



StiftungSchweiz

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Swiss Generosity Abroad

A Market Study Survey illuminating donations from Swiss grant-making foundations to projects abroad.

Sponsored and published by
Philanthropy Services AG



THEPHILANTHROPIST

Das Magazin von Stiftung Schweiz

Project ID
Abel Mon-Jardin

Project Manager
Corinna Seiter

In collaboration



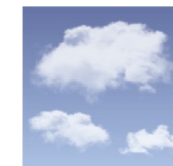
**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**

GENEVA CENTRE
FOR PHILANTHROPY



Behavioral Philanthropy Lab

In partnership



NonproCons

Neue Wege
für Nonprofit-Organisationen

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Key Findings

1. A big number of Swiss grant-making foundations already directly support organisations and projects abroad.
2. Other Swiss grant-making foundations would also like to do this but they do not receive any applications from abroad.
3. The number of projects supported abroad and the grants awarded, confirm this high level of willingness on the part of Swiss grant-making foundations to provide support.



Executive Summary

I cannot stress enough how pleased I am for being given the opportunity, by Philanthropy Services AG, to lead this project and introduce the discussion on: “Swiss Generosity Abroad”.

Most Nonprofit-Organisations operating abroad, when faced with the above topic, would ask the same questions:

- *How do Swiss grant-making foundations operate on the international level with Nonprofit-Organisations ?*
- *What are the opportunities for Nonprofits to request funds from the Swiss grant-making foundations?*
- *What is the range of generosity in volume, that the Swiss grant-making foundations are willing to reach in terms of funding Nonprofit-Organisations operating abroad?*
- *Do Swiss grant-making foundations fund Nonprofit-Organisations directly or through third parties?*
- *What are the aims that Swiss grant-making foundations pursue in supporting Nonprofit-Organisations operating abroad?*

These are some common questions raised by many Nonprofit-Organisations operating abroad. Unfortunately, not enough data is available on this topic, which prevents Nonprofit-Organisations having a clear understanding of the subject. That's why I am so grateful to Philanthropy Services AG for embarking on this initiative; i.e., for sharing their due diligence, sponsoring and publishing this report.

I trust that this initiative will provide insights and better comprehension on how Swiss grant-making foundations can help “international fundraising efforts” to Nonprofit-Organisations operating abroad and with their projects .

The scope of this report is to “get the ball rolling” on:

- Introducing the subject of “Swiss Generosity Abroad” and, in so doing, encouraging Swiss grant -making foundations to share best practices with the Nonprofit- Organisations.
- Making philanthropic work more efficient, transparent and enhancing a dialogue between Swiss grant-making foundations and Nonprofit-Organisations. Our next step should be to produce a second edition; expanding our questionnaire, the number of participants (in particular French speaking) and provide more accurate data.

This survey is divided in nine parts:

- Survey Evaluation – Prof. Giuseppe Ugazio guides the reader through his own evaluation of the survey's methodology.
- Swiss Foundations' Evolution - Dr Peter Buss provides a thorough overview of Swiss Foundations, in order for the international community to have a clearer picture of their profile and activities.
- Total Swiss Generosity 2020.
- Swiss Foundations' landscape – targeting Swiss grant-making foundations that donate abroad.
- Survey Outcome – Abel Mon-Jardin discloses the survey's figures and facts.
- Survey extrapolations, estimations & insights by Dr Peter Buss.
- Meeting Today's Challenges.
- Call for collaboration.
- Discussion – Editor Susanne Sugimoto will be launching and orchestrates several discussion regarding “Swiss Generosity Abroad”, in order to identify today's challenges. This discussion will be extended through webinars, workshops and petits comités.

This paper contains information about our collaborator University of Geneva and Behavioral Philanthropy Lab (BPL). There will also be a range of information from Philanthropy Services AG

It is my hope this paper serves as inspiration for readers to further engage in this subject.

Lets keep in touch!

Abel Mon Jardin

International managing director
of Philanthropy Services AG
Independent Development Consultant



in  

Survey Evaluation

Prof. Giuseppe Ugazio guides the reader through his own evaluation of the survey's methodology.

As a researcher in the complex field of Philanthropy, I am very pleased to see the effort undertaken by our colleagues at StiftungSchweiz – Philanthropy Services AG to provide an overview of Swiss foundations' generosity focusing on their international giving. This research aims to describe the activities of a large pool of approximately 600 Swiss foundations.

