



CF2CF Exchanges 2018

Shared Learning

May 2019



Background

Community foundations in Europe are a heterogeneous group of philanthropic organisations, although with many common features and characteristics.

Diversity in their context, form and function is not only a challenge both practically and intellectually, but also represents potential for learning and advancement for the field. By understanding how others react in a certain situation, we can extend our range of options for similar challenges in our own environment.

CF2CF exchanges are designed to improve participants' understanding of other European communities and the work of community foundations by visiting these regions, entering into a fruitful dialogue, learning from each others' experience and building long-term professional relations and friendships.

At ECFI we are interested in supporting well-thought and good quality exchanges that enhance mutual learning on how community foundations can better address key challenges of our times in their particular contexts.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the participant organisations for providing us with photos and reports, and sharing their learning after each visit. We also want to thank all who distributed information about the programme and encouraged organisations to apply and our Peer-Learning Expert Working Group for reviewing CF2CF applications.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a synthesis of the key learning extracted from the CF2CF exchange reports that community foundations or community foundations support organisations sent after the end of their visits. It presents learning in the words of those that participated - bringing the value of exchanges to life.

Based on their reflections and feedback we have grouped learning and outcomes under five headings:

1. Programmes and activities
2. Organisational development
3. Building connections
4. Belonging to a community of practice
5. Impact and credibility

Tips for a good exchange process are also presented.

IN NUMBERS

- 6 funded exchanges
- 8 countries involved: Hungary, Germany, Italy, Romania, Georgia, Slovakia, Ukraine and Czechia
- 11 visits made
- 12 organisations
- over 50 participants



PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

CF2CF participants have gained new ideas for programmes to engage the community, fundraise, and to work in different ways with vulnerable groups.

"Another well-developed public-private partnership in the social area was presented to us at Seriate, where "Aging is learned" - a project addressed to elderly people but who are still active. We also had the opportunity to visit a recently renovated historic house that will host community fundraising events. It was a valuable meeting and we brought with us a new vision on the possibilities of developing our community. As we saw Bergamo Community Foundation has a large experience in elderly programmes, which is a point of interest for our future programmes."

Claudia Abrudan, Oradea CF, Romania

"We were also very impressed by projects relating to the Roma community, which is a community we also have in Italy, and in Ivrea specifically, but haven't been able to establish any contact with. The project we visited will be a good model for us to import." **Canavese CF, Italy**

"The leadership programme: the fact that ViabilityNet 3.0 participants can use 10% of the grant for personal development; the introduction of the short video about the applicant and his/her community as part of the application for the programme; the 3 values of the leadership programme - trust in myself and others, change is normal and OK, empathy/solidarity (going towards community)". **Bucharest CF, Romania**



"Good practice examples – for instance the Food Bank which we saw was a great inspiration, we are trying to apply it this year in Banska Bystrica in cooperation with the Regional Municipal Office and the Rotary Club." **Healthy City CF, Banska Bystrica, Slovakia**

"After the Berlin meeting we understood how the German government sees the potential of the foundations operating as civilian forces, how to exploit their professional preparedness and thus entrusts them with serious tasks." **Térerő CF, Miskolc, Hungary**

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What CFs have learned in terms of how staff and board work, grant committees, annual reports, processes and tools for development.

"The different system of institutional work was very inspiring, where most of the work is done by volunteers. It is something different from our model but for sure to be considered as a functioning model in our situation for the future." **Healthy City CF, Banska Bystrica, Slovakia**



"We appreciated the way in which Bergamo Community Foundation reports their activity in the annual report and we considered it a good material as a source of inspiration for us." **Claudia Abrudan, Oradea CF**

"We should involve every staff member in working with our grantees, we should involve ex-grantees into our grants review committees and also employ a more flexible programme for our staff and we could work from our grantees' offices from time to time." **Bucharest CF, Romania**

"Organisational learning is yielded from seeing things, but also from reflecting on them within each team and together in the big team as well." **Roots and Wings Foundation, Hungary**

"Learning about the Romanian CF movement and CFSOs was very relevant as we are thinking of how we can be more connected to local communities across the Czech Republic, how to be less centralized and how to build a better environment for philanthropy and community development in the country. Thus, understanding the complexity of the CF support environment in Romania - ARC, the Federation of CFs, which organisation does what and where tensions arise - was very enlightening and can help us understand the risks inherent in building a network of regional entities." **Via Foundation, Czechia**

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

In terms of forming relations and connections, participants have expressed ideas for future collaborations, return visits or joint programmes.

"Building relations with CFs and CFSOs in other countries is especially important at this stage of CF/CFSO development in Georgia. We also see different possibilities to cooperate with each other in the future in different formats." **Center of Strategic Research and Development, Georgia**

"We are open for a continuation. And we feel sufficient understanding to be a productive and constructive distant - learning partner in this future relationship. It was a good start and substantial investment (time, money relation-wise) to establish further cooperation online."

