

Network^{of}
European
Foundations

PARTNERING^{FOR}IMPACT

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Dear Readers,

'Alignment'... the ever-elusive 'Gaal' for those of us working in collaborative projects. As in ancient times, this quest is fraught with challenges. By its very nature, it takes time, trust, and commitment.

In today's context of polarisation and polycrisis, finding alignment is like swimming against a strong current. But foundations are equipped to swim through choppy waters, navigating difficulties with patience, understanding, and curiosity, sowing the seeds of alternative futures.

At NEF, alignment is at the heart of our work. It starts with setting up functional governance and clarity of roles between the three main stakeholders: NEF as the host organisation with ultimate responsibility, the collaborative teams that lead the implementation of fund strategies, and the contributing foundations who provide direction and vision, the North Star. Each partner brings a unique set of expertise and experience, working in complementarity and subsidiarity as much as possible.

A recent American [study](#) on collaborative funds offers insights into what it takes to support and strengthen such initiatives. While the European context differs in many ways, it will certainly guide and enrich our thinking at NEF and our organisational planning for the coming years.

In this newsletter, you will read about 'areas of enlightenment' where we can celebrate alignment and collaboration. For instance, EPIM has developed an interesting co-leadership model with two directors working together seamlessly. Moreover, the EAISF and Civitates are working on resourcing the implementation of AI legislation across Europe. Indeed, it is time for Europe to take the lead in regulating the development of the digital space, especially amid rapid global technological shifts. These are just a few highlights. Beyond these examples, many of our collaborative projects are experimenting and evolving in their own ways, with valuable lessons to share.

As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions to continue learning and growing together as we sail towards our North Star.

Peggy Säiller
NEF Executive Director

Highlights- - - - -

AI funding- why it matters now?

By Catherine Miller, Director, AI & Society Fund and Elisa Peter, Director, Civitates

Europe is where the rules for Artificial Intelligence (AI) are being written and it's where a vision for AI that serves people and society can grow. As Trump prepares to take over the US Presidency, Europe will need to double down on its commitment to be a leading voice in tech accountability and responsible innovation. Empowering public interest voices that can put people at the heart of the debate on AI will be a catalyst for its success. That's why European AI & Society Fund and Civitates are seizing this opportunity with new grantmaking on

implementation and enforcement of regulations to address AI harms experienced on the ground and enforcement of Europe's recent platform regulation, Digital Services Act.

[Read More](#)

EPIM Co leadership

A little over a year ago, EPIM adopted a co-leadership model, making it one of the first major philanthropic organisations in Europe to do so.

Co-directors Sophie Ngo-Diep and Hrishabh Sandilya reflect on this journey: the highs, the challenges, and how shared leadership boosts capacity, innovation, and a collaborative culture, as they interviewed each other for Philea – Philanthropic Europe Association. You will read their [interview](#) on the Philea website.

Project Updates - - - - -

AGEE

The Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe recently [gathered](#) grantee partners, members, and advisors in Athens, fostering a strong, collaborative community united by our shared commitment to advancing gender equality across Europe. As part of our ongoing effort to understand the evolving needs of our partners, the Alliance team has also conducted site visits in the Netherlands, Spain, France, Hungary, Sweden, and the Czech Republic. These visits deepened our appreciation of their impactful work and strengthened relationships rooted in trust.

In parallel, Alliance members have engaged in peer-learning sessions focused on intersectionality and trust-based grantmaking. We've documented key insights from our [learning journey](#), offering a resource to those interested in transforming their grantmaking practices.

Gender equality organisations are essential in building a fairer, more inclusive Europe, yet they often face significant financial challenges. To better understand the funding landscape, the Alliance is [commissioning](#) research to examine the support from private foundations and the EU reaching organisations led by women, girls, trans, and non-binary people in the EU.

Keep up with the latest updates from the Alliance by following them on their [website](#), [newsletter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

European Fund for the Balkans

This November will see the 5th edition of the regional "Trees of Friendship" initiative. It was originally conceived as a way to take responsibility and plant the number of trees needed to offset the carbon emissions caused by the EFB's business flights. Yet, the idea of planting trees simultaneously with many partners in all countries of the region has generated a lot of interest. EFB is actively approached by partners with requests to participate. Thanks to strong regional support, 2100 trees have been planted so far in 15 cities across the Western Balkans. This year, 600 trees will be planted in 9 cities, highlighting the much-needed regional solidarity in the fight against air pollution and climate change.

Keep updated through the [EFB website](#).

JAFOWA

To support its growth, JAFOWA has strengthened its operational team.

Médoine Mbengue, a Senegalese agricultural engineer with 10 years of experience, joined JAFOWA at the end of August. As Deputy Programme Manager, based in his native Senegal, he brings to the programme his in-depth knowledge of the agricultural and agroecological sectors in West Africa.

JAFOWA is now led by a duo: Laurent Grolleau as Programme Manager and Médoine. With this new structure, JAFOWA is able to work more closely with its partner farmers' organizations and refine its understanding of local issues. This should result in enhanced integration of JAFOWA into its ecosystem, at an opportune time before the launch of a new JAFOWA call for proposals in 2025.