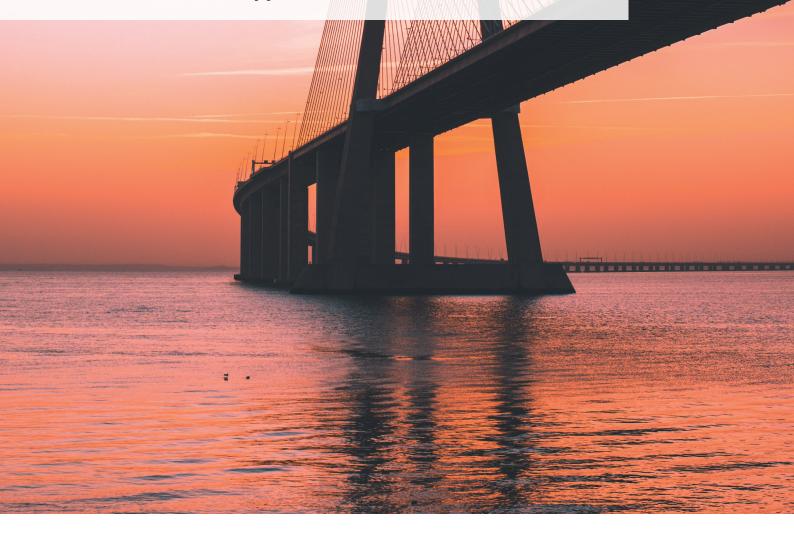
FEBRUARY 2021

ASSETS, CAPACITY, TRUST

Role of Community Foundations in Development of Local Philanthropy









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AUTHORS



Barry Knight is Executive Director of the Centre for Research and Innovation in Social Policy (CENTRIS) and an adviser of the Global Fund for Community Foundations, particularly in the areas of evaluation and knowledge management. He is a social scientist who has worked for the UK Government as an adviser on policy and grants for non-profit organisations. His early career was spent in research and teaching at Cambridge University and he later worked for the European Commission. He has written books on economic development, family policy, inner cities, the voluntary sector, and social enterprise. He is the author of <u>Rethinking Poverty</u>, published in 2017.



Larisa Avrorina is Program Director at CAF Russia with over 20 years of experience in the non-profit sector. Larisa has been actively involved in the development of many support programs for NGOs, grantmaking and evaluation of social projects in various areas. Larisa is the author of a number of studies and publications on NGO development and activities. Since 2007 she has been the head of the Program for the Support of Community Philanthropy.

FOREWORD





Jenny Hodgson

Maria Chertok

Music I dissected like a corpse. Proved its harmonies like higher mathematics. Alexander Pushkin, Mozart and Salieri

How to best convey the story of the slow but enduring change that community foundations across Russia are contributing to at the local level? Of course, sharing individual stories is one way to go about it. Like listening to a piece of music, such stories can leave a lasting impression, a warm glow of inspiration. But they can sometimes also serve to reinforce the notion that change is random, unintentional, the result of chance or a lucky coincidence, rather than anything more systemic or durable.

If community philanthropy is to demonstrate its impact as a field and a practice, whose strength lies in its very ability to help gather and organize the different invisible pieces that are essential to any process of lasting change – the trust, the relationships, the contributions within and of communities – then it needs a new methodology that can both "measure" the music and, at the same time, celebrate and augment its harmony and beauty.

It goes without saying that communicating community philanthropy's effectiveness as an approach is important when it comes to communicating with the outside world, such as government, funders and other stakeholders who may have resources that they could potentially invest. However, as we have both learned over our many years' experience in this field, it is also as important for community philanthropy organisations themselves. For the individual people involved – leaders, staff, volunteers, not to mention community members themselves – being able to track the small, often invisible, marks of progress, and how together they all contribute to a bigger version of success, is critical, whether it is the moment someone decides to join a giving circle, or volunteers their time, or submits an application for a project (and then does any of these again the next time round!).

