



JOHNSON CENTER
AT GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

A Different Kind of Funder?

**Why and How Funders Support
Community Philanthropy**



Introduction

This paper sets out the findings from key informant interviews with representatives of six funder agencies supporting community philanthropy. For the purpose of this inquiry, community philanthropy is understood as a locally driven form of development seeking to develop local assets, build community capacity as well as increase trust relationship between local and external actors, as a way to foster sustainability – that is enduring change.¹ Building local assets mobilizes capital, such as financial, social, reputational or leadership existing within a community or alternatively drums up resources from outside the community while building capacity seeks to strengthen local groups and organizations – their management, structures and abilities, that communities’ support, count on and trust. Finally, fostering trust fosters healthy relationships and partnerships among and between local community groups as well as with external groups and is marked by mutual accountability and respect (GFCE: 2014). Of note, community philanthropy – while a form of community driven development – distinguishes itself through its focus on asset development. In particular the encouragement of local people to raise funds and resources based on local norms and conventions of philanthropy grounded in socio-cultural as well as religious practices.

¹ A focus on these three reinforcing pillars is the framing used by the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCE).

This paper uses information gained from the processes of analyzing key themes and insights found in narrative data to learn about why funders support community philanthropy and what it means for the way in which they work. Additionally, this inquiry is interested in the contribution that funders believe they make to advance their own organizational goal and objectives as well as those of community philanthropy. It also sheds light on the type of support that funders would welcome from community philanthropy support organizations and networks.

This paper reveals that community philanthropy is attractive to funders for different reasons, suggesting that advocacy efforts should be tailored and customized. Furthermore, variations in funder motivation and intention inform different practices or behaviour. This, in turn, leads to various contributions to development goals and objectives. Finally, the paper submits that community philanthropy support organizations and networks such as, but not limited to, the GFCE, Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) and the Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy (GACP) may need to step into a bolder convening, coordinating, and catalyzing role, as funder agencies have an ongoing appetite for technical backstopping, learning and collective sense making.

This study, formative and exploratory, is based on a cohort of funder organizations that were encouraged that have engaged with the GFCE in the area of community philanthropy. It was funded by a small grant from the GFCE in partnership with the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University as part of a Charles Stewart Mott Foundation-supported research programme.

Background and Summary

The concept of community philanthropy is not widely understood in the development world. It remains on the margins of development discourse despite its potential as a building block for international aid and its promise of locally owned and sustainable development.²

Efforts rectifying this situation seek to clarify what community philanthropy is, why it matters and how funders can appreciate, support and harness its potential more effectively. Toward this end, a set of guidelines for effective philanthropy engagement (GEPE)³, while considering the field overall and not just community philanthropy as a sub-set, has been developed that encourages governments and aid organizations to acknowledge philanthropic actors, let them into the club and furthermore consider how aid, government and philanthropy can work together. Additionally, the GACP, a multi-funder and multi-stakeholder collaborative⁴, carries out joint research and learning activities to advance the practice of community philanthropy and influence

2 Hodgson and Knight, 2010.

3 This guideline was developed by global philanthropy leaders including the following: the European Foundation Centre, Global Network of Foundations Working for Development, OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), Rockefeller Foundation, Stars Foundation, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS).

4 The GACP is a five-year donor learning initiative aimed at deepening the evidence base and raising the profile for community philanthropy. It includes the Aga Khan Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ford Foundation, Inter-American Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

international development actors to better understand, support and promote community philanthropy's role in achieving more lasting development outcomes.

This paper is a preliminary inquiry into what learning can be taken from the GFCE's effort, through engagements at conferences and bilateral consultations, to attract funders to community philanthropy. The paper gathers, analyzes and documents the experiences and reflections of six agencies that have found this proposition appealing.

Sources of Data

The report draws on one source of evidence: key informant interviews of the experience of six funders supporting the community philanthropy model in the global south. All funders are United States (US) or United Kingdom (UK) based. Three have a full-time presence in the country or regions where they work.

The funder agencies consulted in this paper belong to three clusters. They are either a private foundation, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or bilateral mission. The cohort is very diverse in terms of experience with community philanthropy. For one funder the model is brand new and exploratory, while another has a long history and track record promoting community philanthropy. The remaining four funders fall somewhere in between, offering varied and emergent experiences yet all in active learning, testing and reflection mode.

