

# Diversity on the boards of non-profit foundations in Switzerland

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# Foreword

This report on diversity on the boards of non-profit foundations in Switzerland was written by Dr Aline Kratz-Ulmer, an academic fellow at the University of Geneva's Centre for Philanthropy, and Laetitia Gill, the Centre's Executive Education Associate.

In our report, we provide facts and figures, and describe the current trends affecting the composition of the governing bodies of Swiss-domiciled foundations. Our aim is to strengthen the knowledge base about the important issue of diversity. Our report can be downloaded free of charge at: [www.unige.ch/philanthropie/en/research-publication/research/diversite](http://www.unige.ch/philanthropie/en/research-publication/research/diversite).

First, we would like to express our deep gratitude to Prof Henry Peter, director of the Centre for Philanthropy, for always being available to provide advice and input, which helped us to advance and optimise our research.

We also wish to thank everyone who took part in our survey, the organisations that forwarded the questionnaire to foundation board members, and the relevant supervisory authorities. We are particularly grateful to Sandra Anliker (Deputy Director of the Pension Fund and Foundation Supervisory Authority of the Canton of Bern), Dominique Favre (Director of the Occupational Pensions and Foundation Supervisory Authority of Western Switzerland), Martin Mayer (Director of the Pension Fund and Foundation Supervisory Authority of the Canton of Aargau), Jean Pirrotta (Director of the Supervisory Authority for Foundations and Pension Funds of the Canton of Geneva), Stefan Stumpf (Director of the Eastern Switzerland Supervisory Authority for Foundations and Pension Funds), and Dr Sandra von Salis (Director of the Supervisory Authority for Foundations and Pension Funds of the Canton of Zurich). Our discussions with these representatives provided us with a better understanding of the practical aspects affecting the composition of foundation boards.

Lastly, we would like to thank Lise Trémeaud and Floria Heitz for their help in processing the questionnaire, and Véronique Produit at the University of Geneva for sharing her statistical expertise. We are also grateful to Pauline Guédon and Anne-Françoise Ritter at the University of Geneva's Centre for Philanthropy and Marie-Noël Pichelin for carefully reviewing this report.

Zurich and Geneva, 28 June 2022



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# Introduction

Ensuring diversity on foundation boards is an increasingly important issue in today's society. Normally, we think of diversity in terms of corporate boards of directors. In recent years, various studies have demonstrated a correlation between increased diversity on corporate boards of directors and companies' business performance.

The issue of increasing diversity in the business world has prompted legal and other changes, but Swiss foundations are shifting more cautiously towards the modern concept of governance. The University of Geneva's Centre for Philanthropy (GCP) considers diversity in the governance of non-profit foundations to be a topical issue worth studying. We also believe that diversity can be a major driver of innovation and success in the philanthropy sector.

As the amount of data available on this topic in Switzerland is limited, we chose to begin our research by conducting a survey of board members of non-profit foundations. The objectives of this empirical survey were as follows:

- a) to collect and analyse concrete data
- b) to take stock of the situation on the boards of Swiss non-profit foundations
- c) to issue initial recommendations on how foundations can make their governing bodies more diverse and efficient.

# Methodology

The survey was conducted between June and September 2020. Approximately 600 people were contacted through various channels, with a response rate of 38%. Completed surveys from 720 foundation board members representing 107 non-profit foundations (53 in French-speaking Switzerland and 54 in German-speaking Switzerland, out of a total of 14,000 non-profit foundations registered in the country) were received and analysed.

The questionnaire was sent primarily to foundations in French- and German-speaking Switzerland because of the location of the two primary researchers (Laetitia Gill in Geneva, at the time, and Aline Kratz-Ulmer in Zurich). However, both researchers work with foundations across Switzerland.

Finding the email addresses of board members was a difficult task, as they tend not to be provided in the foundations' external communications.

The questionnaire was sent by email in both French and German, either directly to the board members or to the foundations so that they could forward it to their board members. The questionnaire comprised 35 closed questions and sub-questions with spaces for participants to add comments, some of which are provided in this report.

The questionnaire was not designed to provide a representative analysis of diversity on Swiss foundation boards, but rather to provide a sample of these boards to identify key characteristics.

The questionnaire was anonymous, but the participants had the option of providing their contact details if they were open to be contacted at a later date.

For ease of reading, some percentages have been rounded.

Participants included members of the foundation boards and of management. Their answers reflect their own points of view and do not necessarily represent the opinions of other members of their board or management team.

This report is divided into four sections. Part one provides the definition of "diversity" on which this survey was based. In part two, we analyse the main questions and answers from the survey. Part three contains recommendations based on this analysis, and part four examines how the issue of diversity on foundation boards in Switzerland may evolve.

# The authors

## Aline Kratz-Ulmer



Aline Kratz-Ulmer studied law at the University of Zurich. After obtaining her master's degree in 2006, she was admitted to the bar in Zurich in 2010. From 2009 to 2011, she worked as a research assistant at the Centre for Foundation Law at the University of Zurich, focusing her research on foundations and trusts. In 2016, she completed her thesis on investment foundations and obtained a PhD from the University of Zurich. She worked as an attorney at law for various commercial law firms and as a legal clerk at the Swiss Federal Supreme Court.

Since 2019, Aline Kratz-Ulmer has been working for the law firm Hubatka Müller Vetter Rechtsanwälte in Zurich, where she advises all types of foundations on various aspects of foundation law and occupational pensions. She also provides expert legal advice on investment foundations and trusts, as well as on inheritance law. She regularly publishes and gives lectures on these topics. Furthermore she has been an academic fellow at the University of Geneva (GCP) since 2020, where she is involved in teaching and doing research on diversity in the governance of Swiss non-profit organisations.

## Laetitia Gill



Laetitia Gill holds a master's degree in management and is a recognised expert in the field of philanthropy and social innovation, with over 20 years of experience in both private companies and non-profit organisations. She has served as a member of several association boards for more than ten years.

Laetitia Gill was GCP's Executive Director from 2017 to 2022, helping to define and implement the Centre's strategy as the only cross-disciplinary research centre of its kind in Europe. In addition to her research on diversity in the governance of Swiss non-profit organisations, Laetitia Gill co-created the University of Geneva's Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) in Operational and Strategic Philanthropy. She cooperates with the programme and is responsible for the module on leadership and diversity. Convinced of the importance of solid governance in ensuring a sustainable and innovative philanthropy sector, she teamed up with Fondation de France, on behalf of the GCP, to create the European Academy of Strategic Philanthropy, a forum dedicated to leaders of the largest grantmaking foundations in Europe. Since March 2022, Laetitia Gill has been based in Montreal, Canada.

# The Geneva Centre for Philanthropy

The Geneva Centre for Philanthropy (GCP) is a cross-disciplinary academic centre created in 2017 through a public-private partnership between the University of Geneva (UNIGE) and currently seven philanthropic foundations. It has gained recognition among academics and practitioners as a reference in the field of philanthropy, both in Switzerland and internationally.

The GCP focuses on three interconnected areas: research and publication, teaching, and public events.

The GCP works on five priority research topics:

- Taxation and philanthropy
- Social entrepreneurship and hybrid entities
- Why do people give?
- Foundation governance
- Artificial Intelligence and Philanthropy

Transferring knowledge is at the core of the GCP's work. Whenever possible, its events and publications are open access to ensure that they reach as many people as possible. In the five years since its creation, the GCP has become a significant source of information on philanthropy.

[www.unige.ch/philanthropie/en](http://www.unige.ch/philanthropie/en)



# Part 1

## Definition and key findings

# Definition of “diversity”

Diversity is a multi-faceted term that can take several forms, such as age, gender, ethnicity, physical and psychological ability, and sexual orientation.<sup>1</sup>

The GCP survey is based on a broad definition of diversity, meaning that along with the characteristics mentioned above, other individual characteristics – such as people’s professional skillset, the languages they speak, their nationality, their personal experiences, and their diversity of thought and disciplines – are also taken into account.<sup>2</sup>

To achieve full potential, diversity must be seconded by inclusive practices. In a more inclusive environment, individuals feel recognised, respected and valued, enabling and encouraging them to become fully engaged in their work.

*“If we want to continue to live in a diverse society, we need to be able to look at things from different perspectives when seeking solutions. This works better if the diversity seen in society is reflected in the membership of decision-making entities. If more foundations take this simple truth into account, we will be heading in the right direction.”<sup>3</sup>*

**Christophe Degen**, Director of proFonds

*“Why do we need diverse boards? A board should reflect the population it serves, and I think that’s what diversity really entails. Fulfilling gender, race and ethnicity quotas is not enough if everyone goes to the same university and comes from the same culture. Contrasting views and tensions force us to be more rigorous and thoughtful in the decision-making process and lead to more creative and robust decisions.”<sup>4</sup>*

**Atalanti Moquette**, Founder of Giving Women

- 1 Cathrine Müller, Gudrun Sander, *Innovativ führen mit Diversity-Kompetenz*, p. 2. Aufl, Bern, 2011, p. 80; Aline Kratz-Ulmer, “Wirkungsvollere Stiftungstätigkeit mittels”, *Foundation Diversity Management*, SZW/RSDA, 2020, p. 164.
- 2 Aline Kratz-Ulmer, “Wirkungsvollere Stiftungstätigkeit mittels”, *Foundation Diversity Management*, SZW/RSDA 2020, p. 164; Aline Kratz-Ulmer, “Wo stehen wir diesbezüglich in der Schweiz?”, *Foundation Diversity Management*, SuS 4/2021, p. 14; Thomas Sprecher, Philipp Egger, Georg von Schnurbein, *Swiss Foundation Code*, p. 73.
- 3 “Wer in einer vielfältigen Gesellschaft handlungsfähig bleiben will, muss die Dinge bei der Lösungsfindung aus verschiedenen Perspektiven betrachten können. Das geht besser, wenn die Entscheidungsgremien die Vielfalt der Gesellschaft abbilden. Wenn immer mehr Stiftungen diese simple Wahrheit beherzigen, sind wir auf dem richtigen Weg.”
- 4 “Pourquoi la diversité dans les conseils d’administration? Un conseil d’administration doit refléter la population qu’il sert et, pour moi, cela définit la diversité au sens profond du terme. Il ne suffit pas que les quotas de genres, de races et d’ethnies soient représentés, si tous et toutes ont fréquenté les mêmes universités et font partie de la même culture. Les tensions et les points de vue opposés nous obligent à faire preuve de plus de rigueur et de réflexion dans le processus de prise de décision et conduisent à des décisions plus créatives et plus solides.”

# Key findings

## Age diversity in the foundations surveyed



**75%**

of the board members were 50 years or older.



**5%**

were under 40 years of age.



**89%**

of the foundations surveyed did not set an age limit for board membership in their articles of association.

## Nationality of board members of foundations operating both in Switzerland and abroad



**79%**

of the board members were Swiss.

## Terms of office of board members



**98%**

In 98% of the cases, the term of office can be renewed more than once; in 1% of the cases, it can be renewed only once, and in 1% the cases, it is not renewable.



**28%**

In 28% of cases, foundation board members are elected for an open-ended term, while in 72% of cases, they are elected for a fixed term.

### Diversity



**65%**

of those surveyed consider their board to be diverse.



**90%**

consider diversity to be an advantage for their board.

**73%**

consider diversity on foundation boards to be an issue that should be discussed more frequently.



**86%**

think that diversity contributes to a foundation's efficiency.

### Compensation



**65%**

of participants think that greater compensation for board members wouldn't increase diversity, while 35% think that greater compensation would help to increase diversity.

### Measures to increase diversity



**50%**

said that the founder or the board itself should be responsible for ensuring diversity. 48% believe that diversity should be addressed in a code of conduct, whereas 10% said that diversity should be required by law.



**65%**

of participants felt that providing training for board members, and potentially to board candidates as well, would enhance diversity on foundation boards.





