

# NEWS LETTER

 King Baudouin  
Foundation  
*Working together for a better society*

Under the Honorary Chairmanship of HM Queen Mathilde

WINTER 2023

Lessons from the  
end of the world  
Explorers' legacy helps  
chart climate solutions



## EDITORIAL

Brieuc Van Damme  
CEO

## EXPLORING, CONNECTING

Stepping out of our comfort zone is, for me, essential if we're to progress, as individuals or a society, and certainly as philanthropists. Without reaching out to people and communities beyond the scope of our daily routines, without connecting, listening, and forging new relationships, we can't hope to build a better society that works for everyone. I think you'll find plenty to nourish that thought in this issue of the Newsletter.

As a lover myself of outdoor pursuits in the icy wilderness, I can appreciate how far out of their comfort zone Adrien de Gerlache and the crew of the Belgica must have felt when they became the first people to survive an Antarctic winter. Our cover story celebrates the 125th anniversary of their bravery and shows how we can use a role as custodians of our heritage to inspire young people today to meet the environmental challenges facing our future. As exhibition curator Jill Peeters notes, solutions can be found in making vital new links among researchers, as each unlocks a part of the vast and complex puzzle driving climate change.

Going boldly into the unknown and reaching out to those whose voices are often unheard has been at the heart of our FETA project, to foster a green transition that leaves no one behind. We're delighted now to be sharing FETA's key lessons on how to engage with hard-to-reach citizens, so that philanthropists everywhere can broaden their impact. Elsewhere in the Newsletter, Gerald Abila of KBF Africa Prize winners BarefootLaw urges the rest of the world to learn from a continent that many overlook. Let us, he says, embrace "ubuntu" – favouring conciliation that works for everyone over "winner-takes-all" confrontation.

As I thank our donors and the Belgian National Lottery and its players for their support throughout 2023, I'm pleased to share some thoughts from myself and Philea CEO Delphine Moralis as we discuss philanthropic priorities for the Philea Forum 2024 in Belgium. We look forward to seeing many of you in Ghent in May!

The King Baudouin Foundation is an independent, pluralistic foundation working in Belgium and at European and international level. We are seeking to change society for the better, so we invest in inspiring projects and individuals. The Foundation was set up in 1976, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of King Baudouin's reign.

# NEWS LETTER

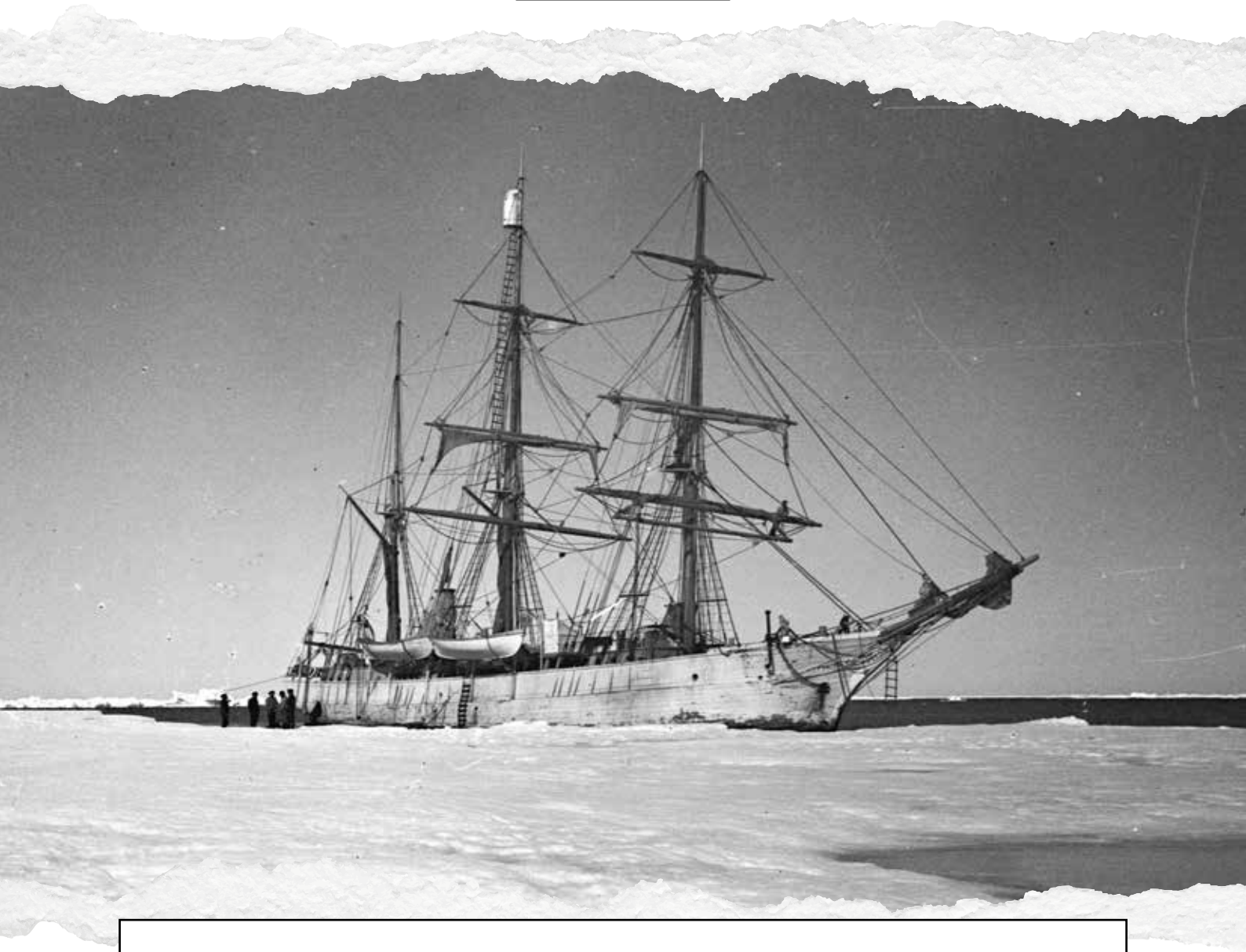
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## LOOKING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

Stewardship of our heritage has a vital place in the activities of the King Baudouin Foundation. In an age of anxiety about our planetary future, KBF's BELvue museum is making Belgium's rich historical legacy relevant to today's young generation – mining the past to illuminate the present and help youngsters chart their own way forward.

Celebrated in Belgium yet all but unknown farther afield, the pioneering voyage of the steamship Belgica to explore the Antarctic is the subject of a thought-provoking, interactive exhibition.

Marking the expedition's 125th anniversary, the playfully entitled "Looking for the End of the World!" takes visitors on a journey to Antarctica today, and through the global environmental crisis of which the polar continent is symptomatic, into a place of hope, where each of us can help navigate this existential challenge and find ways forward for humanity.

KBF turned not to a historian as curator but to Jill Peeters, the face of the Belgian TV weather report and a meteorologist with an international reputation for raising awareness of climate change.

"The structure of the proposed display space at BELvue, with three rooms, meant that we quickly saw that we could present those as the past, present, and future," says Peeters. "This is an exhibition about something that we cannot show – the climate. And we have used the story of the Belgica to help people see it."



### Into the void

The historical display in the first room of the tour – entitled “Voyage into the Unknown” – offers artefacts and images from the ship and its crew. They set sail from Antwerp in August 1897 and returned more than two years later after extraordinary hardships as the first people to survive an Antarctic winter, trapped in pack ice and all the while studying in scientific detail an ecosystem whose very existence had been only sketchily imagined.

A stuffed penguin stands testimony to the local fauna which helped stave off the scurvy that afflicted the 18 young men of the Belgica through the two-month-long polar night. Log notes kept by the expedition's leader, naval officer Adrien de Gerlache, are part of a vast trove of information and data they brought back from the frozen south which still informs scientific study today – from measures of the changing polar climate to the preparation of astronauts for the mental and physical rigours of extended missions to other planets.