The following funder agencies participated in this study:

- Aga Khan Foundation (USA) – an international NGO
- Anonymous Foundation – private trust with offices in the UK
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation – a US-based foundation
- Comic Relief – a UK-based charity
- Segal Family Foundation – a US-based foundation
- USAID – the bilateral mission of the United States of America government

The researcher is aware that, in relation to the broader catchment of funder agencies supporting community philanthropy, this is a small sample. The paper is cursory, but provides a first step and one that hopes to stimulate what could be a broader effort to collect information systematically and comprehensively.

The study is informative, making three noteworthy contributions. These are that it:

- 1** Informs a conceptual framework for understanding why community philanthropy is attractive to funders;
- 2** Offers practical nuts and bolts about the 'how' of supporting community philanthropy, complementing an existing appreciation of principles and good practice guidelines; and, finally,
- 3** Provides concrete insight into the support funders would like to receive, offering the basis for a comprehensive and systematic framework and programme of action.

Motivation and Intention

The inquiry explains that funders are attracted to community philanthropy for different reasons. Funders were asked why they support foundations or other types of community philanthropy organizations and, specifically, why the community philanthropy model is of interest to them.

Findings suggest that there is no single motivation or intention. The funders participating in this study fall into three motivational groupings:

- Values-based
- Tactical and strategic
- Hybrid (a blended approach)

The following figure presents these groupings as a spectrum or band along which funder motivations and intentions can be located and differentiated, while the text below details each further:

Funder Motivation and Intention for Supporting Community Philanthropy



Values-based	Blended	Tactical/ Strategic
Commitment to the paradigm	Appreciation of practical use of elements in the community philanthropy paradigm	Commitment to policy and programme

Figure 1: Spectrum of funder motivations and intentions

Value-based funders support community philanthropy as an ‘end in itself’. For these agencies, the tenets of community philanthropy are embedded in the organization’s DNA: it is ‘who they are’ and central to their mission. In short, the commitment to community philanthropy is at the paradigm and policy level. The case of the anonymous foundation locates at this end of the spectrum. The six pillars that underpin their developmental approach (i.e. target the grassroots; help people meet their basic needs; support people to help themselves; encourage people to give back; support local leadership; and focus on long-term sustainability) align with the community philanthropy model. The focus on self-help, giving back and sustainability are noteworthy affiliations.

The tactical/strategic grouping is attracted to the usefulness of community philanthropy, seeing it as a ‘means to an end’. In this instance, community philanthropy does not wholeheartedly align with the identity of the agency; rather this practice is viewed as a potential delivery channel that has utility and can assist the funder agency to meet its own programmatic objectives. In short, the community philanthropy model is seen as a river that crosses the funder agency’s path through which their programmes can potentially flow. The case of USAID is exemplary. Community philanthropy is not integral to the mission’s top-down development paradigm charged with disbursing large tranches of money and being accountable upward to the US Congress and the American taxpayer. However, at the programmatic level, staff aware of the limitations of this approach and the benefits of a ‘bottom up’ and locally driven development paradigm find openings through

the programmes they direct to draw on the benefits of community philanthropy. How programme staff exercise their authority and decision-making power to do this is detailed below in the section on funder practice.

The third funder grouping is a mixture of the first two. A funder agency draws selectively on the community philanthropy model. They embrace parts of it, but not, as one respondent put it, 'whole hog'. In this instance, a particular pillar or principles of community philanthropy may resonate with 'who a funder agency is' while other aspects speak to achieving a particular programme objective or strategy. The Aga Khan Foundation is located here. The foundation's decades-long track record of supporting indigenous institutions, including unregistered or informal organizations, groups and community groups, rather than non-governmental organizations or setting up new vehicles to work through, speaks to the community philanthropy principle of building from what is locally rooted, known to, trusted by and favoured by a community. In addition to a strong identification with this principle, the foundation finds the community philanthropy pillar of communities giving back and practices of self-help, appealing as it supports their strategic focus on raising funds – external and internal to the community, through various investment models such as crowd funding and e-philanthropy. Organic mobilization of resources and local funds contributes to this broader strategy as one notch or building block.

To conclude, it is clear from this finding that the pull of community philanthropy to funders is varying. A consistent attractiveness cannot be assumed. Funder reasons for supporting are not standardized or identical. This finding implies that efforts to target and attract funders should be customized to relevant entry points or 'hooks'. The central message is that refining the 'case' for community philanthropy can help improve the 'pitch' and potentially lead to better results in securing donor uptake.

