

2023 exchanges bring a youthful dynamic

It is no surprise that Romania features strongly in the CF2CF exchange programme this year. The field in Romania is characterised as being young and dynamic, bringing a spirit of entrepreneurship and is seen as the flagship of the 21st century community foundation movement. It is comprised of smart people eager to learn and very willing to share their knowledge and experience. ‘We believe in best practices as the best way for our initiative groups to learn, get inspiration, and adapt to their own region and needs’ said Ruth Williams, CEO of the Austrian Association of Charitable Foundation, which is supporting the establishment of community foundations in Austria. ‘We expect to gain many helpful insights that will help us build the first community foundations in Austria and we hope to establish long lasting relationships between organisations in both countries’, she added.

Similarly, the Spanish Association of Foundations is looking to the Romanian Federation as a model which supports local fundraising and high levels of citizen engagement, in particular of developing the leadership role of young adults. Representatives from the Romanian Federation will contribute to the Spanish conference for community foundations and participate in crowd funding events.

A multi-lateral exchange is to be implemented involving community foundations from Slovakia, Czechia, Hungary, Austria and Poland. Along with sharing knowledge an aim is to identify potential joint projects, in particular those addressing issues ‘out of the spotlight’ e.g. in neglected rural areas, in marginalised communities, and in relation to under-valued work of community foundations.

Porta Palazzo in Italy is leading an exchange with Timișoara Community Foundation, from Romania. They will explore and build on respective experiences of supporting civic activism, advocacy and the use of civic space. ‘We are interested in the advocacy, lobbying strategy and network building that the Porta Palazzo Community Foundation is doing locally when implementing their programmes, in order to receive support, expertise and approval from the local administration, other stakeholders and experts on different domains’ said Oana Petrescu, Program coordinator, Timișoara Community Foundation.





Sibiu Community Foundation, also from Romania, and Assifero, the Italian association of foundations share a particular interest in the involvement of young people, not only in the community foundation field but more widely in civil society organisations and in public bodies. 'In Sibiu we noticed two significant trends, with the first being the tendency of the older generations to take a step back from active roles within the community due to burnout amongst other reasons and their intention to move towards bringing a different kind of contribution, such as mentoring. Secondly, the younger counterparts are struggling to find their voice and step up to bring change. We aim to bridge this gap by facilitating the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and creating a healthy context for dialogue and opportunities on both sides' said Ana Maria Bugneriu, Sibiu Community Foundation. This exchange will provide valuable insights and learning for the entire community foundations field.

All exchanges will lead to the production of a report which will be shared on the ECFI website along with a synthesis report on key learnings from them and the Study Visit to Serbia.

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