Photographs and other memorabilia illustrate the multinational make-up of the crew, which included Norwegian Roald Amundsen 14 years before he became the first man to reach the South Pole, and American physician Frederick Cook, as well as scientists from Poland and Romania.

“My great-great-grandfather, Adrien de Gerlache, went to Antarctica not to plant the flag, not to exploit its resources, but to do science, to understand how this continent works. It really was the unknown,” says film-maker Henri de Gerlache, whose family collaborated on the exhibition.

## VOYAGE INTO THE UNKNOWN



**16 AUGUST 1897**

Belgica sails from Antwerp.



**23 JANUARY 1898**

First sight of Antarctic mainland. Study of geography, geology, flora, and fauna.



**5 MARCH**

Belgica caught fast in pack ice.



**17 MAY**

Sun disappears



"He had a real vision, about science, about international cooperation. He was ahead of his time. They faced many difficulties. Two died. But they found a way to resist, they found how to work together," adds Henri de Gerlache, who has himself twice travelled to Antarctica.

#### In search of hope

That spirit of cooperation and resilience, which saw the crew of the Belgica cut their own way out of the ice pack against the odds, can inspire visitors to confront their own worries about climate change. So argues Ariane Bazan, professor of clinical psychology at ULB Free University of Brussels, who contributed to the exhibition.

"We're all in the same boat," she says. "And, like the Belgica, we can get ourselves out of this if we follow the same basic principles as the young men of its crew."



### 14 JANUARY 1899

Crew begin sawing channel to clear water.

for 67 days.

### 14 FEBRUARY

Belgica breaks free of ice, reaching Chile on 28 March.

### 5 NOVEMBER

Home to Antwerp.



“They came through because they stuck to their course over the long haul – despite the tensions and differences we can imagine among a crew confined in a small space for 13 months. And they created among themselves the ingenuity and daring to free themselves.”

The second room, entitled “Dive into the Deep”, makes clear the scale of the challenge facing us today. Overlooked by an image of our planet’s largest mammal, the blue whale – one of many species endangered by human activity –

visitors can explore how far our world has changed from that of a mere 125 years ago. There is a look at the accelerating melt of polar ice caps, raising the sea level worldwide, as well as at the “plastic soup”, which penetrates even the Antarctic, as we dump millions of tonnes of waste into the ocean every year.

The situation provokes anger and anxiety, especially in the young. The museum, however, also explains how scientists are collaborating across disciplines to better understand our ecosystems, providing creativity in diversity that was exemplified aboard the Belgica. As Jill Peeters puts it: “I’m a meteorologist. I know how clouds are formed. But I didn’t know that phytoplankton in the ocean form their own clouds, to protect themselves from heat. As scientists, we’ve discovered so much about our world. Everything is laid out on a table – but there are a lot of tables! Now we need to make connections.”

### All hands on deck

Conservation has seen whale numbers rise, for example. And, as Peeters points out, the IMF, which monitors the global economy, estimates that saving whales is the most cost-effective investment we can make to save ourselves from our own carbon dioxide emissions (one whale removes as much CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere as thousands of trees). (See page 32)

In the final space, “Change Course”, BELvue visitors get a hands-on lesson in making an impact. Slip into a mock-up diving bell and they find tips from the simple – “eat less meat” – to the more demanding – “insulate my home”. They can then write their personal pledge on a sticky note and post it proudly with many others on the walls of the chamber.

The free exhibition at BELvue runs until 4 February 2024. For details: [belvue.be/en/expo/looking-for-the-end-of-the-world](https://belvue.be/en/expo/looking-for-the-end-of-the-world)



“I hope the exhibition can reconnect people with their history,” says curator Jill Peeters. “But also reconnect them with nature and with the potential for what we all can do to help.”

For KBF CEO Brieuc Van Damme, “Looking for the End of the World” is a prime example of how the Foundation is striving to put climate and sustainability at the heart of its action, while maintaining its broad range of activities, including cultural conservation.

“How can you shape the future if you don’t take care of the past, of our heritage?” he asks. “This pioneering voyage to the Antarctic brought back

enormous amounts of scientific data that is still being studied today. So, our exhibition makes the link from that 19<sup>th</sup>-century heritage to what we can learn from it today, notably about climate change.”







Adrien de Gerlache (above) and the crew of the Belgica were pioneers in many ways that influence our world today and will continue to do so in future.

#### Exploring Antarctica

By the 1890s, Antarctica seemed the “final frontier” for humanity. But, with scarcely a navy to speak of, Belgium was an unlikely candidate to lead a new push to explore it. Yet in 1898 the Belgica was the first ship to spend a winter there, at constant risk of being crushed by ice.

#### Science, not flags

In an era when European nations were dividing up the globe for power and profit, de Gerlache steered clear of jingoistic flag-

planting, leading Belgians, Norwegians, Poles, an American and a Romanian in the name of science. His refusal to claim territory would inspire the Antarctic Treaty of 1959, itself now emulated by international accords on space exploration.

#### Seeing the light

Frederick Cook, a Brooklyn physician, improvised to fight new health problems on board. To combat scurvy, he added raw penguin to the crew's diet of vitamin-poor canned food. To cure depression and lethargy through the long polar night, his “light therapy” had men stand naked before a blazing fire. His insights help protect those in extreme environments today.

#### Hope vs Despair

When the summer thaw failed to free the Belgica, de Gerlache proposed

sawing through hundreds of metres of ice to open water. Few thought it possible. Yet simply labouring together filled them with hope and energy. And it worked. At BELvue, visitors can get a glimpse of how we, too, can cooperate to free ourselves from today's climate crisis.







# LISTENING TO EVERYONE

Fair Energy Transition for All, or FETA, is a KBF-led European project to ensure green policies help – and win support from – people whose lives are already difficult. Governments have listened. Now, FETA's pioneering model for sounding out hard-to-reach groups is being adopted by others who want philanthropy to better meet the diverse needs of society today.

European governments have encountered fierce opposition to measures that are intended to combat climate change but which many citizens see as costly and elitist.

That prompted the King Baudouin Foundation and five partners to launch a Europe-wide listening exercise which would indicate how people who are already struggling to pay bills and overcome exclusion could be won over to the pressing need to slash carbon emissions from transport and heating.

FETA resulted in two years of focus groups involving 1,000 people in nine countries, followed by detailed recommendations to national and EU authorities. Credible because rooted in the lived experience of Europeans grappling with real hardships, those findings have found an audience among policymakers. The Belgian government has put FETA's ideas on inclusive transition at the heart of its presidency of the EU Council during the first half of 2024.

With governments facing a loss of trust as they try to implement radical change, understanding those who feel left behind – and engaging with them on constructive solutions – is vital. For that reason, the FETA team has collated their lessons learned into a guide for others: "Make the Invisible Visible".

"In FETA, we explored the concerns, fears, hopes, and expectations of economically and socially disadvantaged people in countries across Europe," says Pascale Taminiaux, FETA project manager at KBF. "Our free-to-download booklet aims to be a practical guide for everyone planning to better involve hard-to-reach citizens in the public debate, decision-making, and policymaking processes – regardless of the topic. It's a hands-on guide and we want



Participants included the unemployed, low earners, single parents, under-25s or over-60s living in precarious circumstances, the sick or disabled, immigrant communities and those suffering from racial, gender, or other discrimination. Ensuring a diversity of backgrounds means looking at people's gender, age, ethnicity, education, and whether they live in cities, towns, or the countryside. Community organisations can be vital channels for initial contact – but researchers should not rely on these intermediaries to provide survey input.

Help with travel or childcare costs for attending focus groups, cash or store vouchers, group meals or outings, and social events for family and friends can help make participants feel valued, respected and interested in the topic.

