



Implementation of emergency response and recovery funds / programmes

Lessons from practice and longer-term implications

April 28th, 2020

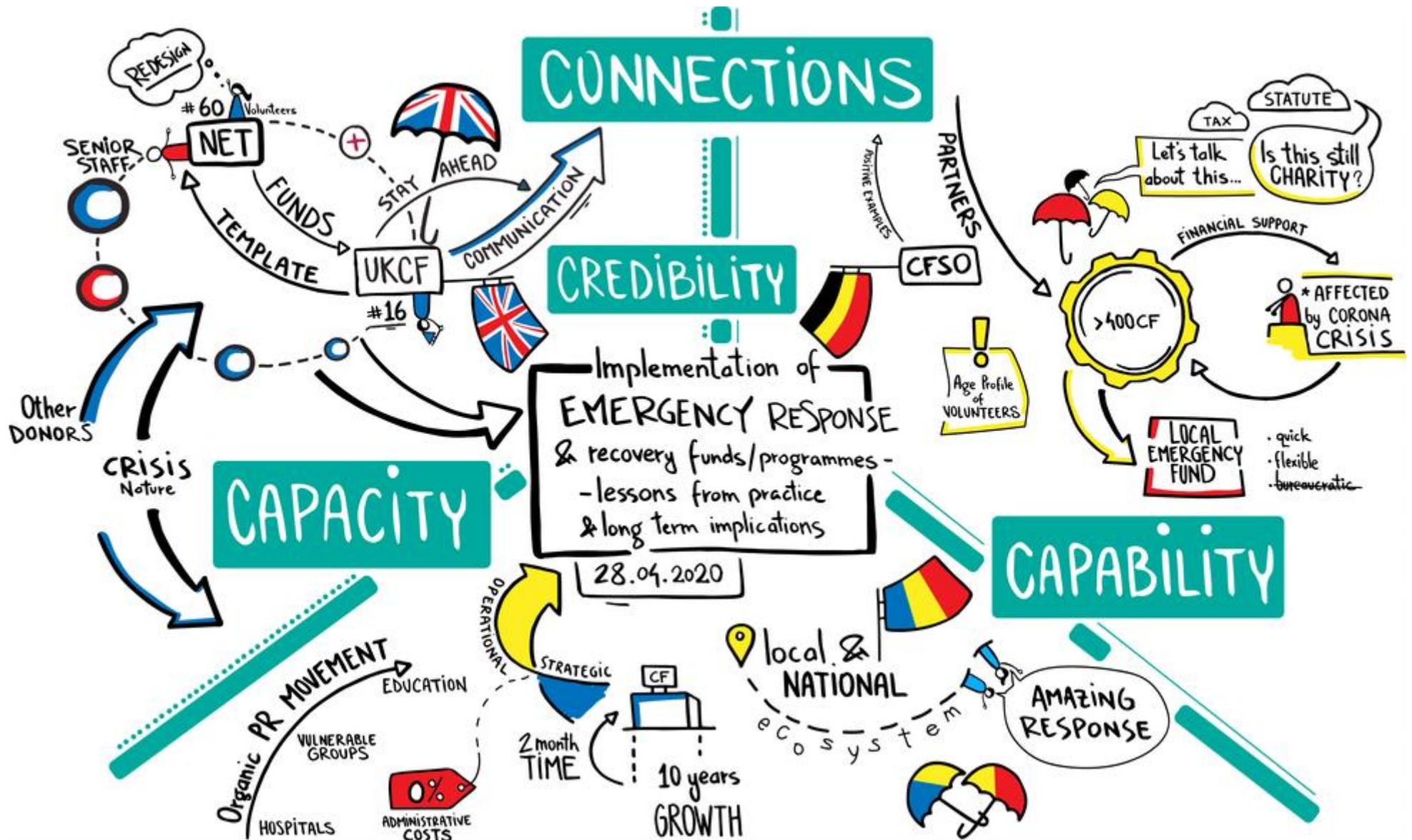
On April 28th, ECFI hosted a second on-line gathering of community foundation support organisations (CFSO). 32 participants from 21 CFSOs joined to hear experiences from UK, Germany and Romania and to consider the challenges and lessons from the establishment and implementation of Covid-19 crisis response and recovery funds.



