

How to give it

Carlo Bonomi



Italian-born Carlo Bonomi, 43, is founder and managing director of the Barcelona-based private equity firm InvestIndustrial. He is also a trustee of its charitable arm, Invest for Children (www.investforchildren.org), which aims to help young adults with physical and mental disabilities achieve a better quality of life.

What is the first charity you can remember supporting?

At school in Turin, we brought in food for the local poor people.

Which cause do you feel most passionately about?

The integration of people with disability into the workspace. At Invest For Children (i4c), much of our focus is on people with Down's syndrome. These are young adults who are not looking for jobs in special workshops but in proper companies. It teaches them how to have a job, pay social security, pay taxes and be part of the system; part of everyday life.

What sort of jobs are you talking about?

Back office work, some front office work, work with computers, archiving, nursing, cooking, waiting, assisting in shops. It really depends on each individual's capabilities. People with Down's syndrome are as different as you and me.

What do you get out of your giving?

I get a personal reward. I feel

a much better person. From a social point of view, I see the benefits for those we help, but also for everyone in the company that funded it. A company's clients, its employees, local charities – all benefit when a company donates money. So when I see companies move towards that, I feel pleased.

How do attitudes to charity differ between the Mediterranean and northern Europe?

Southern Europe donates as much as northern Europe, but the north does it in a more professional way. The European Venture Philanthropy Association (www.evpa.eu.com) and the Private Equity Foundation (www.privateequityfoundation.org) are trying to redress that. I am a trustee of both – EVPA puts venture capital and philanthropy together, as venture capitalists can teach foundations to be more efficient. It's not just a

question of money, it's a question of training, marketing skills, and fundraising skills.

There's an expression "don't give a man a fish – teach him how to fish". We want to teach him how to fish, then teach him how to sell his catch. It's a step further.

Should a specific percentage of income be given to charity?

InvestIndustrial donates 1 per cent of everything we do to our i4c foundation. Everybody should be able to donate 1 per cent of their net income to charity.

*Interview by Angus Watson
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CHESS SOLUTION

1845: 1 Rxc8+! Resigns. If Rxc8 2 Rd7+ Ke8 3 Rxd4+ wins the queen. If Kxc8 2 Qc1+! Nc6 3 Bxc6 Qe3+ 4 Qxe3 dxe3 5 Bxa8.