As the King Baudouin Foundation develops a long-term strategy to build inclusive transition criteria across its programmes, the guide recommends: "Put citizens' needs in the centre of each step. Create a sense of appreciation, agency, and trust."

For more on FETA, including the method guide, go to [fair-energytransition.eu/](https://fair-energytransition.eu/) and see the Spring 2022 and Winter 2022 issues of this Newsletter. [kbs-frb.be/en/international-newsletter](https://kbs-frb.be/en/international-newsletter)

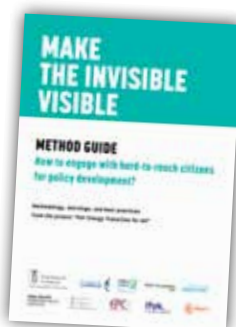
people to feel free to adapt the methods to suit their needs."

### Hands-on experience

Insights include how to identify and mobilise participants, encourage their engagement, accurately curate their views on complex and often unfamiliar issues, and inform them as the policy process advances. Launched on the eve of the lockdowns that marked the Covid-19 pandemic, the guide's injunction to "be agile" speaks to hands-on experience, hard won.

## MAKE THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE SELECTED TIPS FROM THE GUIDE

- Use plain language and real-life examples
- Keep an open atmosphere in a familiar place
- Plan communal meals, offer compensation
- Keep people in the loop as they influence policy
- Use interviews, interaction, the power of quotes



## OPEN EARS, OPEN MINDS

In an interview looking at current priorities for philanthropy (p. 14), KBF CEO Brieuc Van Damme and Delphine Moralis of Philea highlighted the need to listen to diverse voices.

**Van Damme:** "FETA is a beautiful example of how it pays off to invest in reaching people who live on the streets, who are in drug addiction centres, in shelters for women and so on – people who never really get a chance to speak up. It has sparked the interest of the European Commission, of the COP, and other organisations. It's really a best-case example."

**Moralis:** "Listening to diverse voices takes time. It takes patience. Oftentimes you go two steps forward and one step back. But that's OK, as long as you're moving in the right direction. I used to work in youth protection, and the most inspiring meetings I ever had were the kinds where we let 14-year-old girls from the most fragile context in Uganda tell us what to do. They knew much better than we do. I'm happy to see the philanthropy sector doing that more."



# TEEN REFUGEES FIND PATH TO LEARN



A new school opened in Athens in September to offer vocational, technical, and language classes to foreign youngsters seeking refuge in Greece. Run by the nonprofit Faros and supported by the King Baudouin Foundation's MiJoRiJa Fund, it teaches both academic and problem-solving skills to vulnerable teenagers.

Amro was 15 when he arrived in Greece. He had fled the war in Syria, and he was alone, one of some 40,000 unaccompanied minors who arrive in the European Union every year. Their outlook can be bleak, but today Amro speaks English and Greek fluently, is doing well in school, and dreams of a future working as a translator. He also has a safe place to live thanks to Faros, a centre for refugee youth in Athens. Now, Faros has opened an after-hours school, an addition to its invaluable services to some of the city's most vulnerable residents.

Patricia and Dan Kirk-Biswas started Faros in 2014 to provide unaccompanied minors with care and support. It quickly became a crucial resource, a day centre where young people can find counselling, help with homework, recreational activities, and simply feel surrounded by a loving community.

"It's about helping them to believe in themselves and to unlock their potential," says Patricia Kirk-Biswas. "These youths can end up anywhere. We want to help them down the right path and see their own value."



### Long-term planning

Aside from the drop-in centre, Faros has also hosted summer schools offering vocational training. The new school builds on that experience, with eight classrooms operating year-round in its own premises.

"We have a team of paid staff, some of whom are teachers, so the support from KBF has been really crucial," says Patricia. "KBF also supports long-term investment in the school and in Faros, which allows us to work with a long-term strategy."

Faros's classes are open to refugees aged 13 to 19 who lack family support locally and are held after normal school hours. Some of the pupils enrolled in Faros classes also attend Greek state schools, others do not. "We help them to enrol in school, but then also to succeed," Patricia explains. "One of the things we saw in the beginning was that many of these kids drop out of school. Say you're 15, and you come from Afghanistan, and you are plunged into an eighth-grade class with very little language support. It is so easy for them to feel like a failure in school. But this has nothing to do with their abilities; it has to do with not having enough support."

### Broad curriculum

The Faros school offers a range of vocational, tech, and academic courses, such as woodworking, digital literacy, mathematics, science, 3D printing and Greek and English languages. There is a maker space and a special programme designed by the D-Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to cultivate creative thinking, innovation, and entrepreneurial skills.

"It gives them vocational skills but also problem-solving skills and the mindset to take on challenges," says Patricia.

"That's been extremely powerful. They face so many challenges that other teenagers don't. They have been forced into an adult world that they have to navigate on their own."

### Symbol of hope

Between 600 and 700 youngsters a year find help from Faros, whose name, meaning 'lighthouse', bears the powerful image for Greeks of a beacon of hope. The new school can serve about 60 at a time, and some classes already have a waiting list, with demand high. "On Friday, we had 12 Somali girls sign up for the computer class," says Patricia.

**"Slowly, I began taking steps with the help of my teachers, and I became more confident in school. Now I will be graduating in two years."**

Faros pupil Amro

As for Amro, he is now 20 and enrolled in Faros's 18+ programme, which offers semi-independent accommodation for up to 14

young adults. "One of the big gaps in services to refugee youth is that when you turn 18, there's really no support," says Patricia. "From quite literally one day to another, you lose it all."

Alongside the US ambassador and the Greek deputy minister for migration and asylum, Amro spoke at the grand opening of the Faros school on September 22. "I didn't know how I was going to learn the language," he said. "But slowly I began taking steps with the help of my teachers, and I became more confident in school. Now I will be graduating in two years."

## THE MiJoRiJa FUND

The MiJoRiJa Fund, founded by Belgian business leader Rik Jans, focuses on a positive approach to migration among young people. It supports projects that encourage the integration of youngsters into society, helping them to develop skills and undertake training.

[kbs-frb.be/en/mijorija-fund](https://kbs-frb.be/en/mijorija-fund)

For more about Faros:  
[faros.org/about](https://faros.org/about)



# IMPACT THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Over the course of five years, funding more than 60 projects in over 20 mostly African countries, the Business Partnership Facility managed by KBF has proved its worth in channelling Belgian public support into private enterprises to promote sustainable development. Those are the findings of an independent evaluation.



“The BPF is the right tool,” concludes the report, which assessed the performance of the facility from 2019 to 2023 as it reached the end of its initial five-year programme to foster the development of small businesses and help them create jobs, raise incomes, protect the environment, and empower women in the developing world.

Seen as part of a “missing middle” – economic actors which struggle to find sufficient funding to contribute to development – small businesses were targeted for help by Belgium’s Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGD). The King Baudouin Foundation was charged with implementing the scheme, with an initial budget of 12 million euros.

Businesses were encouraged to apply in partnership with public bodies or NGOs and had to demonstrate a project proposal that was economically sustainable and would advance at least one of three development

goals: climate, environment, and biodiversity; gender and female entrepreneurship; or decent work and social protection.

## Positive experience

Grantees were overwhelmingly positive, praising procedures that showed “understanding of the challenges faced by business in Africa”. Stakeholders were also consulted, including via focus groups in the field for several projects in Africa.

Among grantees, a shea butter producer in Benin began exporting to the United States, boosting incomes for women who gather the shea kernels, while in Tanzania, a company using fly larvae to convert food waste into animal feed and fertiliser took on additional workers and helped local communities develop more sustainable, organic farming.