Being able to tell this more nuanced and complex story is important, both as a way to demonstrate the value of community foundations' work, but also to help build a sense of confidence among those involved in the work that they are driving real change at the community level. This report is the result of four Russian community foundations' determination to champion such a message by working in ways that combined both the practical and inspirational elements of their work.

We at CAF Russia and the Global Fund for Community Foundations have been pleased to support them in this process and we are delighted to share this report which, we believe, marks an important contribution to the global field and is relevant for community philanthropy organisations, no matter where they are in the world.

Jenny Hodgson, Global Fund for Community Foundations Maria Chertok, CAF Russia

INTRODUCTION

The concept of community philanthropy continues to take shape across countries. Researchers and civil society development institutions in many countries are concerned with the same questions: what role community philanthropy plays in local development, what ideas and resources are invested in it, and how it can be measured and evaluated.

We asked ourselves the same questions within the Program for Support of Community Philanthropy implemented by CAF Russia. Together with community foundations involved in the program we started to look for solutions. New research presented in this report demonstrates the use of ACT (Assets-Capacity-Trust) framework to find answers to these questions. This report highlights what we found important, what were the results and the impact of the work. Barry Knight, advisor of the Global Fund for Community Foundations, contributed greatly to this evaluation report and acted as



Larisa Avrorina, Program Director, CAF Russia

a consultant and promoter of the ACT framework. His experience in community philanthropy development in different countries formed the basis for this research.

As leaders of community philanthropy development, foundations themselves should constantly analyze and evaluate their activities. Today's agenda for community foundations and the goals they set are all about achieving sustainability, evidencing the importance of their work, engaging new supporters and partners, assessing community capacity and resources and finding common ground for meaningful interaction.

This research was quite long-term and covered a period of two years. It was important not only to grasp the ACT framework, but also to explore the indicators based on the actual day-to-day work of the CFs, and show how the concept worked in practice. This work began when the framework was presented at the School for Community Foundations in Perm in 2017, which has been the hub for CFs' training and exchange of best practices for a number of years. Then the framework described only ideas, approaches and directions. For the next few days the participants of the school discussed how to develop it further to the level of indicators. It was interesting for everyone to play a new role – the role of researchers, to find common characteristics inherent in foundations and determine their functions in the development of community philanthropy. Eventually the indicators were identified and at the next stage community foundations started to apply, use and look for evidence of the relevance of the new approach.

Four foundations, representing different regions and communities, from urban to rural, decided to undertake this joint pioneering work. Looking at themselves through the lens of community, reconsidering work priorities, evaluating things no one evaluated before required additional resources and time.

The work accomplished made it possible for the foundations not only to evaluate the knowledge and practices acquired over the years of their work and to see their value through the eyes of community itself, but also to understand how to gain community trust. Applying the ACT framework the CFs were able to see new prospects and opportunities and build their strategy for the future.

EVALUATION WITHIN THE PROGRAM FOR SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY

Since 1997, CAF Russia has supported the development of community foundations (CFs) in Russia. It has acted as a resource offering information, technical assistance, consultancy, networking activities and analytical services to the field.

Community foundations are non-profit organizations that pool resources of a community, engage business, government and public organizations to contribute into community development and social initiatives. The first community foundations in Russia were established in Togliatti (1998) and Tyumen (1999), in the small town of Chaikovsky, Perm Territory (1999), and later became experimental hubs for community philanthropy development.

There are now 80 CFs in Russia, which is a remarkable growth following the creation of the first one in 1998. The nature of these developments has recently been described by Jenny Hodgson in <u>A lesson in vision and patience: The well-kept secret of Russian community foundations</u>.

