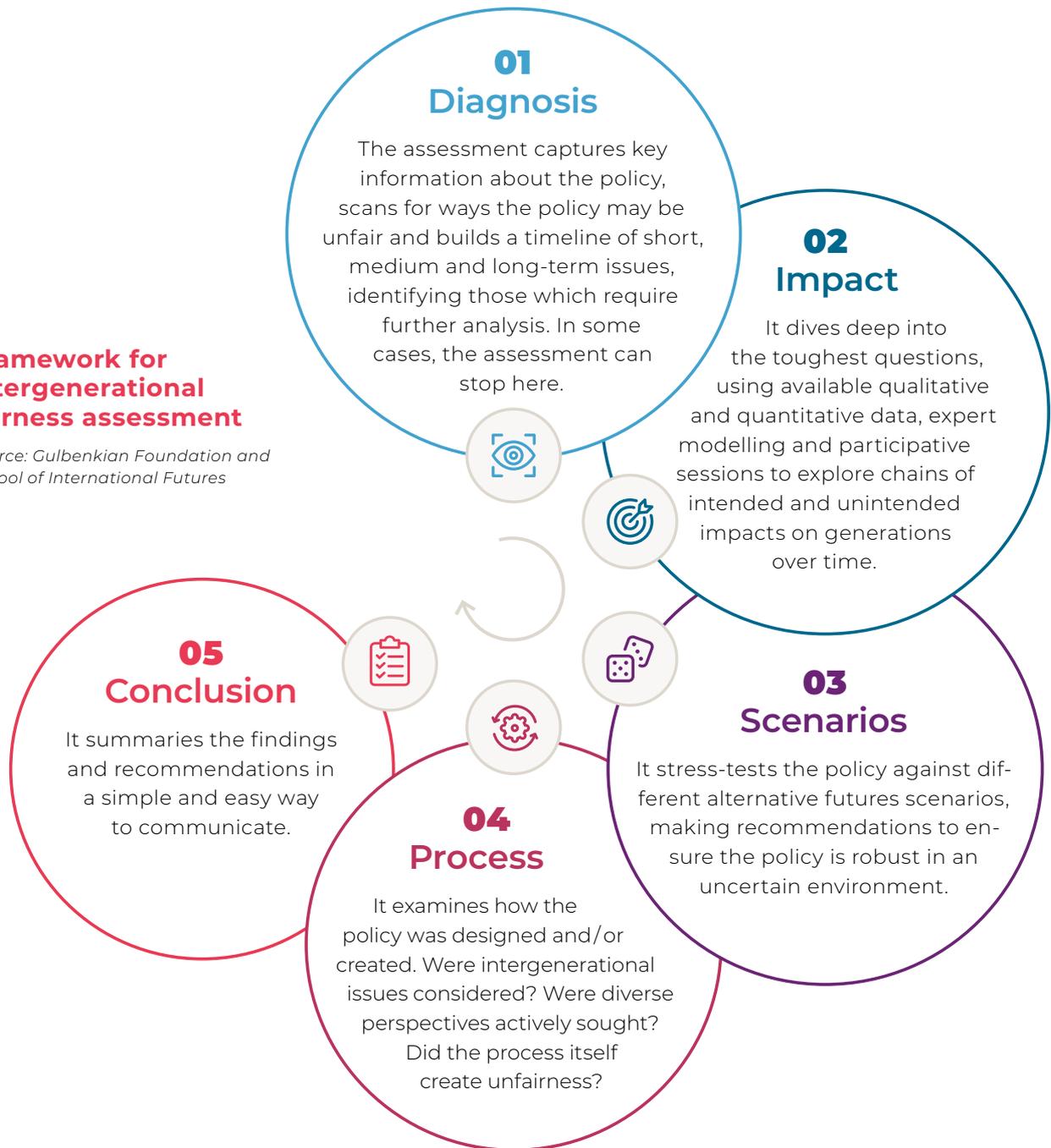
### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?

“ You should be ready to embark on a journey that will take several years. The trustees gave us time to do this work. We spent more than one year doing the diagnosis and then commissioning the studies. It was one and a half years into the project before we communicated about the initiative. If the board was expecting short-term results, this would not work. This was a patient project.”

**Luís Lobo Xavier**, Director of Strategy and Planning,  
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

## Framework for intergenerational fairness assessment

Source: Gulbenkian Foundation and School of International Futures



## GOOD TO KNOW

Other regions of Europe are also focusing on intergenerational fairness. For instance, in 2015 Wales passed the [Well-Being for Future Generations Act](#), outlining seven well-being goals including prosperity, resilience, health and regional cohesion. The act encourages policymakers to take a long-term, integrated and collaborative approach to advance the social, economic, environmental and cultural development of Wales. To ensure accountability, Wales has a Future Generations Commissioner who works across policy areas.



# EMERGING FUTURES

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is building imagination infrastructure through collaborative experimentation and visionary leadership

## Case in brief

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p> <b>The issue</b></p> <p>The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has identified in its UK Poverty 2025 report that 2.6 million (44% of the poorest fifth of households) were in arrears with their household bills or behind on scheduled lending repayments; 4.1 million households (69%) were going without essentials; and 3.2 million households (54%) cut back on food or went hungry. These stark figures underscore the need for systemic change through comprehensive, long-term policies to address the root causes of poverty and inequality.</p> | <p> <b>The context</b></p> <p>Addressing the broader “metacrisis” – the systemic challenge of how crises are responded to – requires a framing that expands the sense of what is possible, balancing immediate needs with deeper, visionary work. JRF has been working for over a century to address societal challenges and improve the lives of those in need. What began as an initiative to provide immediate relief has evolved into a broader mission to advocate for structural changes that create long-term equity and sustainability.</p> | <p> <b>The path forward</b></p> <p>JRF's Emerging Futures initiative supports and shields pioneers and innovators building post-capitalist futures, through innovative funding models and equity-based practices. By prioritising interconnected ecosystems and reimagining philanthropy, the programme shifts away from traditional grant models to support holistic, sustainable solutions. Central to its approach is the cultivation of “imagination infrastructures”, empowering communities to envision and create alternative, equitable futures through collaborative experimentation and visionary leadership.</p> |
|--|--|--|

## Joseph Rowntree Foundation: A snapshot

JRF operates across multiple sectors to influence policy, amplify marginalised voices, and build a more just and inclusive society.

### Mindset

- Drive policy change and deeper structural changes
- Influence power and amplify marginalised voices
- Focus on equity
- Embrace risk
- Infrastructure mindset
- Plurality of views and voices



Team of **53 people**



**9 positions** dedicated to the Emerging Futures initiative



**€54 million** Overall budget over the next 5 years



**€64 million** Endowment



Geographic focus **United Kingdom**

## 1. Overview

Founded in 1904 by English philanthropist and businessman Joseph Rowntree using shares from his chocolate company, the foundation initially provided affordable housing for low-income individuals and tackled social issues in the UK. The foundation went on to [focus on research](#) and funding to combat poverty in the UK, pioneering critical insight tools like the [Minimum Income Standard \(MIS\)](#) that supports the [Real Living Wage](#) and guides poverty policy.

Now an independent social change organisation, it acts towards tackling deep poverty and destitution and building economic security guided by a mission of supporting and speeding up the transition to a more equitable and sustainable future. Its diverse activities across all four UK nations include policy development, advocacy, impact investment, supporting visionaries, field building and grass-roots movement support.

In 2021, JRF expanded its focus from solely focusing on poverty in the UK to include imagining and building fairer futures, alongside addressing immediate issues. While tackling poverty remains a core mission, the foundation now balances urgent policy and practice changes with the deeper structural shifts needed to create an economic and social model where people and the planet can thrive.

To further this mission, the foundation has launched the Emerging Futures programme, aimed at fostering better, more beautiful futures and accelerating the transition to a just economic, environmental and social landscape. Recognising its privileged position, the foundation is committed to investing in the deep work of imagining and building fairer futures, acknowledging that if it doesn't lead this effort, few others will.

“When I joined JRF, there was a lot of misinformation around poverty, and the government's plans to defund research made our role as information providers crucial. We realised that while we were doing good work within a narrow context, we could be doing so much more. Our endowment had grown, and with it, our responsibility to make a bigger impact. This realisation led to a focus on advocacy, campaign work, and launching our Emerging Futures programme.”

Sophia Parker, Director of Emerging Futures, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

## 2. Challenge

Poverty remains a critical issue in the UK, affecting over 14 million people, including 4.2 million children and 8.1 million working-age adults, according to the foundation's [“UK Poverty in 2025”](#) report. Since the publication of this report, they have seen more evidence of rising insecurity and desperate measures that households are having to take to get by. According to the foundation's 2025 edition of the report, poverty has remained largely unchanged for over 20 years, with no sustained decline since the early 2000s. Economic shocks such as austerity, Brexit, and the cost-of-living crisis have worsened the situation. In 2022-2023, 6 million people were in very deep poverty, with incomes 57% below the poverty line.

Despite government support during the pandemic, many families are still struggling to meet basic needs, with certain groups like lone parents, disabled individuals and ethnic minorities facing disproportionately high rates of poverty. This deepening poverty and its



consequences mean long-term, comprehensive policies are needed to address the root causes of poverty and inequality.



The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, initially focused on addressing poverty in the UK, recognised that tackling the root causes – such as economic structures, access to resources and social injustices – was essential for creating lasting change. Without addressing these underlying factors, efforts to alleviate poverty would remain limited and unsustainable. JRF’s approach acknowledges the interconnected challenges of the metacrisis, polycrisis, and permacrisis, which encompass environmental degradation, economic instability and social inequality. By focusing on systemic reforms, the foundation aims to prevent the recurrence of poverty and reduce the risks of these crises. Its vision includes reimagining global financial systems to prioritise equity, sustainability and fair wealth distribution, while steering resources toward community development and climate action.

As JRF shifted its mission from solely tackling poverty in the immediate present to accelerating equitable transitions for the future, it found itself grappling with how to redefine its priorities. The team has had to think hard about how to balance the urgent and growing need to ameliorate the worst effects of poverty today, with the need to intensify investments in alternative futures rooted in community and ecological wealth. Building a coherent strategy in this context has been challenging.

Its governance and financial strategies also posed significant challenges for JRF. With its endowment growing substantially (to over £400m/€475m) during Covid-19, questions emerged over how much to spend and invest, and critically, the degree to which those investments fully aligned with the mission. The foundation has ongoing commitments to the Housing Trust, which is part of its group structure, so while spending down wasn’t an option that Trustees considered, the Board have committed to moving towards a fully mission-aligned endowment over the coming years. In this way, the team have not only been working to realign JRF’s programmatic priorities, but also the overall assets of the foundation, to be in service of supporting and speeding up the transition.

The Emerging Futures initiative focuses on addressing long-term, interconnected crises like poverty, economic inequality and environmental degradation. Its bigger objectives include fostering innovative solutions and imagining more equitable futures. This initiative aligns with the foundation’s role by pushing beyond short-term relief to tackle systemic causes of inequality, ensuring that JRF’s efforts are not just reactive but transformative. Through these efforts, Emerging Futures aims to create lasting societal change, shaping policies and practices that address deep-rooted disparities for a more just and sustainable future.

“ Internally, it’s been a work in progress. The existence of Emerging Futures has challenged and grown our work, particularly with grass-roots organisations, but this growth comes with risks. Full integration of this work is complex and requires a deep understanding of how to advance it while managing these risks.”

**Sophia Parker**, Director of Emerging Futures, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

### 3. Approach

JRF has adopted a distinctive approach with its Emerging Futures initiative, designed to foster systemic change and build equitable futures. The initiative addresses long-term challenges through multiple interconnected efforts. These include:

- [Supporting and shielding an ecosystem of organisations building post-capitalist futures across the UK](#)
- Fostering and deepening practices of collective imagination (see for example the [800+ practice community](#), and the [toolkit](#) launched in 2024), to build hope and counter fatalism
- Backing [visionaries and storytellers](#) to promote different visions of what might be possible
- [Nurturing a radical field of transformative investment that seeks to shape a finance system in service of people and planet](#)

This approach aligns with the foundation's mission to accelerate the transition to a more just society by addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality.

#### Re-shaping philanthropy and investment

Driven by a deep commitment to equity, transformation and the creation of „imagination infrastructures“ – the foundational ideas, structures and processes that can enable new social and economic systems to emerge – the foundation draws from global examples of transformative economic models to inform its work in the UK. This involves exploring new financial instruments and investment strategies that are being successfully implemented in other parts of the world. The organisation's commitment to equity and transformation is reflected in its recruitment and team-building efforts, where diversity of thought and experience is highly valued, and in its funding practices, which prioritise projects that challenge existing inequities and support systemic change.

As an organisation, JRF has been committed to continuous learning, engaging in hypothesis-driven sessions and sensemaking exercises to better understand its approach. The foundation has been inspired by the way that [Luminate made use of a hypothesis/assumption framework in this space](#). Monthly sessions with imagination partners have been essential for refining understanding and making sense of the complex landscape. However, capturing these learnings in a meaningful way is an ongoing area of inquiry. Finding ways of linking learning to the foundation's overall theory of change, rather than taking a traditional “impact” lens to individual organisations being funded, is an area in active development in early 2025.

#### Supporting and shielding “future-builders”

The Emerging Futures programme supports those developing ideas that draw us from the status quo, creating new systems and models that can replace them. Over the last two years, the foundation has backed a network of organisations who are working to build post-capitalist futures across the UK. These organisations represent critical nodes in a wider ecosystem uncovered by an innovative social network mapping project the foundation commissioned in 2024. This research suggests there are around 2000 organisations across the UK engaged in this kind of work.

Their efforts span multiple human systems, geographic scales and practices, but all are rooted in powerful ambitions, using words like joy, regeneration, solidarity, life-affirming and healing to describe their work. While this kind of work may not yet be completely re-shaping policy and politics, there is a growing coherence and power to it, and JRF hopes that its new five-year commitment to this ecosystem will bring further stability and power to the work.



#### Building imagination infrastructures

The Emerging Futures initiative supports „imagination infrastructures“ by nurturing collective creativity to envision and build more equitable futures. It resources communities and organisations to dream and imagine together how the world could look different, to think more expansively about what might be possible. Much of this work is directly concerned with tackling the “metacrisis” – helping us to see the world in new ways, moving us past the dominant modernist narratives of separation and scarcity. This approach emphasises that transformation is driven by new ways of thinking and collective action. But the foundation recognises this is a relatively nascent area for funder activity, and so the team is working closely with other leading thinkers and practitioners in this field from around the world, to shape its future responsibilities in relation to this work.

