

50 YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO  
CULTURE  
HUMANITARIAN AID  
MEDICAL RESEARCH  
EDUCATION

STANLEY THOMAS  
JOHNSON  
STIFTUNG

STANLEY THOMAS JOHNSON FOUNDATION 1969 – 2019

UPLIFT —  
THE HISTORY OF THE  
STANLEY THOMAS  
JOHNSON FOUNDATION

1969 – 2019

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Stanley Thomas Johnson foundation

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Table of Contents

9	Mirjam Eglin
	<b>Foreword</b>
	<b>Half a Century!</b>
13	Martin Bieri
	<b>A Rock Without a Devil</b>
19	Peter Miles
	<b>From a Sleepy Market Town</b>
	<b>to the Heart of the Defence Industry</b>
31	Markus Mugglin
	<b>An Elaborately Tangled Corporate Construct:</b>
	<b>Aviation Developments Ltd. in Switzerland</b>
37	Marcel Brengard
	<b>From 1969 to 2019—A Short History of the</b>
	<b>Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation</b>
45	Antoinette Schwab
	<b>Alexander von Muralt, a Visionary Patriot</b>
49	Julia Wehren
	<b>Walter Oberer: Tracing Histories</b>
53	Konrad Tobler
	<b>Shifting Boundaries: Harald Szeemann alias</b>
	<b>SzAmen alias D. Lara H. Namesz</b>

- 57 Armand Cachelin, Beate Engel and Andreas Tobler  
**Funding Practices in the Sector of Medical Research since 1970**
- 63 Beate Engel in Conversation with Dr. Gian Domenico Borasio, Professor for Palliative Medicine at the University of Lausanne  
**‘Geriatric Medicine is the Medicine of the Future’**
- 70 Hrair Sarkissian  
*The Last Scene (2016)*  
**Photo gallery**
- 89 Foundation board members Ursula Frauchiger, Beat Wismer, Kaspar Zehnder and Beate Engel (Programme Manager Culture)  
**Fostered and Furthered: The Challenge of Independence and Creativity**
- 98 June Johnson Dance Prize  
Kiriakos Hadjiioannou and Association  
*Antibodies: The Higher States* trilogy  
**Photo gallery**
- 111 Phyllida Shaw  
**Championing Change in and Through the Arts**
- 119 Larissa Bizer  
**Production Managers—Pulling the Strings Behind the Scenes**
- 127 Markus Mugglin  
**Emergency and Development Aid: Moving Ahead to the Beginning**
- 134 Cédric von Niederhäusern  
*Leaving war behind*  
**Photo gallery and field report**
- 153 Bernhard Pulver  
**Education in Transition**
- 161 Guido Münzel in conversation with Pierre Alain Schnegg, Director of the Department of Health and Welfare and Johnson Foundation Trustee Walter Rumpf  
**‘There is no better social integration than having a job.’**
- 172 Marco Frauchiger  
*tête-à-tête: Cultural Projects in Schools in Partnership with the Education Department of the Canton of Bern, 2018*  
**Photo gallery**
- 185 Jürg Steiner  
**Between the Pursuit of Profit and Social Commitment: An Encounter with Joseph Schnyder, Managing Director of the Johnson Foundation 1992—2010**
- 190 Claudia Gnehm  
**The Marriage of Profit and Philanthropy**

194	Mirjam Eglin and Guido Münzel
	<b>Foundation Management Today</b>
	—
	<b>Appendix</b>
199	William Morgan and Mike Jones, Aerospace Bristol
	<b>The Development and Function of the Blind Rivet</b>
201	<b>1910 – 2019: A Chronology of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation</b>
204	<b>150 Million: The Distribution of Funds 1969 – 2018</b>
205	<b>Trustees, Presidents of the Board and Managing Directors since 1969</b>
206	<b>The Management Office in 2019</b>
206	<b>Authors</b>
207	<b>Image Credits</b>
207	<b>Imprint</b>

## Half a Century!

It is with respect and joy that we look back on 50 years of work achieved by the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation. Many invaluable projects have been initiated and supported in the fields of culture, education, humanitarian aid and medical research since the foundation was established in 1969. Even though it is impossible to document all these projects individually, this publication nevertheless provides some representative insight into the development of the foundation and its funding activities.

Our approach is to operate in a forward-looking and transparent manner, and on the occasion of the anniversary, it is equally important to us to take an open-minded, critical look at the past. The research we conducted has unearthed many new or surprising findings and drawn attention to open questions about the history of the foundation. What matters most to us is to show how the trustees and staff have continuously engaged with, questioned and repositioned the activities of the foundation, while always keeping the foundation's purpose in mind. Among the key characteristics of the foundation are its dynamism and vibrancy, which have been nurtured over the years by natural shifts in the composition of the board, and above all by the influence of social change.

In this spirit we look to the future with curiosity. We are mindful of creating a sustainable impact and will keep reflecting on our own activities. As an independent foundation we can take a long-term view and support projects neglected by the public sector, commercial sponsors or charitable organisations that rely on donations. Our work focuses on funding innovative approaches and on building sustainable partnerships. Despite all the transitions and changes, our activities consistently remain centred on the core purpose of the foundation: to improve people's quality of life and foster mutual cultural understanding. This task remains both urgent and challenging.

Mirjam Eglin

*President of the Board of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation*

*‘I was one of many people who are prevented from crossing borders and who are held back by walls. Now I’m on the other side. I know what people in this situation—Afghans, Syrians—are fighting for. There are many people like me who have simply never been given a chance. Here I read news about governments putting up barriers to protect people. But protect them from what? From people like me? It’s very sad.’*

Orna Kazimi, artist from Afghanistan, fellow of the Culture & Conflict Visiting Artists Programme at Central Saint Martins College, London 2016–2018.  
→ Phyllida Shaw, *Championing Change in and Through the Arts*, S.111f.

## A Rock Without a Devil

The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation was established 50 years ago. The fortune that endowed it was the result of profits made during the Second World War. What does that mean today—and what does it have to do with art? An essay.

Grant No. 158: Ten thousand Swiss Francs to the writer Erwin Heimann for his novel *Die Gestraften* (The Punished). So it is recorded in the files of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation for the year 1980. Nine years previously, the still very young foundation had begun its activities with two contributions to the Red Cross for the victims of natural disasters in Romania and Peru. Until Heimann's novel, few if any literary projects had featured on the list of approved grants.

## Inner and Outer Laws

Erwin Heimann is not a very well-known author today. In the 1950s and 1960s however, the episodes he wrote for Swiss Radio were extremely popular. Born in Bern in 1909, he trained as a heating engineer and later became an editor for the Francke publishing house. Hailed as one of the last working-class writers in Switzerland when he died in 1991, he had always defended the position of a reformist, state-supporting Left.

In the semi-fictional novel *Die Gestraften*, Heimann addresses conditions in the Swiss penal system. While working on the book, he had himself interred in the Thorberg penitentiary for two weeks. Heimann's text does not speculate on issues of moral philosophy, but it does touch on questions that are relevant to assessing the history of the Johnson Foundation. Heimann writes that human beings are 'subject to several laws': external laws that are 'dictated by social norms' and 'others, just as compelling, that shape people from the inside out, without having been chosen or wished for.' External laws can be broken, Heimann says, but 'people are inescapably under the sway of' internal laws.



## The Missing Protagonist

The wealth that formed the basis of Johnson Foundation was amassed as a direct result of the war. This fortune ended up in Switzerland because the English rivet manufacturer Stanley Thomas Johnson wished to evade trade restrictions and avoid taxes. The establishment of the foundation is apparently due neither to the initiative of the man it is named after, nor that of his widow June Johnson, but to that of her trustee Hugo Spühler.

It's as if we were encountering an erratic block in a field: a rock whose origins lie in inhospitable territory, whose presence seems inexplicable and continued existence surprising. Like that rock, the Johnson Foundation stands somewhat lost in the landscape and hardly anyone knows why, or how. Stories about erratic blocks often tell of giants who picked up a boulder and dumped it somewhere, or of the devil who was prevented from smashing a church and abruptly abandoned the rock he had intended for the job. But in the story of the Johnson Foundation, though it appears just as erratic, there is no such giant and no devil either.

So who could the protagonist be? Stanley Thomas Johnson, the war profiteer who never heard of the foundation and in whose life and work there are no traces that would point to such a legacy? June Johnson, who might have had a biographical connection to some kind of dance, but did not herself think of passing on her inheritance in this way? Or the Bernese trustee Hugo Spühler, who came up with the idea, but had become involved in the whole thing more or less by chance? None of them are suitable protagonists, none of them are people in whom motive and deed coincide. No one left this boulder lying around. It is simply there.

This distinguishes the Johnson Foundation from other foundations whose endowment is not infrequently also ethically problematic, to say the least, but which have an unambiguous connection to a founding figure. The German Flick Foundation campaigns against xenophobia, racism and intolerance and has an important art collection, but it goes back to the business empire of Friedrich Flick, who was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for war crimes in 1947. The Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, which will soon be housed in the new extension of the Zurich Kunsthhaus, stems from the fortune of the armaments industrialist Emil G. Bührle. The Fondation Nestlé pour l'Art, which is very active in promoting the arts, was founded in 1991 on the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company it is named after. The company is still represented on the foundation's board of trustees and its economic activities likely run counter to the presumed or declared political convictions of many of those who receive its support.

## Are Rivets Weapons?

In some cases, there seems to be a dialectic in the foundation system between charity and ethically illegitimate—though not necessarily unlawful—enrichment. And in the case of the Johnson Foundation, one might even say between creation and destruction, for what consequences did the use of Johnson's rivets on fighter planes entail other than destruction? This is undeniable despite the fact that the Allies used these fighters and bombers against an enemy whose destructive rage was beyond measure. Rivets can be used for entirely different things, such as building bridges for example. Johnson's rivets however were part of a weapons system. But does that make the rivets themselves weapons?

According to current Swiss legislation, it both would and would not. According to Article 5 of the Swiss Federal Act on War Materiel, individual parts and assemblies are in principle also covered by the concept of war materiel. In the dispatch on the law, however, the Federal Council states that elementary parts such as screws, nuts or bolts are not subject to the law, and that this applies even to custom-made products. Consequently, blind rivets for combat aircraft do not fall under the concept of war materiel under current Swiss law, even if the law itself describes them as such. Is this not an instance of Heimann's concept of 'external' and 'internal' laws, of principles that contradict each other, even if they mean the same thing?

## Moral Alchemy

This contradiction is reflected in the purpose of the Johnson Foundation, which weighs in on the other side of the dialectical—or should we say dilemmatic?—scheme of destruction and creation. Regardless of who gave the impetus for this formulation, the mission of 'alleviating the conditions of people in times of war and of refugees' can be interpreted as a will to make amends. From an optimistic humanist point of view, the promotion of the 'fine arts' and 'scientific research' could be equated with the hope for a world in which such reparations would never again be necessary. To save the world from mankind: that is the guiding principle behind the foundation's stated intention 'to improve people's quality of life and foster mutual cultural understanding.' Originally, however, the Soviet Union, 'Red China' and Germany were excluded from the foundation's activities. This was stipulated in the foundation's founding document, June Johnson's last will and testament, rooted in a postwar worldview based on opposing fronts.

The foundation has since dispensed with these limitations. It has also long since severed ties with the still extant Avdel (Aviation Developments) group, which was founded by Johnson, and now the foundation's capital has even been invested sustainably. Dreadful things have become beautiful, it seems. It is as if, in a kind of alchemical process, the Johnson money has been transformed from an impure into a pure substance. As if, even though inherently neutral, it had undergone a moral purification, albeit at the expense of a historical limbo. Hence its seemingly erratic existence in the strangely disconnected form of the Johnson Foundation.

## Art and Money

That art plays a role in this process is hardly surprising. Art has always expressed the inherent contradiction between being entirely of this world and yet beyond it. Every attempt to discuss and possibly criticise the conditions of production casts art as the lead actor in this drama of inescapability. That art and money should have nothing to do with each other is certainly a fairy tale. Money is not a thing apart from art; money is not the external condition that makes art possible: the two are inscribed in each other. That was so when art was commissioned by power, and it has remained so since it sells on the market. Money expresses itself through art and art expresses itself as money. It's just that art likes to keep quiet about its money content, whereas money boasts about its art content. Art and money are both abstracts that only seem to appear in relation to something else, as an image or as value, but ultimately reference nothing but themselves.

Consequently, the money we are talking about here, the Johnson money, cannot rightly be punished. It cannot be held guilty of its own history and origin, and the same is true of the foundation it constitutes. This foundation forms the secular framework that keeps the almost metaphysically detached capital grounded. It is the legend, the riveting tale of the devil with the rock, of the devil that does not exist. Is this the punishment for Johnson's war profiteering, for his rivets? Erwin Heimann's novel is not called *Die Bestraften*, but *Die Gestraften*—suggesting that it is about punishment as a burden, being punished for something one has not actively provoked, as opposed to being penalized, chastised or disciplined for a deliberate act that merits punishment. By changing the prefix, Heimann mitigates the punishment and increases it at the same time.

The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation has a history. Its money cannot be punished for it, and neither can the foundation. The money is free, oblivious to the burden of its history, while the foundation must bear that burden.

## From a Sleepy Market Town to the Heart of the Defence Industry

It all started in a garden shed in Godalming, south of London. The Johnsons, father and son, specialised in the sale and maintenance of engine components. But then Stanley Thomas Johnson secured the rights to a novel rivet system and realised its eminent importance for the emerging aircraft industry, which was rapidly growing in the face of the looming Second World War.—A research journey.

A lovingly designed museum in the historic centre of Godalming in Surrey commemorates the personalities whose history is linked to the pretty market town: James Oglethorpe, for example, who in 1733 founded the colony of Georgia on the territory of the future United States, or Aldous Huxley, author of the dystopian novel *Brave New World*. Godalming is nestled in rolling hills, meadows and woodland, about 50 km south of London. It is part of the so-called 'Stockbroker Belt' since London's financial district is still within reach for wealthy commuters. The museum also contains a short biography of Stanley Thomas Johnson, whose story begins in this sleepy place.

From the museum, the main road leads across the River Wey to the newer district of Farncombe. There, a few years after their marriage, Albert Harry and Sarah Jane Johnson moved into a three-bedroom, semi-detached house built around 1908. Sarah, née Hunter, came from a small town in Yorkshire. Harry, a bicycle and motorbike mechanic, was raised in a village north of the university town of Cambridge. Here, at 59 Hare Lane, Stanley T. Johnson, as he later called himself, was born on 10 June 1910. His younger sister Dorothy Ellen followed in 1914, on the eve of the First World War. Harry had found work in Godalming at Edgington's, a bicycle and motorbike dealer. He apparently escaped military conscription, introduced in 1916, because Edgington implored the authorities to let him keep Albert. Like many other businesses, Edgington had adapted to circumstances and was manufacturing munitions during the war.

Even as a child, Stanley thus became acquainted with engines, mechanics and the war economy.

There is no record of what Stanley did after completing his compulsory education at the age of fourteen. However, he may well have been introduced to the world of bicycle mechanics and engines by his father Albert and supplemented this practical training with courses at the technical college in Godalming or in neighbouring Guildford. These included subjects such as motor and electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, as well as commerce and accountancy.

In 1929 the Johnsons moved to a large detached house called Manningtree, on the corner of the Meadow and Llanaway roads. There Stanley started his business in the garden shed, and in the early 1930s the family business Johnsons (of Godalming) was established. The Johnsons specialised in the sale and servicing of engine parts, including those for the rapidly developing aerospace industry. They had links with Farnborough Airfield, then the headquarters of the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE), a research centre only 20 km away where prototypes were designed. The only surviving evidence of this connection is a negative decision: a test report by the RAE in March 1936 found mercury wire fuses provided by the Johnsons to be unsuitable because they burnt out too quickly.

## A Rivet Sparks an Idea

In the same year, however, Stanley landed his big coup. Britain's economy was on the upswing again after the global crisis of the Great Depression, not least thanks to a massive rearmament programme. In view of the threat posed by Nazi Germany, the British government pushed ahead with the construction of fighter planes. Aircraft construction was undergoing a shift from wood to aluminium, which required new assembly methods. The assembly of component parts had previously been carried out with solid rivets, which required at least two workers to insert them from the front and back of the structure. The new Chobert system of blind rivets enabled a single person to set the mandrels from one side only using a special hand tool, a rivet gun, thereby greatly reducing assembly times while also saving costs.

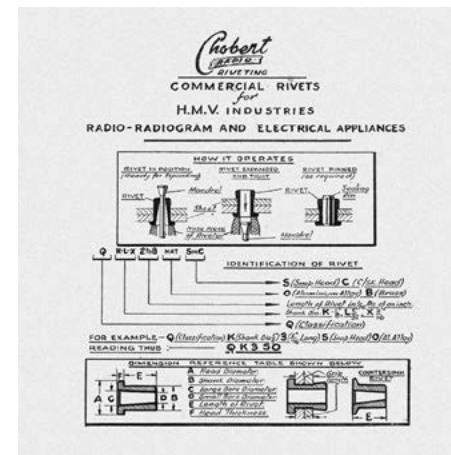
The system had been developed only a few years earlier at the French Blériot aircraft works. The designers were Leon Kirste, an Austrian, and the Frenchman Jacques François Gabriel Chobert, in whose name the inventions were patented. Stanley succeeded in securing the rights to manufacture, use and market the Chobert system for the entire British Empire. In order to put this into practice, he founded the company Aviation Developments Ltd. on 11 June 1936.



Johnson's family home from 1929 onwards: 'Manningtree' house in Godalming, No. 37 Meadow



The first company headquarters: the Johnson family's garden shed, 1936



Chobert riveting: an undated advert for Aviation Developments Ltd.

Like Johnsons (of Godalming) before it, the company was based in Argyle House in London, opposite King's Cross station. The Memorandum of Association sets out the purpose of the new company in detail on five pages: the manufacture and sale of tools and equipment for all kinds for aircraft, machines and engines, as well as the acquisition of patents and licences and the granting of the associated rights.

## The Right Connections Open Doors

The composition of the high-calibre Aviation Developments Board of Directors shows how well-connected Stanley already was at this point. He recruited a heavyweight of the British aircraft industry, aviation pioneer Alliott Verdon-Roe, as chairman. In 1910 Verdon-Roe had founded Avro, one of the world's first aircraft manufacturers, and is said to have contributed at least the lion's share of the start-up capital for the new company. Verdon-Roe's biography, however, also contains an inglorious chapter: in 1934 he joined the British Union of Fascists (BUF), and he continued to sympathise with fascism after the war. Several BUF members were drawn from the British Establishment, and Verdon-Roe was not the only aircraft industrialist among them. Their attraction to fascism stemmed from an unbridled belief in achieving superiority through technological progress, and the development of ever better aircraft in particular. There is no evidence that Stanley also flirted with such ideologies, but having the influential Verdon-Roe on board was a clever move that opened many doors to the young entrepreneur.

Stanley tapped into an ideal business channel by bringing the managing director of the aircraft manufacturer Supermarine Aviation Works, Trevor Westbrook, on board as a technical advisor. Supermarine built the famous Spitfire fighter planes that played a decisive role in the Battle of Britain between mid-July and late October 1940. A total of 20 000 Spitfires were built, all using Chobert rivets.

The most important position at Aviation Developments, however, was reserved for Stanley as managing director. He was described in trade journals as a man passionate about aviation who had been associated with Johnsons (of Godalming) since his youth. The Chobert system received detailed coverage in the trade press and in September 1936, Stanley wrote a letter to the editor, published in *Flight* magazine, making a strong case for his product and even challenging a rival company to a design duel in order to prove that his system was more efficient and therefore less expensive.

At the time, Stanley was already involved in several companies. By the end of 1936 there were at least three: Aviation Developments and Johnsons (of Godalming), as well as Johnsons (Holdings), a company that had been founded shortly after Aviation Developments, initially as Stanley Johnson Ltd., to trade in aircraft and motor vehicles. The three companies operated on similar terrain, and it was impossible to retrospectively disentangle their financial interconnections.

It soon became clear that Stanley had won out over the competition with the Chobert system, for by early 1940 it was estimated in the trade press that about three quarters of all aircraft built in the British Empire contained Chobert rivets.

No clues have been found as to where Aviation's warehouse and production facility were located in the early years. But at the end of June 1939, a good two months before Britain declared war on Germany, the company moved its headquarters to Welwyn Garden City in the county of Hertfordshire, a good 30 km north of London. The offices in the capital remained. Welwyn was built in 1920 as a garden city, with the vision of combining the advantages of town and country while avoiding their disadvantages. For Stanley, the move had two important benefits: There was enough space for both offices and production, and there was much less likelihood of being hit by German bombs.

## Expansion Across the Atlantic and the War Years

In September 1940, Stanley narrowly escaped disaster. With the Chobert rights for the entire British Empire in his pocket, the first thing he now pushed for was a visit to Canada, which had entered the war shortly after Britain.

Stanley also wanted to expand his business to the United States. To this end, he bought a ticket for the journey from Liverpool to Montreal on the passenger liner *City of Benares*. Transatlantic journeys at the time involved considerable risk, as both warships and passenger ships were exposed to German attacks from air and sea. The *City of Benares* was in the service of the British government as part of an evacuation programme and was to bring children from urban risk areas to safety. The children's transports also offered a certain level of safety for paying passengers, as they began their journey under the protection of a whole convoy of ships.

The *City of Benares* left Liverpool on 13 September 1940. The escort convoy had already departed when the steamer was targeted by a German submarine on the evening of 17 September. The submarine fired a torpedo and hit, sinking the ship within 30 minutes. Most of the crew and passengers, including celebrities, scientists and businessmen, were killed in the attack. Of the ninety children evacuated, only thirteen survived. The tragedy so devastated the public and the government that the transport of children across the Atlantic was suspended.

And Stanley? He appears on the ship's manifest with his ticket number and profession recorded as 'Aeronautical Engineer', but he is not on any official or unofficial list of survivors. Either he changed his mind at the last moment, did not make it to Liverpool in time because of the air battle raging across England, or he had secured several tickets in advance in order to keep his options open.

Stanley did make it across the Atlantic before the end of that year, and shortly afterwards, in July 1941, the company Aviation Developments (Canada) Ltd. was registered in Canada. In the United States, it was not until July 1945 that the company Aviation Developments Inc. was registered in the tax-favourable state of Delaware and launched operations a year later in an office in Burbank, California.

Aviation Developments now marketed the Chobert system as a weapon in its own right, advertising it in the early years of the war as the 'Tommy Gun of the industry'. Tommy Gun was the popular nickname for the Thompson submachine gun, used mainly by American and British troops.

A contemporary sales brochure praised the Chobert system as the most effective solution for a whole range of defence products, such as combat aircraft, tanks, weapon systems and ejector seats. It claimed that up to a 1000 blind rivets could be fastened per hour.

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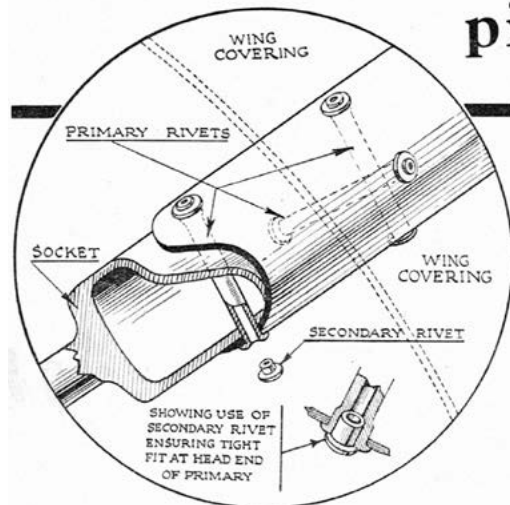


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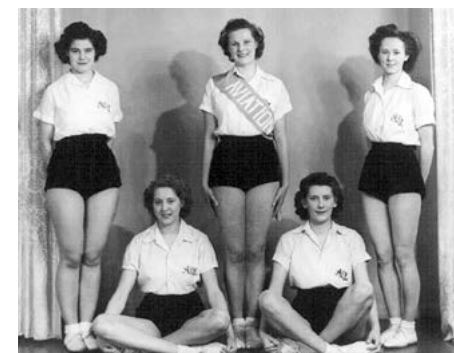
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Telephone : TERminus 6288. AVIDEV, Norwest, London



A hat, a cigarette and a C-gun:  
Mr. Stanley Thomas Johnson  
demonstrates the riveting system  
in the 1940s



Women's work: a pressing plant in  
St. Albans, July 1941



Wearing the company logo:  
participants in a physical fitness  
programme, March 1942

**The Defence Industrialist**

The war, with its huge demand for Chobert rivets, and the decades that followed made Stanley a successful and prosperous defence industrialist. After acquiring the Chobert-rights, Stanley and other aviation engineers applied for further patents, mostly improvements to the Chobert system, and after the war the company expanded into other countries. In order to keep up with rapid technological developments and increasing quality requirements, the following decades saw the continuous development, adaptation and refinement of various designs of rivets and fastening systems.

New materials were introduced and Stanley's products were deployed in an ever wider range of areas.

Blind rivets are still omnipresent in daily life today, for example when we travel by car, train or plane, when we operate the cooker or the washing machine, when we sit at the computer or use our smartphones. As early as 1948, Aviation Developments celebrated a great success with an invention far removed from the armaments industry, namely an indestructible ear tag for farm animals, which had to be attached with a rivet of course.

The word 'aviation' in the company name was therefore increasingly perceived as misleading, and in 1961 the company was renamed using the abbreviation 'Avdel', which stands for Aviation Developments Ltd. or Aviation Developments Ltd. At the same time, new and larger business and production facilities were opened in Welwyn. Avdel changed hands several times in the following decades and has now for some years belonged to the multi-national giant Stanley Engineered Fastening, which is based in New Britain, Connecticut, USA.

