

# The Foundation Review

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Volume 9  
Issue 3 *Global Community Philanthropy*

Article 4

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8-2017

## Editorial

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### Recommended Citation

Franklin, Jason (2017) "Editorial," *The Foundation Review*: Vol. 9: Iss. 3, Article 4.  
<https://doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.1382>  
Available at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr/vol9/iss3/4>

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# editorial

This issue of *The Foundation Review* offers new insights into the growing field of global community philanthropy. Several articles look more deeply into specific nations: retrospective assessments of the development of community giving in Vietnam and Russia sit alongside a more theoretical reflection grounded in the South African experience of community giving as a vehicle for consciousness-raising. This issue also offers more practical assessments of specific practices, including social return on investment (SROI) metrics from Romania, and the community university model from Brazil. Finally, it offers comparative assessments of giving circles as one form of community philanthropy in the U.S. and U.K., and explores approaches to community management of large scale assets in Canada, the U.S., and Ghana. Each of these articles, from the broad and theoretical to the specific and applied, offer compelling insights and perspective on the fast growing and complex field of global community philanthropy.



*Jason Franklin, Ph.D.*

## **What was the impetus for this issue of *The Foundation Review*?**

This issue of *The Foundation Review* got its start almost two years ago, soon after I began my tenure as the first W.K. Kellogg Community Philanthropy Chair here at the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University. It was clear from the start that part of the Kellogg Chair's work would be globally focused, and so Jenny Hodgson, executive director of the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF), was among the first people I reached out to.

Perhaps no organization has been more instrumental in the massive growth of community philanthropy practices across the globe in the past decade than GFCF. This collaborative fund was launched in 2006 as a pilot initiative of the World Bank, Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and WINGS (Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support — a global network of grantmaker support organizations and associations) in order to support the development of community foundations in transitioning and developing countries. In 2009, it became an independent institution, and since then, under Hodgson's leadership, the South Africa-based GFCF has reached across the globe to spur new organizing, build critical local capacity, and enable transcontinental learning, all in an effort to power this growing global philanthropic movement. Since its founding, the GFCF has awarded US\$4.2 million in grants to 176 organizations in 58 countries.<sup>1</sup>

As we talked about ways to collaborate, Hodgson noted that the research on global community philanthropy still remained underdeveloped. This discussion led to a March 2016 call for expressions of interest from scholars, evaluators, and community philanthropy leaders to propose ideas for possible collaborative research projects, with potential funding of US\$2,500-5,000 per project. We ultimately received over 50 research proposals, from Brazil to Bangladesh. Although not scientifically representative, the proposals were certainly reflective of the state of the global community philanthropy discourse. It was clear, for example, that there are parts of the world — in particular, parts of Asia and Africa — where the idea of organized community philanthropy is not as well established as in other locales. Similarly, there was a strong correlation between the sophistication or ambitions of

<sup>1</sup>Global Fund for Community Foundations. <http://www.globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/grants-awarded>.

research ideas and the existence of an established, or at least an identifiable, community philanthropy sector (however it defined itself), as indicated by the presence of at least one flagship institution. GFCF funded 14 projects from this initiative, and it is from these programs, and several others that received GFCF funding over the years, that we drew the focus of this issue of *The Foundation Review*. Each article that appears here was first submitted by a project team, then was subjected to peer review, and was ultimately accepted for publication.

It is safe to say that without the support of the Global Fund for Community Foundations this issue of *The Foundation Review* would not have happened. We are deeply grateful for both their direct support of several of the projects recounted in the following articles and their leadership in broader efforts to spur research on global community philanthropy and to build the field in general.

### So what do we know about global community philanthropy?

If no organization has done more to build global community philanthropy than GFCF, perhaps no one person has done more to help advance data and research on this movement than Barry Knight. As an adviser to GFCF and director of the U.K.-based think tank CENTRIS, Dr. Knight is one of the world's leading researchers helping the field better understand the dynamics of community philanthropy. Data collected for the Global Community Foundation Atlas (developed by the Foundation Center in partnership with GFCF, CENTRIS, and WINGS) offers the best data on the field to date. From this effort, we know that between 2000 and 2010, the most common type of community philanthropy institution — community foundations — grew by 86 percent, with an average of 70 institutions created every year. Today, there are over 1,800 place-based foundations around the world, granting more than US\$5 billion annually. Almost three-quarters of these are less than 25 years old.<sup>2</sup> However, community philanthropy is more than just community foundations. As Dr. Knight wrote in his overview of community philanthropy in Europe:

The growth in community foundations has been organic, messy and unorganized, characterized by the nuances of local context and by emerging practices and values that suit each local context. It has also been marked by a loosening of tight definitional ties to the U.S. community foundation model — signifying a shift from the close relationship of siblings to that of a larger extended family... In the case of 'community foundation', a better formulation is therefore 'community philanthropy.'<sup>3</sup>

This broader definition includes giving circles, informal giving groups, Youth Banks, crowdfunding platforms, giving days, women's funds, Jewish federations, Muslim *waqfs*, Korean *gehs*, and much more. As the introduction to a series of case studies of global community foundations commissioned by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (and also authored by Barry Knight with his colleague Andrew Milner) notes:

The core similarities matter— all in some way help geographic communities mobilize financial and other kinds of capital for improvement of the lives of residents. But so do the differences. Some have endowments, some don't. Some are large, more are small. Some call themselves community foundations, others do not. This diversity is one sign of community philanthropy's flexibility, potential, and rising popularity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Global Community Foundation Atlas, 2014.

