

# Annual report

## 2025



## About Fondation Botnar

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss philanthropic foundation based in Basel, established in 2003 to continue the philanthropic legacy of Marcela and Octav Botnar.

Dedicated to the wellbeing of young people who live, learn, work, connect, and play in urban and digital spaces around the world, the foundation invests in and supports innovative initiatives and research, bringing together actors across sectors to create purposeful dialogue and partnerships.



Marcela and Octav Botnar

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## From alignment to momentum

As 2025 came to a close, we reflected on a world marked by uncertainty and accelerating change. Long-held assumptions about stability, shared values, and collective responsibility have been tested and put under pressure. For organisations like Fondation Botnar, this sharpens both our responsibility and our purpose: to stay responsive and connected to the communities and young people with whom we work.

This year, we concentrated on what matters most to us: enabling young people's wellbeing by working differently – more coherently, collaboratively, and with greater strategic intent. Our refined strategy, *Pathways to young people's wellbeing*, represents a shift from individual initiatives toward connected portfolios and a long-term perspective. It challenges us to align our choices, our partnerships, and our ways of working around impact rather than activity.

That shift has required focus and trust. Throughout 2025, open and regular dialogue within the team and with the Board has been essential. Together, we examined our limitations as honestly as we did our achievements, and we collectively shaped what comes next. This will allow us to remain adaptive in an ever-changing environment.

The courage shown by young people around the world in 2025 — standing up for their rights, democracy, and the rule of law, often at personal risk — reminds us why this work matters. Their resolve inspires ours.

We thank those who continue to accompany us in learning, partnership, and action. With this focus, we step into the future committed to moving forward together.

Elsbeth Müller  
Board Chair

Andrea Studer  
CEO



“In a world of uncertainty, our purpose has become clearer: to work with young people and partners, courageously and collaboratively, to advance young people's wellbeing.”

## Key insights

As we advance our strategy, learning plays a central role in supporting young people's wellbeing. Our strategy emphasises a systems perspective, long-term partnerships, and evidence-informed decision-making. Understanding what works, where change is emerging, and where challenges persist is therefore essential to evolving our approach.

Throughout 2025, we reflected on evidence and lessons from partners, programmes, and evaluations to better understand how change happens in the ecosystems surrounding young people. These reflections highlight patterns in what strengthens local systems – and where further effort is needed.

Three key insights from this learning process stood out this year and are shaping how we implement our strategy.



Continue exploring these insights in the digital report

### Insight 1:

#### Youth participation reinforces systems

Across programmes, young people reported gaining confidence, voice, leadership skills, and recognition within their communities.

Yet participation does not automatically translate into influence and is most effective when well-resourced and embedded in formal processes.



### Insight 2:

#### Early strategic contributions enable systemic shifts

We observed that early, strategic contributions can unlock broader change when solutions are designed to align with institutional interests from the outset.

When we worked with the public sector – not around it – and broad coalitions of other actors, we were more likely to see policy adoption, budget commitments, and scale.

### Insight 3:

#### Local anchoring and strong intermediaries are critical

In cities and multi-partner programmes, locally rooted organisations played a central role in coordinating stakeholders, building trust, and establishing a long-term vision.

This reinforced an important insight: coordination and learning are part of the essential infrastructure of local ecosystems.



Overall, these insights point to strengthening local ecosystems in collaboration with in-country partners. These partners are key in establishing trust-based, long-term relationships with the public and private sectors, civil society, and, importantly, with young people who live in the places we work.

## 2025 at a glance

2025 was shaped by shared reflection and learning through dialogue, aligned actions, clarified priorities, and momentum towards impactful action.

### May

#### **Strategic partnership with World Health Organisation**

We launched a partnership with WHO, committing CHF 8 million to strengthen structural conditions for young people's health.



### July

#### **Learning from ten years of health research investment**

We reviewed 31 grants to assess their contributions to the biomedical research and development value chain, yielding practical insights to improve health outcomes for young people.



### September

#### **A historic global political declaration**

Through sustained partnerships in the Being initiative, we contributed to key policy messages in the historic UN High-Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health – the first to centre mental health at the heads-of-state level.



### June

#### **Contextual insights for strategic development**

We gained deeper insights to inform our strategic development, facilitated through engagement with partners and young people, including a visit by our Foundation Board to Ghana.



### August

#### **Deepening our rights-based approach**

We developed a youth participation framework that aims to shift unequal power structures, hold duty-bearers accountable, and support young people in claiming their rights.