## Exclusive Flats in an Elite Neighbourhood

Stanley gradually left Godalming behind in the mid-1930s and seems to have lived something of a nomadic life. His name appears in the electoral register in Godalming until 1937, but simultaneously crops up in London directories from 1934 onwards. One of these addresses was just around the corner from Argyle House, another in West London. In the 1939 census, Stanley was recorded in North London at the home of a professional colleague, and the following year he gave the address of another engineering colleague, this time in Welwyn, when purchasing his ticket for the *City of Benares*.

Many registers and directories did not survive the bombing raids of the war years. The addresses that are found for Stanley after the war, however, bear witness to his steep rise and the great wealth that came with it. At least two flats in the exclusive development of Dolphin Square in Pimlico, on the banks of the Thames near Westminster, were registered either in his own name or through his company. Many celebrities have lived there over the decades. Stanley also owned a flat in the Park House block of flats in the centre of Welwyn. On his business trips between 1949 and 1952, he repeatedly listed different addresses, sometimes in Dolphin Square, other times in Welwyn.

Stanley's family had also left Godalming before the war and stayed in the West London house for a short time. His parents Albert and Sarah were listed as living together in Birmingham in the 1939 census, but must have separated during the war or immediately afterwards. From 1946 Sarah occupied one of the flats in Dolphin Square, number 610 in the Hood House block. Albert spent the remainder of his life in the Midlands, and Stanley's sister Dorothy married her second husband Noel Wilfred Purvis, a shipowner and greyhound racer, reputed for turning up at the races in a yellow Rolls Royce.

Nothing is known about Stanley's private life until 1954. In March of that year, however, a certain June M. Starr was registered with him at number 20 Park House, Welwyn.

## The Woman from the City of Fishermen

Stanley was still honing his technical and business skills in Godalming and London, when a tragedy unfolded in the coastal town of Hull in North East England.



Group photo with the ladies:  
workers at Woodfield Road, July 1941



A well connected man:  
Stanley Thomas Johnson in his office,  
undated

On 4 March 1933, the local press reported growing concern about the overdue fishing trawler *James Long*. The trawler had sailed for Iceland five weeks earlier with a crew of thirteen, but had not reported in for a fortnight. Although there was still hope that it had only been delayed, the families of the crew were already preparing for the worst. The first officer on the *James Long* was 29-year-old Cyril Vale, husband to Ivy Maude and father of almost two-year-old June Mary.

Cyril's wife Ivy told the *Hull Daily Mail* that her husband may have had a bad premonition, for he was wary of this trip. He had already been on board the *James Long* the previous year, when the ship was also reported lost for a while. According to Ivy, Cyril had brought back the doll her little daughter June was playing with from that previous trip to Iceland. June, she said, kept asking about her father and missed him so much that she fell ill. The *James Long* was officially declared lost ten days later, and Cyril's picture appeared on the front page of the local newspaper. For many years on the day of the accident, which left 30 children orphaned, Ivy and June published a newspaper notice in memory of Cyril.

On 25 February 1937, when June was almost six years old, Ivy married her second husband, Joseph Starr from the Irish town of Nenagh, in Hull. The *Hull Daily Mail* devoted a full article to the event, noting that Ivy wore a purple dress and matching hat, as well as a squirrel fur coat when she later departed for the south of England. June Mary, whose surname was now Starr, was not mentioned in the article. Her life story over the following seventeen years remains a mystery.

June was born in Hull on 28 March 1931. Seafaring and fishing were family traditions in this city whose name was synonymous with the English fishing industry. June's grandfather Vale had been



a fisherman, and her maternal grandfather had been a sailor. Newspaper reports on the trawler tragedy mentioned that June had recently won a prize in a regional baby competition when she was about twelve months old. These competitions were based on the appearance of health and the 'healthiest' children in different age categories were awarded a silver spoon to take home.

There is no trace of June in the 1939 census, whereas Ivy and Joseph Starr are listed in the southern English port city of Portsmouth. Joseph was a radio operator on a warship there, and Ivy ran a shop. June may have lived in Ireland, her stepfather's home country, for a while during the war, because more bad news came from there in the summer of 1944. Her mother Ivy, who had been suffering from myocarditis for some time, died in the psychiatric hospital in Clonmel on 27 August, aged only 37. She is buried nearby at Nenagh, Joseph's birthplace. June Mary Starr was orphaned at the age of thirteen. Joseph married again, had three children and died in 1971 in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, where he resided as a businessman.

When and where Stanley and June met is also unknown. However, they most likely met in London in the early 1950s. It can be assumed that June had a hard time after the war without parental support and that she finally ended up in the capital, like so many others, looking for work. She is only documented again in 1954 at Stanley's flat in Welwyn.

## Marriage and a Move to Geneva

Less than three months after the end of the war, the left-wing Labour Party surprisingly won the British general election. Labour transformed the country into a welfare state, introduced the National Health Service and nationalised large companies. With some compromises this policy continued until the mid-1960s, which increasingly deterred large-scale private entrepreneurs. It was probably one reason why Stanley decided to move to Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>

Stanley registered in Geneva on 24 January 1954 and received his settlement permit on 12 April. He and June had decided to get married in California and on 1 July they boarded the luxury steamer Queen Mary in Cherbourg, France, for the five-day crossing to New York. They occupied a first-class cabin; Stanley carried five pieces of luggage and June only three. From New York they travelled on to the West Coast and on 14 July Stanley and June were married in Burbank, Los Angeles. He was 44 and she 23 years old. The entry in the marriage register confirms that neither had been married before.



A rare snapshot of Mary June Johnson: Stanley Thomas Johnson with his wife at the opening ceremony for the new company facilities in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, September 1961.



On course for expansion: Aerial view of Black Fan Road and the Mundell company sites in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, 1966

Stanley combined pleasure with business on this trip. His best man was the then managing director of the local branch of Aviation Developments, the American aviation pioneer and engineer Nathan Heath McDowell. Stanley probably also wished to inspect the new company headquarters on South Victory Boulevard in Burbank, which had been projected for completion the previous month.

June Mary Johnson was registered in Geneva on 12 November 1954, four months after the wedding, and on 9 March 1955 she too received her settlement permit. From time to time she travelled with Stanley to England or the USA, where the couple stayed at the Beverley Wilshire Hotel in Beverley Hills, California. It was June who officially opened the new buildings of the company now renamed Avdel in Welwyn in 1961. A rare photograph shows her at the ceremony alongside Stanley, who is standing at the lectern.

In Geneva, Stanley and June resided in a prime location at Quai Gustave-Ador 62, in an apartment with a huge terrace and a beautiful view of the lake. The couple does not seem to have attracted much attention in Geneva, and their circle of acquaintances probably included many other English-speaking expatriates. When his father Albert died in February 1956, Stanley was already referred to as a retired managing director at the reading of the will. The same applied when his mother Sarah died in December 1961 in the Dolphin Square flat, even though Stanley had since founded companies in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Unlike Albert, Sarah left behind a considerable fortune.

Among the items she bequeathed to Stanley, specific mention is made of a small mahogany desk that had belonged to him before he moved to Geneva and an antique wine cabinet. Sarah also willed a sum of money to a friend, Elsie Metcalfe.



She was Stanley's long-time personal assistant and later continued to handle his business estate.

On 1 February 1967, Stanley died at the age of 56 at the American Hospital in the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, having reputedly suffered from liver disease for some time. Stanley was cremated and buried at Saint-Georges Cemetery in Geneva on the morning of 7 February. Obituaries appeared in the prestigious British newspapers *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*. The yacht club Société Nautique de Genève also published a short notice in Geneva. Those who knew Stanley describe him simply and succinctly as a real self-made man.

Stanley had made provisions for the ongoing administration of his business interests and provided an allowance for June. However, she died only two years later, on Easter Monday, 7 April 1969, at home on Quai Gustave-Ador.

The circumstances of her death were never fully clarified. She was cremated on 11 April 1969 and her ashes buried in the grave she shares with Stanley. June had only just turned 38 years old.

The author would like to thank Ann Laver, research coordinator at the Godalming Museum, for her tireless support and for selflessly providing access to her own research.

<sup>1</sup> For more on this, see the text by Markus Mugglin, p. 31ff.

## An Elaborately Tangled Corporate Construct: Aviation Developments Ltd. in Switzerland

The rise of Aviation Developments Ltd., the company founded by Stanley Thomas Johnson, was typical of the British defence industry during the Second World War and its immediate aftermath. Less typical is the company's partial relocation to Switzerland. A reconstruction.

An economy geared to war-time production, an almost empty treasury, a moribund export industry and extremely scarce foreign currency reserves: Great Britain found itself in an extremely precarious economic situation after 1945. Nevertheless, the new Labour government, which in a surprising landslide had just forced war hero Winston Churchill out of office, promised a massive expansion of the welfare state.

Having been spared the direct impact of the war, Switzerland was in a comparatively comfortable economic position. Even so, it was still necessary to court the favour of the victorious powers. This strategy rapidly succeeded in dealings with Great Britain, not least by granting a loan of 260 million francs in 1946. The loan helped the British to ease their shortage of foreign currency and to buy goods from Switzerland on credit. British citizens were also able to travel to Switzerland again, a popular holiday destination since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Economic relations, which had almost come to a standstill during the war, quickly revived. One economic sector even experienced a veritable boom: the British arms industry, represented by many large companies and even more small, little-known supplier firms. Among them was a hardware business founded in a small town south-west of London. By 1936, it had been named Aviation Developments Ltd. and was producing so-called blind rivets, which remained in demand for peacetime aircraft construction.

## Britain as Switzerland's Arms Supplier

When used to build airplanes, Stanley Thomas Johnson's rivets did not cause a public stir. Familiar and feared heavy weapons, on the other hand, did. It was these that boosted trade between Great Britain and Switzerland in the post-war years: the Vampire I and II fighter aircraft in the immediate aftermath of the war, Venom I and II in the first half of the 1950s; later the Centurion I and II tanks, followed by the Hunter and in 1961 the Bloodhound anti-aircraft missile system.

Switzerland became a preferred customer of the British arms industry and Great Britain the Swiss Army's most important supplier. Switzerland spent over a billion Swiss francs on British weapons systems between 1945 and 1958. From 1950 to 1958, the arms trade included 176 fighter aircraft, 30 training aircraft, 393 aircraft produced under licence and 210 tanks. 'Impressive numbers', as Marco Wyss concludes in his study of the economic relations between the two states during this period, when Switzerland bought almost all its heavy weapons from the United Kingdom. <sup>1</sup> Not only was every aircraft and every tank purchased abroad or produced under licence, Wyss notes, but with two small exceptions they were all of British origin. The volume of Swiss arms purchases in Great Britain was extraordinarily high even in comparison with the weapons acquired there by the European NATO countries. One in five of the aircraft purchased in Britain by the European NATO countries and Switzerland in the period from 1950 to 1958 was destined for Switzerland.

It was not only armament policy that drove the business between the United Kingdom and Switzerland during this period; economic considerations were equally important. As mentioned, after the war, Great Britain was short of foreign currency and its economy devastated, with the major exception of the aircraft industry which had experienced 'phenomenal growth' during the war years. <sup>2</sup> In 1939 during the first four months of the war, 730 aircraft were produced each month; by 1944 this figure had risen to 2435 per month. Fighter aircraft accounted for well under one per cent of all aircraft produced at the beginning of the war, but nearly ten per cent by the time it ended. Almost two million people were employed in the aircraft industry.

While the British manufactured mainly for their own needs during the war, the aircraft industry emerged as a first-class supplier of urgently needed foreign currency in the post-war slump. Switzerland's largest arms purchases in Great Britain alone accounted for almost a quarter of British exports to Switzerland in the fourteen years after 1945—which soon led to a surplus in the British foreign trade

balance with Switzerland, a welcome contribution to the financial stabilisation of an Empire that was losing its lustre.

On the Swiss side, too, the arms deals were not based solely on military considerations. An internal memorandum from the then director of the Trade Department (and later Federal Councillor) Hans Schaffner to the Federal Finance Administration (FFA), as quoted in a study by Markus Gsteiger, declares it virtually a Swiss national duty not to damage assets in England. <sup>3</sup> Schaffner had asked the FFA to give preference to the British Vampire over American aircraft, arguing that this was the only way to ensure eventual repayment of the loans granted to the United Kingdom. The purchase of the Vampire fighter jet would therefore also serve Swiss national interests. The tourism industry seconded this point of view in its trade publication *Schweizer Hotel-Revue*, claiming that national defence interests aligned with those of the tourism industry, since the purchase of the Vampires would provide the British with the foreign currency required to fund their holidays in Switzerland.

## War Profits from Blind Rivets

Stanley Thomas Johnson was among those who profited from the war, even though he did not manufacture any actual armaments. His most important product was the so-called Chobert rivet for which he had acquired the patent the year after taking over his father's ironmongery business. The product was in great demand in the aircraft industry and renaming the company Aviation Developments Ltd. in 1936 made it clear that the company was more than just another hardware firm. Aircraft construction was then shifting from metal and wood construction to all-metal structures. This required a new generation of fasteners and equipment that could be processed from one side of the component, replacing conventional rivets.

The Chobert blind rivet fulfilled this requirement, and with the surge in demand for new aircraft during the war, the need for these rivets increased exponentially. Even before the end of the war, Stanley Thomas Johnson expanded to Canada and later to the USA. Other production sites followed. But he obviously felt that his expansion plans were being hindered. Britain had used up almost all its foreign exchange reserves during the war; it descended from a creditor to a debtor nation. <sup>4</sup> Foreign exchange was regulated and restricted by the state, and the industrialist lobby objected to high taxes. Stanley Thomas Johnson also perceived the restrictions, tax burdens and other government directives as an impediment he was looking to avoid, prompting him to emigrate to Switzerland in 1954. While he kept his production site in England, he relocated the company's financial headquarters to

Switzerland. Here he could expand and organise his business as he pleased. From Geneva, he constructed a complex conglomerate of companies with various bases. He was advised by a tax consultant and a US banker in Liechtenstein with an office in Zurich. They set up various corporations to finance the Avdel Ltd. production plant in Welwyn Garden City, England.

## An Opaque Conglomerate of Companies

Soon an elaborately tangled construct of companies with branches in Vaduz, Lucerne, Glarus, Chur and Geneva was established. Through the company United Fastenings Est (UFE) in Vaduz, Johnson transferred his shareholding in Avdel and Avdel Corp. Burbank to Aircraft Investments AG, a holding company founded in Lucerne. A second company in Vaduz, Iberia Est, became a shareholder in the newly founded Aerpat AG in Glarus and in several companies in Chur. Aerpat in Glarus held the patents, for the commercial exploitation of which the British and US American manufacturing companies paid licence fees. Companies in Chur either provided machines to the production companies on the basis of leasing contracts or received licences for non-patented production processes and compensation for services. The lion's share of the income flowed back to a branch in Vaduz, which used it to provide a loan to another company in Chur for the purchase of machinery.

In 1959, the Industrial Advisory Comp (IAC) was established in Geneva. Through it, Johnson and other consultants advised and instructed the operating companies in return for a turnover commission. Olympia Holding Geneva, founded at the same time, owned the IAC shares. Stanley Thomas Johnson no longer officially owned the companies. He transferred the ownership rights to foundations in Liechtenstein and acted as consultant to the companies, taking a turnover commission as his fee. When he died in 1967, he left behind seven manufacturing works, five sales companies and twelve service companies, all interlinked and deliberately forming a structure that lacked transparency. Johnson's first tax advisor in Switzerland, Willy Staehelin, once tellingly admitted 'that all the Swiss companies he had organised at our request were a complete fiction, a Swiss fiction.'

From 1958 onwards Hugo Spühler, an independent trustee who had previously worked in the Federal Tax Administration, played an important role alongside Stanley Thomas Johnson. He was appointed to the boards of most of the Switzerland-based corporations and thus had a privileged insight into the inner workings of the corporate web. He wrote in an internal report that the organs of all the companies were subject to the dictates of Stanley Thomas Johnson, although he no longer

officially owned the companies. The members of the corporate bodies were even asked to submit an undated declaration of resignation to one of their boss's close associates, meaning they could have been dismissed by Stanley Thomas Johnson at any time.

## Avdel—a British Exception?

For centuries, British companies, present across continents, have formed the backbone of the empire. The United Kingdom was also once the world's most important foreign investor, and the UK is still one of the largest global players today. Switzerland as a business location played a relatively subordinate role; Swiss companies have invested and continue to invest more in the UK than the other way round. This does not mean that Great Britain showed little interest in the Swiss market. On the contrary: after the Second World War, trade between the two countries increased enormously; in 1945 British exports amounted to more than 20 million Swiss francs, increasing almost tenfold by the following year.

In 1947, when the first major arms deal was concluded for Vampire I, exports rose to over 300 million Swiss francs and, with one exception, consistently fluctuated between 300 and 400 million Swiss francs until the mid-1950s. Thus, the UK always achieved a clear trade surplus vis-à-vis Switzerland. A considerable part flowed back via tourism: in 1950, Swiss tourism once again counted more than 300 000 arrivals from Great Britain and five years later this rose to almost half a million. The traditionally close ties that had developed between the two nations since the 19<sup>th</sup> century were thus quickly re-established.

New investment and relocations of production by British companies to Switzerland after 1945 on the other hand were negligible. The monthly *Anglo-Swiss Trade Review* published by the British Chamber of Commerce for Switzerland included no information on such activities, but there was much talk of promoting trade, with a number of trade fairs held in Zurich. An event to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Chamber of Commerce in 1950 highlighted the current status and promotion of the long-standing economic partnership between the two countries, prompting the then president of the British Federation of Industry, Robert Sinclair, to express his delight at the 1200 agents representing British companies in Switzerland. This testified to the fact that the needs of the Swiss market were being intensively explored in order to tap new export potential. The Chamber of Commerce itself was also expanding. Before the war, it had only a little over a hundred members, but afterwards the number skyrocketed and exceeded 800 by 1948.

A first double taxation agreement, concluded in 1954, encouraged companies to set up in both countries. Some British-controlled companies were also present in Switzerland, which is reflected in the composition of the board of the British Chamber of Commerce for Switzerland at the time. These included: Gillette Safety Razor, which had already set up shop in Switzerland in 1919 and opened a manufacturing plant in Neuchâtel in 1948; Sunlight AG, which was founded in 1898 and incorporated into the British-Dutch Unilever before the Second World War; British American Tobacco; Imperial Chemical Industries; and many other companies of British origin.

Stanley Thomas Johnson did not want to enter the Swiss market. He neither manufactured nor marketed blind rivets here. With his subtly woven financial construct, he exploited the scope for tax optimisation, which was greater in Switzerland than in post-war Britain.

<sup>1</sup> Wyss, Marco (2013). *Arms Transfers, Neutrality and Britain's Role in the Cold War: Anglo-Swiss Relations 1945–1958*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.

<sup>2</sup> Anglo Swiss Trade Review, *Official Journal of the British Chamber of Commerce for Switzerland*, October 1945, p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> Gsteiger, Markus (1997). *Die Wirtschaftsbeziehungen der Schweiz mit Grossbritannien 1945 bis 1955. Vom Bilateralismus zum Multilateralismus*. Studie der Universität Bern, p. 30

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

## From 1969 to 2019—A Short History of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation

How Stanley Thomas Johnson's estate became the assets of a foundation, how the foundation withdrew from his industrial legacy—and how the foundation continuously reflects and renews its commitment: a chronological review of the last 50 years of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation.

### Background

Although the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation was named after the British industrialist, its establishment can neither be traced back to him, nor is there any written evidence that it was set up in his spirit. In her will, his wife June bequeathed their joint assets to a foundation that was to be named after her late husband. The driving force in the background, however, was Johnson's Bernese trustee Hugo Spühler and the Avdel Policy Committee (APC), which Stanley T. Johnson had set up before his death to manage his company and his assets.

Johnson died in 1967 at the age of 57. Coming from a humble background, he succeeded in amassing a considerable fortune through his companies in the Avdel Group. Together with his wife June Mary Johnson (née Starr), he settled in Geneva in the post-war period. The marriage remained childless, and according to Johnson's will, his entire property passed to June Johnson. In accordance with Johnson's instructions the administration of the estate was entrusted to a seven-member committee which he had convened even before his death to take over in case of serious illness. This Avdel Policy Committee (APC) consisted of three trusted advisors from Johnson's companies, three personal advisors and his trusted secretary Elsie Metcalfe.

The committee largely supervised June's finances and patronised her accordingly, although Spühler claimed she was content simply to continue a carefree lifestyle. June had no children or direct family members and therefore no close heirs. Hugo Spühler persuaded her to draw up a will in which a charitable foundation was appointed as the main beneficiary, to be established in Bern after June's death.

June died under mysterious circumstances in 1969 in her flat in Geneva, which, according to Spühler, prompted the Geneva judiciary to investigate, although the investigation was soon discontinued without result. CHF 100 000 went to Johnson's sister, and the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation was set up in 1969 with the remaining inheritance. The APC had the authority to appoint the foundation board.

According to Elsie Metcalfe, the foundation was set up in keeping with Mr. Johnson's 'frequently expressed wishes'. Spühler asserted that the foundation ensured the continued existence of the Avdel Group in the spirit of Stanley Thomas Johnson. However, there are no documents that testify to Johnson's wish to create a foundation, and consequently this can also be interpreted as a post-facto justification by Spühler and Metcalfe. It is possible that the creation of the foundation provided a legal form that ensured the cohesion of the corporate conglomerate and thus the preservation of Johnson's life's work. At the same time, it ensured that the APC retained control over the company and the disposition of the company's profits.

In short, nowhere in the available sources is there any evidence that the establishment of a foundation was in accordance with Stanley Thomas Johnson's will. The will that paved the way was signed by his wife and sole heir. Formally, she was the founder of the foundation, and it was her estate that constituted the foundation's capital. In this way, persons close to her and Johnson were largely able to retain control of the assets and the company.

## The Foundation's Early Years

The foundation was established shortly after June's death and met for the first time some six months later. Its initial capital at that time was about 1.5 million US dollars with an annual income of about 100 000 US dollars. Most of the foundation's trustees were drawn from the APC itself, joined by additional figures with connections to the members of the committee.

According to the last will and testament of June Mary Johnson, the foundation was established to support the following causes:

- a) *The promotion of fine arts, especially musical, theatrical and ballet performances including contributions towards the development of artists and performers of fine arts.*
- b) *The promotion of the objectives of the International Committee of the Red Cross in alleviating the conditions of people in times of war and of refugees.*
- c) *The promotion of the scientific research, especially in the fields of medical*

*science and generally in all activity tending to promote the standard of living of deserving countries.*

- d) *The Officers of the Foundation are hereby authorised to make special grants in the event of elementary catastrophes whenever the contribution from third parties should not be sufficient. Grants of such kind shall be destined to increase the funds available to first aid only and in an amount not exceeding the equivalent of £ 4 000.*

The will also contained a clause that allowed the revision of these award criteria and provided for the consultation of experts. Furthermore, June's last will contained a so-called codicil prohibiting support for projects in Communist China, the Soviet Union and the two German states. Although codicils do not exist under Swiss law, its provisions came into effect due to the subsidiary application of British law and applied to all funds awarded by the foundation board until the turn of the millennium.

Following the first meeting, an initial award was granted to the Royal Free Hospital in London, and at the second meeting, CHF 200 000 was donated to the Red Cross to help victims of natural disasters in Peru and Romania. Settling further donations, however, proved more complicated, since the foundation was still largely unknown. The members of the board suggested possible causes and organisations, and then assigned individual trustees to approach suitable organisations for projects worthy of support, such as La Scala in Milan or the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA). Within a few years, however, the foundation received a rising number of applications and projects outside the foundation's focus areas were increasingly turned down.

In the first ten years of the foundation's existence, the board was still engaged in transferring assets from June Mary Johnson's estate to the foundation. The funding areas also underwent an initial revision, as the board of trustees used the right granted to it to revise the award criteria. While the category of the arts remained largely unchanged, 'scientific research' focused on medicine from the beginning. Probably the most significant change was in the interpretation of supporting the objectives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): this purpose was transformed into the broader category of 'development aid' as early as 1971 and retained this designation for around 40 years. In 1972, the first grant was awarded in the newly created category 'Aid in favour of Children and Handicapped'. These two new focal points essentially launched the foundation's social commitment. At the same time, the focus on development aid demonstrates the foundation's willingness to adapt its charitable purposes to contemporary discourse, in this case to the Third World solidarity movements of the 1970s.

## Sale of the Avdel Companies

The idea of potentially selling the Avdel companies in the long-term was already under consideration back in 1973. June Mary's will stipulated that the foundation would own and benefit from the company, but that the rights to manage it would be exercised by the APC for a period of 75 years from the date of her death. These rights also included the sale of the company itself, provided that this take place within the 75-year period and on the basis of a joint decision by the committee and the foundation. Responsibility for the manufacturing works was increasingly perceived as a burden and the APC found it difficult to reconcile the interests of the foundation and the company. A particular concern was the fact that the profits were to be siphoned off for the benefit of the foundation, while from a business point of view it would have been better to reinvest them in the company. In March 1973, the foundation finally took the decision to sell the works, on condition of reasonable financial terms.

Initially, the plan was to list the shares on the stock exchange and then sell them via brokers, but Avdel was too small a company for the New York and London stock exchanges. In addition, there was the impact of the global recession. The originally envisaged sale's strategy therefore no longer seemed advisable to the trustees. Instead, the company was to be transferred to the specially created company Avdel International N.V. (ANV). APC members Pearson and Moore were to buy up a third of the shares. Organised in this way, the plan was to then sell the whole conglomerate. Hugo Spühler went in search of an interested buyer, but it took him until 1978 to find a suitable company in Newman Industries. A complex contract was concluded with this company, which provided, among other things, that the foundation would remain in possession of the company premises for several years and would rent them to Newman.

