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The background of the entire page is a photograph of a globe of the Earth being held gently in the palms of two hands. One hand is an adult's, with visible skin texture and hair, and the other is a child's, smaller and smoother. The hands are positioned at the bottom of the frame, supporting the globe. The globe shows the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting foliage.

# Engaged Philanthropy™

## Global Philanthropy: A Family Office Guide to International Giving

Volume 4

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## About This Guide

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Welcome to *Global Philanthropy: A Family Office Guide to International Giving*, the fourth in a series of EngagedPhilanthropy™ guides—offering tools to help family offices worldwide plan and practice international giving that is both meaningful and effective. Download the first three EngagedPhilanthropy guides *Laying the Groundwork*, *Balancing Passion and Strategy*, and *Making the Most of Family Dynamics* at [SuzanneHammer.com](http://SuzanneHammer.com).



This guide features ways families can use philanthropy to respond to humanitarian needs around the globe. It's intended to help your family office think through whether you want to add a global component to your philanthropy.

This guide is written primarily for family office leaders—and the advisors who serve them—who wish to learn and take a more intentional planned approach to philanthropic giving. While some of the information herein speaks to U.S.-based family offices and donors, the stories and lessons are also relevant for international family philanthropies.

There is certainly no “one” way to “do” international philanthropy, however, there are learned practices, tools, and ideas others have tried and found helpful. We offer these ideas for you to read, reflect, and take back to your own family or the families you serve. We hope they spark family conversation and lead you to an impactful international giving strategy.

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**This guide answers the questions:**

- How can you get started in international giving?
- What are challenges of funding across borders?
- What are the best ways to learn about, vet, and build relationships with partners abroad?
- What best practices do international donors and NGOs recommend?

**What is Global Philanthropy?**

We use the terms global philanthropy, cross-border giving, and international philanthropy interchangeably in this guide, and define it here as any grant or donation made by a donor, corporation, or family enterprise to a recipient outside the donor's home country. These can include grants or donations to organizations within the donor's home country that have significant international purpose and impact.

## Why Give Internationally?

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**As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, more families of wealth are looking to make an impact globally through their philanthropy and investments.**

This is greatly needed, as we, as humans and a planet, are facing some of the most complex humanitarian and planetary crises of our time. These challenges transcend our borders and go beyond what any one government, enterprise, or philanthropist alone can fix.

There are many reasons to give internationally, and perhaps the most compelling is this: international giving allows donors to achieve more with less. Small grants and individual donations can have a proportionately larger impact when given overseas rather than at home.

Charitable donations go a long way in the developing world, where services and goods are typically much cheaper than they are in developed countries. Consider these statistics:

- A mere \$100 can cover the costs of high-quality healthcare for three patients, de-worm close to 1000 children, or protect 500 people from iodine deficiency for the rest of their lives (TheLifeYouCanSave.org).
- GiveWell (GiveWell.org), an independent charity evaluator, recently estimated that their top-rated international charity averts a child death for every donation of \$3,000.

If your family office is looking to make the most impact and your giving is aimed at supporting human life and reducing suffering, your dollars will go farther when you give to reputable international organizations or the intermediaries that serve them.

*“Why should people fund internationally? The Earth is a relatively small fragile planet, and it’s only when we look at it as a whole that we see the interconnections needed for our mutual survival. You might be doing really good work in one place, but by connecting it to the whole you can have greater impact.”*

*– Cynda Collins Arsenault,  
President and Co-Founder,  
Secure World Foundation*

## How to Give Internationally

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Family offices and individual donors have considerable freedom to give internationally based on their passions and concerns. Many become deeply, personally engaged in the projects and organizations they choose to fund. Additionally, family offices can often move money quickly, placing them in a good position to respond quickly to international events and disasters.

Family offices manage their global grantmaking and investing in different ways. Some donate directly to organizations working abroad, while others give to organizations in their home country that are working on international issues. For U.S. and U.K. donors, for example, giving to intermediary organizations based in the donor's home country is the easiest way to get money overseas. You can verify an organization's charitable status (on [GuideStar.org](https://www.guidestar.org) or [GuideStar.org.uk](https://www.guidestar.org.uk)), you can research their track record and ability to actually help in an affected location, and, if your family has a private foundation, you can avoid the legal procedures of expenditure responsibility and equivalency determination that's required when giving to international organizations.

**Because laws vary among countries, be sure to review relevant local laws and regulations before giving to an entity outside of your home country.** Many countries require organizations to register with one or more government agencies before receiving international funding, and some have established offices that serve as liaisons or registration centers for nonprofits and donors. Consult with your lawyer or philanthropic advisor before giving internationally.