# Part 2

## Survey results analysis

# Participant profiles

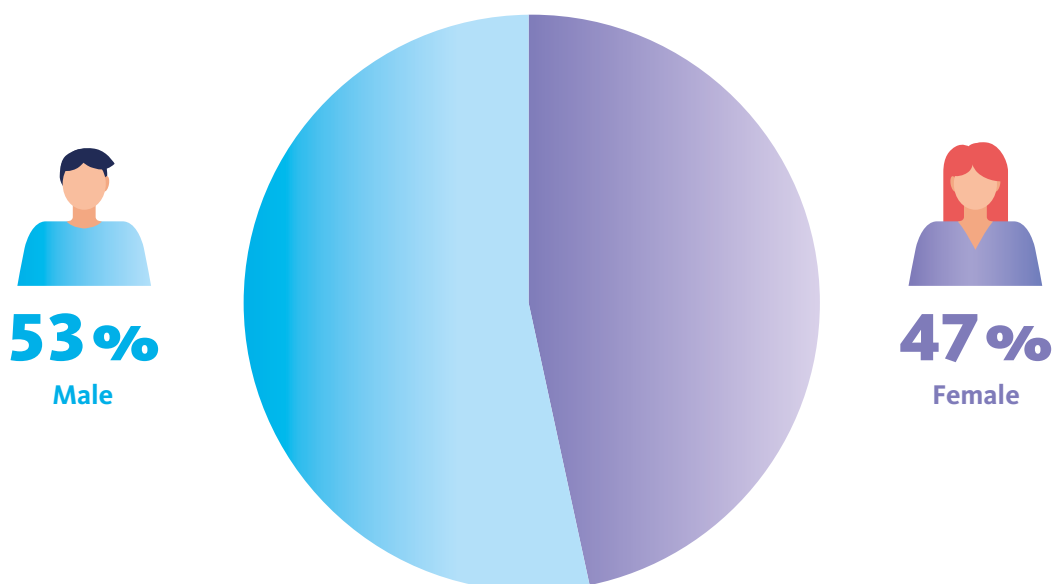
## Gender

Almost the same proportion of men (over 53%) and women (almost 47%) responded to the survey, although there were more men (63.2%) than women (36.7%) on the foundation boards surveyed (see p. 19).

Among the French-speaking participants, 50% were women and 50% were men, whereas 56% of the German-speaking participants were men and 43% were women.

Therefore, women were over-represented in this questionnaire relative to their presence on foundation boards. Could this be because women are more attentive to diversity?

### What is your gender?

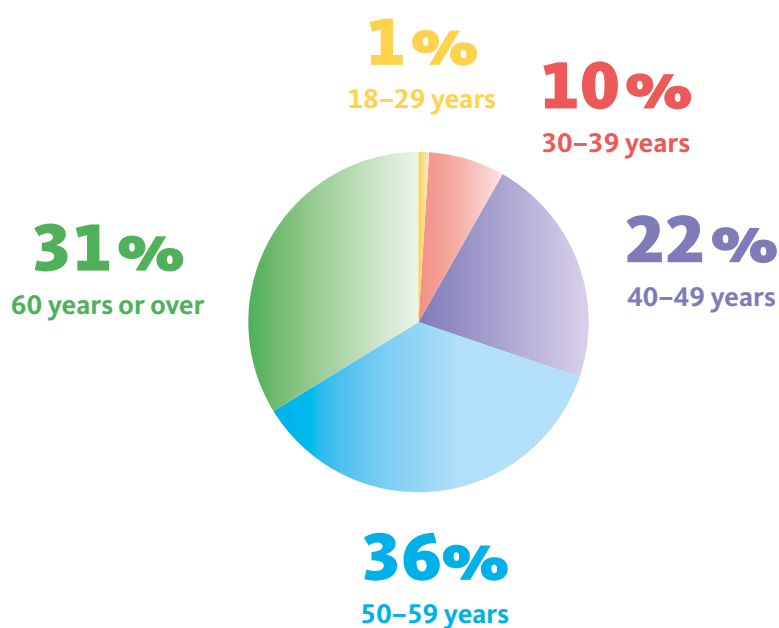


## Age groups

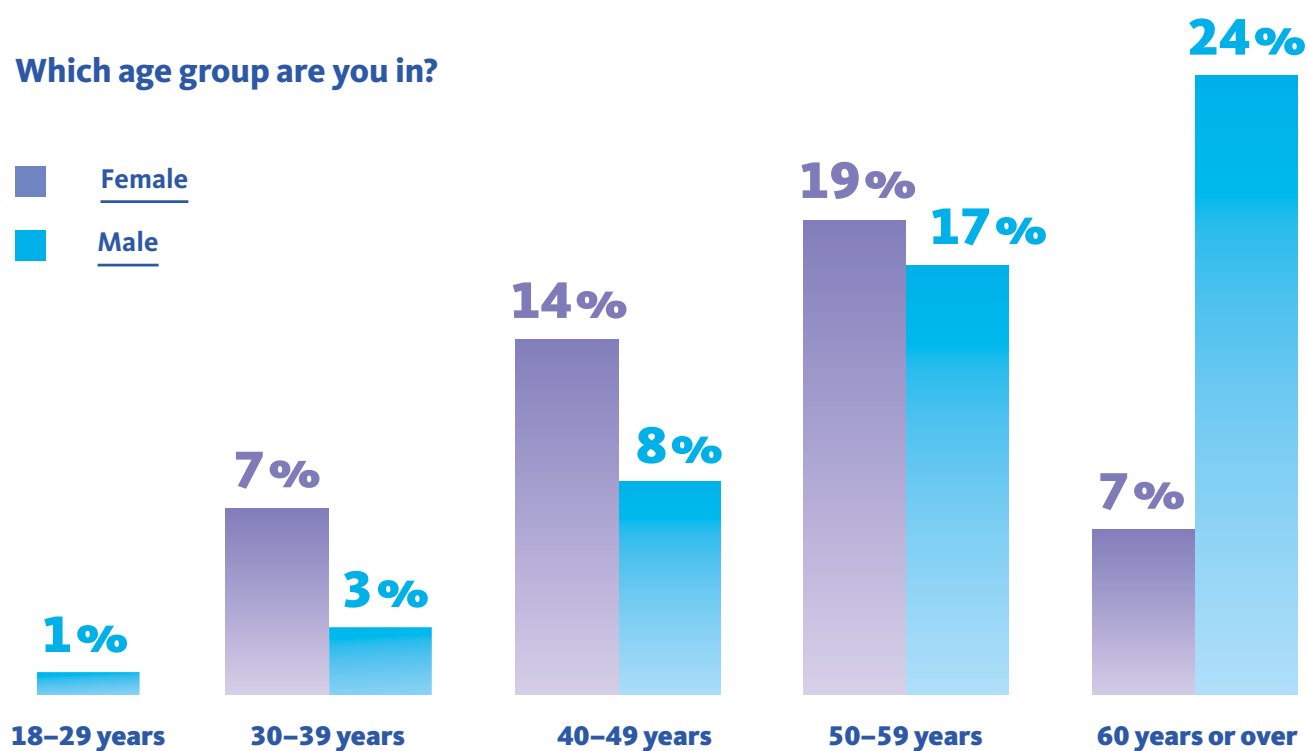
The “50–59 years” and “60 years or over” groups were the largest age groups in the survey, accounting for 67% of the participants. It is worth noting that most of today’s foundations were established 20 or more years ago, and many initial members are probably still sitting on the boards.

Furthermore, foundation board members and management teams usually have extensive experience because of their roles and responsibilities. This is reflected in the age breakdown of board members, as shown on page 20.

### Which age group are you in?



### Which age group are you in?



# Education

It is interesting to note that more than three quarters of the board members surveyed (79%) have a university degree, whereas most of the remaining participants attended a university of applied science.

There are various reasons why almost all the participants had a university degree. For instance, their area of study may be related to the field in which the foundation operates, which may require certain skills (legal, financial, medical, scientific, artistic, etc.). In addition, individuals with a university degree may wish to return to society some of what they have gained through their education. They may also feel more entitled to or eligible for such positions. Moreover, as these positions are unpaid, members need to have another source of income, so they are often higher earners, and those with a university education tend to earn more. Finally, people with a university education often have a broad network of professional contacts and are more likely to be recruited through co-option.

The foundation sector itself also benefits from having board members with a university education, as it is a sector with very little oversight and requires a range of skills and complex decision-making.

## What is your level of education?

### General university



### University of applied science



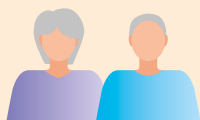
### Other



### Apprenticeship



## Key findings



**Most women surveyed were between the ages of 50 and 59 years, whereas most men were over 60 years.**



**Regardless of gender, the vast majority of participants have a university degree.**



**Female participants were over-represented in the survey relative to their presence on the boards of Swiss foundations.**

# Foundation profiles

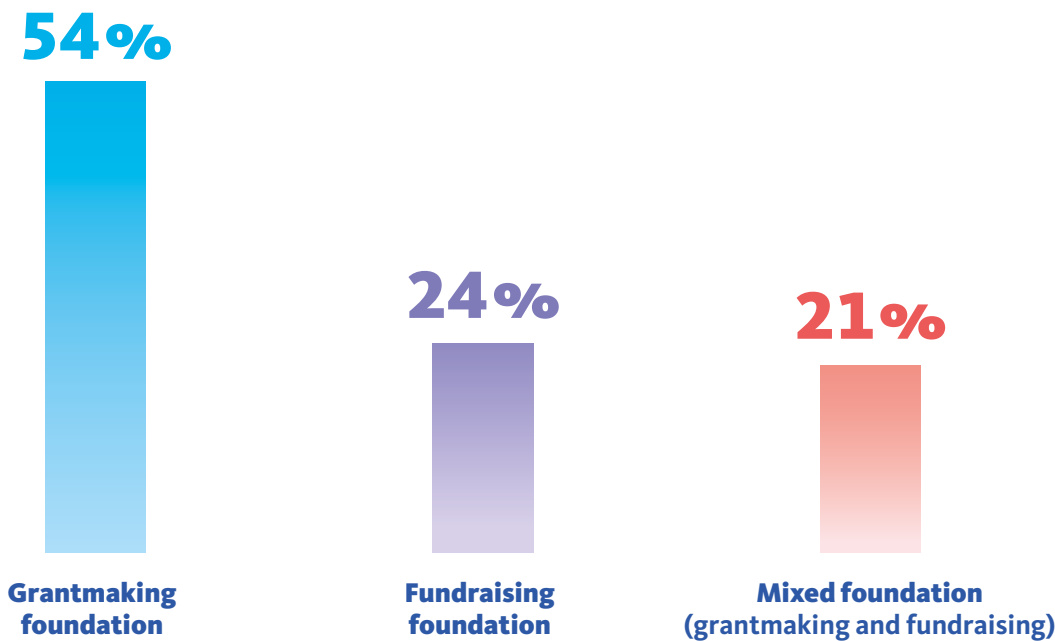
## Types of foundation

Grantmaking foundations (54%) made up the majority of the foundations surveyed, fundraising foundations accounted for 24%, and mixed foundations (i.e. grant-making and fundraising foundations) made up the remaining 21%.

*“The Swiss Foundation Code states that efficiency is the fundamental principle of good governance. Having a well-balanced foundation board leads to a broader array of skills, enriches discussions and maximises impact. The GCP study helps us show that foundations are aware of this issue and overwhelmingly see diversity as a tool for driving efficiency.”<sup>5</sup>*

**Dr Lukas von Orelli**, President of Swiss Foundations

### What type of foundation do you have?



5 “L’efficacité constitue un principe fondamental de bonne gouvernance, selon le Swiss Foundation Code. Un bon équilibre au sein des conseils de fondations favorise la valorisation des compétences, permet d’enrichir les discussions et ainsi d’optimiser l’impact. L’étude du GCP contribue à montrer que les fondations en sont conscientes et voient, en grande majorité, la diversité comme un outil d’efficacité.”

## Regional scope of the foundations' activities

The balance between foundations operating only in Switzerland (43%) and those operating both in Switzerland and abroad (57%) is relatively equal. This indicates that Switzerland is open to the rest of the world. It may also reflect the fact that Switzerland is home to many international organisations that run first-rate programmes in other countries.

The foundations surveyed operate across all continents, regardless of the type of activity, with Africa and Europe (including Switzerland) having the greatest presence.