Funder Practice

The study asked how funder agency behaviour has adapted or been customized to support community philanthropy organizations or foundations, seeking to draw out what works or does not work so well. Analysis of the ways in which funders described their engagement with community philanthropy partners suggests that motivation and intention informs and influences behaviour. In short, adaptation in behaviour cannot be divorced from why they support community philanthropy. There is a correlation.

This preliminary evidence, subject to testing, indicates that funders driven by strategy and tactic, as well as those falling in the hybrid group, adopt a type of behaviour that seeks to draw out and focus on what community philanthropy can offer. They link its offer to what the funder has already committed to as part of its policy or programme strategy. In contrast, illustrations of practice provided by funders in the values-driven grouping demonstrate a much more robust set of adaptations.

Six cornerstone adaptations

The behaviour of values-driven funders reveals that there could be six cornerstones of practice for guiding funder support to community philanthropy that warrant refinement and testing. The base for funder behaviour is organized into the following core practices:

- 1 Being flexible in how you fund
- 2 Bringing more than financial capital to the table
- 3 Talking to and listening to community philanthropy partners
- 4 Being responsive to partner needs and adapting offerings to suit them
- 5 Paring back reporting requirements and expanding the monitoring matrix
- 6 Sharing power
- 7 Valuing local asset mobilization

Analysis of funder descriptions of their systems and structures, organizational cultural and technical inputs, offers insight into the ‘how’ of supporting community philanthropy partners. Below, each cornerstone is detailed with specific actions or conduct:

1 Being flexible in how you fund

Do this by:

- increasing funding periods — allowing time, being patient and building longer-term relationships with partners;
- funding organizations rather than projects;
- supporting infrastructure that provides paths to knowledge, peer learning and networks;
- stimulating local funding (e.g. matched funding and challenge grants);
- trusting partners to use monies how they see fit to achieve their goals, tying budgets to goals not line items;
- never funding more than a third of an organization’s budget (to avoid dependency) and rather supporting them to raise funds from others; and
- funding differently by setting up local funds to which individuals can contribute – including online and web-based facilities.

2 Bringing more than financial capital to the table⁵

Do this by:

- using contracts (social capital) to link partners up to other service providers (for example, that offer capacity building) and for peer learning (networking among partners);

⁵ This finding suggests that funders bring to the table a full range of what Ambassador James Joseph, in a keynote address to the Global Summit on Community Philanthropy, held in Johannesburg from 1–2 December 2016, terms SMIRF capital – social, moral, intellectual, reputational and financial.

- sharing intellectual capital, for example expertise in fundraising with partners and experience from other projects and cases; and
- allowing partners to leverage reputational capital in negotiations with other funders based on openly, publically backing and supporting them.

3 Talking to and listening to community philanthropy partners

Do this by:

- encouraging staff to find new ways of working with communities by discouraging top-down approaches;
- reducing the funder (external) push, letting ideas and change emerge from the partners and community;
- listening to partners and communities by talking less and having the confidence to listen;
- building a mutual understanding and relationship around what partners and communities want to achieve and how they will do this;
- assisting partners in developing and articulating their own understanding of what they are doing as a way to develop mutual understanding and trust;
- seeking partnership feedback on what the relationship and partnership looks like and how to improve it;
- recruiting programme staff that knows the community, for an investment in strong relationships and the ability to read the community and what is going on;
- focusing on mind-sets, values/principles and relationships rather than a preoccupation with outputs (if you get the former right, outputs will follow); and
- working through existing structures as these are the ones with a local constituency and authenticity.

4 Being responsive to partner needs and adapting offerings to suit them

Do this by:

- taking the time to collect and analyze data (do research and collect evidence) on organization and community needs and rights;
- updating programme and service offerings in response to what partners say they want and prioritize;
- offering a menu or different packages of services that partners can choose from – e.g. a range of capacity building options;

- letting partners select their own consultants/service providers e.g. trainers, advisors, facilitators;
- using an open application procedure (instead of calls) following up with the most compelling ones, taking the time to visit them (team, board and community);
- creating spaces for convening such as workshops and conferences where funders and partners can collaborate and talk;
- focusing on innovation, giving partners the space to try things out, for example piloting new approaches and exploring the spectrum of different expressions of community philanthropy; and
- building capacity in core competencies that are often overlooked in supporting civil society organizations which include: communications downward to community for awareness creation/reporting/visibility; marketing; and the management of external and local fundraising.