This paper presents a summary and visual harvesting of the presentations and discussion, reflects on actions through a 4Cs lens, and sets out proposed next steps.

- Community Foundation for West Flanders, Belgium
- Stara Zagora CF, Bulgaria
- Tuzla CF, Bosnia & Herzegovina
- Knowledge Center for Danish Foundations
- Active Citizenship, Germany
- Alliance of CFs in Germany
- Roots & Wings Foundation, Hungary
- Assifero, Italy
- CF Movement in Latvia
- Local Funds Foundation, Netherlands
- Academy for Development of Philanthropy, Poland
- Federation of CFs, Poland
- Association for Community Relations (ARC), Romania
- Romanian Federation of Community Foundations
- Charities Aid Foundation, Russia
- Trag Foundation, Serbia
- Healthy City CF, Slovakia
- Support Foundation for Civil Society, Turkey
- Association of Spanish Foundations
- ISAR Ednannia, Ukraine
- UK Community Foundations

A visual overview of the presentations and discussion



Visual harvester: Adrian Popa.

Introduction

In Europe the health crisis has hit peak levels at different times, affecting some regions harder than others, but lockdown and physical distancing measures will have brought similar issues to communities across the continent. Community foundations (CFs) whether large or small, well-established or newly registered, endowed or operating with annual funds, set in rural or urban areas, with paid staff or just volunteers have mobilised extensively to respond to the health and humanitarian challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Community foundations support organisations (CFSOs), though varying in scope, structure, experience and capability have been working tirelessly to advance and support the field through a variety of actions that we have categorised below, using a [4Cs lens](#). Having the opportunity to connect with peers and learn how they continue to respond to the crisis through different phases is to quote a participant “like seeing into the future”. We are grateful for everyone’s presence, presentations and engagement.

Presentations

Following-up from our first online meeting and building on the visual image that depicts emergency response, recovery and sustainability as stages through which community foundations will have to perform through the crisis, we have focussed this discussion on hearing from CFSOs in UK, Germany and Romania on the response to the Covid-19 emergency and lessons learned through the process. Based on that we have categorised actions from all three countries in a common framework (see below) and we invite individual organisations to think through the framework analysing which actions are being undertaken and which areas could benefit from further investment, at different stages.

United Kingdom - Rosemary MacDonald, Interim CEO, UKCF

UKCF is the umbrella body for the 46 community foundations in UK. Partnering with the [National Emergencies Trust](#) (NET), a national charity set up to respond domestic disasters (and being activated for the first time with Covid-19), UKCF has been distributing millions through its network. The funds provide vital support in the quickest way possible for vulnerable groups affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This has enabled CFs to raise their profile, capitalise on existing donor relations as well as prospective ones. For UKCF and the entire network this means a greater focus and attention to communication and collaboration between them and this significant new public donor (NET) to ensure transparency, accountability and trust and to prevent staff burnout. While a first successful wave of donations address emergency needs there is a long way ahead to address issues of sustainability and resilience for local charities. UKCF is actively documenting the process and will be able to draw on a template of how to deal with national emergencies in the future.

Germany - Ulrike Reichart, Program Director, Alliance of CFs in Germany

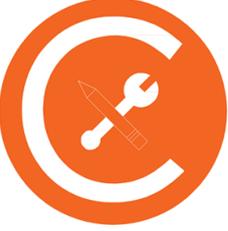
The Alliance Community Foundations is the membership body for over 400 community foundations in Germany. Many of the CFs are working really hard to counter the effects of the Covid-19 crisis and to strengthen social cohesion despite the restrictions of social distancing (which has been particularly difficult for CFs dependent on volunteers from an older demographic). Some have set up emergency funds, collect donations and/or coordinate volunteer support for those in need. More so, they organise community building activities like sewing face masks, balcony singing and [organ concerts in neighbourhoods](#) and in front of retirement homes. They build partnerships with local food banks, local government and the business community. While there is no national funding distribution, the Alliance as part of the Association of German Foundations is part of [advocacy activities](#) that address the Ministry of Finance on behalf of the sector for measures of support. They also communicate broadly positive examples of funds and programs run by CFs, to draw attention to their work and help establish further partnerships. Internally it supports its' members through online meetings on topics related to the crisis, like impact on the asset management, remote project management, design and delivery of emergency funds, noting a surprising increase in digital learning.

