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Profiles
With more than 1,400 grants made, almost €207 million committed through 2007, and at least €300 million dedicated to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens, the Foundation has made a very strong start in its first decade.

Shipping magnate Stavros Niarchos understood the meaning of thinking and acting globally long before the term ‘globalization’ became so prominent in public policy and economics. His business operations began in Greece, yet his accomplishments were notable worldwide. He is considered one of the most successful businessmen of the 20th century.

Stavros Niarchos was born 3 July 1909 in Athens, Greece. His parents both came from small villages near Sparta in southern Greece. He studied law at the University of Athens and began working in 1929 in his family’s grain business. Recognizing the substantial expense of importing wheat from Argentina and the former Soviet Union, Niarchos convinced his family that he could save money by owning the ships that provided the transportation. The first six freighters were bought during the Great Depression.

While Niarchos served in the Greek Navy during World War Two, the Allied forces leased his first vessel. He participated in the Allied operations in Normandy and was awarded the Order of the Phoenix, the Royal Order of King George I, and the Royal House Order of SS George and Constantine, among other distinguished service medals. The ship leased to the Allies was destroyed and Niarchos used the insurance funds as capital to expand his fleet after the war. He bought oil tankers, which marked the young
entrepreneur’s beginning as a significant player in the world of international commerce.

In 1956, less than 20 years after creating his own firm, Niarchos agreed to build and operate the Hellenic Shipyards, the first such private investment in Greece. Known as the Skaramanga Yard, it employed more than 6,000 skilled workers and rapidly became the largest Mediterranean shipyard for repairs and new construction. In 1985, the shipyard was placed under state control, but Niarchos’s early and considerable commitment to Greece stands as an effective demonstration of the power of private investment for the country’s economic well-being. This commitment – and investment – was to continue well after his death.

Making an impact on the world stage
Niarchos’s business philosophy in shipping was to buy and build big: his super tankers set world records for size and carrying capacity. For many years, he owned the largest private fleet in the world, operating more than 80 tankers.

His personal accomplishments ranged from competitive sailing to championship horse racing. Stavros Niarchos earned recognition as an important investor in, and collector of, fine art. He worked tirelessly and expected much from those who worked for him. As master of his own success, he understood the potential of every individual.

The cover of Time magazine in 1956 described him as a ‘shipping tycoon’. In the following 40 years before his death in 1996, his achievements and activities continued to be reported on widely in the business and popular media. While he did not necessarily seek fame, he clearly had a desire for a legacy that went beyond the sum total of his financial accomplishments.

The creation of an eponymous foundation offered just such an opportunity, with its work guided by his lifetime interests. By requiring that at least half of the funds distributed be spent in Greece, he ensured that his impact on the country of his birth would be secured in perpetuity. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation, which began operations in 1996, embodies the guiding principles Nicarchos laid out. His vision was to contribute to the well-being of Greece and to have an impact on the world philanthropically, just as he had made an impact in his many successful business ventures.
The legacy of Ancient Greece

Although the Stavros Niarchos Foundation’s work in Greece and internationally has been very much in keeping with modern times, the cultural heritage of Ancient Greece is important when considering the context and underlying values of the Foundation’s activities. Stavros Niarchos strongly encouraged the promotion of Hellenism as an important part of its giving programme. The cultural roots, as he no doubt understood, run deep.

The word ‘philanthropy’ – the love of mankind – comes from Classical Greek. It seems fitting to listen to the Ancient Greeks in reflecting on the Foundation’s first decade and as the Directors and staff consider the future.

Aristotle wrote about Generosity, Extravagance and Stinginess in the *Nichomachean Ethics*. While he never tells readers what they should or should not do or give, he distinguishes excessive giving from insufficient giving and describes a mean, which he calls generosity, in an effort to help the reader understand the concept of giving well.

With growing demands on the Stavros Niarchos Foundation’s resources, particularly as its work becomes more widely known, the challenge to give well remains constant. It is the Directors’ intent to ensure that positive change occurs as a result of the Foundation’s actions.

Aristotle also wrote, ‘education is the best provision for the journey to old age’. The Foundation’s far-reaching interest in education, across ages and geography, is a modern-day representation of a clearly relevant message.

Socrates wrote, ‘the unexamined life is not worth living’ – this too speaks to the values of education, culture and well-being embodied by the Foundation’s activities. Finally, the phrase, ‘Give me where to stand and I will move the earth’ is attributed to the mathematician Archimedes. He was offering guidance on physics, but the concept also has applications for philanthropy.

After ten years of operation, it can be said that by providing funds to create the Foundation, Stavros Niarchos’s legacy was to provide a ‘firm place to stand’ for those charged with realizing his charitable vision. No doubt, he expected that over time the wise application of his charitable resources would help improve conditions throughout the world.
Stavros Niarchos’s life and interests led those charged with executing his philanthropic vision to concentrate the distribution of funds in four main areas: arts and culture, education, health and medicine, and social welfare. In addition to the distributions in Greece, the Foundation has a strong commitment to support projects promoting Hellenism outside Greece.

**Think globally and locally**

In the Foundation’s early years, its Directors assessed the opportunities inside and outside Greece to determine where the Foundation had the potential to add value in a significant way. With half of the Directors members of Niarchos’s family and the others men who knew him well through his business activities, his thoughts and vision were ever-present in the conversations that led to the creation of the Foundation’s operating strategy. Starting from scratch did not mean starting without a sense of what was important to the donor and how he might like to be remembered. The Directors understood that the Foundation’s work and the donor’s philanthropic legacy were going to evolve over the long term. They were anxious to begin operations, but there was also a clear sense that much could be learned from the work of others. They deliberately took time to discuss programme strategy, to meet with representatives of US and European foundations, and to learn about opportunities within the eventual programme areas.