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Here are some of the most common ways donors get their charitable dollars overseas:

*Rules and regulations on international giving vary depending on where you live. Be sure to consult with your lawyer or philanthropic advisor before giving internationally.*

1. **Give directly to an organization outside of your home country.** This option empowers donors to form deeper, meaningful relationships with their international partners. However, it may or may not allow a donor to take a tax deduction, and it does require additional administrative steps. *Note:* The safest, most efficient way to send money directly overseas is by wire transfer.
2. **Donate or make a grant to an in-country non-governmental organization (NGO), also called a nonprofit intermediary organization, to support its international programs or activities.** Giving to an intermediary organization is typically the easiest way to get money overseas, and typically would allow donors to claim income tax deductions on the gift. Some NGOs will establish a “friends of” organization that raises funds for a specific charitable program or activity outside of the home country, such as a school, hospital, or place of worship.
3. **In the U.S. and U.K. (and the idea is growing in other countries), donors can establish or donate to a donor-advised fund (DAF),** a public charity that can, for a fee, provide a range of legal and monitoring services to donors wishing to support organizations overseas. Donors set up donor-advised funds with sponsoring organizations such as a community foundation, an independent public charity, a religious organization, or a financial institution.
4. **Give via the web.** E-philanthropy sites allow donors to identify, review, and select specific projects and organizations to fund.

## Choosing a Global Issue Area

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Philanthropy is personal. To one donor or family, the biggest humanitarian crisis of our time is poverty. To another, it's climate change. Refugees. Malaria. Land mines. Forests. Food. Making sure all humans, everywhere, have access to clean water, sanitation, and good hygiene. These are all valid and urgent issues that deserve your time, energy, and resources. However most donors don't have the resources to make a dent in all of these issues. **Philanthropy requires you and your family to make choices on which issues are the most passionate, pressing, or dire to you.**

### *Ask yourselves...*

1. What is the family looking to achieve through its international philanthropy?
2. What are the top three- to- five international issues that family members feel most passionate about? Which is the most pressing? Which can everyone agree on?
3. What community of focus, or geographic area, will the family focus on? ("Community of focus" can refer to a village, city, entire region, or country.)
4. What does this community of focus actually need? If the family doesn't yet know, how can you find out?



## Challenges to International Giving

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Giving globally can feel uncertain and even risky. It's in the back of every international donor's mind: Is the money really getting to the people? Perhaps you've heard horror stories of supplies and funds lining the pockets of a few corrupt people, versus reaching those that are actually in need.



More often than corruption, what happens is that a community may choose to use funding differently than initially intended. For example, community members might buy a tractor instead of a build a well, or they may hold on to the money for a future need they have yet to identify. While a funder might say, "you didn't use the funds as we earmarked," the community might respond, "yes, but we used the funds for an immediate need as we identified it."

"Donors can inquire upfront about an organization's process for a program and financial audit. Good organizations will have an audit trail that tracks the money and progress," said Steve Werner of Werner Consulting. It's important for donors to realize that organizations need overhead funding if they are to make sure the funding is getting to the projects appropriately. "Many times, donors want 100 percent of their money to go to bricks and concrete or water pumps, but none of that can get built if donors aren't willing to pay for program management," said Werner. "If donors want successful implementation, reporting, and financial controls, they have to cover some of the costs of the organization's overhead."

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According to Braimah Apambire, Ph.D., “In the U.S., sometimes the IRS regulations complicate everything for directly giving overseas. Some funders want to stretch dollars by funding directly, but it’s challenging from the U.S. government side. That, and donors rarely have bandwidth to supervise local NGOs.”

“It can seem confusing to figure out how their dollars can go abroad and transform lives. It’s important for foundations and donors to educate themselves—get to know the issues and the players. Look for funders who are already giving to the area of interest. They are more often than not always willing to partner with other foundations and donors,” said Apambire.

*“One thing I would tell people about international giving is: don’t be scared. If you contribute \$50 to a bigger program that goes to help one person to have water for 25 years, then you have made a huge impact. Your money may not be able to provide water for 500,000 people, but it can help a percentage of those people live healthy lives, stay in school, and gain an opportunity that they otherwise would not have had.”*

*– Braimah Apambire, Ph.D., Director,  
Center for International Water and Sustainability*

## Building Respectful and Honest Relationships

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Funders also need to be sensitive to the power dynamics that exist between donor and NGO, especially when working with organizations abroad.