Brilliantly lead by Abel Mon Jardin, the research team of StiftungSchweiz – Philanthropy Services AG produced an intriguing initial report on 28 grant-making foundations based in the German speaking part of Switzerland – with most of these foundations located in the larger cities of Basel, Bern and Zurich. Foundations were approached via email and about 5% engaged with the researchers. This is to be expected as foundations are typically limited in staff and tend not to have the resources to collaborate with “non-essential” initiatives.

Given this sample size, the results obtained are not fully representative of the foundations' landscape, however, as the research used qualitative methods – i.e. semi-structured interviews – we are able to get a fine-grained perspective on how the foundations analyzed giving. This includes getting vital insights on their motivations, the number of projects developed abroad – also in relation to the total number of projects, the channels used to deliver donations, as well as the most relevant obstacles organisations giving internationally find.

Most importantly, the close interactions that the research team could have with foundations allowed them to obtain data which is typically very hard to access, such as information on the financial aspects of foundation's international projects.

The results obtained with this survey are very interesting, in particular it emerges that close to 75% of the foundations analysed have international activities and that a minimum 38 Millions euros are disbursed for these activities. This means that only a minority of foundations are not working abroad, with one of the main reasons being that these organisations do not receive applications from abroad.

As mentioned, like all research projects, the present survey has room for improvement, I would recommend the researchers expand the limited sample size and broaden the geographical reach (i.e. beyond foundations located in the German speaking region of Switzerland), thus also including in its research the French and Italian speaking areas of Switzerland. It is nonetheless a great first attempt to characterize Swiss foundation's generosity.

Building on this endeavour, future activities can rely on more sophisticated methods, including applying Artificial Intelligence based Natural Language Processing algorithms to big-data in order to get a deeper and wider understanding of Swiss generosity. To achieve a more accurate characterization of Swiss generosity, collaboration from foundations is essential. As mentioned by Peter Buss on the previous page, embracing efforts to promote the digitalization philanthropic organisations would be a significant contribution to help researchers understand the patterns in Swiss Generosity and the impact that philanthropic organisations are achieving at home and abroad.

Giuseppe Ugazio

**Edmond de Rothschild Foundations
Chaired Professor in Behavioral
Philanthropy**

**Geneva Finance Research Institute
Co-Director of the DAS in Strategic
and Operational Philanthropy**

University of Geneva



Swiss Foundations' Evolution

Dr Peter Buss provides a thorough overview of Swiss Foundations, in order for the international community to have a clearer picture of its profile and activities.

Switzerland has around 13,000 foundations, of which about two-thirds are grant-making foundations. Every year, the grant-making foundations distribute around 2 billions Swiss Francs for charitable and cultural purposes in Switzerland and abroad. That is a lot of money for such a small country.

For many years, Swiss foundations and their activities were purely a private matter. There was little transparency and hardly any information. Recently however, this has changed, mainly because of five factors:

1. This decade witnessed a major generational change in the boards of trustees, which led to more openness and professionalism.
2. Various university institutes and training institutions as well as the sector associations ensured greater professionalism in the sector.
3. The philanthropy platform stiftungschweiz.ch and its magazine THEPHILANTHROPIST brought about more dialogue and a lively exchange among the players.
4. The digitalisation of society increasingly made its way into the philanthropy sector.
5. The pandemic Covid19 led many foundations to question their traditional funding policy and to adapt to the requirements of the time.

Most foundations in Switzerland are quite young and many are dynamic and willing to shape the future. The Swiss foundation system of today is no longer comparable to the cautious and secretive sector of the past. However, this is hardly known because there is still not enough discussion about it.

Where is the trend heading? Lukas von Orelli, President of swissfoundations, the sector association of Swiss grant-giving foundations, states it clearly: "Foundations are no longer charitable organisations whose sole legitimacy lies in their charitable activities. Foundations are "impact enterprises" that must use private charitable capital efficiently to achieve the highest possible social benefit (impact). They will increasingly be judged internally and externally by how high this benefit turns out to be. Purpose and method remain a private matter, but the proof of success must be provided." (Philanthropie aktuell 02/21).

This may sound somewhat technocratic, but it nevertheless gets to the heart of the matter. What needs to be interpreted here is above all the understanding of social benefit, which even sponsors in Switzerland may and must define in very different ways. Let us embrace diversity here! Let's always make things possible that are not only of general benefit! Because that is what makes life valuable. And yes, let us do this with enthusiasm and heart.

