

Welcome to the Global Fund for Community Foundations e-bulletin!

This bulletin includes an update on developments at the GFCF and its partnership with WINGS, and a special focus on the growing role that online technologies and social media are playing among community philanthropy organizations the world over.

News from the Global Fund for Community Foundations

GFCF Board Member, Sibongile Mkhabela speaks at opening plenary of the EFC's 20th Annual General Assembly (AGA) and Conference

The EFC's 20th Annual General Assembly (AGA) and Conference in Rome (14-16 May) attracted the participation of 637 delegates from around 60 different countries, reinforcing the reputation of our annual gathering as a valuable meeting point for foundation representatives from across Europe, and friends from other parts of the world, to meet each other, share ideas, and discuss questions of common concern.

The main theme - "Fighting Poverty – Creating Opportunities" - proved to be an especially pertinent choice in the context of the current economic climate. It also provided a chance to revive some of the basic values of philanthropy, which has always depended on having a positive vision and an optimistic outlook. Not just imagining a better future, but actively working towards it, making good use of all available resources to overcome obstacles and find creative solutions.

The AGA and Conference was opened by the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, who warned against the risk of exclusion being made worse by the rise of a public rhetoric that includes "intolerant or xenophobic overtones". Napolitano's remarks were widely reported in the Italian press, which placed them in the context of political debates around the treatment of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants by the Italian authorities. They also inspired a Conference Statement, drafted by EFC members and received with enthusiastic applause at the closing plenary session, calling on Europe's political leaders to "build a framework for addressing migration in ways that truly respect the dignity of all human beings".

Another inspiring contributor was Sibongile Mkhabela of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, who criticised grantmakers and development agencies for too often sticking with methods that are ineffective or counterproductive. She emphasised the importance of empowering local communities so they can set their own agendas, and challenged foundations to play their part in helping to bring about a new reality based on global solidarity and social justice. She said, "The very nature of poverty needs relevant and imaginative responses from philanthropic organizations. We need to transcend mere amelioration of difficult circumstances. Central to our strategic positioning is to enhance our direct relationships and development work with and for the communities. The ascendance of community foundations in our environment must be linked with the sponsorship for the emergence of broad-based community organizing and development strategies and tactics. Community foundations strategically might have to adopt and embrace community organizing and direct social action for the promotion and protecting of social justice and human rights. Further, our discourse must help promote ownership of developmental

initiatives including cooperatives that are often lost in the inhibiting grip of government patronage. Community foundations might give renewed agency to indigenous initiatives and help such initiatives to become part of the mainstream socio-economic development.”

To view AGA and Conference material, please visit the [EFC's website](#).

Update on the Global Fund for Community Foundations and WINGS

We are pleased to be providing this update on the status of the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) and, in particular, its relationship with WINGS.

It was back in 2005 that the opportunity first arose to pilot the idea of a new entity to support community foundation development globally. In response to this unique opportunity, the leadership of WINGS (Director Gaynor Humphreys and the Coordinating Committee) took the plunge and put itself forward as the lead body to administer the three year “incubator” phase.

Now, almost four years on, with the incubation phase now completed and \$1.8 million in grants awarded to emerging and more established community foundations in almost 40 countries, the GFCF is moving into the next phase of its existence as an independent entity. After an extensive process of consultation which included some 500 philanthropy practitioners and funders, it was agreed by the GFCF’s Management Committee, WINGS and the European Foundation Centre (which serves as the fiduciary for the Fund) that the GFCF should “spin off” from WINGS and establish itself as an independent entity with its own board.

As these changes have started to get underway, we thought it a good time to inform WINGS network participants and GFCF grantees.

What does this mean?

The GFCF and WINGS are no longer formally connected (although we fully anticipate ongoing partnership and collaboration). There will be changes to the GFCF’s website to reflect the break from WINGS and to provide information about the new board and programmes as they emerge.

What are the future plans for the GFCF?

The GFCF will continue to operate as a virtual organization with staff based in different locations. It will incorporate in the U.K. (the process has begun) and there are plans to open an office in South Africa further down the line.

The European Foundation Centre will continue to serve as the fiduciary for the GFCF until it is fully established and the grants administration will remain there over the coming months.

An initial board of six members has been constituted which is now taking the lead on overseeing the GFCF’s strategic direction. Board recruitment will be ongoing to ensure regional representation but members so far are: Barry Gaberman (ret’d Ford Foundation, U.S.), Avila Kilmurray (Community Foundation for Northern Ireland),

Sibongile Mkhabela (Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, South Africa), Monica Patten (Community Foundations of Canada), Maureen Smyth (C.S. Mott Foundation, U.S.) and Rita Thapa (Nagarik Aawaz and formerly TEWA, Nepal).