"Funders need to understand and acknowledge that they have a big edge. The NGO looks to them as the ones providing the money, and often, there is no opportunity for equal and honest dialogue," said Braimah Apambire. "Funders can miss out on a lot of things when this is the case. NGOs are unlikely to tell donors what they want to do. NGOs are not bold enough to challenge a funder for what they really need, and that can lead to the NGO then bending the rules."

"It's up to funders to create an atmosphere where there is honest and transparent discussion—so that the shared goals are clear, the missions are well aligned on what you want to do, and there is no fear from the NGO," said Apambire.

"International giving is about more than the money," he said. "It's about the relationship." As with any relationship, that means maintaining constant dialogue, listening to your partners, and giving, asking for, and receiving honest feedback.

### *Ask Yourself...*

1. How do we want to be who we are in the philanthropic world?
2. Who do we need to be in a relationship with to make that happen? What steps will we take now, in six months, and in one year to build those relationships?
3. How can we ensure we are listening to our partners and respectfully mitigating the power dynamic between funder and NGO?

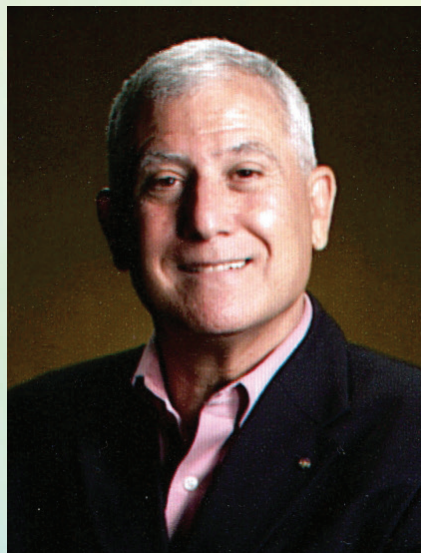


## Five Qualities to Look for in Overseas Partners

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### 1. Is the organization really and truly engaged with the community?

Almost every organization will say they are, but that might mean they showed up a few times and tried to tell the community how they should do things differently. The better, more effective organizations spend a lot of time in the community they serve. That's more expensive and more intense, yet if they don't spend time in the community, they will never understand how things function and what the leadership structure within the community is like. Organizations should be able to show they are following a process that engages the community in a meaningful way.



Steve Werner,  
Werner Consulting

**2. Related to the above: Does the organization do a proper assessment of what's needed?** This is important: you don't want to put a square peg in a round hole. For example, a donor may want to fund a certain water filter, and yet, that filter may not be the best filter for the community's water quality. Women and children may still have to walk miles daily to get water, and the filter may or may not take care of the problems at that water hole.

Organizations that get to know the community and do a proper assessment of its infrastructure and social needs take the lead from the community, rather than trying to assert a solution onto the community.

**3. What kind of follow-up will there be, post-grant/donation/investment?** In developing communities, organizations must do follow-up visits and provide

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training in order for a project to work. You might compare it to a company that builds a factory: A company doesn't sit everyone down for a half hour and say "okay, go to work." Nor do they say at the six- or 12-month mark "okay, we're done." Organizations—and donors to those organizations—need to follow up to monitor the project and make sure everything is working properly. Organizations should budget those follow-up visits from the beginning, and be honest with donors that this is what they need.

4. **Do the staff and leadership have a long-term vision?** So many organizations are understandably desperate for donations and have a hard time thinking beyond their current situation. It's about funding the program this year—it's that simple and needed. However those organizations that are willing to grow and that are open to new ideas, willing to take some risks, experiment with fundraising, meet some other people—it's those organizations that are more likely to change. If organizations keep doing the same thing they always did, they will be in the same place two years from now.
5. **Is the organization willing to admit mistakes or failure?** There's not anyone in the world who has a success every time, nor is there any organization. Look for partners who will tell you when they've failed, and what they learned from that failure. Ask your partners: Where do you think you could be doing better? Where do you need help? The answers to these questions will give you a sense if the organization is a learning organization, or if the organization is about hype and trying to make themselves sound successful.

***Thanks to Steve Werner of [SteveWernerConsulting.com](http://SteveWernerConsulting.com)  
for contributing to this section.***

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*Ask Yourself:*

1. What kind of due diligence do we need to do to feel comfortable giving to this organization? Who can we talk to on the ground to learn more?
2. How much risk are we willing to take? What does risk mean to us?
3. What kind of follow up will we do to ensure the project served the community in the way it was intended?
4. How can we be respectful to our grantee partners and empower them to do their best work? Do we need to adjust our reporting requirements to fit the grantee's timetable?
5. How does the grantee measure impact over time, beyond meeting the short-term needs of beneficiaries?