### Where does the foundation operate?



**43%**

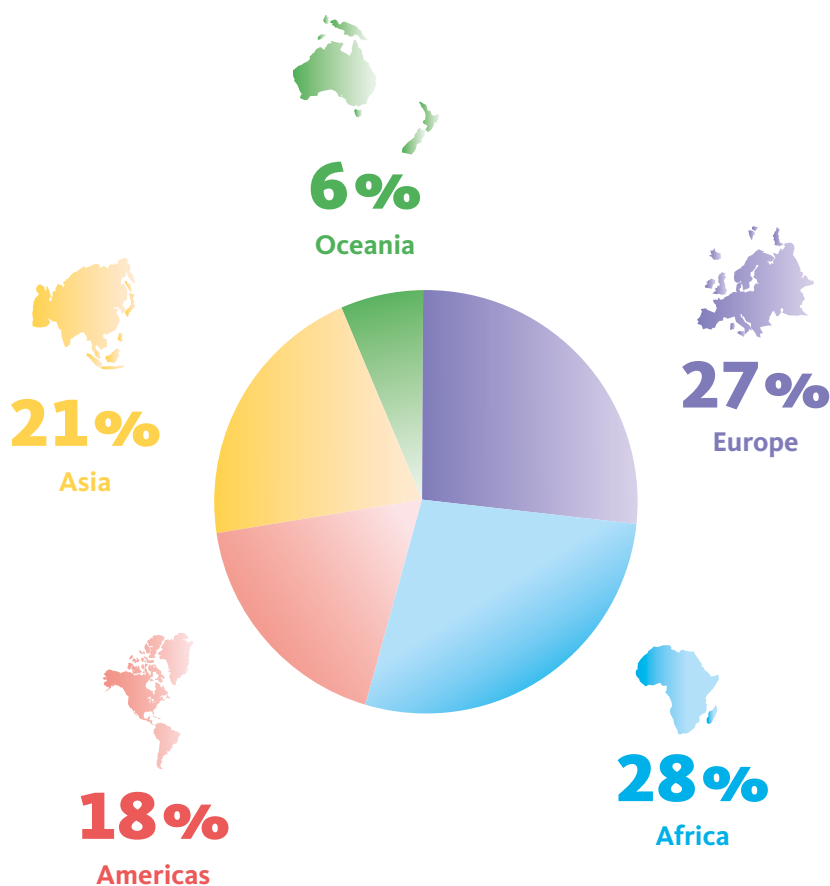
Only in Switzerland



**57%**

In Switzerland and abroad

### On which continent(s)?



# Number of board members

Most of the surveyed foundations had five board members. This number may seem high given that most foundations have few resources and often struggle to recruit board members. The Swiss Foundation Code recommends that small foundations with a simple purpose and where the board work will not take up much time should establish a board with less than five members. However, it also states that the number of members should never be less than three to enable “both control and majority decisions”.<sup>6</sup>

“Foundation boards generally consist of five to seven people, but usually at least three people. They have the skills and time required to perform their tasks and undergo systematic educational training.”<sup>7</sup>

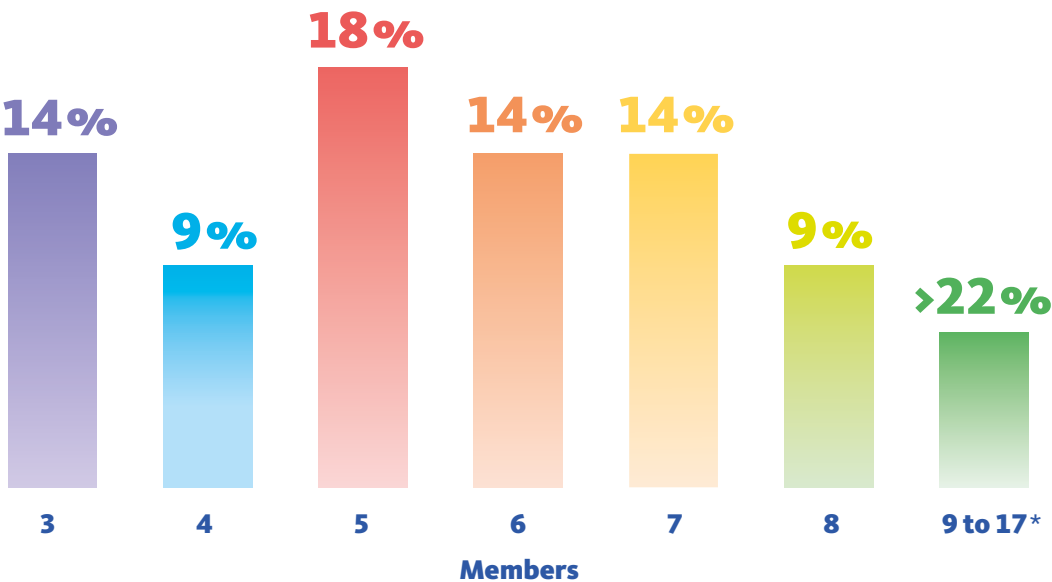
“The board of directors comprises at least five mutually independent members.”<sup>8</sup>

*“Looking at these results on the subject of diversity on Swiss foundation boards, I am pleased to see a general consensus that diversity is an advantage for a foundation board. For me, having women on boards is fundamental as it allows for a better balance in the management of a foundation. I believe that there is no future without diversity – this has always held true when it comes to genetics, but men, unlike women, have too often opposed it.”<sup>9</sup>*

**Nicolas de Tonnac**, President of Pro Infirmis Genève and a member of the Foundation Board of Foyer-Handicap

6 Thomas Sprecher, Philipp Egger, Georg von Schnurbein, *Swiss Foundation Code 2021*, p. 74.  
7 *Ibid*, p. 70.  
8 *The 21 Zewo Standards*, 2017, Standard 4.  
9 “À la vue de ces résultats concernant le sujet de la diversité au sein des conseils de fondations en Suisse, je suis heureux de constater que, de l’avis général, la diversité constitue un avantage pour un conseil de fondation. Pour ma part, la représentation féminine est fondamentale, car elle permet de réaliser un meilleur équilibre dans la gestion d’une fondation. Je considère qu’il n’y a pas d’avenir sans diversité, la génétique l’a toujours clamé, mais les hommes, contrairement aux femmes, s’y sont trop souvent opposés.”

## How many members does your foundation board have?



\* This percentage includes boards with 9–17 members, with 17 members being the largest number reported.



## Gender parity on foundation boards

Among the foundations that participated in the survey, 63.2% of the board members were men and 36.7% were women, and one person (0.1%) identified as another gender. Only a quarter of the foundations have the same or a greater number of women than men on their boards.

However, a 2019 survey reported an even lower percentage of women on boards than that found in our survey.<sup>10</sup>

Most foundations were created 20 years ago, when diversity within foundations was not a societal issue.

Men probably make up the majority (63.2%) of the foundation board members because they have better networks. Men who already make up the majority of foundation boards tend to recruit people they know, which might lead them to recommend another man. This process is not discriminatory in itself, as women can do the same, but the outcome can be discriminatory.

Another explanation could be that women (36.7%) do not proactively seek these positions or volunteer for them.

Rather than simply seeking diversity, foundations need to take an inclusive approach to ensure that

members have complementary expertise, that everyone feels able to speak up, and that their opinions are valued and considered. However, managing a more diverse board requires the board chair and its members to have a specific set of skills.

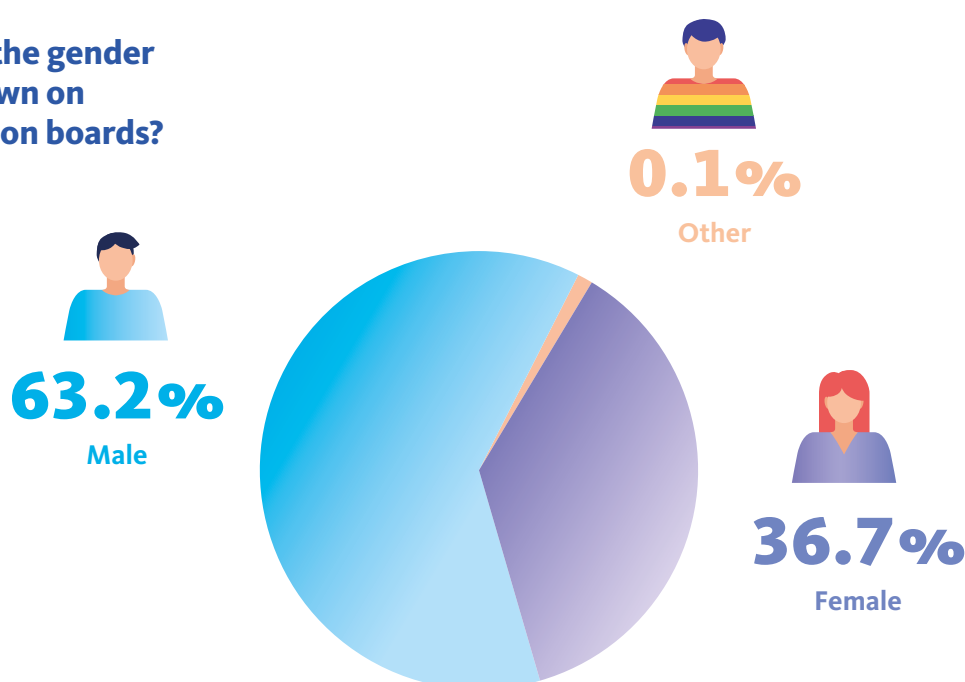
*“The findings of the diversity survey conducted by Laetitia Gill and Dr Aline Kratz-Ulmer are extremely interesting. It is reassuring that 90% of the participants consider diversity to be an advantage for their board. However, it’s surprising that 24% of male participants remain on or join boards beyond the age of 60, compared to just 7% of women. Is this a sign that women tend to step away from their professional duties after retirement?”<sup>11</sup>*

**Dominique Faesch**, President of Prix du Cercle Suisse des Administratrices

10 Beate Eckhardt, Dominique Jakob, Georg von Schnurbein, *Rapport sur les Fondations en Suisse 2019*, p. 10.

11 “L’enquête sur la diversité, dirigée par Laetitia Gill et Dre Aline Kratz-Ulmer, est extrêmement intéressante, avec notamment un constat rassurant : 90 % des personnes répondantes considèrent que la diversité est un avantage pour leur conseil de fondation, et un autre constat, celui-là étonnant : 24 % des répondants hommes s’engagent au-delà de leur 60e année dans un conseil de fondation contre 7 % de femmes. Est-ce là le témoignage d’une démission professionnelle des femmes au-delà de la retraite ?”

### What is the gender breakdown on foundation boards?



# Breakdown by age group

For the 107 foundations surveyed:

- In more than one third of cases, over 50% of the board members were of 60 years or older.
- In 4% of the foundations, 100% of the members were aged 60 years or over.
- More than one third of the foundations had no board members below the age of 50.
- Only 2% of the foundations had no board members over the age of 50.

Among the 720 board members surveyed, 75% were over the age of 50, 38% were between 60 and 69 years, 19.6% were between 40 and 49 years, and 5.4% were between 18 and 39 years.

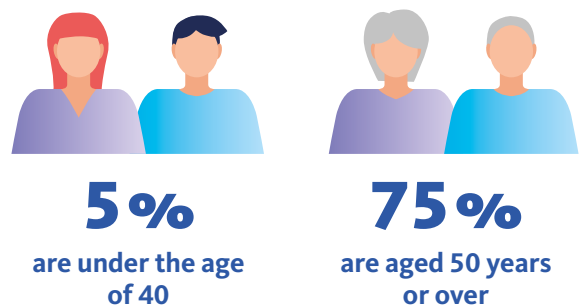
The reason that professionals in the sector often give for a large number of older members is that positions on foundation boards are voluntary (and generally not remunerated) and can demand a lot of time.<sup>12</sup> Retired people or people over the age of 50 tend to be at a stage in their lives where family and career are less of a priority. This allows them to devote their time and professional expertise to these positions.

<sup>12</sup> Aline Kratz-Ulmer, Jan Schudel, "Frau gesucht, Ist die Zukunft von Stiftungsräten jung und weiblich?", *Fundraiser Magazin*, 6/2018, p. 44.

