Gender & Development

ISSN: 1355-2074 (Print) 1364-9221 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cgde20

Disrupting and democratising development: community philanthropy as theory and practice

Jenny Hodgson

GENDER & DEVELOPMENT
2020, VOL. 28, NO. 1, 99–116
https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2020.1717214

Disrupting and democratising development: community philanthropy as theory and practice

Jenny Hodgson

Systems of community giving and self-help have always existed within different cultures and traditions around the world. But it is only recently that community philanthropy has started to gain visibility as a specific practice that has relevance to the broader field of international development. In this article, we focus on what community philanthropy looks like as development practice, drawing on examples from a global cohort of 16 organisations that identify with the community philanthropy concept. We define community philanthropy as a value-driven development practice that builds assets, capacities, and trust. In particular, it focuses on the role that local resources can play in community development, and how their presence can help influence power dynamics associated with international development. Ultimately, we show that community philanthropy is not merely emerging as a useful support structure on which mainstream development can build, but that it is far more radical than this. Community philanthropy practised by organisations with their roots in civil society and social justice movements can disrupt and democratise the system and create an alternative to 'development' as we know it.

Les systèmes de donations et d'entraide communautaires ont toujours existé dans différentes cultures et traditions de par le monde. Mais ce n'est que récemment que la philanthropie communautaire a commencé à acquérir une visibilité en tant que pratique spécifique revêtant une pertinence pour le domaine plus large du développement international. Dans cet article, nous nous concentrons sur ce qui constitue la philanthropie communautaire en tant que pratique de développement, en nous servant d'exemples émanant d'un groupe mondial de seize organisations qui se reconnaissent dans le concept de philanthropie communautaire. Nous définissons la philanthropie communautaire comme une pratique de développement impulsée par des valeurs et qui développe les biens, les capacités et la confiance. Elle se concentre en particulier sur le rôle que les ressources locales peuvent jouer dans le développement communautaire et sur la manière dont leur présence peut contribuer à influencer la dynamique du pouvoir associée au développement international. Nous démontrons en fin de compte que la philanthropie communautaire n'émerge pas seulement comme une structure de soutien utile sur laquelle peut se fonder le développement classique, mais qu'elle est bien plus radicale que cela. La philanthropie communautaire pratiquée par les organisations émanant de la société civile et de mouvements de justice sociale peut perturber et démocratiser le système et créer une alternative au « développement » tel que nous le connaissons.

KEYWORDS
community philanthropy; international development practices; international NGOs; power; grassroots

CONTACT Jenny Hodgson jenny@globalfundcf.org

En diferentes culturas y tradiciones de todo el mundo los sistemas de donación comunitaria y de autoayuda han existido desde siempre. Empero, solo recientemente la filantropía comunitaria comenzó a adquirir visibilidad como práctica específica relevante para el campo más amplio del desarrollo internacional. En el presente artículo nos enfocamos en cómo se percibe la filantropía comunitaria en cuanto práctica de desarrollo, recurriendo a ejemplos provenientes de una cohorte global de 16 organizaciones que se identifican con el concepto de filantropía comunitaria. En este sentido, definimos la filantropía comunitaria como una práctica de desarrollo basada en valores que generan activos, capacidades y confianza, particularmente centrada en el papel que pueden desempeñar los recursos locales en el desarrollo comunitario y en cómo su presencia puede contribuir a incidir en la dinámica de poder asociada al desarrollo internacional. En última instancia, exponemos que la filantropía comunitaria no opera simplemente como una estructura de apoyo útil sobre la cual puede cimentarse el desarrollo convencional; se trata de una práctica mucho más radical. La filantropía comunitaria desplegada por organizaciones arraigadas en la sociedad civil y los movimientos de justicia social puede perturbar y democratizar el sistema para crear una alternativa al "desarrollo" tal como lo conocemos.

Introduction

> Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing. (Arundhati Roy 2003)
>
> You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete. (Buckminster Fuller, in Quinn 1999, 137)

In 2016, the first Global Summit on Community Philanthropy marked an important moment in the emergence of a field. With it emerged the campaigning hashtag, #ShiftThePower.[1] The summit, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, brought together some 350 people from more than 60 different countries.[2] Its aim was not only to recognise and celebrate a growing global community philanthropy movement, but also to invite a broader range of people and organisations working in different parts of the development system to join forces and work together towards a new paradigm of people-led development. The past decade has seen the global community philanthropy movement become more visible, vocal, and organised (see Gilbert 2018; Hodgson and Knight 2016; Hodgson and Pond 2018). It includes new kinds of organisations and networks that have surfaced from the ground up, which all emphasise the role of local community resources in challenging conventional power dynamics and in producing qualitatively different outcomes. While money is important in community philanthropy, it is not central: instead, value is placed on generosity, trust, and solidarity, and on numbers and quality of relationships between people, communities, and institutions.