The most formidable operating challenge the Directors faced was how to function as an international foundation with clear European roots, but with interests in the US as well as other parts of the world. The Foundation was also committed to spending at least half of all funds in one country. Geography in the case of Greece was clearly destiny, but the mandate was to think globally, not just locally.

The new foundation was large by international standards, yet the country in which it had to distribute at least half of its funds is small in both population and geography. Added to this challenge were two other significant issues. First, the non-governmental sector in Greece was not as robust as in other Western European countries. This at once made the opportunities for effective grantmaking more compelling but also, at times, more complex. Second, the government sector as a prime service provider in many of the areas for the Foundation’s prospective activities – education, health, arts and culture, and social welfare – had limited experience in working with charitable entities of this size and type.
With no formal or set payout requirement, the Directors needed to establish internal distribution parameters, ensuring that at least half of the funds distributed were spent in Greece.

**Flexibility within a structure**

One important result was a decision to concentrate support on activities that could be sustained over time without creating dependency on the Foundation’s resources. Sir Dennis Weatherstone, the Foundation’s Chairman, set the stage for the initial operations by suggesting that the Foundation embrace ‘flexibility within a structure’.

While there was no rush to make distributions in Greece or internationally, a few significant grants were made in the early years to respond to some of Niarchos’s interests. Four commitments outside Greece are particularly notable. The first was a contribution to the capital campaign under way at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. As a notable collector and a long-time supporter of the museum, a grant enabled a gallery to be named in honour of the Foundation.

Two gifts supported major medical institutions in the US. The Weill Cornell Medical School received support to establish research fellowships and a commitment was made to Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine to support research and treatment in ophthalmology, urology, surgery and bioethics. These gifts built on Niarchos’s interest in health and medicine and offered opportunities to support new areas of investigation by both promising young scientists and more established researchers.

The largest grant during this period was made in 1999 to the Sail Training Association of the UK, now called the Tall Ships Youth Trust, to fund a new vessel. The *Stavros S Niarchos*, launched the following year, has provided challenging sailing and youth development opportunities for hundreds of young people from the UK, Greece and other countries. Everyone who knew Niarchos is confident that Tall Ships Youth Trust programmes, which combine leadership development and sailing prowess, are representative of this exceptional man.

**Committed to integrity**

The Foundation is committed to a high standard of integrity in all of its operations. Procedures were implemented to respond in a timely fashion and to ensure that applicants understood all operating guidelines.

Many of the early grant recipients were asked to keep the donor’s name anonymous. This protected the Foundation from an early onslaught of requests that might have ensued given the visibility of the Niarchos name,
particularly in Greece. The philosophy on public recognition and visibility has evolved over the years – a website was created in 2004. However, the actual amounts of individual grants are not disclosed.

To ensure responsiveness to opportunities in Greece, an Advisory Committee was formed to identify and review proposals and to make recommendations to the Directors on funding decisions. Advisory Committee members travelled throughout the country in search of opportunities. They met with and listened to people in all walks of life – government, civic and educational organizations, business and religious leaders – to better understand where the Foundation could add value.

As operations in Greece expanded, the Foundation added professional staff to meet the grantmaking challenges and realize the opportunities identified. The programme staff now reviews new requests, monitors ongoing grants and develops programmes based on research to identify areas of need. A technical staff based in Greece works with grant recipients, particularly on the implementation of capital projects, which represent a significant portion of the grants made. The members of the Greek Advisory Committee continue to provide recommendations to the Directors and guidance for the staff.

**Establishing a track record at home**

After establishing a track record of giving in Greece, the Directors and the Greek Advisory Committee decided to pursue a project of considerable significance. In 2007, it announced a Memorandum of Understanding with the Greek government to fully fund a major national project. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center will consist of a new National Library, a new National Lyric Theatre and an Educational and Cultural Park, all to be located at the Athens Faliron Delta.

The Center is expected to attract nearly 1 million visitors annually. The National Library will be a state-of-the-art facility committed to the principle of lifelong learning. In addition to extensive collections and public internet access, it will emphasize educational programmes for young children and be fully equipped to serve people with special needs. The National Lyric Theatre will be a cultural centre that can accommodate internationally produced performances.

The Educational and Cultural Park will provide much-needed green space in Athens. Through the planting of trees, the park should positively influence the area’s microclimate and air quality. Importantly, this urban oasis will connect the city centre to its waterfront. The final agreement between the Foundation and the government is expected in 2008.
‘[The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center] is a unique opportunity for all involved, our foundation as the sole donor and the Greek people . . . to give life to this project. Athens, the cradle of civilization, will now have the necessary facilities to be a major and distinguished participant in the educational and cultural arena of the 21st century,’ said Andreas Dracopoulos, a Director of the Foundation and the designated Board overseer of Greek grantmaking activities. ‘We at the Foundation are honoured to be able to play our part in ensuring this dream can be realized.’

**Promoting Hellenism**

There are many things that distinguish the Foundation’s work in its first decade of operations, both for the positive outcomes and for the lessons learned that will inform its future work. First is the creative implementation of Niarchos’s wish to promote Hellenism.

The Directors opted for a multifaceted strategy, recognizing that there are many ways to implement this mandate. The Diaspora Greek community and the Greek Orthodox Church provided many opportunities. Grants to Greek schools have provided new facilities and educational materials. The Foundation has also provided support for social welfare programmes including Saint Michael’s Home in Yonkers, New York, which provides housing and care to the elderly. Other community-based facilities are also supported, all sponsored and operated by church members for the benefit of the broader Greek community.

Support extended beyond the Greek community in 2003 to the New York Public Library and the Queens New York Public Library for a Hellenic Festival that offered a variety of exhibitions and public programmes including dance, theatre, music performances, films, workshops and lectures over the course of six months.

