
Community philanthropy: the missing link between local communities and international development

Filantropia comunitária: a conexão perdida entre comunidades locais e desenvolvimento internacional

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Abstract: This article is based on the premise that local communities' engagement in development processes is a key factor to increase the chances of long lasting success. In this context, we present community philanthropy as a viable strategy for international development organizations to engage civil society in the advancement and sustainability of development goals. To this end, we (a.) draw on the available international development and community philanthropy literature to establish background information and examine what makes collaboration feasible, (b.) present three cases of collaboration between community philanthropy and international development organizations, and (c.) conclude with lessons learned and recommendations. Real-life examples demonstrate that there is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach, but rather a set of good practices that can be established.

Keywords: development; international cooperation; philanthropy; sustainability.

Resumo: Este artigo baseia-se na premissa de que o engajamento de comunidades locais em processos de desenvolvimento é primordial para aumentar as chances de um sucesso perene. Neste sentido, apresentaremos a filantropia comunitária como uma estratégia viável para que organizações de desenvolvimento internacional engajem a sociedade civil no avanço e sustentabilidade de objetivos de desenvolvimento. Para tanto, (a.) revisaremos as literaturas disponíveis sobre desenvolvimento internacional e filantropia comunitária para estabelecer o que torna a colaboração entre as áreas factível, (b.) apresentaremos três casos de colaboração e (c.) concluiremos com aprendizados e recomendações. Exemplos concretos demonstram que não há uma abordagem única para colaboração, mas um conjunto de boas práticas pode ser estabelecido.

Palavras-chave: desenvolvimento; cooperação internacional; filantropia; sustentabilidade.

1. Introduction

The idea of development is relatively new, dating back to the 1940s, and has traditionally been connected to governments as donors, as well as to international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which implement development projects¹. An important step toward changing this dynamic was the recognition in the past decade that local civil society actors must be part of international development processes (Courtet *al.*, 2006). Additionally, international development cooperation has engaged with private foundations in different projects, the Gavi Vaccine Alliance is a high-profile example, but efforts to bridge the philanthropic and international development worlds has tended to be on an *ad hoc* basis.

This mindset has, nonetheless, started to change. There is a growing movement to systematically engage philanthropy in development processes. Especially after the financial crisis hit in 2008, unlocking private resources became of paramount importance in financing for development, and partnerships with foundations could be one of the keys. The renewed role of philanthropy in global development cooperation is exemplified by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Network of Foundations Working for Development, the Guidelines for Effective Philanthropic Engagement (GEPEs), and the SDGFunders - a partnership between the UNDP and private foundations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Another emblematic initiative is the Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy, which includes the Global Fund for Community Foundations, the Aga Khan Foundation USA, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). One of its aims is specifically to advance the understanding of development actors on the potential of community philanthropy as a partner (Global Fund for Community Foundations, n.d.-a).

¹We use the term “development aid agency” or “donors” to refer to government bodies, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); “international organizations” refer to organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank; and “international NGOs” refer to organizations such as Oxfam International. As a whole they will be referred to as “international development organizations”.

This research sets out to present community philanthropy as a viable option to connect global agendas to local interests. By strengthening and engaging communities, international organizations and aid agencies can optimize their programs and address development issues through an inclusive and sustainable process. Real-life examples demonstrate that there is not a “one-size-fits-all” or perfect approach, but that a set of good practices can be established for the proposed relationship to be fruitful to both sides in achieving common goals.

In this article, we (a.) draw on the available international development and community philanthropy literature to establish background information and examine what makes collaboration feasible, (b.) present three cases of collaboration between community philanthropy and international development organizations, and (c.) conclude with lessons learned and recommendations.

2. International development cooperation

“Poverty on a global scale was a discovery of the post-World War period.” (Chari and Corbridge, 2008, p. 132). This remark by Colombian scholar Arturo Escobar provides us with a now widely accepted timeframe for the history of international development as we know it today, at first focused on economic growth and then expanding to welfare². The development idea was based on the assumption that a group of “underdeveloped” countries needed to reach a “developed” state, following western evolution and progress patterns, and that they could not do that by themselves - external help was needed.