This article explores the emerging role and power of community philanthropy as a source of both alternative practice which seeks to activate and unlock community energies and assets, and as a rebuke of top-down mainstream development approaches. It assesses its potential to help shape broader efforts to move towards a more equitable and locally rooted system for people-led development. We will use the following definition of community philanthropy to inform our discussion here:

> Both a form of, and a force for, locally driven development that strengthens community capacity and voice, builds trust and, most importantly, taps into and builds on local resources, which are pooled together to build and sustain a strong community. (Doan 2019, 9)

Although community philanthropy has started to attract the interest of some institutional donors interested in exploring how top-down, donor-led, interventions can better foster bottom-up development (see Serafin and Tennyson, 2019),[3] it has yet to feature on the radar of mainstream development more broadly, despite the current preoccupation of the humanitarian and development sectors with the 'localisation' agenda, whose purpose is also to put 'local' at the heart of development work.[4]

Community philanthropy is also emerging at a moment when development and humanitarian organisations, ranging from the United Nations through to international non-government organisations (INGOs), are facing growing calls to shift their considerable power – much of which still tends to be concentrated in global headquarters – towards civil society in the global South (Doane 2019). Recent safeguarding scandals, accelerated by the #AidToo and #MeToo movements, have both dented public trust and raised questions around accountability and institutional cultures within many INGOs. Similarly, some argue that competition among INGOs for funding and a general bureaucratisation of the aid industry have also had the effect of diverting many away from their original values and purpose (Glennie 2018; Steets and Derzi-Horvath 2016). As Michael Edwards points out, many INGOs 'have become a comfortable part of the furniture of foreign aid that was first designed in the 1950', despite the dramatic changes in context that have taken place since then (Edwards 2016).

At the same time, while progressive INGOs may understand poverty as the outcome of marginalisation and inequality, this does not necessarily always translate into practice when it comes to day-to-day operations. At times, northern institutions stand accused of undermining southern civil society peers by co-opting the rhetoric of, say, gender equality and women's rights, in order to access funding from donors in the global North to deliver programmes which are based on business principles and hard financial calculations (Al-Karib 2018). Similarly, the closing space for civil society activism in many countries is causing INGOs to back away from engaging in overtly political work in partnership with local activists around issues of rights, particularly if it might jeopardise their ability to implement more neutral service delivery programmes in the same country. Finally, as INGOs 'localise' their structures and register as local organisations, many are actively involved in fundraising in those countries too, with all the advantages of a global communications support structure. This can have the effect of undermining and even crowding out the efforts of local civil society organisations that are looking to build public support for their work, often in the face of limited access to other funding sources. Increasingly, INGOs are being asked to consider their future role in the global civil society ecosystem, as sources of solidarity rather than as competitors, extractors, or resource-holders.

At the Pathways to Power Symposium in London in November 2019, one participant suggested that, in their current form, INGOs are not needed unless they are prepared to ask 'How do international civic organisations empower and support the local?'

We believe strongly that community philanthropy has much to offer in regard to conversations around participation in and ownership over 'development', civil society legitimacy, and power that can help inform in this process of 'right-sizing' of INGOs and re-configuration within the global civil society space. Although the organised field of community philanthropy is still relatively young, it constitutes an increasingly well-documented and theorised field of practice, which can offer insights and examples for development actors (INGOs and funders) who are looking to re-think their roles within the larger effort to achieve economic and social justice for people in the global South. To date, however, community philanthropy does not form part of the INGO 'playbook' of alternative strategies worth exploring.

This article aims to help close the gap in knowledge of community philanthropy within the formal development sector, and to argue for its relevance in current conversations around civil society resourcing and power. We will focus briefly on the origins of community philanthropy as a *specific development discourse* (as against a cultural historical phenomenon), which has roots in both the demand and the supply side of community development, before considering the potential it offers communities, above and beyond conventional Northern top-down funding relationships. We then share insights from a joint action-research project focused on the questions of measurement and power led by our organisation, the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF),[5] with 16 other organisations involved in community philanthropy that highlight practices and structures that emphasise people and their assets as a source of community power.[6]

Community philanthropy: two 'origin stories'

Self-help and traditional community structures: a demand-side proposition

Systems of community giving and self-help have always existed within different cultures and traditions around the world. Throughout history, people have found ways to organise their resources collectively to fulfil specific needs. Examples include the *minga*, or community work day, in Latin America; *harambee* in Kenya; *bayanihan* in the Philippines; *qogolela* in Zimbabwe; *stokvels* in South Africa; and hometown associations in Mexico, as well as other types of burial societies, merry-go-rounds, and co-operatives. All of these are premised on the practice of pooling contributions to create a shared resource which community members can access. In contexts where government delivery of basic services continues to be inadequate, these practices have continued to exist, serving as an important community-based social safety net that helps communities respond to day-to-day and emergency household needs such as medical costs, school fees, funerals, and so on.

These member-based groupings also play an important social role in strengthening bonds of kinship and social ties and, in some cases (such as *stokvels* in South Africa), they provide opportunities for collective asset management and growth (Mutuku and

Kaseke 2014). Overall, they function effectively because they are based on relationships of trust between members. Ledgers listing contributions and pay-outs form the basis of this trust, as do regular meetings of group members. Although the main beneficiaries of these groups are usually the members themselves, it is not uncommon for a group to look out beyond the immediate membership and decide to help non-members, including more vulnerable members of the community.

While specific rules and arrangements may vary, at their core these systems are organised around people and relationships and are bounded by clear rules. This kind of socially embedded collective action, which depends on a strong connective tissue between community members, has long been understood as a source of organising, both in ways that can advance the rights and interests of the most marginalised (Batliwala 2012), as well as reinforce the 'masculinist' status quo (see Baron *et al.* 2000).

The concept of social capital (and the sub-categories of 'bonding', 'bridging', and 'linking' social capital), is relevant here, drawing attention to the key importance of trust and reciprocity, and the relationship between the quality and extent of relationships a person might have and their relative social and economic status. Bonding social capital refers to connections to between members of a network who seem themselves as similar ('like you'), bridging social capital refers to respect and mutuality between people who are not necessarily alike in socio-demographic terms ('not like you'), and linking social capital refers to relationships of trust between people interacting across power differentials, which includes the ability to make claims from formal or institutional power (Gittell and Vidal 1998; Putnam 1995; Szreter and Woolcock 2004).