A more recent grant enabled the Children’s Museum of Manhattan to create an exhibition on Ancient Greece that will travel to other children’s museums across the US. This theme was continued through support of the Odysseus Language Project at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada where web-based courses are being developed with Modern Greek content for Chinese students.

An example of the implementation of this strategy is the Foundation’s relationship with the Hellenic Studies Program at Yale University. After being asked to provide funding to expand Yale’s offerings related to Modern Greece, the Foundation in 2001 opted for a pilot project partnership with the University to assess academic interest and to secure the University’s commitment to sustain any new work over time. Funds were
provided to support language instruction in Modern Greek, to offer new courses by visiting scholars, and for public outreach.

Based on the initial success of the programme and Yale’s continuing commitment to the expanded offerings, a second multi-year grant was made. In 2007, the experience of six years turned into an endowment grant to establish the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for Hellenic Studies at Yale. The now permanent funding, when combined with the University’s resources, will include support for language study and funds for library resources, research and travel to Greece, and public events.

**Supporting international organizations**
The positive experience of partnering with Yale over time is mirrored by relationships that developed with two international social welfare organizations. Operating support provided to the Landmine Survivors Network in 1998 proved transformative. In the case of Home-Start International, in 1999 such support helped launch a new worldwide effort, now with operations in 15 countries.

Key to the impact of these grants was the willingness of the Foundation’s Directors to take some risks and to provide operating support over time. These decisions were possible because the Directors believed in the organizations’ missions, trusted their leadership, and were committed to identifying projects where support could truly make a difference. This willingness to build partnerships over several years represents a second important aspect of the Foundation’s activities.

Home-Start International promotes the welfare of predominantly low-income families with very young children by using trained volunteers who offer support, practical help and friendship to families under stress. An outgrowth of Home-Start UK, which was founded in the 1970s, Home-Start International was created in 1998 to respond to requests from many countries interested in adopting or adapting the model.

Believing that many families could be strengthened and sustained through crisis periods with the assistance of caring community members (many former recipients of Home-Start assistance themselves), the goal was to establish a sister organization to further the Home-Start model throughout the world. After three years, new partnerships had been created in seven countries with additional countries added in the subsequent years.

Although the Niarchos Foundation support has diminished, it was the cornerstone of the organization’s funding base and led to further support from other European funders, including the European Union, for the programme’s continuing expansion. Today, the Home-Start International
network reaches into Africa, East and West Europe, North America, the Middle East and Australia, and the organization is well equipped to sustain its future growth.

The Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) was in its second year of operation when the Foundation first provided a three-year grant for operating support. With an operating budget of just over €680,000, LSN was seeking to expand its programmes as well as to implement a development and outreach effort. LSN’s leaders understood that without a solid administrative infrastructure to support programme growth, the organization would be unable to meet the needs of those it was developed to serve.

By the end of the three-year grant cycle, LSN had developed and implemented peer support networks in six countries, offered publications that were translated into seven languages, and had a budget of more than €3.4 million thanks, in large part, to the ability to implement the development plan. A second three-year grant was made in 2002, which led to the addition of another country to the network and funding from the governments of Canada, Norway, Switzerland and the US.

As the second grant was nearing completion, LSN approached the Foundation with the idea of creating an awards programme for ‘survivorship’, for people who have overcome their injuries and learned to live again. LSN’s goal was to recognize the important work by individuals and groups, to showcase accomplishments and to inspire others. The Foundation agreed to provide funding for the awards programme, now known as the Niarchos Prize for Survivorship. The awards have helped bring recognition to those who work in this area and have helped attract new interest in LSN’s work.

**Fostering collaboration**

A third key component of the Foundation’s operations is the value it places on collaboration, which is important given its operating methodology with offices in Athens, Monte Carlo and New York. While staff members have particular areas of assignment and geography, they are all part of the Foundation’s team and work closely to ensure that Stavros Niarchos’s underlying vision is implemented.

Collaboration has also been the hallmark of several of the Foundation’s grants, primarily through facilitating linkages between organizations in Greece and the US or other parts of Europe. The theme also relates to the Foundation’s experience and interaction with grantees.
In 2005, a conference was held in New York City that brought together representatives of many organizations that had received funding. The idea was to facilitate interaction among grantees. The discussion during the one-day event highlighted various efforts ranging from individual exchange programmes to modelling good practice on programme implementation and technology.

It also gave representatives of recipient organizations a chance to meet and discuss their respective programmes, thereby finding their own opportunities for collaboration and learning. By bringing key people together and giving them the opportunity to share lessons learned, the Foundation was able to use participation in the conference as a means to considerably expand the impact of many individual grants.

Today, there are several collaborative efforts initiated or supported by the Foundation. Some have fostered institutional collaboration and others have enabled individuals to meet and interact in new ways. Notably, even after specific grants have ended, the relationships created endure. In all of these efforts, the Foundation has sought to multiply the impact of its work and to strengthen the participating institutions individually and collectively.

For example, it provided funds to the German Marshall Fund to add Greece to the list of European countries participating in the Marshall Memorial Fellowship programme. Support to the Natural History Museum in Crete was combined with a grant to the Peabody Museum at Yale leading to a multi-year collaboration of scientists and the development of education programmes for young children in New Haven and Crete.

Foundation support enabled JSTOR – an online storage system – to be offered in Greek universities, linking the institutions and their students to a worldwide effort to provide easy access to important academic journals. Other medical exchanges have been undertaken through the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, the Arthritis Foundation, and the US-based United Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation.

John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City will be offering places in its Masters programme for Greek law enforcement officials and will sponsor workshops on terrorism and conflict with representatives from the Greek National Police, as well as others from the Balkans region.

