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Charly Kleissner: "Private wealth comes with enormous responsibility. Not only to ourselves, but most importantly, to the planet, nature, and society." (Press Release)



Sofia Schuck
ESG reporter

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With a decades-long career in **Silicon Valley**, including stints at companies like **Next** , founded by Steve Jobs, and a history of leadership in technology and artificial intelligence startups, **Charly Kleissner** decided to shift his focus to work with more purpose: **impact investing**.

The decision came in the early 2000s, when Charly had already amassed a considerable fortune. "I understood that **private wealth** comes with enormous responsibility. Not only to ourselves, but more importantly, to the **planet, nature, and society** ," he said in an exclusive interview with EXAME.

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Driven by this idea and a critical view of economic and financial systems, he founded the **KL Felicitas Foundation**, a pioneering foundation in **impact investing**.

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Later, in 2015, she also led **Tonic**, a global non-profit network that connects investors with green projects, and **Twist**, a company that aims to leverage systemic economic, social, and environmental transformations and provides support to entrepreneurs.

All with the same mission: to go beyond financial returns and **seek solutions** that positively impact **society and the planet**.

Currently, these investments already represent more than a third of total assets worldwide and could reach US\$53 trillion (approximately R\$273 trillion) by 2025, according to Bloomberg Intelligence.

"Today my role has been to push the deeper side of impact. I work with changes in mindset and awareness, creating networks and collaborating with initiatives that aim to transform systems," Charly said.

Originally from **Austria**, he spends most of his time in the United States, but also frequently travels to Europe, where he has invested in initiatives such as impact banking and **the tokenization of natural resources**.

In a conversation during a brief visit to Brazil to participate in the **Impacta Mais** event, Charly shares his vision on the **evolution of impact investing**, the challenges and opportunities in Brazil, and how technology, especially **artificial intelligence**, can be an ally in developing a **fairer and more sustainable future**.

According to the executive, Brazil has a unique opportunity, especially in the year of the **Climate Change Conference (COP30)**: "the country can prove that it is possible to align **economic growth** with **environmental and social responsibility**, attract more and more

1. You founded Tonic and other impact-focused initiatives. How do these organizations help shape this global ecosystem?

That's a very good and important question. Because the **impact ecosystem** needs to be strengthened from all sides: in the supply of capital, in demand, and on the intermediary side. And Tonic, which we co-founded, emerged because there was no global organization or network for us private impact investors to collaborate, co-invest, and learn from each other.

From the beginning, the network was born with an international mission. First, focusing on Europe and North America, and then expanding to Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. In South America, unfortunately, we haven't been as active. I wish we had more members in **Brazil**, but even so, we play a significant role. Currently, we have about 550 members in the network, who are high-income families or individuals.

2. What has driven the significant growth of impact investing in recent years?

I think most people, especially institutions, were very focused on market returns, and this became a starting point for **attracting ESG (environmental, social, and governance) investments**. The perception was that this could reduce financial risk while still maintaining gains. However, as we went deeper, the profound **social and environmental impact** became more difficult to sustain, requiring broader **collaboration between different types of capital**.

3. What is the role of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in this scenario?

Artificial intelligence, in its current form, is influencing virtually everything. This means that every industry will be impacted in one way or another. **AI** will be at the service of making industry more financially profitable. The challenge is that we need to use it for good, with the goal of making humanity assume its responsibility to **care for the planet**.

One of the fundamental problems with these algorithms is that they are trained on a **dataset** predominantly from the **global north**, which ends up reflecting the biases of that region. We need to include the global south more, indigenous communities, so that AI produces a broader reflection of **human consciousness** and helps transform **economic systems** in a **more just and sustainable way**. Otherwise, the technology may exacerbate inequalities.

4. Can Brazil become a relevant hub for impact investing? What is preventing us from

that coming from high-net-worth families and individuals, needs to assume **more responsibility**.

If recognized families in the country invest with impact, this can free up more capital for the area and create success stories that, in turn, would attract more investment.

5. What could COP30 mean for Brazil in terms of attracting sustainable investments?

As the host country of **COP30**, Brazil can demonstrate **leadership , especially in the face of geopolitical** uncertainties and realignments , and stand out by demonstrating its commitment to **sustainability**.

Furthermore, it can prove that it is possible to align **economic growth** with **environmental and social responsibility**. This can attract investment and create a new model for **sustainable development** in the country.

6. Do you believe we are living in a 'bubble' in this sector? How can we ensure that this growth is sustainable?

I believe the **deep impact** sector is not in a bubble. **ESG** , on the other hand, did have a bubble, which burst. Now, it's important that people who truly care about **positive impact differentiate themselves from those who are merely using the acronym as a risk mitigation** measure .

Deep impact addresses the systemic root causes of problems, and that's the kind of investment we should be pursuing. To ensure this is sustainable, we need more capital flowing into this area and more people involved in creating **real change**.

7. And what are the repercussions of Trump?

Following the change in US administration, there was significant **resistance** , especially with the withdrawal of support for international initiatives and the reduced focus on issues such as **diversity and ESG** .

However, I believe this could end up accelerating the **impact movement** , as many will realize that it is even more important to continue with these **investments**. Brazil, for example, can stand out by showing a path for other countries.

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