5 Paring back reporting requirements and expanding the monitoring matrix

Do this by:

- expanding metrics to capture not only quantum data (how many/how much), but also how development happens (process) and its depth (the gravity or penetration of the work);
- paring back reporting requirements to an annual report (not quarterly), based on organisation milestones and longer-term outcomes (rather than activities) as well as the agreed-upon budget; and
- conducting annual field visits.

6 Sharing power

Do this by:

- investing upfront in partner selection – making sure the organization is the right one (i.e. shares your value system and is clear on what they want to achieve);
- trusting partners enough to let them ‘get on with it’; and
- moving away from the ‘funder as knower’ to ‘funder as learner and listener’.

7 Valuing local asset mobilization

Do this by:

- acknowledging local contributions enough to calculate or take a measure of them, as a way to stress the equity that communities bring to the table, empowering community through greater recognition of their value;
- recognizing that community assets go beyond money, in fact this may not be as important as other forms of resources – in-kind, volunteer time and talent for example, also count;
- caring enough to look for and understand the community dynamic when it comes to resource mobilization – the how, what, who and why;
- supporting ways and approach to support, rekindle and or cultivate local giving practices.

Linking community philanthropy to funder commitments

Strategic or utility-based funders contribute another set of practices. It is clear that when support for community philanthropy is used to support a programme or interest, funder practice is about making the link between community philanthropy and what organizational policy or programmes they are interested in and committed to. The habit is to introduce aspects of community philanthropy that are more familiar to the organization, exploring how they can be a potential solution to a problem with which the agency is grappling.

The case of the ‘Local Solutions Initiative’ at USAID, is illustrative of an early effort to factor community philanthropy into a significant policy and strategic programming focus on local ownership and sustainability, captured in a 2014 local systems framework⁶ for supporting sustained development. Early efforts are underway to use the mission’s policy interest in partnering with local organizations as an entry point for building the capacity of grant partners to engage more effectively with their constituency, thereby reinforcing their authenticity and embeddedness in community. Another tactic they pursue is to bring community philanthropy insights into the conversation when a group or project is trying to work through a problem. In discussing Ebola or HIV/AIDS, for example, the discussion can turn to what a community philanthropy perspective can bring, for example by offering home-grown strategies to address issues based on the local context and norms.

This paper suggests that tapping into what community philanthropy can offer a funder agency in advancing what they are already committed to and interested in, is a strategic way of introducing the model and ‘prodding’ change in practices. USAID experiences this as a process of translation and digestion. A representative summed it up in the following way:

‘In the local works programme we focus on how we can nudge agencies practices that we can’t get away from because of our size and our funding source, into something that is imbued with community philanthropy ideas. We will not be able to pursue community philanthropy whole hog. But can take the ideas and link them to mainstream work.’

⁶ www.usaid.gov/policy/local-systems-framework

Comic Relief refers to this process as 'shifting the dial' of power dynamic toward greater devolution to community. In doing so, they face obstacles and challenges, including the agency's need for upward accountability and due diligence to the funding public. As such, they grapple with challenges in changing practice related to viable process for shifting power from funder agencies to local organizations, yet operating within the constraints of due diligence and public accountability.

In summing up, the above findings on funder behaviour adaptations imply that 'behaviour follows intention and motivation'. Funders will shift their behaviour in ways that suit their need and interest in supporting community philanthropy to advance the ends they seek. This implies efforts to provide funders and their programmatic staff with practical guidance on the 'how' and practicalities of supporting community philanthropy must recognize this and detail different approaches. The central message is that because funder intention differs, various different behaviour protocols can also be expected.

Partnership Selection

Narrative analysis of responses to questions on motivation and behaviour shows that the majority of funders in this study emphasize getting the right partners. They link partnership selection to trust building and regard trust as a precondition for lessening the funder's grip on power. Trust provides the funder with a basis for more flexible and less controlling ways of working with local partners.

Two funders explicitly describe partner selection as a trust-building process in its own right. They stress that selecting partners is about relationship building, not grant approval. It is not a 'tick box' exercise. The Segal Family Foundation programme officer summed it up in the following way: 'Relationships are very much trust-based. You and your officers judge and make your own assessment about the reputation of the partners and their 'worthiness' and then you work on that basis.'