Through work initiated at the Institute of International Education, there have been new collaborations among European academics that enable the sharing of course materials and research efforts. The annual Niarchos Lecture at the Washington DC Peterson Institute for International Economics creates a forum for leaders in business and government
to discuss important topics related to global economic matters. In addition, students in the US and Anatolia College in Greece are linked through the Manhattan Theatre Club’s education programmes. Through videoconferencing they worked collaboratively in a playwriting project that circumnavigated the globe.

**Promoting the use of technology**

A fourth theme, which complements the goal of fostering collaboration, is the Foundation’s commitment to promote the use of technology to provide access to information. This is deemed valuable as a means of ensuring that important resources are widely available.

Grants over the years include support to digitize materials from the collections of the New York Public Library. Grants have also supported Greekworks, a multimedia organization dedicated to providing Greek and Greek-related cultural and educational content through the internet. Early support was given to Ithaka, which is committed to the use of IT to enhance higher education globally.

In Greece, the commitment to expand access to information through technology will be represented most fully by the new National Library. In addition, the Foundation has launched a programme to provide technological and educational support to elementary schools in less advantaged areas of Greece. The goal is to properly prepare and equip students for their future academic needs and ensure that they don’t fall behind their peers in metropolitan areas that have greater resources.

Another important project in Greece is the construction of a technology centre in the library of Anatolia College. In addition to offering
training and learning opportunities for the students of Anatolia and its sister school, the American College of Thessaloniki, it is a resource for the community. The Foundation also demonstrates its commitment to promote the use of technology by several grants to local historical and/or cultural organizations to preserve and digitally store folklore, music and dance archives for future generations.

**Identifying opportunities with global impact**

All of these activities are consistent with the important lessons learned from Stavros Niarchos’s successful career. Just as his ships navigated the globe carrying vital cargo from one location to another for much of the 20th century, the Foundation’s support for projects that use technology to advance knowledge is a 21st century effort to ensure that the intellectual equivalent of that vital cargo – the power of knowledge and ideas – is also accessible globally.

Reflecting on the Foundation’s first decade, Director Spyros Niarchos says, ‘We have built our grants portfolio through actively identifying opportunities with global impact and the recognition that we must invest in good people. That is what truly distinguishes our first ten years of work.’

The determination to ensure effectiveness and to continually add value remains a cornerstone of the Foundation’s activities. Now with a track record and more visibility through the website, there is greater outside attention to the Foundation’s work.

The Directors understand clearly that the Foundation’s work is more than grantmaking. They also understand the value of using the Foundation’s convening capacity, as was done with the gathering of grantees in 2005 and with the subsequent sponsorship of an international conference on the future of libraries, hosted at the New York Public Library in 2006.

The Foundation also shares its intellectual capital through the work of its Directors and staff and their ongoing interactions with representatives of the public, private and non-profit sectors in Greece and throughout the world. In Greece, particularly, Foundation staff offer valuable technical assistance to recipient organizations, considerably increasing their capacity to produce positive outcomes over time.

**Partnering with governments**

The Foundation’s presence and contributions in Greece are also represented by the way in which it has partnered with national and various local governments to provide critical infrastructure assistance. Much of
this is in the form of vital equipment that public budgets cannot provide. For example, it has provided a new training centre and Super Puma helicopter for the Hellenic Fire Department and a patrol boat for the Coast Guard. The Foundation has also provided vehicles for transportation in mountainous and dangerous areas, firefighting, street and park cleaning and snow removal, as well as buses to transport handicapped children to medical and education programmes.

It has provided robotic security equipment for the Athens International Airport and funds to construct daycare centres, run programmes for children with special needs, and renovate or build housing for senior citizens. The purchase of necessary medical equipment, provision of emergency generators for remote health facilities, and upgrading of clinic facilities and ambulances have all been made possible through Foundation grants. In all cases, the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the materials or facilities provided falls to the respective governmental or service provider.

Responding to disasters

Early on, the Directors made a commitment to respond to humanitarian and natural disasters throughout the world. The Foundation has provided assistance to the victims of the World Trade Center bombing and relief to those who suffered because of the South-east Asian tsunami.

Either through local aid organizations or international groups, it has made grants to provide relief for victims of earthquakes in Pakistan and India, the flooding in Mozambique, hurricanes in South America, and various programmes to address the health and well-being of refugees. A newly established programme mechanism allows a prompt response to such unforeseen but devastating events so that assistance can be made available as quickly as possible.

A ‘wholesale’ distribution of funds

Given the array in scope and geography of the opportunities for funding outside Greece and the modest number of programme staff in Monte Carlo and New York, the Foundation has looked to leverage its resources by partnering with several intermediary organizations addressing areas of mutual concern. In some measure, this reflects a ‘wholesale’ rather than ‘retail’ approach to distributing funds.

This way of working also offers a degree of assurance to the Directors as partnerships with organizations that have first-hand knowledge and expertise greatly enhance the Foundation’s contributions.
in remote and disadvantaged areas of the world. Programmes that have been supported include the Global Fund for Women and PATH, which works on global health issues through the application of science and technology. Other beneficiaries include Leonard Cheshire International, which works globally to provide educational access for children with disabilities; Médecins Sans Frontières, which provides emergency medical care in areas of humanitarian crisis; and Mission Enfance, which provides educational programmes in developing countries.

**Making a difference at local level**

Support has also been given to several locally based programmes in selected economically disadvantaged areas of the world. Such efforts have included educational equipment in Chiang Mai, Thailand; homes for low-income families in Lima, Peru; water and sanitation projects in Lhasa, Tibet; and HIV/AIDS education programmes in Uganda and Rwanda.

The Foundation fully recognizes, even given its substantial size, that it can neither do everything nor be everywhere. But it has learned that even modest amounts of money can and do make a difference.