The report found that BPF funding had played a “pivotal role” in creating new jobs and improving working conditions, as well as

raising incomes and giving women a greater role. Most grantees found the awards helped unlock funding from other sources. Working with the BPF created new awareness among entrepreneurs of a need for – and the benefits of – building environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals into their businesses.

KBF has taken note of the report’s recommendations and will continue to monitor ongoing projects, facilitate cross-project exchanges, and measure the lasting effects of several projects for some years after the termination of BPF funding.



For more information:  
[businesspartnershipfacility.be/](https://businesspartnershipfacility.be/)



## HELPING MOROCCO'S QUAKE VICTIMS

The world news cycle moved on rapidly after a devastating earthquake on September 8 killed nearly 3,000 people in southern Morocco and left some 300,000 homeless. But while international attention soon refocused on Gaza, assistance is still greatly needed, both to help Moroccans through the winter and for longer-term rebuilding. In addition to aid provided by governments and NGOs, KBF continues to provide facilities for individuals, companies, and organisations to show solidarity with the victims and help in the reconstruction. KBF's partners in the global Myriad network are also facilitating donations. Over 400,000 euros was raised in two months and new funds are now going toward psychological support, temporary housing, and rebuilding projects.



## BETTER HEALTH, BETTER LIVES

Sixty KBF-managed Funds provided a total of 6.6 million euros during 2022 to 72 health research projects at Belgian universities and polytechnics. Covering many and varied areas of medicine, they have in common that they were made possible by philanthropists intent on improving the quality of life for patients. The new laureates include young scientists being offered an early boost to their careers and more established researchers whom donors wish to encourage to pursue promising lines of inquiry. Among grantees who presented their work in October at an awards ceremony in the presence of Belgium's Princess Astrid were Francesca Rapino of Liège University's Giga biomedical research centre, who is making fundamental investigations into the immune response to melanoma, and Anton De Spiegeleer of Ghent University, whose field is sarcopenia – the loss of muscle mass in older people.



## INSPIRING CLIMATE HOPE: PRIZE FOR INSTITUTO TERRA FOUNDER



Leila Wanick Salgado, who founded Instituto Terra in 1998 with her husband the photographer Sebastião Salgado, has been recognised for her 25 years of dedication to reforestation and the recovery of ecosystems in Brazil's Atlantic Forest. The 1-million-euro Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity rewards outstanding contributions to climate action and climate solutions that inspire hope. Wanick Salgado received the award in July at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon from the jury president, former German chancellor Angela Merkel. Since 2020, KBF has managed the Instituto Terra Fund, to manage donations to the nonprofit in Europe. KBFUS runs a Fund for donors in the United States.



# TRUST AND COURAGE

## LOOKING AHEAD TO THE PHILEA FORUM 2024



KBF will host the annual Philea Forum in May 2024. CEO Brieuc Van Damme and Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea) chief executive Delphine Moralis talked over priorities for European foundations when they meet in Ghent.

**The Forum brings together a sector in rapid transition. What, for you, are the key issues?**

**Delphine Moralis:** “For me there are two main issues: trust and risk-taking. There are concerning signs of a crisis in trust – in institutions, in democracy – which has only increased with fake news, fast developments in AI, polarisation etc. Young people are among those whose trust in democracy and society has decreased over the past

years, and this is worrying. It will be important to continue on the path started during the pandemic of listening to grantees, finding balanced and meaningful ways for measuring and evaluation, providing flexible funding. It will also be very important for philanthropy to live up to its potential in terms of being risk takers, innovators, and long-term thinkers. We need to walk the talk, realising the potential of philanthropy and its diverse capabilities.”

**Brieuc Van Damme:** "Absolutely! Because we can take risks, because we are agile, philanthropic organisations should be key actors in this transition from the old world to a new one. At the same time – and this resonates with your point about people losing faith in our institutions – most people are not comfortable with change. So, it's our responsibility, in coming up with new social models, to involve everybody, especially people who feel left behind or unheard, to strike a balance, to make sure that we offer people that trust in the future. There are also new philanthropic tools to involve the next generations, there are new technologies, there are new legal frameworks at European level. All that creates momentum and it's our responsibility now to capitalise on that. So, the Philea Forum in Belgium comes at a very timely moment."

**Moralis:** "I love that combination of momentum and responsibility! With the freedom that we have to use our limited capital wisely, we also have a responsibility to be very brave."

**Van Damme:** "And trust also means we ourselves need to be more accountable, more transparent. There's margin for improvement!"

**The Forum will be held just before the European (and Belgian) elections. What are your political priorities?**

**Van Damme:** "European governments should work more together – and foundations also need to be able to work together more. Philea is an ideal partner to advocate for putting the single market for philanthropy higher on the legislative agenda. I also hope that after the European – and Belgian – elections in June, policymakers will prioritise restoring faith in our democratic institutions and environmental sustainability."

**Moralis:** "EU institutions have been waking up to the power and the value of philanthropy. There's now a

Proposal for a European Cross-Border Association, which could save associations up to 770 million euros a year. So that's exciting! But there are so many barriers still to cross-border philanthropy. And we are hopeful the institutions will tackle them. Policymakers can also tap into the intangible assets of philanthropy, the knowledge, the networks, the expertise, the closeness to society. Philanthropy could bring more if it was invited to co-create and be a real partner of the institutions."

**Finally, as you welcome your international partners, what does Belgium offer the sector – apart, of course, from the famous good humour and hearty cuisine?**

**Moralis:** "Embracing complexity and a diversity of views to find consensus is

something that I think we have in our DNA. I hope also that as Belgians we bring humility to philanthropy. I think it's so important to be humble, and to be aware of the privilege we have to be doing these jobs."

**Van Damme:** "Indeed. And because we're sort of at the buffer between the North and the South, that makes us maybe a little bit more pragmatic, easy to work with, creative for sure, to find ways around, to try to find consensus."

**Moralis:** "And, of course, the beer and chocolate help too!"

**For more information on the Philea Forum, on 27-30 May 2024:**  
[philea.eu/events/philea-forum-2024/](https://philea.eu/events/philea-forum-2024/)





# TALKING WITH MY ENEMY

World news has been dominated of late by violence in the Middle East that has also heightened tensions among communities in Europe. Since 2021, KBF has been supporting one project in Hungary that aims to develop a model for dialogue which might help societies find a way back from deep-seated prejudices and hatreds.

An “indescribable shift”, from a sense of anxiety in setting out to face people with deeply hostile views to “greeting my

dialogue partners as friends”. That’s how one participant describes the change in mood over several months of encounters between young Hungarians with far-right views and others from the country’s LGBTQI, Jewish, and Roma communities.

“Once people begin to see each other as human beings, perhaps we can find ways to improve relations.”

György Tatár, chair, Budapest Centre

That modest measure of success for a pilot programme of dialogue which ran through 2022 has encouraged a second

round of conversations involving more prominent and influential figures from these groups, starting in late 2023 and facilitated again by experts from the Budapest Centre for Dialogue and Mass Atrocities Prevention.

Its chair, former Hungarian and EU diplomat György Tatár, stresses the importance of dialogue. That means letting participants express themselves and explain their beliefs and motivations – and also creating conditions for listening to each other – rather than seeking to mediate between opposing positions or trying to negotiate any kind of deal.







### Keep talking

"It's not about changing minds, it's about keeping talking and seeing what drives the other," says Tatár. "Once, at the level of the individual, people begin to see each other as human beings, then perhaps we can create conditions where groups can find ways to improve their relations."

Hungary has seen the rise of a particularly confrontational political discourse over the past few years. Heated rhetoric around immigration, racist discrimination against the Roma minority, anti-Semitism, and "culture war" campaigns against the rights and freedoms of LGBTQI people have seen far-right groups win representation in local and national assemblies and present an intimidating public presence in towns across the country.