Analysis of the narrative data suggests that partnership selection is an upfront relationship-building activity that requires a major investment of time and money. Funders participating in this study put forward the following ways of working when supporting community philanthropy:

- Work with open application systems rather than grant calls, reviewing and filtering organizations as they present themselves;
- Assess the reputation and credibility of local groups by using staff on the ground to check them out and reach out to wider networks of actors for their assessment;
- Test the fit by assessing a potential partner against your agency's own values statement and ways of working;
- Request a full proposal only after identifying the best organizations to work with;
- Once the agency decides to partner, 'let them get on with it'.

To wrap up, the above insight draws attention to the importance of relationship-building to trust, which is arguably central to power dynamics. In doing so, it complements and deepens the discussion on 'critical success factors in effective partnering' found in the document entitled 'Shifting the Power: How can Working in Partnership Help?', prepared

by the Partnership Brokers Association for the 2016 Global Summit on Community Philanthropy.

Measurement and Metrics

This study asked how funders take a reading of how sensitive their community philanthropy partner is to the community dynamic and prevailing systems of giving on the ground. Specifically, it enquired whether they have any way of tracking the level and type of community participation and input to a foundation or community philanthropy organization. The study posed this question because a key feature of community philanthropy is its promise to place community dynamics at the centre of an organization's practice, though prior studies⁷ suggest that this is easier said than done.

Recognizing that an 'aspiration-practice gap' exists, there was curiosity around whether the funders supporting community philanthropy in this study were assessing and tracking partner's performance in this regard. All respondents acknowledged that this was a tricky area where more work needs to be done. Respondents felt that a partner assessment metric would be helpful. Discussion related to what this could look like generated a preliminary set of potential indicators for testing and refinement. The funders consulted for this study suggest that a metric for assessing the extent to which partners have their finger on the pulse of the community dynamic could consider the ability of an organization to:

- Raise funds from the local community, as well as solicit their time and labour contributions;
- Provide more and diverse types of services to their constituency;
- Delve into more sophisticated programming – including that which tackles underlying prejudices or taboos in a community – for example those related to women's rights and family planning;
- Build up the community's asset base improving community wellbeing.

Analysis of the data also reveals that funders have ideas on how this information could be collected. They proposed the use of social network analysis – gathering data from many groups about their own collaboration and participation, as well as use of a 360-degrees instrument. These methodologies could close the feedback loops ensuring that community information and perspective is captured and filtered into the partner assessment. Feedback labs and collective commons tools provided by Keystone Accountability, for example, were cited as potentially useful.

Making a difference

This study investigated what difference funders felt their support was making. Did it contribute to the funder agency's mission, programmes and issues, or to those of

⁷ Bernholtz *et al.*, 2005.

community philanthropy? For instance starting with and tapping into local resources such as leadership, knowledge and priorities; seeking to strengthen local assets, capacity and trust; and encouraging a culture of giving?

The funders participating in this study came up with the following five distinct effects they have on the field of community philanthropy:

- 1 Stimulating the local funder appetite for giving:** by using matched-funding mechanisms/campaigns that inspire local giving and can trigger knock-on effects for complementary support, such as goods in-kind and labour contributions;
- 2 Enhancing the credibility and profile of local partners:** by (i) building the capacity necessary for national registration or certification enabling the organization to qualify for funder support as well as tax free status in some instances; (ii) providing reliable support, being an ally and friend that sits in their corner; (iii) profiling partner innovation and success, enhancing their attractiveness to other funders and (iv) graduating partners from being a grantee recipient to an intermediary organization, receiving larger grants directly;
- 3 Catalyzing action:** by supporting data and evidence generation (such as story-telling) that taps into community and constituency voice, offering evidence for learning and application;
- 4 Making the case for community philanthropy:** by documenting actual change on the ground where the value of community philanthropy is spelt out; and, finally,
- 5 Incubating new foundations:** by making a long-term and concerted effort to nurture and grow foundations.

The funders in this study also identified three ways that introducing a community philanthropy perspective has impacted on their own agencies. Firstly, it has accelerated the view that development is more than a technical fix. It involves working with local organizations and groups, coming up with a plan and a theory for how change happens. Next, it has generated learning around how funders' initiatives geared toward funding and supporting local community solutions can be structured and implemented. Finally, supporting community philanthropy has advanced the way in which funders think about and approach programmatic issues by turning to community engagement, local ownership and community-led action.