## Getting Started: 8 Tips for Global Philanthropy

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Here are eight tips donors shared for how they give effectively to overseas organizations:



**1. Decide why international giving is for you and your family.** What is motivating you to do it? What do you hope to give and receive from your philanthropy? What causes can you, as a family, agree to work on together?

**2. Do your research. Learn about the country or region where you plan to work.** Read about the history and current events, relations among social groups, politics, and the role of religion and other belief systems. This will give you a cultural context for how to work within the region.

**3. Consider engaging a philanthropic advisor who is skilled in international giving.** According to one donor: "I hired an advisor when I first started, and it was the best thing I ever did. She helped me articulate my vision for the philanthropy I wanted to do, figure out what to ask, and went on site visits with me."

**4. Join funders groups to learn more about the issues and what is needed.** Learn from those who are already funding in the areas you care about. Many foundations publish reports on their initiatives and the international context in which they work. Ask them: Who is doing what, and where are the gaps?

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5. **Go to conferences that focus on your funding area of interest.**

At conferences, you'll meet NGOs, donors, and incredible people doing the work you wish to support.

6. **Do site visits.** Traveling to the regions you want to fund and talking with local people is the best way to learn about an issue and the dynamics of a place. It's an opportunity to meet with potential grantees, policymakers, and other funders. Look for study tours organized by intermediary organizations or funder affinity groups. (The Global Livingston Institute, featured in this guide, is one group that offers immersion tours.)

7. **Learn by doing.** Make a small number of initial grants or investments in areas of interest, viewing them as learning opportunities. Experiment with what works for you and your family office, and grow your giving/investing over time.

8. **Do your vetting, and give organizations the money—including overhead costs.** Trust them. Treat them well for the work they do. Don't ask them to waste valuable time complying with unreasonable applications and reporting. Focus instead on the relationship with them as your partners, and what you can do to make this the most meaningful engagement.

*“Doing a site visit is life changing. It will work you in ways you don’t expect. It makes for such a more rich and meaningful experience.”*

*– Sasha Rabsey,  
Founder, HOW Fund*

## Best Practices in Global Philanthropy: Donor and NGO Profiles

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### Global Issue Spotlight: Access to Clean Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene “A Starting Place for Development”



As a donor, you can't build a community or strengthen a community if that community doesn't have the basic infrastructure—clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (commonly called WaSH)—for its people to live healthy and humanely.

According to WaSH Funders (WaSHFunders.org), access to clean, safe water is one of the direst issues of our time—663 million people worldwide are without reliable access clean water, and 2.4 billion without adequate sanitation. More than 315,000 children die every year from diarrheal diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation. These are preventable deaths.

According to WaSH consultant Steve Werner, when a country has poor water quality, the cumulative effect of having tuberculosis or even pneumonia or a serious cold can kill them. “These deaths may not be reported as water-related, but it is the hidden reason. Water-related issues prevent children from absorbing nutrients, which weakens their bodies and stunts their brain development between ages one and four,” he said.

Supporting basic infrastructure, coupled with ongoing monitoring and evaluation, can mean saving the lives of adults, children, and entire communities. Perhaps no one knows this better than Braimah Apambire, Ph.D., who is a globally accomplished development and WaSH expert and lecturer.



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Apambire grew up in northern part of Ghana—the poorest part of the country, close to a dry area with little rainfall. “We didn’t have water growing up. In the dry season,



Braimah Apambire, Ph.D.,  
Director, Center for  
International Water  
and Sustainability

people walk long distances to fetch water. Two times a day, we took the cattle to far away places to drink water. In my pre-teen years, the Canadian International Development Agency came to the northern part of the country and began to drill wells. With that came a big relief, and the opportunity to go to school. I had the personal experience of water scarcity, and then living through the transformation of what was possible when water was provided.”

“Water is taken for granted in developed countries, especially in the US. If you’ve never lived in a place where there is snow and cold, no matter what they tell you in Africa, you’ll never know how cold it really is. When you have water flowing from the taps, you never know the negative impact it has on people who don’t have it. Especially on women and girls, who spend easily two to three hours walking long distances each day to fetch water for their families, when in reality that water is probably unsafe, and their kids will fall sick due to this water they drink.”