‘Our work has really just begun,’ says Director Andreas Dracopoulos. ‘We have established what we feel is a sound track record and we continue to try to add value in Greece and internationally. In the spirit of our founder’s approach to business, we look forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.’
The purpose of this book is to showcase the rich diversity of the European foundation sector and to profile some of the personalities behind its evolution. We achieve this in the profiles, although the foundations featured in these pages are just a very few examples of the thousands across Europe. Special attention is given to Turkey as it prepares for the upcoming negotiations with the European Union and the role of foundations in the past, present and future.

Through the essays, we invite readers to explore some of the complex dynamics of the sector, although we do not intend this endeavour to be strictly academic or comprehensive. We believe the essays shed some light on the various theories of change that foundations are following in their approach to civil society, science and research, and the market.

There is an abundance of literature about US philanthropy, which could lead to a belief that the methodologies and strategies used by our American colleagues are the benchmark for philanthropy around the world. We hope to demonstrate that continental European philanthropy is a different animal; because of the various models of civil society in Europe and the role played by the state, the Anglo-Saxon style philanthropy found in the US is actually the exception. Foundation leaders in Africa, Asia and Latin America are also developing their own approach to philanthropy.

We believe the reader will be able to get a very clear impression of the rich variety and diversity Europe has to offer by looking through the prism of a few well-chosen examples. Of course, many others could be chosen, and we trust that in coming years more European foundations will make efforts to share their stories with a wider public. We have tried to
illustrate the diversity of the sector by choosing older foundations, going back as far as the 16th century, and new philanthropic ventures.

We looked for geographic spread and foundations that use various and often innovative methodologies. We take full responsibility for our choices, but apologize to our colleagues whose interesting and inspiring work does not appear in this book. This means there is much more work to be done in profiling the good work being done across the continent.

We also make a plea for the long-overdue European foundation statute to become a reality, and call on national governments to implement the necessary legal and fiscal framework that will enable foundations to fulfil their mandate – to create value for society.

Success has many parents. As does this book. First and foremost, the editors would like to thank Gerry Salole, Chief Executive of the European Foundation Centre. He was the lead parent in this exercise, for it was his idea to showcase some of the sector’s achievements through a storytelling lens rather than an academic treatise. We thank Dianna Rienstra who took the lead on the writing, as well as the other writers who worked on the profiles. Every book needs a good publisher. We thank Alliance Publishing Trust and particularly Caroline Hartnell for fulfilling this role. We would also like to thank our colleagues who took the time to contribute to this endeavour by writing what we believe are thought-provoking essays.

Norine MacDonald
Luc Tayart de Borms
Why this book?
As the title of this book suggests, philanthropy in Europe is rooted in a rich past and is moving towards a promising future. The diversity of philanthropic impulses, a *leitmotif* that has fuelled the dynamism of the sector throughout history, is expressed here in just a few examples of European foundations. This dynamism continues today, following – sometimes shaping – the contours of Europe’s evolving social, political and economic fabric. This dynamism was born within Europe’s different religious contexts and has moved forward in tandem with its secularization. As church and state separated – in most countries – philanthropy has found its place in modern societies in different ways.

One of the primary points we hope to illustrate with this book is that throughout history, foundations have played an important role in the development and strengthening of European societies. Today and in the future, the sector has an even more critical role to play within the European landscape, both within and across national borders, and internationally. However, the sector’s potential is being held back, among other things, by the EU’s single market, which does not include foundations. In effect, foundations are operating in an environment of unfair competition arising from differences between the tax systems in the 27 EU Member States. Hence the essay by Gerry Salole, Chief Executive of the European Foundation Centre, which makes a plea for Europe’s institutional machinery to get into gear and facilitate the sector’s ability to participate properly on the European stage by moving forward with a European foundation statute.
Such a statute – on and off the back burner for years – would at once complement national legislation and create an enabling environment for foundations’ work locally, regionally, nationally and globally. At the same time, in many EU Member States, foundations need a more modern legal and fiscal environment if they are to live up to their potential to create real value.

In this commentary, we explore Europe’s various civil society models and how foundations work within them. The journey takes us across a philanthropic landscape that is colourful, complex and compelling, peopled by some quixotic characters and pragmatic visionaries. In the essay section of this book, we introduce the reader to several of the ‘thinkers’ in the field who offer valuable insights into the past, present and future of the sector. We also take stock of the accomplishments of foundations and outline some challenges facing the sector that only foundations themselves can meet.

Models of civil society

**The Anglo-Saxon model** In Anglo-Saxon societies, civil society organizations (CSOs) are viewed as being a counterweight to government and the state. In an ideal world, they foster pluralism in their societies and cast themselves in the role of critics of the state and advocates of reform. There is usually a strong culture of volunteerism and foundations support civil society and fund issues that governments do not. There is also an enabling legal and fiscal infrastructure that encourages donations and gifts. The most obvious examples are the United States and the United Kingdom.

**The Rhine model** This includes Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands and is characterized by strong CSOs that are institution-like and often receive contracts from the state in a form of ‘societal corporatism’, rather than operating as a counterweight to the state. They function much like subcontractors in sectors such as healthcare and education. Paradoxically, they are independent from the state, but predominantly publicly funded. Because of this interdependent relationship and dependence on government funding, the fiscal and legal climate does not strongly favour donations and gifts. In this space, foundations are only recently being recognized as important players, particularly corporate foundations.

**The Latin/Mediterranean model** Here the role of the state is strong with a clear division between church and state. Traditionally,
Exploring the context in which foundations create value

Foundations – to fulfil their obligations to create value – must fully understand the context in which they assume their various roles and how best to meet the economic, cultural and social needs of the societies in which they operate, whether in their own communities or beyond. To do this, foundations must take into consideration the policy environment in which they work. In defining this environment – and responding to it through grantmaking or operational programmes, projects and initiatives – it is critical to evaluate the interplay of roles among the state, the market and civil society.