But how can the impact, the benefit of "impact enterprises" be made more visible? I see digitalisation as a great opportunity here. Not only does it change the nature and efficiency of foundation work, but it also helps to make its impact more transparent. And Switzerland is well on the way to achieving this.

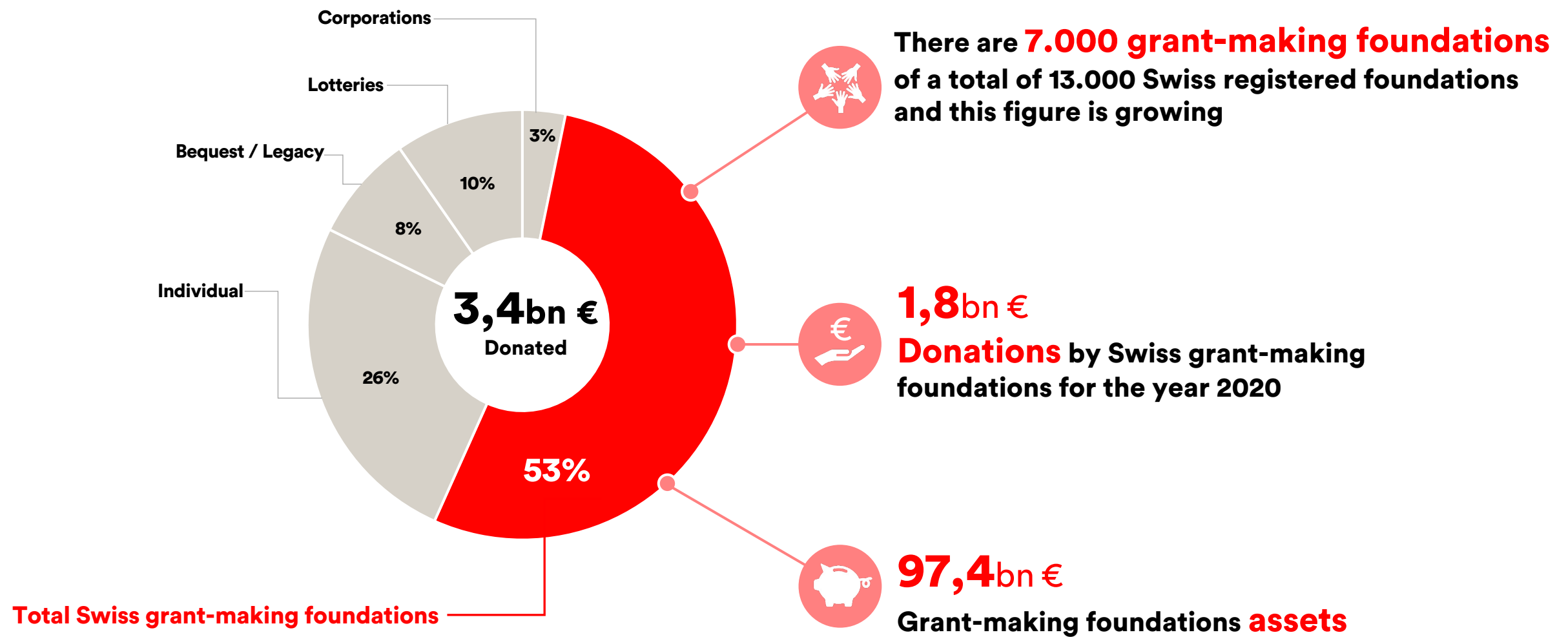
Peter Buss

**CEO Philanthropy Services
AG | StiftungSchweiz
Publisher THEPHILANTHROPIST**



Total Swiss Generosity 2020

Facts & Figures *



* see sources

Swiss Foundations' Landscape

Targeting Swiss grant-making foundations that donate abroad

The environment of Swiss grant-making foundations is diverse and constantly evolving. There have been many efforts through studies to shed light on their activities.

Our aim: This report aims to specifically target Swiss grant-making foundations that donate abroad.

StiftungSchweiz's researchers mapped 600 Grant-making foundations involved in international giving. This data is included in StiftungSchweiz's platform.

150 grant-making foundations were highlighted, which are geographically representative of Switzerland to give a balanced picture. They were contacted through several emails and of the mentioned 150 foundations 28 responded to our survey.

These 28 foundations that responded gave us a valuable 5% sample, that we believe is an excellent first step in testing the temperature of Swiss grant-making foundations donating abroad.

The 28 foundations we listened to in this report are based in German-speaking Switzerland*.