From the perspective of the formal development sector, such kinds of systems and structures may be hard to see or interact with. More importantly, although the work of Freire (1972) and Chambers (1983) on 'bottom up' or participatory development approaches have had an impact on how development was understood, many of these ideas have now come to exist in a silo away from thinking around development programming. Indeed, today's development actors seem to be increasingly driven to restructure the world in a Western image, where 'city-based trustees distinguished by their education and technical know-how join(ed) with the transnational development apparatus to expound on how deficient, tradition-bound villagers should live' (Li cited in Gilbert 2018, 10) and where a key focus is on the flow resources from the global North to the global South.

A renewed focus on documenting, understanding, and re-framing giving behaviours and complex money flows, and of individual and collective action at the community level, have been important drivers of the emerging community philanthropy discourse. Research projects that led to the publication of *The Poor Philanthropist: How and Why the Poor Help Each Other* (Wilkinson-Maposa and Alan Fowler 2005) have helped shaped this new narrative, in which systems of giving are understood beyond each individual act as a potential source of a more strategic, intentional organising of resources and voice in ways that can translate to expressions of community power. That, at least, was the thinking behind the creation of trail-blazing institutions, such as Tewa – the Nepal Women's Fund, a non-profit organisation which seeks to raise half of its funds from within Nepal, and the

Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) which helps communities to mobilise and pool their resources. More recently, this kind of exploration of local systems and structures has informed the development of newer initiatives and activities, such as the Dalit Community Foundation in India and the Zambian Governance Foundation for Civil Society[7] (Zambian Governance Foundation for Civil Society 2018).

Charitable giving and the US community foundation experience: the solution to a supply-side problem

A second, contrasting, source of inspiration for the growing community philanthropy movement is the history of a particular institutional form in the United States – the community foundation. The Cleveland Foundation (established in 1914) was the innovation of a prominent lawyer, banker, and citizen Frederick Goff, who was troubled by the inefficiencies of dormant philanthropic capital left by wealthy members of the community in perpetuity to address societal issues that were no longer relevant or had already been solved. 'Men die', he observed, 'and the whole face of things changes after they are gone' (quoted in Kroll 2017).

The Cleveland Foundation was the first well-documented pooled fund of its kind: a public philanthropic institution that held funds in perpetuity for, and on behalf of, the benefit of a particular community; a kind of flexible savings account, the interest on which could be drawn down in response to changing and sudden needs. This kind of long-term community asset would, in theory, allow a community's leader not just to respond to immediate circumstances, but also to plan for the future.[8]

Taken at face value, the term 'community foundation' – and the implication of financial resources held and grown over the long term for and by a community – is a powerful one, particularly in the context of the global South. Financial capital tends to lie largely in the hands of small numbers of elites, and individual savings, let alone investment, lie beyond the range of possibility for the majority. In the idea of a 'foundation', there is also a powerful notion of building up for the long term. However, helping communities to build up long-term local assets is not part of most mainstream development practice; in reality, a 'successful' project is more often one which involves funding being spent over a fixed – and usually short – timeframe (and usually, through some small miracle, exactly according to budget lines drawn up in a proposal written several years ago). As a proposition, the idea of the 'community foundation' is a simple yet radical one, particularly in the context of broader efforts to transform aid: rather than focusing on the delivery of projects, the emphasis becomes one of helping to put in place credible, long-term, systems and structures which allow communities to manage their own development and reduce dependency on external money and agendas.

To reiterate then, as a development practice community philanthropy has been shaped by two converging forces – one bottom-up and the other top-down. It introduces and emphasises the centrality of homegrown, horizontal systems, through which communities can organise themselves and their resources. Furthermore, it is also preoccupied with re-inventing institutional designs in ways can aggregate and direct different types of resources that might not normally sit alongside each other (external and local, big and small) and, by doing so, not only reduce inefficiencies but also build long-term community ownership and control into its structures of governance and ways of working.

Community co-investment: not just different, but better

The term ‘community-led development’ has long been a mainstay of the lexicon of international development and is often used interchangeably with terms including ‘locally driven’, ‘bottom-up’, and ‘development with a human face’. The notion of community-led development dates back to the 1960s and is associated with a strong emphasis on participation and a rights-based or pro-poor approach in which the key variables are the state and citizens’ ability to claim their rights. (It is perhaps also worth noting, in the context of this discussion of community philanthropy, earlier framings of community-led development saw development funding as a key instrument for change, but there is little mention of other kinds of local non-state resources.)

Recent years have seen a growing critique of the ability of the formal side of the development system (funders and, partly as a result, INGOs) to deliver development that is indeed ‘locally led’ (Anderson *et al*. 2012). Bureaucratisation of the aid process, the pressures of downward accountability to funders, and an emphasis on technical solutions have also served to depoliticise aid (Gilbert 2018). Some have called this shift towards a professionalised NGO sector, where ‘capacity’ is defined by an organisation’s ability to engage with the formal development sector, the ‘NGO-isation of resistance’ (Roy 2004), which has, in turn, eroded solidarity and the pursuit of rights and justice at the community level.