In June, the GFCF will invite letters of intent, for complete applications due in September 2009. Further details will be posted on the GFCF's website and advertised through this e-bulletin.

Special Feature: Tweets, Snowballs, Causes, Blogs - Community philanthropy goes online

With social networking websites attracting millions of users all over the world (Facebook has 200 million users, LinkedIn 35 million and Twitter around 5 million) never have there been more opportunities for grassroots community philanthropy organizations in remote corners of the world to reach global audiences in ways that are free and easy to use. In this bulletin we asked partners in developing contexts to tell us about how they were using "social media" or "user-generated content" to raise the profile of their organizations and their work, and we hear from how community foundations in Canada are moving into the virtual sphere in their work too.

For an emerging community philanthropy institution like the [Phuket Community Foundation](#) in Thailand, whose modest funding base does not allow for conventional marketing approaches, a tool like Facebook provides the perfect tool to raise the foundation's profile in a low-cost and immediate way. On its Facebook page, PCF has posted photographs of its launch and its first projects (one on road safety, another a toy library), simple explanations of the activities and even a local radio interview about the foundation with one of PCF's board members: it has even posted a question asking "what's the one thing that most needs fixing in Phuket?" on its page (although there have been no responses posted yet!). The island of Phuket is an international tourist destination (and has its own sizeable expatriate population), which makes a Facebook presence a logical long-term fundraising and awareness building strategy, in combination with community outreach efforts on the ground.

In Egypt, the [Maadi Community Foundation](#) (Waqfeyat al Maadi al Ahleya), initially set up their Facebook site with the intention of building awareness of their work, although they subsequently discovered what a powerful tool it was for recruitment, both of staff and volunteers. A recent project organized in partnership with Food Bank required the services of volunteers to distribute food parcels for those that needed them during the holy month of Ramadan: 30 out of 50 volunteer positions were filled through an advertisement on Facebook, with volunteers receiving specific training in community development methods, which they then passed on to the families to whom they delivered food. Google Docs is another tool which Maadi uses on a day-to-day basis. It allows you to work "virtually" by create an online workspace where documents can be published and read by selected members.

For more established organizations like the [Lambi Fund](#), a grassroots grantmaker in Haiti, social networking sites offer an almost unlimited potential and are a focal point of their work. According to Executive Director, Karen Ashmore, with so many technological mediums now to choose from, the Fund was careful to avoid spreading itself too thinking across too many sites and, instead, targeted specific websites that would made most sense for the organisation's development as an activist organization. The Lambi Fund is a "Twitterer", regularly posts videos on YouTube and

regularly features on blog sites such as that of the celebrity blogger Perez Hilton, as well as other sites such as Concreteloop, Green Belt Movement and Wunderground. Lambi also has a large presence on Facebook with a "group" page, a "fan" page and a "cause" page. ("Causes" on Facebook is itself based on the notion of "democratizing activism" by providing "equal opportunities" for individuals to participate, leverage their own networks, raise funds and become politically active on issues that they care about).

It is in the area of online fundraising where the Lambi Fund has begun to reap real (as against "virtual") returns. Sites such as globalgiving.com, [Network for Good](http://NetworkforGood.com), [ReliefWeb](http://ReliefWeb.org), [Catalogue for Philanthropy](http://CatalogueforPhilanthropy.com) and [Universal Giving](http://UniversalGiving.com) allow users to search according to their interests and then donate online. Through these, as well as Haitian Diaspora websites such as Haiti Innovation, Windows on Haiti and Haiti American Professional the Lambi Fund has dramatically increased their donation income, from 42 online donations in 2006, totalling \$3,401, to 941 donations in 2008 totaling \$98,452. By using cheap or free online technologies, as well as the services of interns from a local university the Fund has further managed to reduce costs.

Social Media & Canada's community foundations: Jane Humphries of Community Foundations of Canada contributed this view from Canada

Blogging. Twitter. Facebook. The world wide Web 2.0 has taken root in Canada, changing the way we communicate, as individuals and as communities. And while there is incredible potential for social media tools to make it easier than ever to share the community foundation story, the adoption of these tools is still in its infancy in the Canadian movement.

Among the country's 165 community foundations, a relatively small proportion are adopting social media tools at this stage, but interest is high. For instance, the finance directors of the country's largest foundations chose a session on social media for an upcoming peer gathering – a sure sign that social media isn't just the realm of communications staff.