## WHAT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE



**Invest** in work that grapples with questions of narrative and metacognition



**Grow** better capabilities to act as a field-builder rather than a traditional grant funder



**Nurture** ecosystems of change in power-aware ways



**Engage** in continuous learning, sense-making and collective reflective practice



**Be open** to experimentation, and consider how that needs to shift your risk appetite



**Use** your influence to connect radical innovation in the niches to those holding power

“Culture shift in an organisation is complex especially when an organisation has an established identity. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is known for bringing expertise into the corridors of power, and this vision can be difficult to match with the Emerging Futures Programme that says, “there are no answers” and that it is important to work in emergence. At times this can feel like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation is two separate organisations – and addressing this, and ensuring our organisational architecture is designed to support this deeper system-shifting work, is part of the work.”

**Sophia Parker**, Director of Emerging Futures,  
Joseph Rowntree Foundation

## 4. Results and learnings

### Resourcing pathfinders and building a network of “future-builders”

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) supports a group of organisations known as “Pathfinders”, which are actively engaged in reimagining and redesigning societal structures to achieve transformative change. These organisations focus on practical, place-based initiatives that build operable frameworks, such as new legal contracts and governance models, rather than merely addressing specific issues. One such Pathfinder is the [Centre for Knowledge Equity](#), which integrates lived, learned and practiced experiences to empower leaders in creating systems-level change. This initiative exemplifies JRF’s commitment to supporting organisations that are not only envisioning alternative futures but also actively constructing the frameworks necessary to realise them.

JRF’s funding approach for these Pathfinders includes not only unrestricted core funding but also support for accessing specialist resources and expanding potential funding. This comprehensive support enables organisations to build long-term systemic change in their local contexts. Through its support of Pathfinders, JRF aims at fostering anticipatory capacity within civil society, empowering communities to actively shape their futures.

Despite these efforts, there are challenges in determining when to experiment quietly versus when to escalate experiments across the organisation. Recruitment challenges related to the capabilities needed for such work, and the need to “walk the talk” in recognising the realities of the work, have added further complications.

Key learnings have emerged, including the importance of collaboration on issues such as extreme wealth, and the underestimated need for specific competencies in hiring to meet the demands of this new approach. JRF’s broadened role – balancing grantmaking, field-building and catalytic collaboration – positions it among peers far beyond traditional philanthropy. By never having been confined to a grantmaking identity, JRF has been able to experiment with innovative models, advancing its mission to steward equitable and impactful transitions for the future.

## Building an ecosystem

JRF is not just funding individual projects but is working to build an interconnected ecosystem of initiatives. By connecting different initiatives and encouraging collaboration, JRF is helping to amplify the effects of each project, creating a network of changemakers who can support and sustain each other's work. By fostering collaboration, shared learning and resource-sharing, they create a more robust infrastructure for systemic change.

For example, JRF is encouraging their Pathfinders to build horizontal relationships and share learning among partners to co-create solutions, rather than work alone. The work involves exploring new approaches in areas such as grass-roots initiatives; emerging fields like community power and care systems; governance reforms; and shifting narratives to engage broader audiences. Central to this work is the preparation of communities – particularly marginalised ones – to imagine and help build more equitable futures through joint action and collective learning.

## Reimagining investment

Over the last three years, JRF has convened a major annual conference designed to bring together leading global voices on the roles and responsibilities of philanthropists and investors in these times of polycrisis. The 2024 [“Next Frontiers” conference](#) focused on transformative approaches to wealth management and redistribution, philanthropy and investment.

Additionally, JRF's Emerging Futures programme exemplifies the foundation's dedication to [reimagining investment to transfer wealth and power](#). Through this initiative, JRF funds projects like the Good Ancestor Movement and ShareAction, focusing on wealth redistribution and influencing the „Great Wealth Transfer“. By supporting these organisations, JRF aims to play its part in dismantling the “wealth defence industry” and resource the hacks, investment approaches, governance models and ownership structures that together could reshape our finance systems to prioritise

community and ecological well-being over traditional profit motives. These efforts demonstrate JRF's proactive role in shifting economic power, ensuring that the benefits of development are shared more equitably.

## Culture of openness and transparency

The Emerging Futures programme exemplifies authentic leadership through its transparent approach to development. Sophia Parker, the Director of Emerging Futures, has offered candid insights into the programme's evolution. In her blog post, [“Emerging Futures at JRF - two years in, the story so far,”](#) Parker reflects on the journey, acknowledging both successes and challenges encountered along the way. This openness not only fosters trust but also invites stakeholders to engage deeply with the programme's development. By sharing these experiences, the programme demonstrates a commitment to learning and adapting, ensuring that it remains responsive to the needs of those it aims to serve.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?

“To make a lasting impact, recognise that field-building goes beyond a single organisation's mission. It involves collaborating with a broader network of allies, peers and visionaries. Success in this space requires understanding that the field is much larger than just your immediate organisational or philanthropic circle.”

**Cassie Robinson**, Associate Director of Emerging Futures, Joseph Rowntree Foundation



# RISK TOLERANCE, COLLABORATION AND LONG- TERM COMMITMENT

How the Romanian-American Foundation is making catalytic investments

## Case in brief

|   |   |  |
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| <p> <b>The issue</b></p> <p>Romania suffers from a historical lack of trust, which is a key ingredient of democracy and economic development. Furthermore, there is a limited philanthropic tradition in the country, which hinders civil society and the development of solutions to societal challenges. Building trust and nurturing collaboration are essential to tackling these problems, to reinforcing democracy and to boosting economic development.</p> | <p> <b>The context</b></p> <p>Civil society in Romania emerged late due to historical barriers, specifically heavy suppression during communist rule. After 1989, its development was met at first with government hostility, and since then, with mixed public perceptions – shaped by political shifts and foreign aid dynamics. However, civil society has gradually strengthened, and there are initial signs of systemic change in key sectors such as agriculture, education and community development. Still, there is a long road ahead.</p> | <p> <b>The path forward</b></p> <p>Tackling societal challenges often requires patience and sustained efforts that rely on trust and authentic collaborations. Approaches that highlight the importance of adaptability, long-term commitment and continuous learning are also key to driving systemic change. In a context dominated by project-based funding, the foundation has focused on collaboration, multi-year investments and refining strategies in response to evolving challenges.</p> |
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## Romanian-American Foundation: A Snapshot

The Romanian-American Foundation seeks to build a sustainable economy and democratic society in Romania by promoting equal access to opportunities. Its vision is a prosperous, engaged society where citizens act responsibly, rural economies thrive, innovation is commonplace, youth lead progress, and philanthropy is a core value. Through partnerships and focused investments, the foundation aims to create meaningful, lasting impact in communities across Romania.

### Mindset

- Long-term commitment
- Risk tolerance
- Collaboration

“Philea is one of the best places for inspiration. Through peer learning, events, workshops and discussions facilitated by Philea we adapted our ways of working and the instruments we used. One such example is scenario planning, which is now integrated into our practice.”

Suzana Dobre, Vice-President,  
Strategy and Programs

## 1. Overview

The Romanian-American Foundation's flexible and iterative approach is grounded in its long-term perspective and collaboration

In the early 1990s, the United States Congress created an instrument to assist Romania and the region in transitioning to a free-market economy. The Romanian-American Foundation inherited this endowment making it the only endowed foundation in Romania at the time. Not only did the foundation inherit the endowment but also an entrepreneurial spirit and risk tolerance.

With a vision of a prosperous, engaged, and entrepreneurial society, the foundation supports initiatives that empower communities to shape their own futures, encourage rural economic growth, integrate innovation into the economy, and inspire youth leadership. In its long-term goals, the foundation envisions a culture where philanthropy is embraced as a societal value grounded in solidarity and trust.

The foundation's approach goes beyond traditional project-based funding, offering institutional grants and supporting locally driven solutions that promote sustainability and resilience. For example, through strategic investments in community foundations and cooperative models, the foundation has helped shift Romania's philanthropic culture for the long term, fostering grass-roots organisations that encourage collaboration and self-reliance.

By working closely with partners to test and scale innovative solutions, the foundation ensures its initiatives are adaptable to Romania's changing needs, contributing to a more vibrant civil society. This flexible, long-term funding model has enabled the foundation to build partnerships that drive meaningful, lasting improvements, positioning communities for future success and helping to foster social and economic progress across the country.



## 2. Challenge

In Romania, a deep-rooted lack of trust has long hindered the development of effective community-driven initiatives. Recognising this challenge, the Romanian-American Foundation took a patient and adaptive approach, focusing on long-term, flexible funding and a collaborative framework. The foundation's strategy emphasises the importance of demonstrating the power of cooperation by showing communities what they can achieve together.

The country's limited philanthropic tradition underscored the necessity for a funding partner willing to exercise patience and embrace calculated risks. By offering 5-7-10 year funding, the foundation can address these systemic challenges by promoting rural development, fostering innovation and supporting civil society. Using an adaptable framework to define incremental steps toward long-term impact allows the foundation to envision the future it wants to create and systematically map the actions needed to get there.

“The foundation's entrepreneurial mindset is about solving problems through continuous learning and adapting, a flexible approach that sets it apart from traditional, rigid funding models.”

Suzana Dobre, Vice-President, Strategy and Programs at the Romanian-American Foundation

### 3. Approach

The foundation supports a range of organisational partners (grantees) by embracing a long-term funding strategy that prioritises scalability, sustainability, and capacity building. This approach fosters collaboration and adaptability to evolving needs. By cultivating a culture of flexibility and utilising foresight tools, it ensures agile decision-making and continuously refines its strategies to align with its mission. It works closely with its partners, assisting them throughout the process from diagnosis of the problem towards supporting them in their work towards systemic change.

#### The foundation's approach:

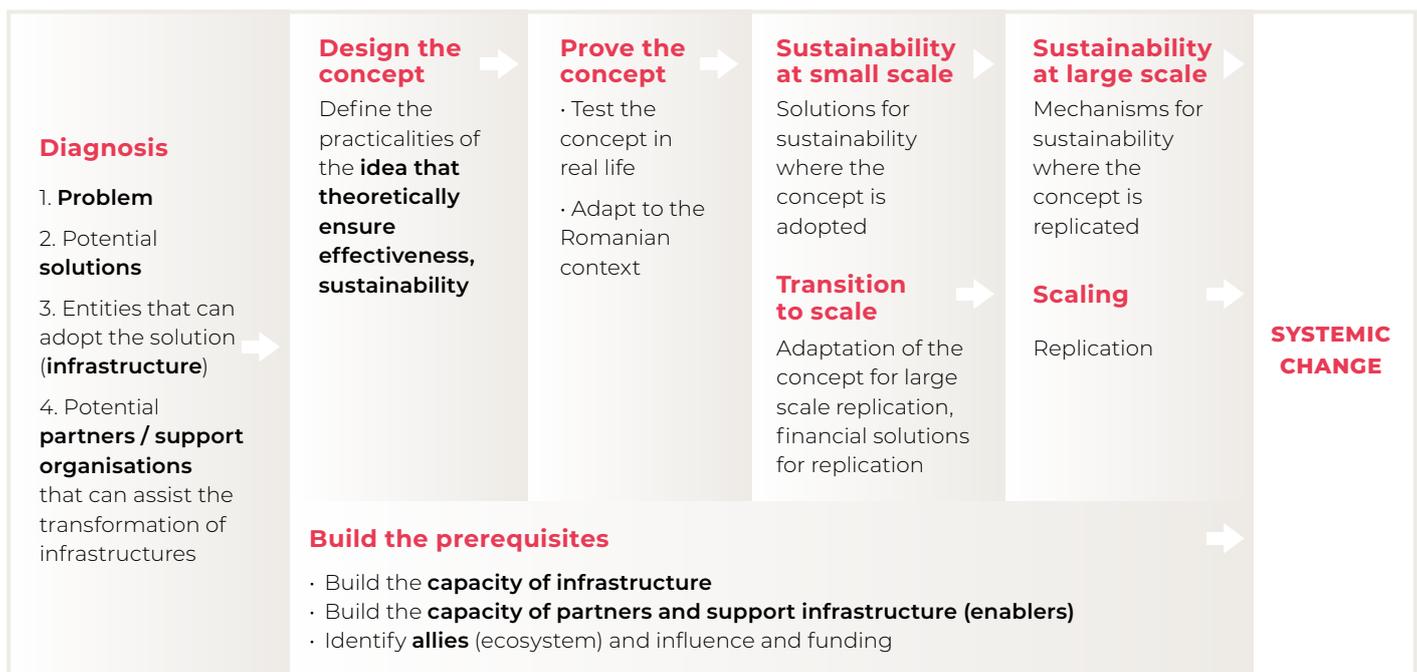
- To start with, the foundation develops a long-term funding strategy together with the partner organisation (grantee), based on diagnosing the problem and identifying potential solutions.
- A clear vision focused on scalability and sustainability guides the partner's activities, ensuring its model meets community needs and delivers results for the community it serves. Continuous evaluation ensures the model incorporates elements for immediate impact and future growth.
- Once a vision is in place, the partners concentrate on capacity building. This involves identifying specific strategies to facilitate the model's expansion, which can include targeted fundraising efforts to secure necessary resources. Engaging diverse stakeholders and strengthening core operations are crucial for

grantees in this phase. By fostering an environment that supports growth, the foundation can enhance its partner's ability to achieve its goals and extend its reach to those who need it most.

- As the foundation embarks on this journey, it must be aware of the evolving landscape. Assessing new actors in the ecosystem and their needs is critical for informing strategic adaptations. By staying attuned to changes in the external environment, the foundation can enhance collaboration with partners, ensuring that its model remains relevant and sustainable.
- Central to this strategy is a commitment to cultivating an internal culture characterised by flexibility and adaptability. The Romanian-American Foundation promotes flexibility within its programmes by integrating foresight tools, such as horizon scanning and scenario planning, into its internal processes. This forward-thinking approach enables the organisation to anticipate future challenges and opportunities, helping it remain proactive and responsive to emerging trends.
- Finally, the foundation must embrace change as an ongoing journey rather than a fixed endpoint. By adopting a process-oriented approach, it can adjust its strategies and roles based on lessons learned and evolving needs. This perspective ensures that the foundation's efforts are continuously aligned with its mission and the context in which it operates, fostering a dynamic organisation prepared to meet future challenges head-on.

#### LONG-TERM FUNDING

#### EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY, SCALE



## 4. Results

With a focus on collaboration, the Romanian-American Foundation partners with local organisations, civil society, public institutions and international organisations to drive systemic impact. Programmes are designed to rebuild trust and nurture a culture of collaboration that has historically been limited in Romania. Two examples of such investments are presented below – a programme aiming to offer a solution for small and medium farmers to reach markets through association; and the development of a network of community foundations engaging local people in solving together those issues relevant for them.