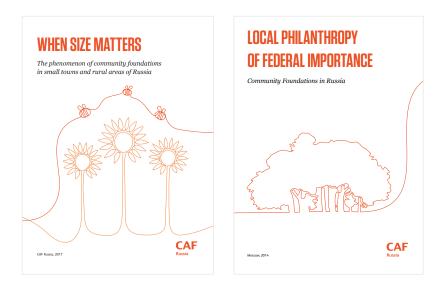


Community Philanthropy Forum. Twentieth anniversary of CFs in Russia

Evaluation has always been an important feature of CAF's Program for Support of Community Philanthropy. This has involved regular external and internal evaluations at each stage. This has involved monitoring the foundations' activities (analysis of grantees' reports, websites, annual reports and other information materials). Evaluation has been based on the development of indicators that determine progress in the development of foundations, taking into account changes in their role in communities.

The Program pays special attention to the training of regional experts and community foundations' employees in internal evaluation (as a result a network of such specialists has been formed) to ensure that evaluation is a necessary part in CFs' activities.

CAF explores not only the activities of particular CFs, but also their importance in the Russian philanthropic sector. In 2014 a report 'Local philanthropy of federal importance. Community foundations in Russia' was published. And later in 2017 another report was published 'When size matters. The phenomenon of community foundations in small towns and rural areas of Russia'.



The aggregation and analysis of the results of internal and external evaluations make it possible to adjust and fine-tune the Program in accordance with the level of CFs' institutional development, taking account both of developments in the foundations themselves and changes in external conditions in communities.

EVALUATING THE ROLE OF CFs AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY

The purpose of this evaluation was to understand how CFs and their activities bring about social change and what role they play in their communities.

We used two key data sources to assess the role and contribution of community foundations. Together these two data sources gave insights into the growing field of community philanthropy in Russia and provided more information compared with earlier CAF studies.

- 1. Two surveys of CF leaders on the priorities of their work were held respectively in 2017/18 and in 2019/20. The heads of CFs described in detail the ongoing changes in the communities during the interviews. Twenty-one foundations responded to the first survey and nineteen to the second.
- 2. For the first time the evaluation was carried out based on the ACT (assets, capacity, trust) framework developed by the Global Fund for Community Foundations. The framework was presented to the participants of the School for Community Foundations in 2017 by Barry Knight, GFCF expert, and it was suggested community philanthropy practitioners assess their work based on it.

For the first time foundations realized a need to assess their social significance and the attitude of community towards them using the indicator of 'trust'. The concept of 'trust' is critically important for the development of community philanthropy. The data from the surveys highlights that this indicator is the most important and determines the added value created by CFs (1st work priority in order of importance in 2018 and 2020).

18 out of 19 respondents pointed out building trust as the most important area of work.





The ACT framework

Over the past decade or so, the Global Fund for Community Foundations has pioneered the ACT framework, based on empirical testing of the work of community philanthropy across the world.

The ACT framework measures assets, capacities and trust, which are three valuable outcomes of community foundations.



Assets are resources held by a community that take a variety of forms, including but not restricted to money, designed to ensure the long-term independence of the community foundation and its work.



Capacity is agency, the sense that local people can do things that they see as important within their communities, and this entails mobilising people and mobilising money.



Trust underpins the relationships in a community and brings peace, harmony and prosperity. It is the social glue that welds local people together to achieve what they want in their communities.

Four Russian CFs from Angarsk, Perm, Pryazha and Pskov took part in the whole process of evaluation. These CFs represent four different types of communities, within different environments. Their reports are based on systematic research using indicators devised by community foundations themselves.

The four case studies give detailed accounts about how local people are using existing resources in their community to mobilise people and money to build communities based on peace, harmony and prosperity. In each case the community foundation is shown to be an institution at the heart of the community and owned by members of the community.

Most significant change

The community foundations play a vital role in 'civic activism' – citizens stepping forward to take control of their own destinies by playing a leading role in their communities. The engagement of citizens builds the power of communities.

The biggest achievement was gaining trust amongst the local community. Now most of the community initiatives are implemented with the comprehensive support of the people. Three giving circles were held, and four projects supported. The map of citizens' civil initiatives was published (#PowerTogether).'

Such changes were leading to a decrease in dependency and an increased sense of agency among people commonly regarded as 'beneficiaries':

'Having learned new skills and experience, people in their silver and golden age stopped being merely beneficiaries and were able to manage the project themselves and successfully attract resources.'