The Winnipeg Foundation, the country's oldest, and one of its largest community foundations, was one of the first to launch a monthly CEO blog. More than 100 are 'following' the blog since appearance last September. The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation recognized change was on the horizon when it decided to migrate its' site to IGLOO, an interactive web platform. Down the road, the foundation plans to explore possibilities for groups working on a particular issue or area of interest to be able to interact online.

Community Foundations of Canada has created Sharepoint collaboration spaces for various programs over the past several years. The spaces create online communities of interest such as youth in philanthropy and our Vital Signs program, where there are a range of discussions and documents that need to be shared over a period of time. In addition, CFC's new website offers an RSS feed to visitors, allowing them 'pull' new information from our site quickly and easily.

While the response is measured regarding the value of applications like Facebook, some foundations are using it to promote events and many staffers are connecting online with other community foundation leaders and staff. Multi-media tools like podcasts and video postings are being enthusiastically embraced and a number of

Canadian community foundations are posting public service announcements and other videos on YouTube.

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation has a Twitter page, as well as a Facebook page. So far, the feedback has been positive and eye-opening – a U.S. community foundation contacted the foundation after coming across a quote by Albert Camus that GSJCF posted on Twitter. Twitter also offers an easy and timely approach to fundraising. For example, a recent 'Tweet' invites people to set up a fund with GSCF in honour of Mother's Day, followed by a link to their site.

Stephanie Bogle, who updates the Twitter page sees a two-fold value: the increased opportunity for peer-networking, and its effectiveness in driving people to the organization's website. She is also encouraged by a recent survey that found highly satisfied visitors to nonprofit websites were 49% more likely to donate money than compared to dissatisfied visitors.

Keen yet cautious is the approach here. The many choices available for online networking can easily feel overwhelming and staff stress the need to pick and choose carefully, particularly since they require time to maintain and manage. But for those interested in expanding their network or drawing attention to a new, user-friendly website the benefits can be worth it.

Community philanthropy news update

From beer mat to World Summit Award for "MyMachine", Community Foundation of West Flanders

Congratulations to the Community Foundation of West-Flanders in Belgium, whose MyMachine project has been selected by the World Summit Award, a global initiative selecting and promoting the world's best e-Content and innovative ICF application, as one of the most outstanding examples of creative and innovative e-content in the world. According to Jan Despiegelaere, Coordinator of the community foundation, the idea for the MyMachine project, which is aimed at stimulating and celebrating creativity, started as an idea jotted down on a beer mat. The project consists of 3-step process: first, primary children come up with an idea for their own individual "Dream Machine", then the idea is passed on to design, engineering and art students who transform the idea into a practical design. Finally, students in technological colleges produce actual prototypes of these machines. As the project began to take off, one of the community foundations corporate partners, Indiegrouop, not only provided a website for the project (www.mymachine.be), but also set up an online tool which allows children, students and all others involved to work on these machines in a virtual environment. The project will be presented at the WSA gala in September (in Mexico – H1N1 flu permitting) in Monterrey, Mexico to experts from the IT industry and governments from around the world.



My machine founders. From left to right, Piet Grymonprez, Jan Despiegelaere and Filip Meuris

In talking about the importance of the project to the Community Foundation of West Flanders, Jan described it as 'first of all, ... it is a project that strengthens the community... It also strengthens our local position and general appreciation as a convenor, and it most surely has opened the door to new potential donors or partners with little interest in 'charitable' activities'.



Launchday of the MyMachine project at the Harelbeke Elementary School

Study Describes Growth of Community Foundations in Mexico

A new, comprehensive study of 21 community foundations in Mexico reports that these organizations are strengthening the civic fabric and playing a pivotal role in growing a new type of philanthropy in Mexican communities.

According to 2007 financial information, the community foundations raised more than \$30.8 million (U.S. dollars) in assets since their founding, principally from local, private sources. That figure places Mexico at the forefront of Latin America's grassroots philanthropy. This is especially noteworthy, the study says, because many of the 21 community foundations are still quite new and have small staffs.

The study was funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Global Fund for Community Foundations and the Inter-American Foundation, and was conducted by a U.S.-Mexico research team – Teamworks, based in San Francisco, and *Alternativas y Capacidades*, based in Mexico City. The objective of the research was to establish a current overview of Mexican community foundations, describing their main characteristics and the support system for their development.

