

## Cooperation between Acacia - Fund for Development Cooperation and Foundation Freie Gemeinschaftsbank

### **Our task succeeds in cooperation over several generations:**

*"Whoever gives time, whoever gives attention, whoever shares their experiences and talents with others, whoever helps others to stand on their own two feet, usually gets something back in return. Reminding people of this, encouraging them to do so, is a task that is not only important for me, but above all for society as a whole." (Gauck, 2012)*

**Acacia, the fund for development cooperation in Basel, has existed for over 25 years. With more than 200 members, it supports around 40 projects worldwide. The Foundation Freie Gemeinschaftsbank was founded in 2001 and has been active as an umbrella foundation since 2015. In the last seven years, more than 60 funds with over 100 projects worldwide have come together under the umbrella of the foundation. We are very pleased to jointly announce that we have been in various discussions over the past year to bring Acacia and the foundation Freie Gemeinschaftsbank together.**

### **Why do we want to work together?**

The board of Acacia has been discussing the question of continuation and handover for several years in various meetings. In discussions with various people, the possibility of cooperation and handover with the Foundation Freie Gemeinschaftsbank has arisen. Especially President Jules Ackermann and Treasurer Karl Buschor, due to their age and health, would like to hand over certain activities to younger hands. The bookkeeping, the preparation of the newsletter, the administration of donor data and donation receipts - all these administrative tasks need to be relieved in a timely manner. At the same time, the question arises as to how the content-related work and support can find new forms of relationship.

Over the last five years, the foundation has built up its own technically modern infrastructure and can accommodate the existing Acacia projects under its roof. As a young team consisting of six people, there are various opportunities to connect and offer the Acacia projects a new home and a new community.

We see our coming together as an invitation to all people from our two environments to join us on our journey and get to know each other.

We are of different ages but our hearts beat for the same cause. We have sensed in our common conversations that we share the same desires, values and questions about this world. Because we feel comfortable together, the first step was taken. We experience that trust is being built here. We look forward to what is to come, without being able to plan or foresee the future exactly. We learn from each other and bring together Acacia's many years of experience and the Foundation's fresh dynamism. Together, we want the work of Acacia to continue for a long time to come. We would like to lay a foundation stone here for further years of development cooperation.

## **Does the “spirit” of Acacia remain?**

The souls of organisations are something mysterious. The people who animate the work shape them and yet they are independent as a culture and identity. We understand the spirit of Acacia as something that is not linked to physical appearances. Nevertheless, it is something that also lives in the foundation: working with and for and through other people and enabling space for courage, change and development in trusting relationships. We are confident that the spirit of Acacia will continue to develop with the new forms.

## **Will Acacia be dissolved as an association?**

No, not as a legal form for the time being. In May 2023, the Board will ask being elected for a further four years. During this time, we would like to shape and complete the transition. In 2027 we will decide anew whether we want to keep the association as a vessel or end it. It will become clear in the future how we will work together.

## **Practical questions for members and donors**

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### **Will I remain a member of the association? Are there still membership fees?**

No, the board of the association will ask all members to leave the association at the general meeting in spring 2023, as it will only be continued administratively. The Acacia board will take care of the remaining tasks.

The association will continue to exist from 2023 for at least the next four years. The board will continue to ensure that the cooperation can develop on good ground.

### **Will I still receive the newsletter?**

The Acacia newsletter will be published in autumn 2022 and probably again in autumn 2023. The Foundation is working on its own format for presenting projects, which will be published for the first time in 2023 or 2024 and into which the Acacia newsletter or project article will be integrated. One thing is certain, however: there will still be opportunities to read about the projects! The exact form and frequency of publication are still open from 2023 onwards.

### **Can I continue to donate to my projects?**

Yes, of course. For a transitional period, both the Acacia accounts and the Foundation accounts will accept donations for the projects. No donation will be lost! We will inform you about the new account details from the autumn newsletter 2022 onwards, when we have prepared everything. From 2023 onwards, donations will mainly go through the foundation accounts, so that the Acacia administration is relieved. Then only the account details will change for you, the purpose of payment will remain the same.

### **When do I have to change my Standing Order?**

We ask you to change your standing order at the turn of the year 2022/2023. We will also inform you of this again and call you if you forget. During the transition period, both account details will remain in place. We will make sure that your donation arrives safely.

