

Community Foundations – A Tool for Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Culture is increasingly understood as a resource for economic and social development. While existing World Bank instruments have proven suitable for financing infrastructure projects, including projects that preserve material culture such as historical buildings, structures and landscapes, it is often much more difficult to support preservation and use of small and intangible cultural heritage. Community Foundations present a practical instrument to supplement larger cultural heritage projects and to support the preservation and use of cultural heritage applying community driven development (CDD) approaches.

Culture is “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”¹ **Cultural heritage** is the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Cultural heritage manifests itself in diverse forms, from mega-structures, like pyramids, medieval cities, monastic complexes and museums, to languages and dialects, songs, art, folk stories, customs, practices and dances

Among other things culture is a **resource for economic and social development**. When poor communities preserve and develop their cultural assets, they are also generating new economic opportunities. It is possible for communities to generate income from cultural heritage and this creates employment, promotes tourism, stimulates micro enterprise development, fosters private investment and can reduce poverty. Cultural heritage tourism is a fast growing segment of the tourism industry, creating and sustaining jobs including providing opportunities for marginalized groups. It also strengthens social networks and cohesion as groups come together for a

collective purpose. For example in Rwanda, the Twa ethnic groups are known for their pottery. This cultural heritage has enabled them to form associations and market their products. Countries value their cultural heritage; for some cultural assets constitute a major part of their national resource base while others emphasize the income-generating potential of community cultural enterprises.

The appreciation of peoples’ own culture and heritage has important impacts on **social development**. Investment in cultural heritage can increase the awareness of a community’s own identity, boost confidence and can be a factor in social mobilization and empowerment. Appreciation of cultural heritage may promote inclusion and complement capacity building; sense of local ownership and economic incentives also encourage good governance practice.

The Role of Community Foundations

Community Foundations (CFs) are independent organizations that provide grants to support a variety of projects identified and implemented by local citizens. They are formed as partnerships between local civil society organizations, the business community and governmental bodies and are independently registered. The grantmaking undertaking of Community foundations responds to a broad spectrum of needs and opportunities. Community foundations are distinguished from other

¹ Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2002.

forms of local independent nonprofit organizations by the combination of the following six characteristics:

1. They act as grant-making foundations
2. Their mission is broadly defined (e.g. to improve quality of life in a community)
3. They serve geographically defined communities – a city, district or province
4. They are supported by a broad range of donors and seek philanthropic contributions primarily from inside the community
5. They are governed by multi-sectoral local boards reflecting the community
6. They build capital endowment, which is an important element of sustainability

The CF governing board decides on the type of projects to support, a decision that is intricately linked to local context. CFs have a limited funding base anchored primarily in donations from local individuals and families, businesses and in some countries also governmental sources. This means that CF grants are much more suitable to support small initiatives than large infrastructure projects. The average size of grants depends on the strategy chosen by the board and typically range from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand. CFs may also consider different grant size categories – small grants for beginners, and larger for advanced groups with a track record.

CF's grantmaking is driven by communities and responds to grant proposals submitted by various eligible community-based organizations. Proposals are evaluated by CF's Board or grant committee. Some CFs are proactive and allocate part of their budget specifically for cultural initiatives or hold special rounds of grants dedicated to culture.