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“Eighty percent of diarrheal disease is caused by poor WaSH, and eighty percent of deaths of kids under age five are due to water-borne diseases. Sanitation and hygiene are equally important for health outcomes. If the sanitation is not present, the community cannot prevent diseases.

A gap in funding that Apambire sees is keeping the water sanitation structures running once they are constructed. “A community may not have the know-how to repair or maintain the water equipment. If the equipment goes unfixed, community members will then go back to the contaminated water sources they previously depended on.”

**“Most donors want to construct new systems. However they could much more easily fund the repair or expansion of systems for about five to ten percent of the cost,” he said.**

Contact: Braimah Apambire, Ph.D  
Center for International Water and Sustainability – Desert Research Institute  
775-673-7300  
DRI.edu/Center-for-International-Water-and-Sustainability

*“WaSH is a starting point for development. It prevents sicknesses. It improves nutrition. It propels the economy and gender equality. It changes a community entirely and opens opportunities.”*

*– Braimah Apambire, Ph.D.,  
Director, Center for International  
Water and Sustainability*

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### **Donor and NGO Spotlight: David W. Douglas, Waterlines** **“Trust But Verify”**

In 1986, family philanthropist David W. Douglas and his wife Deborah started a 501(c)(3) organization called Waterlines. Douglas, now a board member of Wallace Genetic Foundation, is a grandson of Henry A. Wallace, a former Vice President and the founder of the nation's first hybrid seed corn. Based in Santa Fe, New Mexico,

Waterlines has provided technical help and funding for more than 1,000 rural drinking water projects in 15 developing countries. Most of the projects are in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Panama.



“When funding internationally, I think water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) is the most important health and development issue that there is. From a health perspective, there is no more important issue. Malaria, AIDS, TB—as important as they are, nothing comes close to the overall toll in morbidity and mortality caused by inadequate WaSH conditions in developing countries. In rural areas, women don’t have time to go to work or school or have healthy children because they are hauling water three- to- four hours a day. Many schools abroad don’t have functioning toilets; they often lack separate gender latrines, causing young girls to drop out at puberty.”

Waterlines works closely with indigenous nonprofit organizations and individuals skilled in drinking-water supply projects. “International giving has to be demand-driven,” said Douglas. “Donors can’t parachute in and tell people what they need. We’ve never worked with a community that hasn’t come to us.”



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Each year Waterlines makes site visits to more than 100 communities to check on previously-completed projects to determine whether water systems are working properly. According to Douglas, this is part of a funding approach he calls “trust but verify,” particularly important for a publicly funded nonprofit organization.

“After working with a community to develop a project proposal, we may send the water committee a \$3-5K grant to build a water tank. In some cases, we may not know at first whether they will use the money as they say they will. However, we follow up. Waterlines volunteers and our in-country facilitators return to the community, touch the water tank, look at the budget. We check on 100 projects per year to see if the water tank was built as expected, and to make sure it’s working in the community over time. We’ve built relationships with local individuals over time with whom we trust, and we pay them small stipends to oversee our projects.”

“So many donors worry about vetting on the front end rather than verifying on the backend. The emphasis should be the other way around,” said Douglas.

Contact: David W. Douglas, Waterlines  
505-988-5642  
Waterlines.org

*“Because, in developed countries like the U.S., we have clean water coming out of our faucets, donors don’t get it. Unless they’ve traveled abroad and held a sick child who is suffering from diarrhea, it’s an uphill battle to get people interested in this issue. The Hiltons, the Gates, some of the bigger donors understand it and are working to make a difference, but that’s a small fraction of donors out there.”*

*– David Douglas, Philanthropist  
and Founder of Waterlines*

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## Donor Spotlight: Sasha Rabsey, HOW Fund

### “Trust-Based Philanthropy”

Sasha Rabsey is founder and director of the HOW Fund, a donor advised fund she



Sasha Rabsey  
Founder, HOW Fund

established a decade ago through the Tides Foundation in San Francisco. Through this fund, Rabsey supports mentorship programs for women and girls worldwide, and she herself has been on the ground with partners in many of these countries. She also co-founded the Present Purpose Network, a group of highly engaged women funders in the U.S. and Europe making grassroots grants through a collective action fund.

Her passion for philanthropy was born in the bush of Africa. “My at-that-time 17-year-old daughter said: Mom, let’s go to Africa together. I said okay, but I knew nothing about Africa.”