### 1 SPOTLIGHT ON COOPERATIVES

TIMELINE  
2014–2024

THE ROMANIAN-AMERICAN  
FOUNDATION INVESTMENT  
\$1.7 MILLION

#### Challenges & opportunities

Romania's agricultural sector has long struggled with fragmentation and limited market access, particularly for small and medium-sized farmers. Forming cooperatives could help address these issues by pooling resources and improving market access, but a deep-rooted mistrust of cooperatives persists among farmers, stemming from negative experiences. However, new

opportunities, such as EU rural development funding and support from experienced NGOs provided a promising foundation to rebuild trust and encourage farmers to view cooperatives as beneficial partnerships for growth.

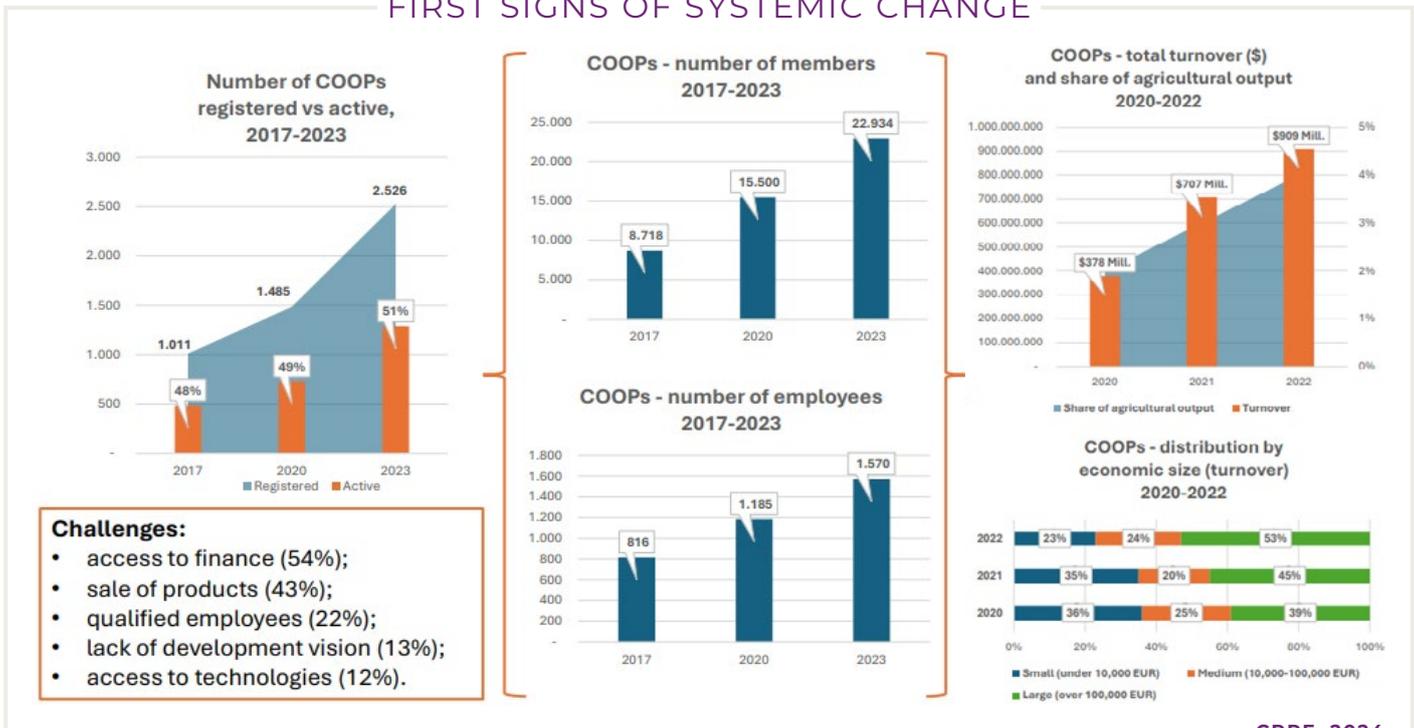
#### How the foundation made an impact

The foundation invited four strong NGOs with extensive experience in rural development to design and implement an experiment supporting farmers to form associations. The programme, funded by RAF for ten years, had three phases: testing, groundwork and scaling. First, partner organisations launched pilot projects in four communities to show cooperatives could succeed in Romania. Next, they focused on research, documentation and advocacy to support broader adoption. Finally, they trained a network of NGOs to help set up cooperatives and access EU funding. Their efforts also influenced the Ministry of Agriculture to include cooperative funding in EU rural development programmes, paving the way for long-term support.

#### Signs of systemic change

While it's too early to declare victory, the first signs of systemic change are visible. The cooperative model is beginning to take root, and though it's still early days, there's reason for optimism.

### FIRST SIGNS OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE



## 2 LOCAL ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

TIMELINE  
2010–2024

THE ROMANIAN-AMERICAN  
FOUNDATION INVESTMENT  
\$6 MILLION

### Challenges and opportunities

Romania has historically seen low levels of philanthropic activity, with limited volunteerism and weak NGO involvement at the local level. To address this, the Romanian-American Foundation saw the potential for community foundations to serve as local hubs for mobilising both people and resources to tackle community challenges.

In recent years, Romania has experienced improved economic conditions and a rise in civic engagement, especially on community-level issues. NGOs have been instrumental in mobilising communities, providing fertile ground for the establishment and growth of community foundations. The foundation's strategy began 14 years ago with ARC Romania, a key partner organisation that worked at the grassroots, providing community facilitation and seed funding to help establish 19 community foundations across the country, 16 of which are still active. These foundations act as key local players in fostering both financial and volunteer support for local initiatives.

### How the foundation made an impact

To ensure long-term sustainability, the foundation implemented a fund-matching mechanism, encouraging community foundations to raise funds in their own community from individual donors or to establish community thematic funds. To further strengthen the community foundations, RAF provided institutional funding to support them in designing and implementing organisational strategies. A Federation of Community Foundations was created, fostering a learning community to share best practices and continue scaling efforts.

### Signs of systemic change

Today, the first signs of systemic change are emerging. While the results of course cannot be attributed solely to the Romanian-American Foundation and its partners, the growing role of community foundations in Romanian philanthropy signals a broader shift in local engagement and capacity building.

### Key takeaways

- **Develop a theory of change**
- **Embrace flexibility**
- **Co-design with partners**
- **Reflect continuously**
- **Build trust-based relationships**
- **Learn from failure**

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER FUNDERS?

“Moving from being a donor to a valued partner is critical, and this requires humility and listening to partners and the wider ecosystem on the ground in order to arrive together at the best way to move forward.”

Suzana Dobre, Vice-President, Strategy and Programs

# TRANSFORMATIVE DECISION- MAKING



## FUTURE CHAIR

How **Assifero** has put youth agency on the agenda for funders and their networks 30

## SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

How **Leap Collective** is shifting philanthropic practice 34



# FUTURE CHAIR

## How Assifero has put youth agency on the agenda for funders and their networks

### Case in brief

|  |   |  |
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| <p><b>! The issue</b></p> <p>We are on the brink of an intergenerational crisis, with young people disproportionately affected by recent economic and social shocks. Through previous times of challenge, all generations bore the burden equally. But now, young people carry a heavier share due to Europe's demographic changes and the climate emergency. Intergenerational solidarity is essential to address these issues, requiring the sharing of power across generations to build a more equitable future.</p> | <p><b>🗨️ The context</b></p> <p>The intergenerational gap is widening as Europe's population ages compared to other continents. In a context of economic decline, which heavily impacts youth, young people are underrepresented in decision-making. This disparity has been pervasive in all sectors of society, including philanthropy, where young people – despite representing a substantial portion of beneficiaries – are often excluded from philanthropic decision-making.</p> | <p><b>🧭 The path forward</b></p> <p>Philanthropy can benefit from meaningfully engaging children and young people to address the root causes of issues more effectively. Including them in designing, implementing and evaluating activities, as well as in governance, ensures their voices are heard. By doing so, the philanthropy sector will set an example of meaningful youth participation for others to follow.</p> |
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### Assifero: A Snapshot

Assifero is the Italian association of foundations and philanthropic entities, serving as a reference point for institutional philanthropy in Italy. Its membership includes 170 diverse family, corporate and community foundations, unified by shared goals: working for the common good, listening to communities, and fostering long-term development. Its seven staff members work to facilitate collaborations; share best practices and innovative approaches; increase information flow; and create spaces for exchange. Assifero aims to build a more visible, informed, connected and effective philanthropic system in Italy that is recognised as a key partner for human and sustainable development.

### ⚙️ Mindset

- Strategic philanthropy
- Future-oriented agendas
- Impactful and sustainable development
- Collaboration and support

## 1. Overview

[Assifero's Future Chair](#) initiative is a commitment that encourages philanthropic organisations to meaningfully engage young people in their work. The initiative builds on models of child participation such as Article 12 of the [UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which upholds the right of children and youth to be heard. It includes [Laura Lundy's model](#) for ensuring space, voice, audience and influence for youth participation; and [Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation](#), which outlines levels of decision-making agency for youth as a way to promote meaningful engagement.

Moving beyond tokenistic involvement of young people, Assifero developed the initiative through a participatory process with young people. Future Chair was launched in March 2023 with the current commitment of 60 signatories representing diverse Italian philanthropic organisations.

## 2. Challenge

Young people are significantly underrepresented in decision-making roles, both in politics and in philanthropy. Despite making up 22% of Europe's population, [only about 10% of Members of the European Parliament \(MEPs\) are under 35](#). This underrepresentation leads to policies that often overlook [the needs and challenges faced by younger generations](#), including economic inequality and the [lack of affordable housing](#). The inclusion of young people in decision-making is essential for addressing these issues effectively and working towards more sustainable and equitable futures.

In the philanthropy sector, youth are frequently viewed solely as beneficiaries rather than active contributors, which [perpetuates the inequalities that philanthropy aims to solve](#). Only 60% of organisations surveyed in

“If you want to embark on this journey, you need to ‘walk the talk.’ Assifero made an intentional decision to encourage younger people on staff to be board members and represent the association in a high-level context. For instance, I am part of the Messina Community Foundation board and I have been a member of the Board of Reves. It's about fostering inner transformation.”

**Francesca Mereta**, Assifero's Coordinator of external communications and international networks

Philea's publication [Child and Youth Participation in Philanthropy](#) involve youth in their work, with a varying degree of collaboration, and only a minority includes them in their governance structures. According to a 2023 survey conducted by Assifero and Bocconi University, in Italy, only 5% of philanthropic organisations have board members below the age of 50, and just 32% employ staff under 35. Despite 37 of 38 respondent foundations serving young beneficiaries, efforts to involve young people were rated as moderate.

The active participation of children and young people in philanthropy enriches the sector by deepening its commitment to social justice and making future practices more inclusive and effective. Some foundations have recognised the value of intergenerational dialogue and adopted innovative practices to foster meaningful collaborations with children and young people.

“If we shift our mindset to view children and young people not just as citizens of tomorrow, but as individuals with rights and responsibilities, then we will stop infantilising them and begin to value their contributions. Children and young people are ready to help tackle every societal challenge.”

**Carola Carazzone**, Secretary General of Assifero

### 3. Approach

The Future Chair initiative encourages philanthropic organisations to symbolically leave an empty chair at their meetings as a way to highlight the absence of children and youth in decision-making processes. The empty chair reminds organisations of their impact on future generations and urges them to address this gap. The concept of the Future Chair emerged from a UN leadership course where someone mentioned leaving an empty chair to represent what was missing.

The initiative is a call to action to:

- **Foundations and philanthropic organisations** – to start their inner transformation by meaningfully including children and youth in decision-making processes.
- **Philanthropy networks** – to unveil their role as agents of change, enablers and multipliers of social change by walking the talk and encouraging a more equitable practice among their constituencies.

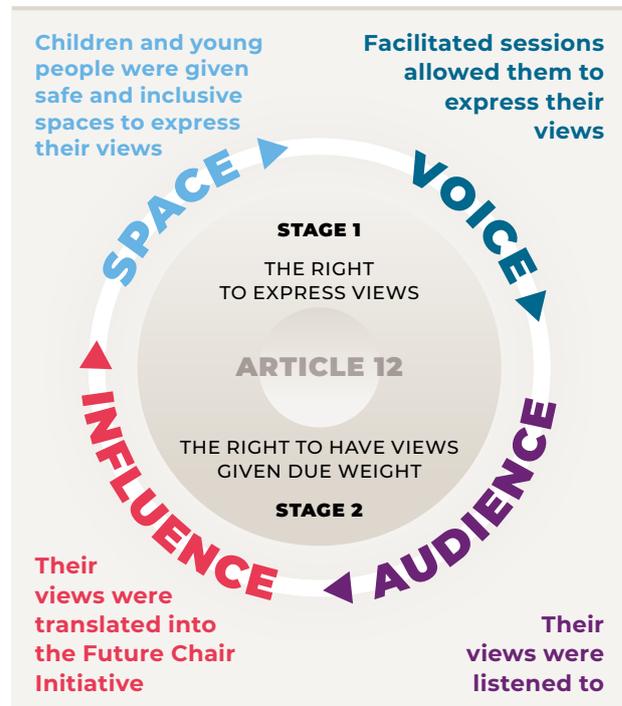
Future Chair promotes principles that advocate for meaningful engagement of young people in philanthropy, fostering dialogue and ensuring action on their recommendations. The initiative seeks to inspire similar practices across the sector, enhancing overall impact and inclusivity.

#### Inspiration

To address the lack of representation of young people in philanthropic foundations, Assifero explored ways in which it could harness its influence to embed intergenerational justice. It was initially inspired by the [International Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change](#), the global movement of foundations committed to taking urgent action on climate change, and Philea's publication [Child and Youth Participation in Philanthropy](#).

The initiative was developed through a participatory process with young people, who were integral throughout, contributing to the development of both the initiative's principles and its logo. From October 2022, the association initiated a dialogue between foundations and 200 students from United World College (UWC) and **Michael O'Flaherty, Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency**, followed by 2 in-person workshops with 18 young people aged 16 to 26. Fair remuneration was crucial to ensuring equity, acknowledging the expertise and lived experience of young people, who are not only at the heart of the initiative but also its driving force.

## HOW ASSIFERO APPROACHES INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE USING THE LAURA LUNDY MODEL



### THE PRINCIPLES OF FUTURE CHAIR

1. Create and facilitate spaces for dialogue and debate
2. Remove obstacles and ensure enabling conditions
3. Foster a culture of active listening at all levels
4. Consider and follow up on young people's views and ideas
5. Communicate your progress
6. Uphold and promote the principles

“ Nothing about us, without us: That is the underlying principle. True inclusion means involving people in the process, making sure that decisions reflect their diverse viewpoints, with the aim of fostering shared ownership of solutions.”

