



#TrustCreatesImpact

Nine Considerations for the Foundation of the Future

#TrustCreatesImpact is an initiative whose members reflect on and shape the future of foundations while learning from one another in the process. The following nine considerations guide us in this commitment, as they represent the basic principles of sustainable grantmaking. We understand the considerations as an intertwining value system, unfolding their true meaning in their combined entirety. Based on this understanding, we strive to show how and why foundations can always challenge themselves and develop further. For us, this requires trust – in partners, networks, and new ways of working that make change possible in the first place.

As an initiative, that is, as each individual foundation and together as a network, we are on a journey towards realising these considerations. Through our actions, we gradually approach and reflect on them. We invite other foundations to join us in the #TrustCreatesImpact initiative in order to actively participate in the discourse regarding the future of the philanthropic sector and to progress towards individually achieving the goals of the nine considerations.

We are convinced that the considerations address important issues for the foundation sector. Therefore, we understand #TrustCreatesImpact as an initiative and temporary impulse to initiate these processes.

- 1. Foundations of the future are conscious of what diversity means for their work, both inside and outside their own walls.** In order to live up to their social responsibility and to ensure the quality and relevance of their work, foundations reflect on their own behaviour, recognise discriminatory structures, and overcome them. In their funding, own programs as well as their organisational structures, they advocate for

the representation and recognition of diverse and different realities of life.

2. **Foundations of the future listen.** In doing so, they do not only consider those who they fund and support, but search for ways to help underrepresented groups find their own voice. Equitable listening encourages widening own horizons and critically challenging own assumptions. Both of these in turn improve the own quality of work, but also require stepping out of well-accustomed comfort zones and being open to honest feedback.
3. **Foundations of the future share their power.** By continuously reflecting on their internal and external decision-making processes, they become aware of their own privileges. Building on this, foundations consciously work towards sharing this power and creating a balance of power between funders and grantees.
4. **Foundations of the future are honest with themselves and with others.** Not only are they transparent regarding their (funding) criteria and decisions, but they also share their own experiences and thus always treat partners and employees with openness and respect. This implies taking accountability for own actions by not trying to hide perceived failures, but by being open about them in the interest of a shared learning culture and knowledge gain.
5. **Foundations of the future work together in partnerships and networks.** They value synergies that may arise from partnerships and do not view networks as an end in themselves. Cross-sectoral partnerships between public institutions, businesses, foundations, citizens, non-profit organisations, and activists can have manifold impact: They collectivise individual efforts, boost outreach, improve mutual understanding, and increase the knowledge of all actors involved.
6. **Foundations of the future take a chance on innovation.** No matter whether they intend to proactively change existing systems and structures, or whether they want to preserve what has worked well so far: foundations can dare to be innovative, both in what and whom they support and in the way they do it. They have the courage to take risks and consider failures as valuable learning experiences.
7. **Foundations of the future fund with foresight.** Towards building a resilient civil society, they provide unrestricted and structural funding in order to invest in both the organisational structures and the

knowledge of their funding partners. Only in this way can organisations establish themselves in the long term and have a sustainable impact. Most importantly, however, this provides them with the ability to respond to new developments and unexpected situations in a self-determined manner.

- 8. Foundations of the future provide more than just money.** Non-profit organisations often require more than traditional project funding to be successful and effective in the long term. Foundations can provide access to networks, contribute their expertise, and act as sparring partners through shared learning experiences. In doing so, they always keep an eye on the needs and resources of their funding partners and are able to tell when financial support is exactly what is needed – and when provisions must go beyond it.

- 9. Foundations of the future also commit their assets to impact.** Foundations' investment decisions should be based on the same values and principles that drive their commitment to achieve social change. Whether through the placement of sustainable funds, active sustainable investments, or impact investing, to us it is clear that foundations of the future align the profitability of their investment decisions with their social value and strive for their transparent and strategic integration into the overall purpose of the foundation.