

December 2020

New initiative to support the development of community foundations in Albania



Kostandina Këruti, Partners Albania

Programme Manager, Partners Albania, and International Fellow 2020, Graduate Center, City University New York (CUNY), Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, Kostandina Këruti, describes the rationale for Partners Albania to specifically address the development of community foundations in Albania. She points to evidence of empowerment of civil society, enhanced trust, and increase in philanthropy, which has led Partners Albania to take this on as a strategic priority.

Worldwide, community foundations are being recognized as important organizations that respond to immediate and long-term issues of and within communities. They embody the very essence of “leave no one behind”. Community Foundations are capable to utilize local assets, human resources, and maximize local capital; and contribute to understanding of communities they serve and increased networking among individuals, public and private institutions to enhance community development.

Even though community foundations are not yet developed, Albania is evidencing an empowerment of civil society. Institutionally, they have increased their capacities in terms of management, leadership role, fundraising campaigns and in the last four years local organizations have coordinated and managed the sub-granting schemes by becoming supportive to community led-actions. On the exterior, the civil sector, and civil society organizations are not only increasing in numbers, but also are shaping and influencing local policies that respond to community needs and priorities, and by increasing their public trust and impact in the society.

Based on the annual monitoring report of philanthropic activity in the country conducted by Partners Albania since 2015, there is evidence of a growing trend of philanthropic activity in the country. The last year, due to the emergency situation by an earthquake that struck Albania, saw an increase of proximately 50% of calls for donations or campaigns organized by individuals and institutions.

These are driving reasons why Partners Albania through its agenda aims to contribute to a wider awareness and education of the public on the concept and model of community foundations. If promoted and properly organized, community foundations could play an important role in supporting community initiatives and non-profit organisations in the country through funds generated by local donations.

Partners Albania will focus in the next 3 years on two main pillars:

1. Raising awareness and public interest in the economic and social values of philanthropic activity through information, research and promoting public debate about it;
2. Introduce and provide the necessary support in the development of innovative platforms that enable and facilitate interaction between actors for the development of philanthropic activity with a focus on on-line crowdfunding platforms and community foundations.

Specifically, in relation to community foundations, Partners Albania will:

- work to deploy public awareness and education tools for increasing awareness and understanding of community foundations;
- undertake research to better understand the characteristics of community foundations;
- generate dialogue and build bridges among sectors for boosting the development of community foundations in the country.