

Interviewer: Ashley Parsons, Net Impact, American University of Paris

Interviewee: Klaus-Michael Christensen, President - Swiss Impact Investment Association

Klaus moderated a passionate session about private equity's role in creating value while decarbonizing portfolios. As president of the Swiss Impact Investment Association his mission is to raise awareness of how investors decisions impact society. The association works as a bridge between the impact and the investor, and he had a lot to share about on-the-ground ways all parties can be brought to the table and **contribute** to the impact investing mission.

*I wanted to talk to you a little bit about the association that you formed. As you opened the panel you said, "I wanted to open an association and see who came in," and I wanted to know: **who came in?***

Klaus: So I did not specifically aim at any one sector. I have a very strong belief in learning across sectors. We are often very insular in our way of thinking, bankers think like this, engineers think like this, foundationalists have one goal that they follow and one mission, NGOs have missions as well but in different ways but the private equity and investors they have other issues. **They're all stakeholders in the scene of impacting our society**, so I wanted them all to come, and they all came.

Has it mostly been Swiss companies and groups?

Klaus: We're global - people come from all over the world, from Haiti, from Ghana, we had the King of Ghana, big cities and local cities to our annual conference. The government supports the association because it brings a lot of new ideas to a local platform and they think that's **fertilizing the economy**. It is, actually it worked. When we sent out invitations we didn't focus on any one sector. We're completely independent, we don't represent anybody, any group, we represent an idea.

What would the weakness to that, or the biggest challenges in doing that? Is it finding a common theme that isn't vague?

Klaus: The vagueness was in the beginning a help in our path. If we had been very focused in our idea, we might have overseen something, now here we had a lot of different kinds of ideas coming in and we're trying to make a business model out of this association. Because our mission is to make awareness, **how do you make awareness?** There are so many ways to make awareness, to find that business model of how we want to make awareness,

through the business model of the summit and through different kinds of other medias that we are setting up now. That's the kind we didn't have in the beginning, that's the challenge and still the challenge that we need to focus on one deliverable that can be done, because if you don't focus on one way of doing things you'll never do it. We are in that process of finding one way to bring awareness.

What would you say is your biggest personal takeaway from the conference this week so far?

Klaus: For me? I like creating discussions, like I just did. I love that, because I think it's so helpful.

It was really good, so passionate.

Klaus: I think it comes down to the point of problem-solving attitudes. I think a lot of people here have this attitude to find solutions, to learn. We need to do much more about that. **We need to engage them much more in actually finding proposals**, with the ideas that came out of this workshop. Takeaways as you ask, we have to be sure to let people know that they're contributing and instil that contribution as part of the conferences all the time: **You're not just here to listen, you're here to do something.** People are ready for that here.

