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## COVID-19

### Community Foundations in Action

#### France - uncertainty remains our biggest challenge



Aurélie Reder

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The biggest challenge for Aurélie Reder, director general at the Community Foundation Metz Mécènes Solidaires at the moment is that there is simply a lot of uncertainty. Foremost about fundraising since it's not clear which events can take place during the rest of the year and which have to be cancelled, as has already happened to the popular donors breakfast and the visiting of projects that have recently been supported by Metz Mécènes Solidaires. There is also uncertainty over longer term economic consequences and community needs with the pandemic widening existing societal inequalities.

When the community foundation first realised that the pandemic was not going to be short-lived, Aurélie and her colleagues didn't hesitate: "Clearly many associations urgently needed us." In terms of network building, where the community foundation could link different actors and associations - but also it could help financially, quickly. That is why Aurélie and her team immediately allocated €10,000 via social networks and the local press and offered help to different organisations. At the same time, they kept making calls for donations from individuals. To know where their help was urgently needed, Aurélie's team invited associations to send emails with their needs. Then, the board directors validated the requests via email. "Being more flexible and faster in the decision-making and change process was one of our challenges at the beginning" she recalls.



"The need for food for the most underprivileged was a real issue, but also domestic violence and the school dropout rate. Many children didn't even have computers at home to be home-schooled." In the long term, Aurélie is expecting a widening of inequalities in her community. She assumes that Metz Mécènes Solidaires will have more causes to support while at

*Thanks to Mécènes Solidaires!*

the same time, corporate donors might be suffering from the economic consequences of the pandemic. But on the brightside, Aurélie says, “during lockdown, local solidarity chains were set up. Working together with all stakeholders was necessary, for example, when we tried to supply children with computers.” So at least there is one big certainty for Metz Mécènes Solidaires: that the community foundation was and is still playing a major role for the community during the crisis.



*Home schooling with laptop is better!*

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The Community Foundation Metz Mécènes Solidaires was established January 2018. Two employees and ten volunteers work for the community foundation. Since the foundation started it has raised €336,139 and distributed €146,198. €20,000 was distributed to associations in response to needs arising from Coronavirus.

*The Community Foundation Metz Mécènes Solidaires is one of approximately 60 community foundations in France (together with around 50 funds under the aegis of Fondation de France). The [French Foundation Center](#) and [Fondation de France](#) both work on promotion of community foundations as a model of civic engagement adapted to French culture and reality. For more information see our [website](#).*