The above findings, while just a first step in understanding the effects of funders' supporting community philanthropy, are important. They shed light on the ways in which support to community philanthropy can have an influence on agency attitudes and developmental practice. These insights reinforce the strategy of shifting the development paradigm by 'prodding change' and 'shifting the dial' noted earlier in this paper. They also draw attention to what funder agencies themselves see as the entry points for their own engagement – sitting where they feel they are best positioned to make a difference.

Support for funders

As noted in the introduction to this paper, the funder agencies participating in this study have all engaged to some extent with the GFCF around the community philanthropy

model; these engagements range from information exchange and shared learning opportunities through to a funding relationship. As a young field endeavouring to become more integral to development discourse, however, it is argued that efforts to secure funder engagement cannot be 'once off' – rather advocacy and support must be continuous and concerted. Responding to this conviction, this study wanted to find out from funder agencies themselves the type of backstopping they would consider useful and indeed welcome. The overall finding is that all the funders consulted in this study want to see more done to attract and sustain funder interest and deepen practice. Specifically two action-oriented findings emerged: the first provides insight into how funders feel philanthropy organizations should approach their advocacy role, while the second lays out a preliminary list of offerings and activities for consideration and refinement.

The role for intermediary organizations

Funders suggest that community philanthropy intermediaries and networks must 'step up' and 'be bold'. One informant summed it up this way: 'it is not necessarily about doing different things (i.e. more) but doing what is being done in a robust way that is clearly tied to and drives a vision that can in turn stimulate more investment'. He elaborated the point further: 'show us the vision and what you will do with more resources', arguing that this can be a critical way to unleash more resources. In a similar vein, another respondent contends that community philanthropy intermediaries need to get 'a buzz going' about the field of community philanthropy:

'It is not just about sending out tweets. It is about having good academic research, writing about things that have happened in the past or will happen, writing and sharing about interesting tools you have used. The focus has to be on real and tangible things that contribute or have the potential to contribute to the field's development. These things have to be communicated. This means you have to package information in such a way that could be compelling and which you have to think through: who is my target audience, how am I going to target whether it's the corporates or big international funder agencies or whether it's just more individual rich people who might donate money.'

Finally, a third voice maintains that a community of practice in community philanthropy needs to be developed: 'I do think there is tremendous value in building a professional community of practice that comes together on a regular basis to share lessons and advances in the field'.

Potential offerings and action points

Analysis of narrative texts generates a list of objectives and supportive actions. Funders' advice, a first step to informing an advocacy and support framework, are structured around the following six recommendations:

- 1** Convening platforms , events and conversations;
- 2** Generating evidence and support learning;
- 3** Facilitating collective sense-making;
- 4** Developing a centralised resource on community philanthropy;

- 5 Documenting impact;
- 6 Framing community philanthropy as future facing.

Consultations with funders fleshed out each proposal into a series of potential strategies, activities or inquiries.

1 Convening platforms, events and conversations

These include:

- connecting people from different areas of development, introducing them to the potential of community philanthropy as a future option;
- leveraging and taking charge of the new spaces for conversations that are opening up as large aid organizations question and rethink development;
- positioning southern organizations within the conversations to take the lead and re-strategize around addressing issues of dignity, power and resource use;
- enhancing sharing and learning for an improved understanding of what community philanthropy is, the objectives of funders in supporting best practices; and
- exploring the potential, promise and limitations of community philanthropy as a vehicle for shifting the power dynamic in international aid.

2 Generating evidence and supporting learning

These include:

- distilling and applying lessons on where and how community philanthropy is taking root in funder agencies;
- generating measures and evidence on the rootedness of organizations in communities and their sensitivity to community dynamics and philanthropic norms;
- continuing to generate evidence for a deeper understanding of southern organizations, how they work and their readiness for a 'shift in power'; and
- establishing indicators for a community philanthropy metric that measures quantum, quality and process.⁸

⁸ Ideas include measuring shifts in the degree of community participation, ways in which conversations are changing, shifts toward more sophisticated programming that tackle deeply rooted and systemic issues including taboos, shifts in levels of local resource mobilization, levels and type of community engagements, and, change in types of service provided to the community.