**Francesca Mereta**, Assifero's Coordinator of external communications and international networks

## 4. Results

### Shared understanding around intergenerational solidarity

Future Chair inspired a national debate on intergenerational justice and the need to include young people in decision-making in philanthropy and beyond. Through the initiative, Assifero has enabled the multiplier effect of philanthropy infrastructure, spreading its practice not only among its members but also to partners and beneficiaries.

The ways in which its 60 signatories live up to the principles of the commitment are diverse. These range from including young people in the design and implementation of programmes, to reorganising governance structures and facilitating succession planning in organisations.

#### Meaningful youth engagement

- Several foundations have established Youth Banks, empowering young people to design and manage calls for proposals, an approach adopted by [Fondazione Monza e Brianza](#).
- In addition to creating a Youth Bank, [Fondazione di Comunità Milano](#) established the role of Youth Planner. This position focuses on proposing projects in the areas of interest and participating in the Call for Proposals promoted by the Youth Bank with other young people.
- Other foundations, like [Fondazione Wanda di Ferdinando](#) in collaboration with [Wayouth](#), are putting young people in charge of shaping the future of their towns and cities.

#### Changing strategic governance

Meaningful inclusion of young people has taken on new forms in some foundations, which are now intentionally rethinking their decision-making processes. These foundations are incorporating young people in their governance structures and strategic decision-making roles. An example of this is [Fondazione Cottino](#) which elected a young woman to its board of directors after having signed the commitment and pledged to reform its governance.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?

“Philanthropy infrastructure organisations should be strategic and intentional in utilising all available resources to change mindsets and encourage wealthy individuals to become more aware of social injustices. Stay true to your mission if you claim to be committed to long-term, sustainable social change and justice for future generations.”

Carola Carazzone, Secretary General of Assifero

### GOOD TO KNOW

The [#FitForFuture-Generations](#) is a campaign by European think tanks, foundations, associations and non-profits, which is also supported by Philea. It advocates for the EU to address long-term risks, uphold core EU values, and safeguard the interests of future generations and include them in the EU's democratic decisions. The campaign calls for the development of an inter-institutional Declaration on the Rights of Future Generations; the appointment of a Future Generations EU commissioner with a broad, horizontal portfolio and acting as first vice-president; and the amendment of the Better Regulation Guidelines to include intergenerational justice as a key principle of lawmaking in the EU.



# SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

## How Leap Collective is shifting philanthropic practice

### Case in brief

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>! The issue</b></p> <p>Institutional philanthropy faces the paradox of potentially perpetuating the very problems it aims to solve: While philanthropy aspires to be a force for good and driver of systems transformation, prevailing funding practice and compliance regulations can often lead to power imbalances, which hinder philanthropy in supporting deep social change.</p> | <p><b>👁️ The context</b></p> <p>The scale of contemporary crises requires the adoption of new approaches to address root causes of societal injustices and thereby contribute to transformative change. Despite increased attention to the interlinked crises of our time, philanthropy's established project-oriented culture often focuses on short-term needs, limiting the possibilities for broader impact through addressing systemic inequalities.</p> | <p><b>🧭 The path forward</b></p> <p>Philanthropy needs to embrace long-term thinking and more equitable practices while centring the power of under-represented communities in decision-making processes. Philanthropic organisations can strengthen their risk-taking muscles through a deliberative process of introspection, addressing unintended consequences of their actions and building trust-based collaboration with partners, including social movements and activists.</p> |
|--|---|---|

### Leap Collective: A Snapshot

Leap Collective is a group of activists, social entrepreneurs, foundation representatives and donors working towards systemic change in philanthropy. It was launched in 2020 as an experiment by social entrepreneurs and activists – representing such organisations as Ashoka Germany, Guerrilla Foundation, Renewable Freedom Foundation and Resource Justice – who wanted to design it as “[a container for learning from philanthropic experimentation](#)”. Leap’s goal is to contribute to a philanthropic sector that shares power and supports systems transformation in a radically transparent way.

### ⚙️ Mindset

- Systems transformation
- Experimenting and prototyping
- Bringing activists and philanthropists together
- Power-sharing
- Radical transparency



## 1. Overview

Leap Collective emerged to bring about systemic change through its unique approach to philanthropy, aiming to move beyond the paradox of philanthropy perpetuating, in certain ways, some of the problems it aims to solve.

Leap Collective seeks to transform philanthropy by promoting genuine sharing of power, full transparency and trusted funding relationships, as well as by funding initiatives that drive systemic change in areas such as justice, decolonisation and ecological and social well-being. It works towards a shift to sustainable and equitable systems by:

- **Uncovering, disrupting and renegotiating power dynamics in philanthropy**
- **Supporting systems transformation activities and engaging with both established and emerging participatory funding structures to reach under-funded actors**

As a collective of activists, entrepreneurs and philanthropy practitioners, Leap centres equitable decision-making, experimenting and learning to address and challenge the short-sightedness prevalent in the current culture.

“*In Belgium, I often felt isolated as I created a grass-roots philanthropic fund for systems change. But connecting with others in the Leap facilitation group helped tremendously. Talking about this together strengthens all our narratives and practices in our local communities and helps us share them globally.*”

**Hadiel Holail Mohamed,**  
Director of Kaira Fund and  
Coordinator of Leap Collective



## 2. Challenge

Established practices in the philanthropy sector, especially when responding to the compounded crises of our time, have often fallen short of delivering the desired results for both donors and partners. “If philanthropy wants to respond to these fundamental developments and contribute to the solution of broader problems in society, it must examine its role and the strategies and instruments it can use,” wrote Rien van Gendt in his recent book “[Philanthropy Back to the Drawing Board](#)”. An intentional process of introspection can help philanthropy acknowledge existing gaps and maximise opportunities for realising the desired change.

The recent Black Lives Matter and decolonisation movements have prompted some established organisations to reflect on the origins of their wealth. By acknowledging the connections with problematic histories, such

as enslavement, colonialism or exploitation of natural resources, philanthropic organisations can create an opportunity to act now to address these wrongs.

In some parts of Europe, such as the UK, foundations are increasingly encouraged to scrutinise their own endowments (e.g. [the ACF's Origins of Wealth toolkit](#) and [Ten Years' Time's Racial Justice and Social Transformation: How funders can act](#)), and some organisations are proactively considering how [their wealth was generated](#) and are taking steps to understand and address the root causes of social injustices, embarking on a journey towards more equitable futures. Despite the approach not yet being mainstream across the continent, there is significant debate and acknowledgement of this and other flaws of philanthropy, as well as recognition of the ongoing challenges in implementing radical changes within the sector.

“ We are trying to challenge the kind of philanthropy that uses short-term thinking and addresses symptoms, but not root causes.”

Hadiel Holail Mohamed, Director of Kaira Fund and Coordinator of Leap Collective

### How problematic legacies cast shadows on the practices of today

One aspect of current practice that is rooted in the past is the systemic lack of diversity in philanthropic decision-making. While the data is very scarce, [research in the UK](#) showed that trustees of foundations were “99% white, 68% male and 58% were aged 65 and over”. The lack of representation undermines the sector’s ability to support genuine social change and instead perpetuates inequalities.

The difficulty of “walking the talk” can be observed in progressive funders’ adherence to conventional grant-making practice. By contrast, conservative funders of far-right movements have been providing core funding to build institutions rather than short-term funding to carry out projects, giving their trust to their grantees on a yearly basis and building their capacities [to re-align a far-right takeover](#). Instead, many progressive funders use an “impact logic” through projects, which supports rigid KPI application, time constraints, compliance procedures and reporting requirements which hinder the capacity of grantees to deliver long-term systems change. In 2025, philanthropic assets in Europe amounted to €516 billion, yet total expenditure constituted only €76 billion (Philea data, 2025), keeping the number of grants provided on an annual basis lower than it could be.

Additionally, there are questions around the adequacy of the established funding practice, which might unintentionally create power imbalances that can result in the [non-profit starvation cycle](#). [Research by Humenum](#) highlights that the relationship between grant-seekers and grantmakers is often strained by unrealistic expectations regarding the resources required to run organisations effectively. This is compounded by the misconception that low overhead costs are a sign of efficiency.

### 3. Approach

Leap Collective emerged as an alternative to an established practice, providing a space for both activists and philanthropy to co-design solutions to address the root causes of social inequalities. Leap supports practices that help activists receive the resources they need to advance climate and social justice and empowers solutions that are locally embedded and inspired by practical, real-life experiences. Leap is committed to making sure it “walks the talk” itself by embracing authenticity, transparency and risk-taking; and valuing growth through learning from mistakes and failures rather than prioritising reputation management.

Leap’s supporters provide unrestricted funding to Leap based on trust in its mission and values, which allows it to prioritise systems transformation, relationships and learning, rather than meeting reporting requirements that pretend that results always come exactly as planned. To enable this transformative work, Leap Collective relies on [Änderwerk](#) as its fiscal host. Änderwerk, registered in Germany, helps Leap navigate the challenging legal framework for non-profits, ensuring that its radical aims align with existing regulations and acting as an intermediary for the allocation of funds for its experiments. It also enables cooperation with nonregistered groups such as activists and movements: Current philanthropic practice involving such groups is challenging and considered risky.



## Embracing experimentation as a tool for change

Leap identified experiments as the most transformative tool in achieving change. Experimentation creates spaces which allow for genuine connections with activists and people with lived experience to drive action forward. The ideas for experiments are sourced both through Leap members and open channels of communication. The collaborative governance model of Leap invites the members to discuss each proposal in weekly meetings. The ideas that are taken onboard must be aligned with Leap's values, receive unanimous consent from its members, and have at least one member of the collective willing to host the experiment.

Each Leap experiment has three phases:

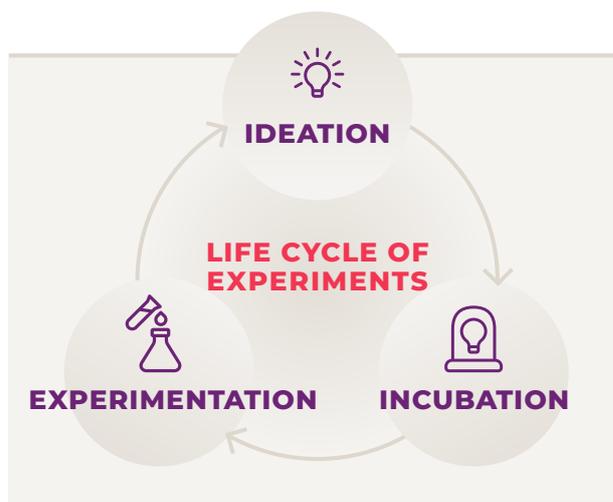
- 1 During the **ideation phase**, the proposals are collaboratively developed with activists and movements.
- 2 In the **incubation phase**, Leap secures seed funding and facilitates conversations with activists, communities and organisations who are compensated for their time to co-design the experiment.
- 3 The **full experimentation phase** starts upon securing implementation funding with each experiment testing distinct philanthropic practices, governance models, influencing strategies and redistribution mechanisms.

Finally, an experiment might stop, transform or become a self-standing project. At every phase of the experiment, groups design the process and decide on funding allocation together with Leap members. Trust and continued feedback loops between the organisations involved are the basis of the process: Transparency is integral to the entire granting process, and activists are aware of the origins and destinations of philanthropic funds. This individualised approach acknowledges that each group and experiment are distinct, requiring unique solutions.

*“With experiments, there is no linear process. No single model fits all experiments, and this is a significant challenge. We need to acknowledge and embrace complexity. Embracing failure is essential for learning, a concept often unheard of in philanthropy.”*

**Hadiel Holail Mohamed**, Director of Kaira Fund and Coordinator of Leap Collective.

## HOW LEAP COLLECTIVE APPROACHES CHANGING PHILANTHROPY



Leap shares the lessons learned together throughout the process with the philanthropic space to demonstrate how philanthropy can be done in a radically different way.

## WHAT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

1. Build genuine trusted relationships with partners.
2. Acknowledge the complexity of systems transformation.
3. Align endowments with philanthropic activities.
4. Foster cultures of care within organisations.
5. Fund people, not projects, and make funding accessible for grass-roots organisations.
6. Dismantle power dynamics within and beyond funding relationships.

## 4. Experiments in the spotlight

While it is too early to assess results, the innovative set-up and objectives of Leap Collective's experiments offer insights into its transformative vision for philanthropy:

### Systems transformation

- **Collective Abundance** is an exemplary effort of Leap to bring about systemic change in European philanthropy by shifting the focus from climate change to a climate justice agenda. This experiment – supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation and facilitated by Leap – was transformed into a stand-alone initiative through a participatory process which involved climate justice actors from across Europe. To tackle the barriers faced by grass-roots climate justice organisers, the initiative pursues three interconnected strands of work:
  - 1 Implementing a €5 million **participatory regranting fund** over five years, with allocation decisions made by a community of grass-roots groups.
  - 2 **Transforming funder-grantee dynamics** by promoting accessible funding and mutual accountability through innovative practices (including through the creation of a grantee union).
  - 3 **Encouraging a fairer wealth distribution** and tangible changes in philanthropy, ultimately reshaping relationships between climate funders and grass-roots organisations while building a grass-roots-led force in the European climate movement.
- Beyond participatory grantmaking, Leap seeks to redefine established funding practices to prioritise the well-being of all stakeholders. Through the **Radical Intersectional Care experiment**, Leap aims not just to change funding dynamics but to cultivate cultures of care as a vital foundation of how it practises activism and philanthropy.
- Through its **Migrant Justice experiment**, Leap facilitates gatherings with migrant justice activists from various Mediterranean countries, such as Tunisia, Morocco, Greece and Italy. It aims to create a platform for collective action and empowerment within migrant justice movements, underscoring the complex legal challenges faced by migrant justice activists. The group strategises together around how philanthropy can better support the migrant justice movement.
- Leap's experiment on a **Basic Income for Activists** centres on support for individuals who have been working for systems change, in some cases for decades, but who usually must submit proposals for ever-new, limited-time projects to be attractive to funders. Where many funders manage their own risk by making such individuals in essence ineligible for support, Leap works on mechanisms that allow for activists to receive unrestricted support, alleviating funding pressure which allows them to focus on their core work.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?

“Seek discomfort, be ready to be moved, be ready to be challenged. Have fun and be playful, you'll learn better than from KPIs. Do one impossible thing every year.”

