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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,



Generosity is a very personal decision. Aristotle writes: «But to decide to whom to give it, and how large and when, and for what purpose and how, is neither in every man's power nor an easy matter».

There are many indications that giving is rewarding. All world religions have a more or less clear rule of giving at the core of their teachings. The Bible says: «He who gives generously will be enriched, and he who waters will also be watered himself». Behavioural research also confirms that giving makes people happy and that people who give are generally healthier.

Nevertheless, giving seems to be difficult for us. That is why tax incentives for giving are needed. Or fundraising techniques that remind us to donate to others. In this issue, we explore the question of why Switzerland offers the best conditions for philanthropy in international comparison, yet at the same time appears to show relatively below-average levels of engagement.

Regardless of these statistical findings, everyone can try for themselves how much giving gives – and how often a «warm glow» effect enhances their own well-being!

Wishing you a pleasant read,

Georg von Schnurbein

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Donations and Social Change

Macro-Micro Gap in Swiss Philanthropy: While the enabling environment for philanthropy in Switzerland is among the most favourable in the world, individual generosity seems to lag behind global averages. We argue that the gap is due to strong social safety nets and the wealth-generosity paradox.

By Abigail

GPEI as macro indicators and WGR as micro indicators

In the last quarter, two major benchmarks in the charitable sector were updated: the Global Philanthropy Environment Index (GPEI) and the World Giving Report (WGR). Viewed together, they capture philanthropy at different levels. The GPEI offers macro-level indicators, assessing the regulatory, fiscal, and socio-cultural conditions that shape giving across countries. In contrast, the WGR highlights micro-level indicators, focusing on individual behaviors such as donating and volunteering. Combined, they provide a comprehensive picture of the philanthropic landscape and enable meaningful cross-country comparisons. This article presents a snapshot of Switzerland's standing in the 2025 editions of both reports.

Strongly enabling environment

The Global Philanthropy Environment Index (GPEI) by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy measures the enabling environment for philanthropy based on expert country assessments. Since its launch in 2018, Switzerland has consistently ranked among the top performers alongside Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Singapore, and Swe-

den. This section reviews Switzerland's standing across the six GPEI pillars.

Switzerland maintains a perfect score (5.00/5.00) in the ease of operating a philanthropic organization, supported by clear laws on registration, operations, and dissolution. On domestic tax and fiscal issues, the country has improved, particularly following a reform in the canton of Zürich easing tax exemptions for activities abroad. As Switzerland's most influential canton, Zürich's decision is expected to shape practices nation-wide.

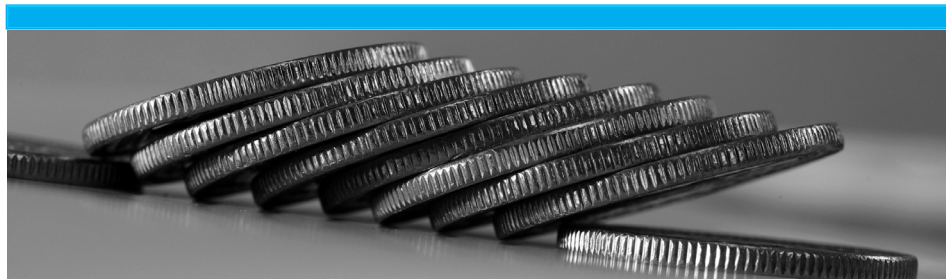
Scores on cross-border philanthropic flows have also risen. Although foreign donations remain ineligible for tax benefits unless channeled through a Swiss nonprofit, the growing use of intermediaries such as the Transnational Giving Europe (TGE) network has expanded opportunities. The political environment has improved as well, with stronger dialogue between authorities and the philanthropic sector, again driven by Zürich's update to the tax exemption criteria. Switzerland also secures perfect scores for the economic and socio-cultural environment. The economy is strong, with nonprofit donations reaching record highs despite the economic challenges and pandemic of 2020–22. Robust infrastruc-

ture fosters innovative forms of philanthropy, while a long tradition of giving and volunteering sustains a highly supportive socio-cultural climate. Philanthropic organizations also benefit from strong public trust, reinforcing Switzerland's leadership in the global philanthropic landscape.