### November

#### **Advancing collaboration across OurCity partners**

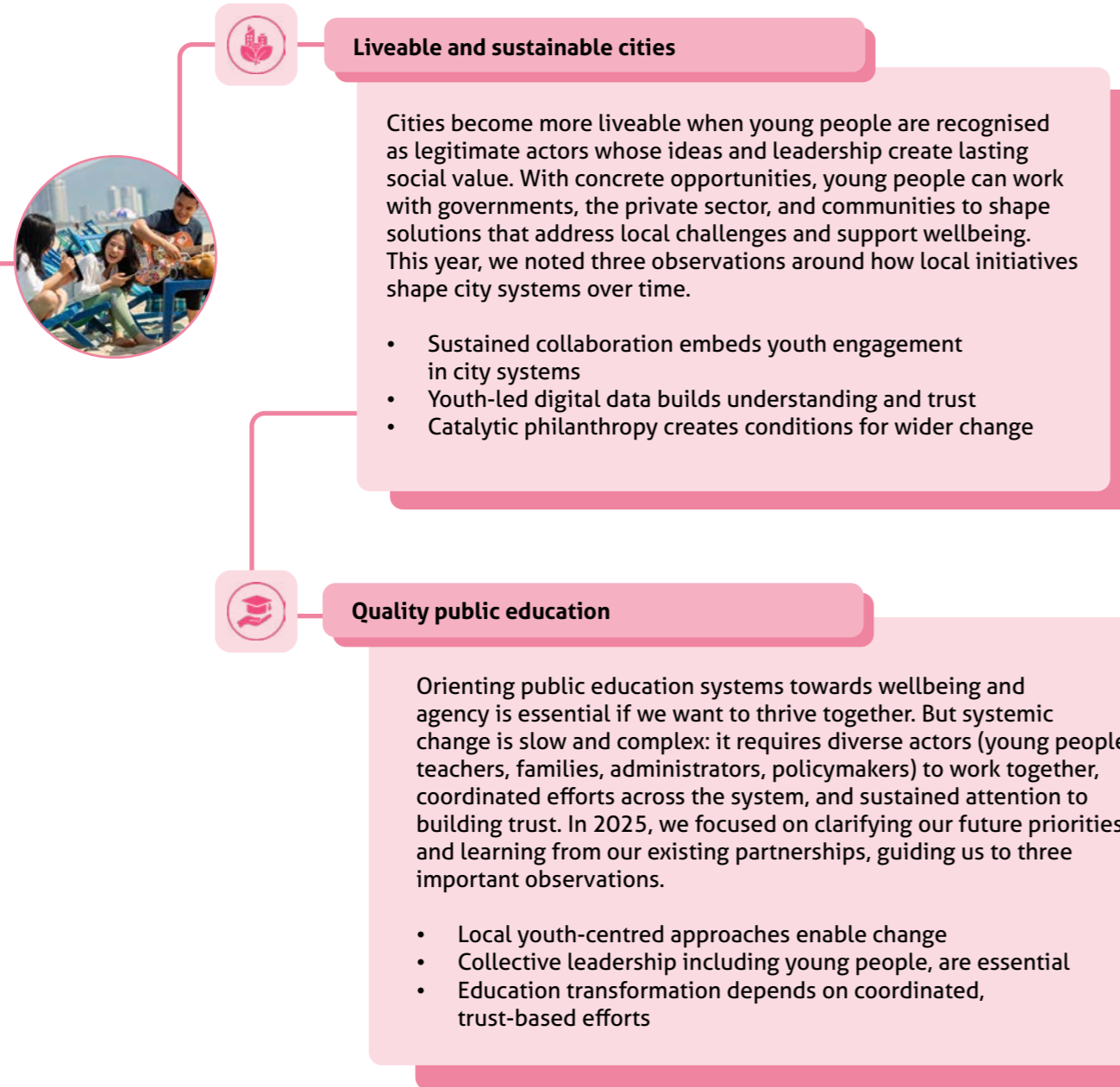
The Global OurCity Gathering in Barranquilla convened five cities to align young people-generated data and priorities with municipal strategies.

## Our themes

Our thematic work translates our strategy into practice, bringing together partners, evidence, and young people's perspectives. Across each theme, we continued to deepen our understanding of what drives meaningful and lasting change.



Discover deeper insights in the digital report



## Stories of change

These stories offer a glimpse into how partners and young people are driving change — from advancing digital rights to reshaping urban participation. Scan the QR codes to read the full digital stories.

