

# wise philanthropy advisors

*It is not useful enough to give money away; it has to be done wisely. The advice of professionals in the field can be rewarding. Listen to some donors who shared their experience.*

Share the wealth, of course, but how? When Laure's father encouraged her and her two brothers to use some family assets for philanthropic projects, she felt very inspired. She quickly thought about the areas that she could support—education, particularly with poor youth; the environment, especially access to water. However, the desire to help was not enough. After discussing the legal framework of her project, she faced a complex task and ventured in uncharted territory. She feared that her enthusiasm would put her on the wrong path. At that point, a banker offered to use an independent third party, and put her in touch with [wise](#).

Professional expertise was crucial. The siblings were impatient to get started after having selected projects that were dear to them; however, they faced two difficulties: They did not have a strategy that would yield the highest results in the best possible conditions. They did not know the ground well enough to select grantees without making mistakes. They also felt some mistrust—we all know how money is often badly spent. [Wise](#) immediately met with the family members, asked about their goals and, together with them, created a strategy tailored to their needs.

Expectations run high. The first goal is to help, but also to initiate a family project that will nurture ties between parents and children, brothers and sisters. Such a project is not easy to implement, given the diverging interests and the agendas

of each member. However, there are solutions that are tailored to the specific needs of each individual while keeping a common denominator that will unite them all. This is [wise](#)'s specialty.

Anna is her twenties; her story is similar to Laure's. Her father also gave her and her siblings a sizeable amount of money for charity projects. She also realized how daunting the task was. *"We were overwhelmed," she honestly admitted. "We did not know what to do."* An example among many: in the early stages, donors are often tempted to support every single project that they hear about. But not all projects have the same quality. One has to choose, but how and on what criteria? *"Fortunately, Maurice and Etienne guided us in our baby steps,"* the young woman acknowledged.

What is the added value of philanthropic advisors at that stage? *"They help us figure out what we can expect from the various projects that are presented to us,"* answers Laure. *"More importantly, they share their experiences at a time when we could get carried away by excessive idealism."* Giving involves choosing. The purpose is not only to please, but also to obtain results. The keywords are impact, efficiency, and durability.

Anna launched her philanthropic activities just a few miles away from home, in Aix-les-Bains, France. She learned the ropes with her brothers by giving *"a second chance to people who have slipped through the cracks of society."* A few months later, they decided to *"commit to international projects."* They ventured to Brazil and visited an organization that helped street children. [Wise](#) identified a project, planned the meetings, and organized a visit to the premises.

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The trip had a lasting impact. “The neighborhood was so oppressive, so horrible that we were afraid to get out of the car,” remembered Anna. “But the organization we came to see was extraordinary. Once we entered the door, we were amazed by the atmosphere. This experience changed our lives.” This emotionally rich trip enabled the donors to meet the beneficiaries and to coordinate the work more efficiently, by setting specific goals and planning the next steps with the grassroots organization. “Our children do not feel that they are giving, but rather, that they are sharing with others,” said Anna’s father.

Philanthropy generates exceptionally powerful experiences, but it also requires a strict follow-up—another of wise’s expertise. Laure did not have enough time to follow up, and asked wise to monitor and analyze the results of her commitment. Once a year, she devotes a few days to visit each of “her” projects—an indispensable activity, according to her. “This is when our commitment makes sense,” she noted. “When we meet the concerned people, we really understand what we are doing.”

“Wise is a valuable support,” explained Laure. “Their approach is fluid. When I wish to undertake a project somewhere in the world, I do not need to start from scratch. The team at wise knows a whole array of projects in such different regions and fields that I am confident they will always find what we are looking for. They bring us peace of mind, since I trust them completely. They guarantee that the projects I support are reliable and will have an impact.”

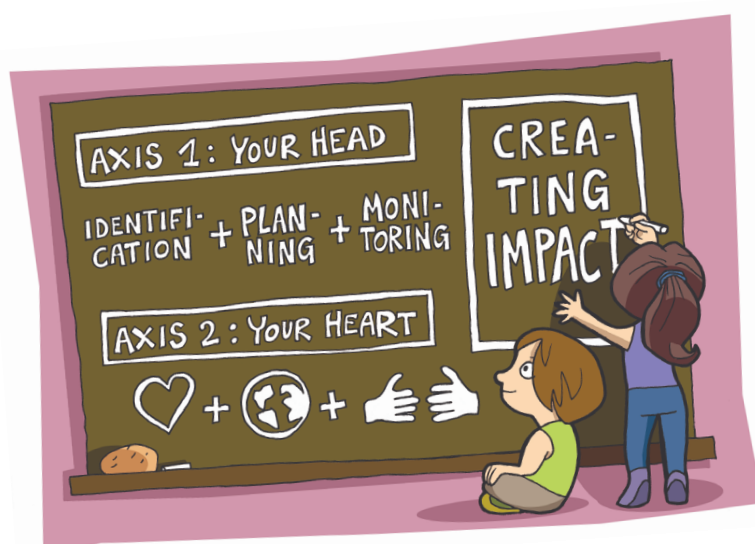
“The size of the company is another advantage,” Laure added. “We can contact the executive directors at any time, which creates a strong relationship and saves time. We deal with individuals that we know personally, not with an anonymous organization.”

The quality of the leading team, co-founders Etienne Eichenberger and Maurice Machenbaum, does the rest. “You just need to meet them once to realize how they complement each other,” said Laure. The former is familiar with the economy; the latter is an expert in projects in developing countries. Together, they understand the expectations of the donors and the potential of the projects, and how to create the best possible matches between the two.

As for Anna, she acknowledged the flexibility of both men and their team. “They know how to adapt to circumstances,” she said. “And they display remarkable motivation. They never stop. They are always ready to come to your house.” When meeting with wise, donors gain more knowledge and hone their skills. They begin to understand by themselves how to leverage their financial support. Some donors get new ideas and additional motivation. Anna has now greater ambition in the field of philanthropy. She could very well see herself devote part of her life to it. “It is easier and more rewarding to help when you have the right tools at hand,” she explained. “I received the tools from wise.”

“In Europe, philanthropy is still a mostly private activity. To involve family members unites them and creates new ties among them; they each have an opportunity to have a stake in our world,” said Etienne. And Maurice added, “for us, it is a great joy to have earned the trust of donors, and to accompany them on this path that is both intimate and turned towards others.”

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