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PhiLab

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Le **Réseau canadien de recherche partenariale sur la philanthropie** (PhiLab), anciennement Laboratoire montréalais de recherche sur la philanthropie canadienne, a été pensé en 2014 dans le cadre de la conception de la demande de financement du projet développement de partenariat CRSH intitulé « Innovation sociale, changement sociétal et Fondations subventionnaires canadiennes ». Ce financement a été reconduit en 2018 sous le nom d'« Évaluation du rôle et des actions de fondations subventionnaires canadiennes en réponse à l'enjeu des inégalités sociales et des défis environnementaux ». Depuis ses débuts, le Réseau constitue un lieu de recherche, de partage d'information et de mobilisation des connaissances des fondations canadiennes. Des recherches conduites en partenariat permettent la coproduction de nouvelles connaissances dédiées à une diversité d'acteurs : des représentants gouvernementaux, des chercheurs universitaires, des représentants du secteur philanthropique et leurs organisations affiliées ou des partenaires.

Le Réseau regroupe des chercheurs, des décideurs et des membres de la communauté philanthropique à travers le monde afin de partager des informations, des ressources et des idées.

The **Canadian network of partnership-oriented research on philanthropy** (PhiLab), previously called the Montreal Research Laboratory on Canadian philanthropy, was thought up in 2014 as part of the conception of a funding request by the NRCC partnership development project called “Social innovation, social change, and Canadian Grantmaking Foundations”. From its beginning, the Network was a place for research, information exchange and mobilization of Canadian foundations’ knowledge. Research conducted in partnership allows for the co-production of new knowledge dedicated to a diversity of actors: government representatives, university researchers, representatives of the philanthropic sector and their affiliate organizations or partners.

The Network brings together researchers, decision-makers and members of the philanthropic community from around the world in order to share information, resources, and ideas.



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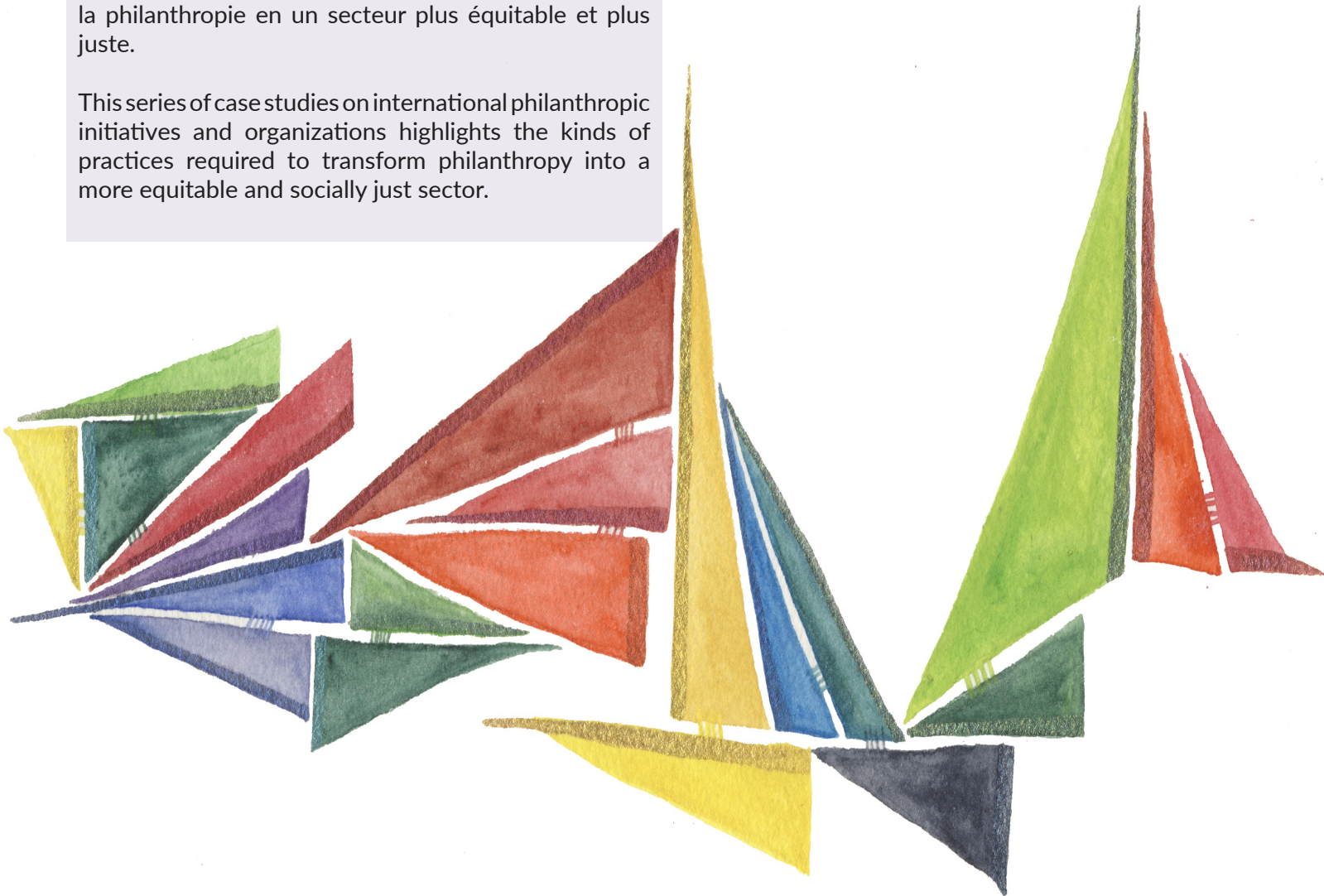
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DOSSIER SPÉCIAL | SPECIAL FEATURE

