

Business Philanthropy: Institutionalizing the vision of a sustainable Latin America (A)

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This is part of a case series. The aim of this case study is to inspire MBA students to engage strategically in philanthropic activities, thus generating societal value at a larger scale. The case is split into two parts. Part A (Stephan Schmidheiny's Legacy: The Vision of a Sustainable Latin America) outlines the challenge to act philanthropically vis-a-vis the tremendous sustainability challenges of Latin America, which can only be addressed by a strategic and business-like approach. Part B (The VIVA Trust: Creating Synergies to Leverage Societal Impact) on one hand presents the solution to Part A and on the other raises the question of how the particular approach to philanthropy might be replicated by others. At the end of 2001 Stephan Schmidheiny was the single shareholder of GrupoNueva, an investments and operations holding company based in Costa Rica specialising in forestry, wood processing and water management. He is also the founder of Fundacion AVINA which works to foster sustainable development in Latin America. By 2009 AVINA had given more than USD330 million in grants supporting bottom-up change towards sustainability all across the Latin American continent.