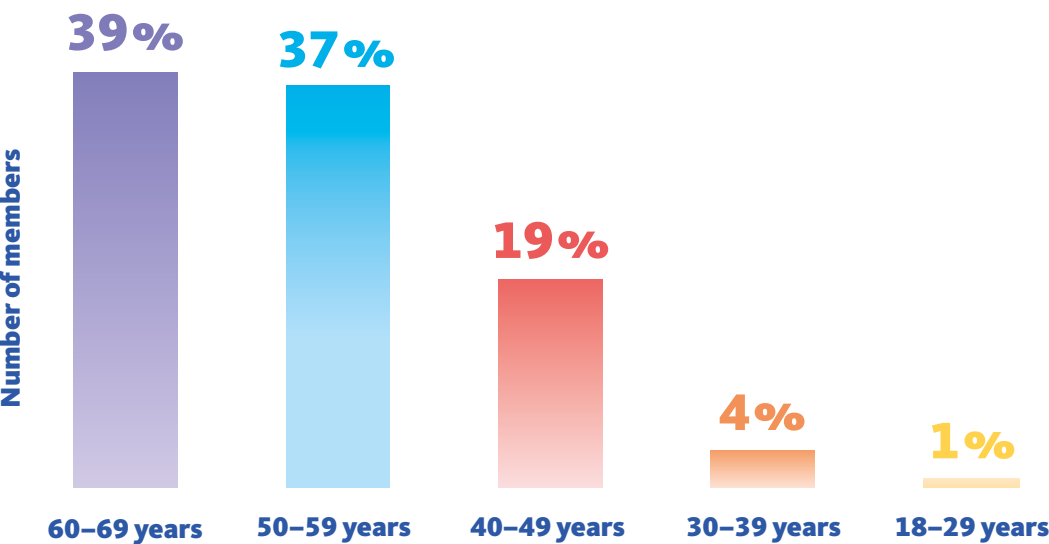
Another explanation is that young people do not proactively seek these positions or volunteer for them. People under the age of 40 are usually at a point in their lives where they focus on other personal, family or career-related projects.

In addition, foundation board members tend to appoint candidates who are recommended to them, and these candidates are likely to be in the same age group. As the majority of existing members are aged 50 years or over, these factors lead to a fairly consistent average age of over 50 years.

## What is the age breakdown of board members?



## What is the age breakdown of board members?



## Nationality by region

The vast majority (79%) of board members are Swiss nationals, which is consistent with the findings of the *Swiss Foundation Report 2021*. However, the report states that the proportion of foreign members varies greatly from one canton to the next.<sup>13</sup>

Board members are mostly European (including Swiss), perhaps because the foundations operate primarily in that region. In addition, some foundations' articles of association explicitly state that board members should be Swiss nationals. This could be because cantonal or municipal rules require a specific number of Swiss nationals on foundation boards.

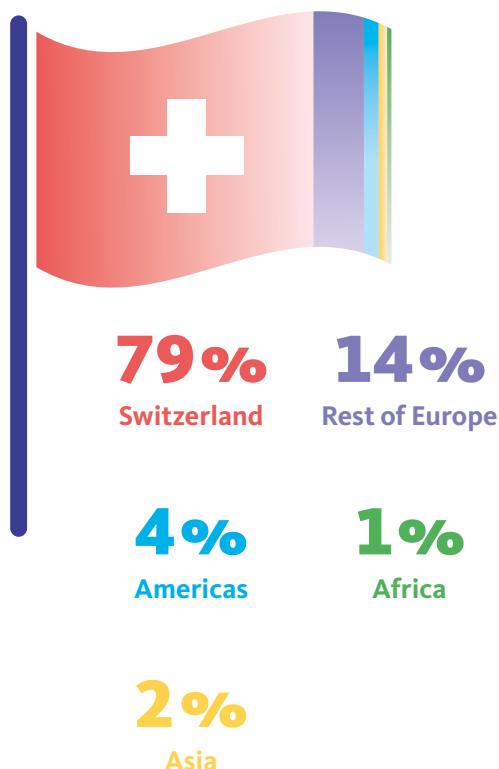
<sup>13</sup> Katharina Guggi, Julia Jakob, Dominique Jakob, Georg von Schnurbein, *Swiss Foundation Report 2021*, p. 10.

## Age limits on membership, as stipulated in the articles of association

89% of the foundations that participated in the survey do not stipulate an age limit for board members in their articles of association. This may be because the founder did not want to include such a provision to avoid limiting the pool of potential candidates. The lack of an age limit also leads to a wider age range.

### Do the foundation's articles of association stipulate an age limit for the foundation board members?

### Nationality by region for foundations operating only in Switzerland



**89%**  
of the foundations  
surveyed do not have  
an age limit



**11%**  
of the foundations  
surveyed have an  
age limit



**5**  
of the 12 foundations that  
stated they had an age  
limit also indicated what  
that age limit was.

## Age limits of board members, as stipulated in the articles of association

*"In the canton of Aargau, there are many small, local foundations that are involved in promoting cultural aspects of community life or in promoting some kind of social service. In these cases, greater diversity on the foundation boards would be extremely beneficial. A mix of professional skills, age groups, and genders in the governing bodies of these foundations would ensure that the needs of all potential beneficiaries were considered. As compensation is usually very low and often non-existent, the governing bodies of these foundations tend to be made up of people who do not work, mainly because they are retired, or people who work in public administrations. Therefore, there is a risk that the interests of older residents and local administration will be overemphasised when funds are allocated. The board of a foundation that promotes cultural aspects of village life must cover the needs of everyone living there, whether they are young or old, male or female. Local culture is not only about traditional concerts by local choirs and music associations. Youth culture and women's associations should not be neglected."*<sup>14</sup>

**Martin S. Mayer**, Director  
of the Aargau Supervisory Authority

More than three quarters (78%) of the participants were aged 50 years or older, and more than half of the individuals in that group were 60 years or older.

Only 11% of the foundations stipulated an age limit in their articles of association. Adding such a provision could help bring new and younger people to foundation boards.

Where an age limit is stipulated, it ranges from 70 to 80 years, which is above the Swiss retirement age, with an average of 73 years. Given current demographic trends and ageing population, this average age limit is likely to increase in the years ahead.

### What is the age limit stipulated in the articles of association?



With age limit:

**73 years**  
on average

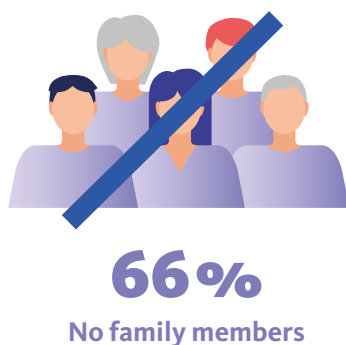
<sup>14</sup> "Im Kanton Aargau gibt es zahlreiche kleine, kommunale Stiftungen, die meist das kulturelle Dorfleben fördern oder abstrakte, allgemeine Sozialhilfe vorsehen. Hier wäre eine Diversität im Stiftungsrat sehr förderlich. Mit einer Durchmischung von Fachkompetenzen, Altersgruppen und Geschlechter im obersten Organ könnten die Bedürfnisse aller potentiellen Destinatäre wahrgenommen werden. Aufgrund der minimalen oder oft fehlenden Entschädigungen wird das oberste Organ in solchen Stiftungen üblicherweise von nicht erwerbstätigen Personen, meist Rentnern, oder Personen, die in der öffentlichen Verwaltung tätig sind, besetzt. Dabei besteht die Gefahr, dass bei den Vergabungen die Interessen von älteren Bewohnerinnen und Bewohnern und der Gemeinde selbst übergewichtet werden. Ein Stiftungsrat einer Stiftung, die das kulturelle Dorfleben einer Gemeinde fördert sollte ja die Bedürfnisse aller Bewohner, ob jung oder alt, ob männlich oder weiblich, abdecken können. Die lokale Kultur besteht nicht nur aus den traditionellen Konzerten von lokalen Gesangs und Musikvereinen. Auch die Jugendkultur und Tätigkeiten von Frauenvereinen sollen nicht zu kurz kommen."

## Members of the founder's family on the board

Two thirds of the foundations (66%) had no family members on their board. This percentage belies the idea that foundation boards almost always include family members.

Including the founder's family members on the board can, with some types of foundations, be used as a form of succession planning. Family members are usually familiar with the reason the founder created the foundation.

### How many members of the founder's family are on the board?



## Renewing the terms of office of board members

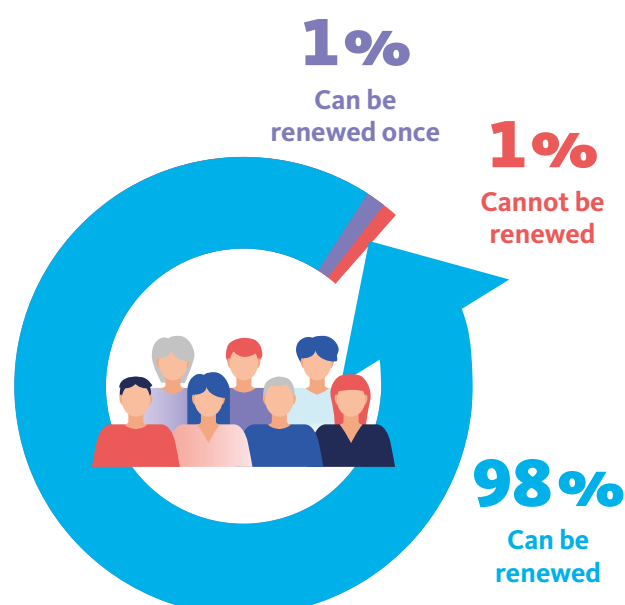
Almost all foundations offer renewable terms of office. Renewable terms of office can be beneficial for foundations, which can draw on members' knowledge as it develops over time. However, if there is no limit on the number of times a term of office can be renewed, this can lead to monotonous decision-making, and the foundation can miss out on fresh ideas.

*"Foundation boards in Switzerland are very diverse, but not all of them are professionally structured. Given the rules imposed by the supervisory authority and increasingly important ethical and due diligence issues, we need to think about what kind of training board members need and what expertise is required within the board and to set that out formally. Limiting the number of terms of office is another issue that needs to be addressed."*<sup>15</sup>

**Catherine Labouchère**, President of the Fondation pour l'Université de Lausanne

<sup>15</sup> "Les conseils de fondations en Suisse sont très divers, mais force est de constater que tous n'ont pas une organisation structurée de manière professionnelle. Avec les règles imposées par l'autorité de surveillance des fondations, et avec les questions éthiques et de due diligence qui sont devenues incontournables, il est temps de réfléchir, puis de formaliser sous une forme à définir tant une formation des membres que la composition des conseils en termes d'expertise. Le nombre limité de mandats est également un sujet qui devrait être traité."

### Do the foundation's articles of association allow the members' terms of office to be renewed?



# Terms of office of board members

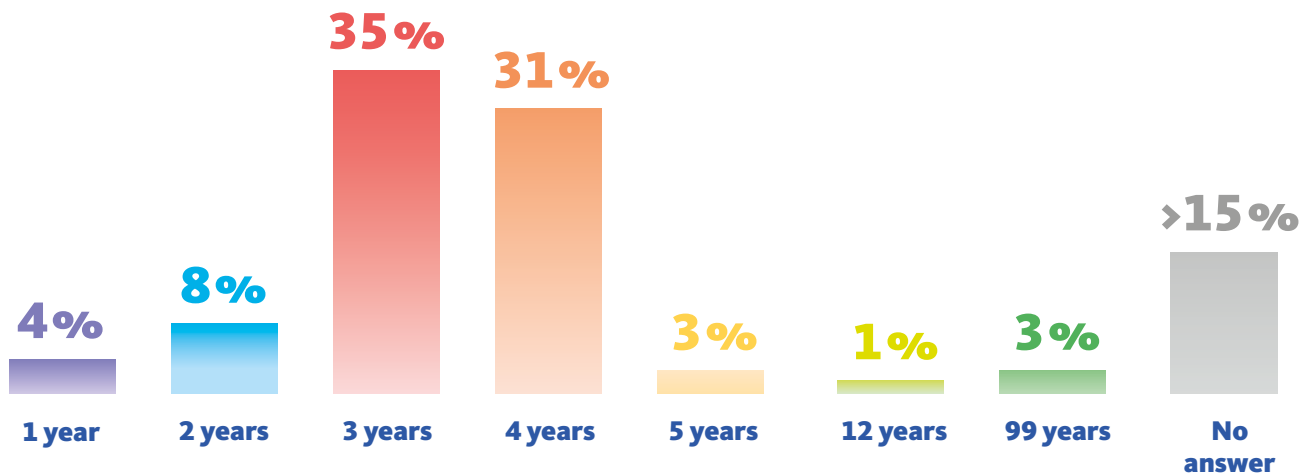
The participants indicated that where members are appointed for a fixed term, it is usually for a period of three or four years. The advantage of a three- or four-year term is that it gives the member time to become familiar with the foundation’s functions and objectives. However a term of three or four years may not always be ideal: if the member’s schedule changes, or if there are changes within the board, the member may no longer have as much time to devote to the foundation. This could prompt the member to step down, which can cause inconvenience.

