

Supporting children: a critical and sound investment, say foundations

Brussels, 18 November 2011 – Supporting children today to improve their prospects of a brighter tomorrow is a critical social as well as economic investment that European foundations are making for the future. These foundations, free from political influence, are in a unique position to directly address the needs of children and young people, recognised amongst the most vulnerable groups in society. In the run up to the Universal Children’s Day on 20 November, the EFC is highlighting some of the innovative work undertaken by its members in this field.

Foundations working together to make a greater impact on children and youth policy at the European level is of critical importance. Responding to this need, the EFC **Children and Youth Interest Group**¹ provides a platform for participating foundations to learn, network, exchange experience and discuss opportunities for collaboration to support children and young people. Also launched in 2009, the **Learning for Wellbeing Consortium of Foundations in Europe** aims to inspire and engage policy makers, foundations and other stakeholders in Europe to listen more to children and young people, and to take more initiatives with them for their well-being in their learning environments (as underlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

“Why are foundations so well positioned to invest in children? Because our only interest is the interest of young children...” Leontien Peeters, Bernard van Leer Foundation

EFC members target children and young people via a broad spectrum of activities including promoting values, rights and democracy-learning; fighting poverty; supporting early childhood development and child protection; and advancing children's overall well-being. A selection of innovative initiatives by EFC members in this field is available below:

¹ Participating organisations: Bernard van Leer Foundation; Bertelsmann Stiftung; Freudenberg Stiftung (Chair); Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian; Fundació 'la Caixa'; Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace; Jacobs Foundation; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; King Baudouin Foundation; Körber- Stiftung; Stiftung Mercator; The Atlantic Philanthropies; The Oak Foundation; Robert Bosch Stiftung; Universal Education Foundation; Velux Foundations

Four EFC members²

Poverty is Not a Game (PING) - PING is an online game made for secondary schools, forming a starting point to discuss the subject of poverty and what it means to be poor. The partners of the PING project want to contribute to the social debate by encouraging the use of games at school as a tool to open the difficult discussion about poverty. [Read more](#)

Bernard van Leer Foundation (The Netherlands)

Improving pre-school opportunities for Roma children - Throughout 2010 the Bernard van Leer Foundation worked alongside other European foundations through the EFC Forum for Roma Inclusion to improve the quality of pre-school opportunities for young Roma children. The foundation has also been sharing knowledge between educators and policymakers on what works best in the classroom and in community centres. In March 2010, it held a workshop on early childhood development within Roma communities, attended by Roma representatives, European foundations and European networks of early childhood development specialists. [Read more](#)

Jacobs Foundation (Switzerland)

Luta Pela Paz (Fight for Peace) – This three-year project targets 340 young people between 12 and 21 years old of both sexes in the *favela* communities of Rio de Janeiro. Fight for Peace (FFP) works to confront the problems these children face and offer practical alternatives via sports (boxing and martial arts), education, support services and the promotion of youth leadership. [Read more](#)

Freudenberg Stiftung (Germany)

One Square Kilometre of Education - One Square Kilometer of Education is a long-term joint learning and development platform for people and organisations, who assume responsibility for

² The King Baudouin Foundation (BE), Robert Bosch Stiftung (GER), Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (PT) and Fondation Bernheim (BE)

the successful education of all children and adolescents within a city district or a rural community.

[Read more](#)

For more information:

[Visit the Children and Youth Interest Group page](#)

[Visit the Learning for Wellbeing Consortium of Foundations in Europe website](#)

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the EFC

The European Foundation Centre (EFC), founded in 1989, is an association representing more than 230 public-benefit foundations and corporate funders active in philanthropy in Europe and beyond. The EFC develops and pursues activities in line with its objectives: creating an enabling legal and fiscal environment for foundations; documenting the foundation landscape; strengthening the infrastructure of the foundation sector; and promoting collaboration, both among foundations and between foundations and other actors, to advance the public good in Europe and beyond.

www.efc.be

About foundations in Europe

It is estimated that there are some 110,000 foundations in Europe, collectively spending between 83 and 150 billion euros annually on projects and programmes, and providing employment to up to one million Europeans. Foundations come in many shapes and sizes, with some offering grants while others prefer to operate their own programmes. In towns, cities, regions and countries across Europe, they can be found running or funding hospitals and universities; protecting historic buildings, promoting cultural activities, stimulating economic development and employment, supporting scientific excellence, advancing civil and human rights, engaging in environmental conservation, and much, much more.