

# Women's Role in Philanthropy

Giving is all about love of the others and ourselves

Based on the observation that women have always played a key role in their family and community development, tens of women –entrepreneurs, designers, scientists, philanthropists, family officers, lawyers and farmers- have joined one year ago to launch the WomenRoleInPhilanthropy exchange platform. This initiative aims to offer more possibilities for women philanthropists and for the ones planning to act in philanthropy to share concrete experience and know-how in philanthropy in order to leverage charitable and social initiatives and to increase their impact. Membership is based on a swap. Each Member (individual or entity) could contribute e.g. information and means to proactively support a project. Role of women in philanthropy is vital and should therefore be better encouraged by women and men.

Despite the fact that philanthropy is driven by emotion and compassion, its success is mainly due to the application of rules from the common sense and the basic principles of business. At WRIP, we listen to our philanthropic partners whether initiators of a project or actors on the ground before presenting our views and proposals. The exchange is permanent and changes are permitted. Because economy is almost in every field of life, our reference point is a pyramid from vital needs to luxury life. At our first round table chaired by Mrs Melissa Berman, Chairman and CEO of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors at the Musée National de la Légion d'Honneur in Paris, we discussed about 3 W-pillars of this century : Water, Women in business and philanthropy and Wisdom. Philanthropy is win-win 'enterprise'. "No one has ever become poor by giving" (Anne Frank). We are driven by top priorities amongst which environment protection, food security, education and entrepreneurship. Profit and philanthropy are therefore rather complementary than contradictory.

There will be indeed no sustainable development if political, financial and industrial communities do not seriously consider the problem of water and climate change. The equation is very simple : "no clean water, no life". World economy is already affected by the lack of adequate sanitation for 2.6 billion people. One solution we support is the Ethical Water Exchange® designed by the private company named Prana Sustainable Water (www.pranasustainablewater.ch) aiming to bridge the mismatch between the untreated wastewater

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and the demands of treated water. It offers indeed a simultaneous benefit for health, food, energy, environment, economy, stability and peace.

This 8 March 2012 was dedicated to women in rural world and the UN has declared 2012 the international year of cooperatives. These are to us two clear messages that we need to begin from the start. Therefore agriculture and food self sufficiency are listed as selection criteria of a project. Link between food security and economical independency could not be questioned. One has to eat decently to care for education, to participate to the growth of a community and to potentially become later an investor and a philanthropist. There are countless very efficient actions amongst which the ones of counterparties active in Africa such as [www.femmespourlaplanete.ch](http://www.femmespourlaplanete.ch), [www.olivado.com](http://www.olivado.com), [www.beautifulsoulafrica.org](http://www.beautifulsoulafrica.org), [www.kilasiku.com](http://www.kilasiku.com). These are concrete business cases of impact investing. Only responsible and ethical investments can lead to *sustainable* dividends.

Last but not least, education is an investment in the future, it also facilitate innovation a *sine qua non condition* to survive. Benjamin Franklin wrote that an investment in knowledge always pays the best interest. Coaching and sharing of business recipes are amongst our members preferred contributions. Giving is not only about money but also about time and self dedication. Teaching and learning are two sides of the same process and create long term synergies and sustainable wealth. Our next *rendez-vous* will be in Monaco for a conversation on sustainable luxury and & happiness. You might enjoy more truly an *haute couture* dress, a precious stone, a yacht, a divine dinner or a piece of art when a portion of the purchase price is used to alleviate poverty, to finance a start-up, a research or health program, a home for the elderly... 'Beauty could save the world' said Tolstoï.

Last but not least, WRIP plans to launch awards to support actions and concrete initiatives offering also a return on development in creating jobs, in preserving nature and in giving hope as role model. First award would be dedicated to African Green Ladies.

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