We see in the foundations profiled in this book that the various expressions of the philanthropic impulse differ according to the societal context. This may appear obvious, but US/Anglo-Saxon literature about the sector often gives the impression that the American Anglo-Saxon model is the benchmark not only for Europe and the United States but also for the

the church does charity work and the state is responsible for delivering goods and social services. The state is a strong economic actor and the relationship between the state and market is different from that in other models. CSOs face a challenge in being accepted as independent and autonomous. There is an effort to control organizations and associations politically, either through representation on boards or by legal measures, such as what happened in Italy with the attempt to bring the banking foundations under political control. Gifts and donations are not encouraged by the fiscal system and volunteerism is viewed as a threat to the job market. Foundations have difficulty moving into their role of complementarity – supporting and funding what government does not, thereby fostering pluralism in civil society – because when they move into what is perceived as political territory, they are challenged by politicians who question their mandate.

The Scandinavian model Here the state traditionally plays a strong role, but because of the Protestant roots in these countries, personal initiative is viewed as a positive. There is a strong welfare state, but at the same time volunteerism is a powerful force. CSOs typically thrive and fulfil a complementarity role to bridge the gaps in the system. Civil society often identifies a need, which is later filled by government. Gifts and donations are not strongly promoted in the fiscal system. In this environment, foundations have a very strong relationship with government and government agencies.
rest of the world. This book certainly dispels this notion. We see through the profiles that foundations are operating in very different societal contexts, which inevitably means they are actors within a framework created by different models of civil society. They are also using a broad range of creative methodologies that go beyond traditional grantmaking to taking on operational roles such as advocacy, communications strategies and running their own scientific and cultural institutions. This theme is further explored in the essays.

Civil society is quite a different animal in the north of Europe from in the south, as it is responding to different realities and cultural paradigms. Consider that despite the forces of secularization and post-modernism that have swept across Europe, cultural paradigms die hard, which in part accounts for the different civil society models in Europe. For example, southern European society is still characterized by a very Catholic paradigm, while in northern Europe Protestant ethics generally prevail.

Three models of civil society can be identified across Europe outside the Anglo-Saxon model: the Rhine, the Latin/Mediterranean and the Scandinavian models (see box on pp8–9). These models are of course evolving and changing, as are our societies, but distinctive characteristics can be identified.

The reality of these different civil society models begs the question of whether the standardized methodological approach sometimes taken by foundations is really effective, particularly as such an approach often does not see past the Anglo-Saxon model. It also begs the question of whether a standardized methodological approach is appropriate in the face of the inescapable fact that globalization is creating new cross-border, regional and international challenges. The methodologies of the foundations profiled here indicate that many are reaching beyond the standard approaches to create value in a creative, innovative way, which reflects their diverse responses to change.

This is not to say that the Anglo-Saxon model does not work in societies where civil society is positioned as it is within this particular model, as the profiles of the Wellcome Trust and Impetus Trust show. It is to point out that for many non-Anglo-Saxon foundations, the roles they play are completely different. For example, continental European foundations mostly trust the state to work within international institutions and frameworks to adequately address issues such as human rights and climate change.

We see throughout the profiles a rich diversity in the raison d’être of foundations within various civil society models, as well as how they fulfil
their various mandates today against the backdrop of globalization, whose only constant is change. To further complicate the mix, the role of the state – and thus the relationship between the state and foundations – is constantly changing. These dynamics are also explored in the essays.

These profiles and essays do not attempt to classify the various foundations into rigid parameters, but certain themes and trends do emerge that reflect the civil society models in the various countries. One of the issues we hope to showcase in this book is that European societies are changing, which results in often overlapping models of civil society – and it is these very differences that are creating the richness and diversity of the sector as foundations are permanently adapting to the changing socioeconomic context. At the same time, we believe this richness and diversity could be deepened and extended by increased regional and global cooperation between and among foundations working in partnership.

Diversity within different socioeconomic contexts

It is illuminating to compare the socioeconomic context within which the foundations profiled were founded and how the context has evolved and relates to their work today. Norway’s Fritt Ord focuses on freedom of expression, springing from painful memories of Nazi occupation and repression in Norway exacerbated by the Cold War and fears of communist totalitarianism. The Stefan Batory Foundation has helped to guide Poland through tumultuous political, economic and social changes in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and is now helping to guide the country through the changes brought on by its accession to the European club in 2004.

Armenian Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian launched the oil economy and became one of the world’s wealthiest individuals. His legacy – the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, founded after his death in the 1950s during a dictatorial regime – played an important role in its first decades in combating Portugal’s enormous shortcomings in the areas of education, health, culture and science. Shipping tycoon Stavros Niarchos passed away in the same decade and left a legacy that requires the eponymous foundation to spend half its funds in Greece – shoring up critical educational, healthcare, social welfare and cultural provision – and the other half on supporting projects outside the country.

The Sabancı Foundation, deeply rooted in the socioeconomic, political and philanthropic history of Turkey, has evolved from meeting the urgent needs of society in the areas of education, healthcare and social welfare to one of the largest foundations in the country, which is
today realigning its strategy to better meet the dynamic context and shifting mandates of Turkish society and the consequent changes in the philanthropic landscape. A landscape, as we read in the essay, that has dramatically changed since the first foundations were established before the Ottoman Era in the context of a tradition where pious Muslims could realize – in perpetuity – their religious obligations. ‘Modern’ foundations are playing a role in service delivery and shaping the policy agenda, as well as dealing with the ‘software’ of sweeping social change.

