

**“Community foundations as vehicles for community driven development:
strengthening the conceptual framework”**

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Abstract: *Technical report on planning grant to develop a research initiative aimed at locating the current phenomenon of global community foundation growth within the larger context of other emerging forms of “social solidarity” movements. Describes outcomes of literature review, workshop of scholar-practitioners and other consultations and interviews and suggests that further research into the causes of successful outcomes in specific cases can contribute to the construction of a “theory of change” to guide the design of policy and programmes more broadly, in which new generation community foundations can play a significant role.*

Keywords: *community foundation, social solidarity, new public philanthropies, asset-based community development*

i) Research Problem

The focus of this research initiative has been to locate the current phenomenon of global community foundation growth within the larger context of other emerging forms of “social solidarity” movements and institutions within an emerging “social economy”, including social enterprise rural development philanthropy, membership-based organizing and other

hybrid forms of citizen-led actions, with a view to strengthening the conceptual framework, identifying synergies, strengthening linkages across previously unconnected networks.

While information-sharing and peer exchange *within* the rapidly growing community foundation field have been important in building and strengthening the identity and networks of what are often one-off, geographically isolated institutions, there has been relatively little investment in research and analysis of the community foundation phenomenon and the societal spaces that such institutions are seeking to occupy in their different local contexts and their interaction with other private and public institutional forms as well as with individual citizens.

ii) Objectives

1. To enhance the global community foundation discourse from an academic and theoretical perspective;
2. To strengthen linkages across and with other areas of social innovation, (including hybrids, member based organizations and the social economy etc) both by inviting critical thinking and the exploration of new partnerships;
3. To develop a methodology and framework for a larger phase of research which will allow both for the diversity among individual cases and consistency at the level of interrogation.

Overall, the three objectives stated in the project proposal were met. The third objective, which relates to the development of a methodology for next steps in the research, is still subject to further discussion and development (see below) and will be refined in the submission of any further funding proposal.

iii) Methodology

a) Workshop of scholar-practitioners

The GFCF and CII hosted a two-day meeting of 13 innovative thinkers from Canada, the United States, South Africa, Brazil and the United Kingdom to discuss new approaches to community and organizational development. A brief discussion paper for the meeting (which is attached as Appendix II) laid out the framework for our discussions.

b) Literature review

An extensive review of existing literature on **community foundations** was conducted (and is attached as Appendix III). Most of the literature tends to have a strong Anglo-American (northern) bias, mainly because the first community foundations were established in the United States and then spread to Canada and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, much of the literature has focused on developing the field from the perspective of encouraging community foundations to establish themselves and become part of a family of institutions. There is still relatively little literature on community foundations in the global south or on their role as vehicles for community-driven development. (See Appendix V)

In addition, literature on the social economy, including mutual or member-based organizations (MBOs) was reviewed to situate community foundations in the broader debates

about the changing roles of state, market, and civil society actors and the emergence of innovative organisations attempting to bridge these sectors. In the context of the Global South, this literature is also a useful contribution to debates about development aid and effectiveness and the search for alternative mechanisms for citizen-led development.

c) Inputs from parallel research / consultation process

During the project period, a parallel process of consultation was being conducted by the Aga Khan Foundation and Mott Foundation to explore ways to stimulate and develop community philanthropy as a means of contributing to the sustainability of civil society and supporting the effectiveness of development aid. Barry Knight (consultant to the GFCF and one of the researchers on this project) was the lead consultant on the process and the GFCF also participated (including staff, board members and grantee partners). As part of this process, two regional consultations were held in Johannesburg and Dhaka, as well as one-on-one interviews with community philanthropy and development practitioners and articles published in Alliance magazine.

This is discussed in more detail below.

d) Writing of discussion paper (attached as Appendix I)

iv) Project Activities

The following project activities were carried out and were sequenced as follows:

1. Workshop (June 2011)

The planning process for the workshop provided an important opportunity for both the GFCF and CII to reach to a rich and diverse number of scholars and practitioners. A number of those invited were unable to attend the workshop itself but expressed an interest in the project and idea and asked to be kept informed about the process as it developed further. In thinking about next steps in the process, these individuals will be invited to be part of a **reference group**.