### Face to face

Tatár's goal was to bring youngsters involved with such movements into contact with those they perceived as threats and who were victims of the groups' animosity – Roma, Jews, and LGBTQI people. The process began with the recording of interviews with individuals. They were encouraged to speak frankly about their opinions and why they held them. These

recordings were then shared with the handful of other participants. In controlled conditions, with trained facilitators, face-to-face encounters followed. Those involved were given time and space to tell their personal stories and some ultimately shared meals together.

**"The key is to  
halt the growth  
of hatred."**

György Tatár, chair, Budapest Centre

Discretion is a key consideration. Participants must not only overcome their own fears and prejudices but also worry about criticism from peers who may view any contact with the "other side" as effectively validating views they find abhorrent.

Describing the international mission of the Budapest Centre since its foundation in 2010 as preventing extreme crimes such as genocide, Tatár says the dialogue process sprang from the observation that such atrocities do not come about suddenly, but after a long process of stigmatisation. "The key is to halt the growth of hatred as early as possible," says Tatár. "The first step is to understand the causes of hatred and the personal motivations for it."

## LEARNING TO SPEAK AGAIN

For CEO Brieuc Van Damme, mending damage to European democracy is a priority for KBF. In an interview with the international philanthropy magazine Alliance, he put it this way:

"I feel that we have unlearned how to talk to each other in a constructive way that leads to the best possible policy decisions. How do we reinvent the way we talk to each other? How do we make sure that people have more empathy for each other's point of view? We need to come up with solutions to make sure we're able to talk to each other in five or 10 years from now.

"I was shocked by a study I saw from the World Economic Forum that said that in the US, more than 70% of people would not help somebody in need if they knew they were from the other side of the political spectrum. When did disagreeing with each other make us not want to help each other? I think it's our responsibility to make sure we don't get there.

"It worries me that whenever somebody expresses an idea or an opinion, it's either perfect for one side and incredibly stupid for the other side. There's little capacity left to try to understand where that idea and that sensibility comes from, and if that continues it's the end of society as we know it."



# THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

As darkness sets in, it's time to seek out beauty and comfort for the soul. Artworks acquired by the KBF Heritage Fund or by Funds that it manages take pride of place in a variety of settings this winter.

## WORLD-CLASS ART AND DIVERSITY AT BRAFA

At the annual Brussels Art Fair, or BRAFA, KBF showcases recent acquisitions and a fascinating selection of masterpieces from its collection. For the 2024 edition, these include the early 16<sup>th</sup>-century 'Man of Sorrows' by Flemish primitive Albrecht Bouts; a rare 17<sup>th</sup>-century 'Madonna with Child' in wood (left) by Mechelen sculptor Maria Faydherbe, recently purchased by the Léon Courtin-Marcelle Bouché Fund; 'Portrait of Marguérite', an 1887 painting of his sister by symbolist Fernand Khnopff; and 'Nocturnal Butterflies', a 1998 surreal animated short by filmmaker Raoul Servais, who died in March. As an appetiser for surrealism's centenary in 2024, visitors can view for the first time since its restoration the surrealist "magazine" 'Vendredi'. Handwritten and hand-drawn with contributions from many of the movement's leading figures in Belgium, a single copy of this newsletter was produced weekly over two years between 1949 and 1951.

28 January – 4 February 2024, Brussels Expo,  
Halls 3 & 4: [brafa.be](https://brafa.be)



## CHARITY FINDS ITS WAY HOME

'Charity', a 17<sup>th</sup>-century sculpture by Jan van Delen, has finally returned to the family burial chapel in a Brussels church from where it was looted by French revolutionaries in 1794.

The marble group, commissioned by Lamoral, Count of Thurn and Taxis, to adorn his tomb in Notre Dame du Sablon, has been on quite a journey. It disappeared without trace for over 200 years before being spotted languishing unloved in the lobby of a Parisian apartment building.

Put on sale at a London auction house in 2012, it was purchased by the KBF Heritage Fund and housed in Brussels' Fine Art Museum while the nearby Sablon church was undergoing renovation.

As 2023 draws to a close, Van Delen's representation of selfless care can be seen again in its original setting.



## STORY OF FLANDERS THROUGH ITS ART

"Rare and indispensable": two words that define a masterwork under the Flemish Masterpiece Decree of 2003, which aims to protect and enrich defining examples of the Dutch-speaking Belgian region's artistic and cultural heritage.

Celebrating 20 years since the legislation was passed, 'Rare and Indispensable' is also the title of an exhibition at Antwerp's MAS museum.

KBF is among institutions contributing the 100 artworks on show. Items displayed from the KBF collection, all chosen for their connection to Flanders' great port city, include a 16<sup>th</sup>-century goblet in the form of an owl, made of silver, silver gilt, and... coconut; the only surviving copy of the 1595-96 map of the imagined land of Utopia by cartographer Abraham Ortelius; and a 17<sup>th</sup>-century silver set by Peter Paul Rubens.

[mas.be/en/activity/rare-and-indispensable](https://mas.be/en/activity/rare-and-indispensable)

# PLANNING AHEAD FOR A SECOND LIFE

Exploring new solutions is central to KBF's approach to philanthropy. When they work, they are available to share. That's how a project to tackle difficulties for Belgium's growing population of retirees has taken on a new lease of life across the Atlantic.

"Think Sooner About Later" was a programme launched in Belgium a decade ago in response to rising numbers

of people who were struggling after retirement with a range of issues from health and finances, to running a household and maintaining a social life. Most important, it aimed to tackle the vicious circle that develops as advancing years sap the energy and blunt the skills that people need to fix their own problems.

The answer lay in starting to plan earlier, while still in prime form, to live the fullest and happiest "second life" –

thinking in our 50s about what will happen after 60, 70, 80... The past century has gifted us some 30 extra years of healthy life, but too many find those soured by worries they might have avoided. Working with partners in the community, KBF produced advice and instructional materials to encourage 50-somethings to plan ahead.

That caught the attention of people working with older people 5,000 km away in Canada. "It's not the end when





you retire,” says Isabelle Guérard (right), director of the Sherbrooke local branch of the Québec Association for the Defense of the Rights of Retired and Pre-Retired Persons (AQDR). “People have a lot of good years ahead of them and can still participate in life, in the community.”

### Universal themes, transatlantic reach

Guérard found that she was receiving more and more questions from older people in her city who found themselves in situations they had not prepared for. For example, those who found themselves abruptly having to move into care after a hospital stay put a sudden end to independent living. “A lot of people said ‘If I knew sooner that I would have those choices, I would have probably thought about it better and taken action earlier,’” she says.

It was while developing their own response to this issue in 2018 that AQDR Sherbrooke came across KBF’s programme online. “The objective of the campaign really aligned with our own,” says Guérard. She quickly contacted KBF and received permission to use its slogan – “Pensez plus tôt à plus tard” – and its other French-language materials. AQDR Sherbrooke then adapted these to the context in Canada’s French-speaking province – for example taking account of differing regulations and local norms around work and volunteering, or in finance.

### Preparing a second life

Studies have shown that good preparation before embarking on the senior years increases the likelihood of contentment in later life. The original KBF campaign



encouraged people to reflect themselves and also to open discussions with their families about how they would live as they aged. Materials included a booklet, as well as a card game called “50+ Plan Ahead!”.

This addressed six main themes: keeping working, managing finances, staying healthy, planning for the end of life, remaining active and socially interactive, and considering alternative living arrangements. The pack was designed to trigger dialogue and provide positive and constructive ways to think about the future. KBF also developed a website.

### The golden years, your way

AQDR Sherbrooke has organised workshops, developed its own website with tools and resources, and produced a community television series. Its campaign has reached up to 10,000 people so far. “The best thing I see is the people who come together and who want to stay

**“People need information ... to stay masters of their own lives for as long as possible.”**

**Isabelle Guérard, AQDR Sherbrooke**

in touch after,” says Guérard. “A lot of people have thanked us because it’s a subject that’s very hard to talk about and we give them a space to talk about it with others.”