Future: In upcoming studies, we aim to increase both, our sample size and the Swiss geographic representation, to further provide accurate data for the sector and therefore more visibility regarding Swiss grant-making foundations.

* We did not receive enough responses from Francophone Switzerland, however we are confident that they will be more forthcoming in our next survey report.

We need more visibility for the sector ...especially in light of the increasingly bad reputation the sector has".

Studies-Advancing Philanthropy in Switzerland

Survey Data Pool

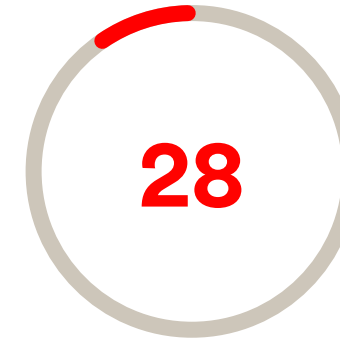
StiftungSchweiz's researchers identified 600 grant-making foundations involved in international giving



Grant-making foundations



Contacted



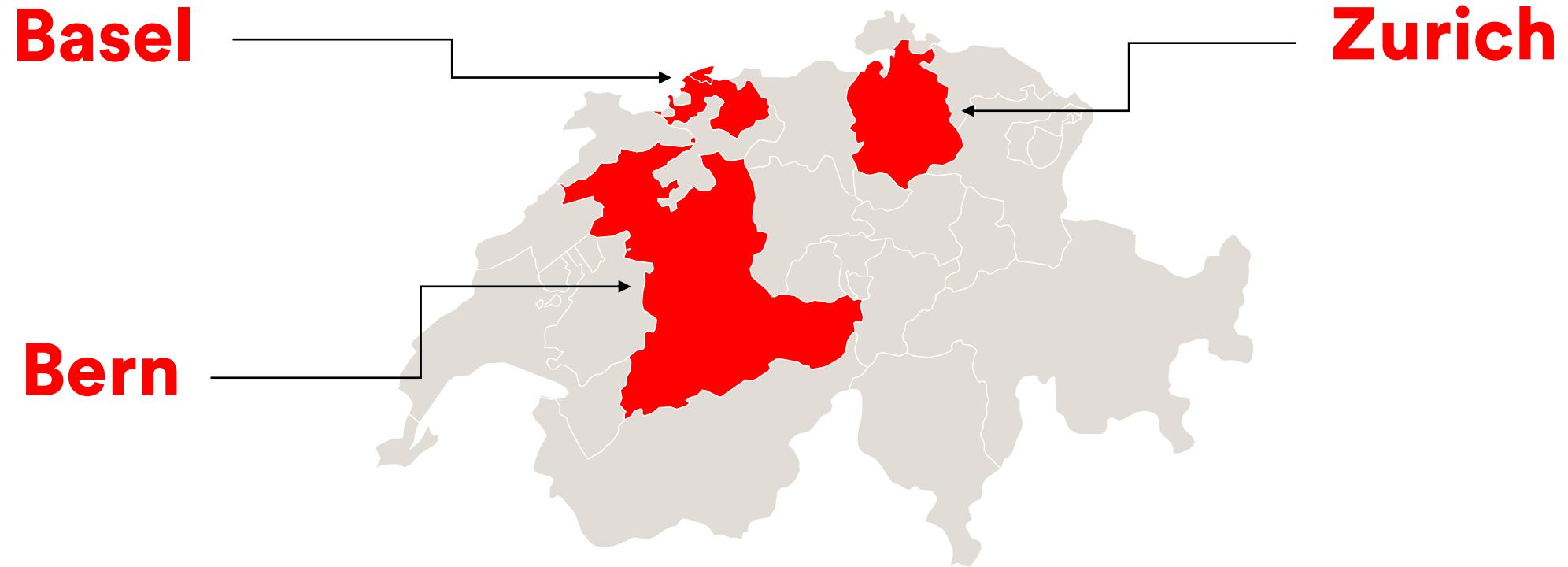
Participants



5%

This 5% sample is based on 600 Grant-making foundations with international activities

Cantons Surveyed



*** N.B.**

- 28 grant-making foundations listened in this report are based in German-speaking Switzerland
- These foundations gave us a valuable 5% sample
- This represents exclusively Swiss grant-making foundations donating abroad



Let's lead the way, shall we?