Indeed, a similar preoccupation with financial and organisational growth and the needs of funders has led to similar critiques being made of established community foundations in, for example, the United States, where like many INGOs, they have arguably become part of the establishment. With some notable exceptions, excessive focus on financial growth and donor priorities have led some to associate community foundations in the global North with the status quo, located at the more ‘settled’, charitable end of the philanthropic spectrum, rather than with the ‘unsettled’ spaces of transformative change and social justice.[9]

Meanwhile, within the emerging global community philanthropy field, managing, sharing, and devolving power is a key preoccupation of many organisations and local resources have an important role to play in this regard. By bringing local money into the equation and co-mingling it with external resources, community philanthropy can introduce a structural (rather than just programmatic) dimension of downward accountability, which means that ordinary people can become co-owners and stakeholders in their own development processes. This can transform an organisation’s ‘DNA’, moving its centre of gravity away from distant and often controlling external donors and towards its primary community stakeholders. In community philanthropy, local community resources are important not simply as a source of new income, but because they can lead to qualitatively different kinds of outcomes. Caesar Ngule, a seasoned community philanthropy practitioner from Kenya, observes:

> When you have the capacity to raise money, to design and implement projects, you begin creating social capital and networks. When an organization raises money from people who understand the context or know the community, it strengthens credibility and accountability. This is often lacking for many [local] NGOs because they get their money from another part of the world. (Presentation by GFCF and Wilde Ganzen at International Fundraising Congress, Netherlands, October 2018)

Local money also comes with significant non-financial value attached to it in terms of other things, such as evidence of constituency, trust, mindset shift, etc., the kinds of 'soft' outcomes that can be hard to design for or measure from outside. In that sense, community philanthropy understands local money as being as much about its *relational* value (what it symbolises) as its financial worth. This puts it in sharp contrast to the conventions of the formal development sector, where relationships are still largely defined by money flows. In a system which continues to place value on the size rather than the type of money (that is, all dollars are considered to be more or less the same) and tangible, hard outcomes, these intangible, process-related types of outcomes can sometimes be hard to see (Glennie 2018, 11).

While community philanthropy may have yet to feature substantively in efforts to shift power within the development sector, there have been some positive developments in that regard. One of these is the example of philanthropic and development monies being channelled directly to independent southern partners in ways that bypass Northern institutions.[10] Given the pitifully small percentage of aid that goes directly to Southern organisations, despite the commitments made under the Grand Bargain,[11] these kinds of demonstration projects that prove that Southern organisations have the capacity to manage significant amounts of external funding are important (Sriskandarajah 2015).

However, while it is important, re-routing flows of money from the global North is only part of the story. A donor working with a Southern actor may not necessarily disrupt power dynamics if it, for whatever reason (risk aversion, donor requirements, institutional culture), merely replicates the top-down behaviours of organisations in the North. In that sense, shifting power requires more than moving the geographic location and here, community philanthropy has a role to play. It is in the combination of direct funding to Southern organisations while also supporting such organisations' efforts to build local resources that will help further reinforce a more equitable, co-investment approach, help to challenge the power dynamics that underpin many donor–recipient relationships, and create new spaces for community participation based on control of resources.

Diverse experiences in community philanthropy: a closer look at a global cohort

In 2018–2019, 16 organisations based around the world participated in a year-long action-learning initiative co-ordinated by the GFCF to explore community philanthropy practice in vastly different contexts and, in particular, to focus on questions of measurement, evidence, and power.[12] Data sources for the following section include information collected from grant applications to the GFCF, individual interviews with organisation representatives, and the proceedings and outputs of two face-to-face meetings. Quotations from individuals below come from these sources.

Of the group, four were from South Asia, four from sub-Saharan Africa, three each from Eastern Europe and Latin America, and one from the Middle East. While all 16 identify community philanthropy as a defining concept and strategy that underpins their work, they constitute a highly diverse group.

To begin with, the primary type of organisation they identify as varies. Three describe themselves first and foremost as community foundations, two as community development foundations, one as a community fund, two as women's funds, two as socio-environmental funds, one as an NGO support centre, one as a national public foundation, one as a grassroots organisation, one as an LGBTQIA foundation, one as an indigenous philanthropic institution, and one as a foundation supporting indigenous communities within a biosphere reserve. In short, what matters less is what organisations call themselves than how they approach their work. The same applies when it comes to how they define community: for some, community is geographic (a town, a sub-region, a biosphere reserve, a country) while for others it is defined by identity (women, LGBTQIA) and or issue (environmental movements, etc.).

They are all relatively young organisations: the oldest was established in 1993 and the youngest in 2017, and eight were founded in the 2000s. The number of staff in each organisation ranges from three to 56, with the median at nine. All of them have strong roots in civil society and social movements. While none were created by local elites as vehicles for managing philanthropy, one was originally created as a mechanism to deliver donor programmes (that is, as a grant-making conduit) before making a strategic decision to re-invent themselves as a truly local foundation.

Grant-making to community partners is an important tool for this group. The size of grants they make – to registered organisations, informal groups, and individuals – varies, depending on a range of factors (including the sources and size of their own funding as well as the demand from and capacities of local partners to absorb funding). While the range in grant size runs from US$100 to US$37,000, the most frequent size falls within the range of US$3,000–5,000. The existence of national or local funding facilities that can disburse grants of this size is important to note as it fills an important gap in the system: in many countries, small and medium-sized groups often struggle to access resources and targeting small grants to them may be perceived by mainstream development actors as too costly or administratively burdensome. In financial terms, all of the organisations in the cohort are quite small. Annual budgets of the organisations range from US$5,412 (the newest organisation) to US$2.5 million (one of the oldest). While two of the organisations have annual budgets of over US$2 million, and two are in the US$500,000–1,000,000 range, the median budget size for the whole group is much smaller (US$240,000).

All of the organisations in the group consider themselves to be significantly under-resourced to meet the demands on them. While all of them receive some kind of external funding support, core support in the organisations themselves as 'community philanthropy organisations' is limited. Several observed that external funders and INGOs are often more interested in them in a more instrumental way, as intermediaries that can help deliver specific projects and programmes.