The World Bank has one of the earliest examples of development intervention. In 1949 it sent a mission to Colombia that later prescribed a program for the country covering areas from agriculture, industry and infrastructure, to monetary policy and foreign trade. The detailed needs and investment assessments, goals, timescales, and quantifiable targets will not look alien to the 21st century reader (World Bank, 1950).

²The British government, for instance, replaced their Colonial Development Act for a Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1939 (Chari and Corbridge, 2008, p. 55).

Still, acceptance of the need to develop has never been unanimous. In 1910, Gandhi wrote a piece contesting the benefit of western modernization processes, in which he criticizes the fact that other forms of civilization, in this case India's, are overlooked or considered less worthy (Chari and Corbridge, 2008, pp. 81-82). That is also the case for aid itself, which generates heated debates questioning its usefulness and whether it may only harm the people it is supposed to assist. Take two of the most prominent and influential development thinkers. On the one hand, Jeffrey Sachs makes the case for more aid, which would give countries on the "poverty trap" a push for development. On the other hand, William Easterly advocates for less aid and more free markets. Should we side with former US president Harry Truman and wish for a one-handed economist?

Consensus is thus not very common in international development, but there is one thing that comes close to it: the fact that development assistance needs to be an inclusive and participatory process. Local governments and civil society should be an integral part of any strategy to tackle development issues. Two of the principles on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) are ownership and alignment (OECD, n.d.-a, p. 03). This means that recipient countries should set their strategies and donor countries align behind them using local systems, which should be strengthened in the process (OECD, n.d.-a, pp. 03-04).

The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011), a follow-up to the Paris Declaration, kept local ownership at the center stage (Bena, 2012, p. 5). The indicators to track its progress include: civil society engagement; transparency and accountability; predictability of funding, that is, if aid was provided within schedule and according to plans; and whether aid is untied³ (Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, n.d.).

That focus on inclusion is important, given that top-down projects with limited timeframes (or delivered piecemeal) and following schedules defined by outsiders limit the chances of long-term, sustainable development. Moreover, overcomplicated processes to access

³"Tied aid describes official grants or loans that limit procurement to companies in the donor country or in a small group of countries." (OECD, n.d.-b)

resources and implement projects undermine local organizations, instead of strengthening them, and send the message that it is not worth it working with aid agencies. These limitations, among others, are presented by Anderson, Brown, and Jean (2012), who conducted a project that reached out to nearly six thousand people involved in development assistance in over twenty countries.

The economist P.T. Bauer, dubbed “Lord Anti-Aid”, pointed out that one of the unintended consequences of foreign assistance was to generate dependency, lack of sustainability and to hinder the development of local institutions (Chari and Corbridge, 2008, 265-268). Quite surprisingly, Anderson *et al.* (p. 21) show that beneficiaries themselves see that as a problem and mention that too much money too fast feed into dependency. This can be also linked to the “needs approach” used by aid agencies. Not assessing capacities, but instead focusing only on what people need may send the message that the more you need, the more you will get (*ibid.*, p. 22). The casualties of this process are participation and empowerment.

Participation was also one of the main concerns of a report launched in April 2014 by the Independent Commission for Aid impact (2014). It found that the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) does not learn from beneficiaries, its local staff, and local partners delivering aid. Their conclusion was that “without this level of real learning, the task of scaling up, delivering in fragile environments and achieving lasting impact will be all the more difficult” (*ibid.*, p. 25).

Finally, one thing generally missing from the international development discourse and action is trust. In the culture within DFID, staff is encouraged to be positive in their reports and discouraged to discuss failures (*ibid.*, p. 09). Anderson *et al.* (2012) pointed to the lack of transparency and communication in aid agencies projects, which “leads people to speculate about what is being hidden and why” (*ibid.*, p. 26). Added to that, there are the shifting priorities and lack of coherence in aid flows, which were found to be volatile, unpredictable and pro-cyclical, characteristics that can even affect macroeconomic management (Bulir and Hamann, 2006, p. 04).

The environment created by such attitudes and practices is hardly conducive to a relationship based on trust, where local communities have ownership of development processes. But despite those issues, beneficiaries still think international aid contributes to local development. The challenge faced by international development organizations is to improve their efficiency, be truly inclusive and trustworthy, and leave behind a sustainable legacy. The next sections demonstrate how community philanthropy can help them address those challenges.

