

GEBERT RÜF STIFTUNG AT A GLANCE

As a philanthropist, Heinrich Gebert was a pioneer: A clearly defined purpose and focused gap funding make Gebert Rüt Stiftung unique.

FOUNDATION DATE: Officially recorded on 12 December 1997

COMMERCIAL REGISTER ENTRY: 27 February 1998

PURPOSE: To promote Switzerland as a top location for business and as a place to live

MISSION STATEMENT: Wissenschaft.Bewegen (making science effective)

IMPACT NOW: Spend-down foundation

GRANT-MAKING CLUSTER: Time-limited areas of activity

FOCUSED STRATEGY: Gap funding in the «valley of death»

GOOD GOVERNANCE: Swiss Foundation Code

FACTS AND FIGURES: 25 YEARS OF GRS

For 25 years, Gebert Rüt Stiftung has been providing «risk capital» in the form of targeted initial funding and making projects eligible for follow-up support – with great success.

Established with foundation assets amounting to CHF 220 million, Gebert Rüt Stiftung has supported 1,267 projects with CHF 258 million. Overall, some 4,000 people have been awarded funding, 434 partnerships have been set up and 194 startups founded. The completed projects have triggered additional resources of CHF 8.4 billion, corresponding to an efficiency factor of 43. An average of 98% of the foundation's annual expenditure is dedicated to funding.

PUBLISHING DETAILS: The present short report is also available in German and French. The full annual report in accordance with Swiss GAAP ARR 21 can be downloaded as of May, Zurich/Basel, February 2023.

MANAGEMENT (1998 – 2022)

The board of trustees and executive team are committed to the focused and effective achievement of goals.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Prof. Roland Siegwart (since 2012, Chairman), Prof. Monika Büttler (since 2017, Deputy Chairwoman), Prof. Andrea Belliger (since 2022), Prof. Elgar Fleisch (since 2018), Prof. Martin Fussenegger (since 2019), Prof. Jean-Marc Piveteau (since 2018), Prof. Marcel Tanner (since 2016)

FORMER MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Prof. Rudolf Marty (2005 – 2017), †Dr. Theodor Fässler (1998 – 2004), Prof. Peter Forstmoser (1998 – 2016), Dr. Katja Gentinetta (2013 – 2020), Prof. Richard Bühler (2011 – 2018), Prof. Jürg A. Schifferli (2007 – 2018), Prof. Susan Gasser (2006 – 2016), †Prof. René Dändliker (2007 – 2012), †Christiane Langenberger (2008 – 2012), Prof. Carl August Zehnder (1998 – 2011), †Prof. Marie Theres Fögen (2006 – 2007), Prof. Philipp U. Heitz (1998 – 2006), Prof. Piero Martinoli (2003 – 2006), †Prof. Verena Meyer (1998 – 2005), †Prof. Hans Heinrich Schmid (1998 – 2005), †Prof. Heinrich Rohrer (1998 – 2002)

EXECUTIVE TEAM: Dr. Pascale Vonmont (CEO/Director), Dr. Marco Vencato (Deputy Director), Jacqueline Grollmund (Project Monitoring/Controlling), Corinne Burkhardt (Management Assistant/Back Office), Angela Zollinger (Student Assistant)

FORMER MANAGEMENT: Dr. Philipp Egger (1998 – 2016, CEO/Director)

HEINRICH GEBERT – A PIONEERING ENTREPRENEUR AND FOUNDER

«I don't need the money, I want to do some good for Switzerland.» Heinrich Gebert's words marked the birth of Gebert Rüt Stiftung. 25 years ago, the success story of Switzerland's biggest foundation for innovation kicked off with a sensation: A headline in the Swiss newspaper «Blick» announced that Switzerland's «Toilet King» was giving away CHF 220 million. Selling Geberit brought Heinrich Gebert a huge fortune overnight. And he was determined to use it for an idea in keeping with his deeply held convictions.