Survey Outcome

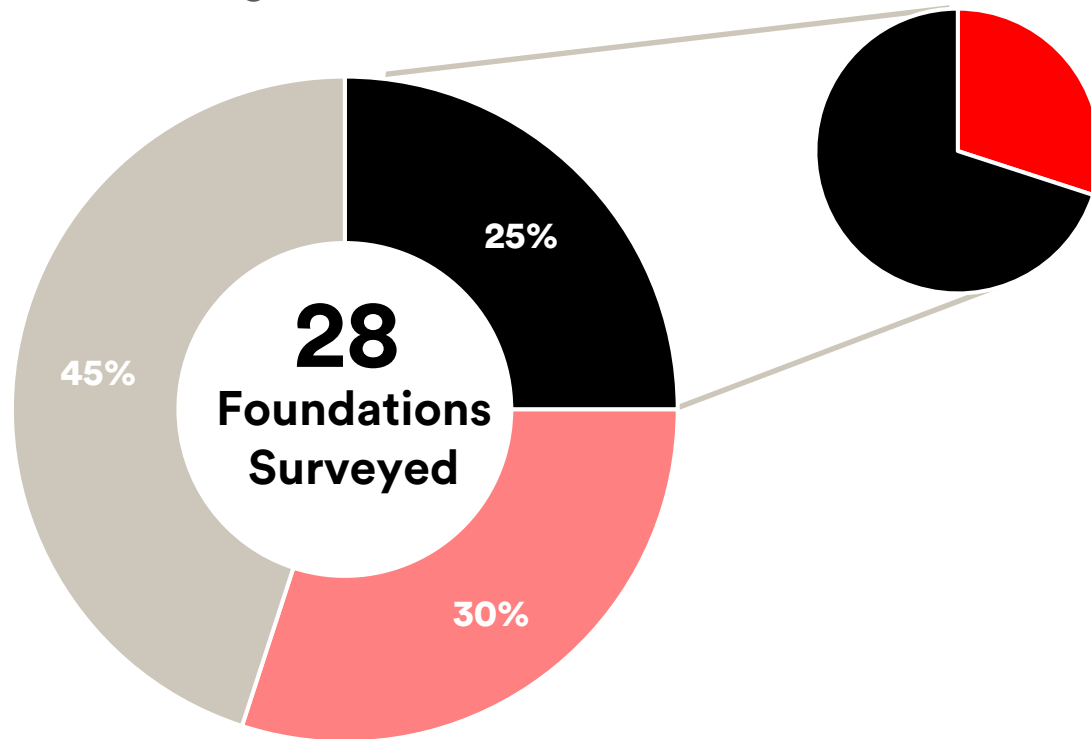
Based on 28 grant-making foundations' responses

Facts & Figures

"There must be better communication that foundations are a social force. It is just not understood how foundations can contribute to society. Foundations could have real impact, but people just don't know that this is possible".

Studies-Advancing Philanthropy in Switzerland

- Donates through organisations based in Switzerland
- Donates through organisations based abroad
- Donates through both



30%

of Swiss grant-making foundations are interested in donating directly to organisations abroad but **have not been approached** by Nonprofit-Organisations

*** N.B.**

The survey results show that the vast majority of Swiss grant-making foundations that fund projects abroad do so not only through organisations in Switzerland, but also directly through organisations based abroad. At the same time, many Swiss grant-making foundations who previously only funded projects abroad through organisations based in Switzerland would also like to do so directly – but they have not been approached so far.

- 75% of all Swiss grant-making foundations giving abroad are doing so directly through organisations based abroad.
- 30% of the 25% of Swiss grant-making foundations that donate abroad through organisations based in Switzerland would like to give directly to organisations based abroad too, but they have never been approached by those organisations.

+150

Projects abroad funded in 2020 by 28 Swiss grant-making foundations across all those surveyed

- The effective number of projects and organisations abroad that are supported by Swiss grant-making foundations each year is therefore likely to be considerably higher.



5

Average number of **projects** abroad supported by 28 Swiss grant-making foundations in 2020

- The effective number of projects and organisations abroad that are supported by Swiss grant-making foundations each year is therefore likely to be considerably higher.