Examples of Cultural Heritage Projects Supported by Community Foundations

Music

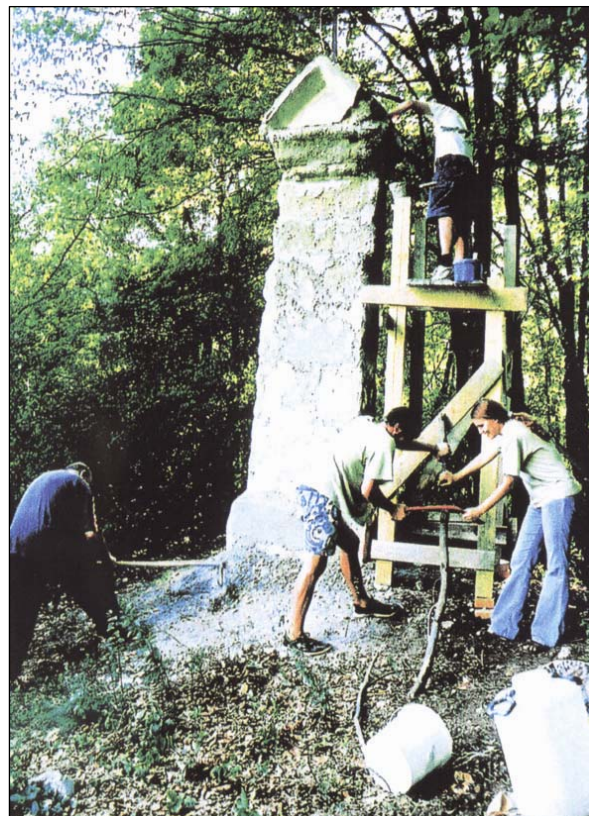
In **Estonia**, the region covered by the Viljandi Community Foundation is distinguished by its Mulgi culture and dialect. Folk music festivals, launched in Viljandi in 1993, have evolved into an annual four-day-long folklore festival, the largest of its kind in the country. The Community Foundation supports the festival by providing additional funds to buy folk music instruments for students, and by contributing towards the fees of children attending a camp for a training course on folk music. The festival also serves as an excellent place to promote the foundation, to gather support and donations.

In **Mexico**, a Tijuana based CF funded the Musical Band Sientimiento Purhepecha, to buy instruments to preserve and transmit their traditions to their children and to share them with other ethnic groups. They have also received a grant to record all their music.

The Modra Torysa CF in **Slovakia** regularly supports folklore festivals and projects of local folklore groups, including their participation at festivals abroad.

Preservation of Historical Monuments

Aluksne Community Foundation in **Latvia** provided a grant to a group of volunteers to improve and clean a historical Livonian settlement and ancient burial field, a cultural heritage monument of local significance. Another grant was provided for renovation of a historical wall in a manor complex, a cultural heritage monument of national importance. Nitra Community Foundation in **Slovakia** supported children groups to preserve the ruins of four medieval castles near the city. Under the guidance of an enthusiastic history teacher, the young people learn about the history of region and do simple maintenance and clean up work. During the winter children meet with various historians and archeologists to deepen their knowledge of local history.



A group of activists, supported by the Healthy City Community Foundation in Slovakia, repairing a historical monument on a tourist trail

Strengthening Cultural Identity

A group of youth in Talsi region in **Latvia** received a grant from the Talsi Community Foundation to participate at an expedition to research and document the cultural heritage, architectural and natural monuments in the region. Photographs of the project were included in a local Calendar. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of a local school in Spare the same CF awarded a grant that allowed pupils, teachers and parents to collect historical materials and establish the Spare school museum. Nitra CF supports cultural events for local citizens and tourists animating Nitra history in a nontraditional way. Living statues representing prominent personalities of the city history populated city's pedestrian zone, while bridges across the local river were used for an exhibition of artistic work of local elementary school pupils, reflecting the history of the place and region. The project culminated in a night theatrical show in the city's main square.

Cultural Tourism

Supported by a small grant from the Talsi community foundation, the Arlava region history and cultural heritage was documented and a tourist route around Arlava surroundings developed, including a tourism brochure. Supported by the Healthy City Community Foundation in Banska Bystrica, **Slovakia**, a group of local activists reconstructed part of historical Via Dolorosa, which is now a segment of a tourist trail and bike path.

