

Bringing our best together: community philanthropy partnerships in a challenging world.



Chris Worman, Global Partnerships and Programming Lead, GivingTuesday

‘Deep connections in a local community and a global digital campaign can work together to inspire giving, encourage collaboration and celebrate generosity’ - says Chris Worman. He has long been an advocate for community philanthropy as a critical, foundational, part of civil society’s development - as a former pioneer in the development of the community foundation movement in Romania and now working on partnerships and strategy with GivingTuesday, a global movement that inspires millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity. Below, Chris makes the case for how GivingTuesday, which started as a one-day concept, can encourage everyday local philanthropy.

I have spent the last 20 years working at the intersection of community, philanthropy, and technology. Never have I felt the need for investment into local philanthropic mechanisms and infrastructure more urgently than I do today.

Look around and you see families buried in screens, hardly making eye contact with each other, much less talking to their neighbors, often falling down divisive narrative rabbit holes. The effects, compounded by the stresses of an increasingly complicated world, are playing out in politics as extreme views gain at the ballot box.

Yet I believe there is hope in the work done by people like you and I who are getting people to look up from the screen; connect with and invest in their communities; and take responsibility for their future through acts of generosity. Our work is an antidote. I also believe, in the face of increasingly pervasive anti-social narratives, we must explore all opportunities available to us to reach and include more people in our work.

One such opportunity is, perhaps somewhat ironically, bringing together community foundations’ deep connections to their communities and local civil



society, and GivingTuesday's digital reach and reporting capabilities. Both community foundations and GivingTuesday - a global movement that inspires millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity - work to engage people in acts of generosity. Both work on active citizenship, social cohesion, and community building. Both bring something that the other often needs. And, as is clear from the more than 150 community foundation and GivingTuesday partnerships already active around the world, both derive clear benefits from partnering.

Community Foundations have partnered with GivingTuesday from Russia to Rhode Island and many points in between. Most often this looks like a community foundation leading a GivingTuesday Community Campaign through which they promote generosity - - sharing stories of local giving and challenging people to give to civil society in their communities. Many organize a local giving and volunteering day with public events and corporate partnerships; most publish a list of local civil society organizations and work with them to run their own campaigns on GivingTuesday; some operate local giving online platforms through which people can give directly to local organizations.

In each case, community foundations are able to ride a wave of media (last year, GivingTuesday had more than 2 billion media impressions in Europe). Community foundations report that the result of local efforts, complimented by media coverage and a massive amount of social media about generosity, is a surge in local participation. This tracks with the research done by GivingTuesday that shows a significant jump in giving during the week of GivingTuesday every year. Further, beyond the total funds raised, research shows that for participating organizations, GivingTuesday is both their biggest day of new donor acquisition and that donors gained on GivingTuesday tend to stay donors longer. And because so much of the organizing and giving that happens on GivingTuesday happens online, GivingTuesday is usually able to provide fairly in-depth reporting to Community Campaign leaders about the results in their community - information that can be tracked year over year to improve our efforts and that can, collectively, provide invaluable insight into the nature of community philanthropy.

In hundreds of communities around the world, GivingTuesday Community Campaigns are run without a community foundation's infrastructure or networks. While these campaigns are important, effective ways to organize local giving, they are volunteer driven. Volunteer leaders often report a desire to partner with institutions like a community foundation with whom they might organize additional events over the course of a year, connect more effectively with local partners, and raise funds for their efforts. For them, a little bit of



infrastructure can go a long way in enabling continuity from year to year. Interestingly, there is work going on right now to explore if effective Community Campaign leaders in communities without a community foundation might be interested in starting a community foundation, or partnering with one in a nearby community who might be able to share their infrastructure and grow through the community of engaged donors already built by a GivingTuesday Community Campaign leader.

Considering the benefits both community foundations and GivingTuesday Community Campaign leaders experience in partnership - and the increasing need for our communities to practice coming together, building trust, hope, and skills through acts of generosity in the face of an increasingly challenging world flooded with divisive narratives - it seems time to bring our movements together.

At minimum, learning how GivingTuesday works with community foundations around the world to increase local donor engagement will spark useful conversations and learning. At maximum, if more community foundations run GivingTuesday Community Campaigns, we will see increases in local giving, civil society resiliency, and social cohesion; and through GivingTuesday's data capacities be able to present our collective efforts encouraging community philanthropy as the powerful, positive force it is.'

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