



Philanthropy from Generation to Generation

by Ismet Berkan, Hurriyet Daily / 9 December 2011

An extremely important change is taking place in Turkey nowadays under the leadership of **Güler Sabancı**, the Chairperson of **Sabancı Holding's** Board of Directors.

This change is happening in the **'philanthropy sector'**, which has become a sector all by itself in the developed and wealthy part of the world.

Sabancı Foundation has decided to focus less on building schools and dormitories. Instead, the foundation has started allocating a significant amount of its financial resources and, more importantly, its knowledge and experience to non-governmental organizations that are engaged in philanthropy at the heart of society.

This, in fact, is a revolution on its own since Sabancı Foundation is one of the biggest philanthropic institutions in Turkey. If only philanthropic foundations founded by other distinguished families or holdings followed Sabancı's lead, a spectacular change could be brought about.

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Every year, Sabancı Foundation, not only provides noteworthy financial support and information to dozens of non-governmental organizations, but also undertakes another very important activity: **It enlightens other non-governmental organizations and major foundations about the latest developments in the world's philanthropy sector by organizing philanthropy conferences.**

At the most recent one of these events, we had the chance to listen to **Matthew Bishop**, co-author of the book **'Philanthrocapitalism'** and the U.S. bureau chief of the famous magazine The Economist. And yesterday's speakers were **Peggy Dulany** and her son **Michael Quattrone** from the **Rockefeller** family, whose philanthropic tradition continues under the management of the fifth generation family members.

Representatives of almost all of the major philanthropic foundations and institutions in Turkey were present in the large assembly hall of Sabancı Centre to listen to these two speakers who shared their experience and opinions on philanthropy.

A lively Q&A session followed the speeches. Then, with a small circle of participants, we had lunch with **Peggy Dulany**, **Michael Quattrone** and **Güler Sabancı**, and gained even more insight into the philanthropic vision of both Sabancı and Rockefeller families.

The reason for this change of vision in Sabancı Foundation is actually quite simple: Philanthropy requires both expertise and focused attention. It is not really possible for a large foundation to focus on many areas at once; however, it is possible for it to collaborate with non-governmental organizations and other foundations that have dedicated themselves to specific areas by providing them resources and/or knowledge and experience.

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Global Philanthropist Circle, founded in 1986 by **Peggy Dulany** from the famous Rockefeller family – who owe their wealth to the famous Standard Oil – is an international institution sharing a similar

vision to the one Sabancı Foundation has recently acquired. This is an institution which brings together world-renowned philanthropists.

It is indeed very beneficial for philanthropists to come together now and again to discuss their projects since that is when a chance of collaboration is born. For instance, the philanthropic foundation Synergos, also founded by **Peggy Dulany**, is nowadays carrying out a massive agricultural project in Africa collaborating with Microsoft's founder **Bill Gates**'s foundation in order to help small and medium size farmers.

Surely one day, philanthropists in Turkey will also be involved in joint projects like this.

Know yourself first

At first glance, the speech that **Peggy Dulany** delivered yesterday seemed to be not about philanthropy per se, but rather about achieving success in the business world. However, this is so only at a first glance.

Dulany started her speech by talking about emotional intelligence. According to Peggy, people with a higher emotional intelligence have 20 percent more chance of succeeding in the business world.

In her own words, the first element of emotional intelligence is self-awareness, in other words, knowing yourself and being aware. While describing self-awareness, **Dulany** put herself and her mother forward as an example, illustrating how relationships can be built on a stronger base as people become more self-aware.

According to **Dulany**, the other elements that constitute emotional intelligence are self-management, empathy and social skills.

She also emphasized that these elements are essential for philanthropy to succeed.

Sustainable philanthropy

The famous saying “**give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime**” may have become cliché by now, but it still points to the essence of philanthropy, that is, sustainability.

You can provide clothing, food or educational support to a person or a group of people for once and even ease your conscience by this. However, if you don't find a way for these people to lead a sustainable life without needing any more help, your one-off support would be useless.

Two months ago, we sent donations to Somali; we fed the hungry. Yet today there isn't any trace of that social awareness we had two months ago. We should learn a lesson here.

The same goes for the situation in Van. That enthusiastic, avid feeling of charity has gradually worn down, if not completely worn off.

If only we had channeled that aiding energy in the right direction, the work done in Van could have been much more beneficial and sustainable.

This is the sort of information that philanthropic organizations need. You might have a very good project at hand, but trying to re-fund it every year could turn into a nightmare. It is a much better idea to initially come up with a smart plan and implement a sustainable project.

This, on the other hand, is the sort of information that needs to be conveyed to non-governmental organisations.