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Our approach to philanthropy is very simple. We do not believe that spending any more money on ourselves or our family would add anything to our happiness. However, using it to support social progress we have found deeply fulfilling. We focus on a few areas which require investment and which we care about deeply, and seeing these projects develop and bring major benefits to people has been a life-enhancing experience.

The areas we have focused on are basic plant science and neuroscience research, which we believe in the long term will bring many benefits in terms of food security and mental health; agriculture development in Africa; scientific and engineering education; the Institute for Government and the Centre for Cities; and the arts. The arts category includes theatre projects, most of which Susie has supported through her own charitable trust, and to which she gives a lot of her time.

We have always believed in taking a proactive approach to grant-making. To succeed in this approach we have assembled a team of idealistic, imaginative and hard-working people who help us identify areas of need and create projects to deliver the benefits we want to see. Working with them to run our charitable trusts has also been immensely rewarding.

It was, therefore, very easy a number of years ago to decide to gradually transfer most of our wealth to our charitable trusts, and we are very happy to have this opportunity to support the Giving Pledge.