Sabanci’s role also underscores the role of foundations in the EU accession process, which has commonalities with the role of the Stefan Batory Foundation in Poland’s transition to becoming a member of the European Union. Interestingly, although Turkey and the EU are struggling with the potential accession of Turkey, the fundamental framework – rule of law, individual freedoms and rights, gender equality and improvement of basic services – are essential for the country’s future prosperity.

The Compagnia di San Paolo has for more than four centuries had a rich, complex history of service to its city, its region, the Italian state and the world. Today, the Compagnia is structured as a ‘not-for-profit group’ operating primarily in Italy, but its activities reach across Europe and extend worldwide, often in partnership with other foundations. This history, together with the Compagnia’s institutional and operational transformations, illustrates the creative way in which foundations are constantly adapting themselves to changing societal contexts.

Fondation de France is an example of a foundation with institutional origins, created by General Charles de Gaulle’s Ministers of Culture and Finance to act as an engine of foundation development in a barren philanthropic landscape scarred by the practices of France’s Ancien Régime, under which legacies and donations were subject to royal approval. Although created by the state, it is today a private non-profit organization that has fulfilled its mandate to foster philanthropy in the country and continues to work for the benefit of French society at local level, as well as supporting some international initiatives.

The European Cultural Foundation is the oldest pan-European foundation. It is the brainchild of a group of prominent European personalities who took the prescient step of establishing an independent foundation to focus on the cultural aspects of Europe’s interdependencies in the wake of World War Two. The Foundation believes that cultural diversity is a resource and seeks to bring people closer together through cultural cooperation and creative activities. A strange animal in the family of European foundations, it is neither a national foundation nor a corporate
foundation; it is not a community foundation nor is it endowed. It is private, but works for the public benefit at European level.

When reading the rich history of the European foundation sector, it becomes apparent how resilient foundations are. They have evolved, transformed and changed over time. Some have survived regime change, others have survived invasion. Foundations are obviously very capable of adapting to the socio-economic and political environment they are operating in because they are contextually grounded.

**Diversity of the philanthropic impulse**

From the philanthropic impulses of wealthy business entrepreneurs come some of Europe’s most successful foundations: Gulbenkian, Stavros Niarchos and Stefan Batory (started by the Hungarian-born American philanthropist and financier George Soros), but also Henry Wellcome, Robert Bosch, Bernard van Leer and, more recently, Stephan Schmidheiny and Stephen Dawson. Although the work of the various foundations differs, according to the legacy of the founder and the context in which they operate, they are all the result of visionaries who basically want—or wanted—to make the world a better place.

Henry Wellcome lived a remarkable life, driven by a brilliant entrepreneurial spirit and care for indigenous peoples. Today, the UK’s Wellcome Trust’s mission to foster and promote research with the aim of improving human and animal health is being fulfilled, and so is the legacy of its founder in the diversity of the Trust’s activities in science, technology transfer, history of medicine, ethics, public engagement and art.

The Robert Bosch Stiftung holds the stock of the industrial giant Bosch and is fulfilling the broadly defined mandate of its founder. Robert Bosch was a man whose substantial gifts and endowments during his lifetime were complemented by his financial and personal support of peace and reconciliation before World War Two. His broad mandate to ‘promote health, education, talent, international understanding and the like’ is being fulfilled through the Foundation’s programme areas with multiple focuses that change over time.

The enigmatic Bernard van Leer—an industrialist, benefactor and circus director—left behind a money-making corporation and a charitable fund. His rather vague philanthropic impulse was insightfully executed by his son, who decided to focus on the educational challenges of environmentally disadvantaged children and youth. Today, the Foundation is multifaceted with a grantmaking programme focusing on early childhood
care and development. Its activities in Israel support the Jewish people and a democratic society, as well as projects to build bridges with Palestinians.

Two contemporary entrepreneurs – Stephan Schmidheiny and Stephen Dawson – express their philanthropic impulses in different ways but they are both visionaries who have found innovative methodologies to make a difference. Entrepreneur Schmidheiny has been driven by his passion for both the environment and global issues and by a deep belief that achievement and wealth bring with them a responsibility to be involved in the issues facing society. Venture capitalist Dawson wanted to go beyond chequebook philanthropy to ensure that charities were using money effectively and efficiently. Both are using instruments that work in the private sector to boost and strengthen civil society.

The challenges and opportunities ahead
Within this fascinating and diverse tapestry of European philanthropy, we find a number of common threads that intersect at the crossroads of the public perception of foundations – a brand that inspires trust but also brings with it challenges. For what is a foundation? For the greater public and decision-makers, the term ‘foundation’ may still be unclear.

There are many other types of organization other than public-benefit foundations operating as foundations. There are political foundations linked to political parties that have played roles in Eastern Europe and are playing an important role in helping to create the political infrastructure in new democracies. There are also foundations created by governments or the European Union and primarily controlled by their founders. An example of this is the Anna Lindt Foundation.

Incidents such as the recent Lichtenstein scandal in early 2008 involving banks acting as tax havens and private foundations raise questions in the minds of citizens. Private money used for public benefit raises as many questions as it does concerns. Questions about the proper role of foundations in a modern democracy; concerns about transparency, effectiveness and accountability.

There is clearly a need to define exactly what constitutes a foundation. If we do not do this for public-benefit foundations within a European foundation statute and within national legal and fiscal frameworks, we risk draconian measures from governments with a penchant to over-react with regulation. We also need specific legal models for other types of foundation as well.

The European Foundation Centre has a central role to play as the philanthropic sector in continental Europe is not very well known compared
to other parts of the world, notably across the Atlantic. The public, policymakers and politicians are largely unaware of the immense amount of assets at play in the sector, which are due to increase exponentially in the future with the wealth transfer of the current generation. They are also largely unaware that the grants, the project development and advocacy work from foundations create employment and strengthen our communities. Foundations rarely if ever seek a high profile in the media and, according to European tradition, individual philanthropists do not like to display their wealth. The European relationship with money is also quite different. In most European countries, citizens are obliged to show their social solidarity through the tax system.