Framing some key findings: assets, capacities, and trust

We understand community philanthropy as a value-driven development practice that builds assets, capacities, and trust. Focusing on these three factors helps us think about, anchor, and join up different aspects of community philanthropy practice and bring some of its less-visible aspects, such as strengthening local systems and relationships, unlocking local assets, and building trust, to the fore.[13]

In the next three sections, we look at each of these factors in turn.

Assets

> We always ask 'What can you bring? What gifts do you have that you can give?' And we find that there is always a willingness to give in the township. (Community Development Foundation for Western Cape, interview, 14 March 2019)

The organisations in our research all seek to build on existing cultures of giving, and foster new ones. They use multiple different strategies to mobilise and organise local resources. These include creating devolved structures, like community funds, which mobilise and pool resources at the grassroots level to be invested under the umbrella of a national foundation (KCDF), travellers' philanthropy (a programme developed by the Monteverde Community Fund, whereby visitors to the area, i.e. 'temporary community members', are invited to contribute to a long-term fund aimed at preserving the balance between the human and environmental dimensions of the community), giving circles (Garant, Roots and Wings Foundation, Community Development Foundation for Western Cape), and advisory services to local businesses (Solidarity Foundation).

All of the organisations in the cohort place emphasis on harnessing and building assets at the local level. While this includes non-financial assets (e.g. volunteering, in-kind contributions), there is also a specific focus on mobilising, pooling, and organising *local money*. Most embrace the word 'philanthropy' (or its equivalent translation) according to its original meaning as 'love of humankind', rather than something that is located solely in the domain of the very wealthy. This framing often has a political or democratic dimension to it: philanthropy is something that anybody and everyone can engage in and, by doing so, flex their social muscle and overcome dependency or beneficiary mindsets. Encouraging community contributions is a long-term strategy. It provides language and expression both to 'hidden' existing systems and to new forms of giving as an act of empathy, protest, or dissent. Getting people to give collectively can also help to build 'bonding' social capital (the 'glue' between people).

As well as building community-level giving, many in the group also set out to engage other kinds of local philanthropic actors in their activities, including the middle class, high net worth individuals, and the corporate sector, as members of the community first and foremost as well as funders, partners, sources, or objects of influence. Although these kinds of relationships may require a careful balancing of diverse interests and power dynamics, they can also play an important role in building 'bridging' social capital (i.e. relationships between groups who do not normally identify as 'us'). In the words of one practitioner: 'We want to ensure that we do not dilute our commitment to issues of social justice and human rights while seeking out new audiences' (comment on grant application form, June 2019).

Two organisations for whom individual contributions are central to the resource mobilisation strategy are the Community Foundation for the Western Region of Zimbabwe (CFWRC) and FemFund, Poland. In Zimbabwe, CFWRC uses the traditional Ndebele practice of *Qogelela*, which refers to 'collecting with the future use' (Moyo 2019), as a framework to inspire and encourage community contributions towards the creation of a community reserve, which can be upon for their own development. This requires intensive work and trust building at the community level by foundation staff.

In Poland, FemFund embarked on its first local fundraising efforts by turning first to its core base of around 60 friends and allies. As a women's fund established during a period of government roll-backs on women's reproductive rights, FemFund's founders had always understood the importance of building a long-term support base for its work, and that meant reaching out to parts of the community who might not immediately identify themselves as social justice activists but who, with the right ask, might be supportive of their cause. A market survey of two different demographic groups – younger women working in the creative industries and working women over 40 – showed that the latter, particularly women with daughters, were more likely to be interested in FemFund's work. This group is now the target of a campaign to bring in new money, and, more importantly, to extend the overall support base for women's rights in Poland (interview, 1 July 2019).

Strengthening community capacity

For many in the cohort, grant-making and non-grant-making activities are intertwined, their combined purpose aimed at strengthening local groups and organisations to be able to organise and act on issues that matter to them. Individual grants, particularly to nascent groups or first-time recipients, accompanied by the right kinds of support (advice, mentoring, training, etc.), are an effective way to devolve power and decision-making, as well as to strengthen ties between local partners. Investment in multiple local groups also helps to ward against power-hoarding by gatekeepers. It can also be understood as a deliberate strategy to build resilience into the local system; if one organisation experiences a shock (e.g. is no longer funded or gets closed down), others can move in to fill the gaps.

In addition to making individual grants, partner convenings (which may be on the basis of something as innocuous as a workshop on grant reporting) are another important strategy that community philanthropy organisations deploy to build bridging social capital across different local partners that might not know or trust each other or that work on different kinds of community-based issues. Convenings and workshops of this type may indeed have a value in themselves in terms of content, but often they are as much about building relationships and horizontal connections between different parts of the community, which, in turn, can lead to more formal alliances and networks.

Strategies for strengthening the capacity and agency of communities within this cohort range from providing small grants and scholarships (to individuals, informal and formal groups), involvement of community members as advisers, and in decision-making over resource allocation (through processes such as participatory grant-making in the case of FemFund and Dalia Association), and workshops and convenings on a range of issues. In describing their work, a number of organisations describe how grant-making is really 'just an entry point to get to people' – particularly those on the very margins of society who might not see themselves as having agency (Dalia Association, interview, 6 December 2018). A grant or scholarship can confer a sense of profound personal validation, recognition, and even hope. In the words of a partner of the Solidarity Foundation in India, receiving a scholarship was a confirmation of their value as a human and their potential contribution to society: 'Someone trusts you, and so you think you have a role to play' (Solidarity Foundation, interview, December 2018).