### **Where do I get my donation receipt? When?**

As soon as you donate to the Foundation for the Acacia projects, you will receive the donation receipt from the FGB Foundation. The change is that it will be sent in January of the following year and not immediately as usual. The donation receipt can also be sent online on request.

### **How does the QR code payment slip work?**

We are in close exchange on this and are considering a step-by-step guide. We are working on finding a good solution and will inform you about it in the newsletter and in the Foundation magazine.

### **Is there anything else I can do to support this interaction?**

You can support the foundation through patience, understanding when something does not work out immediately and with free donations for the foundation. This works for the young foundation like wind under the wings.

## **Practical questions for projects and fundraising**

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### **What does the transition period look like? What are the phases?**

In 2021, we have started to have discussions between the Acacia Board and the Foundation team. In 2022, we are gradually preparing a transition. We are moving towards each other step by step, calmly and carefully. We want to give everyone the opportunity to join us on our journey. To this end, there will be various online meetings for projects and donors in 2022, in addition to the general meeting. There will also be various individual meetings to get to know each other. From 2023 onwards, we would like to channel a large part of the donations through the foundation in order to relieve the administration of Acacia. However, the association will continue to exist until at least 2027.

### **Who will be the future reference person for the projects?**

For the next two to four years, Jules Ackermann will remain as the contact person for the projects. Relationships need time for trust and development. The projects and the foundation will be given this time to get to know each other. It will emerge who will continue and develop this part of Jules' work in the Acacia sense. Over time, we hope that getting to know each other will deepen in such a way that a natural transition into a new form and with new caregivers can emerge.

### **What are the new non-profit requirements? What changes with the legal form of a foundation?**

Acacia is a non-profit Swiss association. The FGB Foundation is a Swiss charitable foundation. In principle, the legal situation does not change. But due to the new legal form, association to foundation, there are other documentation requirements. This means that the foundation is audited once a year by a state-approved auditor and must submit documentation for this purpose. All Acacia projects funded so far are non-profit and will pass this audit. For documentation purposes, the Foundation requires documents, photos or reports. The foundation will be happy to explain what is needed in individual cases.

### **How will Acacia be integrated into the Foundation's funds?**

The foundation offers so-called project funds. These function similarly to Acacia as a fundraising pot. We will approach some Acacia projects individually to ask whether they would like to have an independent project fund. This makes sense if the projects already have a larger network in Switzerland. The other Acacia projects will be combined into a joint Acacia project fund and Jules will initially remain the contact person as usual.

### **What else is new about this step?**

Acacia is proud that 100% of the donations have been forwarded to the projects. The funds of the foundation have decided as a community itself to give a part of their donations to finance the office. Acacia would like to provide reserves to carry this contribution for the projects on a proxy basis for the time being. In the long term, we invite Acacia's projects to consider, in exchange with the Foundation and the fund community, how the funding of the Foundation can be secured in the long term.

To the extent that the Foundation takes over administrative activities for the Acacia projects, we will make free donations available for this purpose.

### **Contact details and getting to know each other - Profile of Foundation FGB**

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Here you will find various information about the Foundation. The Foundation will present itself at the Acacia General Assembly on 07 May 2022. In addition, we would like to offer various events to answer further questions and to get in touch with each other.

For this purpose, there is a website [www.stiftungfgb.ch](http://www.stiftungfgb.ch) and a very detailed annual report as a booklet on the foundation's work. The next annual report will be published in August 2022.

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**Website:** [www.stiftungfgb.ch](http://www.stiftungfgb.ch)

**Address:** Meret Oppenheim-Str. 10, 4053 Basel

**Proof of non-profit status:** List of the City of Basel, page 55, «Stiftung Freie Gemeinschaftsbank»

**Bank account details**

**IBAN** CH26 0839 2000 0282 2031 5

**BIC/SWIFT** FRGGCHB1XXX

**Purpose of payment:** For donations to support our conversion process "Free Donation Acacia"

**Foundation Board:** Margrit Bühler (President), Markus Hildbrand, Max Ruhri

**Management:** Viktoria Schwab (80%)

**Office:** Anke Dietrich (45%), Ludgera Hertel (70%), Manuel Kuhn (30%), Oliver Maurer (70%), Daria Zwyer (Internship Jan. – Juni 2022, 80%)