Cette série d'études de cas présente des initiatives et des organisations philanthropiques à l'international qui révèlent des pratiques contribuant à transformer la philanthropie en un secteur plus équitable et plus juste.

This series of case studies on international philanthropic initiatives and organizations highlights the kinds of practices required to transform philanthropy into a more equitable and socially just sector.



Artiste | Artist: Kai Yun Ching



INTRODUCTION

In its quest to better understand the Canadian philanthropic sector, PhiLab has been building relationships beyond the country's borders, sowing the seeds for international research units. Fostering international networks allows us to establish meaningful relationships with fellow philanthropy researchers and research hubs abroad, which are often studying very different contexts for philanthropy.

This Special Feature focuses on the work of PhiLab's colleagues around the globe. We have curated a series of case studies on philanthropic initiatives and organizations outside Canada that highlight the kinds of practices required to transform philanthropy into a more equitable and socially just sector. Covering organizations from North and South America, Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and Australia, we hope this series offers insight into the diversity of alternative approaches to grantmaking that prioritize equity and community-led action.

Dans sa quête pour mieux comprendre le secteur philanthropique canadien, le PhiLab a tissé des relations par-delà les frontières du pays, semant les germes pour que se constitue une plus grande unité de la recherche à l'international. La création de réseaux internationaux nous permet d'établir des relations constructives avec des collègues chercheurs et des centres de recherche qui étudient la philanthropie dans des contextes très différents du nôtre.

Ce dossier spécial met l'accent sur le travail de collègues du PhiLab qui sont basés aux quatre coins du globe. Nous avons réuni une série d'études de cas portant sur des initiatives et des organisations philanthropiques hors Canada qui révèlent des pratiques contribuant à transformer la philanthropie en un secteur plus équitable et plus juste. Couvrant des organisations en provenance d'Amérique du Nord et du Sud, d'Europe, d'Afrique subsaharienne et d'Australie, nous espérons que cette série offrira un panorama de la diversité d'approches subventionnaires qui priorisent l'équité et l'action communautaire.

COLOMBIA

Philanthropy from a Colombian soccer field

The Case of The Julián Vásquez Soccer Academy



By Darío Castillo Sandoval, Student at DESS in Territorial Planning and Local Development at UQAM



Darío Castillo Sandoval is an economist with a Rural Development master's degree and student at DESS in territorial planning and local development at UQAM. Former assistant professor at the Javeriana University, chairman executive of Confecoop, executive director of Unicossol, and national planning advisor (Colombia). He is living in Montreal Q.C. since 2018. He was an intern at TIESS, at EEQUEBEC, and is an assistant researcher at PhiLab.

Context

Countless organizations play a relevant philanthropic role in different sectors and territories of Colombia. In this context, foundations are the most visible organizational model, but they are not the only ones. There are other types of non-profit organizations (NPO in English, ESAL in Spanish) that carry out different activities, such as the present case study of the "Julián Vásquez Soccer Academy" (AFJV)¹, which has managed to train children and youth soccer players (6 to 21).