**Martin Modlinger**, Leap Collective founder and member, and CEO Änderwerk

### GOOD TO KNOW

Humentum, supported by the Ford Foundation, has developed a project to bridge the gap between grantmakers and non-profits and enhance transparency. The [International Non-Profit Accounting Guidance \(IN-PAG\)](#) aims to harmonise non-profit financial reporting, thereby reducing the burden on non-profits to report in multiple grantmaking formats. The initiative has the potential to properly address the non-profit starvation cycle, enabling organisations to maintain transparency and accountability with donors and beneficiaries by disclosing overhead costs for the whole organisation.

# ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

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# PIONEERING JUST TRANSITIONS

How the Laudes Foundation leverages finance, evidence and partnerships for long-term impact

## Case in brief

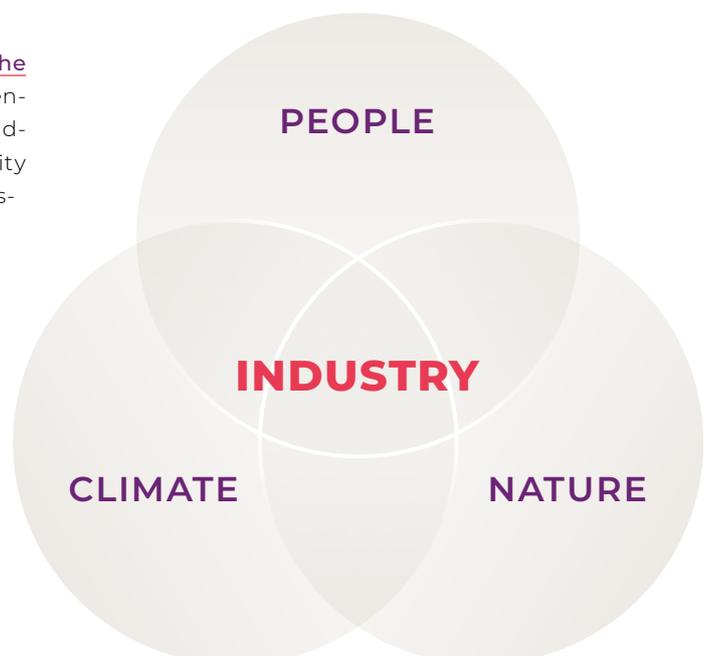
|  |   |  |
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| <p><b>! The issue</b></p> <p>Fashion, food and the built environment generate 80% of global emissions, making their decarbonisation critical to combating the climate crisis. These sectors employ millions worldwide, so their transition must support workers and communities, as well as nature. Without specifically focusing on the need for a collective and equitable approach to transformation, we risk deepening inequalities.</p> | <p><b>👁️ The context</b></p> <p>The post-Covid era revealed the complexities and long-term challenges of the current system of capitalism. Industries need practical solutions for how best to reduce emissions while prioritising equitable and sustainable outcomes for both people and nature. The concept of a “just transition” unites this dual goal, emphasising fairness in industrial transformation with the need to integrate social and environmental considerations.</p> | <p><b>🧭 The path forward</b></p> <p>Laudes Foundation envisions a future where transitions are designed to benefit both workers and the environment, meaning that industries are decarbonised, and communities are empowered. Achieving this vision involves leveraging financial systems to drive change within industries and fostering a cultural shift toward sustainability. Such a systemic transformation may take 15 years or more, but Laudes is committed to building momentum and delivering meaningful progress.</p> |
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## Laudes Foundation: A snapshot

The Laudes Foundation was [launched in 2020 by the Brenninkmeijer family](#), and builds on 200 years of entrepreneurial and philanthropic efforts. It seeks to address climate change, biodiversity loss and inequality by driving systemic change across industries, focusing on the high-emitting industries of fashion, food, the built environment and finance. Its mission to foster a green, fair and inclusive economy is amplified by supporting innovation and working with partners to create positive systems change.

### ⚙️ Mindset

- Experiment
- Build the field
- Connect unlikely allies
- Form communities of changemakers





## 1. Overview

Working alongside a wider network of philanthropic organisations, including its counterpart, Porticus, Laudes challenges and inspires industry to harness its power for good. Laudes's commitment to tackling climate change, nature loss and social inequality is driven by the belief that business and industry can be challenged by philanthropy to use their market power for positive change. Underpinning this mission, Laudes employs 6 strategic approaches to help achieve the greatest impact:

- 1 Accelerating advocacy
- 2 Strengthening accountability
- 3 Scaling research and innovation
- 4 Cultivating alliances
- 5 Amplifying narratives
- 6 Redefining value

Laudes goes beyond traditional grantmaking, using the catalytic power of philanthropy to actively unite business, policymakers, investors and civil society in enduring partnerships to advance systems change. As a prime example, Laudes co-created an [Economic System Map](#) with Nexial, harnessing insights from senior leaders, changemakers and experts across more than 130 organisations globally. The map creates a visual network that not only highlights the challenges faced by changemakers, but also how they can better coordinate action towards a just transition.

 Number of staff  
**53 people**

 Established in  
**2020**

 Annual giving in 2023  
**€73.6 million**

 Headquartered in  
**Amsterdam, Netherlands**  
with offices in the UK,  
Switzerland and Bangladesh

*“ Guided by the right values, rules and incentives, business and industry can be powerful agents to advance the transition to an economic system that values all people, climate and nature.”*

**Katy Hartley**, Director of Strategy,  
Innovation and Narratives, Laudes Foundation

## 2. Challenge

Businesses are operating in an uncertain environment that is constantly changing alongside rapidly evolving regulations. A balance between maintaining long-term strategic visions and addressing immediate priorities is urgently needed. Laudes applies a mindset that embraces complexity and seeks innovative solutions. By diving deeply into critical topics, seeding ideas and encouraging diverse stakeholders to come together, Laudes can foster collaboration and bridge divides between different disciplines to address systemic issues effectively.

Laudes's initial five-year strategy provided a structured roadmap for driving change, but global disruptions such as Covid-19, geopolitical shifts, and economic uncertainty exposed the limitations of having a set strategy. The implementation of a strong theory of change is complex, requiring adjustments and a need for agility, and being able to adapt quickly. Industry shifts are interconnected and unpredictable, necessitating an agile approach considering how action in the short-term can have medium-term effects. Laudes recognised the need for a more dynamic strategy to bridge the gap between looking back and learning and applying foresight to anticipate what is to come.

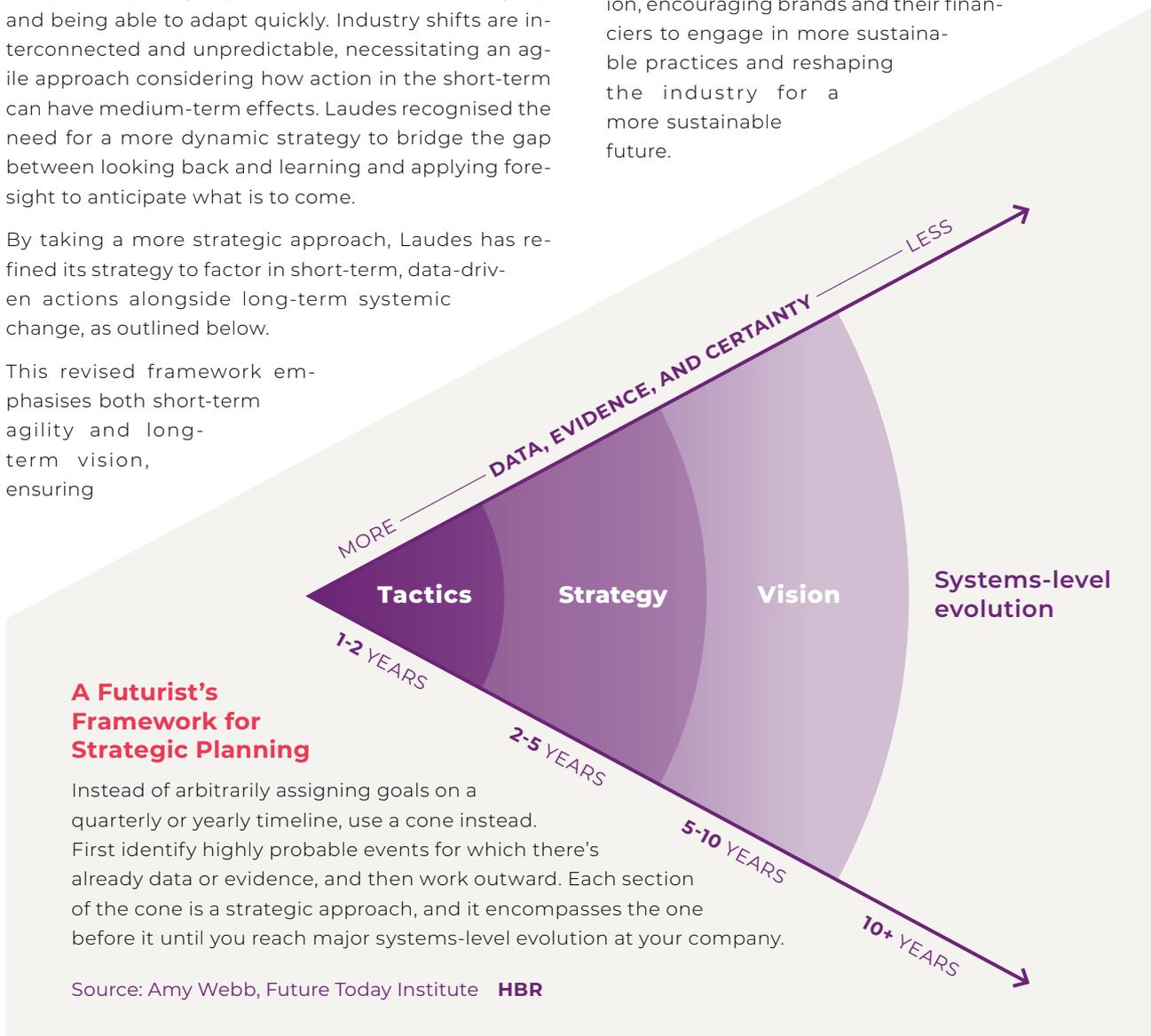
By taking a more strategic approach, Laudes has refined its strategy to factor in short-term, data-driven actions alongside long-term systemic change, as outlined below.

This revised framework emphasises both short-term agility and long-term vision, ensuring

that Laudes's philanthropic investments remain impactful, adaptive and aligned with an ever-evolving global context.

This long-term approach is particularly evident in Laudes's efforts to transition the fashion industry away from fast fashion. By producing billions of garments that quickly end up in landfills, the fast fashion industry is facilitating massive environmental harm. According to an [article in the Harvard Business Review](#), some brands' emissions jumped 52% in 2022, totalling 9 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. In addition, the industry relies on exploitative labour practices, with some workers earning less than four cents per garment and enduring 18-hour workdays.

By highlighting the urgent need for ethical and sustainable reform, Laudes has positioned itself as a vital force in shifting the narrative around fast fashion, encouraging brands and their financiers to engage in more sustainable practices and reshaping the industry for a more sustainable future.



### 3. Approach

Influencing the behaviour of huge industries is undeniably complex, but there remains optimism about the potential for transformation. Laudes begins by understanding economic systems, focusing on different stakeholders across the economy – government officials; investors and financiers; business leaders; the workers, producers and their communities; and media practitioners. Mapping the factors that influence the economy provides valuable insights into how change within this intricate system can be achieved.

Laudes employs a model similar to the “Three Horizon Life Cycle” to manage its partnerships and choose new partners. This involves exploring and learning from early-stage projects (e.g. exploratory grants for food systems transformation); accelerating and continuing successful longer-term initiatives with core support; and exiting or transitioning from projects responsibly.

This approach results in effective partnerships, amplifies impact and enables learning from these efforts. Laudes’s strength lies in fostering collaboration, seeding innovative ideas, setting up lighthouse projects – such as Built by Nature – as well as convening other donors around the key issues central to their work, like the Just Transition Donors Alliance.

Laudes doesn’t just hand out grants to projects and partners, but helps them build resilience, enhance skills and develop networks and organisational capabilities. Through its Learning Fund, partners can access funding for collective learning and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Its collaboration with [Non-Profit Builder](#) enables partners to access support on anything from VAT returns to communications or fundraising. Additionally, its Resilient Partners initiative helps organisations address well-being challenges and provides flexible assistance in response to security, economic and health risks.

### 4. Results

Laudes uses a rubrics-based methodology to help understand and measure its contribution to systems change, while still learning and adapting to new and unforeseen circumstances. Change cannot be captured by numbers alone: Metrics focus on what can be counted rather than what’s most important, but rubrics also set a framework for what “good” looks like. This establishes a shared language for describing and assessing outcomes using both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Laudes’s rubrics are integrated into its grantmaking processes – from the design phase through to measurement, evaluation and learning.

Laudes works with its partners to catalyse change by empowering them and building their capacity. Through building and funding “lighthouse projects” like Built by Nature and Fashion for Good, it effectively leverages expertise and resources to address pressing challenges:

#### **Built by Nature: Transforming the built environment**

Established in 2021, Built by Nature is a grantmaking network aimed at integrating bio-based materials into the construction industry. With additional funders having joined the initiative, the network has mobilised €25.8 million to advance its mission. Built by Nature has contributed to major policy advancements, such as the EU’s recognition of carbon storage in buildings within its new carbon removal framework, which incentivises investment in sustainable innovations. Moreover, the Built by Nature Prize highlights scalable, market-ready, bio-based construction solutions, demonstrating the growing momentum for environmentally aligned architectural practices.

“Take a long-term, systems view and look at who’s already working in that area so that you can build connections and collaborate on certain topics; this can also link unlikely allies. As a philanthropy, we have the privilege to do the hard things and demonstrate what is possible.”

**Stephanie van Drunen Littel**, Senior Manager, Strategy and Special Initiatives, Laudes Foundation

## Fashion for Good: Pioneering circular innovation in fashion

Fashion for Good is at the forefront of transitioning the fashion industry from a “take-make-waste” pattern to a circular and regenerative model. It nurtures and scales innovations through its accelerator and scaling programmes while driving systemic change through long-term foundational projects and impact investments.

[The fashion industry is responsible for significant environmental and social impacts, with 60% of materials being oil-based and 85% of fashion waste ending up in landfills.](#)

This collaboration focuses on decarbonising the sector, promoting circularity and scaling sustainable materials, while supporting inclusive policies and leadership to drive systemic change. The partnership has also fostered industry-wide collaboration via the Circular Apparel Community and raised public awareness with the now closed Fashion for Good Experience, an interactive museum in Amsterdam. These multifaceted efforts aim to make sustainability integral to the fashion industry, from consumer awareness to supply chain transformation, embodying the principles of restoration and regeneration.