Generosity gaps

The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) in the UK, former publisher of the World Giving Index (2010-2024), has introduced a new methodology for its global generosity study, now released as the World Giving Report (WGR). The WGR is based on online surveys of nationally representative respondents.

By donor type, Switzerland records a higher share of charity donors (45% of the population) than the European (41%) and global (36%) averages. In contrast, religious and direct donors are less common, bringing Switzerland's overall donor rate (57%) below Europe (59%) and the global average (64%). Yet in overseas aid and disaster relief, Switzerland stands



out, with 16% of the population contributing – well above the European (11%) and global (9%) average.

Volunteering follows a similar pattern. Volunteers as a percentage of population and average volunteer hours per person in Switzerland (20%, 8.1 hours) outperform Europe (18%, 6.4 hours) but falling short of global average (26%, 8.9 hours). The WGR reveals unsettling findings: 3 of the world's 5 least generous countries are members of the G7. Switzerland ranks 76th of 101 countries, with 0.65% of income donated – just above Europe's 0.64% but far below the global 1.04%. The WGR cites social and cultural norms as the cause explaining this pattern.

We argue that there are two more reasons as to why there is a gap between the "macro" indicators and "micro" indicators we observe above:

- (i) Communities in developing countries often substitute for limited state capacity in their social safety nets.
- (ii) Research shows that as income increases, the marginal share of income donated often decreases (the wealth-generosity paradox).

Abigail

Research assistant and doctoral student at CEPS

GPEI: <https://globalindices.indianapolis.iu.edu/>
WGR: <https://www.worldgivingreport.org/>

Global Philanthropy Workshop Basel: Focus on international perspectives

From 22 to 23 September 2025, CEPS is hosting a two-day workshop in Basel. Researchers and practitioners will discuss cross-border philanthropy.

Tackling global challenges together

The philanthropic sector is undergoing change. Climate change, poverty, health issues: the major challenges of our time transcend borders and require international cooperation. We are responding to this development by organising a workshop on «Global Philanthropy» from 22 to 23 September 2025.

The event, held in the renovated building of the Christoph Merian Foundation on St Alban's suburb, will bring together academics from around the world. The focus will be on new trends, strategies and models of global philanthropy and their impact on local communities and sustainable development. Particular interest will be paid to how philanthropic organisations cooperate with government agencies and what social, economic and political contexts shape their work.

High-profile speakers

The workshop will be opened by Prof. Dr. Pamala Wiepking from the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. She holds the Stead Family Chair in International Philanthropy and conducts research on global philanthropy. On the second day, Prof. Dr. Peter Frumkin from the Gradel Institute of Charity at Oxford University will speak about current developments in the sector.

The comprehensive programme presents concrete research findings from the field: presentations cover impact measurement of philanthropic interventions, the legitimacy of foundations, ethical dilemmas in fundraising, and corruption risks in foundation-funded government projects. A special focus is placed on the power dynamics and aspects of justice in the global transfer of philanthropic resources.

International networking

Participants come from Africa, America and Europe and bring different cultural perspectives to the table. Topics such as «Africapitalism», central American philanthropy ecosystems and British charities abroad demonstrate the global reach of the workshop. We are thankful for the funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), that allowed us to award travel grants to international participants to ensure broad geographical representation.

Bridge to the ERNOP conference

The timing is strategic: just two days later, the 12th International Research Conference of the European Research Network on Philanthropy will begin in Heidelberg. Basel and Heidelberg are only two and a half hours apart by train, making this an ideal opportunity for a philanthropy-intensive week.

Dominik Meier

All information about the Global Philanthropy Workshop: <https://conferences.unibas.ch/frontend/index.php?sub=134>

«Digital donations: simple, fast AND mobile.»

Interview with Marco Zaugg – CEO and founder of RaiseNow

CEPS: RaiseNow supports many organisations with digital fundraising. What do you currently see as the most significant change in donation behaviour?