The creation of private foundations as an expression of corporate social responsibility emerged in Colombia in the mid-twentieth century². However, their development and expansion occurred particularly during the twenty-first century. In addition to

corporate foundations, family and independent foundations currently predominate over other models of philanthropy.

The support that business groups have given to NPOs has been gaining strength because through this, the results of their philanthropic contributions become more visible. It is noteworthy that, because of the philanthropic expansion and diversity over the years, the country now ranks third in the donations index in Latin America, as Paula Fabiani remarked in the last Alliance webinar about the future of philanthropy in Latin America³.



Source: The Julián Vásquez Soccer Academy

Photo 1: Group of players, parents, and coaches at the AFJV.



Source: The Julián Vásquez Soccer Academy

Photo 2: Group of players' mothers at a parent education project activity at the AFJV.

In Colombia, there exists a definition to understand the kind of organization that engages in philanthropic activities. This definition was the result of a research project conducted by the Global Philanthropy Report, the Hauser Institute for Civil Society at the Harvard Kennedy School and the Association of Family and Business Foundations - AFE Colombia⁴.

Non-profit entities that have a source of stable assets and income, so their viability does not depend on obtaining funds from third parties. This is what guarantees that the foundations can function and remain in time. This means that 50% or more of a foundation's funding for it to function comes from a private source.

This definition about organizations that develop philanthropy activities stressed that different types of entities of NPOs, also meet these characteristics, not just foundations⁵.



Source: The Julián Vásquez Soccer Academy

Photo 3: Group of parents at a teamwork education activity.

For this case study, taking as a reference the general framework defined in the AFE Colombia research, an NPO organization was selected, one that developed philanthropic activities, had a governance body, and

oriented its financial resources to social purposes.

The NPO "Academia de Fútbol Julián Vásquez" was selected because it meets the previously mentioned characteristics and because it shows innovation in its practices in the Cali region context. It does so by financing social impact activities from different sources, both internal and external. Furthermore, they call on the parents to be part of the action, and focus their work on serving children and young athletes in one of the cities with the highest poverty rate: 62.5% of their population, according to DANE information⁶.

Background and projects of the Julian Vasquez Soccer Academy

The organization was founded in March 2018 to transform lives through sport, provide direct aid to children and adolescents, primarily those with limited resources. Its founders are the married couple Julian Vasquez and Carolina Congote. Julian is a former professional Colombian soccer player who achieved fame and success with teams in Colombia and Argentina and is the head of the sporting aspect of the organization. Carolina is responsible for management and public relations. The organization's board of directors is composed of members of both Julian and Carolina's families.

Since its inception, the school adopted the mission of promoting sportsmanship and entertainment through soccer, family, and values. To reach it, they created a system to group the parents according to each youth age group. Through this model, the parents from different social classes work together to build conditions for the success of their children's teams. It helps AFJV to identify needs and gather resources to support each of their players. They have also formed a decision-making committee to develop many types of activities with the children and youth that involves the soccer players' parents.

There are two aims for involving families in the decision-making process. First, the NPO tries to empower people to find ways to break the poverty cycle, for example, by being responsible for the fundraising itself and acquiring new skills. On the other hand, it allows them to take a holistic approach to assisting in-kind. Also, in a long-term vision, the NPO creates support for players who are badly hurt to allow them to become professionals in other areas, as described below.



Source: The Julián Vásquez Soccer Academy

Photo 4: Group of players, parents, and coaches on a trip to Barcelona, Spain (2019) for a round of soccer matches.



Source: The Julián Vásquez Soccer Academy

Photo 5: Condolences to the family of one of their players, killed in Cali due to urban violence (2020).

Programs

Collective action through fundraising: By fundraising to pay for national and international trips, families, regardless of their income status, work together with the NPO to organize activities, bazaars, and parties. For instance, they celebrate the “Mercatón” (food collection), convene sponsors, and identify special occasions to distribute the donations among the players.

“Changing Lives” program: “Football is also a way for young people who were born poor to move up the social ladder in Colombia,” says Julian. To this end, the school

participates in national and international tournaments to promote young talent, where those from the most vulnerable families tend to be the most talented. Up to now, they have managed to place players in soccer teams in Argentina (5), Croatia (2), and Sweden (1). By 2022 they will participate in a tournament in Barcelona, Spain, where they will take the team of players under 20 years old. They have already managed to cover the US \$305 000 that it will cost.