## Coolfood Pledge: Reducing the food industry's carbon footprint

One of Laudes's newer endeavours is to support the transition of the food industry – a notoriously complex sector – toward decarbonisation by focusing on demand-side interventions. Since 2019, the [Coolfood Pledge](#) has driven meaningful progress in reducing the food industry's carbon footprint, achieving a 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per plate through to 2022 despite challenges like the cost-of-living crisis and the pandemic. Given that the global food system accounts for one-third of total greenhouse gas emissions, this initiative marks a significant step toward a more sustainable, inclusive and health-focused industry, demonstrating the power of shifting diets toward plant-based, lower-carbon options. The success of this project underscores the Laudes approach to shifting the standard behaviour of industry.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?

“ Know the difference between what you want to understand and learn about and what you want to fund. We're eager to learn, especially when we see how everything is connected. At the moment, many colleagues are keen to explore energy transitions and critical minerals deeply, which we need to understand. However, that doesn't always mean it's a grant-worthy programme at this point in time.”

**Katy Hartley**, Director of Strategy, Innovation and Narratives, Laudes Foundation



# DARE TO ANTICIPATE

## How Mercator Foundation Switzerland made strategic foresight part of its organisational culture

### Case in brief

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>! The issue</b></p> <p>Formulating strategy in a world of interconnected, fast-evolving crises is a challenge. How do you balance immediate needs with long-term goals? How do you stay on target while remaining open to new ideas? To practise foresight successfully, its methods must be embedded in the organisational culture and paired with the time to test, apply and reflect.</p> | <p><b>👁️ The context</b></p> <p>Historically, strategic foresight emerged in the military context. It has since been used by corporations and governments to spot emerging trends, risks and opportunities – and to think through scenarios and test how to respond. But the needs and interests of civil society are not routinely considered in such foresight exercises. Anticipation for the common good remains a wish, not a reality.</p> | <p><b>🧭 The path forward</b></p> <p>Foundations can play a crucial role in establishing foresight for the common good. They can be alert to “weak signals”, foster participatory anticipation methods, mobilise cross-sectoral interest in emerging trends, and provide risk capital to launch experiments on future issues. Establishing foresight routines in a foundation can strengthen the organisation and its impact, but also civil society itself.</p> |
|--|---|---|

### Mercator Foundation Switzerland: A Snapshot

This Zurich-based foundation aims to inspire change. It seeks to empower civil society to meet the major challenges of our time – the climate crisis, erosion of democracy, inequality of opportunities, and the impact of the digital transformation. The foundation does this by strengthening selected civil society actors with organisational development and multi-year core funding. With a firm belief in cross-sectoral cooperation and collective action, the foundation develops, tests and scales ideas for change in collaboration with numerous partners.

#### ⚙️ Mindset

- Build ecosystems of change
- Mobilise unlikely allies
- Test, learn, share and co-create
- Focus on the climate crisis
- Promote a resilient and diverse democracy



## 1. Overview

The Mercator Foundation Switzerland (Stiftung Mercator Schweiz) has abandoned five-year strategy cycles and embraced an agile, iterative strategy model that builds upon testing and learning.

A good life for all within the **planetary boundaries** will require a deep societal transformation – new ways of producing and consuming, learning and participating. The foundation aims to foster a just and democratic transformation towards a more sustainable future. This asks for strategic openness: There is no established path towards systemic change, hence the decision in 2021 to shift strategy. While the foundation's vision remains firm, the paths towards it are allowed to evolve. To cultivate an openness for change and iteration, Mercator decided to harness the methods of strategic foresight. An internal advisory position for “futures and development” was created to

anchor futures thinking in the organisational culture. The whole team is encouraged to explore, experiment, and adapt – to develop a futures mindset.

“Our approach is taking risks, leaving the comfort zone, breaking patterns.”

[Courage - Annual Report 2022](#) of the Mercator Foundation Switzerland



## 2. Challenge

The world is moving fast. Philanthropic organisations struggle with the unpredictability and complexity of current and future developments. The balancing act between immediate needs and long-term goals forces many foundations to make uneasy choices. More than ever, the times are calling upon philanthropic organisations to stay true to their promise: providing risk capital; maximising positive impact; embracing the *longue durée*; focusing on causes that do not attract sufficient mainstream public and private funding; and creating sandboxes for experimentation that spark inspiration on how to do good and better.

The Mercator Foundation Switzerland sees its main role as that of a catalyst. The foundation seeks to initiate and accelerate collective action processes, to help

stakeholders from different sectors to pull together and achieve systemic change. It provides spaces and means for ecosystems of change. To be a proactive and ever-learning funder, the foundation under the leadership of CEO Andrew Holland and Board Director Annetta Reisner dismantled traditional strategy cycles and moved towards more agile, iterative planning. This allows the foundation to constantly question its course and to evolve as it moves ahead.

Working with an iterative strategy model requires an organisational culture that is comfortable with anticipating new developments and with testing new approaches of how to meet the future. The methods of strategic foresight help the organisation to challenge its own routines and linear thinking.

### 3. Approach

The foundation actively cultivates a mindset of curiosity, serendipity and experimentation in which all team members are encouraged to look beyond standard solutions and to test new routes and methods.

#### Horizon scanning

Strategic foresight is essential for this culture of discovery. The team uses Slack daily to share what foresight specialists call “weak signals” – news or phenomena in society that can be interpreted as indicators of potential greater change. Such horizon scanning creates a routine of exchange and inspiration, explains David Hesse, responsible for Futures and Development at Mercator Switzerland. David’s role is to foster participatory foresight within the foundation, supporting team members to share their observations on trends, risks and opportunities. He curates a monthly bulletin of weak signals, an internal newsletter that documents the team’s findings. The team regularly takes time for informal sensemaking sessions to identify patterns in the plethora of diverging signals. Such patterns may be understood as emerging trends.

#### Experimentation

Observation and sensemaking are only one side of strategic foresight. Many emerging issues require practical experimentation to be understood. Mercator Switzerland has set up its own [Futures Lab](#), a sandbox designed specifically to conduct strategic experiments that go beyond the foundation’s established methods and theories of change. Courage and encouragement are at the core of the foundation’s philosophy: “Our biggest risk as a foundation is not about reputation or losing money. It is about not having impact,” says Andrew Holland. The team tries new methods, alliances, and funding mechanisms – all with the goal of maximising long-term impact without being afraid of setbacks: “Failure is part of our learning culture,” says Holland.

#### Evaluation

Strategic foresight will remain superficial without the opportunity to learn. All observations and experiments are thoroughly evaluated at Mercator Switzerland so that the learnings may be shared within and beyond the organisation. Board members are actively involved in this creative strategic process: A continuous Strategic Dialogue between the board and team creates the space for debate, shared critical reflection, and [impact analysis](#). The foundation uses a MELA + Sharing framework to monitor, evaluate, adapt and share its work. External stakeholders are regularly welcomed to challenge and boost the learning sessions.



Team of  
**25 people**



**1** internal advisory position for  
*futures and development*  
(.9 FT equivalent)



Annual expenditure  
**€15-20M**



**> 100** projects  
annually



Geographic focus:  
**Switzerland & beyond**

#### WHAT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE



**1. Act without expectation:** Foresight is about opening up. Cultivate routines of serendipity and expose yourself to new influences. Let things happen.



**2. Collect weak signals:** These indicators of possible future change may be extracted from a variety of sources (media, research, interviews, peer-learning sessions). The signals can help you identify patterns of bigger change.



**3. Foresight is participatory:** Create sensemaking spaces within your team and foster regular exchanges on emerging and future issues. The more diverse the perspectives and areas of expertise, the better.



**4. Invest in experiments:** Review your strategy and assess where your foundation can intervene. Provide risk capital and space for experiments.



**5. Make foresight part of your organisational culture:** Foresight is not an approach, but a mindset that should be integral to your organisation’s culture.

## FORESIGHT AT MERCATOR FOUNDATION SWITZERLAND

| Source:<br>Mercator<br>Foundation<br>Switzerland | <br><b>Detect</b> | <br><b>Understand</b> | <br><b>Test</b> | <br><b>Learn</b>     |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <b>What</b>                                      | Horizon scanning, collecting weak signals  | Sensemaking, pattern recognition   | Strategic experiments  | Evaluation, learning  |
| <b>How</b>                                       | Desk research and interviews with external experts and practitioners                               | Informal and creative discussion of signals and trends within the team                                 | Funding exploratory projects with new or existing partners                                       | Reflective peer-learning sessions, impact assessment, portfolio analysis                                |
| <b>Instruments</b>                               | Monthly Weak Signals Bulletin (for team and board)   | Sensemaking sessions, deep dives   | Grantmaking through existing programmes or Futures Lab   | Strategic Dialogue with team and board, adjustments in theory of change, communication of key learnings |

“Our biggest risk as a foundation is not about reputation or losing money: It is about not having impact.”

Andrew Holland, CEO, Mercator Foundation Switzerland

## 4. Results

Through signals analysis, sensemaking sessions, practical experimentation and learning dialogues the Mercator Foundation Switzerland identifies emerging trends which may become important to the foundation's work and provide an opportunity to increase its impact.

### Urban surveillance

Tracked mobile phones, biometrical recognition, smart streetlights: Privacy is under heavy pressure, particularly in densely populated urban areas. Mercator has partnered with a variety of organisations to learn more about how surveillance may affect democracy, education and diversity in the near future. Partners include the [Edgelands Institute](#), an international pop-up project that explores the future of privacy and security in six global cities through the means of arts and academic research. Mercator co-funds the NGO [Algorithm Watch CH](#) which defends civic liberties against algorithmic surveillance and discrimination. And it explores the consequences of facial recognition with partners from design and the arts such as [Studio Absurda](#).

### Role of finance in transformation

How may impact investors and venture philanthropists contribute to funding systemic change, and how may their funds be pooled to create deep impact? Here, Mercator co-funds the [Impact Club](#), an innovative hybrid of an investors' club and a social business incubator in the Swiss region of Ticino. Another partner is [Meso](#), an alliance of innovators who seek to scale promising social innovation initiatives to achieve transformation towards a more sustainable, regenerative future in urban areas. The role of finance in such scaling processes is actively explored. Mercator supported Meso first through its Futures Lab, and now through its climate programme.

## Public interest journalism

Democracy needs quality information. How can philanthropies strengthen this ecosystem without distorting the market? Mercator co-funds a European house for public interest media innovation in Berlin ([Publix](#)), and a Swiss advocacy group that supports journalists and NGOs when requesting lawful access to government information ([Verein Öffentlichkeitsgesetz](#)). And it funds selected innovative media literacy initiatives, both in schools and in museums ([Print to Pixel](#)).

## Foresight for all

These experiments small and large are only some examples of how the Mercator Foundation Switzerland attempts to increase its impact and to continuously develop its organisation. Mercator's work is essentially about cross-sectoral collaboration, courage and risk-taking, embedded in a culture of learning and experimentation. Strategic foresight is an essential part of this. "Foresight for all" is what Mercator Foundation Switzerland calls this approach: "We have many questions and not all the answers, but we have visions of change for our journey together," says Andrew Holland. "Cross-sectorial collaboration is the core lever to address our most urgent challenges and, if necessary, to change the framework conditions."

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?

“Foresight is something you cannot do alone, you need people to inspire you, to break your bubble. Foresight is about opening up. Workload does not have to increase as people are already doing it – talking to experts, reading articles, discovering new ideas. The trick is to bring these observations together and to collectively make sense of them.

*This process can be great fun. If you can embed futures thinking in your team's culture and then translate the findings into areas where your organisation can make a difference, you will have significantly strengthened your team, your organisation, and your impact.”*

**David Hesse**, Responsible for Futures and Development, Mercator Foundation Switzerland

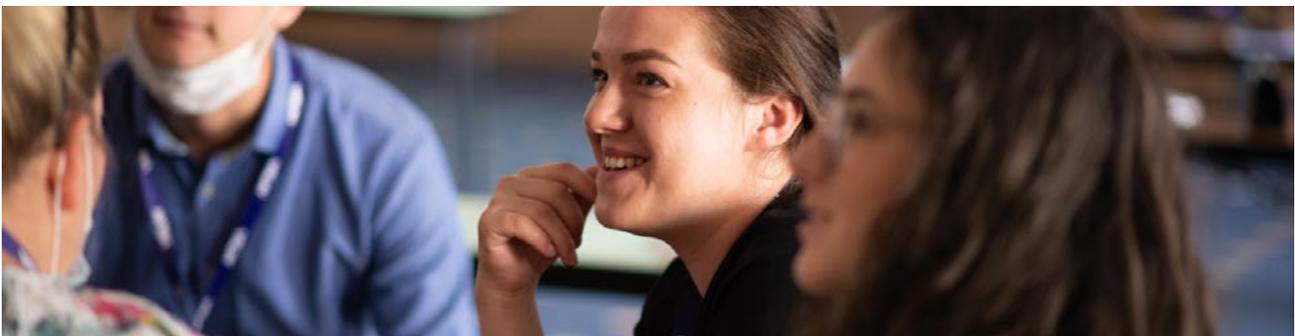


# FROM SHORT-TERM NEEDS TO FOCUSING ON MISSION

How Mozaik Foundation is embracing the long game

## Case in brief

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>! The issue</b></p> <p>While societal challenges we are facing require creativity and patience, the prevailing funding practice provides short-term support which creates a challenging environment for organisations to test viable solutions to the root causes of problems. It might also create donor dependency and an outcome-focused mentality.</p> | <p><b>👁️ The context</b></p> <p>Systemic shortsightedness, lack of space for testing and experimentation, and focus on immediate, tangible results lead to the failures of systems to deliver long-term impact. The evolving nature of some wicked problems – such as worsening mental health and too-rapid technological advances, including in AI and automation – all change the societal fabric and require more forward-thinking approaches from philanthropy.</p> | <p><b>🧭 The path forward</b></p> <p>Philanthropic organisations have the unique opportunity to prioritise mission over measurable outcomes. This requires developing introspection muscles to transform their own internal structures and procedures which allow for innovation, agility and rethinking what they can directly impact and what is beyond their control.</p> |
|--|---|---|



## The Mozaik Foundation: A Snapshot

Established in 2002, the Mozaik Foundation's vision is for its home country Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to be a beacon of entrepreneurial spirit, a place where skilled young innovators are not merely participants but leaders and creators of change. In 2016, the foundation launched a 10-year strategy with the ambition to lead the development of a new generation of entrepreneurial and innovative youth in BiH to serve as a role model to others.