Community foundations are nonprofit organizations that work in defined geographic areas such as cities or states, seek to develop a culture of philanthropy and work to strengthen civil society. Mexico's community foundations have developed in regions ranging from the Mexico-U.S. border cities of Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez on the north to Oaxaca in south-central Mexico.

The study found that the community foundations are making a difference in their communities, giving grants, providing training and creating local networks to address priority social issues. Through them, Mexico has become the Latin American pioneer in the use of philanthropy to foster citizen action, address poverty, teach youth about the benefits of community involvement, and provide economically viable options in rural, indigenous areas to keep families together.

Copies are available for downloading at the Web sites of the two firms that conducted the study, Teamworks (www.sfteamworks.com) and Alternativas y Capacidades (www.alternativasociales.org).

For additional information, please contact:

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Fellowships available!

The Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York is accepting applications for the fall 2009 **Senior International Fellows Program**. The programme in 2009 will focus on the topic of community foundations. Proposals for position papers on Diaspora philanthropy will also be considered. For program details, eligibility requirements and application guidelines, please click [here](#).

Uthungulu Community Foundation – grantee visits keep board engaged and informed

In May, a visit by representatives of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and Global Fund for Community Foundations to Uthungulu Community Foundation (UCF) in Richards Bay, South Africa, provided the perfect opportunity to organize site visits for both board members and visitors to a range of UCF's grantees. UCF tries to



Board members and director of UCF and the Director of "Reaching Out" a Richards Bay-based grantee partner

organize such visits at least once a year to ensure that board members remain informed and involved in the work of the foundation. Projects visited included a counseling service for victims of domestic violence, a health care centre which provides basic medical and counseling services particularly for those affected by HIV / AIDS and whose market garden provides both food and employment within the local community and a pre-school located in a low-income rural area.

Emerging grantmaker, LIN Foundation, in Vietnam, gets its license

Recent GFCF grantee partner the LIN Foundation, an emerging local grantmaker in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam has finally surmounted bureaucratic obstacles in a long and obtained its license.

With generous start-up capital from a local private sector partner, the Foundation has been able to engage in grantmaking from the earliest stages of its existence and since February 2008 has made grants to eleven local non-profit organizations to support nineteen different projects on behalf of seven corporate or individual philanthropists. By March this year, grants totaling \$8,600 USD had already been disbursed. Grants were allocated towards building skills to generate income and provide opportunities, to rebuild the roof of a local training center, to support the distribution of 1,000 self-help books for cancer patients and their families, to provide scholarships to two students living with disabilities and to cover school fees for 28 poor students living without residency cards in HCMC.

LIN has also been directly involved with projects, facilitating the distribution of free meals for 60 beneficiaries at Nhat Hong - a shelter for the blind, and helping to collect donations of second hand goods (e.g. clothes, shoes, accessories and household appliances) to a local thrift shop for poor families, which is operated by the Hoi Quan Den Voi Nhat - a social club and gathering place for HCMC social workers. In this way, the LIN Foundation has been able to make its presence felt both as a grantmaker and on the ground, raising its profile as well as proving itself to be actively engaged with the local community.

By collaborating with the well established Saigon Children's Charity on its *Working With Others* small grant scheme, LIN has had the benefit of working with an organization already well established in and around the Ho Chi Minh City area.

Calendar

Grantmakers without Borders 9th Annual Conference - Global Social change philanthropy, 8-10 June, Washington DC

Grantmakers from around the world will converge on the US capital to discuss and strengthen their understanding of strategic and effective Global Giving. There will be over 30 sessions for participants to choose from, covering grantmaking practice, grant-to-grantee relations, collaborative grantmaking, social change and social justice. For more information, click [here](#).

Global Corporate Responsibility Reporting Summit, 11-12 June, Brussels

CSR has boomed since the end of the previous decade, becoming an integral aspect of corporate society. The summit will discuss what is at the forefront of modern CSR. For more information, click [here](#).

Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural Areas, 11-12 June, Budapest

The conference aims to highlight the need for enhanced cooperation with the different actors in the field of social policies, agricultural development, regional policy and statistics to fight poverty and social exclusion in rural areas. [More information](#).

9th International workshop on Resource Mobilization, 25-28 June, Bangalore

A 4 day workshop that brings together the best fundraising trainers and practitioners from around the world. The IWRM will focus on building fundraising capacity of non-profit organisations. [More information](#).

Coming up in the next GFCF e-bulletin... a look at the role of community foundation and local grantmaker networks and alliances, in Europe and beyond.

If you have a story or experience you would like to share on this issue, or other news and comments, please contact us at info@wings-globalfund.org