Diligence, hard work and an extraordinary entrepreneurial spirit made Heinrich Gebert a pioneer of sanitary technology. At the age of 36, he took over his parents' plumbing business in the Swiss town of Rapperswil. By the time he sold it, Geberit had become an industry leader with international operations. But Gebert was just as innovative in his role as a philanthropist as he was as an industrialist: In setting up the foundation, he transferred the concept of entrepreneurship to nonprofit funding for science and innovation. Gebert Rüt Stiftung was a new breed of foundation: entrepreneurial through and through.

Pioneers are ahead of their time, which can make them demanding and impatient on occasion. In Heinrich Gebert's case, this impatience was coupled with humbleness. He declined the offer of a seat on the board of trustees with thanks, as he was of the firm belief that professionals would be able to put his idea into practice more efficiently. But he found the process of establishing the foundation too slow and wanted to get it off the ground at last. In spring 1998,

Peter Forstmoser, a long-standing adviser he knew well, quickly and successfully put together a high-calibre board of trustees – with well-known figures from the worlds of science and business. These included the entrepreneur Theodor Fässler, Verena Meyer, President of the Swiss Science Council, and Nobel Prize winner Heinrich Rohrer.

GEBERT RÜF STIFTUNG – PROFESSIONAL, ENTREPRENEURIAL, EFFECTIVE

Heinrich Gebert never attempted to intervene in the foundation's activities. Without any outside influences, the board of trustees and the executive team established a professional and focused partnership right from the start, which still characterizes them today. Both are indebted to their founder's entrepreneurial and pragmatic approach in the way in which they implement the foundation purpose. This is reflected in a lean and agile organization, as well as in a funding policy that targets effectiveness over self-preservation and that stipulates looking actively to the future and launching initiatives instead of simply accepting project applications reactively.

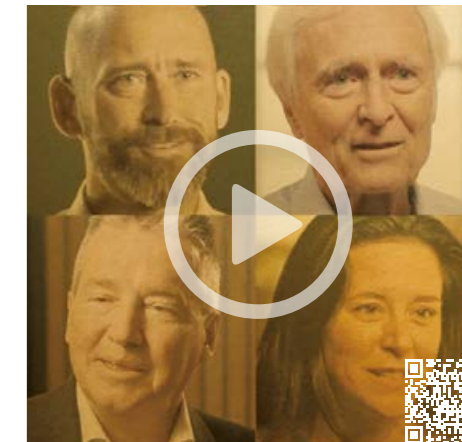
Using scientific innovations to strengthen «Switzerland as a top location for business and as a place to live», Gebert Rüt Stiftung's mission is as relevant as ever. The foundation's grant-making activities remain focused on knowledge entrepreneurs, offering them a lifeline at a stage when their ideas are still so new and unconventional that the risk of failure is deemed high and funding opportunities are therefore thin on the ground. This «valley of death» provides the ideal funding gap for a private innovation agency like Gebert Rüt Stiftung.



A visionary founder who made a difference



«I want to do some good for Switzerland.»



«... number 2 after the Swiss National Science Foundation.»

Since the foundation was set up, its areas of activity have changed but its goal of making effective use of its financial resources remains as important as ever. The foundation provides initial funding for projects where there is a funding gap and potential. To ensure that projects are not only kick-started but also benefit the economy and society in the long term, Gebert Rüt Stiftung positions its support along the value chain in close cooperation with its strategic partners. This has resulted in successful startups such as Climevents AG and permanent institutions such as the Swiss Literary Institute, as well as widely supported programmes including «Venture Kick» and the «Rare Diseases» network.

25 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Gebert Rüt Stiftung was fortunate to have Heinrich Gebert – and Switzerland is fortunate to have Gebert Rüt Stiftung. On www.25grs.ch, we show what the funding has done for Switzerland. Each month we showcase real people and projects that stand out and are literally extraordinary. Switzerland can clearly do with more people like Heinrich Gebert. After all, setting up a foundation is worth it – and it even pays, as an objective glance at the figures shows.