Rabsey found an organization online where they could volunteer, filled out their applications, and she and her daughter got on a plane to Ghana for five weeks. It was nothing like they expected. Their post was an orphanage that had never had outside volunteers before. “The staff of the orphanage took one look at me and my 17-year-old daughter and thought we looked competent enough. They literally left us there, alone for a week, with 15 kids—six of them had HIV. We had no experience; there were no protocols. It was an insane experience.”

“It was pivotal in showing me what bad development and bad philanthropy look like.”

This spurred her interest in wanting to become a funder—and not just a disconnected checkbook funder, sitting by the wayside. “I wanted to be more than just money to the people I partnered with. I wanted to know: What can I do that will best serve you?”

It was then that Sasha started the HOW Fund. Since that time, she has worked hard to empower women and girls worldwide and to mitigate the power dynamics between funders and grantees. “I want to inspire people to be more than they believe they can be,” she says. “After all, philanthropy is about a relationship, not a transaction.”

“I see so many small funders asking their grantee partners overseas for absurd requirements—with no guidance, no relationship building, no overhead funding, no long-term funding—putting NGOs through the rigor,” she said. Individual donors and families now come to Rabsey for philanthropist-to-philanthropist advice. I’m often asked “How do you get the board to move? How do you develop a point of view? How do you go on site visits?” I tell them to start from a place of trust.

**“Trust-based philanthropy is about having contextual and cultural awareness with the organizations and people you partner with overseas. It’s about trusting the work they do, trusting that they know best what they need and how to do it. It’s about how to find the joy of giving, and how others can have the joy of being in a partnered relationship with you.”**

Contact: Sasha Rabsey  
 Founder, HOW Fund: [HowFund.org](http://HowFund.org), and  
 Co-Founder, Present Purpose Network: [PresentPurpose.org](http://PresentPurpose.org)

*“If I want my funding relationship to be more than transactional, it is up to me to listen to partners with an open heart and mind, learn about the context of the work, and not take up space talking about myself.”*

– Sasha Rabsey,  
 Founder, HOW Fund



## NGO Spotlight: Global Livingston Institute and Staffable Africa "Listen, Think, Act"

Jamie Van Leeuwen has worked on poverty-related issues since the beginning of his career. "I went to Uganda in 2007 after I heard a piece on NPR about work to reintegrate child soldiers in Northern Uganda. We learned that the nonprofits going into Uganda were building things and acting without first listening to the people there and thinking it through."



Van Leeuwen formed the Global Livingston Institute (GLI) in 2009. "We wanted a place for students, teachers, community leaders, artists, and musicians to come together to solve complex social issues." Since that time, GLI has taken 1000 scholars and community leaders to Africa. They coordinate an annual music festival that attracts more than 40,000 Ugandans and provides HIV testing and reproductive health services; they host an annual women's leadership summit and coordinate 40+ immersion trips every year; they partner with the local community on workforce development and job training. GLI's work is leveraged and supported by 10 academic partnerships, engaging interns and scholars across the U.S. from Cornell to Creighton to the University of Denver.

Van Leeuwen partners with long-time colleague Brad Busse, who has worked in international philanthropy and impact investing for years. Together, Van Leeuwen and Busse created Staffable Africa—a for-profit social impact company that trains entry-level Ugandans in hospitality. Through a partnership with the private sector and academia,

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Staffable Africa has employed 250 Ugandans to date. They have developed an impact model based on a specific approach: Everything they do must be Ugandan run, it must create jobs, and it must be revenue generating.

“Too often in Africa and other developing countries, someone comes in to help, builds something, and then goes away. An example is a school is built, and then it stays empty because the community can’t pay for a teacher. We take a Listen, Think, Act approach to every investment we make. We didn’t come in and say, hey, you are poor, you need our help. We said please tell us about your community. What are your biggest needs? What are your top three to five priorities for what you want to change?” said Van Leeuwen.



Brad Busse,  
Busse Ventures

Busse uses his business and investment acumen to push for a different approach to international development. He has long been active with Mile High United Way and numerous other charitable organizations in Denver, and primarily through the United Way Worldwide Council on a national and international basis.

“Normally with charitable donations, donors spend money and then have to use more money. We wanted to create a replicable social impact model that would allow most of the investors to make investments and then re-invest the profits,” said Busse.

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Staffable Africa engages the local community, academic partners, and the private sector.

“The key to social impact investing internationally is to have local knowledge and partnerships. If you have to start from scratch, it can be challenging,” said Busse.