The following participants met for two days at the Coady International Institute on 27th and 28th June 2011.

- 1. Ethel Côté, Staff Specialist: Social Enterprise, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, Port Alberni, B.C., Canada*
- 2. Rupert Downing, Executive Director, Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada*
- 3. Colin Greer, President, New World Foundation, New York, United States*
- 4. Jenny Hodgson, Executive Director, Global Fund for Community Foundations, Johannesburg, South Africa*
- 5. Marcos Kisil, President, IDIS (Institute for the Development of Social Investment), São Paulo, Brazil*

6. *Barry Knight, Consultant, Centris/Global Fund for Community Foundations, Newcastle, United Kingdom*
7. *Halima Mahomed, Consultant, Global Fund Foundation, Johannesburg, South Africa*
8. *Alison Mathie, Manager, Research and Publications, Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University, Canada*
9. *Olga Gladkikh, Senior Program Staff, Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University, Canada*
10. *Brianne Peters, Program Coordinator, Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University, Canada*
11. *Carolyn Taylor, Cape Farewell Foundation, Toronto, Canada*
12. *Susan Wilkinson Maposa, Development Consultant, Cape Town, South Africa*
13. *Jeff Yost, President and CEO, Nebraska Community Foundation (USA)*

Participants made up a diverse group, both in terms of geography and the networks that they represented. These included the GFCF, which works with partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe, the Rural Development Philanthropy Network in the United States, social economy networks in Canada and Brazil, and the Coady International Institute's global network of ABCD practitioners and MBOs.

A brief framing paper which laid out the context for the meeting was sent out to participants in advance of the meeting, along with the project proposal that had been submitted to IDRC. The paper posed the following two questions:

- I. *'Do recent developments in community development (e.g. community philanthropy, social enterprise, member based organizing) offer an opportunity to think differently about support for people led organizing for social justice?'*
- II. *If "yes", then how do we join up these different efforts into a coherent whole and identify common characteristics of the organizations that create a definition of what we are talking about?*

Because the aim of the meeting was to explore and try to link conceptual and practical synergies across different networks and bodies of work, a deliberate decision was made not to send out specific papers in advance, so as to avoid tilting the discussion towards or favouring any one particular vehicle or model or another too early on in the meeting. The organizers were keen to ensure that the discussion started with an emphasis on the global context and how participants felt that the spaces in which they were working offered a response to the contextual challenges, both local and global. The notion that the emergence of a certain cohort of community foundations might be considered as one expression of that response was introduced further into the meeting.

During the meeting itself, two substantive research papers were presented for discussion:

- **At the cutting edge: Exploring innovative forms of Member Based Organisations**, Alison Mathie and Yogesh Ghore, Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University, June 2010

- **The Story Behind the Well: A case study of successful community development in Makutano, Kenya**, Halima Mahomed and Brianne Peters, Global Fund for Community Foundations and Coady International Institute, July 2011
This case study was conducted jointly by GFCCF and CII and funded with grant resources from TrustAfrica and has served as a pilot for future case studies.

2. Literature review (July – October 2011)

A review of existing literature on community foundations and on the social economy to situate community foundations in the broader debates about the changing roles of state, market, and civil society actors and the emergence of innovative organisations attempting to bridge these sectors was conducted by Alison Mathie (CII), Jenny Hodgson (GFCCF) and Barry Knight (GFCCF). Reference to the specific publications reviewed can be found in the reference section of the research paper and (on community foundations specifically) in Appendix II.