Citizens stepping forward to take control of their own destinies by playing a leading role in their communities. The engagement of citizens builds the power of communities.



CFs actively use two techniques to build community philanthropy: <u>#GivingTuesday</u> and <u>Giving Circles</u>. These seem to have widespread popularity and have a key role in transforming passive beneficiaries into active agents of change.

Not only do the growth of trust and civic engagement build capacity, but they also bring financial gains. For example, an increase in the number of private donors.

People are engaged through charity events, they show interest in foundations and respond to fundraising initiatives (for example, through crowdfunding platforms).

Giving circle, Vedlozero settlement, Pryazha district

ACT FRAMEWORK IN PRACTICE

CAF Russia began to use the ACT framework with the Russian community foundation sector at the School for Community Foundations held in Perm in November 2017. This was a participative workshop in which community foundations themselves adjusted the framework and developed indicators for Russia.



School for Community Foundations. Perm, 2017

School participants devised a system of indicators for each of the categories of 'assets', 'capacity' and 'trust'. The group designed a matrix setting out performance indicators describing (a) the current situation, (b) the desirable situation and (c) steps necessary to reach the desirable situation. The matrix looks like this:

Table 1: Performance Indicators for Assets, Capacity and Trust

Indicator	Current situation	Desirable situation	Steps to reach desirable situation
Assets			
# sources of funds			
# different methods available to the community foundation			
# organizations and people contributing to the work of the community			
# different groups of people contributing to the work of the community foundation			
Capacity			
# new ideas/initiatives in community			
# NGOs and initiative groups in the territory			
Community foundation team works with whole community			
Trust			
# Giving sources in community			
# Applications to foundation			
# Participants in community development (including those who remain loyal to foundation)			
# Partnerships in community (including joint implementing initiatives with government and business)			

The above matrix would be used to monitor the performance of the community foundations over time to see the extent to which the actions taken by the foundation would close the gap between the actual situation and the desirable one.

Four community foundations were able to use the matrix to assess their performance. These were in Pskov, Pryazha, Angarsk, and Perm.

Four foundations used the ACT matrix to assess their performance for a 2-year period (2017–2019).



Each of the foundations embarked on an evaluation of the work in a systematic way. They followed a common template so that they collected material on the nature of the foundation, the nature of the community, and stories of success, as well as detailed assessments on the impact of their work on the assets, capacities and trust in their localities. Findings were used to draw conclusions about the value of their work, learn lessons and make plans for their future work.

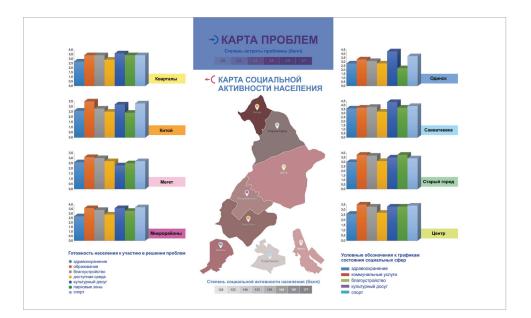
The foundations assessed their work at two points in time – first in 2017 and second in 2019/20. They assessed their progress against their plans.

Although all using a common template, foundations were free to approach the work in ways of their choosing. Some used an external consultant, while others relied on internal staff.

In addition, some of the foundations used an approach called the <u>'Social Passport of the</u> <u>Territory'</u>.

Reference. Social Passport of the Territory

This is a research method designed to understand the nature and dynamics of local areas. Particular attention is given to assessing the quality of life in a municipality. The methodology is being tried out in various regions of Russia based on the pioneering work of the Sodeistvie Foundation in Perm, which developed a unified methodology for creating a social passport that can be used in various types of municipalities – a municipal district, a city, an urban-type settlement, and even a micro-district of a million-plus city. So far about 30 social passports have been created in 10 regions of Russia. The methodology has been established as an accessible, understandable and effective tool in solving the problems of the territory by the local community. It allows for the assessment of living standards and the influence residents have on the development of the territory. The results are used to initiate a dialogue, to allow better and more efficient use of available resources, and to develop horizontal relationships in communities.