The Keystone Foundation, also in India, has worked with and supported diverse and remote indigenous communities within a biosphere reserve in Tamil Nadu since 1993. Its recent pivot towards a community philanthropy approach forms part of a larger process of reflection aimed at re-imagining its long-term role within a flatter ecosystem of actors and support, in which the foundation plays a less central and powerful role. For Keystone, the key questions have been: What are the elements of our work that we should keep? What else can people begin to do now for themselves? (Keystone Foundation, interview, 12 March 2019). Part of this process of has involved starting conversations with its partners to consider how the assets they have (including music and culture) might be translated into a sustainable resource base over time in the form of a type of community fund. In a case like this, capacity strengthening is less about imparting specific skills and more about introducing new ways of thinking and fundamentally shifting mindsets.

Building trust

Across this and all other data-sets collected by the GFCF through its grant-making, 'building trust' is the indicator that is consistently ranked most highly as a central concern of community philanthropy. It is valued as an outcome in itself and as something that, when it is present, improves other outcomes as well.

The ability of community philanthropy organisations to serve as effective community-based mediating structures is highly dependent on the extent to which they themselves are trusted by the community and other stakeholders. This goes beyond the notion of 'partnership', a term that is frequently used in international development to indicate a level of respect between different actors, but which can also mask significant power differentials. In community philanthropy, trust building is underpinned by two core practices, local resource mobilisation and grant-making and, importantly, their use in combination with each other.

While NGOs that rely on external funding may elicit respect at the local level in terms of their work, the funding system that supports them can appear baffling and opaque to outsiders and does little to foster community trust. Large amounts of money appear apparently out of the blue to address an issue decided upon from far away. Even the best intentioned efforts to bring about community empowerment can be challenging when communities are not privy to funding and other decisions made by external actors. By introducing local giving into the equation, community philanthropy deliberately seeks to build trust in local systems and to demystify development as something that is within reach at the local level.

Grant-making becomes an important part of the strategy to build trust here too, demonstrating how small amounts of money, pooled together, can directly help facilitate community-led initiatives on one's doorstep. In this way, 'development' is no longer an abstract construct but a visible reality. By insisting on the link between inputs (money), decision-making (at least transparent, at best, participatory) and outcomes (grant-funded, community-led activities), community philanthropy creates virtuous circles that sees value being added and trust and relationships being built at every step in the process.

In order to ensure that the multiple different interactions and transactions involved in both local resource mobilisation and local grant-making (both are labour intensive) contribute to something more than the sum of its parts, trust in the mediating organisation is essential, not least because the risks to reputation are quite high. Local donors may demand a high level of accountability and transparency and be impatient to see results, while grants to nascent grassroots groups also come with certain risks.

Within this cohort, much attention is given by different organisations as to how they relate to and build trust among different stakeholders (particularly, across power differentials), as well as some of the measures that they can use to keep track of these. Inevitably, they constitute a mixed bag, depending on where trust exists – or not – in their particular community. Among the measures used are: numbers and diversity of local donors and volunteers (and how many of these relationships are sustained over time); range and diversity of partnerships with community organisations (breadth and depth of linkages within a community); numbers of partners beginning to mobilise resources themselves (reduced dependency on the community philanthropy organisation); increased collaborations between different partners and types of partners (bridging social capital); numbers of people attending public events (perceived relevance of the organisation); invitations by media/government to provide expertise (knowledge and experience perceived as a strength); and the extent to which community turns to them in moments of crisis (recognition as a community resource).

'Without trust', observes the director of the Community Development Foundation for Western Cape (South Africa), 'I couldn't have had the conversations I had in the community' (interview, 14 March 2019). The Foundation has strong relationships with and origins in the community it serves. More than just a source of funding, it sees itself first and foremost as an 'active listener' ('We ask, what do you want to do?', *ibid.*) and sees 'target group sanction' (that is, whether community members approve of or want to participate in its activities) as a core indicator of trust. In a similar vein, acutely aware of the potential for intermediary organisations to capture funds meant for the grassroots (or to be perceived to do so), the Solidarity Foundation encourages a radical transparency in its operations by using a 'peer audit'. Community stakeholders are invited in to scrutinise its budgets, its files and systems, and to see that, in the words of a staff member, 'Our books are open' (interview, 4 December 2018).

Conclusion

> Large-scale problems do not require large-scale solutions; they require small-scale solutions within a large-scale framework. (David Fleming 2007, 39)

Community philanthropy may not yet be well established within mainstream development discourses; however, we believe it merits wider consideration by a broader constituency of development researchers and practitioners genuinely interested in moving towards a more equitable and locally rooted system for people-led development. We hope we have shown that community philanthropy is not merely emerging as a useful support structure within the context of mainstream development; rather, it is structurally equipped to disrupt and democratise that system. It has potential to do this by focusing on practices and structures that emphasise people and their assets.

Although the lack of recognition of community philanthropy in broader circles has meant that there have been very few opportunities to invest in its development in a substantial way, there have been some advantages to its quiet emergence, away from the frenetic noise of the mainstream development sector and its shifting priorities. The limited funding that has been invested in the field has included grants to individual organisations for institutional development and, importantly, it has also created spaces for peer-to-peer learning and exchange, based on practices developed and adapted through on-the-ground experimentation rather than through externally led blueprints.

'Our challenge', remarked one, 'is to grow gradually, without becoming a sponge for funding and support that we want to get to grassroots' groups (grant application, September 2018). Although it can operate in the currency of short-term projects and goals (and this often makes tactical sense), community philanthropy is a long-term proposition that understands the process of social change to be slow and non-linear. As one practitioner from Kenya observes:

> A lot of the change happens after the programme ends. Unless you deliberately keep track of these organisations and communities, we'll never know the full extent of the seed we planted. We [NGOs] report contemporary stuff [to funders], but we miss out on a huge part of the story that happened long after we have gone. (Interview, KCDF, 26 June 2019)

As the organisations described in this article have shown, community philanthropy has many ways of operating, both in the specific tools it uses and according to its local context. However, it acts primarily as an *enabler* not a *producer*, playing a bridging role that produces energy *between* different parts of the system in which it operates, rather than itself delivering specific outputs. In short, it plays an enabling role that creates spaces within which others can act.

