



Mother and son Rockefellers' outlook on life

by Meral Tamer, Milliyet Daily / 11 December 2011

Sabancı Foundation Philanthropy Seminars are half-day meetings where new approaches in the field of philanthropy and civil society around the world are shared and discussed with NGOs, public sector representatives, the private sector and the media. The seminars have a history of five years and have been held just before the 10th of December, United Nations Human Rights Day, for the last three years. The speakers are chosen among people who have reflected and worked on philanthropy.

The main title of this year's seminar was "Philanthropy from Generation to Generation" and David Rockefeller's daughter Dr. Peggy Dulany and his grandson Michael Quattrone were there as speakers.

As the Chairperson of Sabancı Foundation's Board of Trustees, Güler Sabancı has emphasized in her opening speech that philanthropy is passed down from generation to generation, having a history of three generations within the Sabancı Group. Naturally, the Rockefeller family has a longer history of it, Michael Quattrone being the fifth generation.

It's not about the money

Mother and son appeared on stage together and, unlike last year's seminar, they explained philanthropy so well without mentioning money at all... Starting her speech by telling that the etymological origin of the word "philanthropy" goes way back to the Ancient Greece and originally means "love of humanity" and that it actually has nothing to do with money, Peggy Dulany won my heart at the very first instant.

Being a civil society expert and an activist, as well as a journalist, I have seen hundreds, maybe thousands of NGO projects in thirty years. I can easily say that those projects which are brought to life with the love of humanity, by people putting their hearts into what they do become far more effective, permanent and transformative for the society than those which are carried out with lots of money only. Right from the start, I personally have been very careful not to take part in projects that involve a lot of money.

What influences children?

After touching upon the importance of listening to our inner voice, facing our fears, getting to know ourselves, listening to and empathizing with others, Peggy called our attention to another important point: "What matters most for our children is not the things we say in life but the things we do, who we are and where we stand. They don't pattern themselves after our words, but our actions; that is how their personality develops."

Dr. Peggy Dulany has shared the same platform as a speaker with his son for the first time; her eyes were shining when she said how proud this made her feel. Michael follows his mother's footsteps in becoming an avid NGO agent himself. He has already founded his first foundation under the name Hearthfire. He is actually an artist. He studied drama. He has written a book, and he is still writing poetry as well as composing songs. He uses all these skills to spread philanthropy in society and to do something beneficial

for the lower segments of society. I was thrilled when he grabbed his guitar in the middle of the meeting and started singing. The poem he read at the end of the meeting was also very meaningful.

Two years older than my daughter

Michael was born in 1977; he is two years older than my daughter. His mother must be around my age, too... Similarly, about two months ago, my daughter and I were together at an NGO workshop organized by PAYDA Platform to encourage large NGOs to collaborate with smaller ones. I was the main speaker, while Doğa was attending on behalf of KAGIDER.

As Peggy has said, what matters for children is not what their mothers say, but what they do, their stance in life. And as our ancestors have put it “the acorn does not fall far from the tree!”

Doğa’s major in university was economics. She designed and sold jewelry for six or seven years, and for the last two years, she has been among the professional staff of KAGIDER, Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey. She has been working to make life easier for people with disabilities since she was twelve. She is even thinking of forming a platform for people with disabilities.

I was as happy as Peggy to work under the same roof with Doğa for the first time at the NGO workshop of PAYDA and shared very similar feelings with her.