70.0000€

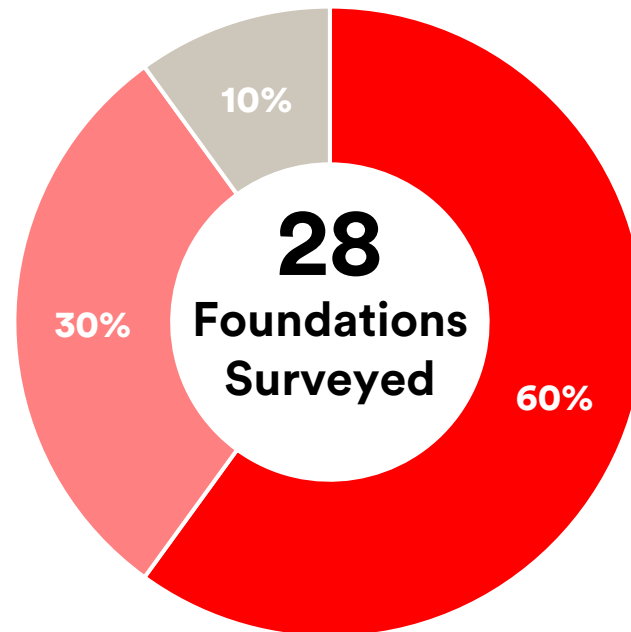
Average grant **by project** abroad in 2020

- The effective giving each year for projects and organisations abroad by Swiss grant-making foundations is therefore likely to be considerably higher.



Foundation Size

■ Big ■ Medium ■ Small



2.000.000 €

Estimated giving from the 28 Swiss grant-making foundations surveyed to Nonprofit-organisations in 2020

The effective giving each year for projects and organisations abroad by Swiss grant-making foundations is therefore likely to be considerably higher.

Survey extrapolations, estimations & insights

Trends, Gaps & Collaboration

***"Bringing a funder database to
scale that captures Swiss
funders by thematic area, and
develop reports of trends and
gaps gleaned from the database
Studies-Advancing Philanthropy in
Switzerland"***



Survey extrapolations

75% of Swiss grant-making foundations **giving abroad** are doing so directly to organisations abroad



7% of Swiss grant-making foundations are interested in donating directly to organisations abroad but **have not been approached** by Nonprofit organisations



+ 3.200 Projects abroad funded in 2020 by Swiss grant-making foundations across all those surveyed



+5 Average number of **projects** abroad supported by Swiss grant-making foundations in 2020



+ 12.000 € Average grant by project abroad in 2020



+38 Millions € Estimated **giving** from Swiss grant-making foundations directly to Nonprofit organisations abroad in 2020



Estimations & insights

By Dr Peter Buss

600 grant-making foundations were utilised for this survey. Their clear causes did not require any further enquiries. In fact, this number is **probably about 30%-40% higher**. It can be assumed that a good 900 grant-making foundations support organisations and projects abroad and that just under 700 (75%) do so directly.

With 700 grant-making foundations supporting organisations abroad, the potential has not yet been exhausted. There is a **gap in the market** concerning foundations in Switzerland that are not being approached despite wanting to be.

We find this figure of 3.200 projects funded by those 600 grant-making foundations is a conservative one due to the minimum arithmetic utilised. We believe this figure could be **up to as much as 30%-40% higher** based on the outcomes, facts and figures plus extrapolations.

This extrapolated figure of an average of 5 projects funded annually by grant-making foundations can be considered **fairly accurate**. The number is much higher for the larger funding foundations, but lower for many of the smaller ones. The grant-making foundations all receive several hundred applications each year. **Only well-fitting cases can be successful.**

Again, this is a very conservative estimate based on minimum calculations. A grant of 12.000 € is not in itself a insignificant amount. But my experience shows that the contributions **can be much higher, even in the six-figure range**, depending on the project. Also it is important to note, contributions can be made over several years.

All 7.500 Swiss grant-making foundations together distribute approximately €1.8 billion annually. 12% (900, see above) of these directly support organisations abroad. If all the grant-making foundations were to distribute the same amount, their theoretical **share would be a good €200 million**. The survey results show that for effectively 900 grant-making foundations that directly support organisations abroad, distributions amount to about €50 million (600: €38 million). The true figure lies somewhere in between - but is in any case very considerable.

Meeting Today's Challenges

5 Targets

More transparency in the philanthropy sector

For many years, Swiss grant-making foundations and their activities were purely a private matter. There was little transparency and hardly any information. Recently however, this has changed. Let's talk about, why is this so important?

More efficiency in getting together

The philanthropy platform stiftungschweiz.ch and its magazine THEPHILANTHROPIST brought about more dialogue and a lively exchange among the players. What is required that ensures everybody will find each other in an easy way?

