



Photo: Discuss it

Understanding polity, policy and politics through experience

Polity, policy and politics as abstract concepts? No, the Beisheim Foundation Switzerland contributes to making democracy tangible and relevant for everyone through its supported projects. Amidst global uncertainties and economic shifts, engaging for a strong democratic society is more crucial than ever.

The current world situation is marked by geopolitical tensions, economic instability, and social upheavals. Thus, understanding and participating in political processes becomes vital for fostering resilience and stability.

The aim of the Beisheim Foundation is to increase the political participation in general. Democracy projects deepen the democratic competencies of the Swiss population and are thus aligned with the focus on future-oriented education. Those projects strengthen individuals as well as society as a whole.

One exemplary initiative in the school context is [Discuss it](#), which encourages apprentices and students to get engaged in political debates and discussions, fostering critical thinking, interdisciplinary skills and active citizenship. By simulating

parliamentary sessions and policy-making processes, students gain firsthand experience in the complexities of governance. Young people get the opportunity to discuss and pose questions to active politicians of different parties. Peers, who are previously trained volunteers, moderate the sessions. This approach aims to make political education even more accessible, and demystifies politics, showing students that their voices matter and can influence real-world decisions.

Outside the school environment, the project [Politique en Scène – Enter Switzerland's Global Stage](#) of Foraus stands out as a beacon of extracurricular political engagement. It consists of preenactment productions in Bern's City Hall, in which participants are immersed in the role of a 'parliament of the future'. They experience foreign policy challenges and must act together to find solutions under time pressure. One of the special features of this project is that, in addition to actors, experts also take the stage: public figures who are intimately familiar with the topics being discussed. They take the fictitious event for granted and take a position within it. The main target groups are vocational and technical college students, as well as decision-makers who benefit from the



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exchange with young people, their ideas and concerns.

Both [Discuss it](#) and [Foraus](#) share a common denominator: they bridge the gap between abstract political concepts and real-life scenarios. By involving participants in hands-on activities, these projects make polity, policy and politics accessible and engaging. They highlight the importance of informed and active participation in democratic processes. Other projects supported by the Beisheim Foundation contribute to this mission too. They bring together diverse groups to discuss and decide on future policies, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility. They demonstrate that politics is not just about distant decisions made by a few but about collective action and dialogue.

In conclusion, all these projects contribute to strengthening democracy. In a world fraught with challenges, such initiatives are essential for building resilient, informed, and democratic communities.

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The Beisheim Foundations

The two Beisheim Foundations in Germany and Switzerland are the largest institutional funders of WHU, which was named after Otto Beisheim when it received an endowment of 50 million German marks from him in 1993.

Dr. Toni Calabretti, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Beisheim Foundation Switzerland, Annette Heuser and Dr. Dr. Christoph Glaser, both members of the Executive Board of the Beisheim Foundation Germany, are also involved in WHU's governing bodies – Dr. Calabretti as Chairman of the WHU Foundation and Annette Heuser and Dr. Dr. Christoph Glaser as members of the Executive Board of the WHU Foundation.

Alongside their substantial support for WHU over more than 30 years, the Beisheim Foundations develop their own programmes and support innovative projects in their respective countries in the fields of education, health, culture and sports.

Through this exchange with [In Praxi](#), the foundations aim to create visibility for topics that are also important to WHU alumni as well as offering specific opportunities for alumni to become involved in foundation projects, for example as coaches or mentors.



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