In the spirit of KBF’s original campaign, AQDR Sherbrooke aims to empower older people, not lecture them. “Our objective is that people can stay masters of their own lives for as long as possible,” says Guérard. “What people really need is information so they can make their own decisions.”

**For more information on KBF’s work for better ageing:** [kbs-frb.be/en/older-people](https://kbs-frb.be/en/older-people)

**For more information on Think sooner about later in Quebec, Canada:** [pensezplustot.org](https://pensezplustot.org)

# BUILDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY TO CLOSE THE GENDER GAP



The Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe – co-founded by the King Baudouin Foundation – allocated nearly 3.5 million euros in grants as part of its latest call for proposals, focused on economic opportunities for women.

With major strides made in gender equality in Europe, it is easy to forget that there is still a long way to go. The EU gender pay gap – how far

women's income lags men's – is nearly 13%. For pensioners, it's almost 30%. Movements hostile to women's rights are proliferating, and some 60% of women experience violence or harassment at work.

KBF, with the Chanel Foundation, L'Oréal Women's Fund, Bodossaki Foundation, JP Morgan, Fondation de France, and Raja Foundation, created the Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe (AGEE) in 2021. A grant-making collaborative fund, the Alliance aids organisations across Europe that work to create long-term solutions to gender-based bias. The

nearly 3.5 million euros it granted in 2023 went to 26 organisations focused on economic opportunities.

**“Women of colour represent one of the most marginalised and under-served groups in our society.”**

Kiran Kaur, co-founder, GirlDreameer

“The underlying causes of a lack of economic inclusion for women are multiple, systemic, and interconnected,” says Nadège Lharaig, programme manager at AGEE.



“They range from reduced opportunities for quality training and education and the prevalence of gender and racial stereotypes, to the unpaid care burden, which still falls mainly on women’s shoulders.”

### Reaching potential

Activities funded ranged from advocacy training for care workers in the Czech Republic and improving job opportunities for rural women with disabilities in Spain to a co-working space for women of colour in Germany.

“Organisations were chosen to receive grants based on a demonstrable long-term impact,” explains AGEE’s Lharaig. “We also looked for organisations that directly included the target groups in their governance and organising activities.”

One of these recipients is the British organisation GirlDreamer, founded in 2016 to empower young women of colour to reach their full potential. “They contend with elevated levels of discrimination, are persistently under-represented in leadership roles, and bear the disproportionate impact of restricted access to education and fair employment,” says GirlDreamer CEO Kiran Kaur.

She and co-founder Amna Akhtar felt lost when they were making their own transition from school to adult independence, not knowing how to build futures other than the ones that were expected of them. So they set up an organisation to give women aged 18 to 35 the guidance they felt they had lacked.

**“Upward social mobility can take a high emotional toll on young people.”**

Boglárka Fedorkó of Romaversitas

### Dreaming to lead

The Alliance grant of 134,400 euros goes to its Dream Fund, which distributes grants to other British nonprofits. “It is imperative to address the distinctive needs of young women of colour in the UK,” says Kaur. “To provide them with leadership and wellbeing opportunities in a non-judgmental, supportive environment.”

GirlDreamer also advocates for women of colour on company boards and hosts group retreats with sport and other outdoor activities.

### Overcoming barriers

Fellow AGEE grantee Romaversitas has a similar mission of improving educational and economic

opportunities, in its case within Hungary’s Roma community. It supports teenagers at school and in vocational training, runs university prep programmes, and helps university students of Roma origin.

“Being one of the few and often the first person in a family – or even in a community – to enter higher education can be a lonely experience,” says Boglárka Fedorkó of Romaversitas. “Especially for someone coming from a minority group that is often stigmatised or discriminated against. While upward social mobility is mostly portrayed as unambiguously positive, it can take a high emotional toll on young people.”

Romaversitas is using its 150,000-euro grant to launch a programme helping young Roma women into careers. “We will be able to develop specific training in crucial topics – like self-image, sexual and reproductive rights, and fighting microaggressions,” says Fedorkó. “We will also provide individual career coaching.”

**For more on the Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe:**

[alliance-genderequality.org/](https://alliance-genderequality.org/)

[kbs-frb.be/en/](https://kbs-frb.be/en/)

[alliance-gender-equality-europe](https://alliance-gender-equality-europe)



# AFRICAN LESSONS

## EXCHANGING LEGAL INSIGHTS

When Gerald Abila founded BarefootLaw in 2012, he used technology to bring legal services to communities across Uganda. Winner of the 2016-17 KBF Africa Prize, the nonprofit is now active abroad. With a new office at The Hague, it hopes to spread African wisdom – and teach the world to embrace "ubuntu"...



Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations to build a healthier, more stable world over the 15 years to 2030, it is making progress toward SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions – that drives Gerald Abila today. Above all, the goal of “equal access to justice for all” is his focus, not just in his native Uganda but across Africa. BarefootLaw has

already taken its model for tech-based outreach to Kenya and Malawi.

Concerned at the slow rate of progress at the half-way mark for the UN Global Goals, Abila believes the developed world could do well to listen to experiences in Africa, where BarefootLaw and others tap in to traditional forms of dispute resolution. These favour dialogue and compromise and are a response to failings in formal legal systems that continue the legacy of conflictual, “winner takes all” approaches to the law inherited from European colonialists.

“It is a legal system that is so adversarial in nature,” Abila (left) says, contrasting it with the African notion of ubuntu – a sense of common humanity and interdependence. “In Uganda, and in many African countries, traditional

systems of justice encourage harmonious resolution of cases. And that comes down to one word, ubuntu. We focus first on reconciliation.”

It is a philosophy that underpins BarefootLaw’s activities on the ground, helping people who cannot afford to go to law in a formal sense – or who live too far from courts and lawyers – to settle family, land, business, and other disputes. The team offers free access to information and guidance, using widely available technological channels, such as social media, as well as their BarefootLaw Boxes – shipping containers placed in remote communities and equipped with videoconferencing and internet facilities to connect villagers with lawyers in the capital.

### Let’s not fight

“For me, a prosperous continent starts with a prosperous dispute resolution mechanism.





So we need to make dispute resolution as peaceful as possible,” says Abila. “The Western world can learn how to resolve disputes harmoniously. Meeting our goals under SDG 16 requires a broader understanding of justice that encompasses principles from the Global North and principles from the Global South.”

That’s where BarefootLaw’s new presence in the Netherlands comes in. In 2023, they established an office at The Hague Humanity Hub, a nonprofit coworking and networking facility that aims to promote a fairer and more peaceful world.

“The Hague is like a central nervous system for lawyers,” Abila says of the city that is home to the International Court of Justice. “There is no better launch platform for us to bring the lessons we’ve learned from the grassroots to the global community. We are in The Hague to widen our partnerships, to enable us to share lessons, and try and influence policy around SDG 16.”

Robert Okello, who runs the office in The Hague, was a beneficiary in 2021 of a KBF-funded fellowship at the ECDPM-European Centre for Development Policy Management, while Gerald Abila, nominated by KBF, will spend 2024 on the Tällberg Leaders Mentoring Leaders programme.

### High tech, and low

As well as African notions of compromise and reconciliation, Abila believes BarefootLaw can offer valuable insights in how tech can serve justice. “We’ve innovated around new technologies, including AI,” he says. “Sometimes people like us from the Global South are left out of global conversations. Through The Hague, we can share with the Global North and the rest of the world this experience we have of that intersection of law and technology.”

As the nonprofit team looks to raise funds, notably from impact investors, to allow it to plan for the

long term, Abila points out that not all the technology BarefootLaw deploys is at the cutting edge of science. They aim to build out a remarkable pilot project that has cut crime in a northern Ugandan town by adding one simple ingredient: street lighting.

