

THEMATIC MEETING

Resilience and Dialogue

2nd meeting Timișoara 25-27 October 2018

SUMMARY REPORT

'One of our roles as community foundations is to awaken resilience, to activate it, to remind ourselves, our organizations and our communities that it is there inside us like muscle groups waiting to be flexed and strengthened'.

Alina Kasprovschi, Bucharest Community Foundation

This report presents key findings from the 2nd Resilience Lab held in Timișoara. More details on the proceedings of both the Resilience Labs can be found here <https://theresiliencelab.wordpress.com/>.

Building on the first Resilience Lab, held in Bucharest in April, which explored concepts and led to the development of the blueprint for assessing and building community resilience, this meeting offered the opportunity for more specific focus on practical solutions. With the combined energy, expertise and ideas, participants mapped relevant stakeholders, data, tools and opportunities that help develop understanding of chronic stresses and acute shocks cities might experience and explored ways to strengthen their capacity to survive, adapt and grow. The meeting, spread over two half days and one full day was a diverse combination of sit down discussions, insertions of theory, open sessions, Socratic walks and case study presentations and discussions.

Key ideas harvested from the Lab

1. Resilience is still a relatively new topic and there is interest in further understanding the theories around it and what can be useful for the work of community foundations.
2. It is helpful to take a step back to think about the organizational resilience of the community foundations first and their capacity to address community resilience.
3. Co-creation with local communities (as experienced in Bucharest and Timișoara) is essential.
4. Resilience should focus on assets and overall community wellbeing, not narrow risk management - however, this must be set within the context provided by adversities. Note should be taken of resilience failures.
5. It is important to continue to share information and tools about how community foundations cultivate resilience with reference to specific cases.

Theory and Case Studies

Following presentation of a theoretical snapshot on the concept of resilience in relation to communities presented by Gabriella Benedek (Roots and Wings Foundation, Hungary). She highlighted wellbeing and adversity as the two of the necessary pillars when considering resilience. Four case studies were shared and discussed:

1. Bürgerstiftungen Deutschlands, Germany - Axel Halling

Based on a fictional case study based on real events in 2016 we discussed the challenge for a little town where the town administration, a community foundation and other organisations try to integrate around 400 refugees that have to be accommodated, given food and proper clothing. Although many people in town are willing to help (and some of them even organize a volunteer network to collect things and exchange information for the refugees) the local mayor and his administration are sceptical and do only the essential work required. The community foundation manages to get an annual grant from the federal family ministry to fund and organize so-called mentoring pairs between local volunteers and refugees, but has to face critical responses from the public. In the group discussion we advised a careful approach without much PR involved until things are settled down plus the call for an integrative approach with all other organisations active in the field.

2. Foundation Moloda Gromada, Ukraine - Inna Starchikova

Moloda Gromada Foundation organized education of civil servants and local government officials based on an online course "Smart Interoperability" as a part of the Government Action Plan to Implement the National Strategy for Promoting Civil Society Development in Ukraine for 2016-2020. This online course (designed by the NGO «Youth Corporation») aimed to develop cross-sectoral interaction and multi-level governance with the help of modern ICT. Her case study showed an example of such interaction in solving local issues (ecological) in Bilaivka Rayon of Odessa region, and development regional networking.

3. South Yorkshire Community Foundation / ASSIST, UK - Sonia Bielaszewska

ASSIST was established in 2005, by local Sheffield residents who noticed a rising number of asylum seekers arriving in their city but being unable to access support services. She described the hostile political environment in direct opposition to the driven leading political agenda, where anybody seeking asylum is currently presumed to be lying until they can prove otherwise. As a result, 1000s become destitute. She described how the community foundation helped organizations 'zoom out to see the bigger picture'.

4. Bucharest Community Foundation, Romania - Alina Kasprovschi

Bucharest is the European capital city with the biggest seismic risk. On average, a major earthquake strikes every 40 years. The last one took place in 1977, killing 1,500 people, injuring tens of thousands and created damages of more than USD 2bn. In the coming period, the Bucharest Community Foundation, along with its effort to fundraise, will put the earthquake on the public agenda, and will communicate the fund so that it is seen as a positive one (education, bringing the community together) rather than a negative one, so that corporate donors are willing to invest.