Traditional Arts and Crafts

Simunye Community Tourism Association is located in **South Africa**'s Zululand region known as the Elephant Coast. The region is part of the Greater St. Lucia Wetlands Park, a World Heritage Site known for beautiful flora, fauna and cultural history. The Association provides information and entertainment to visitors to the Zululand region. Uthungulu Community Foundation grants supported the Association's arts and crafts work program, including woodwork, beadwork, sewing and marketing. Grants made by the Saratov Community Foundation in **Russia** facilitated a regional exhibition "Crafts of Saratov region", a unique opportunity for craft masters and their pupils to present their products. The theme of the event was 'love of motherland'. The goal of the project was to attract youth, people with disabilities, pensioners and all others towards the rebirth of traditional folk crafts as well as towards non-traditional and innovative directions in decorative arts. In **Mexico**, a group of indigenous women artisans Mujeres Artesanas in Baja California, received funds from the Tijuana based community foundation to buy tables and equipment to sell their crafts. The group preserves the traditional

crafts and costumes of their tribal ancestors, presenting their products at exhibitions and selling them at local markets in northern Baja.



A member of Mujeres Artesanas demonstrating her craft.

Culture of Minorities and Marginalized Groups

A grant made by Saratov CF in **Russia** supported the establishment of a small studio for production of "speaking books" for blind people recorded by volunteers. The recording studio tapes literary pieces of local authors, including some books in the Tatar language. The Volga Regional Museum in Saratov received support for their project "Volga region – melting pot of nations." This aimed to document and present the ethnic diversity of the region and educate citizens about the region's history and ethnography with special focus on women's heritage and arts. In a different region of Russia, Pervouralsk CF contributes to preserving cultural heritage of various Ural ethnic groups by supporting the Ural's Peoples Folklore Festival. In Baja California, a group of native Kumiai's received a grant of \$900 for a project called Adobe por Adobe – Building the Future of Our Kumiai Culture. The grant helped to build the capacity and skills of youth in traditional techniques of making adobe and created jobs in the community. **Slovakia's** Healthy City CF awarded over years several grants to "Theater from the Passage" that integrates mentally handicapped young people into community through their theatrical performance. New endowed fund dedicated to supporting the Theater on sustainable basis was recently established by a gift from a private donor to the Healthy City CF; revenues from investing this fund will be used to annually support new projects of the Theater.

Focal Points for Community Foundations and Cultural Heritage Work at the World Bank:

Community foundations work at the World Bank is coordinated by the **Community Driven Development and Local Governance Group** (www.worldbank.org/cdd). CDD is an approach that gives control over planning decisions and investment resources to community groups and local governments. CDD programs operate on the principles of local empowerment, participatory governance, demand-responsiveness, administrative autonomy, greater downward accountability, and enhanced local capacity. Currently, the CDD portfolio at the World Bank amounts to approximately \$ 2 billion a year.

Development of Community foundations in client countries is supported by grants from Global Fund for Community Foundations (www.wings-globalfund.org). The World Bank contributed to establishing this Global Fund through a grant from the Development Grant Facility as well as by participation in its design and governance.

The World Bank's work on cultural heritage is supported by the **Cultural Heritage in Sustainable Development Thematic Group** (CHSD) based in the Finance, Economics and Urban Development Department of the Bank. The CHSD is a community of

practitioners that support the promotion of cultural heritage within the World Bank. The CHSD works in partnership with cultural organizations, donor governments, foundations, private organizations, and regional organizations to mainstream the protection and proper use of culture assets as a vehicle to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

In 2000, the Italian Government established the **Italian Trust Fund for Culture and Sustainable Development** (ITFCSD). The trust fund aimed to further strengthen the World Bank's work in the field of cultural heritage. The ITFCSD is a major source of grant resources for cultural heritage activities at the World Bank. The ITFCSD provided about US\$ 4.2 million in 21 grants from 2002 through 2004 and has contributed to strengthening the Bank's capacity in the field of cultural heritage. It has created opportunities to build knowledge, establish practices, evaluate policies and foster coordination and partnership with other specialized agencies.

This note was prepared by Juraj Mesik. It is part of a series intending to disseminate good practice and key findings on community driven development. This series is edited by Social Development Department of the Sustainable Development Network of the World Bank and additional copies can also be requested via e-mail: socialdevelopment@worldbank.org