

Name of Center

Center for Philanthropy Studies (CEPS)
University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland
<http://www.ceps.unibas.ch>

About the Center

Prof. Dr. Georg von Schnurbein
Director

The Centre for Philanthropy Studies (CEPS) is an interdisciplinary competence centre for philanthropy, founded in 2008. The centre is located at the University of Basel and was initially funded by six Swiss foundations. The centre has an interdisciplinary approach and offers research, training and service in the field of philanthropy.

Major Education Initiatives:

- Academic lectures at the University Basel beginning autumn 2009
- Professional trainings for nonprofit management & law

Major Research Projects:

- Foundation governance

The centre runs various initiatives for an enhancement and better understanding of foundation governance. In collaboration with SwissFoundations it is responsible for the SwissFoundation Code (SFC), the first Governance Code for beneficiary foundations in Europe. A working group, composed of experts from science and praxis, makes sure that the Code is up-to-date. As a result of the last update a commented edition was published in the publication series "Foundation Governance". The recommendations are commented with practical examples and recommended actions.

At the moment, a research project compares different nonprofit governance codes in Germany and Switzerland and analyzes the influence of their development on the content and the acceptance of the different governance codes.

- Foundations building social capital

This project analyses in different phases how foundations contribute to the building of social capital. We use the term social capital to mean social networks, norms and trust. The starting hypothesis is that activities of beneficiary foundations are in most instances investments in social capital. This means that beneficiary foundations

1. Enhance cooperation, knowledge accumulation, understanding and social development
2. Provide know-how, contacts, opportunities for interaction and financial resources. Therefore, the performances of beneficiary foundations are a transformation of financial capital into social capital.

To verify the statement, we will have a look at different case studies to examine how social capital can be accumulated through projects of foundations and which meaning the accumulation of social capital has for the success of these projects. Afterwards we will carry out a quantitative empirical survey to examine how foundations can manage the encouragement and allocation of social capital.

- Performance measurement of foundation projects

This project will analyze different approaches to measure the performance of foundations and its intermediaries in relation to the outcome for the beneficiaries.

The central question is how foundations can influence the performance of intermediaries and how they can assure themselves of an efficient implementation according to their purposes. Stiftung Mercator Schweiz will fund this project.