BLANQUITA **ALIADOS QUE NUTREN A LOS NUESTROS...**



Source: The Julián Vásquez Soccer Academy

Photo 6: Allies that nurture our dreams. Acknowledgements to the rice company “Arroz Blanquita” for their donation to the AFJV.

Training program for parents: Aware of the vulnerability of most of their students, the founders have gradually worked to empower the athletes’ parents through educational processes and psychosocial support to unite families and reduce factors of domestic violence. Periodically, the school offers workshops on proper nutrition, physiotherapy training, family football, and neuro-football, aimed specifically at the families of the school’s players.

Nutritional program: Because there are families who prefer that their children not train and instead of playing soccer, have them work to earn money for their household. The organization finances the athletes’ food at school and, with their allies, have managed to obtain in-kind donations so that the families of the poorest athletes can cover part of their monthly expenses and thus, will approve of their children

attending sports practice. An example of this is “Arroz Blanquita” a company certified as a B Corp, which donates 150 kilos of rice monthly to improve the food security of young football players from lower-income families.

The “new opportunity” program: Due to violence in the city, some young athletes have been severely injured. AFJV, with the help of other medical care foundations, is looking to fund the recovery treatment of those who have been injured. They have also designed a “life project for a new life” program for young people who will not be able to continue playing football for medical reasons after a violent incident. The aim is to provide them with professional guidance to enable them to pursue a career as football coaches or other activity as part of their new life project, which will allow them to earn a living in the future.

Financial Issues

After the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a social protest emerged that resulted in a national economic shutdown for several months in 2021, increasing the crisis that Colombia had been facing since 2020. Currently, there are 190 fewer contributing families at the school compared to before the pandemic. Today, the school has 260 athletes, of which 146 are financed with their resources and donations from third parties: sports training, transportation, uniforms, and food. The families of the remaining 114 participants pay a monthly fee of US \$31 to cover the costs of their participation in the AFJV. Also, these families try to support other players across AFJV with cash donations or in-kind assistance.

Discounting the costs of the maintenance of the land and the facilities that are the property of the organization, the costs to support the organization’s total US \$821 000 per year. They were managing to finance 61% of this sum with the monthly payments of the contributing families whereas the remaining 39% was covered by their own private resources and donations. Now, the proportion is completely reversed. Today, they are looking for new allies, sponsors, and donors to adapt to this challenge.

Conclusions

This case is an example of the new generation family philanthropy model because of the following characteristics:

- 1) They are not heirs of great fortunes: The Vasquez Congote family is financially backing the project with their economic resources, these being the fruit of Julian Vasquez’s savings as a professional soccer player, and his convening power and visibility to attract different supporters.
- 2) They involve the beneficiary community in decision-making: Gradually, some of their impact projects in the territory have been calling for the participation of the students’ parents in decision making.
- 3) They invest in the future: The motivation of the founders is that the younger a child can participate in a discipline that teaches values, the lower the risk that the child will end up on the streets as a drug addict or a victim of crime.
- 4) They believe in the culture of collaboration and cooperation of individual and corporate donors to fund operating costs: It is precisely in this culture of collaboration that the school hopes to continue to grow.

Notes

- 1 A special thank you to Julián Vásquez and Carolina Congote for accepting to be interviewed and for the photographs they provided.
- 2 Villar, R. (2018). [Foundations in Colombia: characteristics, trends, challenges Bogotá, DC, AFE - Colombia.](#)
- 3 Fabiani, P. (04 de May de 2021). [The culture of donation in Latin America. Conference Report.](#)
- 4 Ibid. Villar, page 12.
- 5 According to Colombian regulations, NPOs are legal entities that are constituted by the will of association or creation of other natural or legal entities, to carry out activities for the benefit of the associates or third parties, or the community in general and do not pursue the distribution of profits among its members (Decreets 2150 of 1995 and 427 of 1996 and, Circular Sole of the Industry and Commerce Superintendence -SIC-).
- 6 DANE. (2021, May 10). Las cifras para entender el estallido social en Cali. El Espectador, p. 3. Retrieved from <https://www.elespectador.com/economia/las-cifras-para-entender-el-estallido-social-en-cali/>

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