3 Facilitating collective sense-making

This includes:

- creating physical platforms and virtual spaces (e.g. webinars) where members of the field come together for critical reflection and sharing as a way to put all the pieces together for an appreciation of the ‘sum of the parts’.

4 Developing a centralized resource on community philanthropy

These include:

- coordinating available materials, tacit knowledge and lessons on what works, for example through literature reviews, focus groups and key informant interviews; and
- compiling knowledge into a ‘state of field reader’, locating all critical/seminal materials and arguments in one place.

5 Documenting impact

These include:

- collecting anecdotal stories on the effects of community philanthropy, lifting up experiences and connecting them to tell the bigger story; and
- using storytelling to tap into the ‘big data’ trend in evaluation.

6 Framing community philanthropy as future facing

These include:

- developing the value-added narrative on community philanthropy by focusing on it as a sustainability strategy that goes beyond project funding, combines external and internal resources, and includes communities of identity as well as geographic communities.

In summing up, the above findings on the type of assistance funders would like to have from community philanthropy organizations suggest that they are grappling in a constructive way and seek support from a community of practice. This implies a more systematic role for community philanthropy intermediaries in bringing together and holding together different groups. The core message is that attracting funders to the field is not enough. To grow the field and ensure their continued support, backstopping must be ongoing.

Conclusions

Findings offer ideas related to attracting and supporting funders interested in community philanthropy. They are stated here as three propositions and questions for deliberation and exploration:

- 1** International aid's support to community philanthropy may be a way to connect local communities to the aid system and direct more resources to them. The idea that funder motivation for support can be values-driven or tactical, co-opting community philanthropy for its own use, however, gives reason to pause. It begs the question whether one group of funders is better than the other, whether efforts at attracting funders to the field should be more discerning and selective, or whether advocacy efforts making 'the case' for community philanthropy perhaps need to be more sophisticated and refined, targeting a range of funder needs.
- 2** Knowing 'what works' and establishing a body of understanding, tools and guiding notes for supporting community philanthropy is vital. Describing general principles for funder practice, while a critical starting point, is not enough. To get uptake and traction, what support means for adapting and innovating systems, structures and technical know-how has to be better understood and spelt out. We need to ask what stock-taking of tools, examples and cases needs to happen, where we need to generate more evidence, and what works best in terms of documenting, packaging, communicating and sharing tools and approaches.
- 3** Funders want to engage more and be connected to one another. They want spaces for sharing and exploring experiences, challenges and insights as well as platforms for accessing evidence, tools and materials. There appears to be a role for community philanthropy organizations and network to adopt a 3 Cs approach in supporting funders, that is convene, coordinate, and catalyze. Reinforcing this could also be an 'L' – facilitation of learning.⁹ We should question which organizations should step into this space, how engagement can be negotiated and set up, and what shape an action plan or framework could take.

What Next?

This is a small and limited inquiry. It recognizes that the issue of funder support to community philanthropy is an area where not enough is known and where much more efforts, reflection and learning need to take place. This inquiry offers starting points for discussion, debate and refinement. Toward this end, it is hoped that this report will encourage people, including a broader cohort of funders, to engage in further discussion. This paper also points to a series of critical points that community philanthropy intermediaries can tap into and develop further, such as: the further conceptualization of funder motivation and its implications for attracting funders; distillation of case studies for practical ways funders can work and, finally; the framing and development of a systematic action plan for backstopping funder efforts.

⁹ Convening activities include dialogues, debates and conversations for the identification of key issues, as well as entry points for tackling them. Coordinating includes engagement, collection action/interventions and the bringing together of separate efforts for collective sense-making (i.e. adding up the sum of the parts); catalyzing covers, new ways of thinking and working by generating evidence/in-depth inquiry that can be applied, unlocking blockages where funders are stuck and pilot testing new and promising ideas and strategies; and, finally, learning. This involves facilitating and taking the lead in surfacing data, documenting and disseminating.

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The GFCF works with individual community foundations and other local grantmakers and their networks, particularly in the global south and the emerging economies of Central and Eastern Europe. Through small grants, technical support, and networking, GFCF helps local institutions to strengthen and grow so that they can fulfill their potential as vehicles for local development and as part of the infrastructure for sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and citizen participation.

The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy is an academic centre within the College of Community and Public Service at Grand Valley State University. The Center hosts the W.K. Kellogg Community Philanthropy Chair, the nation's first endowed chair focused on community philanthropy.

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