The sale of Avdel caused a stir in the press. The Financial Times wrote of 'the mysterious S.T.J.F.' because the organisation was hardly known. And Mr Musitelli, director of Avdel Paris, even filed a supervisory complaint, claiming that Pearson and Moore had made unlawful profits with their purchases. This amount should actually have gone to the foundation since it had in fact effected an interim sale at a profit for the benefit of the foundation trustees and the company's board of directors. In addition, he argued that the one-sided concentration on a single buyer had not resulted in an optimal price, which meant that the board of trustees had acted contrary to the interests of the foundation. In a personal conversation, however, Musitelli was persuaded to withdraw his complaint.

Thanks to the sale, the foundation was no longer economically dependent on a foreign industrial group with a limited product range, nor subject to unfavourable exchange rates. It was thus able to secure its financial resources and simplify its administration. At the same time, it spelled the end of the Avdel Policy Committee.

## The 1980s: Aid for the Third World, Children and Addicts

For the foundation, the sale of the Avdel works meant that much more money was available for its funding activities. Aware that this would result in a rising number of applications, from 1978 onwards the board of trustees worked to make the Johnson Foundation's purpose and commitments better known to the public.

The increase in applications as well as new funding areas increased the need for professional expertise. The board also discussed the creation of separate committees staffed by experts who would award grants in their areas of expertise. In the end, the creation of sub-committees was rejected, but the involvement of specialists was implemented in the long-term by favouring the election of experts for the individual funding areas to the board of trustees.

Project visits abroad were another innovation of the 1980s. The board sought to inspect on location whether the development projects the foundation was funding were actually having the projected effect, and decided that the expenses for the trips were worth the investment in the long term.

In the course of the 1980s, the foundation came into its own, gradually funding more and more projects from a wide variety of organisations. The board repeatedly proved receptive to new approaches to charitable action. The issue of drug addiction was already addressed in the mid-1970s with trustees encouraged to suggest relevant projects. In the following years, the foundation board approved initiatives to help alcoholics and heroin addicts, for instance by supporting therapeutic residential communities and organisations such as Aebi-Huus, Arche and Terra Vecchia. Further beneficiaries included women's shelters and other institutions for victims of domestic violence.

The foundation not only showed a sensitivity to current social problems, but also the will to deviate, if necessary, from its purpose as defined in the will of June Johnson. In the other funding areas, the foundation also reconsidered the award criteria and adjusted them if necessary. The regular review and revision of its funding practice was conceived as a continuum. Instead of sticking rigidly to the funding areas laid down in the founding charter, the board used its freedom

to reshape them in order to tackle the social problems it considered most urgent at a given time.

## Revocation of the Codicil and Anniversary of the Foundation

In the late 1990s, the codicil which had guided the foundation's funding practice for over thirty years was finally revoked. In the early 1990s, an expert had still determined that the codicil should definitely be retained. But under the impact of the Federal Racism Act in Switzerland, and the wider historical shift at the end of the Cold War, internal regulations that excluded grants to Soviet Russia, China and Germany had become increasingly untimely. At the foundation's request, the Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations (ESA) ordered the repeal of the codicil.

In 1999, on the occasion of the foundation's thirtieth anniversary, a concert was held at KulturCasino Bern featuring the well-known Bernese pianist Reto Reichenbach, who had once been sponsored by the foundation. Tickets were available for only 20 CHF and the concert, which was also attended by Federal Councillor Ruth Dreuffuss and other personalities from business and politics, drew a large audience. Unfortunately, Hugo Spühler, co-founder, secretary, chairman and later honorary president of the Johnson Foundation, did not live to see the festivities as he had passed away shortly before. Following the death of Elsie Metcalfe in 1994, he was the last member of the board of trustees who had known Mr and Mrs Johnson personally.

## An Endowment and the Introduction of Good Governance

In addition to the effects of the financial crisis from 2007 onwards, which made the management of the foundation's portfolio very difficult, the 2000s were marked by a substantial private donation granted to the foundation. This was a turning point in the foundation's history, as it required a considerable reorientation of its funding practice: While the Johnson Foundation primarily supported Swiss and British organisations, it always retained an international orientation, demonstrated in particular by its commitment to development aid. The fresh endowment added the new funding area of 'education', the purpose of which is to fund school projects in the Canton of Bern and award individual grants to persons residing in the Canton of Bern. Of the commitments undertaken by the foundation as a result of this shift,

the '2<sup>nd</sup> Chance' project launched in 2016 deserves special mention. The Johnson Foundation, in cooperation with the Canton of Bern, supports individuals aged 25 and over to catch up on basic Swiss qualifications. This was the first time that the foundation restricted eligibility to projects and individuals with a connection to the Canton of Bern. By deviating from its original aims and pursuing not only a strong international orientation but also a regional one, the foundation became more rooted in the region where it is based.

This period also saw personnel changes at various levels, reflecting the emerging regional orientation. The board of trustees, once composed of British and Swiss nationals, has been exclusively Swiss since the departure of the last British members in 2013.

The board also gave considerable thought to its own activities in order to prepare for future challenges. In workshops and in collaboration with external experts, the award criteria and the work of the foundation in general were subjected to thorough scrutiny. All this can be viewed as a means of contributing to and implementing the concept of 'good governance'. The foundation issued conflict of interest regulations, revised internal regulations, strengthened the role of experts, expanded committees and established new partnerships. This included the introduction in 2013 of the June Johnson Dance Prize, awarded every two years in cooperation with the Federal Office of Culture to emerging Swiss dance professionals and choreographers. In the area of culture, multi-year contributions are increasingly awarded in the spirit of providing targeted and sustainable support, and a new programme for partnerships with cultural organisations has been launched.

In 2013, the foundation ceased the independent funding of individual medical research projects and, from 2014 to 2018, collaborated with the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS) to support a palliative medicine research programme together with the Gottfried and Julia Bangerter-Rhyner Foundation. From 2019 to 2022, the Johnson Foundation combined funds from the sectors of 'Medical Research' and 'Conflict and Violence' to support two projects by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (STPH) for health management in refugee camps.

In the area of education, the pilot project '2<sup>nd</sup> Chance for a 1<sup>st</sup> Education' was launched in 2016 and entered its second round in September 2018. In cooperation with the Health and Welfare Department and the Education Department of the Canton of Bern, this project offers 50 motivated people the opportunity to catch up on their qualifications under professional guidance.

His sketch of the history of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation is based on a review of material sourced from the foundation's own archives.



## Alexander von Muralt, a Visionary Patriot

Professor of Physiology at the University of Bern, and member of the Johnson Foundation Board from 1969 to 1976: Alexander von Muralt was an internationally renowned scientific authority on muscle research and visionary founder of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) in 1953.

Lorenz Indermühle was amazed. An employee of the Swiss Red Cross, he had been elected to the Johnson Foundation's Board of Trustees in 2010. About two years in, as he was studying the history of the foundation, he spotted a document with a signature he recognised: Alexander von Muralt. His grandfather. Neither the family nor the foundation had realised that the grandson was now sitting on the same board as his grandfather. On the other hand, it is not surprising that Alexander von Muralt was approached for the role when the foundation was established.

At that time, Alexander von Muralt, or AvM as everyone called him for short, had just retired as Head of the Institute of Physiology at the University of Bern. In 1936, when he first came to Bern as a professor, the Institute's building at Bühlplatz 5, the 'Hallerianum' (named after Albrecht von Haller), had seen better days. Flowery wallpaper in the laboratories, gaslight in the course rooms and outdated scientific instruments meant that Muralt and his team were first required to modernise operations. While this mattered, it was never what mattered most: 'Modern equipment is indeed a prerequisite for good scientific work, but the main thing is an



institute's atmosphere', AvM writes in his memoirs. For 32 years he shaped the discipline of physiology in Bern and taught generations of medical students. To mark his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, the city of Bern named a street after him in Länggasse, Bern's university quarter. The street sign reads succinctly: 'Muraltweg—Alexander von Muralt, 1903–1990, doctor, natural scientist and campaigner for research policy.'

He was a doctor and a natural scientist, but his most important achievement was undoubtedly the establishment of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The war had changed the field of Swiss research. While the states who had participated in the war were also mobilizing in the field of science, Switzerland was lagging behind. Many promising young talents migrated abroad. AvM realised early on that Switzerland had to do something about it and was involved in setting up the Foundation for Biology and Medical Scholarships, which enabled semesters abroad at prestigious universities. But that was only one half of the equation. It was now a question of bringing young scientists back, offering them adequate working conditions in their own country or even of recognizing scientific research as a fully-fledged profession. AvM had experienced first-hand what successful research policy could look like, not least on trips to the United States and Great Britain.

He envisioned an institution that could assess and finance projects at the national level and promote young researchers. The inclusion of the humanities was also important to him. And he did not let up. When he became president of the Swiss Society for Natural Sciences in 1947, he was in a position to achieve a breakthrough. He designed concepts, argued for them convincingly, clarified open questions and also knew the right people. In 1952 the time had finally come, and because AvM was a patriot and saw the promotion of research as a form of national defence, the Swiss National Science Foundation was founded on 1 August, Swiss National Day. The ceremony in parliament included music and a gift of flowers from the Federal Council for AvM as the initiator of the new institution. AvM was subsequently president of the National Research Council until 1968. But he is still present today whenever the Research Council meets: his bust stands in meeting room 56 at Wildhainweg 21 in Bern, the headquarters of the SNSF, with an inscription that commemorates his achievement: 'Alexander von Muralt—intellectual father and founder of the Swiss National Science Foundation.'

AvM made his mark on yet another institution, a research station everyone has heard of, not just in Switzerland. The international research station on the Jungfrauoch was inaugurated in 1931. AvM was present at the celebration in Interlaken and was offered the post of director. He declined because he had not yet finished his studies, but in 1937, by then in Bern, he became president of the foundation that ran the research station and remained in this position until 1972. He was often on

the Jungfrauoch, supervising researchers, conducting his own research, settling conflicts and also welcoming guests. Three kings visited the research station during this time: Farouk of Egypt, Baudoin of Belgium and Olaf of Norway. AvM gave his prestigious visitors strict instructions to make sure they could cope with the high altitudes. King Olaf remarked on the way down the mountain that he had not been ordered around like that since he was a child. AvM was clearly a leader by nature.

Serving in the artillery was a family tradition, and AvM was no exception. He served as a major in the Swiss Army during the war and, like many others, completed his compulsory service. As a colonel in the artillery corps he led the big manoeuvre in the Gotthard region at the end of the 1950s, and he was given another honourable task in 1960 when he was asked to organise the funeral procession for General Guisan in Lausanne.

Besides the military tradition, there are also many doctors in his family. Both his father and mother studied medicine. AvM was born in Zurich in 1903. His father fell ill soon afterwards and it was recommended that he move to a high-altitude climate for his health. Until he was thirteen, AvM grew up in Davos. When his father died, he returned to Zurich with his mother. It seemed like an obvious course to become a doctor himself. But during his undergraduate studies in Zurich, he was particularly enthused by physics and enrolled in these courses parallel to his medical studies. 'Three times during my scientific training I had the good fortune to be working in a laboratory just as decisive steps in basic research were taken', he writes in his memoirs. In Zurich, this was with Erwin Schrödinger, who discovered the wave function equation during his time there, for which he was later awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics. In 1927, AvM earned his doctorate in physics, and in the same year he married Alice Baumann. The births of their children trace his career path: the eldest daughter was born in Boston, the middle one in Heidelberg and the youngest in Bern.

At Harvard Medical School in Boston and at Otto Meyerhof's Institute for Medical Research in Heidelberg he was also privileged to experience 'the stimulating creative atmosphere that always prevails in an institute when new scientific ground is being broken.' During this time, thanks to his knowledge of physics, he developed an original method of visually depicting physiological processes in skeletal muscles. In the course of his career, he received many honours and awards for his scientific work.

However, he was never able to make the single big discovery, the 'big catch', as he himself called it, not least because his involvement in research policy kept him away from research itself. He probably never expected to return to the laboratory. But shortly after his retirement, he was delighted to learn that other physiologists

had succeeded in proving a hypothesis that he had always been convinced of: when nerve impulses are transmitted, the optical signal must also change. He joined forces with them and together they continued their research for another six years, using the method he had discovered in his younger years.

For more on AvM's work with the Johnson Foundation, see p. 57

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Julia Wehren



## Walter Oberer Tracing Histories

*... So the new finds the old as brothers  
in the critical stakes and what was  
once a question now an answer makes.<sup>1</sup>*

Walter Oberer, excerpt from the poem  
*Sich selbst bewahren*

He was a trustee of the Johnson Foundation from 1976 to 1979: Walter Oberer, a man who dedicated his life entirely to the theatre. He was a tireless innovator, especially during his tenure at the Stadttheater Bern, and never broke with tradition even in times of great change.

Seeking in the past those points that coincide with the present—this proposition runs like a leitmotif through Walter Oberer's numerous speeches, writings, lectures and memoirs, as well as the many tributes published in his honour. Walter Oberer was without question one of the great protagonists in the history of Swiss-German theatre. A constant presence for almost a century, he is also now a relic from a period in theatre that has little in common with today's aesthetics and production processes. 'The tail end of the belle époque just caught me', Oberer once wrote.

And so he saw his task as that of a 'tracker', seeking nothing less than the truth of art. The manner of his search and his understanding of this one 'truth' are what distinguish 'Obi', as he was called. At the very least, he gave his contemporaries 'a wonderful theatrical era'.<sup>2</sup>

Walter Oberer worked as a dramaturge at the Stadttheater Basel from 1945 to 1948, as artistic advisor and administrative director at the Schauspielhaus Zurich from 1948 to 1957 and as artistic director of the Stadttheater Luzern from 1957 to 1960. He left his most enduring mark on the Stadttheater Bern, significantly shaping

the institution as its director for almost 20 years from 1960 to 1979. It was at this time that he joined the board of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation.

His future career in the theatre was not obvious from the outset. Born in Basel in 1911, he initially turned towards commerce, working as a clerk at the Arlesheim district court. He cultivated his love of theatre in Eva Bernoulli's amateur theatre group in Basel and led a life of stability, starting a family in the 1930s. Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, he began to write theatre reviews part-time, which eventually led to a management position at the Stadttheater Basel in 1945. There he met his future second wife Elsbeth Gmür. She was a dancer in the ensemble, later also at the Stadttheater Bern and, like him, devoted to the theatre. Elsbeth Gmür died in 2017, shortly before her eldest son Michael Oberer, who also contributed to shaping the history of theatre in Switzerland as a writer and director.

## The Enduring Relevance of Classical Theatre

Walter Oberer's beginnings in Basel and the intense formative years in Zurich coincided with a period of renewal and innovation in German-language theatre, marked by new forms of dramatization and new readings of the bourgeois canon. Ultimately, this meant reinterpreting the relationship between past and present. Oberer firmly advocated the importance of showing the 'congruence between a play's content and the present day'; productions should reveal the contemporary relevance of classical material. This outspoken position facilitated his move to Schauspielhaus Zurich, then renowned for the pioneering work of Oskar Wälterlin and Kurt Hirschfeld. In retrospect, Oberer described his Zurich years as 'the most interesting and also the most exciting' of his theatrical life.

Many of the ideas and approaches that distinguished his later career as artistic director originated during this time. Among these was his skill in expanding the canon of small-town multi-purpose theatres: he brought in young actors, singers and dancers, laced his repertoire with both rediscoveries and new material and ensured a consistently high artistic standard.

In Bern he drastically reduced the number of premieres—from 28 to 18—to allow more rehearsal time for each play. His approach to directing was not characterised by 'drill and discipline', but by 'encouragement' and 'letting things develop'. Oberer fostered the humanism of theatre despite the pressure to perform and the strictly hierarchical structures. He strove for 'evolving, cultivated harmony' or, to use another of his numerous bon mots: 'Even ruling can involve serving.' He was aware of the fragility of the theatre and espoused farsightedness in both thought

and action: 'Theatre is never the achievement of an individual, but always the result of all forces striving for artistic truth.'

Oberer caused an uproar right at the beginning of his tenure in Bern. His opinion of the infrastructure? 'Medieval to perfection' and not only with regard to the lighting technology; there was no choir hall, no ballet hall, no rehearsal stage, no dramaturgical office, no serviceable workshops. The artistic staff? 'Barely mediocre.' He summarily dismissed almost the entire artistic staff. This radical change, no doubt painful in many cases, ultimately enabled the theatre to play in a higher league and—as far as opera was concerned—to garner international recognition. The Bernese electorate re-affirmed the course he had taken by approving a loan for the renovation of the theatre from 1966 to 1970.

## The Theatre as Enlightenment Machine

By the 1960s, the era of actor-centred psychological, realistic theatre in the German-speaking world had definitely given way to political and documentary forms which made a tentative appearance in Bern as well. Oberer knew that the opening play of his first season in Bern had to be a sensation. He chose *Hamlet*, with a first-class cast and Harald Kreutzberg as choreographer. The stage set was based on modular pillars that were repositioned in full view of the audience. This break with theatrical illusion is now a matter of course; it was then a novelty in Bern.

However, Oberer's most important contribution to Swiss-German theatre is to be found less in advanced aesthetics than in his skilful design of the repertoire, his desire to rediscover forgotten material and a high standard of professionalism. He resisted shallow edification and reduced the number of operettas and musicals, which were still widespread at the time, to a minimum—not least for the benefit of dance, which could henceforth invest resources in its own choreographies. The ensemble under the direction of Wigman-student Anna Menge comprised an incredible twenty members, which is inconceivable today.

In the 1970s, Oberer also initiated collaboration with the lively small theatre scene in Bern, especially with the Rampe and the Ateliertheater (today Theater an der Effingerstrasse), with which he remained associated as a director after his retirement. Although he also wrote numerous plays and radio plays, opera was always his greatest love. His delight in digging up old baroque operas was almost legendary. As a great Mozart fan, he reintroduced the composer's early works into the repertoire of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the pastoral opera *Ascanio in Alba* as a Swiss premiere (1961) and the oratorio *Betulia liberata* (1963). His scenic

staging of religious oratorios, a novelty in Switzerland, also attracted music lovers from further afield.

Oberer was a skilful artistic director who saw his work as an ‘artistic service in return for the granting of subsidies’ and demanded that cultural policy ensure the greatest possible freedom for artistic production. In his opinion, the democratic value of the theatre as a critical place of discourse was vastly underestimated. Where, if not in the protected space of theatre, can humanity, responsibility, reflection and discussion be meaningfully explored in an uncertain world? As a theatre manager and director he always addressed the audience as citizens in need of enlightenment: ‘I wanted to make people [...] feel that their questions and longings, their worries and fears are ours too.’ Instilling in the audience a sense of ‘alarmed reason’ was still a concern for him at the age of almost 90, as his memoirs show. However, he also knew that the theatre of the 21<sup>st</sup> century could no longer embody the ‘role of the friendly pastor for insecure citizens.’ For him theatre had to fulfil its political function and offer resistance: resistance against forgetting history and against the loss of humanity.

Towards the end of his life Walter Oberer clearly felt deeply concerned about the future. His appeal to the sensitive and alert artists of tomorrow to show a critical commitment in their visions of the world has lost none of its relevance.

Selection of projects funded during Walter Oberer’s tenure on the foundation board:

- 15 September 1976, Application no. 59: Stadttheater Bern, contribution to the production of Henry Purcell’s opera *King Arthur*, CHF 50 000
- 9 June 1977, Application no. 66: Swiss Association for Theatre Research, Bern, inventory of Schweizer Theatersammlung, CHF 40 000
- 22 February 1978, Application no. 79: contribution to the Bern Conservatory, CHF 60 000
- 22 August 1978, Application no. 96: Fondation en faveur de l’Art Choréographique, Lausanne, CHF 45 000
- 22 August 1978, Application no. 101: Internationales Opern-Studio Zürich, CHF 50 000

<sup>1</sup> German Original:

*So findet sich das Neue auch zum Alten als ein verbrüderter kritisch Paar, und aus solch’ gegenseitigem Verhalten wird Antwort, was einst Frage war.*

- <sup>2</sup> Actor Hans-Joachim Frick (1996) in: Christian Hoffmann (ed.), *Fixpunkte. Walter Oberer zum 85. Geburtstag* (p. 23). Bern: All other quotations are taken from Walter Oberer’s memoirs (2001). «Vorhang zu! Erinnerungen eines alten Mannes, der einst mit dabei war», in: *Schriften der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Theaterkultur*, Vol. 22. Basel: Editions Theaterkultur.

Konrad Tobler



## Personal Obsessions and Shifting Boundaries: Harald Szeemann alias SzAmen alias D. Lara H. Namesz

When Harald Szeemann was elected to the board of the Johnson Foundation in 1979, the then 46-year-old was already an internationally renowned figure in the world of art and exhibitions.

In 1983 a letter was addressed to the Belgian painter James Ensor, who had died long before. It was signed by a lady named D. Lara H. Namesz. The lady was in fact a gentleman, Harald Szeemann, for the name is an anagram: read backwards, it reveals the name of the author. Szeemann loved word games, loved language. In 1979 he signed his text ‘Stoss + Eintracht (Gebet). Standesehre des Konservators für die 80er Jahre im Hinblick auf das Jahr 2000’ using a phonetic spelling of the English pronunciation of his name, ‘SzAmen’—which is also a play on the words ‘semen’ and ‘amen’ in German.

Szeemann also loved role play, transformations and staging. He already demonstrated this in the 1950s when as a student of art history he produced a ‘one-man theatre’, for which he wrote, directed and played the main role(s) himself. This event in a small theatre in Bern—prefiguring what would later be called a happening or performance art—was even featured with photographs in the then popular Swiss magazine *Sie & Er*. Szeemann was equally media-savvy in later years, for example at the time of *documenta 5* (1972). His self-presentation did not shy away from exaggeration—in his case, best understood as a form of creative transgression with a touch of pathos. I remember an interview I did with Szeemann in 1993 on the occasion of the major Beuys exhibition at Kunsthhaus Zurich:

he compared Joseph Beuys to Christ and vehemently rejected the suggestion that this might be a bit exaggerated.

Beuys was certainly an important figure in Szeemann's life. The ban on his planned first-ever Beuys retrospective in 1969 actually led to Szeemann's indignant resignation as director of the Kunsthalle Bern. This institution had gradually established an international profile in the decades before Szeemann was appointed as director in 1961. In the eight years of his tenure, he introduced a completely new, open-ended concept of art, expanding it to include such forms as votive images or the art of the mentally ill and going beyond the conventional confines of material, medium, aesthetics and international orientation. Szeemann invented new exhibition formats, explored a new form of cooperation between artists and institution, and consistently shifted boundaries. His 1969 exhibition, the full title of which encapsulates Szeemann's agenda, has gone down as a defining moment in art history: *Live in your head: When Attitudes become Form—Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information*.

After his time in Bern, Szeemann founded the 'Agentur für geistige Gastarbeit' ('Agency for Intellectual Migrant Labour') and worked as a freelance curator. His concepts are most succinctly expressed in two publications: *Museum of Obsessions* and *Individual Mythologies*. In 1972, for *documenta 5* in Kassel, he was able to implement his ideas with practically no constraints (as attested by hundreds of pages filed away in an orange folder). One of the concepts he coined for *documenta* was *Individual Mythologies*, which he describes as follows: The definition of an individual mythology as 'a mental space in which an individual makes those signs and signals that for him constitute the world' (Dieter Bachmann) provides the individual with a beneficial freedom of movement that leaves the engine of creativity undefined and leads to a beneficial relativization of the concept of art because it reintroduces the concept of the eccentric and eccentricity. After all, eccentrics and thinkers are the only people who can escape the great conditioning of the former. The signs and signals they make and the intensity with which they imbue them produce for us the density of the worlds they intend.<sup>1</sup>

The Szeemann myth had clearly been launched, not least by the man himself with his obsessiveness, his vision and his 'tendency towards the Gesamtkunstwerk'. Personal encounters with Szeemann would reinforce this image while conversely also revealing a person who still took pleasure in debate, who delighted in conversation and exuberant celebration. The text 'Identity Kit' from 1980 reads like a self-portrait of the *Gesamtkunstwerker*: I am a so-called wild thinker who delights in the

mythical and utopian content of the products of the human spirit and the fruits of human activity. I am unscientific, speculative, anarchic (not terroristic); I love the obsessive because the only art that will ever be amenable to objective evaluation is single-mindedly subjective art. For me, institutions—precisely because of their privileged position of not having to act in line with any explicitly utilitarian purpose—are instruments for altering or at least ameliorating users' ideas about ownership.<sup>2</sup>

This attitude is apparent in the projects he supported while serving on the board of the Johnson Foundation from 1979 to 1993. For example Adolf Wölfli: Szeemann had exhibited the artist's work at Kunsthalle Bern, wrote about him in the important text 'No Catastrophe Without an Idyll; No Idyll Without a Catastrophe' in 1976, and also featured him prominently in the 1983 exhibition *Tendency towards the Gesamtkunstwerk. European Utopias since 1800*. In his 1991 exhibition *Visionary Switzerland* Szeemann focussed his notion of the 'tendency towards the Gesamtkunstwerk' on Swiss practitioners, again paying tribute to Wölfli, but also to Emma Kunz, Richard Paul Lohse, Henri Dunant, Annemarie von Matt and Karl Bickel, among others.