3. Framing / discussion paper(s)

- a) A brief **framing paper** was produced for the Antigonish workshop (and is attached as Appendix II). As mentioned above, it was decided that the paper should be brief and provocative, mapping out some macro trends and a set of values or characteristics, so that participants came to the workshop curious and ready to be challenged and to engage collectively and across silos. With the short framing paper providing the starting point for discussion, participants at the workshop worked together to consider some of the elements of a larger proposal for research (or “collaborative inquiry”, which was the term that the group agreed upon).
- b) Following the meeting (a report of which is attached as Appendix III), Alison Mathie (Canada), Barry Knight (UK) and Jenny Hodgson (South Africa), continued to meet regularly by teleconference and co-wrote a more in-depth discussion paper which lays out the context for a larger collaborative inquiry project and which is very much informed by the discussions at the Antigonish workshop.

4. Other opportunities for consultation

During the project period, other opportunities for broader consultation arose (not included in the IDRC-funded plan of activities) as a result of a separate process undertaken by the Aga Khan Foundation USA and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation in association with the Global Fund for Community Foundations. The purpose of these consultations was to explore ways to stimulate and develop community philanthropy as a means of contributing to the sustainability of civil society and supporting the effectiveness of development aid. Three meetings were held (in Washington DC, Johannesburg, and Dhaka). Three working papers were written during the process, and two articles published in Alliance magazine so that a wider constituency could offer feedback.

Barry Knight was the lead consultant on this and the GFCCF – staff, board members and partners – also participated in all of the face-to-face meetings. At the Johannesburg meeting, the case study on Makutano Community Development Association and the Kenya Community Development Foundation (which was a joint collaboration between GFCCF and

CII staff carried out as part of the larger process which the IDRC grant has also contributed towards) was presented in some depth and was acknowledged by the meeting as highlighting some of the distinctive features of and potential for community philanthropy.

vi) Project Outputs

The main outputs of the project are:

- a) a report which lays out the findings of the research initiative, proposes that a new generation of community foundations is emerging in the context of diverse forms of “social solidarity” institutions and movements and suggests that further research into the causes of successful outcomes in specific cases can contribute to the construction of a “theory of change” to guide the design of policy and programmes more broadly, in which new generation community foundations can play a significant role. (Appendix I: The New Generation of Community Foundations)

We are submitting this paper to IDRC in draft form because we would like to share it with members of the reference group and participants at the June meeting in Antigonish to solicit their feedback before publishing the final version, which will be disseminated on the GFCF’s website and to the Coady International Institute’s networks.

- b) A proposal regarding future research, outlining goals, objectives and methodology (Appendix IV)

Other specific outputs (which relate more to the activities of the project) are:

- The framing paper for the Antigonish workshop (Appendix II)
- Report of the Antigonish workshop (Appendix IV)

vii) Project Outcomes

The main outcome of this project has been to begin to address some of the ambiguities and misconceptions about the role and potential of community foundations in both the Global North and South, and develop a conceptual framework so that they can be described and evaluated for their contribution to social inclusion and community building.

Other outcomes include:

- New connections across different networks which have not previously been connected, including the community foundation, rural development philanthropy and social economy networks as well as across geographic areas and a willingness on all sides to connect at the level of theory and practice . (At least one more convening has been proposed by way of follow-up to the Antigonish meeting).
- A very productive and enriching collaboration between the GFCF and CII in the development and writing of the research paper, which was written by researchers based in three countries: South Africa, the United Kingdom and Canada

viii) Overall Assessment and Recommendations

The key Canadian partner in this project has been the Coady International Institute and we look forward to working further with them on this initiative. Other Canadian partners with which we have established new relationships with are the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal Community and the Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, representatives of which participated in the Antigonish workshop and with whom we will be sharing the research paper for their further input and feedback.

In terms of the broader donor and policy community, we feel that the timing of this project has been extremely important: not only does it complement the consultation process on community philanthropy engaged in by the Aga Khan Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation but it is highly relevant to the discussions that have been taking place under the auspices of the Bellagio Initiative, led by the Institute for Development Studies, the Resource Alliance and the Rockefeller Foundation.

In practical terms this grant from IDRC has lent the GFCF the opportunity and the motivation to explore the community foundation concept in greater depth and with more rigour.