“Philanthropists want to do more than write a check. They want to leverage resources,” said Van Leeuwen. “Find an organization and ways you can plug in. Learn about the organization, what they need, and how they will spend the money you are willing to invest. Connect with well-known organizations that are already doing work in the parts of the world you would like to give to. They can help you build your network and relationships. Find an angle that can give you some local knowledge,” he said.

**“This takes more time than writing a check. However, as a philanthropist or an impact investor, you can’t just close your eyes, send the money, and hope for the best.”**

Contact:

Jamie “Imanzi” Van Leeuwen, Ph.D., Global Livingston Institute

Brad Busse, MBA, Busse Ventures

[GlobalLivingston.org](http://GlobalLivingston.org)

[StaffableAfrica.com](http://StaffableAfrica.com)

*“Donors like to invest in projects that bring sustained change, not simply put a Band-Aid on a problem.”*

*– Brad Busse,  
Impact Investor  
Busse Ventures*



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### **Donor Spotlight: Cynda Collins Arsenault and Marcel Arsenault: “Funding a World Beyond War”**



Successful real estate investor Marcel Arsenault and spouse Cynda Collins Arsenault share a similar value that has shaped their lives and philanthropy: to get to a world beyond war. To achieve this, the couple has used their wealth to endow several operating foundations that work to achieve peace—both on this planet and beyond.

When they first entered into philanthropy, Collins Arsenault spent several years researching how social change occurs. She wanted to know how to have impact, and how to do it over the long term. “I realized it’s a lot easier to create the positive rather than undo the negative. If you get a jump on something and start working on it, you can make a change before it’s too late.”

She came across the issue of outer space. “On this planet, we are in nation states. We don’t have the government structure yet in place to deal with outer space. It’s an opportune time to learn some of the things on Earth and how we apply that to keeping space sustainable, usable, and secure.”

Realizing that this was unexplored funding area—and one that has impact on all nations on our planet, the Arsenaults endowed an operating foundation called the

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Secure World Foundation that promotes cooperative solutions for space sustainability and the peaceful use of outer space. The foundation acts as a research body, convener, and facilitator, and has built international partnerships with state departments, governments, private companies, the United Nations, and more.

“Convening has become the most important part of our work. We bring people together from various country states and open dialogue, discovering the common issues we face and how can we solve them. We don’t say what the answers are; we simply raise the issues around what needs paying attention to,” said Collins Arsenault.

In addition to her interest in outer space, Collins Arsenault personally gives to international intermediaries serving women, and she convenes women leaders under the program Our Secure Future: Women Make the Difference. The program works to amplify women’s voices, strengthen the global network of women peacebuilders, and create policy change through women in governance.

According to Collins Arsenault, “Our organization doesn’t make grants, however we convene women peace leaders, sponsor the speakers that come to the events, and produce briefings and reports on those issues and conferences.”

“The premise of all our work is that we are all interconnected, and it’s relationships that will get us to a world beyond war,” she said.

This program is one of the many programs led by One Earth Future, an operating foundation that the Arsenaults founded with the goal of making the planet more peaceful.

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One Earth Future is structured as an incubator of semi-autonomous programs. One of these programs, Oceans Beyond Piracy, was pivotal in releasing 26 hostages kept in captivity for years by Somali pirates. The organization serves as a think tank to United Nations anti-piracy efforts, and also offers small business loans with no interest to budding Somalian businesses to help create jobs in the country. Its goal? To give young Somalis hope.

“We wanted to impact peace, and to do that, we had to go where the wars are,” said Marcel Arsenault. “We believe that solving complex problems facing humanity calls for a different way of working together—one that requires a global system of networks working to solve problems.”

“The idea is to have one Earth that we all belong to, that we all live in,” he said. “We believe that will happen in the future. Our job is not to tell the world to change, but to assist in any way we can to make the world a better place.”

Contact: Cynda Collins Arsenault and Marcel Arsenault

Secure World Foundation: [SWFound.org](http://SWFound.org)

Our Secure Future – Women Make the Difference: [OurSecureFuture.org](http://OurSecureFuture.org)

One Earth Future Foundation: [OneEarthFuture.org](http://OneEarthFuture.org)



## 5 Lessons Learned on Global Philanthropy

By Cynda Collins Arsenault and Marcel Arsenault

- 1) **Go where nobody is.** Find something that no one is doing, and do it. As in business, philanthropy is about problem solving – that’s true whether in a complicated real estate deal or lending money in Somalia or creating jobs in Columbia. Find a problem that no one is paying attention to, and bring your creativity and personal impact to the table.