Despite his independence, the 'intellectual migrant labourer' repeatedly associated with institutions, including a long period at the Kunsthaus Zurich. Szeemann reasoned: 'For me, the museum is a place for experimenting with new connections, a place for conserving and conveying the fragile creations of individuals. For me, the collection is part of our collective memory and should therefore always be consulted for its utopian content.'<sup>3</sup> The list of his mostly large-scale exhibitions reads like a summary of his creative agenda, even in this small selection from about 200 exhibitions:

1975: *Bachelor Machines*

1978: *Monte Verità: The Breasts of Truth*

1983: *Tendency towards the Gesamtkunstwerk: European Utopias since 1800*

1991: *Visionary Switzerland*

1995: *A Hundred Years of Cinema*

1999: *The End of the World and the Principle of Hope*

2002: *Money and Value: The Last Taboo*

Despite the anarchy of his approach, Szeemann staged his exhibitions meticulously and carefully, thoughtfully and vividly. And though he loved rampant ideas, he tightly organised his immense archive in his house in Tegna, Ticino, where the tireless traveller had lived since the 1970s. After Szeemann's death in 2005, the Swiss Confederation failed to secure this unique cultural and artistic legacy for Switzerland. Szeemann's archive and library are now housed at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.

- <sup>1</sup> Harald Szeemann, 'The Agentur für geistige Gastarbeit in the Service of the Vision for a Museum of Obsessions' in *Harald Szeemann. Selected Writings*, edited by Doris Chon, Glenn Phillips and Pietro Rigolo, trans. Jonthan Blower and Elizabeth Tucker, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2018, p. 88
- <sup>2</sup> Harald Szeemann, 'Identity Kit', in *Selected Writings*, p. 13.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.

A selection of projects supported by the Johnson Foundation during Harald Szeemann's tenure on the board from 1979 to 1993:

- 6. November 1979, Grant No. 134: Centre d'art contemporain Geneva, contribution to the annual budget for the year 1980, CHF 40 000
  - also 4. November 1980, Grant No. 180, CHF 60 000
  - 6. Grant No. 135: Adolf Wölfli-Stiftung Bern, for the transcription of Wölfli's writings, CHF 60 000
  - 29. Grant No. 258: Beitrag zur Adolf Wölfli-Publikation *Von der Wiege bis zum Graab*, CHF 20 000
  - 27./28. October 1983, Grant No. 326: Ente Turistico Ascona, restoration of the mural by Elisar von Kupffer (Monte Verità), CHF 55 000
  - 5. March 1985, Grant No. 459: Parkett, 1. Edition, CHF 24 000
  - 4. November 1986, Grant No. 602: Photostiftung Zürich, contribution for the acquisition of 50 photographs by Alberto Giacometti, CHF 30 000
  - 5. July 1988, Grant No. 796: Kunsthalle Bern, exhibition Sol LeWitt *Walldrawings*, CHF 30 000
  - 4. July 1989, Grant No. 886: Kunstmuseum Bern, exhibition Lee Krasner / Jackson Pollock, CHF 40 000
  - 2. July 1991, Grant No. 1095: Kunsthaus Zürich, models for the exhibition *Visionary Switzerland*, CHF 150 000
- Regular contributions: Film projects and Scuola Teatro Dimitri Verscio

## Funding Practices in the Sector of Medical Research since 1970

For decades, the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation's support for medical research covered a broad spectrum, primarily geared towards funding individual university research projects and doctoral scholarships in Switzerland and the UK. Since 2013, funding has focused on strategic partnerships. In the future, the foundation will merge the sectors 'Medical Research' and 'Conflict and Violence'.

The first funding application in the field of medical research was approved at the board meeting of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation on 30 March 1971; it was submitted by Dame Sheila Sherlock, a professor of medicine at the Royal Free Hospital in London. The contribution, described as an 'institutional grant', amounted to CHF 150 000, a considerable sum which would correspond to approximately CHF 450 000 today. This first award thus went to England and not to Switzerland, and it supported the research of a woman, which was exceptional at the time. At the age of 39, Sherlock became the first female professor of medicine in the UK and was made a Dame and Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1978. She was one of the world's leading figures in the field of liver disease, then a new specialisation in internal medicine. This extraordinary start to the funding practice in the field of medicine is also related to the individual research interests of the physicians who succeeded each other on the foundation board in its first decade, Alexander von Muralt and above all Kenneth E. F. Hobbs.

## Trustees with a connection to clinical research

Alexander von Muralt (1903–1990), Professor of Physiology at the University of Bern, was the first representative on the board for the sector of ‘Scientific Research’, which is one of the four funding areas listed in the foundation charter.

His tenure as trustee lasted from 1969 to 1976. Muralt was an internationally renowned muscle researcher and in 1953 the visionary founder of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore no coincidence that in the first decade of the foundation’s history, half of the approved applications came from medical research<sup>2</sup> and that the allocation of funds was based on the model of the Swiss National Science Foundation, with a focus on basic research, the promotion of young scientists and the facilitation of semesters abroad for researchers.

In 1974 the Johnson Foundation invited Professor Kenneth E. F. Hobbs to submit a formal application for the expansion of the surgical department at London’s Royal Free Hospital; in 1976 he was elected to the foundation board as the successor to Alexander von Muralt. Now an emeritus professor, Hobbs is among the most important surgeons in Britain. As a young researcher at the University of Bristol in the 1960s, he started a research programme with liver transplants in pigs. His pioneering research led to significant findings in the once so challenging and problematic field of liver surgery. Hobbs worked for twenty-five years as a professor at the Royal Free Hospital in London. It was there that he began his collaboration with Dame Sherlock, the abovementioned ‘Queen of Liver Medicine’, with whom Hobbs formed a successful international team of experts. When Hobbs started working as an endowed professor of surgery at the Royal Free Hospital, the Johnson Foundation granted him the sum of CHF 250 000 to set up a new surgical department, enabling him to employ a research assistant and acquire technical equipment.

In the following years, liver diseases and transplantation medicine remained among the main areas of research supported by the foundation; in 1988, a three-year ‘Stanley Thomas Johnson Research Fellowship’ programme at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine was funded with an amount of CHF 161 994. That same year, the foundation also supported liver research at the Inselspital Bern with a grant of CHF 73 500<sup>3</sup> to Professor Blumgart, who had completed his training in Sheffield in the UK and had distinguished himself as a liver specialist. The early focus on funding liver research may also be related to the fact that Stanley Thomas Johnson, after whom the foundation is named, died of a liver disease in 1967.

There were also many other areas of funding, for example the Inselspital Bern received CHF 250 000 in 1988 for a project in the field of haemophilia. Such large awards were the exception; the majority of contributions ranged between CHF 50 000 and CHF 100 000, with the spectrum ranging from cancer therapy research to AIDS research and psychiatry. For many decades, the foundation supported mainly doctoral fellowships and research projects at universities in London and Switzerland. Providing targeted grassroots funding for individual emerging researchers meant promoting early-stage research to great effect and with a relatively small investment.

Kenneth E. F. Hobbs retired in 2004 after 30 years of service to the foundation. He was succeeded by Professor Charles Wolfe, who trained at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine. Wolfe is an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), Director of Research and Development at Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospitals and Professor of Public Health at King’s College London. In 2018, the Queen’s Honours List recognised his services to stroke research<sup>4</sup> and public health medicine. With the appointment of Charles Wolfe, ‘Stroke Research’ and ‘Public Health Medicine’ were integrated into the Johnson Foundation’s funding practice.

In 2004, for example, the foundation allocated CHF 345 000 to a three-year research project at King’s College on involving stroke patients and their families in clinical research projects and services.<sup>5</sup> In 2008, CHF 207 000 was allocated to a two-year research programme at King’s College on post-stroke care and prevention of subsequent strokes. Another focus of Hobbs’ research was ‘maternity care and maternal morbidity’, including several projects related to the importance of psychological care for pregnant women.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the foundation repeatedly funded salaries for scholarship recipients from the Third World, which suggests a meaningful correlation with the foundation’s other area of commitment, ‘development aid’. Connections between these two sectors run like a thread through the Johnson Foundation’s funding history. The Swiss Tropical Institute, in particular, has regularly received substantial funding, for example CHF 271 000 in 2009 for a three-year project to detect tuberculosis epidemics in Papua New Guinea.<sup>7</sup> In 1991, the Swiss Tropical Institute received another grant to study the effects of an improved water supply on the health of the population.<sup>8</sup> Projects in the field of malaria research were also supported several times at universities in London.<sup>9</sup>

There are no detailed minutes in the archives of the Johnson Foundation; a scientific advisory board with external experts to assess the applications and make recommendations to the board did not exist, and the reports commissioned from external experts are long gone. Nevertheless, the catalogue of the relatively broad

spectrum of funded projects reads like a history of medicine in recent decades, charting changing disease patterns and treatment methods—from transplant surgery, which celebrated its first successes in the 1970s, to HIV research after the discovery of the virus in 1983, to ongoing advances in cancer therapies or the treatment of strokes. (See also the table below on the different support sectors).

Funding Applications for research	Number	% Applications in	Amount awarded (CHF)	% Amount awarded
Non-medical basic research, non-clinical	2	0.8 %	CHF 249 530	0.9 %
Medical basic research, translational research <sup>10, 11</sup>	81	31 %	CHF 7 831 914	27 %
Clinical research projects <sup>12</sup>	171	66 %	CHF 20 706 118	71 %
Veterinary medicine	5	1.9 %	CHF 369 065	1.3 %
	259	100 %	CHF 29 156 627	100 %
“Third World”	15	5.8 %	CHF 2 515 530	8.6 %
Research in the field of liver disease including liver-transplants	14	5.4 %	CHF 1 126 453	3.9 %
Research in transplantation medicine	6	2.3 %	CHF 836 724	2.9 %
Infectious diseases including HIV	37	14 %	CHF 2 990 722	10 %
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Basel	6	2.3 %	CHF 1 345 240	4.6 %

## New Strategic Partnerships

The direct selection of individual applications from England and Switzerland came to an end in 2013 following the resignation of Charles Wolfe and a change in strategy.<sup>13</sup> The Johnson Foundation wished to sharpen the focus of its funding practice and cooperate with an external partner. As part of this new strategy, the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS) was awarded CHF 600 000 per year from 2014 to 2018 for a pilot project in palliative care research. The project was conceived as a response to the general increase in life expectancy and the large number of people suffering from incurable chronic illness in old age. Until recently, palliative care was virtually non-existent as an academic discipline in Switzerland. With the support of the Johnson Foundation together with the Gottfried and Julia Bangerter-Rhyner Foundation, the SAMS was able to launch a successful funding programme to establish this underrepresented new discipline in the Swiss research landscape in the medium term.

From 2019 to 2022, the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation will support two projects of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (STPH). The project ‘Digital System for Better Health Management of Refugees’ (SysRef) aims to improve the quality of health care for refugees and displaced persons in Chad and other places with similar circumstances. The project explores measures for the development and implementation of digital tools to improve health management. These include improving the diagnosis and treatment of infections and other health problems, registration of vaccinations, monitoring of vaccination status, and collection and assessment of epidemiological data.

The second project, NIIDS, is developing a novel diagnostic and monitoring system for infectious diseases in refugee camps. The project aims to develop a comprehensive evidence platform to improve diagnosis and treatment interventions; new diagnostic procedures will be established in refugee camps and adjacent hospitals, and local medical staff will be trained; an integrated diagnostic system with a comprehensive database of regionally relevant diseases will be used to monitor diseases (and outbreaks) in refugee camps. This data is used for patient management with new digital tools and for the targeted development of low-cost rapid diagnostic tests that can be used in the field.

The selection processes in the funding area of ‘Medical Research’ have changed over the decades, but in terms of content, the foundation seems to have come full circle. Following a long exploratory process, the innovative projects planned in the coming years reconnect with the foundation’s past commitments in the field of



medicine in conflict regions. This is in accordance with the intended use of the foundation's assets for scientific research as defined in the will of June Johnson: 'The promotion of scientific research, especially in the fields of medical science and generally in all activity tending to promote the standard of living of deserving countries.'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 45–48.

<sup>2</sup> The distribution of funds between the four support sectors has become more balanced over the years; the total share of grants now awarded to projects in Medical Research amounts to about 25%.

<sup>3</sup> See: No. 796, 1988: The University of Bern, Clinic for Visceral and Transplantation Surgery, Inselspital, Bern, Prof. L. H. Blumgart. Research project on: Liver Blood Flow in Relation to Liver Pathology—Surgical Relevance, CHF 73 500; No. 770, 1988: Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine, Academic Department of Surgery, London, Prof. K. E. F. Hobbs, Stanley Thomas Johnson Research fellowships at the Academic Department of Surgery at the Royal Free Hospital, London, over 3 years, CHF 161 994.

<sup>4</sup> See: No. 2875, 2004: King's College London, Guy's, King's and St. Thomas' School: Enhancing patient / family participation in research and clinical service development; evaluating the case of stroke, 3 years.

<sup>5</sup> King's College, London. Division of Health and Social Care Research. Dr. Peter U. Heuschmann: Long Term patterns of risk transition in pathology and aetiology after first stroke and its implications for secondary prevention and clinical management. The South London Stroke register.

<sup>6</sup> See: No. 3191, 2006: Imperial College, London, Institution of Reproduction: A Study to evaluate cognitive analytic therapy in the treatment of anxiety and depression, and reduction of cortisol in stressed pregnant women, CHF 86 400, 2 years.

<sup>7</sup> See: No. 3832, 2009: Molecular Epidemiology of Tuberculosis: Active Case Detection in Sentinel Sites Across Papua Neu Guinea.

<sup>8</sup> See: No. 1110, 1991: Swiss Tropical Institute, Basle, Department of Public Health and Epidemiology, Mr. Dr. Mäusezahl, research project: Measuring health impact of improved water supplies and sanitation in Zimbabwe, 7 . July 1991, CHF 70 000.

<sup>9</sup> See: No. 3349, 2006: King's College, London, School of Medicine, Guy, King's and St. Thomas' Hospitals Department for Immunology: Rapid Phospholipid generation by invading malaria parasites and its pathological consequences, CHF 134 75 , 2 years; No. 1108, 2011: Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, London, Biology Department, Dr G. A. Butcher, research project: An in Vivo Model for studying human malaria using immunodeficient (Scid) mice, CHF 34 139.

<sup>10</sup> Progress in scientific research depends on insights into fundamental processes in the natural world. This knowledge is generated by basic research, which is therefore the prerequisite for applied research and technical innovation.

<sup>11</sup> Translational medicine deals with the transition of new findings from product research and basic research to clinical application.

<sup>12</sup> Clinical research refers to all research conducted on human beings (healthy or sick people). Its most important instrument is clinical trials.

<sup>13</sup> See: No. 4461: University College London: The effects of prenatal and postnatal maternal depression on infants' bio-behavioural development, CHF 123 281. No. 4462: Breakthrough Breast Cancer.

Weston House: The UKCRN Triple negative Trial. A randomized phase III trial. CHF 34 541.

No. 4507: EPFL: An innovative and affordable composite lower limb prosthesis, CHF 165 000.

No. 4508: Kantonsspital St. Gallen: Clinical evaluation of a polyvalent vaccine against Salmonella enterica in a phase I / II study, CHF 165 000.

Beate Engel

## Geriatric Medicine is the Medicine of the Future

From 2014 to 2018, the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, jointly with the Gottfried and Julia Bangarter-Rhyner Foundation, supported a programme by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS) to expand research in palliative care in Switzerland. As Dr Gian Domenico Borasio, Professor of Palliative Medicine at the University of Lausanne, points out, foundations can exert great influence by providing groundbreaking impetus for health policy developments.—An interview.

*Beate Engel: There are already many specialist fields in medicine, such as cancer research or geriatrics. Why have you advocated to establish palliative medicine as a separate discipline in research, nursing and teaching?*

Gian Domenico Borasio: I can give a historical answer to that.

For thousands of years, medicine did almost nothing but palliative care, because there wasn't much people could do beyond caring for the sick by using herbal remedies to relieve symptoms. The past 100 years have seen rapid development in high-tech medicine, while acknowledgement of the fact that all human beings must one day die has receded into the background. As a reaction to this development there is now an increasing awareness that people in the last phase of their lives have very particular needs, and that it isn't just about the patients but also about their families.

Palliative care is no longer about extending life but about quality of life.

*How does one achieve quality of life in the phase of a terminal illness?*

As the WHO puts it in their definition of palliative care: ‘through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other physical, psychosocial and spiritual problems.’ The needs, cares and worries at the end of life are very complex and require further research, but we already have access to a wide range of interventions to improve and sustain the quality of life of patients and their families. In palliative care, as elsewhere, prevention is the best medicine. It isn’t about the quality of life in the final 24 hours, but the support offered for the final 24 months. Ninety percent of people die of chronic illnesses, so the question of quality of life arises very early in the process. Again and again, important conversations are put off, even when we know that the patient may soon be unable to make decisions, as in the case of a brain tumour or dementia. We must make maximum use of this short window of time.

## Palliative Care as an Antidote to Overtreatment

*What means do patients have of exercising their autonomy?*

Living wills or treatment plans today mainly serve to prevent overtreatment. The media and the trend towards privatising medicine tend to imply that medicine can cure anything. The question remains, however, whether everything makes sense just because it is possible. Scientific studies have shown that artificial nutrition for dying dementia patients does not extend life but rather increases the risk of infection.

Cancer patients are often administered expensive chemotherapies with devastating side effects, although their life expectancy is only minimally extended—this happens especially with private patients. It is also the task of palliative research and teaching to put a finger on this wound in the health system.

*How is the holistic approach of palliative care applied in your team and in the everyday routine of the hospital?*

We must begin at the root and improve the training of medical students and doctors, especially as there are many things that matter more to most people than the moment of death or even the relief of physical symptoms. At our hospital, key professionals from the fields of nursing, medicine, pastoral care, psychology and social care work together. There is an ambulatory as well as a home care team, a palliative liaison service on other stations as well as a dedicated palliative station. Here at the hospital in Lausanne, all new assistant doctors undertake a mandatory training course that teaches the basics of treating geriatric, psychogeriatric and palliative patients. Since 2013, Lausanne has offered the innovative student course ‘Living in the face of death’, in which both medical and theology students participate and even visit patients together.

*How are patients referred to you and how do you decide the right moment for transition into palliative care?*

We are usually asked by our colleagues to join the treatment team in an advisory role. Here in Lausanne there are also beds scattered throughout the hospital for which the individual clinics pass the chief medical responsibility on to us. Cancer patients are one group that often requires palliative care, but only 25% of our patients die of cancer.

Others are lung or heart patients, neurological and geriatric patients. The latter will clearly be the largest and most important group to require palliative care in the future.

*You have contributed significantly to academic teaching and research in the field of palliative care in Switzerland. How would you assess the development of the field in Switzerland?*

Geriatric medicine is the medicine of the future. A majority of the patients we see today are already very old, chronically ill and afflicted with several diseases; many suffer from dementia. This requires specific research, which must be incorporated into medical training. And it requires dedicated professorships in order to foster recognition within the community of physicians. The situation in Switzerland has improved in recent years. When I came to Lausanne in 2011, I was the only professor for palliative medicine in Switzerland. Since then, a nationwide research programme has been established, a further professorship for palliative care has been introduced at the University of Bern and only recently the first professorship world-wide for geriatric palliative care was announced in Lausanne. In the faculty at Lausanne, a new interdisciplinary institute for 'Humanities and Medicine' is also planned.

## Foundations as Catalysts

*What are the current research priorities in palliative care?*

Since medicine today can largely make physical symptoms such as pain and breathing difficulties bearable, we are not very active in pharmaceutical research. Inter-professional research on the psychosocial and spiritual-existential components of quality of life and their interactions are central for us. Important themes include questions of self-determination and proactive, long-term health planning.

Challenging ethical questions must be resolved, especially with dementia patients. Psychosocial determinants of well-being such as positive psychology at the end of life are increasingly being explored at our institution. After all, we not only experience patients who are in despair, but also those who are grateful and happy in very similar clinical circumstances. So, among other things, we are investigating how we can support and promote the feeling of gratitude at the end of life.

*What is the role of foundations in the funding of palliative medical care?*

Foundations played an extremely important role in establishing palliative care in Switzerland. Swiss professorships in the field were all initially endowed by foundations. New approaches such as end of life positive psychology would probably fail on their first application for public funds from the Swiss National Science Foundation. But once early data has been obtained with the help of foundation grants, public funding models can then support further research. Palliative care responds to a great need in society, but not necessarily to a need of the health industry. Therefore, foundations have a significant political role in this area, because they have different priorities and can spark innovative approaches.

Gian Domenico Borasio, b. 1962, was Chair of Palliative Medicine at the University of Munich from 2006–2011. Since March 2011 he is the first Swiss Chair of Palliative Medicine at the University of Lausanne and director of the palliative care department at the University Hospital of Lausanne. His book *Über das Sterben. Was wir wissen. Was wir tun können. Wie wir uns darauf einstellen (On dying. What we know. What we can do. How we prepare.)* was republished in 2014 as a Swiss edition at dtv, which also published his new book *Selbstbestimmt Sterben (Self-determined Dying)* the same year.

*‘In my work the mixing of disciplines has proved fruitful time and again. The artists-in-labs residency is therefore a wonderful opportunity that will open new doors and give me exciting new insights. What visual and material qualities can I find in the feeling of pain, and how can I communicate these in a tangible way?’*

Johannes Willi, artist and participant  
in the artists-in-labs programme, Zurich

Since 2003, artists-in-labs has been facilitating transdisciplinary dialogue between the arts and the sciences by way of long-term residencies in scientific laboratories and research institutes. The research project ‘Das Unsichtbare erfahrbar machen—SchmerzpatientInnen und ihre Erzählungen’ (Experiencing the Invisible—The Stories of Patients in Pain) launched a competition for an artist to work with researchers at the Centre for Medical Humanities at the University of Zurich and doctors and patients at the Swiss Paraplegic Centre. The winning project by Johannes Willi on the topic of ‘Chronic Pain’ is funded by the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation.

Hrair Sarkissian

## The Last Scene (2016)

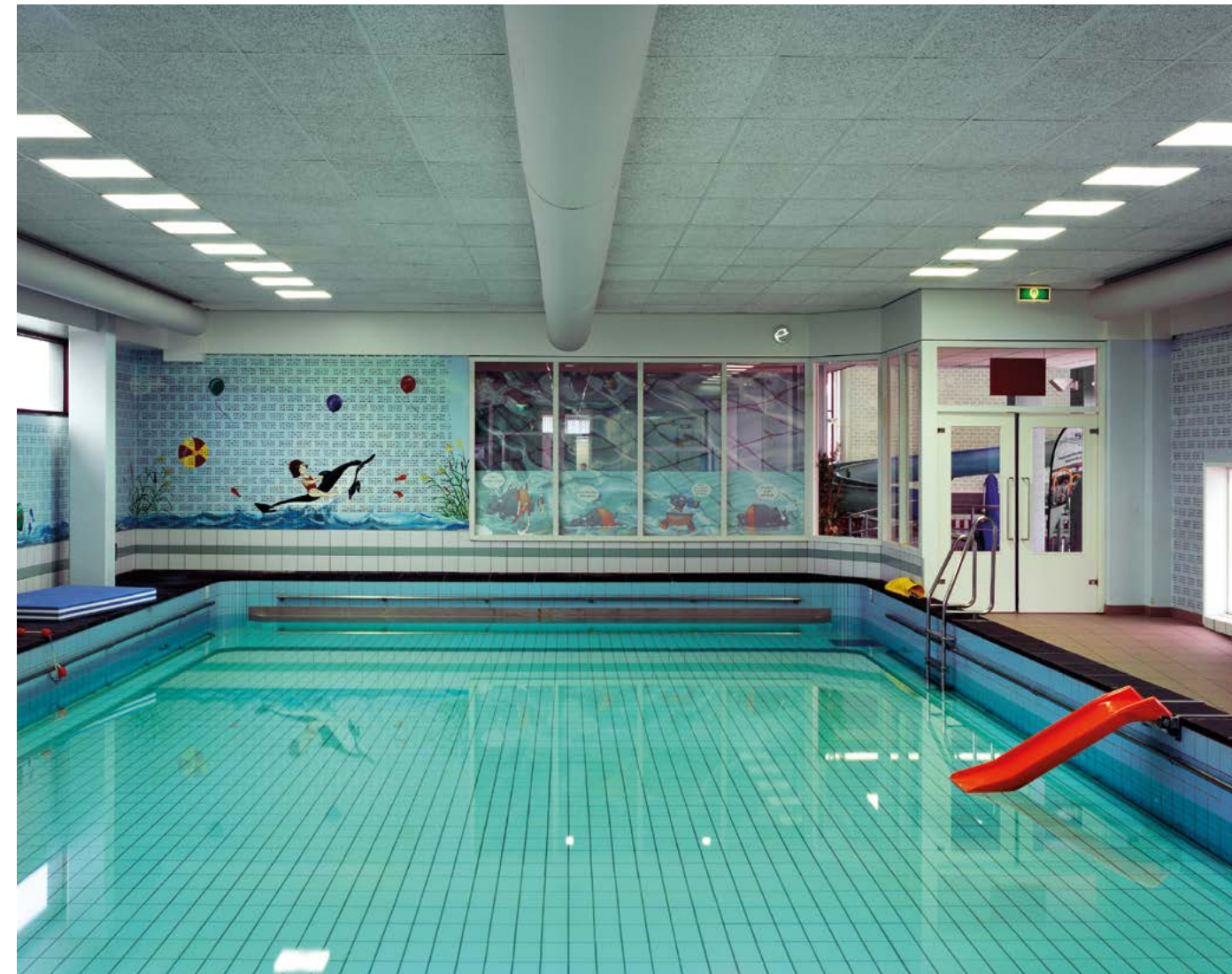
The *Last Scene* project reveals the power of a well-loved place to compress the remembrance of life into a telling scene that is at once melancholic and joyful.

‘I photographed 47 places in the Netherlands that I visited together with terminally ill patients who chose to go and see these places as their last wish. The simplicity of each landscape or scene heightens attention to an inner journey of remembering the past and envisioning a future that no longer includes you.’

In contemporary culture the notion of death and dying is often consciously ignored. Through this project, I would like to give the viewer a chance to grapple with the question of where we come from, and where we are going.

The images turn into mirrors: you try to imagine the person who looked at the scene for the last time, but at the same time the image encourages introspection. What would your own wish be?