### RIGHTS Click

*Turning the tide: Refocusing action in a time of shrinking rights*



At a time when rights are shrinking, our partnership with Amnesty International's RIGHTS Click is working to help shape a digital future in which technology is governed responsibly, and children's rights are protected and upheld.



Read the full stories

### OurTanga

*A city reimagined with and for its young people*



Since 2019, OurTanga (TangaYetu) has brought together young people, local government, civil society, and the private sector to help shape a more inclusive future for Tanga, Tanzania — grounded in the belief that sustainable urban change requires shared ownership across the entire ecosystem.

## Looking forward: from strategy to practice

2025 was a year of intensive reflection on how to sharpen our strategic focus, align our resources, and strengthen collaboration within Fondation Botnar and with our partners.

In a rapidly changing world, marked by shrinking development funding and increasing fragility of once shared values, scaling our impact on young people's wellbeing and rights is more important than ever.

In 2026 and over the coming years, we will sharpen our focus and strengthen our approach in the following areas:

### Deeper engagement in focus countries

We are working more intentionally in our focus countries, guided by local communities and young people who know their contexts best, and adopting a more holistic approach that goes beyond individual sectors. This involves gaining a deeper understanding of the local context, prioritising geographic engagement informed by context-specific developments, and developing a better understanding of how and why change occurs in different settings.

### Enhancing local collaboration through closer partnerships

At the heart of our approach is a commitment to locally rooted collaboration. Through this, we aim to enable more resilient and sustainable pathways to systemic change. This means working more closely with key partners in our focus countries to empower local actors and foster networks across the public and private sectors, civil society, academia, and with young people.

### Enabling thematic synergies

Young people don't experience education, health, digital access, or rights in isolation — these issues are deeply interconnected in how they live their lives. So, our four thematic areas will become more interconnected and mutually reinforcing. By working within defined geographic ecosystems, we aim to broaden collaboration across themes and enable more context-responsive approaches to young people's wellbeing.

### Ecosystems for sustained change

We will cultivate locally grounded ecosystems in which partners can implement and adapt initiatives over time. This creates more sustained, context-responsive, and systemic pathways to change.

We are grateful to our partners and young people, with whom we work together in our shared commitment to realising our mission: to work with and for young people of all backgrounds, contributing to a world that supports their wellbeing and respects their rights.

## Funding awarded

In 2025, Fondation Botnar continued its work to improve the wellbeing of young people and, with a focus on refinement and consolidation this year, awarded targeted funding to select initiatives and innovative companies.

### Grants awarded

In 2025, the Foundation Board approved grants for the following projects totalling CHF 8.6 million.

Project	Organisation	Countries	Amount	Timeline
Palestinian Universities for Child Rights Advancement (PUCRA)	Schweizerische Friedensstiftung - swisspeace	Occupied Palestinian Territory	CHF 4,998,752	2026 – 2030
OurCluj BETA	Asociația de Dezvoltare Intercomunitară Zona Metropolitană Cluj	Romania	EUR 476,320	2025 – 2027
Follow-up to the second Lancet Commission on adolescent health and wellbeing	The George Washington University	Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania	USD 475,000	2026 – 2029
Strengthening the Ifakara Innovation Hub for Health and Well-being	The Ifakara Innovation Hub	Tanzania	USD 428,803	2025 – 2028
Youth, Peace & Security: Reimagining youth participation through a transgenerational lens	Interpeace	Global	CHF 379,940	2026 – 2027
Advancing digital accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities in Morocco	EnableMe Foundation	Morocco	CHF 348,964	2025 – 2028
Streets for Kids: Bringing global experience to local practice	Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors	Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador	USD 340,000	2025 – 2026
Transforming Drug Policy: A focus on children and youth	Foundation for the Graduate Institute of International Relations and Development Studies	Global	CHF 270,000	2025 - 2027
Dialogue Project	Schweizerische Friedensstiftung - swisspeace	Switzerland	CHF 249,988	2025 – 2028
Cluj Youth Federation Blueprint for an impactful and inclusive growth	Cluj Youth Federation	Romania	EUR 243,800	2025 - 2027
Grant Development Support	Slum Dwellers International	South Africa	CHF 90,000	2026 – 2030
Grant Development Support	Liliane Fonds	Netherlands	CHF 73,000	2025 – 2027
Grant Development Support	Universidad EAFIT	Colombia	CHF 68,000	2025
Grant Development Support	UrbaSEN	Senegal	CHF 63,000	2025
Grant Development Support	Yayasan Edukasi Cikal Cinta Damai	Indonesia	CHF 50,000	2025
Friends of Education Initiative collaboration	Foundation for Global Partnership for Education	Switzerland	CHF 50,000	2025 – 2026
Grant Development Support	National Council for the Child	Israel	CHF 50,000	2025
Grant Development Support	Neuer Israel Fonds Schweiz	Switzerland	CHF 50,000	2025

### Venture philanthropy investments

In 2025, we invested a total of CHF 4 million through our venture philanthropy approach, investing in early-stage start-ups whose

products and services have a positive impact on the wellbeing of young people.