## ⚙️ Mindset

- Mission and impact-driven
- Impact investment and high-risk appetite
- Long-term trust building with local players
- Catalysing underused local capacities
- Iterative learning and adaptive strategy
- Empowering the workforce of the future

## 1. Overview

Bosnia and Herzegovina's challenging economic situation, with its high unemployment rate and lack of professional opportunities, is causing many young people to seek their futures elsewhere. The Mozaik Foundation is striving to reverse this trend by challenging the donor-dependency logic, placing impact at the centre, and developing a long-term vision. It has designed a 10-year strategy to create role models for the youth of the country. Through an innovative Impact Management Matrix and clarity on the limitations of the organisation's direct impact, the Mozaik Foundation is an inspiring example of a philanthropic practice that is courageous, systemic and agile.

Founded  
in **2002**



Bosnia and  
Herzegovina



**35** staff  
members



**10-year strategy**  
(2016-2026)



Budget of  
€3 million



Focus on  
creating role  
models for youth

“*Something happened which we didn't expect to happen: When you don't have to be donor-driven and instead are able to adapt and focus on one thing, you become very good. This consistency leads to incremental improvements across all aspects of organisational work.*”

Zoran Puljic, Founding Director of Mozaik Foundation

## 2. Challenge

The aftermath of the collapse of communism in central and eastern European countries and the end of conflicts in the western Balkans saw many international organisations and private philanthropies [enter the region](#) with the intention of strengthening social cohesion and mobilising communities. Apart from supporting organisations and contributing towards building democracy and a market economy, they also helped lay the groundwork for reinvigorating existing – and establishing new – philanthropic cultures, such as [through the dynamically growing community foundation movement](#).

However, this also created some side effects. Many civil society organisations significantly relied upon, and hence became dependent on, funding from international organisations as the only [relevant funding source](#). Another unintended consequence, according to the Mozaik Foundation, is “[projectitis](#) – a condition which plagues organisations that excel in fundraising but become overly cautious, focusing primarily on contract acquisition and donor satisfaction”. Donor dependency and a project-driven ethos often force mission-driven organisations to become chameleons that adjust to funding conditions instead of steering towards their vision.

This is the story of the Mozaik Foundation, based in Bosnia and Herzegovina – a country in the western Balkans that underwent a civil war from 1992-1995 and has since

travelled an uneasy path of reconstruction and reconciliation. The repercussions of the past still resonate in the present: According to a [World Bank report](#), regardless of stable economic growth, “Should BiH continue to grow at the same rate, it would take more than 100 years to reach living standards enjoyed in the EU.” As a consequence, BiH faces a significant brain drain: in the last three decades, [24% of its population has emigrated](#), with mostly young, educated and skilled people among them. Against the backdrop of significant economic challenges, [philanthropy in the country](#) is still perceived primarily as a way of providing help to people, and rarely as a tool for addressing critical issues that demand a long-term approach.

The Mozaik Foundation, which was established in 2002, started with the ambition of creating opportunities for young people to address community challenges, including youth brain drain. While it tapped into funding from USAID, the EU and the World Bank, among other major donors, the foundation ended up with accumulated frustration around the limited impact it was achieving: The projects it had been implementing were donor-driven and outcomes-oriented, without necessarily embedding the visions of local communities and long-term prosperity. This is where Mozaik started pondering over fundamental questions such as: *Why does it exist? How does it measure direct impact of its work? How does it stay true to its mission while remaining a flexible and learning organisation?*

### 3. Approach

Getting out of the grip of short-term wins is daunting and calls for courage, leadership and long-term thinking. While these can be nurtured internally, they can also be facilitated through external stimuli and peer inspiration. In the case of the Mozaik Foundation, the inspiration came from international philanthropies, such as the Mott Foundation and King Baudouin Foundation, while an executive programme for Schwab social entrepreneurs at Harvard Business School in 2013 appeared to be game changing. The Mozaik leadership brought back the learnings to the team and, thanks to a general-purpose grant from the Mott Foundation, initiated a two-year process for a radical restructuring of the foundation's course to the future.

#### The valley of death: Breaking away from donor dependency

The ambition to bring the most possible impact for the youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted in a 10-year ambitious impact statement: "Between 2016 and 2026, Mozaik Foundation will lead the development of a new generation of entrepreneurial and innovative youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina – a value-driven force that creates new social and economic value, creates new jobs and serves as a role model to other youth."

Pivoting to a mission-driven organisation spurred innovation, transforming Mozaik into a more robust organisation, deeply embedded in the communities it serves, and fostering numerous collaborations across the private, public and civil society sectors. Mozaik is nearing its ambition of being able to generate around €500,000 (BAM 1 million) per year for operations through its own income generated through such sources as the proceeds of the endowment, mission-related investments and local contracts – all the while staying creative and flexible in its approach of supporting role models and nurturing new businesses in BiH.

However, there was a price to pay for the foundation's commitment to impact: It required phasing out multi-million-dollar projects supported by USAID and the EU as they no longer fit the foundation's new strategy objectives. Mozaik faced a "valley of death" in 2015-2017 – with the lack of liquidity putting a toll on the staff's workload and morale. Thanks to the support of flexible funding of European private philanthropies, such as the Robert Bosch Foundation and Porticus, and the first institutional grant from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in 2019, the foundation passed this resiliency test, putting it on track to secure organisational sustainability and helping it stay true to its mission.

#### Impact Measurement Matrix: Navigating what is under, and beyond, control

Clarity around purpose and the desired future creates a space to be more intentional about the "how". The foundation landed on a theory of change called an "Impact Measurement Matrix", which includes **3 mission results** around the opportunities for youth and **2 internal sustainability results** in the next 10 years.

The unique feature of the matrix is an **invisible line of control**: This theory of change acknowledges the limitations of its direct impact and that no single actor can predetermine where, how or for whom value might be created. While it gives a promise for the mission and sustainability results, the theory implies that projected outcomes might evolve depending on the context, other players and unforeseen events. Learning leads to new "a-ha" moments which are immediately implemented and brought to life. This ingredient is key to an impact-driven organisation. With the pathway being discovered iteratively during the process, the invisible line of control allows for flexibility, adaptation and constant innovation.



## Establishing the internal culture: “The only constant in Mozaik is change”

Commitment to impact comes along with commitment to continual evolution, which requires a certain mindset of staff members. The internal mantra, “the only constant in Mozaik is change”, speaks to a culture where lessons are rapidly integrated back into the strategy. This is underpinned by clear internal frameworks which are constantly documented and updated to ensure simpler ways of working. The prerequisite for an innovation-prone team is bringing down silos and “islands of control” internally and enabling staff to see the bigger picture.

Keeping innovation at the heart of the entire organisation is made possible by the leadership of Mozaik intentionally adapting management styles to each phase of the programme-development cycle; giving staff the time to mature; and encouraging staff to have a coffee with each other to reassess internal procedures and dismantle unhelpful practices.

## 4. Results

### High risk yields high impact

Eight years into this ambitious strategy, Mozaik is well on track to achieving a sustainable financial model, and set to hit some of its mission targets ahead of time: It attracted and identified almost 80,000 responsible, ethical and positive youth in BiH (out of 50,000 planned); mobilised and empowered over 4,000 youth-led projects (out of 5,000 planned); and supported, invested and promoted almost 450 new businesses (out of 500 planned). While the leverage point for supporting new businesses became Tech4Impact (introduced below), identification of new youth role models is happening on the online platform [Rolify.com](https://rolify.com), a dynamic community of youth activists and social entrepreneurs, which has gone through several reincarnations. These reincarnations became possible through the space provided by the 10-year strategy and the ability to implement, test and iterate at a greater speed than donors' approval timelines (which could sometimes take up to six months). The scale of this impact is the fruit of constant experimentation with projects, which has led ultimately to Mozaik becoming a national champion in its mission areas with a strong network of local partners.

“An analogy for the Mozaik Foundation is Microsoft Office Windows 1995. It is the same programme, but it is constantly upgrading. The people at Mozaik are doing the same thing – they are encouraged to innovate, make mistakes and learn from them. We also welcome ‘external integrations’: We can do little on our own, so we tap into strengths of our partners.”

Zoran Puljic, Founding Director of Mozaik Foundation

### Boosting local venture philanthropy through Tech4Impact

Through the learnings from its charitable projects, Mozaik realised that creating role models for youth in the country is intricately related to building businesses and job opportunities: High-quality jobs that encouraged BiH youth to stay were needed. Following a couple of iterations, the foundation created an equity investment fund [Tech4Impact](#) – an innovative tool focused on SDGs and technology which mobilises private capital, including from the diaspora. Over 350 start-ups have received pre-seed funding – a €25,000 investment for the development of a prototype, as well as pro bono business support from [Mozaik Startup Studio](#). While Mozaik knew little of the investment market at the outset of its journey, it became one of the leading impact investors in the region. The foundation currently has equity share in 17 youth start-ups, with Mozaik's share estimated at almost €2,3 million (BAM 5.5 million).



### Countrywide change

According to [Philea's "Exploring 21st Century Philanthropy" survey](#), advocacy and campaigning will need more philanthropic engagement in the next decade. Focusing on strategy rather than projects opened new avenues of action on advocacy and coalition building for Mozaik, two areas which were initially beyond its scope. Since 2020, the foundation has led a successful campaign that has changed the legal framework for the exemption of food donations from VAT. It could have been impossible in a politically divided country with a complex governance structure; however, the foundation leveraged its reputation and networks to ensure [unanimous support](#), which would ultimately lead to the reduction of hunger and waste of food in the country. The learnings around the need for greater policy and advocacy work will be fed more profoundly into the next cycle of strategy development.

### From a robust organisation to a robust ecosystem

Ambitious theory of change creates humility about the role one organisation can play. Systemic thinking about interdependency and the importance of coordinated efforts motivated Mozaik to develop its interventions at the intersection of two major learnings: local experience and needs, and harnessing global knowledge. The foundation works closely with youth, municipalities, the private sector, media and institutions. It contributes to systemic efforts at the national level as well. Mozaik co-founded the Bosnia and Herzegovina [Philanthropy Forum](#) for charitable foundations and responsible business to mobilise more private funding and create an enabling environment for national philanthropy.

It also supports the adoption of ESG standards and created a platform for thought leaders and change agents through its annual Mozaik Impact Summit. At the same time, Mozaik keeps its finger on the pulse of developments at the European and global levels by scanning global and regional trends against the local pace of development, and through regular engagement with other philanthropic and academic players.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?

“ We learned that while donors often solicit innovative projects, they prefer funding what they know. This disconnect arises because their selection criteria and programmatic staff might not be equipped to recognise and handle high-impact, high-risk projects. Should any organisation, especially in eastern Europe, decide to move towards an organic and mission-driven growth, it is important for private philanthropy to be there for them.”

Zoran Puljic, Founding Director of Mozaik Foundation



# FUNDING WITH TRUST AND FLEXIBILITY

How Robert Bosch Foundation is experimenting with funding ideas and actors

## Case in brief

### The issue

Philanthropy needs to create enabling conditions for civil society actors, movements and activists to thrive and bring change. Current funding and collaboration practices such as stringent reporting requirements often constrain the agility and adaptability of civil society organisations. To address complex challenges, philanthropy must trust and invest in community-led programmes and the organisations that support them.

### The context

In the context of economic constraints and political instability, not only do civil society organisations fill in the voids and hold institutions accountable, they also ideate better alternatives for people and planet. However, this work is rarely supported: Current funding falls short in enabling people and organisations to test and develop solutions that address the root causes of social issues.

### The path forward

Philanthropy takes pride in its built-in feature of having fewer constraints than other institutions, which makes it well positioned to support risky but promising endeavours. Pivoting from supporting programmes and projects to actors and ideas can not only empower philanthropic partners to drive meaningful change, but also bring organisational transformation internally.



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## Robert Bosch Foundation: A Snapshot

The Robert Bosch Foundation was established in 1964 and is rooted in the legacy of the entrepreneur and founder Robert Bosch. The foundation works for a just and sustainable future through its funding.

### Mindset

- Trust
- Inclusiveness
- Transparency
- Flexibility
- Innovation
- Openness to evidence-informed results

## 1. Overview

The Robert Bosch Foundation is active in the areas of health, education and global issues. The foundation considers how the pressing challenges of today intersect as it strives to overcome silo thinking. It also has recently launched special departments: Ukraine Engagement to support Ukrainian civil society over a period of at least five years; and Futures and Networks that focuses on futures-oriented and sustainable philanthropy, in cooperation with political decision-makers in Germany and the Robert Bosch Academy.

The foundation currently holds roughly 94% of the share capital in Robert Bosch GmbH and finances itself from the dividends it receives as a result. However, it has no voting rights. It has evolved into one of the largest company-affiliated foundations in Europe with currently 170 employees working in Stuttgart, its home base, and Berlin.

In 2017, the Robert Bosch Foundation, under new leadership and recognising shifting international contexts, initiated a comprehensive review of its international funding portfolio, which constitutes 50% of its funding for operational and grantmaking activities. Addressing the complexity of global trends required a systematic approach involving a highly participatory process, including commissioning in-depth issue studies and consultations with international experts. This approach fostered a new dynamic, with staff working in cross-departmental groups, making the strategic review and realignment a learning journey for the entire foundation.

This systematic process led to the decision to wind down all existing grants and programmes and start anew. Between 2018 and 2019, the foundation launched a new funding portfolio focused on global issues, emphasising six key areas: climate change, democracy, immigration society, inequality, migration and peace. The strategic realignment in the international funding portfolio inspired transformation in its then other funding areas of health, science, education and society. An enabling factor for this organisational shift had been a 2015 revision of the responsibilities of the board – from overseeing individual projects and programmes to focusing exclusively on adopting a more strategic role and approving the annual budget.

The foundation adopted a mechanism to support organisations already at the ideation phase, addressing a significant gap in the funding landscape, to empower actors to test ideas aimed at tackling the root causes of social issues. The strategic shift implied process reviews, new dialogue formats with the partner organisations, and new internal solution-oriented approaches. The Covid-19 pandemic further helped to technically try out new funding mechanisms and realise them at a faster pace than under normal circumstances.

## 2. Challenge

Despite being at the forefront of fighting the complex challenges facing society, civil society organisations and social movements often deal with financial instability and inadequate funding. Two-thirds of organisations report being unable to attract or retain staff with adequate knowledge and experience, while 37% frequently adjust administrative functions to cut costs when donor coverage for administration is insufficient. Additionally, over half of these organisations struggle to fundraise from flexible sources. The type of project funding that many funders offer limits the capacity of their grantees to enact change. The pandemic showed what was possible when foundations use flexible funding: Around 66% of funders relaxed or eliminated grant restrictions, which helped civil society organisations to redirect staff time and resources to respond to the crisis.