*“The study shows that few foundations put a cap on the number of times a member’s term of office can be renewed. Given the experience and commitment of existing board members, as well as the increasing difficulty in finding new members, I think it would be better not to set an age limit or a limit on the number of terms of office in the articles of association. However, boards also need the freedom to replace members and bring in younger people. In many cases, this is still quite challenging.”<sup>16</sup>*

François Geinoz, President of proFonds

16 “L’étude montre que rares sont les fondations qui limitent le renouvellement des mandats dans leur conseil. Vu l’expérience et l’engagement de conseillers et de conseillères de fondation, ainsi que la difficulté croissante de trouver de nouvelles personnes, il me semble préférable de ne pas limiter dans les statuts l’âge ou le nombre de mandats. Par contre, il faut assurer la liberté de procéder à des remplacements et de renforcer la nouvelle génération dans le conseil. Cela reste souvent un défi.”

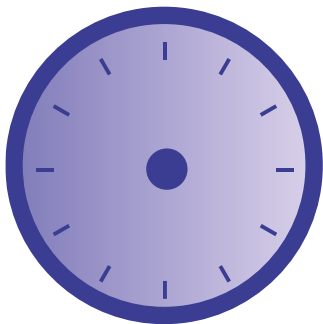
## If board members are appointed for a fixed term, how long is that term?



## Board members are elected for a term of office that is:



72%  
Fixed



28%  
Open-ended

## Representatives of beneficiaries on boards

98% of the participants said that the beneficiaries of the foundation's work are not represented on their board, and there is no provision allowing this in the articles of association. It is common for foundations to exclude beneficiaries from their boards intentionally. However, it is important to ask whether the foundation has the necessary expertise to meet its purpose with no beneficiaries on the board. For instance, art-related foundations need art experts on their boards, foundations that conduct or fund medical research require researchers who can advise the foundation on which projects to support, and sports foundations should make former athlete members of their boards.

This helps ensure that board members have the requisite professional backgrounds, skills, and expertise.

### Do the foundation's articles of association allow their beneficiaries to be represented on the board?



98%

No



2%

Yes

# Key findings



2/3

Almost two-thirds of foundation board members are men (63.2%).



The proportion of women on foundation boards is trending upwards.



73 years old

In rare cases, where the articles of association set an age limit for board membership, that limit is 73 years, on average.



There is very little diversity in terms of nationality.



3 or 4 years

If the term of office is fixed, most boards set a term of three or four years.



If the founder did not set an age limit, this can make the board more diverse in terms of age (younger and older members).



Most foundations do not limit the number of times the term of office can be renewed.



# Diversity

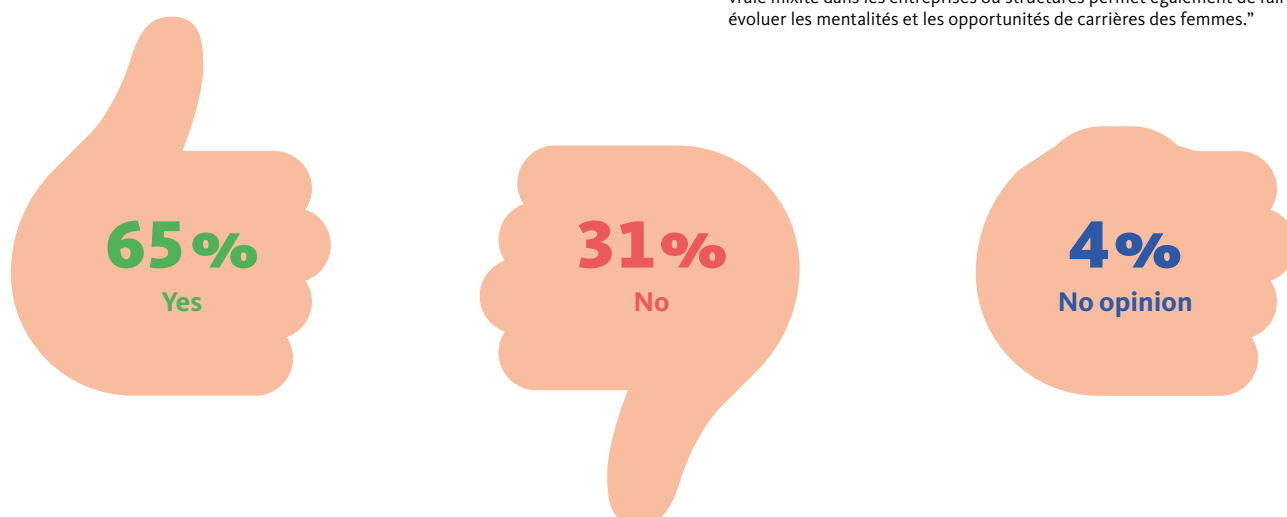
## Diversity on foundation boards

Almost two thirds (65%) of the participants considered their foundation board to be diverse, based on their understanding of diversity.

*“Diversity is a real issue in the professional world. We need strong measures to ensure fairer representation. In the long run, as both research and practice have shown, diversity and inclusion are drivers of performance and innovation. True gender diversity in companies and other entities also helps to change mentalities and career opportunities for women.”<sup>17</sup>*

**Juliette Labarthe**, Director of the Equality & Diversity Service, University of Geneva

### Do you consider your board to be diverse?



<sup>17</sup> “La diversité est un véritable enjeu dans le monde professionnel. Des mesures fortes pour une représentation plus juste sont nécessaires. À terme, comme le montrent la recherche et la pratique, la diversité et l'inclusion sont des générateurs de performance et d'innovation. Une vraie mixité dans les entreprises ou structures permet également de faire évoluer les mentalités et les opportunités de carrières des femmes.”

Response by gender

Far more male than female participants felt that their foundation boards were diverse (74% of men compared to only 56% of women).

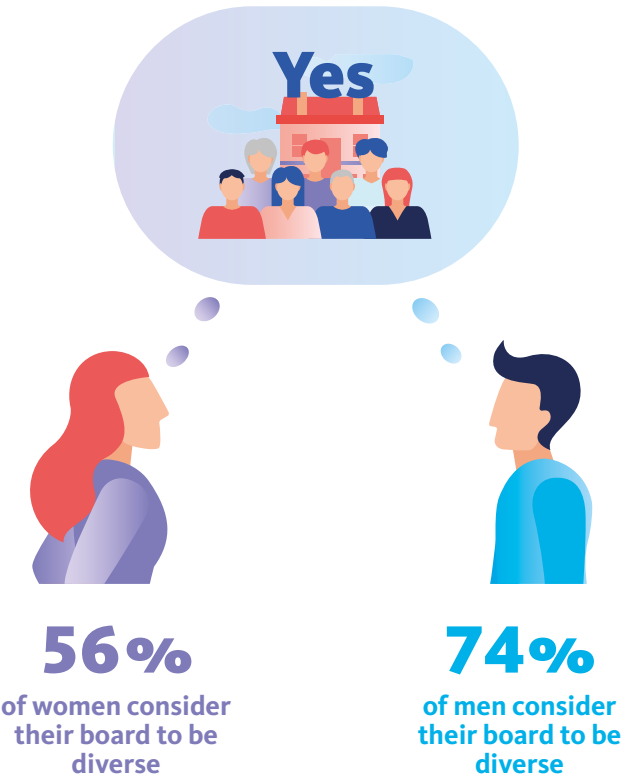
Conversely, 40% of women felt that their boards were not sufficiently diverse, compared to only 23% of men. In other words, almost twice as many women as men feel that their foundation boards are not diverse.

The same number of men and women have no opinion on the subject.

These gender differences can most likely be explained by the fact that there are fewer women on foundation boards, and that women are directly affected by the issue. However, as the gender breakdown of the boards surveyed varied significantly, female participants' opinions on diversity should be viewed simply as a trend.

In addition, men and women may not have the same understanding of the term "diversity".

Do you consider your board to be diverse (response by gender)?



Response by age

The older the participant, the more likely they were to consider their board diverse.

When cross-referencing the data by gender and age, the results showed a major difference in the perception of diversity:

- In the 40–49 age group, only 33% of women thought their boards were sufficiently diverse compared to 89% of men.

Do you consider your board to be diverse (response by age)?

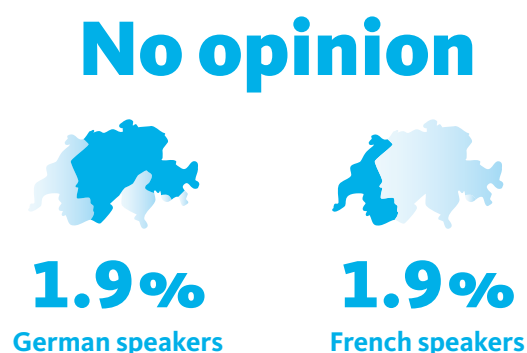
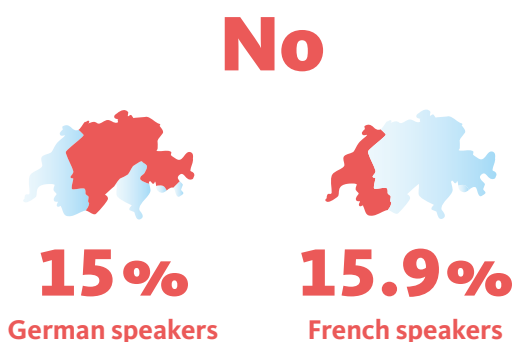
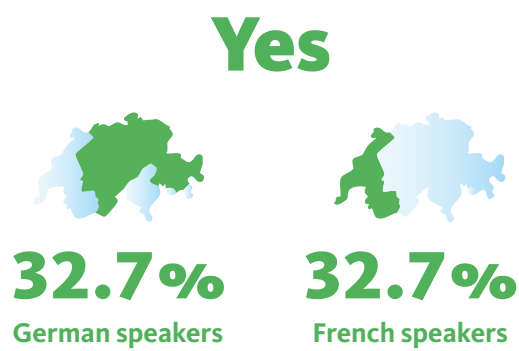


According to one participant:  
*"The board's definition of diversity must be aligned with the purpose of the foundation."*

## Response by language

Board members from the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland responded similarly to the question on diversity: two thirds (65%) considered their boards to be diverse, while only one third considered their boards. Therefore, there were no major differences between Switzerland's two main language regions.

### Do you consider your board to be diverse (response by language)?



*"We do not collect data on the diversity of the foundations we oversee.*

*We assume that most board members of the foundations under our supervision are male and older (over 50 years old).*

*We are convinced that having a balanced membership that is aligned with the foundation's purpose and scope, taking into account not only gender but also factors such as age, education, professional experience, professional skills, language, and home region, ensures that members take informed decisions and can help drive efficiency.*

*We have found that the organisational rules set out in a foundation's articles of association and regulations can hinder diversity in governing bodies, for example, if no age limit or cap on the term of office is stipulated. Including the relevant recommendations in an association or foundation code, and implementing those recommendations, could help promote diversity on foundation boards."*<sup>18</sup>

**Sandra Anliker**, Notary and Deputy Director of the Pension Fund and Foundation Supervisory Authority of the Canton of Bern

<sup>18</sup> "Daten zur Diversität der unter unserer Aufsicht stehenden Stiftungen erheben wir nicht. Vermutungsweise ist die Mehrheit der obersten Organe der unter unserer Aufsicht stehenden Stiftungen mit Männern und älteren Personen (über 50 Jahre alt) besetzt. Wir sind überzeugt, dass eine bezüglich Zweck und Geltungsbereich der Stiftung ausgewogene Zusammensetzung der obersten Organe, die neben Geschlecht auch das Alter, Ausbildung, Berufserfahrung, Fachkompetenz, sprachliche und örtliche Zugehörigkeit und dgl. berücksichtigt, eine fundierte Willensbildung ermöglicht und sich als effizienzfördernd erweist. Wir stellen fest, dass Organisationsregeln in Stiftungsurkunden und Reglementen die Vielfältigkeit im obersten Organ hemmen können, indem beispielsweise weder Alters- noch Amtszeitbeschränkungen der Mitglieder festgelegt sind. Die Umsetzung von in einem Verbands-Kodex bzw. Foundation Code statuierten entsprechenden Empfehlungen können die Vielfältigkeit in den obersten Organen fördern."

