INSPIRING

ENABLING

ACHIEVING
Since the foundation was formed, we have invested more than 400 million euros in charitable causes. We support people and projects through our two main pillars: brain research and strengthening democracy.

The Hertie Foundation builds on the life's work of Georg Karg, owner of the Hertie Waren- und Kaufhaus department stores. At the initiative of his children and heirs, Brigitte Gräfin von Norman and Hans-Georg Karg, the Board of Directors of the Hertie Family Foundation decided on 10 December 1974 to set up a foundation to promote science, education and general and vocational training (Gemeinnützige Hertie-Stiftung zur Förderung von Wissenschaft, Erziehung, Volks- und Berufsbildung).

Today, our foundation “family” includes prestigious institutions like the HERTIE INSTITUTE FOR CLINICAL BRAIN RESEARCH in Tübingen, the HERTIE SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE in Berlin and START-STIFTUNG GGMHB in Frankfurt am Main, which supports people from migration backgrounds. With our FELLOWS & FRIENDS programme and our FRIENDS ASSOCIATION, we have developed ways for the foundation's friends and alumni to stay in touch, follow what we do and help promote our work.

Subsidiaries:

HERTIE INSTITUTE FOR CLINICAL BRAIN RESEARCH
HERTIE SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE
START-STIFTUNG GGMHB
WE INSPIRE

We have been inspiring people and projects to make a difference for over 40 years. We help people to help themselves and expect those we support to make an appropriate contribution as well. Above all, we initiate and run a large number of projects ourselves.

WE ENABLE

We have a strong will to create. We want to make a difference and bring about change. We are convinced that government actions need to be supplemented by citizens’ initiatives and we see our work as a contribution to an active, democratic and enlightened civil society.

WE ACHIEVE

We prioritise sustainability. A large number of our projects have been running for many years; others are now successfully independent or have been transferred to friends and partners, who continue to run them. This satisfies our aim of embedding projects and their impacts in society.

Mankind is at the heart of our work. Within our core areas we work to improve social cohesion and living conditions. In line with the foundation’s motto, we initiate projects that make a difference, bring about change and create long-term benefits.

»Foundations have the privilege of working independently of politics and profit maximisation. That’s why we are able to commit ourselves fully to serving people, in line with our founder’s intention.«

FRANK-J. WEISE
Chairman of the Hertie Foundation
Our brain influences who we are, and how we feel, speak and act. It makes us what we are. As Germany’s largest private sponsor of brain research, we help to improve people’s understanding of the human brain, the way it works and its diseases.

Our projects in the field of brain research inject new ideas into clinical brain research and the fight against neurodegenerative diseases and multiple sclerosis. In addition, we improve the way research is organised and share our findings with the public.

Projected number of DEMENTIA SUFFERERS WORLDWIDE IN 2050:

115.4 M

44% OF NEW MS PATIENTS are under the age of 30

27% OF ALL EUROPEANS suffer from a brain disorder

EVERY 20 YEARS THE NUMBER OF ALZHEIMER PATIENTS DOUBLES

The rise is caused not only by demographic change, but also by greater awareness, which increases the likelihood of an Alzheimer’s diagnosis – the basic prerequisite for access to treatment and care.
CREATING STRUCTURES

Our society is ageing, making us more susceptible to brain disorders. This is why we need more research and better organisational models for research. In Tübingen we set up the Hertie Institute for Clinical Brain Research – Germany’s biggest, state-of-the-art centre for research into neurological diseases – as a model for reform.

FIGHTING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

More than 200,000 people suffer from multiple sclerosis in Germany. This inflammatory disease of the central nervous system has been a focus of our funding efforts ever since the Hertie Foundation was set up. We support research into the causes of multiple sclerosis and its treatment, offer patients support so that they can help themselves, and work to break down prejudice.

INFORMING PEOPLE

What is consciousness? And can you delete memories? Knowledge about the human brain has increased rapidly, particularly in recent years, and is of interest to everyone – not just the experts. We support scientific events, present exciting research findings clearly and publish them through websites, lectures, exhibitions and projects for schoolchildren.