I photographed the scenes at the date and time of the actual last visit.’



Hrair Sarkissian (born in Damascus, 1973) completed his basic training in his father's photography studio in Damascus. He attended the École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie in Arles, France, and completed a BFA in photography at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam.

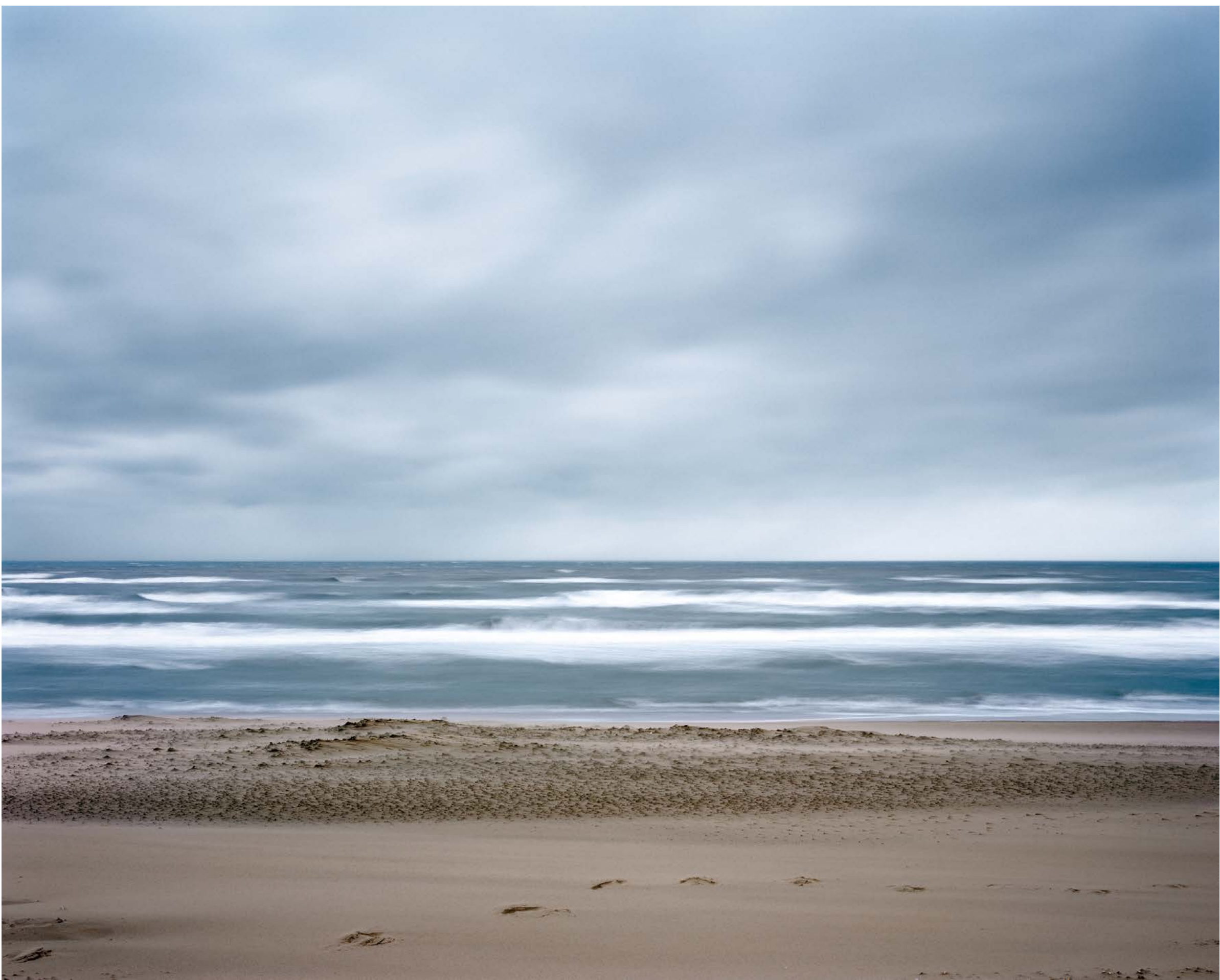




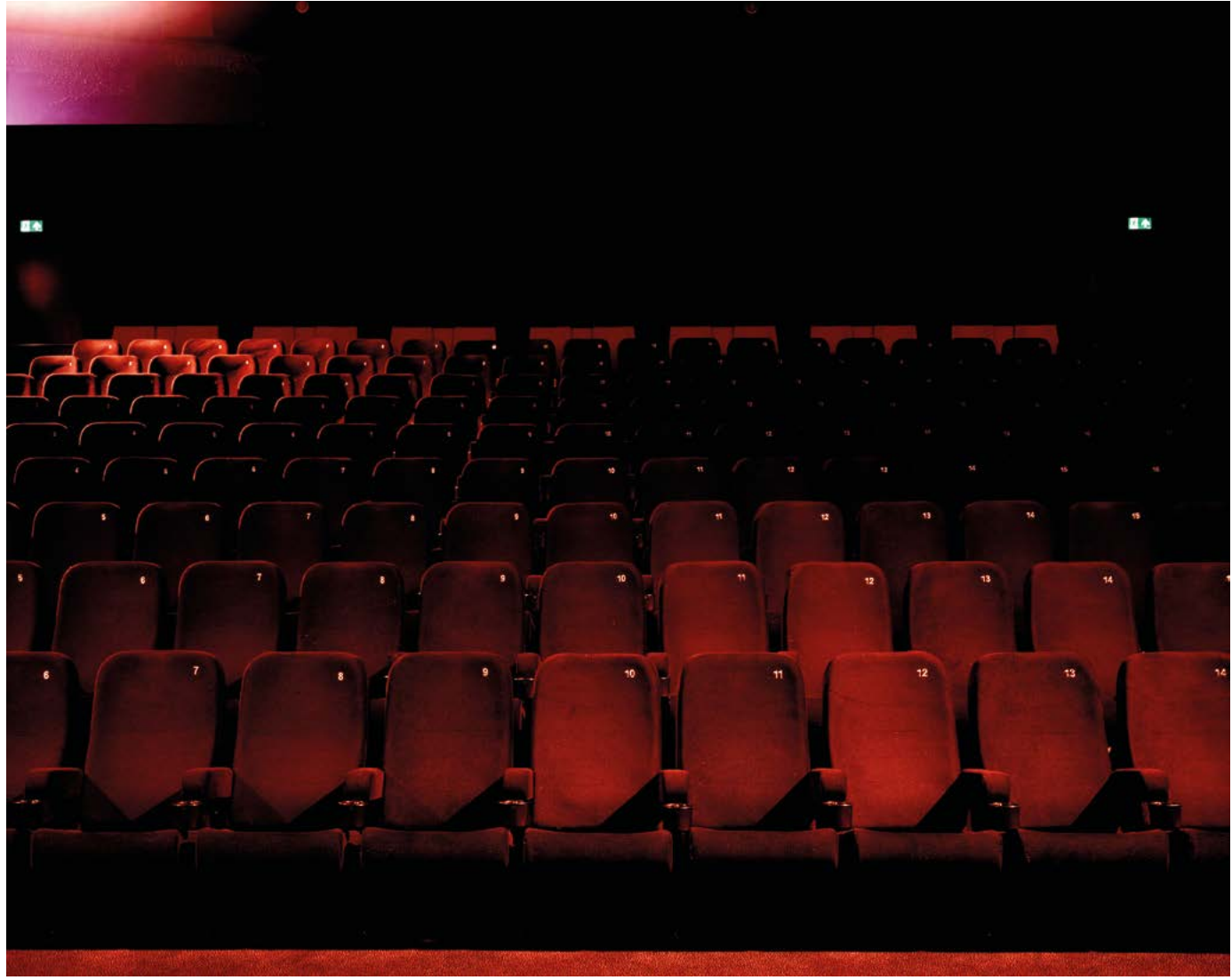




















21 september - 9 oktober  
*Welcome on board!*  
k kans op een ... oomvakanties!  
You're Welcome

JACK'S  
CASINO











## Fostered and Furthered: The Challenge of Independence and Creativity

What cultural projects does the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation support? A roundtable discussion with long-time foundation board members Ursula Frauchiger, Beat Wismer, Kaspar Zehnder and Beate Engel (Programme Manager Culture).

*To begin with, a seemingly simple question.*

*What projects spark your interest?*

**Kaspar Zehnder:** I prefer submissions that stimulate me and by association my own work, projects that surprise me. As a conductor, I'm constantly involved in developing projects and I like it if the pulse of the times becomes palpable in them. In other words, I want to sense that the project has a strong independent spirit and that the idea has not simply been forced to fit the brief of the foundation. So the real driving force has to be creativity.

**Beate Engel:** Many applications increasingly rely on specialists who know how to specify and formulate ideas. This often makes it difficult to sense what we will actually end up seeing on stage or in an exhibition. So for us, a written application is not the only aspect of assessing a project. Another aspect is our practical experience. We all do our best to keep close track of what's going on in our respective fields.

**Beat Wismer:** I expect applicants to at least be aware of the awards policy and the attitude of the foundations to which they apply for support. I tend to be bored by applications from routine

fundraisers who obviously only switched out one addressee for another. Sometimes they even annoy me—after all, they are asking us for something. In view of the English name and the anglophile orientation of the foundation, for example, exhibitions in which a certain proportion of British artists or themes are represented fit in principle with the orientation of our foundation. However, that is not the only consideration. Originality, the quality of artistic work and professional execution are always priorities. But we allow for risks: we know that even promising projects can fail.

*Can you be more specific about your observations regarding professional fundraisers?*

Wismer: When I look back at running an ‘off-space’ in the 1980s—the term hadn’t even been invented yet—we would have hardly dared to ask a foundation for money. We didn’t want to, because the ‘off’ part mattered to us. Today, however, nobody hesitates. They send applications to all the foundations; many of them primarily praise the efficiency of the institution on glossy paper. That’s just not interesting.

Ursula Frauchiger: I classify it as simple marketing, as uninspired whitewashing. I must confess that sometimes I miss the applications that came in the form of a love letter or a drawing. At the time I scoffed at them. This memory means: I want to feel the passion behind a project. This can manifest in a certain obsession with detail, but also in concrete topical questions or in the fact that a project is self-reflective. I expect a lot of knowledge and background. I need to sense that the artists are fully invested.

*Beat Wismer mentioned so-called ‘off-spaces’ or project spaces. Their audience is usually small. Do you take into account potential reach and public impact when assessing submissions?*

Frauchiger: We promote niche projects. I love niches.

But if we contribute 10 000 francs to a backyard project and the only people who come are those who happen to hang their washing in the backyard anyway, then that’s disproportionate. What we support must have a certain public reach. However the scale is different depending on the sector: An art exhibition can attract thousands, while a chamber concert is only performed once or twice and may only reach a few hundred people. With puppet theatre, ten performances, each attended by 80 people, are a sensation.

Engel: Of course we can also expect a certain impact from off-spaces. But attempts to measure that impact statistically can lead to absurdity. Looking back, you can find historically significant cultural events that were very limited in terms of audience. How many people were present at Meret Oppenheim’s now legendary *Frühlingsmahl* in 1959? How large—or perhaps relatively small—was the number of visitors to Harald Szeemann’s now almost mythical exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Bern? There are factors that cannot be quantified, especially when assessing the long-term impact of a project.

Wismer: ... and as a partner, our funding can contribute to increasing the impact of great ideas.

Engel: For example, we currently have a funding request from the Schlachthaus Theatre in Bern, which wants to launch a multi-year project to promote children’s theatre. One of the ideas is to go out into the neighbourhoods to reach children whose parents don’t take them to the theatre in Bern’s old town. In this case, how can anyone predict how many children will actually be reached and what the effect will be?

But it is an important pilot project to test and learn about new methods of approaching audiences.

Wismer: I would like to widen our perspective a little. I am also interested in applications that don't come from my or our specific field of culture. For example, there are projects in our funding area 'Victims of Conflict and Violence' that—as paradoxical as it may seem at first—are downright inspiring. In such cases, we know that the money does not simply flow into a large pot, such as that of the Red Cross. Rather, we can help people directly or perhaps encourage them to escape their terrible everyday lives. I think it's good and important that as trustees and experts we don't just stir the same old cultural soup. At our joint evaluation meetings, we are also confronted with completely different issues that force us to question our work and highlight current social priorities.

Engel: We have in fact supported some exciting projects in which culture is linked to reconstruction work in international conflict regions, such as the Artas cultural festival in Georgia with refugees from Abkhazia.

Zehnder: Of course there are existential priorities. But culture is an inalienable human right. Another project we recently discussed shows, for example, that musical activities can really make a difference within hostile gangs in the former apartheid state of South Africa. In these cases, culture not only reacts to social issues, but is involved in preventing them.

Frauchiger: To me, these are two separate areas. The approaches you mentioned use art as a form of psychosocial support. That is irrefutably valuable. But there is also the promotion of culture itself. And I don't want to compromise on that. In the case of trauma therapy through theatre or music, I do not primarily value the quality of the art, but rather the positive effect on the people who come into contact with this art.

Engel: One of our criteria for funding cultural projects is social relevance. This includes responses to burning issues such as migration. My conviction is that we shouldn't bow to fashion and, above all, that we should beware of our own ignorance with respect to possible solutions. If there are no Arabs in the audience at a play about refugees in the Arab world, that it is to say if those actually affected do not feel spoken to or can't identify, then something is wrong.

*Ultimately, this means that culture must not be instrumentalised. At best, however, it could be just the right dose of medicine.*

Zehnder: Or to put it differently, refugees shouldn't be instrumentalised to attract attention, to legitimize a project or to make it seem relevant.

Wismer: That's why I think the exchange of expertise between the specialists from our different funding areas is so important; they complement each other.

*Let's talk about more general changes in the cultural field. What other observations have you made in recent years?*

Frauchiger: In my field, I have the impression that independent theatre is becoming more political again. In terms of content, there is more meat on the bones these days than there was ten, fifteen years ago, when there was a lot of experimentation. There were many requests along the lines of wanting to explore the body. Others simply said: music plays a big role in our project. But now—and that goes for children's theatre as well, by the way—it's more about crucial social issues again, like the separation of parents, anxiety or aspects of migration. There is an appetite for engaging with serious and relevant topics. I like that.



Zehnder: I have noticed three tendencies. Firstly, projects in the field of music have become more modest—not in their professional ambitions, but in terms of scale. The big funding applications come from institutions that are already subsidised; they can make ambitious plans and then seek additional funding for special projects. Secondly, my feeling is that the field of contemporary music has become less interesting: the applications are similar and restricted to a relatively small field. The third observation: there is a new spiritual dimension that people are beginning to explore, an awareness of the transcendental power of music—of being able to say something without words and without images.

Wismer: In recent years, we have succeeded in linking the lively jazz scenes in Bern, Lucerne and Zurich with British jazz musicians. In 2016, for example, we co-sponsored a Swiss Jazz Week in London. In the field of visual arts, on the other hand, it has become more difficult. There are so many institutions that things are imploding a bit. There are a few big players who essentially deal with what is supposedly the best in terms of quality. In addition, the immense increase in the market value of art has made everything much more expensive. This is illustrated by the history of the foundation: decades ago, we funded a Klee exhibition in Edinburgh with 40 000 Swiss francs, which was a major event back then. That would be inconceivable today. Conversely, we have very active smaller institutions that set thematic priorities and appeal to a local or regional audience. Here we can still make wonderful things possible.

Engel: Then there are also completely new formats—for example the Zurich project ‘Artists in Labs’, where artists work alongside medical professionals for several years, for example in the field of pain research or communication with patients. It is generally productive to focus on funding such multi-year projects.

Frauchiger: We are not commercial sponsors. If something is successful, that’s gratifying, but then it doesn’t need our support it any more.

Zehnder: I can confirm this from my own experience. When I started out, funding determined whether a project would happen or not. It enabled me to stand on my own two feet and develop my work. That’s what this is about.

Participants in the conversation were:  
Beate Engel, Bern: Art historian MA, cultural manager MAA, programme manager for culture at the Johnson Foundation.

Ursula Frauchiger: Lic. phil. hist. German and Romance Languages and Literatures, lecturer at the Vocational Training College Bern, vice-president of the Johnson Foundation and internal expert for the theatre and dance departments.

Beat Wismer, Zurich: Art historian, director of the Aargauer Kunsthaus in Aarau from 1985 to 2007 and general director of the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf from 1 March 2007 to the end of September 2017.

Kaspar Zehnder, Bern: Artistic director of the Biel Solothurn Symphony Orchestra since the 2012 season and artistic director of the Murten Classics Summer Festival since 1999; trustee of the Johnson Foundation, internal expert for the field of classical music.

The interview took place on 7 November 2018 at the offices of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation at Schwanengasse 6 in Bern.

*‘I frequently question my relevance as an artist.  
The prize was a validation that my work resonates  
with people; it encouraged me to carry on.’*

Kiriakos Hadjiioannou, Laureate of the June Johnson  
Dance Prize 2017

→ See photo gallery, p. 99ff.

June Johnson Dance Prize

## Kiriakos Hadjiioannou and Association Antibodies: The *Higher States* trilogy

The June Johnson Dance Prize was launched in 2013 by the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation in collaboration with the Federal Office of Culture to promote young innovative creation in the field of dance. In 2017, the award went to Kiriakos Hadjiioannou and his Association Antibodies for the piece 'Hyperion' from the trilogy *Higher States*.

The award ceremony took place as part of the Swiss Dance Awards in October 2017 at the Equilibre Theatre in Fribourg. In his piece, Hadjiioannou leads the audience through Greek landscapes from romanticised Greek antiquity to the current economic crisis. In his trilogy *Higher States*, Kiriakos Hadjiioannou invents his own performative languages and shows how bodies can push their limits.

Beate Engel

Kiriakos Hadjiioannou studied at the National Conservatory of Contemporary Dance (KSOT) in Athens and completed a Master's programme in Choreography & Performance at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies at the University of Giessen.















*‘BewegGrund is a dance ensemble that promotes the coexistence of people with and without disabilities in the field of dance. Since 1998 the association has been advocating for the inclusion of dancers with disabilities by organising its own dance productions, a festival and education initiatives. Thanks to this long-term activism, BewegGrund has built up a national and international reputation and an extensive network. Dancing outside the norms is our passion.’*

BewegGrund, inclusive dance ensemble, Bern  
The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation supported BewegGrund through  
a three-year partnership from 2014–2016.



## Championing Change in and Through the Arts

The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation funds arts and culture projects in Britain as well as Switzerland. In recent years its support for British arts organisations has focused on projects that combine cultural activities with approaches committed to education and equal opportunity. The initiatives presented here show how a relatively modest investment can achieve a significant social and cultural impact.—An overview.

The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation is recognised by British arts organisations as a funder that understands the power of art to change lives. This is evident in its support for activities that increase opportunities for underserved and excluded groups to take part in the arts and to make their voices heard.

In the UK, venue-based arts organisations (including theatre and opera companies, orchestras, galleries and arts centres) continue to receive the lion's share of arts funding. However, this is coupled with the mandate to create opportunities for everyone to participate in the arts, whatever their circumstances. While assessing and measuring the impact of the arts remains a matter of contentious debate, it is now generally accepted that taking part in the arts can enhance individual resourcefulness and well-being, and so build social capital.

This belief is reflected in many of the policies, programmes and funding decisions of the UK's four national Arts Councils, which replaced the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1994. The original Arts Council was established in 1946 to promote and support the arts on behalf of the government. It was to be financed by government and distribute money on its behalf, but it would choose its own priorities and make its own decisions based on cultural criteria. This principle still prevails, but the concept of art and culture and their role in society has expanded significantly in the intervening years.

## Community Art

The idea that the arts are for everyone has its roots in the community arts movement, which flourished in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s. During the 1980s, artists from minority ethnic backgrounds and artists with disabilities, who had been largely ignored by the funding system, began to be heard. At the end of the 1990s, social inclusion became a high priority for the new Labour government and with the help of the National Lottery, funding increased in areas that had suffered from economic and cultural neglect.

The continuing commitment to enabling marginalised individuals and groups to take part in the arts is a reflection of the diversity of British society and recognition of what Arts Council England has described as ‘the creative case for diversity’, based on the principle that the more inclusive the arts and the more experiences they reflect, the greater the benefit for society as a whole.

In 2014, the Johnson Foundation was the first and only funder of the Little Angel Theatre’s Spectrum Youth Theatre for young people on the autism spectrum. The Little Angel is a puppet theatre in the London Borough of Islington. For young people with speech and language delay, or who are reluctant to speak, puppetry is an accessible art form. It is a visual medium in which speech is not always necessary and where it is, the puppet speaks for the puppeteer. Previous attempts to fund this project had failed, mostly because the number of participants would be small, but the Johnson Foundation recognised the need and trusted the Little Angel Theatre to meet it. The pilot project involved thirteen young people, aged between 11 and 14, meeting every Saturday for ten weeks. They watched a professional production, devised a story, made the puppets, learned how to animate them and performed in front of an audience. The foundation’s faith in the idea enabled Spectrum Youth Theatre to become an integral part of the Little Angel Theatre and today its members show their work alongside the company’s regular youth theatre group. The project has not only provided an opportunity for young people on the autism spectrum, but has enriched the creative output of the Little Angel Theatre.

## Culture in Conflict Zones

In Place of War is an organisation based at the University of Manchester, which began as a research project to study the work of theatre practitioners in war zones. Today, it works with grassroots organisations in places of conflict, or suffering the

consequences of conflict, offering individual artists and creative communities training, advice, equipment and connections. The project was of particular interest to the Johnson Foundation because it resonates with the objectives of two of its funding areas, ‘Culture’ and ‘Conflict and Violence’, therefore coinciding with foundation’s commitment to provide psychosocial support and rehabilitation for victims of war and violent conflict.

In 2017, the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation supported In Place of War’s project to establish a music studio in Nablus on the West Bank, along with a training programme for young people. In Place of War was already working with the Palestinian House of Friendship, which runs educational, cultural and recreational programmes for children and young people in Nablus. The project offered workshops to train young musicians in various aspects of music production, for example teaching them to handle recording equipment. Well-known musicians and producers such as Kae Tempest, PJ Harvey, Nine Inch Nails or Radiohead’s producer Flood were involved in the project.

The resulting Open Gate Studio was ready in time for the first Palestinian Music Expo in Ramallah, in April 2017. This event, which featured 23 bands, attracted an audience of 5 000 and some 60 music industry professionals from other countries, most of them unfamiliar with Palestinian musicians and their music. More than half of them visited Open Gate Studio and spent time with local musicians. During this same period, fourteen young people completed In Place of War’s university-accredited course on creative entrepreneurialism, which teaches its students how to use creativity as a tool for social change in their communities.

## A Theatre Festival as Launch Pad for Careers in the Arts

In South London, the Johnson Foundation supported another educational project for young people through Battersea Arts Centre’s innovative Young Producers programme. The BAC, founded in 1974 is internationally known for its excellence as an accessible cultural institution with a commitment to fostering young talent. In 2017 the BAC launched an annual festival produced by young people for young people. Each year, a new cohort of about fourteen participants (aged 16–29) from less privileged backgrounds is offered the opportunity to organise the Homegrown youth culture festival. The young producers attend twelve evening sessions to learn from professionals about all aspects of production, such as finance, scheduling and marketing. In the Young Producers programme, participants learn how to communi-

cate their creative ideas to an audience; the programme is also diversifying the pool of arts producers. Some of them have gone on to produce and perform their own work and have set up production companies; others have found full-time posts with arts organisations. This year, BAC partnered with the Young Vic Theatre to offer an even richer programme to 20 young producers.

## Art from Afghanistan

Support for individuals can also have a wider impact, as demonstrated by the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation's involvement with Culture + Conflict. This London-based organisation works with artists and arts organisations in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. The opportunities for artists in these situations are inevitably limited and the chances of being able to participate in the global arts community are minimal. That community is poorer if the work of artists from those countries is unseen and unheard.

In 2015, Culture + Conflict, together with the Caspian Arts Foundation, established a scholarship for an artist from Afghanistan. Through the Johnson Foundation, Orna Kazimi, a young artist from Afghanistan, was able to complete a two-year Masters in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins in London. The funds were drawn from two of the foundation's funding sectors, 'Culture' and 'Victims of Conflict and Violence'. Orna Kazimi is a member of the Hazara, a minority community in Afghanistan for whom access to education is particularly challenging. Kazimi completed her degree with highest honours and she now brings her experience of migration to bear on her artistic practice. The ambition is that she will become a role model for aspiring and emerging artists from other under-represented countries and minority ethnic groups.

*‘I have been working with the renowned London guitarist Rob Luft for a year and a half. It was a great experience and an achievement for us to play in front of 1 500 people in the large Cadogan Hall at the EFG London Jazz Festival. We believe that our mix of folk songs combined with jazz influences in English, French, Italian and Albanian creates an important bridge between cultures.’*

Elena Duni, Singer, Bern

Bernese musician Elina Duni took part in the Swiss Programme at the 2018 EFG London Jazz Festival organised by Serious Trust.

The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation supported the participation of Swiss musicians in the UK festival in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

## Production Managers—Pulling the Strings Behind the Scenes

Production managers coordinate the organisation and financing of artistic projects and lead a shadowy existence between the office, the rehearsal room and the stage. No one really knows what they do all day.—A personal report.

When I'm asked to describe my job as production manager, I usually just say 'I'm responsible for everything that happens behind the scenes.' But these few words give only a vague sense of this extensive job, which requires expertise in so many areas. Production managers are budget managers, marketing specialists, human resources experts, pastoral counsellors, advisors and travel agents all in one. The most important task, however, is to support the artists in all financial and organisational matters during the development of a project. Our role is that of good-natured helpers, but we also put up a solid barrier that blocks out everything that could endanger the project. We are both 'good cop' and 'bad cop'—depending on what the situation requires.