To power its “Law Box” in Kole, the team set up a 15-kilowatt solar substation. It has developed into a “justice microgrid”, generating electricity, too, for the local court and police stations but also around the market, and boreholes where people draw household water. Crime, notably against women, has fallen and several more grids in other towns are planned for 2024.

**The winner of the 2023-24 KBF Africa Prize will be announced very shortly. For details see our Africa website [kbfafrica.org/](https://kbfafrica.org/).**

**For more on BarefootLaw, [barefootlaw.org/](https://barefootlaw.org/).**



# NATURAL HISTORY

## SAFEGUARDING SOUTH AMERICA'S TREASURES



The Museo de La Plata, one of Argentina's most iconic historic sites, is home to an extraordinary collection of natural and cultural heritage from across the continent and beyond. Thanks to a new American Friends Fund at KBFUS, it is now building a network of supporters across the globe.

The museum's scale and the variety of its collections, from fossils, rock samples, zoological and botanical specimens, and a library, to anthropological and archaeological artefacts, are in the image of its founder. Francisco Moreno was not only a pre-eminent naturalist and ethnographer who proposed the museum and endowed its first collections before turning 30, he would also become an emblematic figure in Argentine

history and politics, notably putting his science to work in mapping out the 5,300-km frontier with Chile after decades of rivalry over Patagonia.

When its imposing neoclassical edifice opened in 1888, the Museo de La Plata became not only the first natural history museum in South America but also took up a place that it has held ever since among the

foremost such institutions the world over.

"It's a 139-year-old museum that's located in Argentina, but it's much more than that," says Luis Mansur. He heads the foundation which, since 1987, has been dedicated to supporting the museum's development and maintaining the building's fabric.

The Museo de La Plata



Myriad, the alliance for borderless giving, is a partnership between KBF, Give2Asia, and their global affiliates. The alliance removes logistical and compliance barriers for donors. With Myriad, donors on four continents can support charities around the globe, with the same services and fees – and with local tax benefits.

Foundation (FMLP) launched a partnership in 2022 with KBFUS. This set up a new American Friends Fund to build an international support network for the institution – aiming, in Mansur's words to "establish connections, foster networking, and attract more people to the museum."

#### Nature, Mankind, Culture

The museum is a landmark destination for hundreds of thousands of local and foreign visitors. Just outside Buenos Aires, it houses a permanent exhibition spanning two floors and more than 20 other display spaces that, says Mansur, cover "the evolution of nature, from the formation of the universe to the origin of human beings and their cultures".

"When the museum was created by Moreno, it wasn't just to connect natural sciences and man, but also culture and the arts," he adds. The museum also



enjoys a reputation as a research and educational facility within the University of La Plata, for whose undergraduates the foundation maintains a scholarship fund. A commitment to education and public scholarship is also evident in an annual prize, named for Moreno's French-born associate Fernando Lahille and awarded to scholars who distinguish themselves in disseminating scientific ideas in the wider community.

**"This is a moment  
in which maybe  
our country,  
our museum,  
our foundation,  
could receive  
international  
solidarity."**

Luis Mansur, President,  
Museo de La Plata Foundation

#### Reaching out

Rogelio Marchetti, a graduate of the university and one of more than a quarter of a million Argentines living in the United States, is responsible for international outreach. He looks for "people who feel connected to the research, to the school, or to the care of the cultural heritage housed at the museum" – alumni like himself, say, who want to give back: "To say thank you by helping another." He is also looking more broadly to the US Latin American diaspora – 60 million strong and growing: "Part of it is giving people a sense of pride, that we come

from a country that has this institution or that we come from a continent that supports this," says Marchetti.

Beyond that, however, the museum has plenty of scope to draw global interest. Take its improbable Egyptian collection. This is the legacy of Argentine Egyptologist Abraham Rosenvasser's leading role in excavating Ramses II's Aksha temple before it was flooded by the Aswan High Dam. Just as an Argentine heeded a Unesco call in 1960 to save part of our common heritage, so, Rogelio Marchetti says, the partnership today with KBFUS may safeguard the future of the Museo de La Plata: "This is a moment in which maybe our country, our museum, our foundation, could receive that international solidarity."

For more information:  
[kbs-frb.be/en/european-friends-fund](https://kbs-frb.be/en/european-friends-fund)

**The King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS) facilitates thoughtful, effective giving across borders – it is a trusted adviser for US donors seeking to support their favourite causes and non-profits overseas.**



To learn more about our donor-advised funds, legacy funds and KBFUS ART, please visit [kbfus.org](https://kbfus.org). Or contact us at (212) 713-7660 or [info@kbfus.org](mailto:info@kbfus.org).

# CHANGING YOUNG LIVES: HELPING STUDENTS WORLDWIDE



Education is a pillar of KBF's mission to build a better society. Thanks to generous support from donors passionate about giving people a good start in life, KBF CANADA is providing youngsters in several countries with opportunities to pursue higher education.

## Supporting bright minds in Lebanon

Since 2021, KBF CANADA has been working with LIFE, a membership organisation for Lebanese professionals in the worldwide diaspora, to assist talented and driven Lebanese students in financial need.

The chain of crises that have rocked Lebanese society and the economy in recent years has seen the organisation rethink its priorities. "We have been focusing on undergraduate students mainly studying in Lebanon who are really struggling," says Lara Koro, who heads LIFE's Education Programme.

Thanks to the Rossy Foundation Fund at KBF CANADA, LIFE was able to contribute to the education of 49 students in 2021 and 2022, going well beyond mere financial support: "The programme is a hub for nurturing future leaders, offering volunteering, internships, and mentorship," says Majd Fares, who recently graduated from the American University of Beirut with a degree in mechanical engineering.

The fund began supporting a new cohort of 46 students in October 2023.

"The beauty of all of this is that once they start working, they want to help others," says LIFE's Koro. "You want to give back to your community."

## A legacy to nourish Belgian roots

Belgian Claude-Daniel Le Flem is a fine example of someone who gave back. He was just 15 when he lost his mother, a schoolteacher, to cancer. Despite economic hardship, he completed his schooling in Gembloux, near Namur, and graduated from university before eventually emigrating to Canada, where he became a professor of linguistics at Québec's Université Laval.





NEWS FROM OUR MYRIAD PARTNERS

Several decades later, Le Flem established a 1-million Canadian dollar legacy Fund at KBF CANADA in honour of his mother to help students at his former school, the Athénée Royale in Gembloux, who lack resources to pursue higher education.

The Fund was inaugurated in May 2018 with the planting of a Canadian maple at the school — a deeply moving event for Le Flem, who was by then himself terminally ill. He died just six months later. The first annual grant of 10,000 euros was awarded in 2020 along with personal guidance and support. “If I could, I would tell him how much this helped me,” says the scholarship’s first recipient, Nicolas Grégoire. He has now completed a bachelor’s degree in information technology and has begun studying for a masters. “I am really grateful to him,” he adds. “It means a lot to me.”



#### New openings for girls in rural Morocco

Thanks to a Canadian donor, KBF also provides some of the most talented and motivated female pupils from the northern Moroccan town of Sidi Redouane with the opportunity to study at university. Radia Benkhrouya, who has close ties to the area, collaborated with KBF CANADA to initiate the scholarships, which were jointly implemented with the Moroccan nonprofit Fondation Sanady. High dropout rates, especially among girls, are pervasive in rural Morocco, and financial hardship prevents many from continuing their studies after secondary school.

“They are so persevering and hardworking, it’s incredible,” Benkhrouya says of the six young women whose studies the fund supports. “This is going to completely change

the course of their lives — and not just that, they are going to be able to help their families and be an inspiration for other girls.”