3. Community philanthropy

“What needs to be supported by outsiders is capacity building and strengthening of communities and local governments.” (Anderson *et al*, 2012, p. 24) This statement, by a staff member of a local peace and development initiative in the Philippines, sums up the current perceived gap between local needs and international development assistance. It also embodies the opportunity community philanthropy provides to address this gap. To demonstrate that, our first step will be to describe what community philanthropy is and what community philanthropy organizations (henceforth called CPOs) do.

Community philanthropy is defined in different ways, by different people and organizations. For this article a more inclusive definition will be used, which follows a tendency in the field to describe itself using a set of characteristics, instead of a specific definition. Broadly, we can say that community philanthropy is the act of using “local resources for local needs”, and its characteristics include: grantmaking; accountability to local people; seeking local donations; building inclusion and trust in the community; having local people as leaders; serving donor needs; catalyzing community development; building an endowment; raising money for grantmaking annually; having a board reflective of community diversity; pursuing equity; acting as fiscal intermediary for the community; and seeking a gender balance in the organization (Community Foundation Atlas, n.d.).

Before moving forward, it is important to make two observations. The first is that not

all CPOs have all the characteristics above, rather they are reflective of their most common practices. The second is to make it clear that community philanthropy includes different types of grassroots organizations (e.g. giving circles), but that the most popular and institutionalized kind of CPOs are community foundations.

Created 100 years ago in the United States, community foundations have been steadily growing worldwide since they started being systematically counted in 2000 (Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmakers Support, 2010), and there are currently over 1,800 organizations in more than 50 countries (Community Foundation Atlas, n.d.). Even though most community foundations are located in North America and Western Europe, they can now be found in every region. The global growth of community philanthropy attests for one of its strengths – the ability to adapt.

That is helped by the fact that it is quite common for CPOs from different countries to exchange experiences. The relationship of Berks County Community Foundation (in Reading, Pennsylvania, U.S.) with Russian community foundations, or that of the Association of Community Relations in Romania with its British counterpart are examples of how organizations have been learning from each other and adapting good practices.

The main characteristic of CPOs worldwide is grantmaking, that is, to provide funding for local organizations to carry out projects for the community. The act of grantmaking, as opposed to running their own programs, brings a level of empowerment to the community, encouraging self-reliance. Local grantmaking is important in building capacity, as NGOs and community projects will need to design and run programs. Moreover, most community foundations provide training for local organizations (*ibid.*).

Not only do CPOs give to the community, but also fundraise there, seeking local donations for grantmaking or for building an endowment. By raising resources locally CPOs encourage, sometimes for the first time, institutionalized local giving. They therefore employ an “assets-based approach”, assessing and mobilizing local resources for community-driven development. CPOs are generally flexible in taking different kinds of donations (cash, real

estate, or even cattle), and in catering to different donors' needs (Reynolds, 2008, p. 02). This co-investment ensures that there is local buy-in, maximizing the chances of long-lasting success, and showing that the community trusts the organization – you would not give money to an organization you do not trust.

Trust is therefore at the center of the work and success (or failure) of a CPO, making trust-building mechanisms an integral part of their work. By their nature, these organizations work mostly geographically close to a community, making it harder for them not to be accountable to their constituencies. Moreover, community members are also donors who want to and have the right to know how the resources are being used. Finally, another accountability factor is that CPOs generally have local leaderships and a board that reflects the community.

This commitment to trust building, participation and ownership is exemplified by the Brooklyn Community Foundation. In order to ascertain its priorities, the organization spent time and resources identifying community leaders, supporting meetings which included nearly one thousand residents, advocates and leaders, and then sharing the findings. The result was an organizational strategy based on needs and opportunities for change and collective action identified by the community itself (Brooklyn Community Foundation, n.d.).

Lucia Dellagnelo, founder of the Instituto Comunitário Grande Florianópolis (ICOM), in Brazil, mentioned in a conversation that one of the unique contributions of a community foundation to Florianópolis was to provide a space for broad and inclusive dialogues that generate community engagement and which the city lacked. ICOM also provides donors with information that feeds into a broader view of the issues faced in the city, improving their decision-making process when choosing causes to support.