Ideally, production managers are on board from the very beginning. We are mentally involved in the process from the moment an artist develops an idea. First of all, ideas have to be put down on paper in a language that addresses potential partners, sponsors and the public alike, without losing the personal and creative touch of the artist. How did the idea come about? What is the core content of the project? How many people will be on stage—and what are they doing there? What should the stage set look like, and the costumes? What are the goals of the project, and who is it for, which audience? All this information has to be described clearly and vividly before many of the performers have even been approached and although not a cent has been raised for the project. How can we anticipate audience numbers and the impact of a project that is still in the oven, so to speak?

Writing a dossier for an artistic project is a balancing act between visionary ideas and feasibility. The task of the production manager is to give the artists as much freedom to realise their ideas as possible, while at the same time pointing out what may or may not be feasible.

Then a budget of the production costs is drawn up—another balancing act. How are we supposed to calculate costs if we don't know all the details yet? Are six weeks of rehearsals enough? Or would seven be better? How much will the rehearsal room cost? How much material do we need for the costumes? And the artist fees! Can we afford to pay fees in line with official recommendations? Who will be coming from out of town and require travel expenses and accommodation?

And where, in heaven's name, is the money going to come from?

Budgeting is a mixture of gut feeling, experience and hard facts. If you underestimate the project financially, you endanger the whole production and the salaries of everyone involved. Small theatre companies usually have few if any financial reserves. That's why we have to plan as early and as precisely as possible. Financial surprises are unacceptable.

At the same time, we start approaching suitable venues. Do we fit into their programme? When could they schedule a premiere? Will any other theatres join in? And most importantly: we need a good title! Compelling, catchy—after all, we do have to attract an audience.

Once we've overcome the first hurdles, found a venue for the premiere and drawn up a realistic budget, the next step is funding. The most important pillar of funding in Switzerland is the public sector: the municipalities and the cantons. The deadlines for submitting projects to these funding commissions are deeply etched in our memories. Only too well do production managers know the feeling of standing at the photocopier, drenched in sweat on the eve of the submission deadline, and handing in the A4 envelopes with the dossiers to the post office five minutes before closing time.

And if you are lucky enough to have your production selected for public funding, then you really have to run the gauntlet and start applying to foundations. Foundations are both a blessing and a curse for every production manager. In Switzerland, a new foundation is set up almost every day. Finding your way through this jungle, filtering the funding criteria, locating the right contact person and then making sure not to miss the submission deadline is like trying to negotiate a seemingly endless fertile landscape where you can never be sure which fruit is worth picking first.

We are fortunate in Switzerland to have so many charitable foundations that support cultural practitioners. But it takes perseverance, patience and high tolerance for frustration to find the right funding partners for your project.

It is strange to ask someone you've never met before to give you money, but making personal contact is not easy either, as the relevant foundations are spread all over Switzerland. If you don't specifically arrange to meet at a premiere, it can

sometimes take years before you make the personal acquaintance of a foundation's application managers. Of course, the initiative has to come from both sides; production managers and artists should make an effort to get to know their donors and foundations should get to know the artists they support. An official annual meeting attended by several foundations and production managers could meet this need.

Foundations generally want to know the cultural practitioners and institutions they support, and they want to know that their money is in professional hands and is being spent for the agreed purpose. And cultural practitioners must be able to rely on receiving regular support from a certain number of larger foundations. Otherwise, it becomes impossible to plan projects in the long-term.

Submissions to foundations are usually the responsibility of the production management and are time-consuming. Each foundation has its own approach to what an application should include and how it should be structured. Fortunately, online submission has become standard for the larger foundations, eliminating the need for multiple photocopying of dossiers, budgets and press reviews as well as mailing costs. But it also has its pitfalls. Since there is no uniform application system for all foundations, the proposal must be adapted to the respective online forms. One foundation may want a total of no more than 6 000 characters, another a brief summary, yet another has its own input mask for listing the budget. Considering that most production managers have to make several submissions for different groups of artists at the same time, a standardised entry system for applications to different foundations could save us valuable time.

If it all works out and we have pulled all the strings at the right time and in the right measure, we can celebrate the premiere. The applause goes to the artists: the director, the choreographer, the performers and the set and costume designers. Production managers rarely take a bow. They remain invisible in the background, quietly rejoicing that all has gone well, but also thinking ahead to the dismantling of the set, the wage transfers, the final accounts and the next steps for planning the tour. Our reward is the success of others. We have to be able to accept that.

The invisibility of our work and the frequent lack of recognition can be challenging. The financial conditions have also been precarious for years. In order to earn an annual salary of CHF 40 000, production managers would need to supervise four to five new projects a year. This workload is barely manageable if a project is to be further developed on top of administering and implementing it.

The low pay is compounded by steadily increasing workloads. The work processes involved in a production have become more professional, more complex, more bureaucratic. Artists used to be able to approach potential sponsors with a hand-drawn sketch; now they are expected to submit all texts, pictures, videos and

press material to professional standards. Every franc of the performance fee has to be reported to the AHV (National Insurance); non-profit associations are increasingly subject to tax audits, and with international performances, the intricacies of taxation at source and European social security law chip at your last shred of sanity. In addition, there is an increasing demand on production managers to do promotion work: to contribute to establishing the artists as players on the national stage, to launch international collaborations and to organise as many performances as possible in order to increase audience figures.

Many production managers leave the independent scene after a few years to join institutions. The income is too uncertain, while the constant availability and the high level of financial and personal responsibility lead to exhaustion after a few years. However, this means losing years of painstakingly acquired knowledge and valuable networks established with promoters and organisers.

To counteract this situation, we founded produktionsDOCK, an independent production office for contemporary dance, theatre and performance in Basel in January 2017. We are four independent production managers who share know-how, a website and contacts to theatres and financial backers. This cooperation enables us to work more efficiently, to coordinate our working methods and create synergies. Our main concern is the promotion of young talent. We are the only production office to offer a traineeship in production management. We can thereby pass on the knowledge we have acquired over the years and guarantee sustainability.

By merging Swiss production offices into a national network, we aim to strengthen the visibility and relevance of production managers and production structures. Artists can no longer manage the administration of their projects by themselves. It has in fact become impossible for them to keep producing and developing in the long term without a continuous working relationship with a production manager. Therefore, there is a strong need for a sustainable funding structure that goes beyond direct funding of projects by individual cultural practitioners.

*‘I am proud to work with APOPO and clear landmines with the help of mine detection rats. I wish everyone knew how well trained the rats are and how effective they are in clearing mines. With their help, we can save our communities from the deadly threat of landmines.’*

Austragildo Leonardo Gaeita Freitas, Operations Officer  
The Geneva-based organisation APOPO trains rats to detect landmines in Angola, making these sections of land safe for cultivation. The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation supported the programme in 2017 and 2018.



## Emergency and Development Aid: Moving Ahead to the Beginning

Supporting victims of war and refugees was one of the four stated purposes of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation when it was established 50 years ago. Now it funds ‘victims of conflict and violence’.—A look back.

In this field, the foundation reviewed and changed course several times and, in fact, once at the very beginning. In its early days, instead of victims of war, the foundation often supported victims of natural disasters. From the mid-1980s onwards, it concentrated on development aid and supported projects in the areas of water, vocational training, small businesses, agriculture and health. In the 1990s, birth control was made a key priority. Since 2010, the focus has shifted to supporting victims of conflict and violence, marking a return to the foundation’s beginnings.

These changes reflect the spirit of the times, but they also resulted from changes in the composition of the board. In the 1960s, the mood was one of excitement and new beginnings. An ‘Alliance for Progress’ wanted to foster economic and social advances in developing countries, which required long-term programmes instead of emergency aid.

This enthusiasm was followed by disillusionment, as these hopes failed to materialise or were limited to a few so-called ‘tiger states’ in Asia. Africa was soon considered a lost continent. The ‘population explosion’ was said to be swallowing progress before it could take hold and urgently needed to be kept in check. The foundation responded in the early 1990s by prioritizing family-planning. At the end of the first decade of the 2000s, there was a shift in favour of ‘victims of conflicts and violence’.

Does this imply a rejection of development aid? Did the foundation question its impact? No, the reason was a very different one: in 2010 the foundation shifted away from development cooperation and explicitly returned to the statutes of 1969, namely to the support of ‘victims of conflict along the objectives of the international Red Cross.’

The new orientation also sharpens the profile of the foundation, by stating clearly what the foundation is committed to and whom it supports. Organisations applying for funding know what is expected of them.

## The 1970s: Prioritising Emergency Aid

First aid for the victims of flood disasters in Romania and Pakistan, for Bengali refugees and for the earthquake victims in Peru: when the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation first began to fund social projects in 1971, the priority was on emergency aid. In the years that followed, this approach continued to play an important role. Donations were granted for victims of war in West and East Pakistan (today Bangladesh), for earthquake victims in Guatemala, in Friuli in Italy, in Yugoslavia and Algeria, for refugees from Vietnam, and for Bangladesh, which was affected by flooding and famine.

Emergency aid is universally approved. When people are affected by disasters, there is a great willingness to help and no one disputes the need for it. Even many who are sceptical of the principles of development cooperation argue that humanitarian aid should be expanded. Was this the reason for the foundation's focus on emergency aid contributions? Or were there also practical reasons, because emergency response made it easier to make and justify funding decisions?

Over the years, funding practice became more differentiated—regarding both its substance and the organisations supported. From the mid-1980s onwards, Caritas, Brot für Brüder (now Brot für alle), Basler Mission, Helvetas and Swisscontact were among the many well-known Swiss relief organisations to receive contributions.

Development aid or emergency aid? They complement each other. In any case, it is often difficult to draw clear boundaries between the two. Good emergency aid is not only short-term. When it supports the millions of Syrian war refugees who for years have been hoping in vain to return to their country, it also builds schools in refugee camps and runs health centres—commitments that continue far beyond a few months of emergency response. In Colombia, the millions of people forced to flee inland can only now hope to return to their villages after some 50 years of war. Humanitarian aid often turns out to be development aid in the long-term.

## The 1980s: Early Support for Water and Vocational Training

In 1982, the foundation decided to fund issues that are still considered particularly urgent today. It repeatedly financed water projects by Helvetas and promoted vocational training in developing countries through the business-oriented Swiss-

contact. Despite these efforts, the water and vocational training problems did not diminish in the intervening years. On the contrary: in many countries, more young people are entering the labour market. Water is scarce for two billion people. Due to climate change, frequent droughts and increasing agricultural production, it threatens to become even scarcer.

Does that make the development projects for water and vocational training just the proverbial drop in the ocean, or are they proof that development aid promises more than it delivers? These are certainly controversial questions. The fact is, however, that with all the money that flows into development cooperation, the Johnson Foundation's contribution is marginal, despite the 1 million francs it gives annually. There are development successes, but they are only relative, as in the case of water. The proportion of people without clean drinking water has fallen noticeably over the past 25 years. But not all people have access to it by a long shot. To ensure that they do so in the future, many water programmes are still needed, as promised by the UN's 'Agenda 2030' for sustainable development goals.

Nonetheless, the foundation has distanced itself somewhat from water and vocational training projects. Helvetas and Swisscontact are still involved, as is the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Switzerland has legitimate contributions to make in both areas. As the 'water stronghold' of Europe, it has the engineering powers and long-term experience in dealing with systems of water management and distribution. In vocational education and training, Switzerland benefits from an education system that privileges vocational qualifications.

## The 1990s: Ascendance of Birth Control

When the foundation council identified birth control as a new funding priority for development aid in 1992, the timing was hardly coincidental. This was in the run-up to the UN World Population Conference in 1994, amid a public discourse that drew renewed attention to the controversies about the 'population bomb' that had been going on since the late 1960s, when the bestseller of the same name by entomologist Paul R. Ehrlich<sup>1</sup> caused a stir. It fuelled fears about an inadequate food supply in the face of rising population growth.

The foundation began financing family planning centres in Pakistan, Uganda and Madagascar. Contributions for programmes such as 'Girls in the Street' in Bolivia (1994), 'Street Children' in Dhaka (1996) and 'Educational Activities' in Indian slums (1997) were probably also intended to promote birth control as an 'integral

part of all educational programmes'. However, a consistent reorientation towards birth control did not take place. Population policy is more complex than information and education about contraception and contraceptives. It is often contrary to morals and customs, because women are expected to bow to men's desire for many children.

Sometimes, measures that seem to have nothing to do with family planning prove successful. For example, school uniforms for girls, as described by Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo in *Poor Economics. A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*.<sup>2</sup> Rates of teenage pregnancy fell in schools in Kenya where school uniforms were free. 'Two out of three girls who were able to continue going to school thanks to the free school uniforms, "postponed" their first pregnancy.' The success was measurably greater than in schools that relied only on contraceptive education.

The popular telenovelas in Brazil have also proven to be an effective family planning tool. In areas where they are widely watched thanks to cable TV networks, birth rates have dropped significantly, compared to areas where they are not. The heroines of the telenovelas are successful businesswomen with only one child or even childless. The Brazilian economist Eliana La Ferrara is convinced: when Brazilian women see female characters on television who are happy and successful without children, they also want fewer children.

## The 2000s: Beyond Donations— Education and Story Telling

The expert report *Entwicklungsland Welt—Entwicklungsland Schweiz*, commissioned by the association of Swiss relief organisations in the mid-1970s, came to the conclusion that the public must be better and more extensively informed about the problems of the Third World and the reasons for underdevelopment. Donating money to development projects in poor countries, it said, is simply not enough. It has also been argued that it is not enough for us in the North to dispense information. People from poor countries should tell us their own stories, instead of us talking about them and explaining their situation.

Educational projects come in many forms, as attested by relevant projects funded by the foundation in the sector of culture. Projects may involve the moving image and stirring stories, distributed, for example, by Trigon-Film, and screened at the 'FIFF, Films from the South' and 'Cinémafrica' festivals. Such films introduce audiences to foreign worlds and their stories. 'Afro-Pentecost' uses music to set

the mood for distant realities. Film productions from African countries and theatre troupes from various developing countries have also been supported. So far, the selection of such cultural contributions seems somewhat arbitrary. This may change with funding that specifically targets cultural projects engaging with issues of migration and peacebuilding.

## The 2010s: Back to the Roots

In 2010, the foundation decided to focus on supporting 'victims of conflict and violence'. The decision represents a return to the foundation's beginnings, when, in the spirit of the ICRC's goals, support was to be given primarily to victims of war and refugees.

The reorientation became tangible in 2013, when support was provided to victims of violence and armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar, in Somalia, Somaliland, Mali and in the Central African Republic. In 2014, contributions followed for refugees from Syria and South Sudan, and later for Angola, Yemen and Iraq. The approved projects reflect the global geography of war zones and the frightening fact that many violent conflicts have broken out in recent years, but hardly any wars have ended. These recent commitments by the foundation do not conform to the conventional pattern of emergency/humanitarian aid versus development aid/cooperation. The wars are much too prolonged for these categories to make sense.

This applies even more to the aftermath of war and its impact on the civilian population, as the de-mining projects supported by the foundation vividly demonstrate. In Afghanistan, Angola and other countries, the deadly danger of mines extends over huge areas. The removal of these treacherous weapons takes decades but it is an urgent issue for many people, since the projects allow them to cultivate their fields again and thus support themselves. Promoting de-mining projects does not mean abandoning developing countries, especially as wars rage in the poor global South, but only very rarely in the rich North.

<sup>1</sup> Ehrlich, Paul R., *The Population Bomb*. New York: Ballantine, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Banerjee, Abhijit V., & Duflo, Esther, *Poor Economics. A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. New York: Public Affairs, 2011.

*‘I was afraid to leave the house, even during the day. My psychotherapist was very patient, she helped me manage my fears and was there for me when I needed her. I go to Baobab every week. One day I will draw a line between my past and my future. Baobab is helping me to do that.’*

Baobab Center for Young Survivors in Exile, London  
Testimony of a participant in the psychosocial counselling programme.  
The organisation works with young asylum seekers and refugees  
who have experienced violence in their childhood. The Stanley Thomas  
Johnson Foundation supported the programme in 2017 and 2019.

Cédric von Niederhäusern

## *Leaving war behind*

In March 2015, the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation supported the exhibition project *Great Flights—Small Asylum* at the Reithalle Bern, which featured artistic contributions from Syria and Switzerland that engage with the situation in Syria and the politics of asylum. The exhibition included a photo project by Swiss photographer Cédric von Niederhäusern. His photographs were taken in a Kurdish village on the border close to the Syrian city of Kobanî. The photographer reports on his experiences on pages 148–149.

Born in Bern, Cédric von Niederhäusern lives in New York and works as a freelance documentary photographer.

























## Leaving war behind

While the war between the IS and the Kurdish militia rages in Kobanî, people gather every morning on the roof of the mosque in Mehser and align their binoculars. With remarkable patience they search for the buildings with black flags flying on them. The border between Turkey and Kobanî, where the war rages, provides protection: an invisible barrier through which the people on the roof observe the air strikes of the allied federations. Now and again one hears thunder roll across the fields, then grey clouds rise somewhere among the rows of houses. Raised, agitated voices follow, occasional clapping. When it subsides, they resume gazing at their destroyed homeland.

Mehser is a Kurdish Village directly on the border, near the city of Suruc. It is a meeting place for old people from all over Turkey, who gather around the fire to argue; youths from in Kobanî who can no longer attend school; and families who are searching for their sons or daughters who stole away in the night to join the fight against the Islamic State. The village is in a strange position, between the violence in Kobanî and those who have fled from it. Only a few kilometres further north lies the border town of Suruc. Thousands live in refugee camps only ten kilometres from the war. Four of the five refugee camps are managed by Kurds, who are building a sixth, while one is under the direction of the Turkish crisis management authority AFAD.

The helpers in the Amara culture centre, where they are based, write letters to the whole world and knock on any doors they can find to get hold of food, medicine and other provisions. Ceaselessly, they fight their own battle against shortages in the town. Not all refugees are confined to the camps, many live outside the fences. Some families live in barns, empty buildings and apartments while others build their own tents from plastic sheeting on building sites and wastelands. On their drives through the town, the helpers at the culture centre register newcomers and provide them with necessities: blankets, nappies and food in weekly rations.

Some of the aid provisions have been financed with money from Switzerland, organised by Ismael Taisch, who fled Iraq in 1991 and came to Switzerland as a teenager. 24 years later he stands on the loading area of a truck and sorts aid provisions that he has brought to Suruc to help the refugees. He uses his own savings and donations given to him by friends and acquaintances, collected by himself and Kurdish born Rukan Manaz, who also grew up in Switzerland. Together, they founded the project ‘Together for Kobanî’ whose first operation is to help the refugees in Suruc. Taisch wants to gain a better understanding of the situation here, visit refugee camps, make contacts and find out where and how his project can best

contribute to improving the situation. He is supported in the field by the human rights organization IHD.

For Taisch, it is the beginning of a roller coaster ride, for although the operation is successful, it is only a drop in the ocean. Each week Suruc is once again confronted with the question of where the aid will come from. Who will bring the next rations? What doors remain to knock on? And most importantly for the people here: when can we go home?

The great tragedy of the war is that there is no end in sight. When the thundering stops, the people on the roof of the mosque pack up their binoculars, but they now walk through the scarred landscape that they witnessed being shattered by bombs from a distance. Ruins of their homeland, memories crumbling to dust—almost impossible to reconstruct and yet impossible to forget.

Cédric von Niederhäusern

### *Addendum:*

*On 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015 a device exploded in the garden of the Amara culture centre and killed 34 people. The victims were mostly youths who had gathered for a press conference about the rebuilding of Kobanî. The attack received much international attention because of its political dimensions, but it is above all a shocking strike at the hearts of all those committed to helping the victims of war. Most of Kobanî's residents have now returned to their city. Following a directive by the Turkish government citing changes in land use, however, the last remaining refugee camp in Suruc was disbanded in January 2016—despite the fact that about 40 families continue to live there and depend on humanitarian help.*

*‘In Place of War believes that cultural spaces in conflict zones can save people’s lives and improve social structures in vulnerable communities. We established the ‘Open Gate Studio’ in Palestine, helping young people to develop their musical skills. Currently we are building a new cultural space in the South African community of Lavender Hill, which is suffering the effects of forced removals during apartheid.’*

In Place of War, University of Manchester  
The University of Manchester’s In Place of War project builds cultural infrastructure in regions of conflict. The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation funded the ‘Open Gate Studio’ project in Nablus, West Bank, and ‘Rise Above’ in Lavender Hill in Cape Flats, South Africa, from 2016 to 2019.

## Education in Transition

The project '2<sup>nd</sup> Chance for a 1<sup>st</sup> Education' offers 50 people the opportunity to catch up on basic vocational qualifications. As a cooperation between the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation and the Education and Health and Welfare Departments of the Canton of Bern, this programme is part of the wider education system. The author was Director of Education in the Canton of Bern for twelve years. He sums up his insights in ten theses.

1. The Swiss education system is excellent. It deserves respect and appreciation.

The results of the Swiss education system are excellent: a very high completion rate at upper secondary level (between 90 and 95 per cent, depending on the canton) and very low (youth) unemployment demonstrates this—and these results stem not from a random sample, but from a full survey. In view of high levels of immigration, this also illustrates the first-class integration work undertaken by our educational institutions. Before calling for reforms, it is important to acknowledge and maintain this quality.

2. Good schools stand and fall with good, motivated teachers.

Education policy tends to focus primarily on the structural planning of the education system. However, good education from kindergarten to university stands and falls with people and not with structures. Education is about relationships. Only motivated and well-trained teachers can ensure the quality of Swiss education.



Therefore, attention should be paid first and foremost to the working conditions and the support of teaching staff and not to structural reforms.

### **3. Freedom and diversity are the best way to ensure equal opportunities.**

Because education is about relationships, every classroom situation is different. Because people are different. What works in one place with one set of pupils may not necessarily work in another place with other pupils or even on another day with the same pupils. The desire to ensure equal opportunities is often confused with a need for standardisation and uniformity (e.g. standardised school-leaving exams). This is a fundamental error: the same task faces completely different challenges depending on the context of the students, the teachers and the school. Students and their future opportunities are best served when schools and teachers are provided with some freedom. The aim of 'pedagogical dialogue' in Bern is to make people aware of where they have leeway and to encourage them to make use of these freedoms for the purpose of developing their pedagogical skills. This requires a willingness to value diversity in schools: 'Mixed woodland is healthier than monocultures.'

### **4. Our ratio between vocational and academic education is perfect.**

Around 70 to 80 percent of young people in Switzerland complete vocational qualifications, while 20 to 30 percent take the academic route. This ratio has contributed greatly to the success of our country. An excellent vocational education and training system leaves many opportunities open thanks to a variety of pathways to graduate from vocational to academic training (the 'passerelles' and 'Berufsmatur'). The vocational training system is the envy of many countries; at the same time, our country's universities have first-class ratings. This balance should not be changed without good reason. And above all: vocational and academic education must not be played off against each other. Both paths together contribute to the success of our country.

### **5. The permeability of the education system is a key factor in its success.**

Vocational and academic education are of equal value, provided that the permeability of the educational pathways is guaranteed. The opportunity to qualify for access to university education on the basis of an exam following vocational training was widely implemented at the beginning of this millennium; it is one of the greatest achievements of Swiss education policy. This flexibility is crucial; at the same time, to be successful, the system requires careful monitoring to ensure that people from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds really can and do make use of these opportunities.

### **6. Trust builds confidence.**

Education means giving people confidence in their abilities and their future. Students will believe in their ability to learn if teachers believe in their students. Leadership, here as elsewhere, means setting an example. Politics must place trust in educational institutions and give them autonomy, so that school administrations can build relationships of trust with their teachers, and the teachers, in turn, can foster the trust and confidence of their students. Trust always entails giving the freedom to make decisions, to choose one way or another. This principle therefore contradicts excessive standardisation.

### **7. Heterogeneity is a resource.**

Education, social norms and the demographic composition of the population have changed. Diversity within classrooms has increased and can ultimately only be countered with a different attitude towards heterogeneity. Heterogeneity is a resource for teaching: for example when some pupils explain things to others, when older pupils in mixed-grade classes pass on rules and 'class spirit' to younger pupils or when students with IT skills have the opportunity to act as ICT coaches. This is being implemented in more and more schools and is ultimately the only convincing response to the 'problem' of heterogeneity.

## 8. A wide range of subjects from primary school to university.

Education is comprehensive. Not only cognitive skills and knowledge, but also music and the arts, sports, games and other things should be an integral part of education at all levels. Fortunately, everyone agrees on this, because the economy also expects people to have communication skills, innovative strength and flexibility. These qualities are not fostered by teaching cognitive skills alone, but also through school projects, theatre performances, etc.

This wide range of subjects must be maintained not only in primary school, but at all levels of education. Culture and art are also important forms of knowledge and insight for our society.

At the university level, the existence of a broad range of courses and the free choice of subject matter are decisive: no one knows today which subjects and what knowledge will solve the problems of the future. Restricting the choice of subjects or controlling the range of subjects on offer in the vein of a planned economy risks backing the wrong horse.

## 9. Digitalisation: What counts is knowing that you can learn new things.

In 30 years' time, a sizeable proportion of today's young people will be working in a profession that does not yet exist. The answer to digitalisation is therefore not to teach them how to operate the latest devices and programmes. These will soon be obsolete. Rather—as provided for in Curriculum 21 and now also at the Gymnasium level—it is about fostering basic knowledge of how computers, artificial intelligence and media work (computational thinking). Beyond that, the most important thing is that pupils experience learning as a positive process, that they gain confidence and trust in the future—and that school teaches them that they are able to learn and acquire new skills. This is the most fundamental task of schooling and it can be taught in almost every subject.