M.Z.: The average of digital donation is increasing overall, while individual donation amounts are decreasing. People are therefore still willing to donate – despite potentially strained financial situations or precisely because of the great importance of charitable organisations in society. For NPOs, this means that once they have won over supporters, the barriers to donating must be as low as possible – donating should be quick and easy.



Marco Zaugg: Experienced Tech-4Good entrepreneur and founder of, among others, getunik, RaiseNow, and Weunity. Together with his teams, Marco Zaugg is committed to empowering changemakers and donors to create meaningful impact for society and the environment.

CEPS: How does the importance of simple and quick donations to NPOs manifest itself in practice?

M.Z.: Simple, fast AND mobile. 53.8% of donations are now made via mobile devices – this means that NPOs need to optimise their websites and, in particular, their donation tools for mobile use. Equally important is uncomplicated, fast and secure payment processing. Our figures show clear trends: in Switzerland, over 68% of donations are processed via TWINT. For amounts up to 30 Swiss francs, the share of TWINT is over 91%. In Germany and Austria, we are seeing similar developments with PayPal.

More insights into payment methods, donation patterns and trends can be found in the Digital Fundraising Study 2025:



Link to the study by RaiseNow:
<https://www.raisenow.com/en-ch/resources/fundraising-study/2025>

CEPS: What expectations do donors have of NPOs today before they are willing to give – especially in the digital realm?

M.Z.: Firstly, security in payment processing and secondly, trust in the organisation itself. The first point is primarily the responsibility of RaiseNow as a software provider for payment processing. We ensure that NPOs can integrate all important payment methods and emphasise this with notes in the donation forms such as 'Secure donations with RaiseNow'. The second point concerns NPOs directly. From our exchanges with fundraisers, we know that donors expect authenticity, they want to be able to track what happens to their donations, and they want to have a relationship with the organisations they support.

CEPS: What does good relationship management look like for NPOs?

M.Z.: In the DACH region, NPOs generate just under 9% of their digital donation volume through recurring donations – a relatively low figure by international standards. All NPOs should urgently follow up on this. Small and medium-sized organisations have particular potential in this area and should follow suit with more campaigns, outreach and communication. After all, relationship management is always about trust – something that NPOs must continuously work to build and earn.

CEPS: How can trust among donors be strengthened?

M.Z.: The foundation is built on reliable and secure technology. However, NPOs can enhance trust and loyalty above all by thinking beyond the traditional organisation-donor relationship, when the traditional relationship (organisation and donor) when it comes to fundraising. An important additional aspect is community fundraising. In community fundraising, donors themselves become fundraisers and can collect money for NPOs on birthdays or other special occasions. This creates potential for mobilisation, particularly through social media. Good examples are projects that integrate community fundraising into livestreams, or fundraising campaigns in the sports sector, or via platforms such as Strava.

There are many approaches here that can be flexibly adapted to the themes of NPOs. The focus is always on the fact that NPOs have supporters who can tap into new circles of potential donors through their networks.

CEPS: Finally, what kind of developments should NPOs focus on if they want to make their fundraising sustainable future-proof?

M.Z.: Digitalisation and community – for me, these are the two key concepts. It is about holistic digitalisation: from data management and payment processing to campaigning. It is clear that it is not getting any easier to attract new donors. That's why resources should be used as efficiently as possible – and the digitalisation of fundraising and of the entire organisation is a key step in this process. At the same time, it is about digital communities: using networks, creating connections and thereby reaching more people and getting them excited about a project.

CEPS: Thank you for the insights!

RaiseNow was founded in Zurich in 2015 and has been supporting social and environmental causes through technology ever since. The company develops solutions for digital donations and efficient payment processing. Its digital products enable organisations of all sizes to process donations and payments professionally and future-proof their fundraising.

CEPS INSIGHT

Graduation ceremony DAS in Nonprofit Management & Law

In June, CEPS had the pleasure of presenting the graduates of the Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) in Nonprofit Management & Law with their diplomas at a formal ceremony.