Roots and Wings, Hungary

"All three cities taught us many lessons, not only in terms of magnificent sights, but also for excellent meetings. The Térerő' Community Foundation had the opportunity to enjoy the company of dedicated German people who are not

only working with heart-to-heart, but also willing to share their experience and enthusiasm." **Térerő CF, Miskolc, Hungary**

"We met a lot of fantastic, enthusiastic people and we felt that we are on the same board, it is personally very encouraging and motivating to keep us going on." **Healthy City CF, Banska Bystrica, Slovakia**

"We made a strong personal connection and we will continue to stay in contact. We want to know about each other's work, programmes, successes and challenges." **Canavese CF, Italy**

"Thanks to this exchange program we learned a lot. It was an important moment to stop ordinary activities for a few days and to reflect with people who are involved in the same activities but who have a different perspective to analyze processes, tools and strategies. Most likely our relationships will continue beyond the project". **Podilska Hromada CF, Ukraine**



BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Through active engagement the exchanges have proved beneficial for participants and organisations in identifying common issues and creating a shared practice in which to act and construct an identity as a movement.

"It was very interesting to compare how the community foundation translates the same mission in different territories into different activities. But the basic strategies remain in common: detecting territories' needs, involving citizens for new solutions and raising funds to support community development projects."

Community Foundation of Monza and Brianza, Italy

"We had a surprisingly pleasant and worthwhile experience. In big lines, the Romanian community foundations work in the same direction, that is why it was extremely important for us to see how other foundations from abroad work."

Oradea CF, Romania



"We discussed similar issues we faced in our communities, like lack of interest of the local government to support inclusion, social services, etc. and what should be a community foundation's role in such a situation".

Healthy City CF, Banska Bystrica, Slovakia

"Visiting two relatively new CFs in Pecs and Miskolc, was very important to us, as they are undergoing the processes and challenges faced by the newly established/developing organisations. CSRDG finds a lot of familiar activities in the exchange visit."

Center of Strategic Research and Development, Georgia

IMPACT AND CREDIBILITY

Participants reflected on the impact the work of community foundations has on the community, but also the actual impact of the visit from a similar organisation in another country, giving credibility and recognition to the foundation.

"The most inspiring element of our visit was hearing how for many of the Banskà CF beneficiaries it was the trust placed in them by Beata and her colleagues that really made a difference. How the CF's belief in the soundness of an idea, proposal, and project had empowered the organisations and given legs for their ideas to walk on. More so than the grant itself, it was the allegiance formed with the CF that was a catalyst for change. As we are at the beginning of our work as a CF and still trying to establish ourselves as a credible player on the local community welfare stage, relying heavily on grant making to do that, seeing how the Banskà CF has created solid relationships in the community through trust and belief rather than through donations was an eye opener and has made us reconsider our strategy."



"Finally, we were surprised by the effect the visit had on the organisations we support. A very serious, severe and reserved older volunteer at the local food bank was positively beaming at Beata, Ida and Juraj when we visited the project. A group of adults from disadvantaged backgrounds in every rural setting made a real effort to speak English to the delegation. Volunteers from a community centre on the outskirts of town rallied to cut the lawns and fix the broken swings in the playground in record time knowing they had international visitors coming. This was an unexpected result of the visit: the feeling of recognition and importance that our beneficiaries got."

Canavese CF, Italy

KEY LEARNINGS FOR A GOOD PROCESS

This set of recommendations comes from Roots and Wings Foundation in Hungary who have reflected on their exchange with the Center of Strategic Research and Development, in Georgia.

- **As hosts:** field-visits are key, to present a good and comprehensive picture of the support organisation's work regarding the CF and the country context.
- It is useful to have a couple of calls prior to the first exchange to get both parties up to speed on each foundation's context, work and expectations towards to visit.
- Thus the whole partnering teams get to know each other a bit beforehand, not just the coordinators.
- **As guests:** long term commitment and capacity to adopt alien concepts to local context is a must.
- It is useful to learn about other programmes of the partners not only the one in the focus of the study visits. Sometimes cultural programmes and activities are as important in understanding the context as more direct ways of information.
- It is important to have a member of the host organisation who accompanies the guests throughout the whole time. This allows maximum learning by providing a linking narrative and answering questions on the go.



ABOUT ECFI

The European Community Foundation Initiative (ECFI) is a collaborative initiative committed to strengthening and promoting the community foundation movement in Europe.

ECFI is hosted by the German Association of Foundations (Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen) and is run in partnership with the Centre for Philanthropy (Centrum pre filantropiu) in Slovakia.

ECFI works with community foundations (CFs) and community foundation support organizations (CFSOs) primarily through facilitating and stimulating interactions to enable learning, knowledge-building and empowerment. ECFI is also engaged in the mapping and analysis of CF activities and in disseminating information that will facilitate development of the field. ECFI strives to be a central point of contact for wider engagement within the global community foundation movement.

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CONTACT for peer-learning activities:

Mihaela Giurgiu

mihaela@communityfoundations.eu

<https://www.communityfoundations.eu/peer-learning.html>

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European Community Foundation Initiative c/o Association of German Foundations | Mauerstrasse 93 | 10117 Berlin | Germany Phone +49 (0)30 897 947-57 | Fax -91 info@communityfoundations.eu | www.communityfoundations.eu