

CF2CF Learning Outcomes

Community Foundation Slagalica (CFS) and Tuzla Community Foundation (TCF)

May 30-31, 2019

1) Introduction

The first visit within the CF2CF Exchange between Community Foundation Slagalica (CFS) and Tuzla Community Foundation (TCF) took place in May 30-31, 2019 in Tuzla. The agenda included topics that CF Slagalica is interested in: Vital Signs research (organizational resources needed, implementation of results and findings), community organizing through the Network of Active Communities, Youth Bank Programme and community philanthropy. On behalf of the Tuzla CF six staff members took part in the exchange (with others joining for dinner), and three from Slagalica.

2) Key learnings

The most interesting and useful aspects of the exchange for CFS were:

Vital Signs (VS): although CFS has had the idea to start with VS for some time, due to significant decrease of funds followed by equal decrease of staff members in 2017 it hasn't happened yet. Melika gave us a very vivid insight elaborating methodology, practice, resources (staff, external experts, volunteers, funds), challenges, role of social networks and media, and positive impact on the Tuzla CF and on targeted communities through significant follow up activities (water purifiers for several primary schools, solving issue of stray dogs etc.). Bearing in mind that TCF has already done VS three times with secured international funds, it gave us a motivation to start even with lower resources available. The most important observation is how VS contributes to getting the CF closer to the community while presenting what and how the CF can help in solving the community problems and catalysing local and international resources in the right direction. Regular implementation of VS in bi-annual or three-year terms clearly shows the commitment of the CF to work and live with their community, contributing to the Global Goals through local level actions.

Community organizing/Network of Active Communities: Sabina and Emir took our full attention with a substantial and vivid presentation of the history and current work in Kiseljak community, applied 6-step methodology, practical inputs, funds, and finally creation of the Network of Active Communities, with 20 communities involved so far. Although CFS has started a similar project in 2017, the applied methodology differs to some extent. 10 communities covered within a one year period according to the donor demand can hardly compare with Tuzla CFs approach with secured funds for a substantial community actions and comprehensive results. However, we may consider introducing at least some lessons learned (i.e. piloting with social chart for one community, conditioning of work in community with obligatory involvement of the local authority with matching funds for community action if possible, local institution/school and local NGO, inland study visits etc.).

The **Youth Bank Programme** has been having a highly positive impact in Tuzla CF. Youth from participating communities have a positive reaction and gladly join the program, which was substantially upgraded since the beginning. Among the key results are not only empowered youth and implemented youth projects/actions but the creation of a pool of potential volunteers for future youth and other projects and/or for rejuvenation of the Tuzla CF staff members. Besides, involved youth often have the role of “entry point” for other Tuzla CFs projects in different communities. Although our resistance to implement a similar project in Osijek was connected with previous failure to implement such a program in Croatia by one NGO, listening to the positive impact of the Youth Bank program in Tuzla may influence to rethink our decision in the future.

Community philanthropy in Tuzla is implemented “by the book” with strong achievements over the long period of time. Some of the lessons learned include: three-levels funds (program related, individual and philanthropy/humanitarian) accompanied with an endowment fund; 2-3 fundraising campaigns annually; urban planning and culture of housing with so called “gap projects” based on the local poll named “What do you need?”; clearly defined thresholds for donations related to friends of Tuzla CF and Philanthropists Club entering as well as for sponsorships; Donor dinner for cultivating relations with donors and attracting new ones combined with a promotional component etc. Although CFS has some of listed components we have learned how to improve them (i.e. three level funds) and also gain necessary motivation to start i.e. a donor dinner.

3) **On-going relationship**

As both CFs have already good relations we would like to upgrade it with joint projects if such an opportunity arises or is created and more visits with practical elements (e.g. participating in each other’s public actions). There is still a lot of space to learn about the role of board members in fundraising efforts.

4) **The exchange process**

There were no barriers that prevented the CF2CF Exchange from being more relevant and effective. However, we faced a time-related challenge. It was not easy to find a date that fits both CFs busy schedules. Nevertheless, this study visit was fully relevant and effective in such a short period. Jelena Kasabašić, CFS’s Board member and social worker by profession was amazed by the way Tuzla involves centres for social work in the community organizing work that can be relevant to think about in Osijek. Besides, she is motivated to join the team for the implementation of the Vital Signs.

It should be mentioned how context, available resources (staff, funds etc.) and some circumstances (Croatia is EU member where many documents and procedures the Tuzla CF is implementing are not relevant as they are already in practice as demanded by the EU accession or membership status). However, a huge space for improvement mainly lay in the community development area.

We are looking forward to the reciprocal exchange visit when the Tuzla team will join the Philanthropy Week event in Osijek (end of September).