## 10. Education for all: migration is an opportunity.

Everyone who lives here needs qualifications, regardless of their residence status. It is important for people who return to their home country in order to contribute to

personal and social development there, while here in Switzerland it is a crucial prerequisite for strengthening our country and preventing non-integrated, parallel societies.

For recent immigrants, this requires a multi-level strategy at all age levels: the first stage is usually intensive language courses to enable participation in education, followed by integration measures at the various educational levels and finally, provisions that build bridges to secure integration into vocational training. In recent years, Bern has taken clear steps in this direction, both at compulsory school level and with regard to vocational preparation courses for migrants. Integration measures should be a matter of course at all levels.

Throughout its history, Switzerland has benefited from migration: the commitment, culture and labour contributed by immigrants are still an opportunity for us today.

*‘Our society relies on young people dedicated to caring for old or sick people. Our art and education project addresses the existential experiences and emotions that care professionals are confronted with on a daily basis. These experiences inspired moving works of art that captivated a wide audience with their honesty.’*

Frantiček Klossner, artist and participant  
in the project ‘Culture and Care’

The interdisciplinary education project ‘Culture and Care’ by Frantiček Klossner and Urs Schürch took place in 2018 as part of the tête-à-tête competition for cultural projects with schools in cooperation with the Bildungszentrum Interlaken and the Kunsthhaus Interlaken. The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation has been a sponsoring partner of this competition by the Education Department of the Canton of Bern since 2015.  
→ see also photo gallery, p.172ff.

## ‘There is no better social integration than having a job.’

To enable adults to catch up on basic qualifications, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Welfare of the Canton of Bern launched a joint project with the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, which started its second round in September 2018. In an interview with Guido Münzel, the director of the Department of Health and Welfare Pierre Alain Schnegg and Director of the Johnson Foundation Walter Rumpf discuss the significance, successes and future prospects of the project.

*In the field of private foundations there is widespread interest in exploring cooperation between foundations and the public sector. The project ‘2<sup>nd</sup> chance for a 1<sup>st</sup> Education’ is such a public-private partnership (PPP). What criteria must be satisfied for local government to get involved in such a project?*

Pierre Alain Schnegg: The first point is certainly that the goals of the project must fit into our overall strategy. There are a thousand good ideas, but if they don't accord with government strategy, they have no chance of success. Another criterium concerns the quality of a project. That's why we assess its risks and opportunities. I prefer concepts based on cooperation, especially with the private sector. I believe that without the private sector there are no tax revenues, no truly innovative projects and no advancement. The people behind a project are also crucial. There always needs to be a certain ‘chemistry’ among the parties involved. Furthermore, the timing of a project is important, because we cannot start 20 projects at the same time.

*Why did the Johnson Foundation approach the Health and Welfare Department with this issue?*

Walter Rumpf: For us it is clear that a project must correspond to the purpose of the foundation and also have a good chance of success. The foundation wants to support impactful initiatives, the more impact for the beneficiary the better. It is also crucial that they respond to a social need. We analysed the provision for vocational educational training in the Canton of Bern in detail and found that there is a pronounced need for additional measures in the area of adult qualification.

*What are the advantages of a public-private partnership?*

Schnegg: We live in a world that is becoming more and more complex, that is moving faster and faster and that requires more and more flexibility. A public-private partnership can access a wider range of knowledge, competence, experience and resources. Such a cooperative venture increases everyone's chances of success. Private companies have the advantage that they can act more quickly. But public services also have a lot to contribute, such as their profound knowledge of the law or their close links to other government departments. Both the Health and Welfare and Education Departments are involved in the '2<sup>nd</sup> Chance' project. This kind of interdepartmental cooperation is particularly important with regards to education.

Rumpf: Partnerships in general offer us the opportunity to share tasks, benefit from synergies and work together in an interdisciplinary way. Education is primarily the responsibility of the state. The foundation can only act in a complementary, subsidiary and supplementary way in this context, but has a useful role in the operational implementation of such a project. For the foundation, cooperation has enormous advantages. We previously supported personal educational needs submitted by or on behalf of individuals. Within the framework

of a programme we now have the opportunity to accumulate know-how and make use of synergies on a wider scale. Ultimately, we can increase the impact of our activities, for example, by reducing the number of people who drop out of education.

*What difficulties emerge in the cooperation between the state and the private sector?*

Schnegg: The problem often lies at the level of communication and personal relationships. This is where it sometimes gets complicated. People may use the same terms, such as 'expensive', 'efficient' or 'quality', but everyone understands them differently. Another difficulty is that the two sectors have completely different modes of operating. The private sector can do anything not explicitly prohibited by law. In public service, we can do only what the law explicitly allows. Private foundations can be much less risk-averse than public administrations. The public sector above all wishes to avoid making mistakes—and to prevent making mistakes, we sometimes do nothing at all. That is precisely why such projects are interesting: we can share our experiences and points of view.

Rumpf: You summed it up beautifully. Some critical points must be discussed again and again. It is crucial that the responsibilities and the organisation of the project are clearly regulated. A system of checks and balances is needed. The public sector requires certainty that its funds are used in accordance with the agreed purpose.

*In times of increasing pressure to save money in the public sector, there are growing expectations of private players such as foundations to supplement state funding in areas such as education, culture or social welfare. For example, the Johnson Foundation repeatedly receives requests from social services to cover education costs for their clients. All players claim that they provide their services on a subsidiary basis. How should the roles and responsibilities be distributed here?*

Schnegg: It is clear that the state has limited resources.

Perhaps we sometimes don't have the courage to concentrate on the most important of our core tasks. Our scope is probably too broad at times, and so we don't pay enough attention to the most urgent tasks. I take the view that not everything in a society can come from the state. You cannot delegate everything to the private sector, and you cannot expect everything from the state. There is a certain distribution of duties that defines who is responsible for what. Subsidiarity is a basic principle in social welfare. Social services must first check whether there is not another source of funding. Is there another form of insurance that can cover the costs? Can private sponsorship help? I think this is justified because it requires a certain amount of creativity. Not everything comes from above, from the state, and is simply handed out. People must first take the initiative and try to find solutions on their own. If that doesn't work, the state must assume responsibility. There are areas where it is absolutely clear that the state is obliged to fulfil its mandate. I am thinking, for example, of basic education in schools.

Rumpf: My understanding of the state is that, as a rule, foundations should contribute in a complementary way, i.e. supplement the ongoing support provided by public services. Even with a project like '2<sup>nd</sup> Chance' the state ultimately sets the targets. The foundation is guided by what serves the common good. It provides financial support or takes on the operational man-

agement of the project, because it can do this more effectively than public administration.

*What is the significance of the project '2<sup>nd</sup> Chance for a 1<sup>st</sup> Education' in the wider context of the educational and integration policies of the Canton of Bern?*

Schnegg: The project is very important to me and ties in exactly with what I envision for the future. If we want to help people who have problems and are in a slump, the best thing is to give them a good education. A vocational qualification certainly does not solve all the problems, but it creates a solid foundation that empowers people to solve their problems themselves. We have taken the first steps with the pilot and follow-up projects. I am pleased that we are now enabling 50 people to receive training, but I would like to expand even further. The need is there.

*What factors make the success of this project, in your view?*

Schnegg: I see it primarily in the fact that we can give people something to build on. At the end of the programme, they have a diploma—a Federal Certificate of Proficiency (Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis EFZ) or a Vocational Certificate (Berufsattest EBA)—which is the key to accessing the labour market. A training project that does not lead to these qualifications would certainly not be bad either, but it would not offer the participants the same chance for success. In my opinion, the process that a person goes through when they sign up for this project is also very important. It's not like they can just wake up one morning, decide to join the project and start right away. The registration process ensures that we really support the right people, at the right time, in the right direction.

Rumpf: From the foundation's point of view, I might add that a very important factor for success at the strategic level is that cooperation with the public sector significantly increases the available resources.



*What experience has the foundation gained on the project that it would now share with the Department of Health and Welfare?*

Rumpf: Let's first take a step back. We basically initiated the pilot phase of the project, which is currently underway, together with the Department of Education. The Department of Health and Welfare was not yet involved. We acquired quite a lot of know-how regarding the conceptualization, planning and implementation of the project. We have commissioned an evaluation for this first round, but as I said, it has not yet been completed. However, for the second round—now with the Department of Health and Welfare involved—we have taken on board some important input and have hopefully adjusted the right cogs to finetune the project and make it even better.

Our experience with the second round so far has shown that in individual cases there are always many intersecting issues and organisations to consider when it comes to the concrete application of the assessment for financial support in accordance with the Swiss guidelines on social welfare. We have found that we need to delve into this quite deeply and that new problems tend to arise in each individual case. Here the interdisciplinary cooperation is extremely important. But although the operation and implementation of the project are enormously personnel-intensive, the overall goal and the impact we have observed so far justify this effort. Perhaps I am speaking too soon here, but should the project be approved for a third round, the foundation would certainly need to consider how to optimise this and whether additional external staff would need to be recruited.

*How do you see the future prospects of this project?*

Schnegg: As I mentioned earlier, this is a kind of lighthouse project for me, because it is not simply about helping a handful of individuals in the short term, but about really offering them a long-term perspective. That's why I would be extremely inter-

ested in pursuing this project. What form it should take, which organisations, resources or regions should be involved, are a matter for discussion. But for me, such projects are absolutely necessary if we want to field a strong response to the challenges we currently face concerning social integration in the labour market.

*And the foundation's point of view?*

Rumpf: Both sides articulated this clearly when we decided to move forward with the second round: in the final analysis, the focus is on the people who are offered this opportunity. We want to do everything we can to ensure that this support continues to be available to the people who need it, especially since we can also provide a service to society in this way. How the project will be organised in the future remains to be seen. From the foundation's point of view, it is important to preserve and benefit from the know-how gained by all parties and that this process can continue in order to make a sustainable impact—as long as the need exists.

*What is the role of this project in educational policy, for example in relation to welfare recipients?*

Schnegg: Our strategy is to support various projects in the area of labour integration that target different groups. The first target group was young people. It is important to us to really integrate these people into the labour market in the long term. This educational project in particular aligns very directly with our goals. But we also have projects for people over 50 or for employees who have a job but need our support during a difficult time. These are our three main target groups at the moment. Basically, the aim is to integrate participants into the labour market. We are aware that this is not 100 percent possible for all people, but we must succeed in making a dent, because there is no better social integration than having a job.

*Is there anything else you would like to add, anything that has not yet been mentioned?*

Schnegg: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Johnson Foundation for its commitment in an area that may not necessarily be spectacular or generate much media interest, but which can have an enormous impact. Especially if due weight is given to the success of each individual. Thank you very much for the fantastic commitment of your foundation!

Rumpf: May I return these thanks from the foundation's point of view? We are extremely pleased that the Health and Welfare Department has accredited the Johnson Foundation as a partner, so to speak, and that we are pulling together to achieve our shared goals.

*‘My ultimate goal is to successfully complete my apprenticeship as a draughtsman specialising in architecture, and everything else is still subordinate to this goal. I think we are on the way to building a future here.’*

Zinar Yousef, participant in the project  
‘2<sup>nd</sup> Chance for a 1<sup>st</sup> Education’, Bern.  
He fled from Syria to Switzerland with his family in 2014.

## Competition for Cultural Projects in Schools 2018

The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation has been a sponsoring partner of this art education competition organised by the Education Department of the Canton of Bern since 2015.

The photo series by Bernese photographer Marco Frauchiger is part of the school project *Ich und das Andere: Ein Projekt über Identität, Normen und Toleranz* (I and the Other: A Project about Identity, Norms and Tolerance). It was conducted by Marco Frauchiger, Selina Lauener and Benjamin Pogonatos at the Bern Vocational, Technical and Further Education College from January to June 2018. In this project, the students of the BPI Bern (a preparatory vocational school year for young people with a migration background) engaged with the question of 'the other', i.e. with the parameters of ideas about normality. Students explored this question in workshops, where they were involved in artistic projects such as staging photographs, interventions, audio collages, etc. The project concluded with a public exhibition that presented results from the workshops, including a portrait series that Marco Frauchiger staged together with the participants.

Marco Frauchiger works as a freelance photographer in Bern.





















## Between the Pursuit of Profit and Social Commitment

Josef Schnyder left his mark on the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation as Managing Director from 1992 to 2010. For almost 18 years, all the threads ran through him. It was an exciting time, he recalls, ‘but I also felt that the burden was getting quite heavy.’  
An encounter.

Denied! Josef Schnyder’s first contact with the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation in Bern culminated in a rejection. It was the end of the 1980s: Schnyder, a business economist, was running a training and education centre for people with disabilities in Burgdorf and asked the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation for money to support it. He called Albrecht Schwarz, the secretary of the Johnson Foundation, who told him that he was unable to fund Schnyder’s project.

‘I was immediately intrigued by this foundation,’ Schnyder recalls, ‘and thought it might be for me. In principle, it would be similar to running a small business.’ Schnyder had graduated from a commercial college with a focus on corporate finance. When the foundation decided to look for a Managing Director, he applied—and was successful. ‘I was an all-rounder, plus I had worked in England and studied in the USA for six months. I felt at home with the English language,’ says Schnyder. That was probably a point in his favour with the board of trustees, which at the time included two English representatives in accordance with the foundation’s statutes.

In 1992, Sepp Schnyder, as people called him, joined the management of the Johnson Foundation. ‘It was new territory for me. I knew I had to prove myself,’ he says. What followed were ‘18 very exciting years in which I did a lot of back-breaking work. I enjoyed working very much.’

### Nothing Got Done Without Sepp

On an unseasonably mild and sunny winter’s day, Josef Schnyder is sitting at the kitchen table in his house in Lyssach near Burgdorf, where he has lived for 35 years.

His face is marked by many laughter lines, but also by the gravity of life. The 73-year-old looks back in good humour and when he tells his story, almost everything seems like a logical, even natural turn of events—even if there were sometimes painful twists.

In his time, Schnyder was the undisputed command centre of the Johnson Foundation, all the threads ran through him. Nothing got done without Sepp.

‘My most important concern was to keep the head office lean so that we could allocate as much money as possible,’ Schnyder describes his credo. A lot of power was concentrated in his hands, ‘although I don’t like to use that word.’ At the same time, Schnyder was in a high-profile position because of the great responsibility invested in him, which often pushed his limits. He also persevered, because ‘the foundation board appreciated this course.’ According to the father of two, he regularly took a rucksack full of business documents along on family holidays. Schnyder does not hide the fact that his task was ‘difficult to manage’ towards the end of his term of office due to the growing complexity of running the organisation. Of the 1000 applications that crossed his desk per year, some 10 to 12 percent were approved, he says. It was always clear to him that the foundation’s management required restructuring, but in the end personal blows forced him to let go earlier than planned.

## Father of Ikea

When he was inducted as head of the Johnson Foundation in 1992 by the ‘extremely prudent’ president of the board, Felix Stump, Schnyder already had a side line in dedicated decision making. He sat on the Lyssach municipal council for the SVP (the conservative Swiss People’s Party), which he soon left. In 1993, Schnyder, now without party affiliation, was elected president of the municipal council, and it was he who negotiated with the representatives of the Swedish furniture giant Ikea about the site for the company’s new store at the Kirchberg motorway exit—usually over a lunchtime sandwich. ‘I became a kind of father of Ikea Lyssach,’ says Schnyder, who during his term of office (1993-96) laid the groundwork for the transformation of the farming village into the shopping centre that Lyssach is known for today. ‘Of course,’ he says, ‘not everyone was happy about it at the time.’ He weathered the controversy.

At the Johnson Foundation, Schnyder’s first task was digitalisation. “When I arrived, everything was still on paper.” The relevant, decision-making data was stored in an accordion folder and the new boss even ended up writing a user programme for managing databases himself. This helped him to get a grip on his new work envi-

ronment very quickly, although he says it ‘would have been impossible’ without his then secretary Susanne Keller. At the kitchen table in Lyssach, Schnyder is down to earth about his role as head of the foundation: ‘The foundation could only give as much money as it earned.’ Schnyder is alluding to his responsibility for the investment of the foundation’s assets—half in real estate, the rest in shares and bonds, according to the logic: the better the return, the more funds for grants.

On the other hand, Schnyder also acted as a guiding spirit for many of the projects the foundation supported during his time. While reading the newspapers and talking to people, he was always on the lookout for new opportunities: ‘My office door was always open,’ he says, ‘I appreciated it when people came by in person and told me what they wanted.’ However, Schnyder affirms that he never made funding decisions on his own authority. ‘Corporate governance was still unheard of then, that’s true,’ he says. But the auditors were extremely strict, regularly controlling and ‘critically examining’ not only the accounting, but also the management and compliance with the award criteria. In addition, the supervisory authority of Federal Department of Foreign Affairs watched over the foundation.

## The English Spirit

In Schnyder’s time, the foundation supported projects in the fields of fine arts, music, dance, theatre, medicine, social welfare and development cooperation. A kind of compensatory thinking between the pursuit of profit and social commitment served as his inner compass. For example: The foundation earned a lot of money with Philipp Morris shares, which, according to Schnyder, could be had on the cheap whenever the tobacco company had a lawsuit on its hands. This was frowned upon, but, Schnyder says, ‘we returned the money to good use by supporting addiction treatment projects, especially for alcohol addiction.’ A similar logic came into play when the foundation was criticised for profits it made with shares in the oil industry: ‘I always defended that with the argument that we invest in development aid and part of the money flows back to where we earned it.’

Schnyder was a great admirer of the English spirit, to which the foundation was also indebted for entering into areas of social involvement that were not yet or not very well accepted by society at the time. ‘Let’s have a look at it,’ the English members of the board used to say when dealing with sensitive applications, thus provoking controversial discussions in the governing body. He certainly let go of many preconceptions and reservations himself, Schnyder remembers.



In this spirit, the Johnson Foundation provided start-up funding for the Xenia prostitutes' counselling centre, for women's shelters, for the gay meet-up Anderland in Bern, for the Männerbüro (which provides counselling for men's issues) and the Lighthouse for AIDS patients in Zurich. According to Schnyder, the level-headed English attitude also made it easier to award money to controversial art exhibitions, such as that of the sculptor Richard Serra. Years before the issue of food waste hit the headlines, the Johnson Foundation was involved in the launch of the first Swiss food bank, Schweizer Tafel, which today redistributes 16 tonnes of surplus food every day to those in poverty. 'I remember well,' says Schnyder, 'when the project's founder sat in my office. I encouraged her to launch the idea because I felt she was picking up on something important.' This also gave rise to the now well-known Tischlein deck dich project, which provides food to people on social welfare.

## The Revocation of the Codicil

Schnyder drew a clear line between the activities of the foundation and the arena of world politics: 'We consistently rejected extreme positions. We didn't support anything that was ideological.' When funding a children's home in South Africa, for example, the foundation checked that no militant Black civil rights activists were being co-financed. Another topic for Schnyder was the codicil decreed by June Johnson, which prohibited the foundation from making donations to the communist states of Russia and China as well as Germany (because of its National Socialist past). Schnyder considers the revocation of the codicil at the end of the 1990s one of the highlights of his time at the helm of the foundation. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the slow opening of China contributed to establishing the legal basis for this decision.

It was important to Schnyder to maintain a family atmosphere on the foundation board. Before the meetings, which took place three times a year, the trustees and management always had dinner together—in a modest setting, as he emphasises. The foundation also kept a close eye on the budget for annual visits to the development projects it was funding all over the world. From time to time, world-famous personalities sat on the board of trustees, such as exhibition maker Harald Szeemann. This was good for the foundation's public image, but Schnyder says that a stronger influence was exerted by quiet figures such as the music expert and former priest at Bern Münster Martin Hubacher, the development expert Peter Sypcher or the long-standing president of the board Max Gsell, thanks to whose mediation the foundation received a substantial secondary endowment.

Schnyder has particularly fond memories of an almost intimate moment in a board meeting in 2008. Schnyder's wife was seriously ill in hospital, and yet they brought her in without his knowledge, to listen to a chamber concert performed at the board's summer meeting. For the last time. 'A touching moment—a farewell,' Schnyder recalls.

## The Marriage of Profit and Philanthropy

Can good works also yield returns? A new type of foundation entrepreneurship and new forms of public-private partnership are creating efficient financing models in the field of sustainable development. Whether these models will prove successful in the long run remains to be seen. A survey.

The current boom of new financing models in philanthropy is the result of two separate developments. On the one hand, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, drawn up in 2015, made it clear that a substantial part of the roughly 3 trillion dollars needed annually must come from the private sector. This created a need for new and more efficient financing instruments to achieve these ambitious goals. On the other hand, there were increasing examples that making profits and creating philanthropic value do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Put simply, until recently the prevalent thinking was that money is earned with the head and given with the heart. The new financing models promise that good works can also yield returns, which can then be invested in further charitable projects. Whether this 'ingenious lever' is really suitable for widespread use remains to be shown.

The magic word is impact bonds. The core principle of these bonds is that they fund social aid projects and at the same time yield an interest or return. Impact bonds are a category of so-called impact investment. According to the New York based Global Impact Investing Institute, the volume of international impact investment is expected to grow from 228 billion dollars at the end of 2017 to 400 billion by 2020. Pension funds and banks are the main participants in this form of investment. One of the oldest impact investors is BlueOrchard in Zurich, which manages microfinance bonds.

Impact bonds, which are increasingly considered the cutting-edge of innovation in finance, are the brainchild of banks and corporate economics. Accordingly, foundations and organisations with links to the business world were among the first to use them. These new players often believe that development and social projects that are organised according to the principles of commercial enterprises can achieve better results than traditional financing models.

The obvious advantage is that these approaches and claims reach a whole new category of donors. However, it is becoming clear that these new financing models are only suitable for easily quantifiable projects and can thus only reach a portion of the potential beneficiaries of philanthropy.

## Experience in India, Bern and Africa

There is still a lack of widely supported experience and evaluations. But there are initial case studies, such as the first Development Impact Bond issued by the UBS Optimus Foundation, which has already produced concrete results.

The UBS Foundation's Development Impact Bond is one of 121 social impact bonds worldwide that had mobilised 413 million dollars by autumn 2018, according to the results of a survey by the London-based organisation Social Finance, which launched the first social impact bond of this kind in 2010.

Specifically, in 2015 the investor, the UBS Optimus Foundation, gave the Indian organisation Educate Girls a loan of 270 000 dollars over three years. The non-governmental organisation (NGO) was tasked with increasing the school participation of girls in 141 villages in Rajasthan, India. The Indian NGO had clear targets for how many of the 800 girls between six and fourteen years of age in the region who were not attending school needed to be enrolled, and what learning goals they should achieve.

The amount loaned by the UBS Foundation was guaranteed by a so-called Outcome Funder, the UK based Children's Investment Fund Foundation, who assumed the positive risks. If the set targets were exceeded, this charitable foundation would pay an agreed return to the investor. If these targets were not met, the UBS Optimus Foundation would bear the risks—i.e. the 270 000 dollars—itsself. The return, which in this model is agreed in advance as a percentage of the investment, can also be seen as interest from the investor's point of view. However, the amount of interest is not based on the fluctuations of the capital market, but on the degree to which the project achieves its goals.

For the UBS Foundation, this was a worthwhile investment: since the targets were clearly exceeded, not only did the invested sum flow back, but also a corresponding return. In this case, this amounted to an additional 144 085 dollars. For the Indian NGO, the bond was more than a conventional loan. According to Educate Girls' founder Safeena Husain, the unusually long three-year time frame enabled the organisation to develop innovations such as new lesson plans.

The terms 'social', 'development' or 'humanitarian' impact bonds are often used synonymously. Domestic projects are often referred to as social impact bonds and those involving international development organisations as development impact bonds. Humanitarian impact bonds are those that pursue humanitarian goals, i.e. saving lives or providing medical aid in conflict situations.

The UBS project in Rajasthan served as the basis and inspiration for a new development impact bond in other Indian states. The UBS Foundation is once again involved in the project. The new bond of 11 million dollars is also backed by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, the UK Development Office (FCDO) and other potent donors.

Many social impact bonds are not about financing projects in poor countries, but about addressing the need right on our doorstep. The method also works on a small scale. Since it speaks the language of business, it is suited to getting local co-funders from the private sector on board.

The abovementioned British organisation Social Finance also lists the first social impact bond within Switzerland, issued by the Department of Health and Social Welfare of the Canton of Bern to benefit a labour market integration project for refugees with full or temporary asylum status. The service provider is Caritas Bern and the lenders are the Fokus Bern entrepreneurial initiative and the asset manager Invethos, for an amount of CHF 2.7 million. The repayment of the private loan—with a term of five years—by the government depends on the targets achieved. The potential profit or loss is shared between the investor and the service provider. Specifically, if the targets are not met, the loan is not repaid in full and the service provider (Caritas) carries the loss. If the targets are exceeded, the loan is repaid in full. In addition, the service provider makes a profit.

According to Caritas spokesperson Oliver Lüthi, the participation of donors from the business sector made it possible to align all the relevant players—businesses, public sector, private service providers—to work towards a very important goal and to expand their network. By the end of 2017, a total of 100 people had been accepted into the placement phase. Of these, 38 were permanently employed in the primary labour market by the summer of 2018, mainly in the catering and cleaning sectors. 18 were completing an internship. According to the participants' personal coaches, employers are primarily willing to employ people from the asylum sector if they are fully capable of working and possess the required skills and qualifications. According to the external evaluator, Bern-based Büro Bass, it is still too early to assess the outcome of this social impact bond.



## Risks and Opportunities

Huge returns are not to be expected from impact bonds. However, the average yields of 5% are quite respectable in the current interest rate environment. The world's first Humanitarian Impact Bond, issued by the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in September 2017, offers a yield of up to 7%.

The Humanitarian Impact Bond, with a volume of 26 million Swiss francs, is a financial contract in which the return depends on agreed development goals.