New publication

In the past quarter, research has been advanced by CEPS with publications in academic journals such as *Voluntas* and *Voluntary Sector Review*.

Overview of all CEPS publications:
<https://ceps.unibas.ch/de/publikationen/publikationen-uebersicht/>

Relationship status: It's complicated...

The relationship between the state and the NPO sector is multifaceted. Whether acting as executors of state mandates, representatives of interests vis-à-vis politicians, or partnering with public actors, NPOs need a good understanding of sector-specific functioning.

The interaction between the state and NPOs can take many different forms and is not always straightforward. On the one hand, the state sets the framework conditions for the activities of NPOs, and on the other hand, it also relies on the services provided by NPOs when welfare state tasks are not covered by the public sector itself or by the market. The state can influence NPOs and their service provision through service contracts and subsidies. In this role as contractors, NPOs are subject to increased state control.

Conversely, NPOs sometimes act as advocacy actors. They represent the interests of their members, target groups or causes and thus influence political decision-making processes. In this way, they act as the voice of civil society, but without the democratic legitimacy that political parties, for example, have.

Beyond these unequal relationships, the state and NPOs are increasingly entering into partnerships to tackle social challenges together. In the form of public-private partnerships or through approaches such as co-design, co-creation and co-production, projects are not only implemented jointly, but also developed jointly. Here,

the relationship is shifting from the classic client-contractor model to a partnership-based collaboration.

For relationships between public and non-profit actors to function well at the levels mentioned, an understanding of sector-specific practices is necessary. How both sides can understand each other and fulfil mutual expectations for the good of society is a central theme of the CAS Nonprofit & Public Management.

Elisabeth Hasse

Find out more about CAS Nonprofit & Public Management here:
<https://ceps.unibas.ch/de/weiterbildung/cas-nonprofit-public-management/>

NUMBER OF THE QUARTER 2'794

Since 2009, our bulletin „Philanthropie Aktuell“ has been presented background information on the world of philanthropy and provided insights into the work of CEPS. This free bulletin now reaches 2'794 people on its distribution list every quarter.

Subscribe here & an overview of all issues since 2009:
<https://ceps.unibas.ch/en/philanthropie-aktuell/>

Volunteering Survey 2025

The new Swiss Volunteering Survey has been published. It contains interesting facts and figures about volunteering in Switzerland.



The Swiss Volunteering Survey gets published by the Swiss Society for the Common Good (SSCG) and provides a comprehensive report for the fifth time already on volunteering in Switzerland.

The data collected in 2024 highlights the remarkable commitment of the Swiss: 86% of the population makes some form of voluntary contribution to the common good. 53% through monetary donations, 30% through material donations, 41% through formal volunteer work in associations and organisations, and 51% through informal engagement in their community. Despite signs of a shift towards more flexible forms of engagement, the level of volunteer work remains high.

These representative results are encouraging, particularly in light of concerns about a potential decline in engagement following past crises. However, newly added questions show that concerns about social cohesion remain high. This makes it all the more worthwhile to take a closer look at the Swiss Volunteering Survey.

Milan Weller

Further information & download Volunteering Survey 2025:
www.freiwilligenmonitor.ch

CALENDAR

Executive Education:

IL Finanzmanagement in NPO

Gunten
03 - 07 November 2025

CAS Nonprofit & Public Management

4 Module – Gunten & Basel
Start: 5 Januar 2026

IL Stiftungsmanagement

Sigriswil
02 - 06 März 2026

CAS Governance & Leadership

3 Module – Sigriswil & Basel
Start: 13 April 2026

MAS/DAS in Nonprofit Management & Law

Start at any time
[Register Now -> CEPS Executive Education](#)

FURTHER DATES

Global Philanthropy Workshop 2025

CEPS
22 - 23 September 2025

12th International Conference

ERNOP Heidelberg
25 - 26 September 2025

Swiss Impact Forum 2025

B Lab Schweiz
12 November 2025

Impact Week Malmö

Impact Europe
18 November 2025

Schweizer Stiftungstag 2025

proFonds
18 November 2025

PUBLISHER



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LAYOUT & PICTURES

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