A better understanding of unity

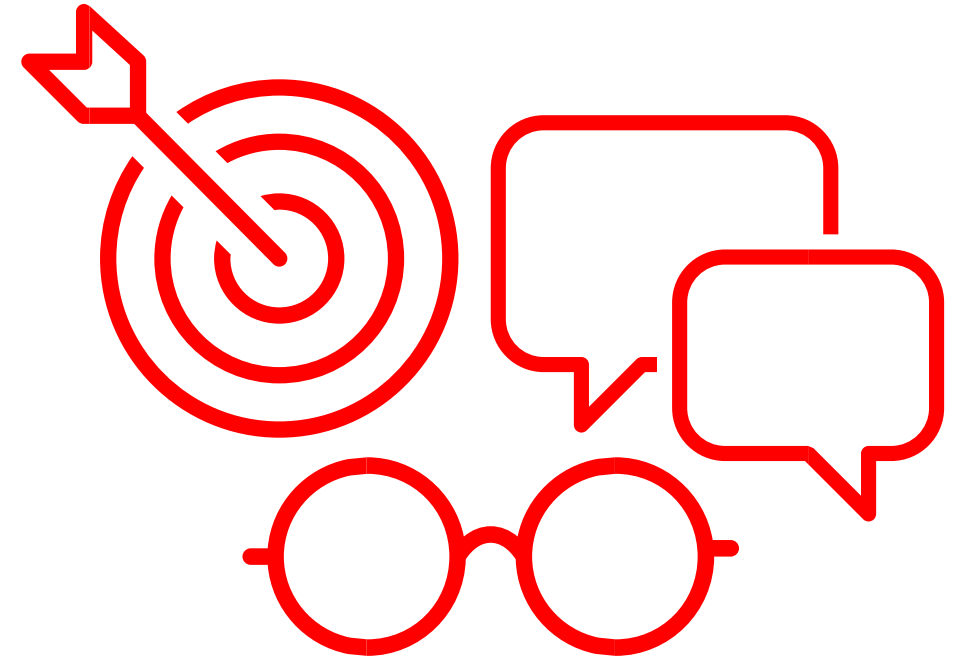
Everyone has the same goal: Let's make the world a little better! But not everyone always pulls in the same direction. Far too often, grant-makers and project owners do not have the same understanding of partnership. How do we get everyone working together on an equal footing?

An open sharing of experience

What went well? What went wrong? How can things be improved? Sponsors can and should know this. This creates trust and progress.

The critical value of experts

Philanthropy also needs its experts. Universities as well as experts working in the field. Their contribution is often decisive. How can the sector better recognize and utilize these experts?



Call for collaboration

Until now, there has been a lack of reliable and robust data on the direct funding activities of Swiss grant-making foundations for projects and organisations abroad. This survey is therefore an important step towards improving the information situation. And the data collected is sufficient to enable an organisation abroad to give serious thought to whether it would also like to approach Swiss funding foundations in the future in order to win them as new project partners.

However, this survey is only a first step, an appeal. It would be desirable to find out more. This can only be done in cooperation with all actors in philanthropy.

We are very happy to get further involved (in this endeavour).





Discussion

Editor - Susanne Sugimoto will be launching several discussions regarding “*Swiss Generosity Abroad*”.

Discussions will be covering our 5 point “*Meeting Today's Challenge*”, among best experts and practitioners. Guests included: Peter Buss, Giuseppe Ugazio etc.

We invite anyone who is interested to join these conversations, as well as foundations.

These contents will be uploaded and presented in our blog, digital magazine and print magazine.

[\[Link\]](#)

Susanne Sugimoto
Editor THEPHILANTHROPIST



in  

Acknowledgements

A HUGE THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING!

A massive thank you to Corinna Seiter for organising a vast amount of emails and battling to analyse them all against the odds! This project would have not been possible without her determination and communication skills!



Corinna Seiter

Project Manager International
Development
Research Manager

We extend our thanks to the University of Geneva for their willingness to collaborate with us on this survey and in particular their generosity in providing us their best experts in the field.



University of Geneva

We also want to thank Mattias for reducing and mapping 14,000 registered organisations to 600 usable examples for our survey.