Romania - Rucsandra Pop, CF Program Director, ARC

Among the youngest and most dynamic movements in Europe, the field in Romania is supported by two organisations, the Association for Community Relations (ARC) and the Romanian Federation of Community Foundations (RFCF). With 19 CFs covering 52% of a country with a poorly prepared medical infrastructure, 17 set up emergency funds to help equip local hospitals and doctors in tackling the effects of the pandemic. ARC launched a [national fundraising appeal](#) while local CFs ran parallel ones while also trying to become overnight experts in medical procurement. Collaboration, cooperation and coordination have been valued more than before in joint national fundraising and funding distribution efforts involving community foundations, the two CFSOs, medical NGOs and private donors. Also, an invaluable public relations capital has grown organically from local level but there are still efforts to be made in capitalising on it and getting public recognition by the state. Having to act quickly, in an operational manner, to respond to the emergency has put current programs on hold as well as the ability to take a strategic view. There is a real concern for medium- and longer-term sustainability of CFs and ARC has advocated for flexible, general purpose funding. RFCF provides informal spaces for discussion relating to operational issues as well as on the effects of the crisis on CFs and the communities they serve through all the phases of response, recovery and in building resilience for the future.

CFSO Covid-19 inspired actions - applying a 4Cs lens

Below we have collated the impressive range of actions being undertaken by CFSOs around Europe that have arisen from this discussion and other evidence from the field.

<p>CAPABILITY</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a template of how to deal with a crisis (greater organisational CFSO and CF resilience) • Providing support / sharing experience in management and implementation of emergency funds • Sharing knowledge about 'new' issues in communities and approaches to dealing with them (e.g. educational needs, domestic abuse, mental health etc), and the state of the Third Sector • Supporting digital transformation (e.g. in own operations and relationships with others including creative approaches to on-line fundraising) • Engaging CFs in recovery / renewal planning • Ensuring CFs have the knowledge to be compliant with fiscal and regulatory requirements and are aware of any changes
<p>CAPACITY</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding value through coordinated national appeal • Brokering national funds for local distribution • Supporting local appeals (e.g. through endorsement and / or securing matched funding) • Addressing barriers e.g. with tax authorities / regulators • Finding support for administrative and core costs of CFs • Protecting staff and volunteers and ensuring their well-being (in a time of remote working and an up-scaling in activity) • Dealing with fall in value of endowments and potential reduction in donations after the crisis (e.g. from financial institutions and corporate donors)
<p>CONNECTIONS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galvanising the CF movement nationally and internationally through productive exchange of knowledge and experience • New working relationships with local and national bodies / funders / the 3rd sector / the public (including establishment of platforms, implementation of programmes, administration of funds, involvement in discussion forums / think tanks) • Recognition that CFs and CFSOs can connect digitally (nationally and internationally) - leading the field, but being aware that this is a challenge for CFs that are volunteer run and in particular with older volunteers • Building European solidarity e.g. through promoting the EFC/DAFNE pledge
<p>CREDIBILITY</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased profile with others interested in the work of CFs and using the CF network as a partner • Managing expectations and being prepared to address 'bad press' (e.g. allocation of funding, processes etc) • Highlight (amplify) examples of actions of CFs and collating that to tell a national story • Bringing evidence from the field to policy makers / informers • Collation of data on the source and scale of addition funds raised and distributed to / through CFs, increasing transparency

Next steps



- ECFI to conduct interviews and document stories of CF responses to the Covid-19 crisis
- ECFI to bring scenario thinking to PEX community (European philanthropy support networks)
- 3rd on-line meeting of CFSOs - May 19th (TBC)
- Topics for on-going discussion: collaboration, digital transformation, sustainability of the field, advocacy at national and European level, building a common message

Communication Channels



[Twitter @ECFINews](#)

[ECFI Facebook page](#)

[CF Practice Exchange Facebook group](#)

[ECFI Website resource page](#)

General contact:

info@communityfoundations.eu