The ICRC bond has a term of five years and the money is earmarked to finance three rehabilitation centres in the Republic of Congo, Mali and Nigeria—i.e. in crisis regions. These centres provide people with wheelchairs, prostheses and medical care. The 26 million Swiss francs are sourced from about a dozen foundations and investors, such as Munich Re. If these new rehabilitation centres manage to return more people to mobility per employee than a predefined control group of comparable centres, the investors will receive a full repayment of their investment and a return of 7%.

The repayment of the investment plus interest is made by so-called Outcome Funders, in this case the governments of Switzerland, Belgium and the foundation of the Spanish financial group La Caixa. If the centres do not perform as well as the control group, investors could lose up to 40 per cent of their investment. For the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, participation in the bond is interesting because governments only pay if the projects are successful. The risk is borne by private companies and foundations. In other words, the risks are transferred from public to private funding.

The results-oriented approach via social, development or humanitarian impact bonds complements traditional philanthropic funding in international cooperation and domestic social work. The innovation risk of traditional public sector humanitarian donors is thus passed on to private investors. Or in the words of ICRC head Peter Maurer: 'With humanitarian bonds, we essentially want to mobilise money that would otherwise not be used for humanitarian activities.'<sup>1</sup>

The advantage of involving private investors is that the investment is made under business conditions and not just as a write-off donation to a charitable cause. The bonds therefore attract new donors from the business community who might otherwise put their money elsewhere. Whether this produces better development results remains an open question. The international community is very invested in the bonds achieving their main goal, namely, to mobilise additional funding from the private sector to reach the UN Development Goals 2030.

<sup>1</sup> See: Credit Suisse Bulletin, Heft 3, 2018.

## Foundation Management Today

**Managing a foundation professionally requires a commitment to 'foundation governance', defined by comprehensible, qualified, transparent and sustainable action. This aligns with the principles of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation.**

In Swiss law, foundations are discrete legal entities founded on private initiative and subject to a permissive legal framework. If they are committed to a public or charitable purpose, foundations benefit from tax exemption. A charitable foundation is therefore guided by both a privately motivated purpose and a public obligation. The question of how to meet this public obligation in a professional and transparent manner has been the focus of discussion and action in the foundation sector in recent years.

At first glance, effectively implementing a foundation's purpose to make a valuable contribution to the common good seems like a straightforward task, well-suited for people who wish to engage in meaningful voluntary work. In today's environment, however, the task of the foundation board is increasingly proving to be a demanding and time-consuming commitment. It requires expertise, experience and a good understanding of contemporary foundation management. Managing a foundation professionally requires a commitment to so-called 'foundation governance', a set of principles characterised by comprehensible, qualified, transparent and sustainable action. The fact that a foundation is self-governed and not accountable to owners, members or shareholders increases the demand for (self-)regulation in accordance with the principles of foundation governance.

In 2005, SwissFoundations published the first version of the Swiss Foundation Code, which has since been revised and amended several times. Alongside other charitable foundations and members of the association, the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation endorses the goals of SwissFoundations and the recommendations of the code. The foundation board acts in accordance with the three principles of the code: efficient and effective implementation of the foundation's purpose, maintenance of a balanced relationship between management and (self-)regulation (checks and balances), and transparency regarding the foundation's basic tenets, objectives, structures and activities.

*The efficient and effective implementation of the foundation's purpose* requires regular examination and review of its practices with reference to the founding declaration while also considering the tradition, current context and future orientation of the foundation. This is especially challenging for a foundation with four different funding sectors, since there are high demands on the development, planning and implementation of specific goals and orientations in each of these funding areas. A look back at the foundation's 50 years of funding practice demonstrates the diversity in interpreting its purpose over the years. Funding policy was always shaped by the spirit of the times and the changing socio-political environment. The periodic review of the foundation's practices to ensure effective and future-oriented interpretation of its original purpose is therefore one of the central and ongoing tasks of the foundation board.

Maintaining four very different funding sectors while also managing the foundation's assets requires considerable specialist knowledge in the management of the foundation. The members of the board therefore represent various areas of expertise, forming an important resource for both specialist and practical knowledge. Each of the funding sectors as well as the finance and investment committees are represented by trustees with professional expertise in these areas. A profile of requirements is defined for each area of expertise represented on the board. In the event of a personnel change, this profile is reviewed and adapted with regard to overall strategy, medium and long-term needs of the foundation and continuity. These profiles are important for managing succession on the board and guarding against co-optation. In order to ensure a transparent and successful recruitment process, the board of trustees also publicly advertised the position of President of the Foundation. The expertise and specialist knowledge of the board members are compensated financially on a moderate scale commensurate with the requirements of their position.

Highly qualified members of the board are imperative to continuously improve the professionalism of foundation's processes and decisions. Cultivating a regular exchange between the operational and strategic levels is also crucial for generating, recording, applying and transmitting relevant knowledge. This is demanding for everyone involved. The board of trustees and the management office therefore emphasise that as an organisation they are always learning. This process includes open discussions, exchange with other foundations and foundation representatives as well as joint workshops and advanced training courses for staff and trustees. This ensures a shared basis on which board and management are able to build their understanding of strategic and operational governance.

To supplement the resources of the permanent organisation the foundation relies on the expertise of external professionals. They advise the foundation on questions of asset or property management as well as at the level of individual funding sectors. The involvement of external specialists has proved extremely valuable when the foundation initiates new projects or partnerships in asset management or funding practice, especially because it contributes to building knowledge in previously unexplored subject areas.

The continuous (re-)organisation of the funding areas is an important part of the foundation's work, and essential to the effective implementation of its declared purpose. The financial basis for these funding practices is maintained with appropriate and profitable asset management. Professional asset administration is therefore among the core responsibilities of the foundation. Investments are made according to the principles of liquidity, profitability and security and in keeping with the foundation's capacity or willingness to take risks. Profits are generated in line with market rate returns in order to maintain the assets' purchasing power in the long term and to enable funds for grants to remain as high and constant as possible.

At the same time, every foundation should ensure that its investments support or at least do not contradict its purpose. In the case of the Johnson Foundation, given its stated mission 'to contribute to improving people's quality of life', it is a question of ethical credibility to invest the foundation's money in institutions and companies that meet sustainability criteria. In recent years, the foundation has therefore thought long and hard about how to further its purpose through suitable, targeted investments. The foundation has fully committed to investing all its assets sustainably. Investment decisions have since been based on environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria. This commitment to a sustainable investment strategy is in line with the recommendations for asset management given in the Swiss Foundation Code.

With regard to establishing a *balanced relationship between management and (self-)regulation (checks and balances)*, the foundation is on solid ground in its anniversary year of 2019. Suitable instruments are in place at all levels of the organization that enable the foundation board to professionally manage, supervise and control the management processes: planning and budgeting annual performance, cost accounting in accordance with the Swiss standard GAAP FER 21, external controlling of assets, an annual risk analysis, an effective internal system of controls and regular self-evaluation of the foundation board. These all contribute to the transparent and responsible governance of the foundation. An internet-based system provides a more efficient way of tracking and processing applications, enabling a transparent decision-making process in which any conflicts of interest are declared.

In the past few years the Johnson Foundation has also worked towards the third recommendation of the Swiss Foundation Code, i.e. to create *transparency with regard to the basic tenets, objectives, structures and activities of the foundation*. As a contemporary foundation, it envisions its role as an active, creative and visible institution in the sectors it funds. Project partnerships, in the form of cooperation with other foundations and with the public sector, can expand and enhance its impact. By sharing competence and know-how as well as financial and human resources, such partnerships enable the scaling-up of projects to achieve a larger impact, something which the foundation would not be able to achieve on its own. Partnerships are also extremely valuable on an organisational level: sharing information, monitoring, evaluation and results, as well as joint planning encourage the foundation to reflect on and improve its own activities.

There are examples of partnerships in all funding areas. In the sector 'Medical Research', the Johnson Foundation cooperated with another foundation to support a research programme in palliative care with the objective of sustainably developing and expanding research competence and infrastructure in Switzerland. Two joint research projects in the areas of 'Medical Research' and 'Victims of Conflict and Violence' for improving diagnosis and health care in refugee camps are planned in partnership with other institutions. For its adult vocational training project, the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation is working in partnership with the Departments of Education and Health and Welfare of the Canton of Bern. In the field of culture, cooperation with the public sector and other foundations provides support for young artists (or groups) as well as for special projects.

An informative website and annual reports that are both visually attractive and interesting to read increase the transparency and visibility of the foundation's current activities and funding projects. The present publication, which charts the foundation's turbulent 50-year history, also sheds light on the basic tenets of the foundation, the origin of its wealth, the personalities and background of its founders, its past and current funding practices as well as the organisation and the people that infuse the foundation with life.

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## Appendix

William Morgan and Mike Jones,  
Aerospace Bristol

## The Development and Function of the Blind Rivet

*Aerospace Bristol is a new aviation heritage museum located on the historic Filton Airfield in Bristol. In 1910 the Bristol Aeroplane Company was founded on the site which later became the birthplace of Concorde. The museum tells the story of Bristol's rich aviation heritage. In 2016 it was awarded a generous grant from the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation for the development of its education facilities. Two museum volunteers describe the history and function of blind rivets.*

Riveting is the process of joining or fastening plates of metal with mechanical fasteners or 'rivets' and was first used in buildings and ships to join iron parts. Riveting became common in the aerospace industry when aluminium alloy was introduced, as aluminium could not be welded reliably. Most aeroplane structures in the 1930s were wooden or metal with fabric covering and made use of hollow rivets that were applied with a hand tool. Prior to 1936, this riveting process required access to both sides of the rivet to fasten it. However, this was a difficult situation for aircraft manufacture as rivets are often required in 'blind' locations within the structure.

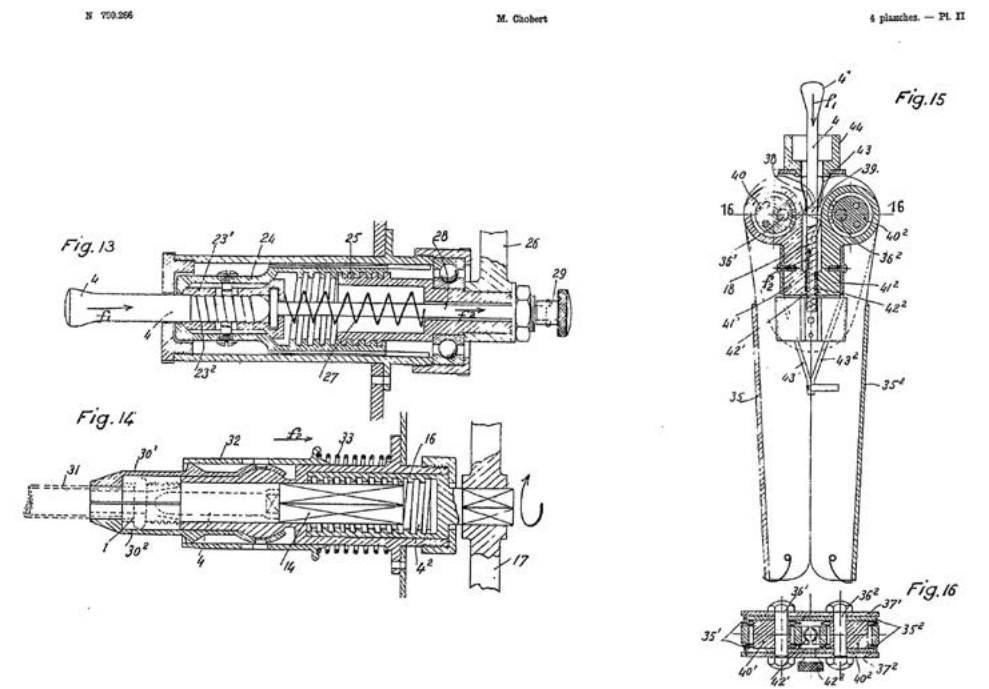
In 1936 Stanley Thomas Johnson founded Avdel (originally Aviation Developments) in Surrey, UK, a company that manufactured blind fastening systems and tools. 'Blind rivets', invented and developed by Avdel, can be fixed without access to the back, which brilliantly solved the problem of riveting aircraft parts together. This is especially true of aircraft with tubular structures where access to the inside is impossible.

How does it work? The Avdel blind rivet is first inserted into a pre-drilled hole in the pieces of metal that need to be joined. A rivet gun then pulls the mandrel (or shaft) up which forces the back of the rivet head outwards, securing the two pieces of metal together and fixing the rivet in place. The stem of the rivet is then broken off and the remains are smoothed away.

Jacques Chobert of Avdel invented what is now known as the Chobert blind rivet in the 1930s. It is suitable for the assembly of thick materials and riveting through uneven or irregular shaped holes. In addition, 50 Chobert rivets could be loaded into a gun at once, rather than having to reload after each rivet, thus drastically reducing aircraft manufacturing time. Skilled workers were able to rivet 50 Choberts in just two minutes. This was essential for aircraft production during WWII when the demand for aircraft skyrocketed and approximately 60–70% of the workforce during wartime were women.

Aircraft manufacture aside, blind rivets are essential in many areas of civil engineering, for instance in fastening rails onto railway sleepers. They also have wide domestic use, for example in kitchen appliances such as stainless-steel cookers.

William Morgan was an engineering apprentice with the Bristol Aeroplane Company before working on the Bristol Britannia aircraft and later, Concorde. Mike Jones was also an engineering apprentice at Filton and worked on the Bristol Freighter and Bristol Britannia, later becoming an instructor at the BAC Training College. William and Mike are both volunteers at Aerospace Bristol and were heavily involved in the development of the museum.





## 1910–2019: A Chronology of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation

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### 1910

Stanley Thomas Johnson is born on 10 June as the first child of Albert Harry and Sarah Jane Johnson in Godalming, Surrey, UK.

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### 1931

June Mary is born on 28 March as the daughter of Cyril and Ivy Vale in Kingston upon Hull, UK.

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### 1936

Stanley Thomas Johnson acquires the patents for the use and marketing of Chobert blind rivets.

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### 1936

Stanley Thomas Johnson founds Aviation Developments Ltd.

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### 1937

Ivy Vale marries her second husband Joseph Starr. June Mary takes his surname.

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### 1940

The trade press estimates that a quarter of all aircraft manufactured in the British Empire are assembled using Chobert rivets.

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### 1940

Stanley Thomas Johnson narrowly escapes death: although he has a valid ticket, he does not board the passenger ship *City of Benares*, which is sunk by German submarines.

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### 1941

Aviation Developments Ltd. is registered in Canada.

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### 1945

Aviation Developments Inc. is registered in the United States.

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### 1948

There is a rising demand for blind rivets – as ear tags for livestock.

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### 1954

Stanley Thomas Johnson settles in Geneva. He marries June Mary Starr in Burbank, USA. The couple live together at Quai Gustave-Ador 62 in Geneva.

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### 1961

Stanley Thomas Johnson's company is renamed 'Avdel'.

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### 1967

Stanley Thomas Johnson dies on 1 February at the age of 56 in the American Hospital in Neuilly-sur-Seine near Paris. He is cremated and laid to rest in the cemetery of Saint-Georges in Geneva.

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### 1969

June Mary Johnson dies on 7 April at the age of 38 in her apartment in Geneva. The circumstances of her death are never fully clarified. Following the death of Stanley Thomas, his trustee Hugo Spühler had persuaded her to appoint a charitable foundation as the main beneficiary of her will.

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The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation is established on 25 September with a start capital of 1.5 million US dollars. The foundation charter declares its purpose as follows: Fine arts, promotion of the objectives of the ICRC in alleviating the conditions of people in times of war and of refugees, scientific research, special grants. The charter includes a so-called codicil, which prohibits the funding of projects in China, the Soviet Union and both German states.

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The first grants are awarded to the Royal Free Hospital in London and the ICRC for the victims of earthquakes and floods in Romania and Peru.

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### 1972

Hugo Spühler is elected as president of the foundation board.

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### 1977

The foundation moves into offices at Eigerplatz in Bern.

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### 1987

On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Stanley Thomas Johnson, the Lagan College in Belfast, Ireland is awarded a grant of £ 100 000 for building and furnishing a new library in his remembrance, The Stanley Thomas Johnson Library.

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### 1998

The codicil is revoked.

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### 1999

30-year anniversary with a piano recital at the Kultur-Casino Bern.

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## 2008

The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation receives a significant additional endowment. As a result it now supports school projects, mainly in the Canton of Bern, and provides education grants for individuals.

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## 2013

For the first time since the foundation was established, the board is composed entirely of trustees from Switzerland and no longer includes British representatives.

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## 2013

Launch of the June Johnson Dance Prize in cooperation with the Federal Office of Culture.

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## 2014

Collaboration with the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences for a research programme in palliative care.

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## 2015

The foundation moves to offices at Schwanengasse 6 in the centre of Bern.

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## 2016

On the occasion of the 50-year anniversary of the foundation in 2019, a special grant of £ 180 000 is awarded to the museum and education centre Aerospace Bristol to develop the Stanley Thomas Johnson Learning Room.

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Launch of the project '2<sup>nd</sup> Chance for a 1<sup>st</sup> Education' in cooperation with the Education and Health and Welfare Departments of the Canton of Bern.

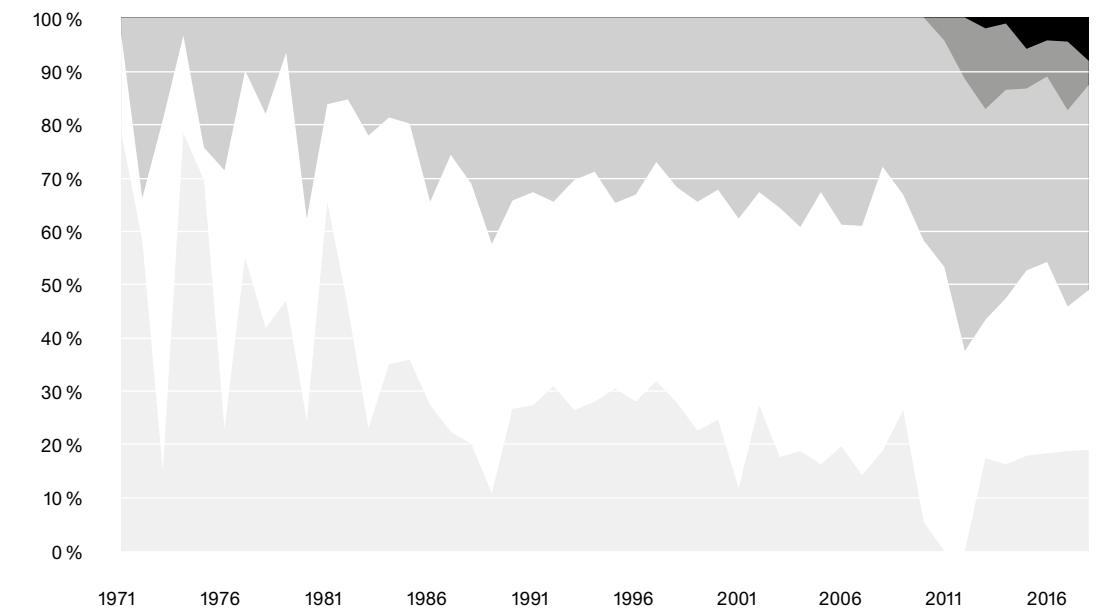
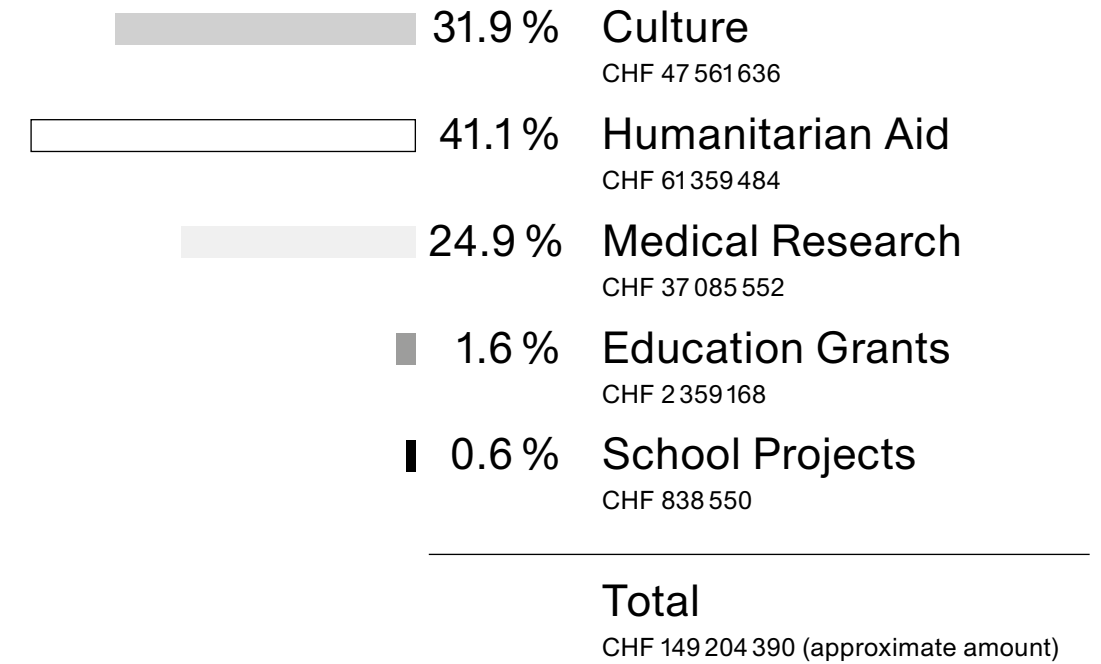
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## 2019

The foundation marks its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the publication of *Uplift—the History of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation* and a celebration at Dampfzentrale Bern on 21 June.

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## 150 Million: The Distribution of Funds 1971–2018



## Trustees, Presidents of the Board and Managing Directors since 1969

### Presidents

	from	to
Elsie Metcalfe	1969	1970
Hugo Spühler	1970	1981
Hansfelix Stump	1981	1994
Christoph Fröhlich	1994	1996
Kenneth Hobbs	1997	2004
Max Gsell	2004	2009
Thomas Zachmann	2010	2011
Mirjam Eglin	2012	today

### Honorary Board Members

Hugo Spühler	1985	1999
Elsie Metcalfe	1987	1994
Katharina Hunziker-Bieri	2009	today

### General Secretaries and Managing Directors

Elsie Metcalfe	1973	1978
Albrecht Schwarz	1978	1992
Josef Schnyder	1992	2010
Judith Safford	2010	2013
Guido Münzel	2014	today

## Foundation Board

	from	to
Alexander von Muralt	1969	1976
Elsie Metcalfe	1969	1972
William Moore	1969	1976
Edward S. Pearson	1969	1976
Hansfelix Stump	1969	1996
Theophil von Mandach	1969	1988
Karl Dätwyler	1972	1973
F.A.G. Schoenberg	1976	1982
Walter Oberer	1976	1978
Kenneth Hobbs	1976	2004
Karl Eigenheer	1976	1981
Harald Szeemann	1979	1993
Hugo Spühler	1981	1988
Martin Hubacher	1983	2004
Alex Krneta	1983	2002
Alfred Rüegg	1989	2008
Ann Rose	1989	2002
Christoph Fröhlich	1990	1996
Hans-Dieter Vontobel	1996	2004
Peter Geiser	1997	2003
Beat Wismer	1999	today
Max Gsell	2000	2009
Peter Spycher	2002	2009
Ruth Warwick Cohen	2002	2013
Rolf Streuli	2002	2009
Charles David Wolfe	2002	2013
Ursula Frauchiger	2006	today
Kaspar Zehnder	2007	today
Thomas Zachmann	2009	2011
Hans Furthmüller	2010	2011
Lorenz Indermühle	2010	today
Walter Rumpf	2013	today
Roland Kobel	2013	today

## The Management Office in 2019

Guido Münzel, Managing Director	Beate Engel, Programme Manager Culture
Myriam Vetsch, Administrative Director	Beatrix Vogl, Administrator
Susanne Bachmann, Administrator	Danièle Héritier, Project Coordinator '2 <sup>nd</sup> Chance for a 1 <sup>st</sup> Education'

### Authors

Martin Bieri, Bern: Author, dramaturge and journalist based in Germany and Switzerland	Markus Mugglin, Marly FR: economics journalist, specialist in development corporation, former director of <i>Echo der Zeit</i>
Larissa Bizer, Basel: theatre and dance producer, member of ProduktionsDOCK, Basel	Bernhard Pulver, Bern: Dr. iur., emeritus state councillor of the Canton of Bern, Education Director of the Canton of Bern (2006–2018), Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Insel Group
Armand B. Cachelin, Bern: Dr. med., PhD, pharmacologist	Antoinette Schwab, Bern: economics journalist
Mirjam Eglin, Zurich: Dr., PhD in Natural Sciences, President of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, expert for the field Medical Research	Phyllida Shaw, London: cultural educator, freelance writer
Beate Engel, Bern: Art historian M.A., Culture Manager M.A.A.; Programme Manager Culture for the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation	Jürg Steiner, Köniz / Mittelhäusern: journalist at <i>Berner Zeitung</i> and freelance writer.
Claudia Gnehm, Zurich: interim director of the economics portfolio at <i>Blick</i>	Andreas Tobler, Bern: Prof. em., Dr. med., former Medical Director at Insel hospital and Insel Group
Peter Miles, London: freelance journalist, retired editor at BBC World Service Radio	Konrad Tobler, Bern: culture writer
Guido Münzel, Bern: lic. phil. I, dipl. Verbandsmanager (association manager) VMI; Managing Director of the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation	Julia Wehren, Jegenstorf: dance and theatre scholar

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The Swiss exhibition maker Harald Szeemann in his studio 'Fabbrica für geistige Gastarbeit'  
in Maggia, Switzerland, photographed in March 1995 with a picture by German artist Joerg Immendorff  
in the background (KEYSTONE/Niklaus Stauss) → p. 53

Photo galleries

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