

Laudes ——— — Foundation

Laudes Foundation
(formerly C&A Foundation)

Location:
Zug, Switzerland

Annual Grantmaking:
€48.3M

Year Established:
2013

Type of Grantmaker:
Corporate Foundation

Mission:
In 2020, C&A Foundation's work in fashion has become part of Laudes Foundation — a new, independent foundation here to support brave initiatives that will inspire and challenge industry to harness its power for good. The organisation works both to influence capital so that investment encourages good business practices, and through industry to tackle its deep and systemic challenges.

Laudes Foundation is a part of the Brenninkmeijer family enterprise, next to the COFRA businesses and the family's other private philanthropic activities, including Porticus, Good Energies Foundation, and Argidius Foundation.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT MATTER:

Insights from a Top-Performing Programme Officer

INTERVIEWEE: LUCIANA CAMPELLO

The relationships that funders build with grantees are crucial if the two are to work well together to achieve shared goals. In particular, the foundation programme officer to whom a grantee is assigned plays an important role in this dynamic, **CEP research finds**. Programme officers strongly shape how grantees experience a foundation's selection, reporting, and evaluation processes, as well as the foundation's overall helpfulness to grantees in assessing their progress and addressing challenges that arise.

Luciana Campello is a programme manager at Laudes Foundation (formerly C&A Foundation) who works out of Brazil as part of the Foundation's Labour Rights programme. When the Foundation gathered feedback from its grantees through the **Grantee Perception Report (GPR)** in 2019, Campello's grantees rated her in the top 10 percent of CEP's overall comparative dataset for their overall quality of relationships, including for her responsiveness, comfort approaching the Foundation when a problem arises, and clarity of communications.

What's her secret? When asked about how she approaches building and maintaining strong relationships with the nonprofit leaders she works with, Campello points to several principles she has found to be effective.

FOCUS ON NAVIGATING THE POWER IMBALANCE

Campello says she first focuses on how to best navigate the inherent power imbalance that exists between funders and grantees. She treats relationships with no two grantees the same, instead gauging the best way in which she can effectively communicate with each one given their context and needs. "I always understand that from day one, the power relationship is there and I try to understand how comfortable

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I always want to
pass the message [to
grantees] that we're
in this boat together.

—Luciana Campello

the partner is,” she says. “Some of them are already very used to working with funders — they’re very straightforward [with me] and I’ll do the same. But with some others, if I sense some tension on the other side of the table, I’ll go a bit slower.”

BE TRANSPARENT IN YOUR COMMUNICATION

While no two relationships are the same, Campello cites transparency — specifically, transparency about what matters most to grantees — as one of the key principles she brings to all her relationships. “I want partners to understand the rationale behind why we do things the way we do,” she says. “I ask, ‘Does this make sense to you?’” This is especially important given Laudes Foundation’s more intensive proposal process, Campello notes.

PUT YOURSELF IN THE GRANTEE’S SHOES

In all her interactions with grantees, Campello says her decisions are informed by her experience earlier in her career working at nonprofits. For example, when making site visits, she always appreciates what it is like sitting on the other side of the table. She recalls “being very conscious that the funder is here; scared and eager to show the good things of the project.”

STAY HUMBLE

For Campello, it’s important that in her role as programme manager she practices humility and recognises the limitations of her own knowledge. “There are things that are not my expertise,” she says. “I’m often honest that I don’t know something.” Being cognisant of this means that Campello opens the space to prioritise learning from grantees, and often doing more listening than talking. “We need to be interested in learning from (partners) about their own realities and from their own perspectives, as well as the realities their beneficiaries are facing. I am always trying to let them know that they have the knowledge.”

Being honest about the limitations of her own knowledge also allows Campello to bring in the expertise of her foundation colleagues, when relevant — something she says benefits not only the grantee, but also the foundation as a whole since it means more staff are getting out of the office and into the field. Campello works very closely with her team, which she describes as “very supportive.”

MEET IN PERSON (WHEN POSSIBLE)

When it comes to those important meetings between foundation staff and grantees, Campello says, whenever possible, she tries to do so in person. “Funders need to make sure to have designated time and budget to visit the field,” she says. And if the partner expresses interest — and it is feasible and helpful for them — bringing them into the foundation office or to a relevant conference is also an effective strategy. For this to work, though, Campello goes back to the importance of transparency and ensuring that the grantee understands the purpose and intentions of those visits. That way, both parties can go into the meeting with clear expectations of how to make sure that valuable time spent together is used most productively.



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If you’d like to learn more about understanding and improving your relationships with grantees, including through collecting grantee feedback via the **Grantee Perception Report (GPR)**, contact CEP Manager, Assessment and Advisory Services, **Charlotte Brugman**, who is based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, at charlotteb@cep.org.



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