Company	Sector	Main countries of operation	Amount	Description
TekUncorked	Environmental sustainability	India	USD 250,000	Clean energy transition via grid modernisation and renewable integration
Huna	Health services	Brazil	USD 150,000	AI-based early cancer detection (blood testing)
GoMyCode	Education	Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia	USD 500,000*	Digital upskilling and coding education
Promethean Energy	Environmental sustainability	India	USD 254,000	Industrial decarbonisation through waste heat recovery
Arummi	Food systems	Indonesia	USD 250,000	Plant-based dairy alternatives
Origin Fresh	Food systems	India	USD 250,000	Vertically integrated fresh produce supply chain
Popular Power	Environmental sustainability	Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, US	USD 75,000*	Solar plant operations and clean energy platform
Plenna	Health services	Mexico	USD 150,000 + USD 150,000*	Integrated women's healthcare platform (clinics + telehealth)
Greenjams	Environmental sustainability	India	USD 254,000	Carbon-negative concrete for low-carbon construction
Fibrizo	Education	Argentina, Colombia	USD 550,000*	Affordable high-speed internet for underserved communities
Mangopoint	Food systems	India	USD 250,000	Vertically integrated agri supply chain
Welli	Financial inclusion	Colombia	USD 350,000	B2B2C healthcare financing platform
Brisil	Environmental sustainability	Bangladesh, India, UAE, Vietnam	USD 236,000	Low-carbon silica production from rice husk ash
Ekincare	Health services	India	USD 500,000*	Corporate health benefits platform
Grinta	Health services	Egypt, Tanzania	USD 250,000	Pharma distribution and primary healthcare platform
Boxful	Decent work	El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras	USD 300,000	Tech-enabled last-mile logistics platform
Ekko	Financial inclusion	Vietnam	USD 250,000	Earned wage access and HRTech platform

\*A follow-on investment is a second investment in a startup company's subsequent funding round.

Startups tend to raise capital in multiple rounds to grow and scale their activities and acquire more clients.

**Accelerating biomedical research for child and adolescent health:** In 2025, we continued our commitment to biomedical research that addresses the specific needs of children and adolescents. Our investments focus on independent translational research institutions that turn

scientific discoveries into real-world impact. In 2025, our contribution to establish the Botnar Institute of Immune Engineering (BIIE) supported the institute as it ramped up operations and recruited leading experts to advance systems, synthetic and computational approaches

to immune engineering for young people and global health. Since 2018, we have also supported the Basel Research Centre for Child Health (BRCC), a leader in digital paediatrics and data-driven innovation.

## Financial statements

Accounting is based on the Swiss GAAP FER 21 standard for charitable social non-profit organisations by the provisions of Swiss law, particularly Articles 957 to 962 of the Swiss Code of Obligations on commercial bookkeeping and accounting.

The annual financial statements of the foundation present an accurate and fair view of the foundation's assets, as well as its financial and earnings position. Funds are recognised when the Foundation Board decides on the expenditure.

In each case, the entire amount is recognised as an expense. Future payment obligations are recognised as current liabilities. Payments to funding recipients are recognised as a reduction in liabilities.

Income statement	1.1. - 31.12.2025	1.1. - 31.12.2024
<b>FINANCIAL RESULT</b>	<b>mCHF</b>	<b>mCHF</b>
Securities income incl. fees	157.51	501.40
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>157.51</b>	<b>501.40</b>
<b>DIRECT PROJECT COSTS ACCORDING TO THE FOUNDATION'S DEED</b>		
Funding contributions	-39.31*	-54.54
<b>GROSS PROFITS</b>	<b>118.20</b>	<b>446.86</b>
<b>OPERATIONAL EXPENSES</b>		
Personnel expenses incl. remuneration	-5.78	-5.68
Material expenses	-6.89	-7.99
Depreciation and valuation adjustments on fixed asset items	-4.11	-3.32
<b>NET PROFIT (before allocation to organisation capital)</b>	<b>101.42</b>	<b>429.87</b>

\* Including CHF 31.1 million for FIE/BIIE

## Governance & Foundation Team

### Governance

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss philanthropic foundation based in Basel, established in 2003 to continue the philanthropic legacy of Marcela and Octav Botnar. It is a member of SwissFoundations, an umbrella organisation of charitable foundations in Switzerland, and follows the guidelines and recommendations of the Swiss Foundation Code (2021).