These examples show that the value of community philanthropy goes beyond providing financial resources, it includes being community leaders, assessing community needs and assets, and sharing information. CPOs also play a leadership and convening role by providing a neutral space for dialogue between residents, NGOs, governments, businesses, and international actors, forming a network in the community.

The fact that CPOs are embedded in local communities and have a long-term view of the community development process puts them in a good position to partner with international aid agencies. As Jenny Hodgson, executive director of the Global Fund for Community Foundations, points out: “Community foundations have the potential to play an important role in channeling and stewarding money in these new and slightly messier kinds of multi-donor, multi-stakeholder arrangements. Furthermore, by growing local philanthropy as well as acting as a channel for external resources, they can play an important role in connecting local interests and larger global agendas in ways that are more integrated”(Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmakers Support, 2014).

That potential of community philanthropy as a vehicle for development is also acknowledged by development agencies. A study by USAID in 1999 includes community philanthropy as an approach to building sustainability and states some of its benefits, such as: enticing community interest in the role and activities of NGOs; engagement in different activities (therefore providing an holistic view of the community, unattached to any specific causes); being a collection point for contributions; and providing sophisticated portfolio oversight as well as professional grants management (USAID, 1999, p. 35).

Another advantage of CPOs is that they are “in it for the long haul”, thinking about the long-term sustainability of the community. A USAID advisor pointed out that “an important advantage that private foundations have is being able to provide more modest funds but over a longer time period, supporting phases of planning, piloting, implementation, documentation and dissemination” (Milner, 2007).

For years now organizations such as the World Bank, USAID, DFID and other bi-lateral or multi-lateral organizations have been promoting and funding community philanthropy. Nevertheless, efforts are *ad hoc* and still a small fraction of what contributes to emerging CPOs. The Community Foundation Atlas’ survey respondents rank bi-lateral and multi-lateral funding way behind philanthropic gifts as a contributive factor to their organizations’ origins (Knight, 2014, p. 05). There is therefore a lot of potential for international development aid to use its resources to initiate and support CPOs as local partners that can

increase effectiveness and promote sustainability. The examples in the next section show what we can learn from past experiences to develop a consistent strategy for partnerships between community philanthropy and international development organizations.

4. Community philanthropy and international development in practice

In the past 20 years there have been several instances when the international development and community philanthropy worlds met. There are cases where international development organizations provided funding to a community foundation, as they do to civil society organizations in general, or were specifically looking at community philanthropy as a model to achieve sustainable, community-driven development. In other cases local organizations themselves sought funding to start a community foundation. The Baltic-American Partnership Program in Latvia, for example, was a successful partnership between USAID and the Open Society Institute. Established in 1998 the program aimed at enhancing civic engagement in the country and one of its objectives was the “development of various models of community philanthropy” (Klapenkovs and Leat, 2001, p. 02). The country now has almost 10 community foundations and a very active association to support these organizations.

Another example is the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), which puts community-led and grassroots development at the core of its work (Inter-American Foundation, n.d.). IAF has supported the growth of community philanthropy in Latin America for years now; it has a partnership with the C.S. Mott Foundation specifically for the development of community foundations in Mexico and is funding the first community foundation in Haiti. The organization was also a founding member of the U.S.-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership, a membership organization that supports philanthropy, especially community foundations, on both sides of the border (<http://www.borderpartnership.org/>).

We chose three projects to exemplify the relationship between aid agencies, multilateral organizations and community philanthropy, as they represent the very distinct shapes interactions among different actors may take. In Serbia a local organization saw in its

already established relationship with an aid agency the opportunity to get support to set up the first community foundation in the country, and the agency ended up including the increase of local philanthropy as a goal in their program. In Poland the interest of local actors to bring community philanthropy to the country resulted in a solid exit strategy for the aid agency. And finally, a multilateral organization partnered with two foundations to test including community foundations in its community-driven development and social funds projects.

4.1 Step Forward Community Foundation in Serbia⁴

The Zajecar Initiative is a non-profit that focuses on empowering citizens, especially young people, to shape their communities according to their needs and in partnership with other stakeholders in the Timok region and Serbia as a whole (<http://www.zainicijativa.org/>), and it entered the philanthropic world through two re-granting⁵ programs in 2007. This was made possible by a partnership with the National Endowment for Democracy, a non-profit that, although independent, relies on funding mainly from USAID (National Endowment for Democracy, n.d.). The Zajecar Initiative also started working with the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC), another non-profit that implements USAID funded programs in Serbia, and these relationships were key to the creation of Serbia's first community foundation.