# Diversity on the participants’ own boards

Regardless of whether they consider their foundation board to be diverse, almost all participants (90%), men and women combined, said that diversity is an advantage for their foundation. Only 5% considered it to be a disadvantage and 5% had no opinion.

This high proportion (90%) suggests that some participants may have been afraid to say that diversity is not beneficial. In addition, although the term “diversity” was defined by the authors at the beginning of the questionnaire, it is still a subjective concept. Not all participants could have based their answers to this questionnaire on the same definition of diversity.

## Would you say that diversity is an advantage for your foundation board?



**According to participants:**

*“Members should be selected based on their expertise in the areas needed to further the foundation’s chosen projects.”*

*“Board members’ awareness needs to be raised concerning the importance of their choice of successor.”*

*“Boards should determine what profiles they are looking for, to ensure diversity and complementarity among members, in line with the needs of the foundation and its mission.”*

*“I welcome the results of this survey. While 90% of the participants agreed that diversity is an advantage for their boards, only 65 % considered their boards to be diverse. Interestingly, there is a wide divergence in how men and women perceive the diversity of their boards: three-quarters of men think their boards are diverse, but only just over half of women say the same. Clearly, we have some work to do in this regard. However, accenting diversity at the board level cannot be just an exercise of ticking the right boxes. We must truly listen to the diverse voices around the table and not maintain old power imbalances. In many cases, this will require a fundamental shift in culture and mindset.”*

**Lynda Mansson**, Executive Director of the MAVA Foundation

Response by age

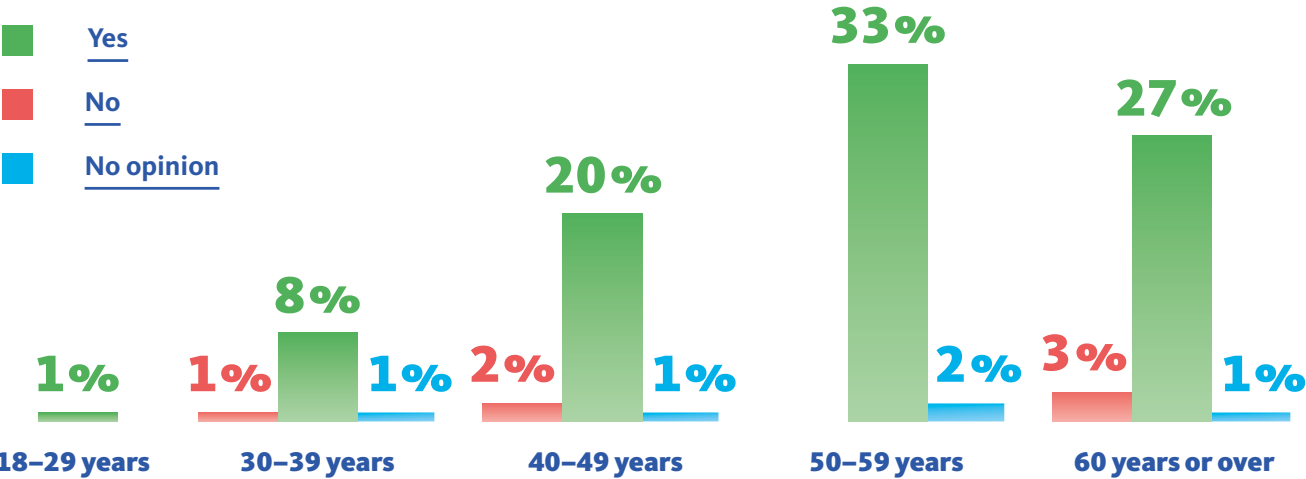
Regardless of the age group, the vast majority of participants saw diversity as an advantage; only 6% did not.

The 50–59 years age group had the highest percentage of participants (94%) who considered diversity to be an advantage.

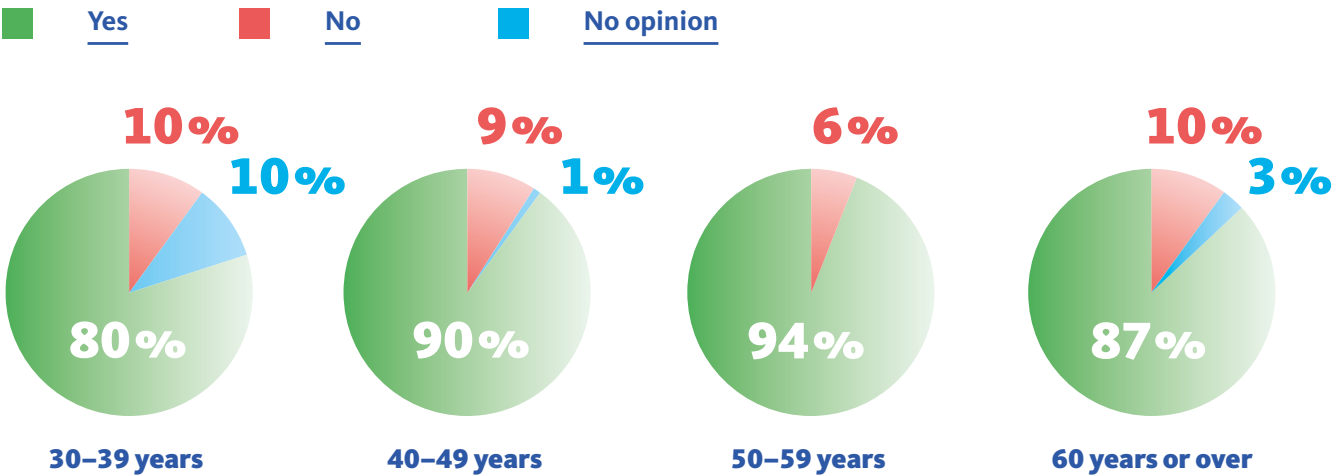
Could this mean that our perception of diversity is closely linked to the times in which we live?

The results clearly indicate (73%) that participants felt that diversity on foundation boards should be discussed more frequently, showing that it is indeed a crucial issue. It is important not only to discuss diversity in and of itself but also to highlight success stories and the benefits of diversity as a way of driving performance.

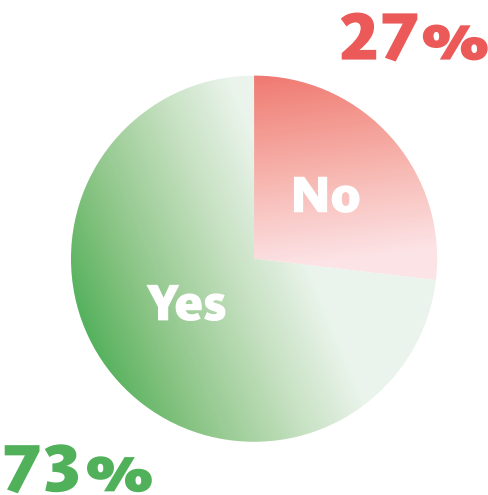
Would you say that diversity is an advantage for your foundation board (response by age)?



Would you say that diversity is an advantage for your foundation board (breakdown within age groups)?



Going forward, is diversity on foundation boards an issue that should be addressed more frequently within the foundation sector?



According to participants:

“Today’s mindset will bring more diversity.”

“Governing bodies don’t have enough knowledge about diversity.”

Response by gender

Regardless of gender, participants agreed that diversity is a topic that should be addressed more often. However, it is interesting to note that proportionally, men are more likely to think it should be discussed more frequently; compared to two out of three women, three out of four men think it should be.

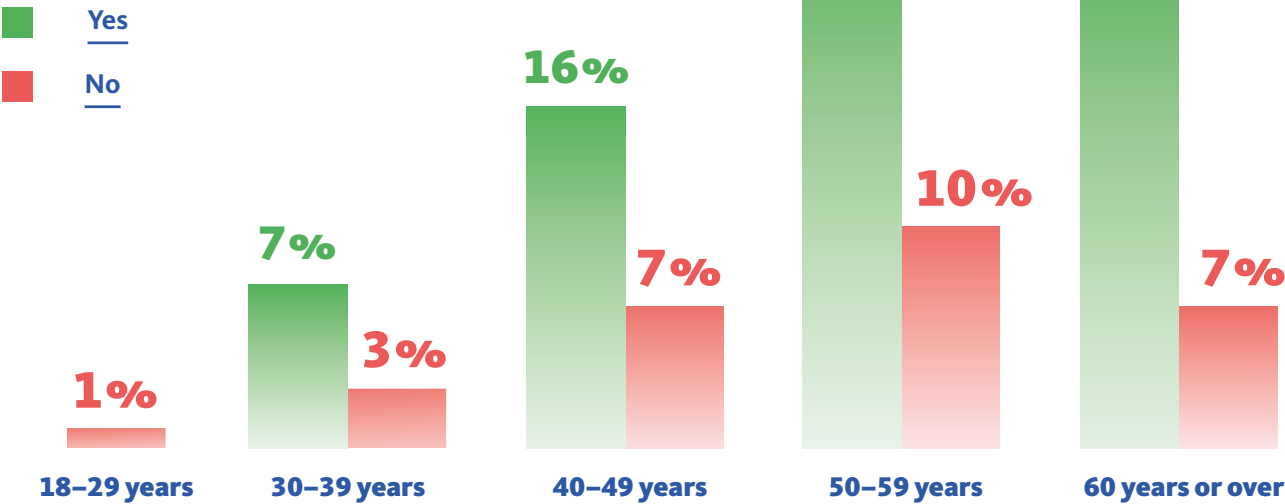
Going forward, is diversity on foundation boards an issue that should be addressed more frequently within the foundation sector (response by gender)?



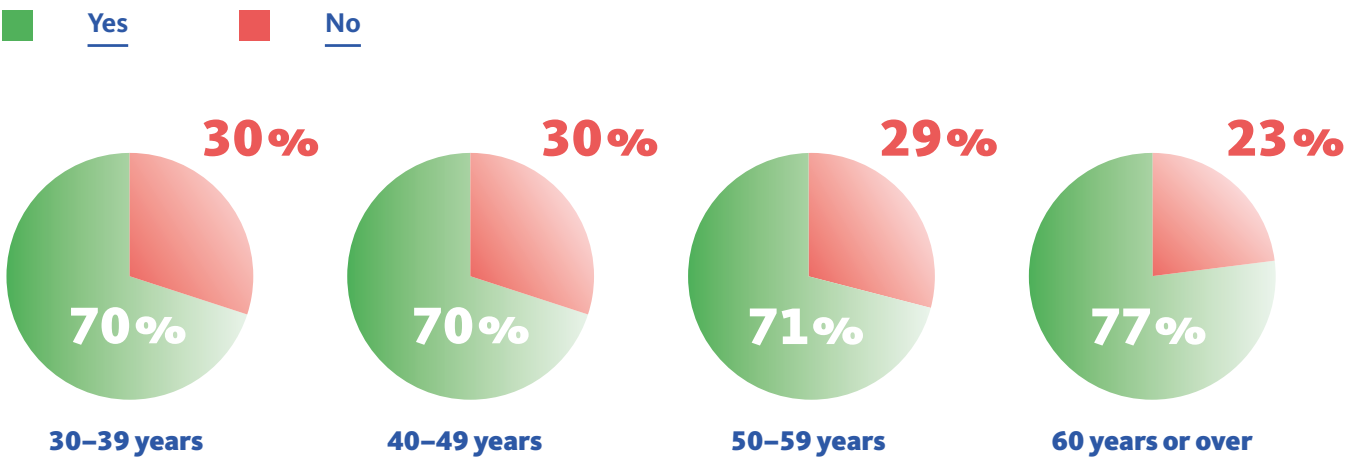
Response by age

Across all age groups, participants (between 70% and 77%) agreed that diversity should be discussed more frequently. The 60 or above category agrees the most strongly with this.