<sup>3</sup>Knight, Barry (2017) *Community foundations in Europe*. (14–24) in Building Bridges for Local Good: A Guide to Community Foundations in Europe. (2017).

# editorial

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Today, thousands of organizations and hundreds of thousands of people are engaged in community philanthropy efforts across the globe. They are connected through a range of local, national, regional, and global networks that are advancing the practice. Perhaps the best recent summary of the state of the field is the 2015 in-depth review by Dr. Avila Kilmurray, which details the trends and patterns of community philanthropy in every region across the globe. First, she traces the development of the community foundation from its inception in 1914 — marked by the founding of the Cleveland Foundation in Ohio — through a century of development in North America; she then tracks its spread and adaptation across the world. Kilmurray notes the varied cultural and religious influences that shape community philanthropy in different regions and the impact of political and economic considerations on their growth and social role(s). Ultimately, Kilmurray observes the increasing connection between players in this global landscape and notes that “the circumstances of the Neelan Tiruchelvan Trust, pursuing a human rights focus in Sri Lanka, are very different from how the Vancouver Foundation experiences social need in Canada — and yet both are part of the global mosaic of community philanthropy.”<sup>5</sup>

## What does this issue contribute to global community philanthropy research?

Given this continued global growth — and daunting diversity of practice — how can a single journal issue hope to contribute to this diffuse body of knowledge? How, ultimately, can you understand a global movement?

While a comprehensive understanding of the field may be hard to achieve when contending with the varied experiences and approaches to community philanthropy across the globe, it is possible to gain a general understanding by approaching the topic from a number of angles, as this issue of *The Foundation Review* endeavors to do.

**Larisa Avrorina** and **Julia Khodorova** from CAF Russia and **Dana Doan** from the LIN Center for Community Development in Vietnam each offer us insights into the country-spanning development of community philanthropy in two remarkably different environments. Avrorina and Khodorova take us on a journey to Russia’s “back country,” the largely rural and remote parts of the world’s physically largest country, where almost four-in-ten Russians live. Largely excluded from the changes brought about by *perestroika*, this article highlights how the development of community foundations in these disperse, small communities are encouraging volunteerism and community activism. In contrast, Doan’s article takes us to the high-density, urban environment of Vietnam’s capital, Ho Chi Minh City. She reflects on the journey of the LIN Center for Community Development since its launch in 2009 and offers a case study on building community philanthropy in an urban, socialist market economy and the dynamics of donor engagement, communication, and partnership which must be addressed by community philanthropy advocates the world over.

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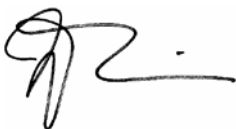
<sup>4</sup>Knight, Barry and Milner, Andrew (2016) [What Does Community Philanthropy Look Like: Case studies on community philanthropy - Vol. 1](https://www.mott.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WhatDoesCommunityPhilanthropyLookLike.pdf), Charles Stewart Mott Foundation: Flint, MI - <https://www.mott.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WhatDoesCommunityPhilanthropyLookLike.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>Kilmurray, Avila (2015) Community Philanthropy: [The Context, Concepts and Challenges – A Literature Review](http://www.globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/information-bank/literature-review/Literature_Review.pdf). Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy. Page 94. [http://www.globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/information-bank/literature-review/Literature\\_Review.pdf](http://www.globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/information-bank/literature-review/Literature_Review.pdf).

**Graciela Hopstein** and **Angela Eikenberry** each contribute articles that offer us another approach to understanding community philanthropy as they explore different models beyond the traditional community foundation. Hopstein introduces us to the West Zone Community University (WZCU), an initiative implemented by *Instituto Rio*, a community foundation based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The WZCU is not a formal institution of higher education, but rather a hub for informal education, training, and conversation in the community. Hopstein invites us to imagine the Community University model as one that aims to shift power and expand the common, central themes of the community philanthropy movement. Eikenberry explores the dynamics of giving circles, an increasingly popular approach to collective giving where (generally) small groups of people pool their funds and decide together where to direct their support. In this article, Eikenberry specifically investigates what type of organizations benefit from giving circles in the U.S. and U.K. and notes that generally small and locally based organizations, those which are most often overlooked by larger institutional donors, are prime beneficiaries of this form of community philanthropy.

Finally, **Mary Fifield**, **Cristina Vaileanu** and **Susan Wilkinson-Maposa** and **Bernie Dolley** each invite us to consider some of the future edges and emerging questions facing the field today. In doing so, they help us to refine our understanding of community philanthropy and imagine where this movement may be heading. First off, Fifield shares examples from the U.S., Canada, and Ghana of how community philanthropy is scaling up to support community-asset management in the face of growing pressure for industrial use of resources. Vaileanu offers an example of how one community foundation is confronting the perpetual challenge of measuring impact, applying a social return on investment methodology to analyze five innovative urban design and green technology projects funded by the Bucharest Community Foundation through a partnership with Porsche Romania. Both Fifield and Vaileanu offer examples of how community philanthropy is continuing to evolve and improve practice. Wilkinson-Maposa and Dolley, on the other hand, take a more reflective approach as they consider the asymmetrical power relations in international aid and development efforts. In the face of this challenge, they argue that community philanthropy must prioritize community empowerment alongside traditional priorities of strengthening capacities, developing assets, and building trust.

From countrywide reflections on the trajectory of community philanthropy, to exploring emerging forms or new techniques and priorities, the articles in this issue of *The Foundation Review* help us better understand this concept by offering a range of insights from experiences around the globe. Taken together, our hope is that these seven articles offer new insights and perspectives into aspects of the growing global movement for community philanthropy.



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