Unlike many of its distant relatives in the global North, community philanthropy in the global South has emerged from the ground up, shaped by civil society activists and community leaders concerned about issues of equity, inclusion, and social cohesion. It deliberately 'weaves from the edges' (participant at Mexico workshop, July 2019), unlocking power at the margins, where opportunities and latent energies exist, and bringing them to the centre. At face value, the approach may appear simple – even simplistic – when contrasted with the more traditional development paradigm, with its planned interventions that are linear, time-bound, scalable, and must be able to be replicated in any number of contexts. But change here is navigated and negotiated through multiple non-linear actions, interactions and relationships, through seeding and nurturing, rather than controlling and through the development of new norms and behaviours which, cumulatively, can shift the dynamics of the wider system. In community philanthropy, noted one practitioner, 'We may look like we are supporting projects, but we are supporting processes of change' (KCDF, interview, 26 June 2019).

Notes

1. The #ShiftThePower campaign seeks to tip the balance of power away from external agencies in the delivery of development programmes and towards local people. For more information, see https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/what-we-stand-for/shiftthepower/.
2. For more information on the 2016 Summit, see https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/news/global-summit-on-community-philanthropy-inspires-movement-to/ and www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRBPk6tnkoM.
3. The Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy was a five-year donor alliance made up of six funders (private and public) to strengthen and promote community philanthropy as a global movement. To learn more about the outcomes of the programme, see www.issuelab.org/resource/donors-working-together-the-story-of-the-global-alliance-for-community-philanthropy.html.
4. For more on the agenda of localisation, see https://charter4change.org.
5. The project, which was supported with a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund in the UK, built on a broader body of work (grant-making, technical support, and data collection) by the GFCF over the previous 12 years to deepen understanding of community philanthropy practice and build an evidence base for the work.
6. For more information on GFCF, see www.globalfundcf.org. In its grant-making, the GFCF uses the following broad organisational criteria in terms of the partners with which it works. organisations should possess some or all of these features: (1) serve a particular community, whether geographic-, issue-, or identity-based, and have a governance structure that broadly reflects it; (2) use grant-making as a deliberate development strategy, which devolves power and resources to groups and organisations in the community it serves; (3) work to build a local culture of giving (philanthropy) within the community it serves and a constituency for its work – organisations are already doing it or want to start; (4) have a commitment to progressive social change, including building support for those on the margins of the community – organisations are already doing it or want to start.
7. For more about Tewa and KCDF's origins and purposes, see www.forbes.com/sites/marlenahartz/2017/09/25/how-one-woman-is-challenging-the-status-quo-in-international-aid and www.

africanindy.com/opinion/durable-development-time-to-do-things-differently-10110842. For more on the Dalit Community Foundation, see http://dcf.org.in.

8. For more on the story of Frederick Goff and the creation of the Cleveland Foundation, see www.clevelandfoundation100.org/foundation-of-change/invention/introduction/.
9. Indeed, recent events at a high-profile US community foundation, which led to the uncovering of a toxic institutional culture, were very similar to revelations made about large INGOs in the light of #AidToo. See www.philanthropy.com/article/Opinion-Growth-or-Mission-/243383.
10. Leading from the South is a feminist philanthropic fund managed by four leading women's funds in the global South: African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (FMS), International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) / AYNI Fund (AYNI), and Women's Fund Asia (WFA). It is funded through a US$46 million grant from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See www.leadingfromthesouth.org/about-us.
11. The Grand Bargain refers to an agreement launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 between some of the largest donors and aid providers, which aims to get more means into the hands of people in need. For more information, see https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/about-the-grand-bargain.
12. The 16 organisations are: Arkhangelsk Centre for Social Technologies, Garant, Russia (www.ngogarant.ru), Community Development Foundation for Western Cape, South Africa (www.cdfwesterncape.org.za), Community Foundation for the Western Region of Zimbabwe (www.comfoundzim.org), Dalia Association, Palestine (www.dalia.ps), Fasol – Fondo Acción Solidaria A.C., Mexico (www.fasol-ac.org), FemFund, Poland (https://femfund.pl), Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ), Kosovo (https://www.fiq-fci.org), Foundation for Social Transformation, India (www.fstindia.org), Instituto Comunitário Grande Florianópolis – ICOM, Brazil (http://www.icomfloripa.org.br), Kenya Community Development Foundation (www.kcdf.or.ke), Keystone Foundation, India (https://keystone-foundation.org), Monteverde Community Fund, Costa Rica (www.monteverdefund.org), Roots and Wings Foundation / Gyökerek és Szárnyak Alapítvány, Hungary (http://gy-sz.hu), Solidarity Foundation, India (www.solidarityfoundation.in), Tewa – Nepal Women's Fund (www.tewa.org.np), and Zambian Governance Foundation for Civil Society (www.zgf.org.zm). One organisation, Tewa, did not participate in the learning group but explored the same learning agenda as part of another partnership with the GFCF.
13. The GFCF developed the Assets, Capacities and Trust (ACT) Framework in 2010 through data collected from 50 organisations (see Hodgson and Knight 2010). Applicants were asked to rank their priorities against a set of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital indicators. For more information, see https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/gfcf/resources/more-than-the-poor-cousin-the-emergence-of-community-foundat-html/.