Unrestricted funding dropped in 2021, as many funding organisations returned to their usual giving practices. The degree of flexibility shown during the pandemic needs to be “the new normal” in philanthropy and should be implemented beyond crises to ensure impactful and equitable partnerships between funders and grantees. The ability of the philanthropy sector to adapt and provide flexible funding solutions is key as the complexity of the problems society is facing intensify. By embracing accessible processes, flexible funding and a broader range of grantees, foundations can more effectively support marginalised communities and drive significant change in turbulent times. Less restrictive and more flexible funding is essential for organisations to effectively address policy threats, community needs and drive systemic change. It enables them to respond swiftly to urgent issues and adapt to future crises, thereby enhancing their capacity to serve their communities and advance their missions.

### 3. Approach

The Robert Bosch Foundation aims to achieve sustainable systemic change, and the way to achieve this requires trust and flexibility. The foundation relies on people and their ideas to change structures and systems, focusing on relational approaches to achieve impact through relationships. This has shifted the foundation's approach from a traditional asymmetrical power structure to developing trusted partnerships. The foundation cooperates with a wide range of partners, and supports them according to the objectives and needs of each initiative. Its commitment to relational approaches is exemplified by its support of PEX, a community of philanthropy infrastructure practitioners, and the Wasan Network, a network of community builders from foundations and social change organisations.

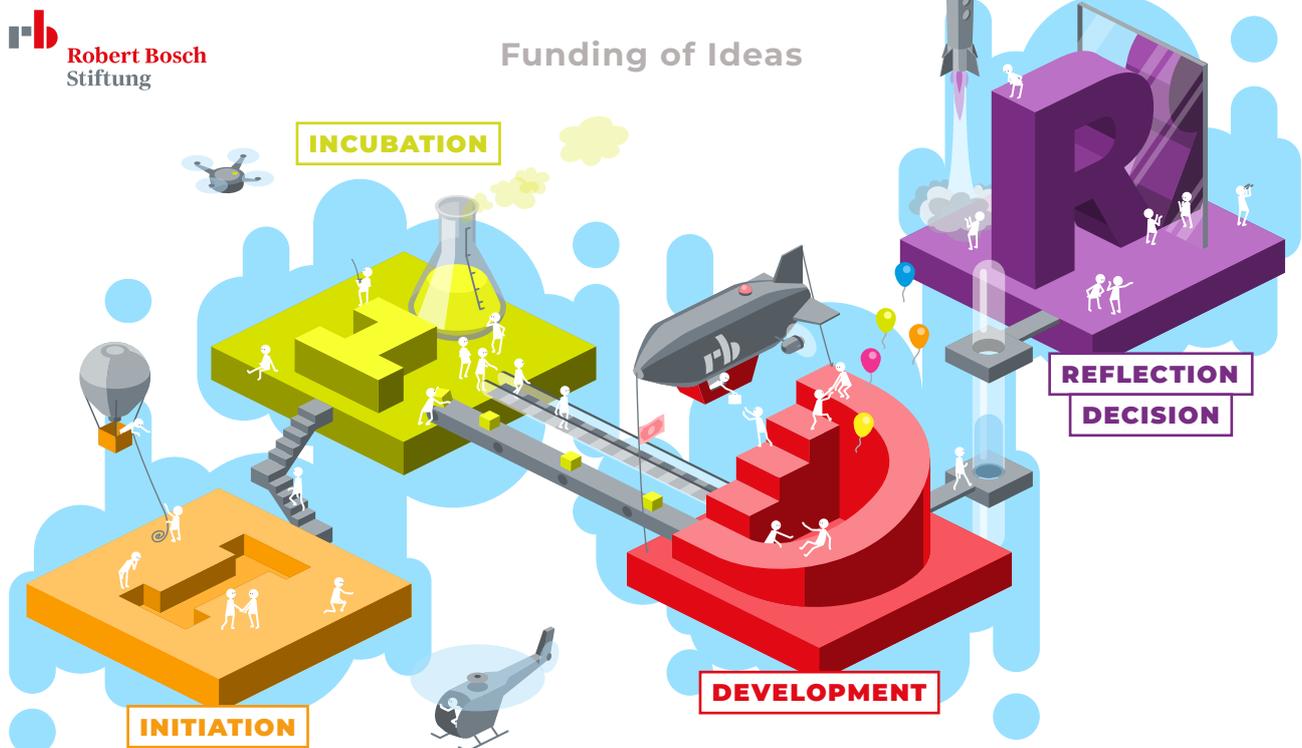
Support is given at every stage of the partnership, with funding already provided at the *initiation* stage. The approach is informed by regular peer exchanges where colleagues meet quarterly to understand and share their experiences with partners. The aim of the process is to create a tailor-made approach responding to the specific needs and aspirations of partners and their ideas. While some prefer receiving financial support and light-touch cooperation, others value close involvement and information exchange with the foundation team. To implement funding with trust and flexibility, the foundation employs two key instruments: Funding of Ideas and Funding of Actors.

#### Funding of Ideas

The Funding of Ideas process is structured to support innovative solutions for complex social problems through four key stages:

- 1 In the initiation phase, the foundation and the organisation get acquainted and decide whether to start a joint development process. The length of the initiation process varies between initiatives.
- 2 During the incubation phase, they identify partners and settings to explore the idea further, leading to a joint vision and agreement, including funding.
- 3 In the development phase, the idea is turned into a concept with flexibility for adjustments.
- 4 In the decision phase, the feasibility of the idea is assessed, determining if the collaboration should continue for implementation.

Regardless of the outcome, the foundation values the mutual learning experience. For example, the Robert Bosch Foundation considered adapting an app used in Canada for integration purposes but realised it was not feasible due to differing cultural contexts. In another instance, the foundation supported the Superrr Lab by providing resources to develop their ideas, acknowledging the expertise gap within the foundation itself.



## Funding of Actors

Funding of Actors is a funding instrument which is meant to support partners in their organisational development. It is general operating support to the organisation for a “next step” they would like to take in their journey. What is important is that the foundation is not doing the organisational development process for or with the organisation – the partner organisation takes over the organisational development process themselves.

To ensure comprehensive support and flexibility, this instrument also involves several key stages:

- 1 Initially, the foundation and a partner get to know each other to decide on embarking on a joint development process. This phase can take at least half a year while trust is built. During the initiation phase, the grant management team assists with administrative steps.
- 2 Exploration follows, where the organisation identifies its strengths, needs and priorities, using financial support to free up resources and gain additional expertise.
- 3 In the development phase, the organisation begins its journey, with flexibility to adjust plans as needed.
- 4 In the finalisation/transfer phase, achievements are reviewed, recommendations are made for other organisations, and feedback is sought to improve the foundation's support.

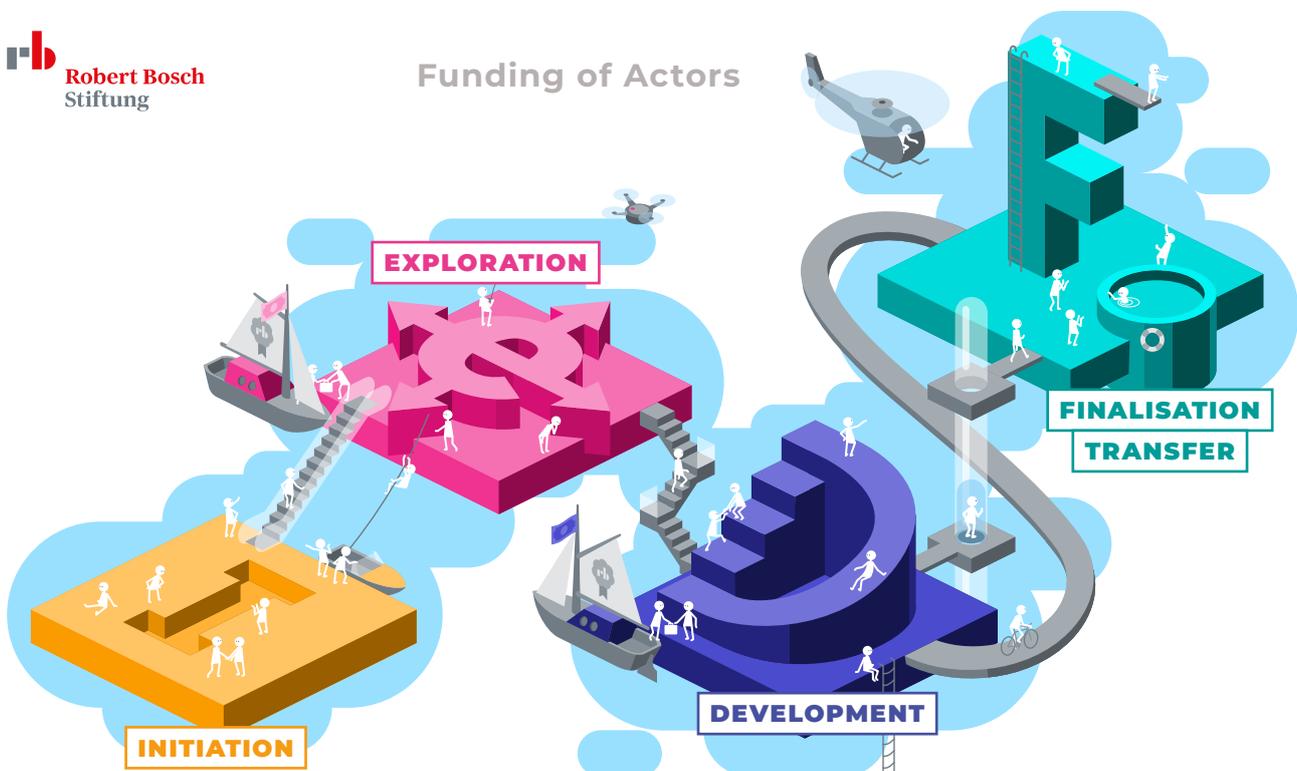
For the evaluation of its programmes and strategy development the foundation employs the evaluation framework, MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning). Conducted annually, MEAL informs the foundation's theory of change by assessing the impact of its programmes and identifying areas for improvement. This framework enables the foundation to make meaningful contributions by evaluating its role in comparison to larger global actors. By focusing on the interdependencies of global issues, such as the nexus between climate change and migration, the foundation ensures a comprehensive and nuanced approach to addressing complex challenges.

“ This approach has been an answer to a need that has been present for a long time. We have learned that it takes time to build this kind of funding relationship, it takes time to build trust with the partners. Our experience with Funding of Ideas and Funding of Actors has led to a more general approach of putting trust and flexibility at the centre of our grantmaking.”

**Silke Breimaier**, Senior Manager Foresight, Impact & Strategy at Robert Bosch Foundation



## Funding of Actors





**170** employees



Headquarters in **Stuttgart** and representation in **Berlin**



Active in **26 countries**



**€2.2 billion** for charitable work since 1964



**Funding of Ideas and Actors** – instruments established in 2022

## WHAT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE



Listen to the needs of your partners



Invest time in building the relationships



Have reflection rounds with staff members



Embrace learning and adaptation with staff



Build up tolerance to ambiguity

## 4. Results

### Changes in internal practices

Trust and flexibility are increasingly at the centre of the foundation's funding relationships, as it relies on people and their ideas to change structures and achieve the foundation's commitment to effecting systemic change. To support long-term and reliable partnerships, the foundation has increasingly adopted more open and flexible contract forms with fewer reporting requirements. The grant management team deals directly with the partner organisations, engaging with various project topics to foster deeper understanding with partners. Inclusivity and the integration of partner voices in decision-making processes have been prioritised through advisory councils and strategy retreats, ensuring that partners contribute directly to the foundation's feedback loops and internal thinking. This practice ensures that diverse perspectives and lived experiences inform the foundation's strategies and initiatives.



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### Building trust with partners

The foundation has invested considerable time in building trust and understanding with its partners. Listening to their needs and understanding how to better work with grantees has allowed the foundation to be more flexible, for example leading it to customise reporting requirements based on the needs of the partner. Though the foundation has created a more tailored and supportive funding environment, one challenge has been the initial reluctance of some partner organisations to fully embrace the freedom and flexibility offered. Despite these challenges, the foundation's willingness to adapt and embrace the ambiguity and volatility of the current moment and the systemic challenges we are facing has been key.



## Peer learning

Working with the new funding instruments has required an iterative process and several peer exchanges. Internally, peer-to-peer learning has emerged as an asset that is in demand among staff. The foundation has recognised the importance of creating spaces and opportunities for staff to learn from each other's experiences and insights. Regular meetings and collaborative projects have become integral to this learning culture, helping to streamline learnings across the foundation and enhance collective problem-solving capabilities. The Berlin representation of the foundation has a physical space, encouraging colleagues from different teams to spend time together and work across themes and issue areas. Teams can also apply for funding together, thus, the foundation is encouraging intersectionality and overcoming internal siloes. This focus on relationships and learning has strengthened the foundation's ability to support its partners effectively.

## GOOD TO KNOW

Other funders are also starting to question funding practices. [Funders for Real Cost, Real Change](#) is a community of practice of 12 large funders started in 2019 to address the non-profit starvation cycle and make changes to their policies and practices. The funders resourced a partnership with [Ariadne](#) and [EDGE Funders Alliance](#) to kickstart the initiative [Funding for Real Change](#), a project that advocates for a future where multi-year, flexible funding becomes the norm. Its mission is to normalise effective grantmaking practices across the sector, ensuring that organisations and social movements have the necessary resources to create lasting change. This communication and advocacy initiative offers a range of resources – including research, case studies and recommendations – to support funders in increasing flexibility and deepening their commitment to grantee partners.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER FUNDERS?

“ We have to live with the imperfection of things, not having answers to some of the questions that come up in an organisation as big as ours. This should not stop us from experimenting with changes to our practices and learning from them.”

**Silke Breimaier**, Senior Manager Foresight, Impact & Strategy at Robert Bosch Foundation

# ABOUT PHILEA

## Philanthropy Europe Association

Our vision is for philanthropy to use its full potential to co-shape and support a pluralistic, just and resilient society that centres people and planet. To achieve this, our mission is to enable, encourage and empower the philanthropic community to build a better today and tomorrow.

**W**e nurture a diverse and inclusive ecosystem of foundations, philanthropic organisations and networks in over 30 countries that work for the common good. With individual and national-level infrastructure organisations as members, we unite over 7,500 public-benefit foundations that seek to improve life for people and communities in Europe and around the world.

We galvanise collective action and amplify the voice of European philanthropy. Together we:

- **Co-create knowledge and learn from effective practices**
- **Collaborate around current and emerging issues**
- **Promote enabling environments for doing good**

In all we do, we are committed to enhancing trust, collaboration, transparency, innovation, inclusion and diversity.

[www.philea.eu](http://www.philea.eu)

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# BRIDGING TODAY AND TOMORROW

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