CF characteristics

The foundations involved in the study operate in different regions and communities. Pskov and Angarsk foundations are mainly focused on urban communities with populations of 210,340 and 224,630 people respectively. Melnitsa Foundation is actively working in its settlement Pryazha with a population of 3,425 people and the 'Sodeistive' Foundation focuses on the development of rural communities in the Perm region, with a total population exceeding 1 million people, and creating the regional Alliance of Community Foundations.

Such variation inevitably affects the kinds of issues faced by each community foundation.

Although working in different places on different issues, the organisations had many shared characteristics. All were voluntary organisations with a trustee board, a small staff team and relied on volunteers. They all raised money from the local communities and encouraged local citizens to become active in working with deepseated local problems of employment, housing, transport and other matters that affect people's lives. All community foundations were highly active in their communities holding public events such as festivals, prize givings and celebrations.

This kind of work means a lot in terms of human development and social progress. Across Russia and in other places too, people are engaged in local public benefit activities for their communities, targeting people who are vulnerable in their communities, encouraging volunteers, raising funds, mobilising citizens, finding ways to connect with public authorities and the business community, and holding charity events.

What does such activity add up to and how can you measure its added value? This is where the 'assets, capacities and trust (ACT) framework' comes in. It is to this that we turn next.

Assets

We saw earlier that **assets** are resources that exist in a community. Assets include, but are not limited to money, and may exist in a variety of other forms.

Money

Money is important, nevertheless, because organisations cannot operate without it. Each community foundation had several income sources. These included individual donations, grants, fees for services, fundraising events, and money from businesses. A good proportion of the income came from local sources and from local people themselves.

The ACT framework enabled each foundation to conduct a review of its finances in the years from 2017 to 2019.

Local expertise

Money is important but not the only asset found in communities. Several of the community foundations drew on **local expertise**. For example, in Angarsk, there was a change in the way that the foundation was managed in mid-2019. Over the course of the year, professional experts were involved in the foundation's activities, who as volunteers, helped in solving particular professional issues. As a result, the foundation had more supporters (volunteers, NGOs, active citizens, entrepreneurs) and began to unite the expert community of Angarsk.

The analysis allows us to say that the assets of the Foundation are growing, as the Foundation has more supporters (volunteers, NGOs, active citizens, entrepreneurs)... We have recurring donations, the Board of Trustees strengthened (they care about the Foundation).'

Angarsk

This kind of development shows the power of local people in communities. We can see similar examples in other CFs.

'In 2015, the Foundation became a part of the local community: there is a 'pool' of interested and active philanthropists – individuals, commercial organizations and NGOs around it. This is evidenced by the general stability of the list of the Foundation's main partners, cited in annual reports – it has established links with the largest commercial and non-profit structures in the region.'

Pskov

In Perm, there was a conscious effort to treat the beneficiaries of their work – older people – as resources for the community, rather than a category of person merely in need of services.

It is striking that the foundations in this study included these people-based assets in their assessments of progress.



Capacity

Capacity is agency, the sense that local people can do things that they see as important within their communities. Once we have recognised and acknowledged assets that exist within a community, we can activate them by mobilising people and money in service of the society that local people want.

There were two important ways in which capacity was developed. The first was through participation of local people and the second through the partnership with other organisations.

- In Pskov, capacity was developed through Good City competitions, charity initiatives, needs assessment, work with volunteers, and scholarship programs. The foundation expanded its work both within the region and beyond leading to an increase in the number of active citizens driving developments.
- In Pryazha, the implementation of a Giving Circle series of charity events helped residents take a fresh look at their localities and how to change their appearance. At this stage, such forms of work as the Giving Circle helped to consolidate the results and provided a solid basis for further development. This resulted in the improvement of territories that took place in almost all settlements: new places for recreation, playgrounds, sports facilities, information boards and much more appeared.