Notes on contributor

Jenny Hodgson is the Executive Director of the Global Fund for Community Foundations. Postal address: 4th Floor, 158 Jan Smuts Ave, Rosebank, Johannesburg, 2196, South Africa. Email: jenny@globalfundcf.org

References

Al-Karib, Hala (2018) 'The dangers of NGO-isation of women's rights in Africa', Al Jazeera, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/dangers-ngo-isation-women-rights-africa-181212102656547.html (last checked 31 December 2019)

Anderson, M., D. Brown and I. Jean (2012) *Time to Listen: Hearing people on the Receiving End of Aid*, Cambridge, MA: CDA

Batliwala, Srilatha (2012) *Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements* (Second Edition) Association for Women's Rights in Development, https://www.awid.org/publications/changing-their-world-concepts-and-practices-womens-movements (last checked December 2019)

Baron, Stephen, John Field and Tom Schuller (eds.) (2000) *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Chambers, Robert (1983) *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, Harlow: Prentice Hall

Doan, Dana (2019) 'What is community philanthropy?', Global Fund for Community Foundations, https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/WhatIsCommunityPhilanthropy.pdf (last checked 31 December 2019)

Doane, Deborah (2019) 'Are INGOs ready to give up power?', Open Democracy, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/are-ingos-ready-give-power/ (last checked 31 December 2019)

Edwards, Michael (2016) 'What's to be done with Oxfam', Open Democracy, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/what-s-to-be-done-with-oxfam/ (last checked 20 August 2019)

Fleming, David (2007) *Energy and the Common Purpose*, 3rd edition, The Lean Economy Connection, https://www.flemingpolicycentre.org.uk/EnergyAndTheCommonPurpose.pdf (last checked 31 December 2019)

Freire, Paulo (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Herder and Herder

Gilbert, Hilary (2018) *Time to #ShiftThePower? Community philanthropy and durable development,* Global Fund for Community Foundations, https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/TimeTo_ShiftThePower_Long.pdf (last checked 17th December 2019)

Gittell, Ross J. and Avis Vidal (1998) *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Glennie, Jonathan (2019) At what cost? A reflection on the crisis at Save the Children, Open Democracy, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/at-what-cost-reflection-on-crisis-at-save-children-uk/ (last checked 31 December 2019)

Hodgson, Jenny and Barry Knight (2010) *More than the Poor Cousin? The emergence of community foundations as a new paradigm*, Global Fund for Community Foundations, https://www.issuelab.org/resource/more-than-the-poor-cousin-the-emergence-of-community-foundations-as-a-new-development-paradigm.html (last checked 31 Dec 2019

Hodgson, Jenny and Barry Knight (2016) *#ShiftThePower: the rise of community philanthropy*, Alliance, https://www.alliancemagazine.org/feature/shiftthepower-rise-community-philanthropy/ (last checked 31 December 2019)

Hodgson, Jenny and Anna Pond (2018) 'How community philanthropy shifts power: what donors can do to help make that happen', Grantcraft, https://grantcraft.org/content/guides/how-community-philanthropy-shifts-power/ (last checked 17 December 2019)

Kroll, John (2017) 'Frederick Goff's legacy lives on within the Cleveland Foundation', Cleveland.Com, https://www.cleveland.com/business/2017/11/frederick_goffs_legacy_lives_o.html (last checked 17 December 2019)

Moyo, Matamsanqa (2019) The Case for Community Philanthropy: an assessment of the effectiveness of involving communities as donors and beneficiaries in bringing about lasting change and people-centred development in Bulilima and Mangwe districts of Matabeleleland South Province, Zimbabwe (draft report)

Mutuku, Sally and Edwell Kaseke (2014) 'The role of stokvels in improving people's lives: the case in Organ Farm, Johannesburg, South Africa', https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286692849_The_role_of_stokvels_in_improving_people's_lives_The_case_in_orange_farm_Johannesburg_South_Africa (last checked 17 December 2019)

Putnam, R.D. (1995) 'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital', *Journal of Democracy* 6: 65–78

Quinn D. (1999) *Beyond Civilization: Humanity's Next Great Adventure*, New York: Three Rivers Press

Roy, Arundhati (2003) *Confronting Empire*, World Social Forum, 27 January 2003, Porto Alegre, Brazil https://ratical.org/ratville/CAH/AR012703.pdf (last checked 31 December 2019)

Roy, Arundhati (2004) 'Help that Hinders', Le Monde Diplomatique, https://mondediplo.com/2004/11/16roy (last checked 31 December 2019)

Serafin, Rafal and Ros Tennyson (2019) Donors working together: the story of the Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy, Johannesburg: Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy

Sriskandarajah, Danny (2015) 'Five reasons donors give for not funding local NGOs directly', *The Guardian*, 9 November, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/nov/09/five-reasons-donors-give-for-not-funding-local-ngos-directly (last checked 16 December 2019)

Szreter, Simon and Michael Woolcock (2004) 'Health by association? Social capital, social theory, and the political economy of public health', *International Journal of Epidemiology* 33(4): 650–67, https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/33/4/650/665431 (last checked December 2019)

Steets, Julia and András Derzsi-Horváth (2016) 'We need less paperwork and more aid in humanitarian work', *The Guardian*, 25 May, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/may/25/less-paperwork-bureaucracy-more-aid-in-humanitarian-work (last checked 17 December 2019)

Wilkinson-Maposa, Susan and Alan Fowler (2005) *The Poor Philanthropist: How and Why the Poor Help Each Other*, Cape Town: Compress

Zambian Governance Foundation for Civil Society (2018) Beyond giving: study of local philanthropy in Zambia, http://www.zgf.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BEYOND-GIVING-STUDY-OF-LOCAL-PHILANTHROPY-IN-ZAMBIA.pdf (last checked 17 December 2019)