

# Public-Private Partnership in Higher Education: A Case Study of the Geneva Centre for Philanthropy

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# Research questions

- What are the key responsibilities and opportunities of an academic center for philanthropy?
- How can cross-sectoral partnerships be efficiently conceived and managed in that perspective?

# Literature Review I.

## Philanthropy Research and Education

- **Philanthropy education and research** is essential to:
  - support the enhancement and growth of philanthropy worldwide,
  - strengthen the role of the philanthropic sector as a creator of social capital, and
  - to encourage effective decision-making among donors, NGO leaders and other actors of philanthropy

(Burlingame, 2009; Weber & Witkowski, 2016; Frumkin, 2006; Brown, 2019; Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2018)

- **Philanthropy, being interdisciplinary in nature**, requires a pluri- and interdisciplinary approach to being fully understood and researched, but, due to the traditional university structure, researchers focusing on philanthropy are often challenged

(Turner, 2007; Shier & Handy, 2014, Hatcher, Shaker, & Freeman, 2016; Bronham, Dinnage, & Hua, 2016; Rhoten & Parker, 2004)

# Literature Review II.

## Cross-Sectoral Partnerships in Higher Education

- **Cross-sectoral collaborations and partnerships are essential** in order to:
  - improve research and higher education teaching,
  - mobilize resources for education,
  - increase efficiency, and
  - set agenda in alignment with the demands of the continuously changing knowledge economy

(Patrinos et al, 2009; Verger, 2010; UNESCO, 2014; European Commission, 2018)

- There are **possible boundaries of cross-sectoral partnerships**:
  - commodification of public education,
  - lack of accountability and transparency, and
  - imbalance in governance and power

(Robertson, 2002; Simons et al, 2013)

# Data and Methodology

Single-case study: Geneva Centre for Philanthropy, University of Geneva

**I. Semi-structured interviews with 10 stakeholders**, including the Rectorate of the University of Geneva, the Canton of Geneva, partner foundations, members of the scientific committee, and key actors of the Swiss philanthropy sector

**II. Analysis of internal documents and archival records**

**III. Participant observation**

# Why The Geneva Centre for Philanthropy?

- The [Geneva Centre for Philanthropy](#) was established in September 2017 at the **initiative of the Rectorate of the University of Geneva**
- The Centre **reports directly to the Rector**
- The Centre's **vision is to address philanthropy-related topics in a pluri-disciplinary manner**
- The Centre's missions are:
  - to support the international development and philanthropy through **research, teaching, and public events**
  - to serve as an **interface between practice and research,**
- The Centre was founded in collaboration with three private foundations; **as of today, the Centre has eight partner foundations**

# Preliminary Findings I.

## Philanthropy Research and Education

1. Overall, the interviewees agreed that philanthropy research and teaching requires a pluri- and **interdisciplinary approach as well as cross-sectoral partnerships**. While the **Centre** is relatively young, the stakeholders have welcomed its **innovative model**.
2. The Centre is expected to **continue serving as an intellectual hub, a platform for networking and as a thought leader in philanthropy, building bridges among various stakeholders**.
3. The Centre is expected to define and develop expertise in certain domains and **focus on their “competitive advantages.”** In general, **data-driven and high-quality research** is as important as the engagement with and representation of different actors of the philanthropic sector.

# Preliminary Findings II.

## Cross-Sectoral Partnerships

3. As the Centre is a partnership with private foundations, it has an opportunity to **create synergies by collaborating with different faculties and practitioners.**
4. In general, the **processes for accountability** is crucial for cross-sectoral partnership models.
5. Finally, research centers are expected to establish a **transparent system** to ensure that their research are not earmarked by external funding and a **strong public outreach** to cultivate and strengthen their reputation.

# Lessons Learned: The Future of Philanthropy Education and Research Requires Cross-Sectoral Collaboration



There is an increasing **demand for philanthropy education and research**



Centers on philanthropy need to cultivate **cross-sectoral partnerships** in order to be resilient and sustainable and to successfully develop and implement research-to-practice approaches



Philanthropy research and education – as per definition – is **interdisciplinary**; that should influence our role in developing an enabling environment in that field

# Next Steps:

## Comparative (Cross-National) Research

- **Second phase of the research project** is to conduct a **comparative research on academic centers for philanthropy** collaborating with centers located in the United States, Chile, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, India, Australia and South Africa among other countries
- Simultaneously, the research team aims to organize **roundtable discussions** with centers for philanthropy to **share good practices** and develop successful approaches for cross-sectoral partnerships in philanthropy education

**Thank you for your attention!**

**Any questions?**



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