In the following years, the Zajecar Initiative began looking into community philanthropy as a strategy for community engagement and to leverage local resources, as it believed that through the establishment of a community foundation it could generate greater impact on both citizens and community in the Timok Region. The organization explored the issue with different individuals and organizations in Serbia, and in 2008 it organized a conference called "The prospects of establishing a community foundation in Eastern Serbia" to discuss the viability of community philanthropy in the country with civil society organizations, foundations, the donor community and experts in this field. They found that a community foundation could be the answer to the issues of lack of trust and connection of the non-profit

⁴In addition to bibliographical materials, information was gathered through conversations with Danko Nikolic, one of the Zajecar Initiative's founders.

⁵Re-granting or sub-granting is a mechanism through which donors provide funding to a well-established, larger organization so that it can facilitate funding to smaller or grassroots projects or organizations.

sector with communities and civil society in general.

The project to create the first Serbian community foundation was presented to the ISC in 2011, as it was already a partner and funder of the Zajecar Initiative. Nevertheless, the ISC was unsure on whether it should fund the project, as it was out of its area of work, which focuses on advocacy. After a year of negotiation, the ISC provided a grant of around US\$45,000 under its “Special Initiatives Grants” toward the creation of the Step Forward Community Foundation (SFCF). An important aspect in the negotiation to build a case for community philanthropy, was that there were no local sources of funding, hindering the sustainability of the non-profit sector.

The SFCF was established in February 2013, concentrating on the Timok Region and acting in five areas: resource development; donor service; grantmaking and program support; community leadership; and philanthropy development. An advisory council, comprised by local residents and experts, was created to help identify community priorities and needs for intervention. At first, grantmaking was being done in cooperation with the Zajecar Initiative, but the goal was to gradually transfer the grantmaking role from the Initiative to SFCF. It is early to see the community foundation impact, but, with the Initiative’s support, it has already established a fund named after a Serbian singer, Zeljko Vasic, to support his philanthropic work; launched the fundraising campaign “Solidarity Shopping” selling products at music festivals designed in local workshops; and also supported relief efforts after the floods in May 2014.

In 2013 the Zajecar Initiative received a grant from USAID through the Civil Society Forward program (designed as a phase-out strategy to strengthen civil society organizations in Serbia) to continue building the grantmaking and organizational capacities of SFCF (USAID, 2013). One of the program’s stated goals is to “...improve prospects for local Serbian philanthropy to expand potential sources of civil society support.” (*ibid.*).

4.2 Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland⁶

In 1995, USAID provided funding for the Democracy Network Project (DemNet) in Poland – a three-year project run by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), and aimed at developing “a new generation of sustainable public advocacy NGOs active in democracy, environment, social services, and enterprise development, and capable of participating in local governance” (Academy for Educational Development, 1998, p. 01). Even though the project’s implementation was hampered by bureaucratic practices (Carothers and Ottaway, 2000, pp. 202-203), it was successful in strengthening local capacity.

From the beginning of the project USAID had a close relationship with the grant recipients – organizations implementing the project in different Eastern European countries were invited for meetings in New York to discuss strategies even before some agreements had been finalized, and they met again a year after the project started for assessment and evaluation (*ibid.*, p. 202). That kind of relationship strengthened the partnership, and half-way through the project, with support from its local staff, AED presented USAID the idea of introducing community philanthropy in Poland.

The first step was to co-organize with local and international actors three conferences between 1997 and 1998 to introduce the topic. These generated enough interest for a feasibility study to be conducted, which was co-funded by two foundations and evaluated local capacity in four communities. Thirty community leaders were then identified to be part of an 18-day training program on community foundations, community leadership, grantmaking, marketing, fundraising, and legal and accounting issues. After the program, participants went on week-long visits to the U.S. and Great Britain to learn about the community foundation model and drafted action plans for establishing community foundations in their communities. Publications on endowment management, as well as Poland’s investment and legal regulations scenario, were also part of the strategy (Academy for Educational Development, 1998, pp. 33-35).