Going forward, is diversity on foundation boards an issue to be addressed more frequently within the foundation sector (response by age group)?



Going forward, is diversity on foundation boards an issue to be addressed more frequently within the foundation sector (breakdown within age groups)?



According to one participant:

*“An individual’s network and personal and professional skills are still the most common criteria used when recruiting someone to join a foundation board. It is rare for diversity to be considered, and when it is, it is often because the founder or chair wants to ensure that a diverse range of beneficiaries or donors is represented, often for practical reasons. Unless there is training on or awareness-raising of these issues – potentially provided by the supervisory authorities, with a view to including diversity in foundations’ articles of association or another policy – there will not be enough leverage behind the concept of diversity for it to become a key criterion when selecting foundation board members.”*

*“There appears to be a mismatch between board members’ acknowledgement of diversity as an important component of board membership and their willingness to take steps to increase it. There have been studies, seminars and presentations on the topic in recent years, but diversity has not yet made it to the agendas of foundation board meetings. I hope that by addressing the issue in codes of conduct, training and when selecting new board members, we can speed up progress on diversity.”<sup>19</sup>*

**Dominique Favre**, Director of the Occupational Pensions and Foundation Supervisory Authority of Western Switzerland

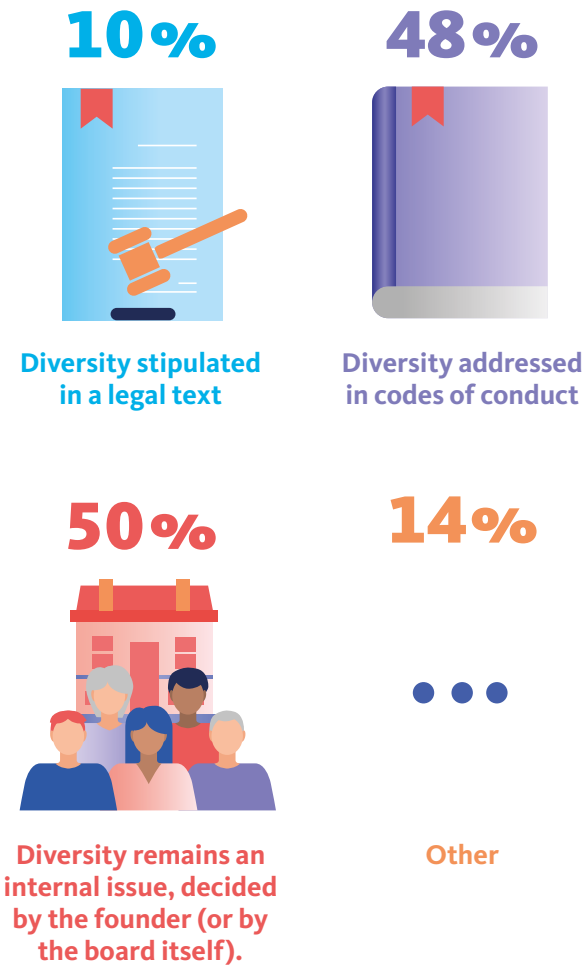
*“This GCP publication is very timely, as societal challenges increase, trust in institutions, including foundation is declining, strong foundation governance, including diversity is critical. What surprised me the most in the report and stimulated a questions, is that whilst 90% of respondents considered that diversity is an advantage for their board, the fact that 75% of board members are 50+ and 70% are Swiss, means there is a gap between aspiration of what is seen as good and the reality. Why do we have such a gap?”*

**Dr Stefan Germann**, CEO of the Botnar Foundation

Measures to make foundation boards more diverse

For 50% of participants, the issue of diversity on foundation boards should be addressed internally, by the foundation. However, some participants believed that there were steps that could be taken externally.

What measure(s) would you support to make foundation boards more diverse (multiple answers possible)?



19 “Il me semble que nous pouvons constater une contradiction entre l’importance reconnue de la diversité des membres des conseils de fondations et la volonté de ces derniers de fournir des efforts pour l’accroître. Le sujet a fait l’objet depuis quelques années d’études, de séminaires et de présentations, mais il n’est pas encore présent dans les ordres du jour des séances des Conseils de fondations. On peut espérer que les codes de bonne conduite, la formation et le renouvellement des membres des conseils feront accélérer le traitement de cette problématique.”



## ***External measures to make foundation boards more diverse***

### **Legal text**

90% of participants were against legislation to promote diversity on foundation boards. Of the 90% who opposed this suggestion, 47% were women and 53% were men.

The 50–59 age group has the highest percentage of participants (38%) who are against diversity legislation, while the 40–49 age group is in favour (19.8%).

### **Code of conduct**

Including diversity in the code of conduct is a divisive issue. 48% of the participants were in favour of a code of conduct or law, and 52% were against. Women (60%) tended to favour a code of conduct more than men (37%).

A slight trend that emerged was that younger participants were more likely to favour a code of conduct. Most participants (71%) who opposed a code of conduct were over 50 years old.

Looking more closely at the 40–49 age group, women were more likely to be in favour of a code of conduct than men, with 67% of women supporting this proposal compared to 33% of men.

### **Other**

Participants over 50 years of age were more likely to make suggestions here, with those in the 50–59 age group making the most. This age group was not in favour of leaving the issue of diversity to the founder or the board itself.

The comments show that the participants understood diversity very differently. For some people, diversity refers to nationality, while it is about gender, etc. for others.

## **Three possible approaches for a more diversified board**

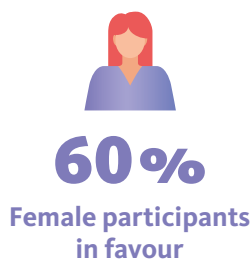
1. Governments can take legislative measures to promote diversity on foundation boards. Such measures could include regulations on transparency and quotas related to gender, race, and sexual orientation (i.e. hard law).
2. There could be a sector-wide initiative to draw up rules for good practice (i.e. soft law).
3. Foundations of their own volition can stipulate a certain level of diversity in their articles of association or directives.

Here, it is important to address the recruitment of new board members, as recruitment is the key to enhancing diversity. Diversity is often hindered because board members tend to select candidates from among their inner circles or apply criteria that can exclude certain potential candidates.

Promoting more diverse foundation boards can be achieved through sound governance practices, such as limiting terms of office, identifying the skills and profiles required, and creating a skills analysis grid. Foundations or recruitment experts can also be provided.

## What external measures to increase diversity would you support?

### Code of conduct



#### According to participants:

*“It is the founder’s duty to address the issue of diversity. The three measures proposed in this questionnaire do not enhance diversity.”*

*“We need to introduce quotas.”*

*“There should be a requirement to include a minimum number of members from at least two different continents.”*

Following the discussion within foundations and among other stakeholders in the sector, and the publication of a number of studies on the subject, the issue of diversity was included in the Swiss Foundations Code 2021, in recommendation 6:

*“The foundation board’s composition should be balanced. This can be specified and substantiated by the founder in the foundation charter; however, even without such stipulations, it is dictated by circumstances. Depending on the foundation purpose and the field in which it operates, the intended balance may relate to a wide range of criteria, such as age, gender, expertise, language, national, regional or ideological affiliation, residence, professional activity, experience, etc.”<sup>20</sup>*

Recommendation 12 of the Swiss Code of Best Practice for Corporate Governance states, “The Board of Directors should guarantee that there is an appropriate diversity among its members.”<sup>21</sup>

*“Foundation law is loose. Except for a few mandatory provisions, it provides foundations with a great deal of freedom. Nevertheless, corporate governance and diversity have become topical issues that affect foundations, particularly large ones. Making sure there is some level of diversity, a variety of skills, and that all members are involved can help to ensure that the foundation is properly managed in the interests of its beneficiaries and that it can achieve its purpose.”<sup>22</sup>*

**Jean Pirrotta**, Director of the Supervisory Authority for Foundations and Pension Funds of the Canton of Geneva (ASFIP)

20 Thomas Sprecher, Philipp Egger, Georg von Schnurbein, *Swiss Foundation Code 2021*, recommendation 6, p.68

21 Swiss Economy, *Swiss code of best practice for corporate governance* 2014, p. 10.

22 “Le droit des fondations est un droit libéral, qui, sous réserve de quelques dispositions impératives, laisse une grande liberté à la fondation. Néanmoins, les notions récentes de corporate governance et de diversité sont devenues des sujets d’actualité qui touchent également les fondations, notamment les grandes. Ainsi, une certaine diversité au sein des conseils, des compétences variées et une implication de toutes et tous les membres permettent une bonne gestion de la fondation dans l’intérêt de ses bénéficiaires et de la réalisation de son but.”

*“There is a diverse range of profiles in today’s society, and that should be reflected in companies. To reap the benefits of diversity, it is necessary to have an inclusion policy so that diversity does not become a source of discrimination. This is why diversity management and inclusion must be embedded in an organisation’s culture. Despite the challenges that this change entails, there are many benefits to inclusion at several levels: individual, organisational, and societal.”<sup>23</sup>*

**Dr Klea Faniko**, Project Manager in the Equality & Diversity Service and Lecturer in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Geneva

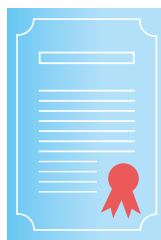
## Internal measures to make foundation boards more diverse

Even if greater diversity can be achieved through government- or sector-wide measures, there is clearly a need to rethink foundation board membership.

Participants suggested that introducing quotas could increase gender diversity.

## What internal measures would you support to increase the diversity of foundation boards (multiple answers possible)?

65%



Initial training for board members

21%



Using an external person to recruit new board members

22%



Compensation for board members

23%



Other

<sup>23</sup> “La diversité des profils humains est un phénomène qui caractérise la société de nos jours et qui se reflète également dans les entreprises. Pour tirer profit de la richesse apportée par la diversité, il est nécessaire d'appliquer une politique d'inclusion, sans quoi la diversité peut devenir une source de discrimination. C'est pourquoi le management de la diversité et l'inclusion doivent être ancrés dans la culture organisationnelle. Malgré les défis occasionnés par ce changement, les bénéfices de l'inclusion sont nombreux et se situent à plusieurs niveaux: individuel, organisationnel et sociétal.”

# Compensation of foundation board members

Participants, regardless of gender, agreed that compensation would not increase board diversity (65%).

Under current Swiss law, to benefit from tax exemptions, foundations must agree not to pay their board members any compensation (subject to minimum amounts). This rule should be reconsidered to encourage younger members to join. There was a parliamentary initiative, Luginbühl (14.470), to change this rule but it failed.

The lack of compensation is a key factor in Switzerland's philanthropic sector. It is also crucial when it comes to attempts to professionalise the sector and bring about generational changes. Research suggests that compensating members of governing bodies "in an appropriate manner creates a welcome incentive for competent people to devote the necessary time and effort to a task that can be weighty and complex, as well as to take on the responsibilities that go with it".<sup>24</sup>

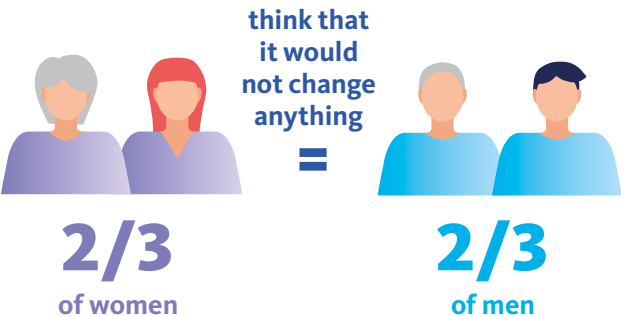
Opinions on this vary according to age. However, generally speaking, the belief that compensation can improve diversity increases with the age of survey participants. Is it life experience or the wisdom that comes with age that leads to this response among older people?

<sup>24</sup> Henry Peter, Benoit Merkt, "Utilité publique et activité économique", EF 3/2019, p. 212.