### Foundation Board

The Board of Fondation Botnar comprises at least five members. Board members are elected for three-year terms and can be re-elected for up to twelve years of service.

### Committees and commissions

The Audit & Risk Committee, HR & Organisational Committee, Philanthropy Committee, and Investment Commission hold responsibility for the strategic oversight and governance roles described on our website.

### Audit and supervision

KPMG AG, Viaduktstrasse 42, 4002 Basel, Switzerland, is appointed Fondation Botnar's statutory auditor. It audited the foundation's 2025 annual financial statements and recommended their approval. The supervisory authority of Fondation Botnar is the Federal Department of Home Affairs, Foundation Supervision, Bern, Switzerland.

### Asset management

The assets of Fondation Botnar are invested based on principles of responsible investing for institutional investors. These principles are published on our website as "Investment Beliefs and Principles". Some of the asset management mandates needed to be reallocated in 2025. This was initiated with an RFI and RFP process followed by off- and on-site Due Diligence. The mandates for Global Equities were reallocated, one of them newly hedged to CHF, as recommended in the ALM study of 2024. In addition, the Global Government Bond mandate now includes an allocation to Green Bonds.

### Board Chair

Elsbeth Müller

### Vice Chair

Flavia Bustreo

### Board Members

Michele Acuto (from Jan.)

Otto Bruderer

Urs Gasser (from Mar.)

Martin Lenz

Amalie Molhant Proost

Elsbeth Müller

Florian Schweitzer

### Honorary Chair

Peter Lenz (Chair until 2019)

### Audit & Risk Committee

Flavia Bustreo

Martin Lenz (Chair)

Amalie Molhant Proost

### HR & Organisational Committee

Otto Bruderer

Urs Gasser

Martin Lenz (Chair)

### Philanthropy Committee

Michele Acuto

Amalie Molhant Proost

Elsbeth Müller

Florian Schweitzer (Chair)

### Investment Commission

Stefan Beiner

Otto Bruderer (Chair)

Susanne Haury von Siebenthal

(Deputy Chair) (until Feb.)

Frank Juliano

### Management Office

Heike Albrecht, Risk and Compliance Manager

Yvonne Arivalagan, Policy Manager

Stefanie Besmens, People and Office Manager

Aline Cossy-Gantner, Portfolio Manager: Mental health

Ross Hall, Education Portfolio Lead (from Jan.)

Susanna Hausmann-Muela, Cities Portfolio Lead

Ursula Jasper, Policy Lead

Marcus Jenal, Strategic Learning & Evaluation Lead

Siddhartha Jha, Portfolio Manager: Digital

Sary Lock, IT & Digital Platform Manager

Manuela Mächler, Grant Operations Manager

Kiara Marvuglio, Engagement & Communications Lead

Szandra McCrory, Executive Assistant

Eva Moldovanyi, Programme Manager

Zur Oren, Portfolio Manager: Cities

Katharina Pompilio, Chief Programme Officer (from Sept.)

Alexandra Sagarra, Strategic Learning & Evaluation Manager

(from Aug.)

Sophia Schärer, Strategy & Governance Manager (from Sept.)

Alexander Schulze, Chief Programme Officer (until Jun.)

Karin Schumacher, Chief Operating Officer

Sushant Sharma, Chief Investment Officer

Fiona Smith, Digital Portfolio Lead (from Sept.)

Samira Stauffiger, Grants Administrator

Andrea Studer, Chief Executive Officer

Rineke Veenendaal, Communications Manager

Nicolas Vetterli, Strategic Learning & Evaluation Manager

Antoine Veyrassat, Senior Investment Manager

Daniela Weber, Investment Manager: Venture Philanthropy

### Board engagement and strategic priorities (2025)

In 2025, the Foundation Board reflected on the Foundation's approach to investing for impact in partnership with young people and other stakeholders. Drawing on the legacy of the founding family, the Board discussed how to strengthen implementation of the refined strategy, including the capabilities and collaborations required. A Board visit to Ghana further informed these discussions through exchanges with young people, policymakers and civil society partners, providing insights relevant to advancing young people's rights and wellbeing.



## Imprint

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[communications@fondationbotnar.org](mailto:communications@fondationbotnar.org) if you would like  
to provide feedback on this Annual Report.

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