In Angarsk, new projects and programs were introduced, such as the competition of social projects (grants), and a scholarship program for youth. This was part of a strategy to develop the capacity of non-profit organizations, by conducting individual and group consultations on writing applications for grants at the federal, regional and local levels. In Perm, which was by far the biggest of the community foundations participating in the evaluation, capacity was much increased. By 2019, the focus of the Sodeistvie Foundation shifted from that of a community foundation to that of a methodological resource centre for the territories it supports. This is due to the development of a financial support system for NGOs in rural areas through federal and regional programs (comfortable environment, proactive budgeting), grant competitions of Timchenko Foundation and Potanin Foundation etc.). 'Sodeistvie' developed capacities in supporting NGOs to write grant proposals, monitoring and evaluation and other technological capabilities. This is a remarkable feat of scaling up.

Trust

Trust underpins the relationships in a community and brings peace, harmony and prosperity. We saw with capacity that two kinds of relationships are critical to its healthy development: participation of people in the work of the foundation and the work of developing local civil society organisations to deliver programs.



The team of Melnitsa Foundation, Pryazha

Of the three indicators, trust is the most important because it is almost impossible to get anything done in a respectful way if it is absent. Trust is intangible but vital because it is what binds people together in joint work. All the community foundations recognised the importance of trust and saw it as a vital component in cooperation and cohesion of their areas. Measuring trust is not easy. Different factors and positive changes can demonstrate trust. It might be an increased number of partners and supporters, new joint projects.

In Pskov, for example, trust grew during the period of the study, evidenced by the fact that more than 60 organisations took part in #theanswerislocal (#silavmeste) initiative; business has begun to take part in joint events, and people from the community have become more responsive to becoming involved in the work of the foundation.

Correct positioning, implementation of successful programs, exchange of experience at the regional level contributed to the growth of trust to the foundation in Angarsk. In 2017, the Foundation had been in decline. Frequent changes in the management, a narrow approach to projects, and ineffective work led to a loss of trust by businesses and the wider community. Since the end of 2017, active work began on the re-establishment of the Foundation. Ineffective programs were closed. New staff were hired. Efforts were put into relationships with NGOs, government, business and active citizens. A new strategy involved exchange of experience at the regional and federal levels, so that over time, the Foundation became a platform for joining the efforts of NGOs in the city. This, suggested Angarsk Community Foundation, was due to the growing trust in the community and how people were now trusting them with money. This showed up in the demand for services, participation in communications activities and the development of partnerships.

The central factors in the success of the indicators on trust in Perm CF were the reputation of the CF head, interaction with federal initiatives and their promotion at the regional level. The fact that the foundation developed a system of communication with other foundations within the framework of the School for Community Foundations platform organized by Perm CF Alliance is a sign of trust from partner organizations.

Measuring trust is not easy. It might be an increased number of partners or supporters, new joint projects.



Trust can be measured through a survey. This was done in Pryazha. As part of the survey 'Social Passport of the Territory', 38.3 per cent of residents said that they were familiar with the activities of the foundation. Of these, 74.1 per cent said that their attitude to the foundation was 'most favourable', 23.9 per cent were 'neutral', and 1.1 per cent were 'suspicious'. Other measures supported these favourable results. Some 350 local people subscribed to the Fund's community on VK social network. Moreover, focus groups on the results of the 'Radius of Trust' project, showed that local people were becoming closer to each other, and are thinking more carefully about their native village and how to improve it. The number of donations from individuals is growing year-on-year, and this is one of the substantial indicators of the level of community trust in the foundation's work.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings from the ACT framework

The evaluation enabled each foundation to review and write about its work, reflecting on achievements and challenges in a two year period. We have seen how assets are the potential resources that are available in a community, capacities are the actions and agency that flow from mobilising those assets, and trust is the social glue that welds local people together to achieve what they want in their communities.