Dr. Matthias Meier

A big thank you for all the time spent on this report. We are grateful for the recognition of our efforts concerning our methodology and our ambition to make the data acquired more transparent and accessible to all. We also appreciate the deep evaluation of all our internal reports of our data



Prof. Giuseppe Ugazio

Geneva Finance Research Institute –
University of Geneva

Sources

Facts & Figures *

The last update was done in 2020

Total Swiss Generosity - Facts & Figures. According to Swiss Charity Register
StiftungSchweiz Database- Analysis Team

The following information is the result of previous studies produced by
StiftungSchweiz. **These can be accessed via the following Link: [\[Link\]](#)**

StiftungSchweiz

<https://stiftungschweiz.ch>

FLO-Advancing Philanthropy in Switzerland

https://www.rwi.uzh.ch/dam/jcr:000000000-7037-0113-0000-00006f1d9643/Summary_Advancing-Philanthropy-in-Switzerland.pdf



Our Partner



The Geneva Centre for Philanthropy is a cross-disciplinary academic centre created in 2017 through a public-private partnership between the University of Geneva (UNIGE) and several philanthropic foundations. Created in 2017, it has gained recognition among academics and leaders as a reference in the field of philanthropy both in Switzerland and internationally.

Its work focuses on three strategic, mutually reinforcing areas: research and publications, teaching and public events. Knowledge transfer is an integral part of the Centre's DNA. Whenever possible, this means that events and publications are made available in open access in order to ensure their wide dissemination.

In four years, the GCP has thus become a significant source of information on philanthropy. The GCP has defined 5 priority topics: Taxation and Philanthropy, Social entrepreneurship and Hybrid entities, Why do people give?, Diversity in the governance of the non-profit sector, and Artificial Intelligence and philanthropy. Under the co-direction of Daniele Castle, Laetitia Gill, and Prof. Giuseppe Ugazio, the GCP offers the first certified executive education program in Strategic and Operational Philanthropy. [\[Link\]](#)



The BPL is housed in the Geneva Finance Research Institute (GFRI) of the Geneva School of Economics and Management (GSEM) at the University of Geneva, and is directed by Professor Giuseppe Ugazio.

The Behavioral Philanthropy Lab (BPL) investigates social decision-making from a multidisciplinary point of view, with a specific focus on philanthropic behavior. The interdisciplinary spirit of our lab is reflected in the variety of topics our research addresses relying on methods from many traditions: 1) consumer behavior to study human biases and attention developing implicit and objective measures of brand familiarity; 2) behavioral finance, to investigate whether/why people choose to expose themselves to negative tail risk in circumstances where one major loss can eliminate all previous gains; 3) behavioral economics and cognitive psychology, studying how acute stress impacts honesty.

In 2022 we are launching a new research project on Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy.

Our Lab offers also several courses on Philanthropy at the Bachelor and Master level. In 2021 we opened the first certified Executive Education program in Strategic and Operational Philanthropy [\[Link\]](#)

About Philanthropy Services AG



Philanthropy Services AG is committed to a modern form of philanthropy that achieves as much as possible with as little outlay as possible, a philanthropy that everyone can see and experience, and that brings people joy.



Learn More About Us

A range of our services for Philanthropy Community



Consultancy



[\[Link English\]](#)

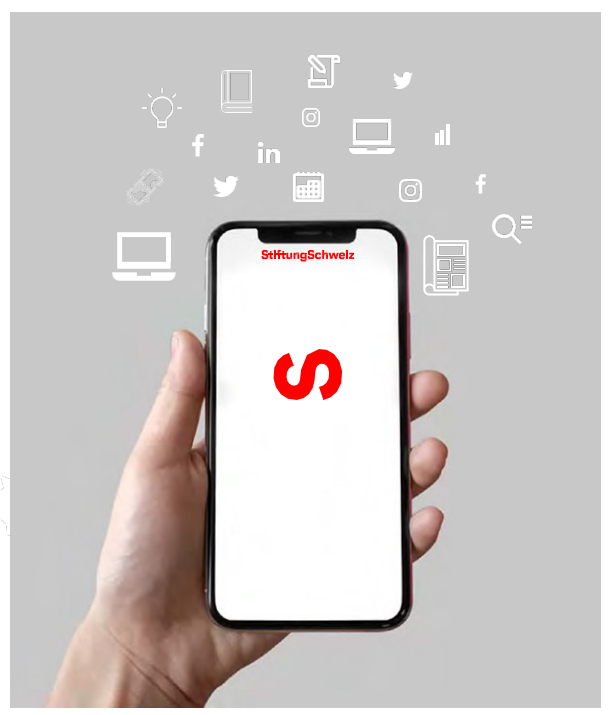
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**Danke.
Merci.
Grazie.
Thank you.
Gracias.**



Contact:
office@stiftungschweiz.ch

Philanthropy Services AG
Rittergasse 35 | 4051 Basel
Schweiz

StiftungSchweiz