- KBF CANADA is a registered charitable organisation in Canada.
- It works with individuals, families, corporations, and foundations to enable donors to support charitable activities outside Canada.
- KBF CANADA crafts personalised solutions for one-time gifts or recurring donations through donor-advised funds.

[kbfcanada.ca](http://kbfcanada.ca) -  
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# CHINA

## NAVIGATING CHALLENGES, SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

With its vast size, rapidly growing economic power, and a wide range of challenges, China presents an intensely complex environment for philanthropy. Six years on from a framework law that regulates foreign donations, Give2Asia, KBF's partner in Myriad, has built a formidable track record in directing grants to Chinese beneficiaries.



International philanthropy accounts for a small but growing share of China's philanthropic landscape, according to *Unlocking Cross-border Philanthropy in Asia*, a major research project published in 2022 by Give2Asia in cooperation with the Asia Philanthropy Circle, the King Baudouin Foundation, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

In 2021, overseas donations to China totaled 2.5 billion dollars, with individual donations accounting for 32% of that total. China's philanthropic sector as a whole is expected to reach \$100

billion by 2025. Getting to know the ecosystem for grantmaking from abroad into a country with both great need and great wealth is to plunge into a dynamic environment where difficulties jostle with formidable opportunities.

### A unique environment

Since 2017, China's philanthropic landscape has been shaped by the Law on Administration of Activities of Overseas Nongovernmental Organisations in the People's Republic of China. Commonly referred to as the Overseas NGO or ONGO law, it imposes a comprehensive

legal framework for governance of all international grantmaking activities. Donors and nonprofits must navigate a complex system and cultivate strategic partnerships for success.

The ONGO law requires overseas NGOs to register a China Representative Office (CRO) to operate in China. CROs must work closely with a Professional Supervisory Unit (PSU) as well as the municipal Public Security Bureau (PSB) for project approvals, following their guidance and oversight. This unique environment demands a deep understanding of the country's nuances, complexities, and evolving regulations.

### Challenges and opportunities

Depending on the scope and location of a given project, approval may take several months. In recent years, PSUs and PSBs have begun to seek more input from related administrative departments, indicating an increasingly detailed and rigorous approval and monitoring process for overseas charitable activities. The layered system of administration, coupled with a dynamic geopolitical environment, imposes a steep learning curve on new entrants.





NEWS FROM OUR MYRIAD PARTNERS

The opportunities, however, are equally compelling. China is home to the world's second largest population and second largest economy, with rapidly evolving social and economic needs.

International philanthropy can play a vital role in addressing these needs and creating meaningful, sustainable impact. Among overseas NGOs registered in China to facilitate inbound donations, over half came from three sources: the United States, Hong Kong, and Japan. These cross-border inflows focus on trade, education, youth, health, and poverty alleviation. Young donors, particularly among Chinese expatriates who have studied overseas, are increasingly interested in giving abroad and looking for opportunities to build meaningful legacies beyond China.

#### Expert partners

Give2Asia's CRO has established a track record of success and a strong reputation within China. In six years, it has submitted thousands of grants to the Chinese authorities for approval under the system of Annual Activity Planning (AAP). Only one has been rejected. This has meant navigating effectively the complexities of the ONGO law while gaining approvals and building robust relationships with various local and provincial government bureaux, donors, and grantees. Headed by Carol Yang, the office has a wealth of experience and expertise that has garnered the trust of donors seeking to make an impact in China.

Donors can navigate the complexities of the regulatory landscape and leverage the country's growth trajectory by

heeding these key pieces of advice: partner with experts who have a deep understanding of the ONGO law and a strong network of relationships in China; conduct thorough due diligence on potential grantees to ensure alignment with the ONGO law and donor priorities; design flexible and adaptable programmes that can respond to evolving needs.

Among Give2Asia's signature programmes in China are Tomorrow-iCAN, which has helped more than 2,000 high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds on their way to top universities, and China Rural Doctors, which has raised over 1 million dollars to improve the skills of physicians in village health centres. Both these programmes and many others offer tax-deductible donation from Europe, the US, and elsewhere via the Myriad network.



For details of these and other resources that can help illuminate China's fast-developing philanthropic landscape, do visit the Give2Asia website at [give2asia.org](http://give2asia.org).

Give2Asia is a trusted partner for international philanthropy and the leader in donor-advised giving to the Asia-Pacific. Our mission is to strengthen communities in Asia by making cross-border giving easier and more effective. Since 2001, Give2Asia has facilitated more than 535 million US dollars of charitable grants in more than 30 countries.



**40%:**  
share of carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ) in atmosphere captured by phytoplankton



**50%:**  
share of oxygen ( $\text{O}_2$ ) in atmosphere produced by phytoplankton



# SAVE WHALES, SAVE OUR PLANET

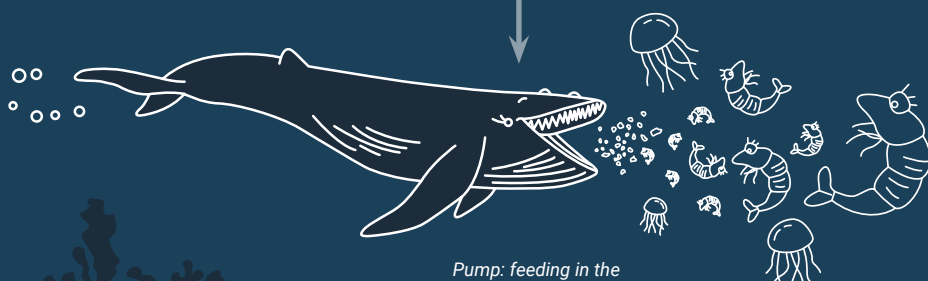
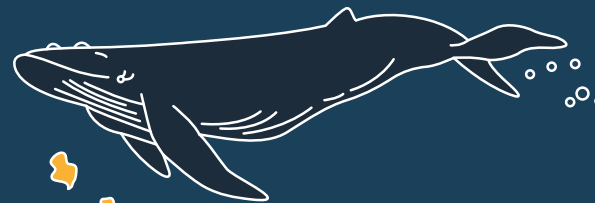
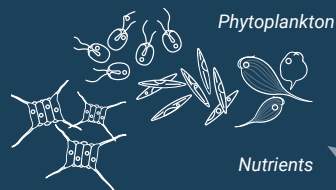
The KBF-run BELvue museum is marking the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a pioneering Belgian expedition to Antarctica (pages 3-7). While looking back at the voyage of the Belgica, visitors also discover how the polar continent and its ocean have been affected by human activity.

$\text{CO}_2$  emissions heating the planet pose a threat to humanity. But the exhibition also highlights potential solutions to which all can contribute. For example, starting to reverse the 20<sup>th</sup> century's near annihilation of whales around the Antarctic and elsewhere offers a potent remedy.

This is thanks to the way the world's largest mammals "pump" carbon between the ocean surface and seabed throughout their life cycle. Their presence nourishes phytoplankton, some of nature's tiniest creatures, which are vital to producing the oxygen we all breathe.

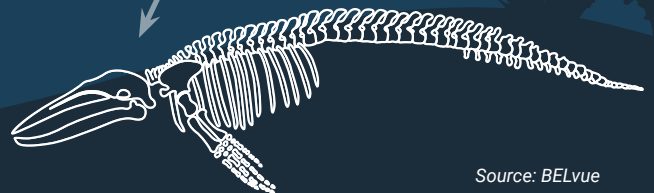
**37 BILLION TONNES:**  
 $\text{CO}_2$  captured annually by phytoplankton – four times as much as the Amazon forest

*\*Source: IMF*



Pump: feeding in the deep sea, breathing at the ocean surface

**30 TONNES:**  
( $\text{CO}_2$ ) removed from atmosphere when a whale dies – as much as over 1,000 trees absorb in a year



*Source: BELvue*

 King Baudouin Foundation

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