Another reason for this low profile is that in the European environment today, foundations are perceived as relatively small players compared to what governments and other actors are achieving. However, many foundations are playing the role of catalyst, facilitator or convenor, and working closely with civil society organizations, governments, scientific and cultural institutions, and other actors. Despite the fact that foundations are playing a critical role, the sector does not work on taking a higher profile as they don’t want to overshadow the accomplishments of other players or to undermine the role of foundations as convenors or as providing neutral platforms for debate, dialogue and action.

What these profiles and essays clearly demonstrate is that foundations have a brilliant track record. They are imaginative and creative and have fulfilled their mandates in innovative ways. Many are working cross-border to help meet the challenges of issues such as migration, science, culture, human trafficking, HIV/AIDS and poverty. The sector has earned a lot of credibility in myriad areas, but we must do more.

Therein lies our conundrum – the challenges ahead demand that we become even more European and more global, while working in closer partnership with other organizations and foundations. But our operating environment is restricted, something that could be remedied to a large degree within the parameters of a European foundation statute.

But a European foundation statute is not a silver bullet, nor is it a panacea for everything that challenges the sector and limits its potential. Yes, a statute will clarify the role of foundations and create a framework for citizens to pool their expertise and financial resources for projects of public benefit and European interest. Yes, a statute will be a public-benefit legal tool governed by European law and complemented by existing national laws. Yes, a statute is a logical extension of the political idea that Europe should be a Europe without frontiers.
All of this holds true. But at the end of the day, the sector must also consider some of the challenges it is facing, including those posed by the rich ethnic, religious and cultural diversity that is Europe. We discuss some of the challenges here, but this list is just a beginning.

**Challenges ahead**

*Work more in partnership*

Working in partnerships is often necessary if foundations are to meet today’s complex challenges. Such challenges almost always involve a wide range of different actors who can play key roles in meeting them. This is a rather new paradigm in philanthropy, but one that has already proved its value. Working in partnership is not only more effective but will go far to reaffirm the legitimacy of foundations as valuable players in their societies.

The Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation (NEF) is a prominent force for European foundation collaboration around key policy issues. NEF is not a membership organization but a ‘platform’ to enable joint projects to get off the ground, involving 62 foundations (in 2007) participating in one or more projects, including work on integration and migration, deliberative democracy, and the European Fund for the Balkans. This combination of convening, research and participation is characteristic of the way in which NEF tends to work.

This type of collaboration is a good start, but working in partnership – when feasible – should become the norm rather than the exception.

*Bridge the gender gap*

When it comes to foundations and gender, European women are facing a glass ceiling. In 2005, among the European Foundation Centre’s 173 voting members, 49 had a female primary contact (28 per cent). Primary contacts are mostly the head of the organization. On the Governing Council, 6 out of 30 members have a woman as primary contact (20 per cent). Some concerned EFC members set up a Gender Strategy Group in 2005 to address the lack of gender balance among EFC members and governing bodies, on EFC conference panels and so on. Among its aims is to encourage the EFC to follow the policy of the European Union and its institutions and adopt a target of at least 40 per cent women on each committee, group or platform. The EFC initiative is laudable, but change must come from within individual foundations.

*Reach out to become more European and more global*

Despite the reservoir of resources and talent at their disposal, many foundation leaders feel overwhelmed and disempowered in the face of
the daunting challenges we face today. As they wring their hands over how best to deploy these resources, they often end up doing what they know and hiding behind the strictest interpretations of their mandate. We believe – and it is proved within the chapters of this book – that they need to mobilize innovative methodologies strategically to create impact and effect meaningful change. There are many areas to work in where they can make a difference, either individually or in partnership, be it in science, better governance or migration, to name a few.

Collect more data
The foundation sector needs to invest in better data collection. There is a serious lack of up-to-date, credible data from the 27 EU countries. As illustrated in the final essay of this book regarding the need for a European foundation statute, existing data is outdated and limited to certain countries. Data is critical to transparency, but also to help us make a convincing argument to decision-makers about the need for a statute. We need data about how many foundations actually exist, about their endowments and budgets, about the numbers of employees and volunteers in philanthropy, and we need an inventory of the issues the sector is tackling. Some question the need for data or get lost in academic detail. But if the philanthropic sector is to be given the weight it deserves — and we want to lobby for a European foundation statute — we need the numbers.

Pay more attention to dialogue and cultural differences
As the title of this book graphically depicts, Europe is a mosaic of languages. There is an increasing trend to view dialogue as a simple matter of translation, but this is far too simplistic. Behind each and every language is a long tradition of culturally intertwined concepts, beliefs and practices. This is increasingly presenting a challenge in a world where English is becoming the lingua franca.

Concepts such as social justice, social economy, social entrepreneurship, leadership, community and volunteer work — to name a few — are not necessarily understood in the same way in different parts of Europe, whether it be in the north, south, east or west. At the same time, the lingua franca is often being simplified into a type of shorthand, which risks leaving out nuances and meanings behind it. We need to be consciously aware of this intercultural learning challenge as we branch out into doing cross-border or international work.
The Italian government in 2001 introduced reform measures to a bill that would ensure the majority of seats on the boards of foundations would go to representatives of local authorities. The European Foundation Centre argued that the changes in the law undermined the independence of foundations of banking origin, thereby affecting their capacity to act for the social and economic development, well-being and progress of their communities at local, regional and European levels. In 2003, the Italian Constitutional Court declared that some of the changes to the law were unconstitutional.

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