» For us humans, brain research is part of the search for ourselves, for the human condition. The brain determines our perceptions, decisions, emotions and actions. Neuroscience therefore has an effect on all areas of life.«

PROF. WOLF SINGER
Member of the Hertie Foundation Board of Trustees, director emeritus of the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research
Strengthening democracy

Democracy forms the basis for peace, freedom and security, making it a mainstay of our society, but political apathy is currently taking on dramatic forms. We support people and projects that play an active role in strengthening our democracy and securing social cohesion in Europe.

Our projects in the field of strengthening democracy inject new ideas that enable people to help shape our democracy, promote integration and strengthen social cohesion. We have a particular focus on convincing young people that getting involved in our democracy is worthwhile.

The 5th century B.C. was when the early precursors of democratic government first emerged

- Just 8% of the members of German political parties are younger than 30
- Lost 37% of their members
- 28.5% didn’t vote in the 2013 Bundestag election
- 52.1% didn’t vote in the 2014 European elections

200,000 schoolchildren practise political debating each year through the Jugend Debattiert programme
STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

SHAPING SOCIETY
We are convinced that our society needs people who want to make a difference in the world. At the Hertie School of Governance we give students the tools they need to make a difference. As we prepare young people for leadership tasks, we are stretching and supporting the democracy shapers of the future.

SUPPORTING INTEGRATION
We see integration as an important part of a sound democracy and social cohesion. For this reason, we support people and projects that demonstrate new solutions for successful integration. With our German Integration Prize (Deutscher Integrationspreis), for instance, we are using crowdfunding for the first time and testing new models for finding, selecting and financing foundation projects.

FORMING OPINIONS
A lively culture of debate is a mainstay of a healthy democracy. With our national Jugend Debattiert school competition we help young people to respect other opinions from an early age, to argue their own position and to contribute to a diverse, democratic society as responsible citizens.

» How does democracy function beyond the nation state – in the EU, for instance? How robust are democracies against populism and how good are they at integrating? Our aim is to contribute to a better functioning of open, pluralistic societies through a better understanding of democracies.«

PROF. HENRIK ENDERLEIN
Vice President of the Hertie School of Governance
MILESTONES

1974  The Hertie Foundation is established.
The Hertie name comes from Hermann Tietz, who co-founded the Hertie chain of department stores at the end of the 19th century.

1974–94  A focus on multiple sclerosis (research & support for patients).

1992  Hertie Award for Commitment and Self-Help presented for the first time.

1998  Karstadt shares are sold off, severing the link to the department store and creating new options for expanding the foundation's funding activities.

1999  berufundfamilie gGmbH set up to address issues of combining work and family. Audits introduced. Since 2016, certifications have been handled by berufundfamilie Service GmbH.

2000  A pilot debating project for young people (Jugend Debattiert) launches in Frankfurt and is soon rolled out nationwide.

2001  First NeuroForum Frankfurt lecture series provides up-to-date insights into brain research. START scholarship offered for the first time. There are now over 2000 scholarship holders and alumni.

2003  Hertie School of Governance set up in Berlin as the first private German university for public policy.

2004  Hertie Institute for Clinical Brain Research opens in Tübingen. It is Germany’s biggest, state-of-the-art centre for research into neurological diseases.

2006  First Hertie Senior Research Professorship for neuroscience awarded.

2009  Eric Kandel Young Neuroscientists Prize awarded for the first time.


2012  fellows & friends platform set up to consolidate all alumni activities.

2015  Hertie Innovation Centre for Advanced Practitioners established.

2016  German Integration Prize awarded for the first time.
The foundation’s headquarters are in Frankfurt am Main. We also have an office in Berlin that acts as a link to our projects in Berlin and the networks of the capital.
Der Sitz unserer Stiftung liegt am Grüneburgweg 105 im Frankfurter Westend. Dazu betreiben wir ein Büro in Berlin, das als Schnittstelle zwischen dem Stiftungsort Frankfurt am Main und den Projekten in Berlin dient.

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