⁶In addition to bibliographical materials, information was gathered through conversations with Iwona Olkowicz, one of the founding members of the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland.

The DemNet Project was initially implemented by AED, but in 1998 the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland was subcontracted to jointly implement it. This was done as part of the DemNet's exit strategy from the country, which was to help set up an indigenous organization to sustainably advance the work started. The Academy was registered in February 1998 with that purpose, receiving its office supplies (computers, furniture, etc.) from USAID and additional funding from private foundations to implement a three-year development plan between 1999 and 2001.

Through their participation on the DemNet Project implementation, the Academy's staff built capacity to continue the activities related to helping communities establish community foundations and promote philanthropy (*ibid.*, pp. 32 and 35). The program was very successful and 15 years later there were 26 community foundations in Poland (<http://communityfoundationatlas.org>), being one of the countries where community philanthropy has steadily grown and developed.

4.3 The World Bank's Community Foundation Initiative⁷

In the early 2000s, as several countries emerged from financial and political crises, demand for a more inclusive development process, focused on local empowerment and capacity, grew. Consequently, community-driven development (CDD) became a popular strategy for service delivery. Between 2002 and 2011, the World Bank approved 734 projects with a CDD approach, totaling 22.5 billion dollars (World Bank, 2017).

At the same time, Joyce Malombe wrote a study for the World Bank on community foundations, making recommendations on how the organization could support and work with them. These recommendations included: disseminating of the community foundation concept; facilitating conversations between community foundations and the private sector; looking into specific World Bank initiatives that could benefit from community philanthropy; promoting an enabling environment with governments; and mobilizing funds for operations and endowments (Malombe, 2000, pp. 33-34).

⁷In addition to bibliographical materials, information was gathered through conversations with Dr. Juraj Mesik and local sources in Eastern Europe.

This was the beginning of a dialogue between the World Bank and private foundations that resulted in the Community Foundation Initiative (CFI), launched in 2003 as a partnership with the International Committee of the Council on Foundations, and co-funded by the Ford and Charles Stewart Mott Foundations. An advisory committee to direct the project and provide expertise was created (composed of staff from the World Bank and different foundations), and a community foundation specialist, Dr. Juraj Mesik, was hired (Reynolds and Sera, 2008, pp. 05-06).

The CFI was a five-year project with the objective of testing whether the World Bank's instruments could be adapted to support community foundations, and had among its goals: building knowledge and expertise on community foundations within the World Bank; improving its capacity to provide technical assistance and support mechanisms; identifying potential pilot projects across the Bank's portfolio to test community foundations' added value to CDD; and assessing the feasibility of CDD programs as incubators for community foundations (*ibid.*, p. 06).

One of the Initiative's main accomplishments was the establishment of the Global Fund for Community Foundations in 2005, to support " the development of community foundations in transitioning and developing countries"(Global Fund for Community Foundations, n.d.-b).The organization, a grantmaker and support organization, is now one of the most important and active voices for community philanthropy in the world. Additionally, eleven community foundations in Kenya, Moldova, Tanzania, and Thailand were established, or were in the process of being established (Reynolds and Sera, 2008, p. 14), with a varying degree of success.

In Moldova, out of five community foundations established only two are still operating (in Cahul and Ungheni). There is a general feeling in the region that more time and effort should have been spent in choosing the location of the community foundations. According to a local foundation worker, one community foundation was closed for lack of support from local authorities who saw the community foundation as a competitor, and the other two closed due to management issues. That is a different scenario than the one in

Thailand. In the Asian country a local organization, the Local Information Center for Development, was strongly involved from the start and requested funds from the Bank to set up a community foundation in the province of Korat (*ibid.*, p. 16). This foundation is still operative.

In Tanzania, three community foundations were registered and a fourth, the Mwanza City Community Foundation, was in the planning process during the CFI, receiving a start-up grant from the Global Fund for Community Foundations in 2009 (Global Fund for Community Foundations, n.d.-c). Its prospects were not great though, as the organization did not have support from the “City Fathers” and was struggling to convene stakeholders (Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmakers Support, 2010).

The Western Kenya Community Foundation did not take off during the CFI, which was already in “closing mode” and there was not enough time to fully support the new organization. However, the Bank partnered with the Kenya Community Development Foundation (a well-established organization) for its Western Kenya Community Driven Development and Flood Mitigation Project (World Bank, 2010).