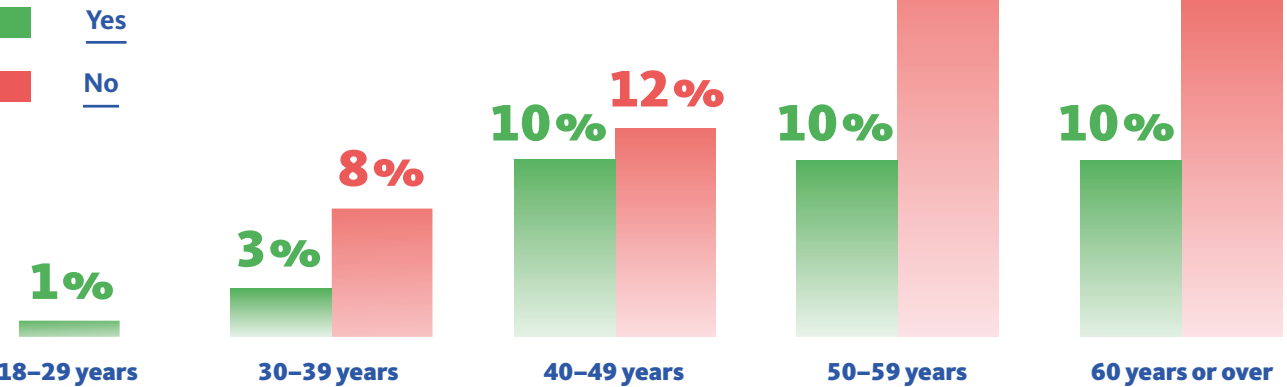
Do you think that compensating board members would help increase diversity and professionalism?



Do you think that compensating board members would help increase diversity? (Answers by gender)?



Do you think that compensating board members would help increase diversity? (Answers by age group)



## The link between a diverse board and an efficient foundation

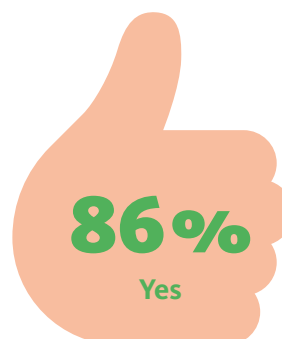
86% of participants, regardless of gender, age, and language, believe that diversity helps to make a foundation more efficient.

Among the participants who did not think that diversity contributed to efficiency (7%), there were six times as many German speakers as French.

No participant under the age of 40 indicated that diversity did not contribute to the foundation's efficiency.

A more diverse board results in greater efficiency, particularly in qualitative terms. Foundations should be encouraged to introduce inclusive measures so that everyone feels encouraged to express their views, even if they oppose the group.

Generally speaking, would you agree that a more diverse board can help make a foundation more efficient?



**40%**  
German speakers



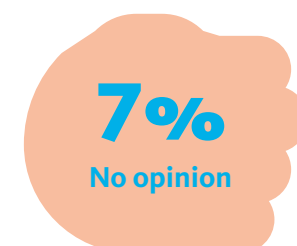
**46%**  
French speakers



**6%**  
German speakers



**1%**  
French speakers



**4%**  
German speakers



**3%**  
French speakers

# Key findings



Men are more likely to consider their board to be diverse.



French speakers are more likely to consider diversity to be a driver of efficiency.



The vast majority of participants in both the French- and German-speaking parts of Switzerland think that diversity can help make a foundation more efficient.



Most participants thought that the issue of board diversity should be addressed internally by the foundation.



Our perception of diversity depends on the environment in which we live.



# Part 3

## Recommendations

## Awareness-raising and training

- Raise awareness of diversity among foundation board members and provide training to board members on diversity, including prejudices and bias.
- Implement rules and internal measures to promote diversity.
- Determine what “diversity” and “inclusion” mean for each individual foundation; create a specific in-house policy that sets out the diversity principles adopted and communicate publicly on the issue.
- Foster a culture of respect so that each board member feels free to express their opinions while also considering the differences in opinions.

## Board membership and members’ profiles

- When recruiting new board members, select candidates for their specific skills and how they complement those of other members, based on the needs of the board and all its members.
- Select board members with an authentic, inclusive leadership style.
- Ensure that board members are driven by the foundation’s cause, rather than their personal interests.
- Introduce age limits so that foundation boards are gradually renewed, which will increase diversity naturally.
- Ensure that boards have between three and seven members based on the size and profile of the foundation.
- Keep the term of office short (e.g. three years).
- The founder could stipulate a maximum term of office (e.g. 15 years, with five three-year terms) and an age limit (e.g. up to the age of 75) in the foundation’s articles of association or regulations.
- Periodically review the composition of the board and the management team and consider whether additional skills are required. These skills could be added, for example, by limiting the terms of the office and creating skills analysis grids.

## External measures

- Raise awareness among notaries, lawyers and other foundation consultants regarding the benefits of diversity on foundation boards.
- Provide legal authorisation for board members to receive compensation.
- Identify and highlight diverse and inclusive foundation boards.
- Encourage foundations to post recruitment ads for board members on social media.
- As a follow-up to this initial benchmarking study, conduct a survey of diversity on the boards of Swiss non-profit foundations every three years.





# Part 4

## Conclusion and outlook

This report is the first survey of the members of the boards of Swiss non-profit foundations and provides some interesting findings.

Participants' responses and comments show that diversity is a fundamental issue in Switzerland's philanthropic sector and should be further explored.

The responses and discussions resulting from this survey convinced us of the need to rethink the membership of foundation boards. Currently, there are unlikely to be any legislative measures within the Swiss philanthropy sector, especially since foundation leaders do not want to be subject to external constraints. Meanwhile, changes in behaviour and attitudes must also come from within. It will take more than simply appointing board members with greater levels of diversity. We must promote a more open culture, since the prevailing culture in these entities is often the crux of the issue.

To achieve greater diversity in terms of age, gender, nationality and life experience, legislative measures could be taken or umbrella organisations that represent the interests of foundations could issue recommendations (for instance, in the form of a code of conduct or guidelines for articles of association or regulations).

To make it easier for a more diverse range of individuals to join these boards, several issues must be addressed. These include recruitment practices, meeting accessibility, the structure of foundation board meetings, board roles, and conflict management within the foundation board (because conflicts arise more often when a more diverse range of perspectives is represented).

Given the increasing demands in terms of qualifications, responsibilities and time, as well as the often-limited human resources, it will become increasingly difficult for foundations to find members, and it will be essential to provide training to these individuals. As the number of foundations increases, the recruitment process will become increasingly difficult. In other words, making foundation boards more diverse is not an easy task.

However, we need to rethink the membership of foundation boards to drive innovation, creativity and community impact.

The experience of foundations as well as the – albeit still scarce – academic research on the subject shows that diversity, when it comes hand in hand with inclusion, creates positive group dynamics and enhances collective intelligence, which, when taken together, leads to greater efficiency.

Indeed, the sum of the intelligence of all members, with their different knowledge and skills, can drive the success of a shared project. This not only helps to advance collective thinking but also creates richer, denser and greater overall intelligence that can benefit everyone in the group.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Goleman, "Emotional Intelligence and Focus," 2015, *Harvard Business Review*, <https://bit.ly/3yoQrIA>.

*“I strongly believe in group dynamics and particularly in the contribution that a diverse set of skills, cultures and sensibilities can make in this context. Different ages and genders complement each other, and their plurality enriches the quality and relevance of their visions and decisions. It is therefore essential to promote diversity in the governance of philanthropic organisations’.”*<sup>26</sup>

**Prof. Henry Peter**, Head of the Geneva Centre for Philanthropy, University of Geneva

*“Bravo to GCP for exploring the critically important topic of diversity in foundations’ governance. While it is encouraging to see 90% of participants recognising the value of diversity in boards, it is clear that we all need to do more to ensure that our own governance structures reflect the deep commitment to diversity and inclusion that we demonstrate in our grant-making. I hope that this report serves as a call to action to all of us in raising our own ambitions to bring in new voices and those with lived experience into our boards.”*

**Leslie A. Johnston**, CEO of the Laudes Foundation

<sup>26</sup> “Je crois fortement à la dynamique de groupe en général, et en particulier à l’apport dans ce contexte de la diversité des compétences, des cultures et des sensibilités. Les différents âges et genres sont complémentaires et leur pluralité enrichit donc la qualité et la pertinence des visions et des décisions. Il est dès lors essentiel de promouvoir la diversité dans la gouvernance des organisations philanthropiques.”

# Appendix

## Questionnaire “Diversity on the boards of non-profit foundations in Switzerland”

### Participant's profile

#### 1. What is your gender?

Please select only one of the following:

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

#### 2. Which age group are you in?

Please select only one of the following:

- ☐ 18–29 years
- ☐ 30–39 years
- ☐ 40–49 years
- ☐ 50–59 years
- ☐ 60 years or over

#### 3. What level of education do you have?

Please select only one of the following:

- ☐ Compulsory school education
- ☐ Advanced school education
- ☐ Apprenticeship
- ☐ University of applied science
- ☐ General university
- ☐ Other

### Foundation's profile

#### 4. What is your foundation's type

Please select only one of the following:

- ☐ Grantmaking foundation
- ☐ Fundraising foundation
- ☐ Grantmaking and fundraising foundation

#### 5. What is the scope of the foundation's activities?

Please select only one of the following:

- ☐ Only in Switzerland
- ☐ In Switzerland, Europe and other continents

#### 6. Which other continent(s)?

Please select the applicable continents

- ☐ Europe
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Americas
- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Oceania

#### 7. How many members does the foundation board have?

Enter a number: \_\_\_\_

**8. What is the gender breakdown of the foundation board members?**

- ☐ Women
- ☐ Men
- ☐ Other

**9. What is the age breakdown of the foundation board members?**

- ☐ 18–29 years
- ☐ 30–39 years
- ☐ 40–49 years
- ☐ 50–59 years
- ☐ 60 years or over

**10. What is the breakdown in terms of nationality (by region)?**

- ☐ Number of Swiss nationals
- ☐ Number of nationals of other European countries
- ☐ Number of nationals of African countries
- ☐ Number of American nationals
- ☐ Number of nationals of Asian countries
- ☐ Number of other nationals

**11. Do the foundation's articles of association stipulate an age limit for foundation board members?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If so, what is the age limit stipulated in the articles of association?

**12. How many members of the founder's family are on the board?**

Enter a number: \_\_\_\_

**13. Do the foundation's articles of association allow the members' terms of office to be renewed?**

- ☐ Term of office cannot be renewed
- ☐ Term of office can be renewed
- ☐ Term of office can be renewed only once

**14. Foundation board members are elected for:**

- ☐ An open-ended term
- ☐ A fixed term

Where members are elected for a fixed term, how long is that term (number of years)?

How many times can the term of office be renewed (number of possible renewals, not the number of terms)?

**15. Do the foundation's articles of association allow the foundation's beneficiaries to be represented on the board?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If so, how many?

## Diversity

**16. Do you consider your board to be diverse?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion

**17. Would you say that diversity is an advantage for your foundation board?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No opinion

**18. Going forward, is diversity on foundation boards an issue that should be addressed more frequently within the foundation sector?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If no, why not (multiple answers possible)?

- ☐ The issue is sufficiently addressed
- ☐ The issue is too divisive
- ☐ The question is of little interest
- ☐ Other (specify)

**19. What external measures would you support to increase the diversity of foundation boards (multiple answers possible)?**

- ☐ Making diversity a legal requirement
- ☐ Addressing diversity in codes of conduct
- ☐ Diversity remains the decision of the founder and also of the foundation board
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**20. What internal measures would you support to increase the diversity of foundation boards (multiple answers possible)?**

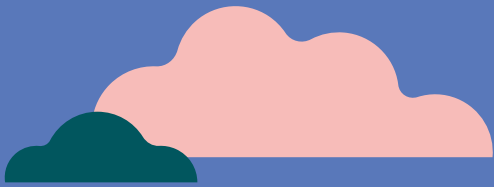
- ☐ Training board members
- ☐ Using an external person to recruit new members
- ☐ Compensating board members
- ☐ Other (specify)

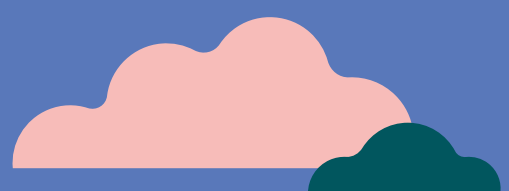
**21. Do you think that compensating board members would help increase diversity and professionalism?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**22. General speaking, would you agree that a more diverse board can help to make a foundation more efficient?**

- ☐ I don't agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ No opinion





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