Cynda and Marcel Arsenault,  
Founders, Secure World  
Foundation and  
One Earth Future

- 2) **Take the long view.** In philanthropy, as in business, think in terms of the long game. Most endeavors are short-term, chaotic, political. Nobody thinks long-term. Donors must develop a broader perspective and a long vision for what they want to change. It’s not about the crisis of the day; that will pass. Have patience, put your head in the game, and stay in it.

- 3) **Listen to whom it is you want to fund.** Rather than putting your own needs

or values on others, ask them first what they need, and listen to what they say. For example, the women we give to are putting their lives on the line. If we fund

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something they are doing, they could get killed. They know what they need more than anyone. We listen first and follow their lead.

- 4) **Find the right partners on the ground.** Sort through to find the people you can trust. Find partners that are hard working, driven, passionate, and honest. In business, we've been successful by leading and motivating the right partners. It's the same in philanthropy. Find the right partners in the areas you want to fund—that's the beginning and the end.
- 5) **Know that it's not easy work.** If you go down the street and give money to your church, that's easy. You write a check you feel good. When working or giving internationally, it's challenging. The farther away you are from a country or project, the more difficult it is. However, we like doing things that aren't easy. We're not going to avoid a problem because it's hard. If we all do that, nothing gets done.

*Thanks to Cynda Collins Arsenault and Marcel Arsenault  
of SWFound.org and OneEarthFuture.org for contributing to this section.*

## Resources to Learn More

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- **Charities Aid Foundation and CAF America**—International and domestic donor advised funds: [CAFOne.org](http://CAFOne.org) and [CAFAmerica.org](http://CAFAmerica.org)
- **Council on Foundations Global Grantmaking**: [Cof.org/topic/globalgrantmaking](http://Cof.org/topic/globalgrantmaking)
- **Cutbill, Clive, Paines, Alison and Hallam, Murray ed.** *International Charitable Giving*. Oxford University Press, 2013: [Global.oup.com](http://Global.oup.com). Discusses legal rules regarding international giving
- **Engaged Donors for Global Equity**—Community of donors, foundation officers, and advisors in the international philanthropic landscape: [EdgeFunders.org](http://EdgeFunders.org)
- **Global Philanthropy Partnership**—Provides information and resources to donors and donor advisors interested in addressing issues of global importance: [Global-philanthropy.org](http://Global-philanthropy.org)
- **Global Philanthropy Forum**—Peer learning network of philanthropists and social investors committed to advancing international causes: [PhilanthropyForum.org](http://PhilanthropyForum.org)
- **Grantmaking Without Borders**. *The Opportunities and Challenges of Working with Intermediaries in International Grantmaking*: [InternationalDonors.org](http://InternationalDonors.org)
- **NGOSource**—Helps U.S. grantmakers streamline their international giving through equivalency determination support: [NGOSource.org](http://NGOSource.org)



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- **Singer, Peter.** *The Life You Can Save: How to Do Your Part to End World Poverty.* Random House, 2010: [TheLifeYouCanSave.org](http://TheLifeYouCanSave.org). Includes reasons why to give internationally, myths on international giving, and tools including a charity impact calculator and a recommended list of evidence-backed charities
  - **Social Capital Markets**—Conference dedicated to accelerating a new global market at the intersection of money and meaning: [SocialCapitalMarkets.net](http://SocialCapitalMarkets.net)
  - **Thousand Currents (formerly IDEX: International Development Exchange)**—Identifies, evaluates, and grows the best ideas to alleviate poverty and injustice: [ThousandCurrents.org](http://ThousandCurrents.org)
  - **Tides**—International and domestic donor advised funds: [Tides.org](http://Tides.org)
  - **Nichols, Rebecca, and Mackinnon, Anne.** *International Grantmaking: Funding With a Global View.* GrantCraft, 2004: [GrantCraft.org](http://GrantCraft.org)
  - **U.S. Center for Disease Control**—Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WaSH): [cdc.gov/healthywater/global](http://cdc.gov/healthywater/global)
  - **Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS):** [WingsWeb.org](http://WingsWeb.org)
  - **WaSH Funders**—Hub for funding and needs-related data and information on water, sanitation, and hygiene: [WaSHfunders.org](http://WaSHfunders.org)
  - **World Summits and Conferences:** *Grantmaking on a Global Stage.* GrantCraft, 2005: [GrantCraft.org](http://GrantCraft.org)

## About Hammer & Associates

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engage in and connect  
to their philanthropy*

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- Managing transition points, including succession, change in assets, and spend-down
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