

Global Social Responsibility

The Trafigura Foundation was founded in 2007 by the Trafigura group which is a leading international commodities trading and logistics company. Since starting its operations it has granted more than 32 million USD in 26 countries. The CEPS speaks with Vincent Faber, Executive Director of the foundation.

CEPS: What was the reason for the Trafigura corporation to establish its own foundation?

V.F.: It is obvious today that the size and scope of social issues needing to be addressed in the world – poverty, access to education, access to health, to water, global warming, etc. – are now beyond the sole capacity of states/governments, and even less so of private individuals. Big corporations such as Trafigura, especially those operating transnationally, are undoubtedly social actors in a global society of which they are genuine citizens. As such, they have clear responsibilities on which it is evident – primarily to themselves – they cannot turn a blind eye.

Vincent Faber



The trained geophysicist initially worked for an international corporation in the energy field and in consulting. At the age of 30, Vincent changed his career path and decided to devote his professional life to international humanitarian work. He was called upon in 2008 to lead the newly-created Trafigura Foundation.

It is also obviously a corporate interest to operate in a context of stability, with people enjoying a good education, a dignified life, and a healthy environment. Last but not least, a corporation is also the reflection of its employees' values. We are blessed with an extremely multicultural and diverse staff. As everyday people working in countries with economic and social challenges, they naturally feel compelled to act. The company realised that it was not only a duty, but also objectively sensible to create a structure to give support and guidance to our people, to respond to their appeal to 'give back' to the local communities

CEPS: What are the overarching goals of the foundation?

V.F.: I could answer by just describing our three focus areas as a grant-maker: sustainable development, education &

integration and health, all roads to social and economic development. Basically, our mission is to give to our NGO partners the financial means to carry out and strengthen their programmes around those three pillars. But beyond that particular mission, I believe we have other ones, just as fundamental for a corporate foundation like ours: to raise the company's awareness of social issues hindering the life and dignity of the communities and people 'at our doorstep', to have our employees understand that they can be part of the solution, and ultimately to foster links and create the channels to get them to act concretely, if so they wish.

CEPS: How do you work together with your partners?

V.F.: We literally engage with our partners. We do not just give money; we also provide strategic and managerial support to our partners, sometimes for instance by sitting on their boards. We believe in competence-sharing: we lend our partners the kind of business acumen we have at our fingertips to help them create and implement well-rounded, successful programmes. As a matter of fact, our actions embody the seven principles of Venture Philanthropy, as defined by the European Venture Philanthropy Association, in our collaboration with our grantees: high engagement, organisational capacity-building, multi-year support, non-financial support, involvement of networks, tailored financing, and impact measurement.

CEPS: In which way does the foundation and corporation share the same vision?

V.F.: Although our foundation is statutorily independent from the company in its decisions, we are embedded in the 'daily life' of the Trafigura Group, for the simple reason that a key pillar of our mission is to build bridges between our almost 10,000 colleagues and the communities in which they operate. This vision is of course entirely shared by the company, as the Trafigura Foundation is the instrument which allows it to carry out and to give

structure its responsibility as a social actor in the human society. Moreover, let's not forget that a vision builds upon a culture. The connection between the foundation and the company has enabled us to develop our modus operandi from the latter's corporate values: agility, versatility, responsiveness, and the courage to innovate and take risks. Reciprocally, I believe our work also influences the way the business is being carried out, with more attention being paid to the impact it has on the communities around us, and greater awareness of the social responsibility we bear as a major global economic player.

CEPS: Thank you very much!

CEPS INSIGHT

Publication Working Paper

In the Working Paper Series the essay "Why nonprofit? – Nonprofit support organizations for NPO in mixed industries" was published by Sibylle Studer, Sara Stühlinger and Georg von Schnurbein.

www.ceps.unibas.ch/publikationen/ceps-working-paper-series/

Farewell of team members

Rafael Wyser has left the CEPS on 30 August. Sibylle Studer has started a new challenge with Interface Consulting starting 1 September. She will continue in a part-time position with the CEPS. We wish both them all the best!

Public lecture series

The CEPS together with the law faculty has launched a public lecture series "Societal responsibility of foundations" in the winter semester 2014. The lecture will be given in German. The first will be held by Dr. Christoph Degen with the title "Stifterwille und Gemeinwohl"

www.ius.unibas.ch www.ceps.unibas.ch

NEWS

European Day of foundations

On 1 October 2014 takes place the second European day of foundations. Foundations and associations are invited to use this day to present their work and to organize own events.

www.tag-der-stiftungen.ch