The story of each of the community foundations and their communities is different. There are, however, some common threads. Each one seeks a cultural transformation of their locality by building the 'social capital' of their place. They do this in a variety of ways, but the outcomes of their work can be measured in terms of assets, capacities and trust. If there is one term that adequately described this process it is that of encouraging active citizenship to build the community.

In Pryazha, the 'flagship' ice hockey project, which contributed to the life of every family that joined. Such high-profile work spun out into other activities – redesign of the foundation's website and cake baking as part of the 'good kitchen' programme. This was part of the 'positive dynamics in the development of the community over the past five years'.



A similar set of findings was found in Pskov. With high-profile activities such as festivals, all indicators suggest that the Foundation became an integral part of the local community, and meets its goals in the field of charity. This is not to say that the work has no challenges since it is sometimes difficult to motivate volunteers and there is no permanent volunteer pool to draw on. However, the Foundation managed to adapt to the problems of the regional community and test new tools. Impressive examples include the Giving Circle, an interactive charity map, and My History project.

In Angarsk, the community foundation has successfully re-invented itself in the past two years, recruiting new staff, shedding ineffective work and finding a new focus in building active citizenship. Since 2017, the New Angarsk Foundation has been continuously working in the direction of developing the capacity of non-profit organizations.

In Perm, the Foundation has undergone a transformation in becoming a regional resource centre for the development of social initiatives. It has consolidated its work on veterans and taken a systematic approach to developing the agency of older people in the region.

The value of the ACT framework

As part of the study, participants were asked to review the value of the ACT framework itself. This was its first use in Russia and, if it is to be used more extensively, it is important to get feedback to improve it. Such improvements are best undertaken by community foundations themselves, rather than by outsiders, since measurement should be based on what matters in local communities.

Overall, the CFs' views of the framework were favourable. The foundations that tested it consider this work useful for further development of the organization and for a better understanding of their role and capabilities in the community.



The ACT review helped organisations to plan. The system of indicators helped to correctly prioritize the work.

The inclusion of the sections 'desirable situation for the future' and 'steps to achieve the desired situation' in the final assessment table helps the foundation's management to identify the real prospects for further development of the organization and allows it to determine real steps and actions to achieve the planned results.'

Furthermore, the system allows longitudinal tracking. The ability to compare data collected over the years allows the organization, if desired, to combine the regular assessment of the activities of the CF with full monitoring quite easily, which is important when an organization has been operating in the territory for a rather long time.

The evaluation of a CF's work using the ACT framework is not a rigid template with a particular set of indicators, but an adaptable tool which may be adjusted for your needs



A particularly notable feature was the fact that the review could be done internally without the additional expense and complication of hiring an external consultant. Inevitably arising in such a situation, excessive subjectivity and 'personal partiality' of internal experts can be largely neutralized by the rigor and clarity of the developed indicators.

The ACT framework should be seen as an enabling framework for people to review and develop their work, rather than a rigid template that must be filled in using a particular set of indicators. This is an adaptable tool that they find useful, which will enable them to assess what they do, change their plans if need be and communicate the results to people in their community, in Russia and in the wider world.

Next steps

This kind of evaluation allows us to take a new step towards understanding the value of community philanthropy, especially in terms of forms and methods of work with the community. CFs are a motor for civic activism and have become embedded in their communities as centres of development, rather than merely searching for resources to support particular target groups.

CFs have now become more precise in measuring community needs and assessing the level of trust, and this in turn affects the sustainability of foundations.



It is important to continue the process of experimentation of community philanthropy in Russia. A particularly useful next step would be to extend the work of the ACT framework, perhaps in four new localities to build up the collective knowledge base of community philanthropy in Russia.

The work here has resonance with work taking place in other parts of the world and it is important to connect this experience to the wider <u>#ShiftThePower</u> movement.

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Assets, Capacity, Trust

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We are a public charity working to build a generosity movement, motivating society to give more effectively and helping to transform lives and communities in Russia. We develop culture of giving, strengthen communities working together for sustainable development and support improvement of quality and access to care for everyone.