The first community foundation in Ghana, called Akuapem, was also supported by the CFI (Akuapem Community Foundation, n.d.), but, according to Dr. Mesik, was not officially included in the project as there was no significant financial support. Likewise, he pointed out that the Rivers State Community Foundation in Nigeria was also supported by the CFI, receiving start-up funds through the Bank’s Post-Conflict Fund window. Both organizations are still active.

5. Connecting local goals with global agendas – lessons and recommendations

The successful cases above have a common thread: local buy-in. They show that the main ingredient for a fruitful relationship between international development organizations and communities is to treat the latter as equal partners. Listening to the needs and capacities of

communities before starting projects. Both in Poland and Serbia there was a clear interest from local organizations in community philanthropy, signaling a bottom-up approach to development. Instead of simply opening a community foundation, these local organizations inquired stakeholders on whether they would be interested in a new type of funding model, and explained what community philanthropy was. Afterwards, they trained local leaderships, provided support or hosted the new CPOs within their own structures.

That might be a lengthy and costly process, but on top of ensuring local participation, it also increases the chances that good management practices are put in place. The failure of several community foundations in Moldova, and problems at the Mwanza City Community Foundation in Tanzania, demonstrate the dangers of skipping those important steps. Ensuring participation addresses the unequal balance of power local civil society organizations see regarding their work with international actors. The perception is that outsiders are more powerful because they have more resources, feeding into a vicious dependency and disempowerment circle.

The key is to show that different kinds of resources are equally important and that communities are able to pull resources together to solve problems. Eleanor Fink, a philanthropic advisor to the World Bank, pointed out that “What piqued the interest of the World Bank and... Robert Zoellick (in community philanthropy) was ‘the idea of social capital’ (Non-Profit Quarterly, 2012). In Kenya, for instance, it was not necessary to open a new organization. The Kenya Community Development Foundation was well-established and had been running since 1997 (Kenya Community Development Foundation, n.d.), and later the World Bank began working with it as part of its community-driven development strategy. Similarly, one of the first actions of the new foundation in Serbia was to find a local funder.

Finally, as it was highlighted by the USAID's involvement in the Polish case above, CPOs can be part of a sustainable exit strategy. These organizations will already have in place mechanisms to give small grants (such as due diligence processes) according to the communities' needs. They have strong ties to the communities and continue to raise funds after the international development organization leaves, ensuring the projects' sustainability. They

provide a chance for international actors to leave a legacy behind, and advance the work started, helping address the issues brought by the limited timeframes international development organizations tend to work with.

6. Concluding remarks

This article set out to demonstrate that collaboration with CPOs is a viable strategy for international development organizations to engage civil society in the advancement and sustainability of development goals. International development organizations can benefit from having partners that focus on sustainable, community-driven development. Whereas CPOs can benefit from having experienced and resourceful partners that may be to help advance the field and take community philanthropy to new frontiers.

We highlighted how international actors may often have a top-down approach, finding it hard to identify local needs, be inclusive, support without generating dependency, and build community relationships based on trust. On the other hand, we demonstrated how community philanthropy organizations can help address those issues. Among their particular strengths are: an advantaged position to systematize community knowledge and make well-informed needs assessments; a leadership role in communities; the ability to convene different actors; being an adaptable model that has been successful in different regions of the world; no limited project timeframes; accountability to both donors and the community; being an intermediary, supporting grassroots organizations, as well as a grantmaker; providing a sustainable exit strategy, continuing to raise funds after the international development organization leaves; ensuring participation among community members and ownership through co-investment; a focus on assets-based approaches, looking into what communities have to offer, as opposed to only what they need.

It is important to understand what works and what does not, and what kinds of behaviors are regarded as desirable and effective, so organizations go into collaborations with eyes wide open and with higher chances of success. Systematizing knowledge and information

is the first step to encourage learning from peers, partners and beneficiaries' experiences. By developing best practices and looking into possible sources of problems and solutions for them, the intention is not to have a how-to guide, but to inspire informed conversations and encourage others to join in. These efforts help us avoid "reinventing the wheel", duplicating efforts and repeating mistakes, increasing effectiveness toward improving people's lives, which is the ultimate goal.

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