



## Resilience Rainbow

What role can community foundations play  
in increasing community resilience?

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*2013 Emerging Leaders International Fellows Program*



CENTER ON PHILANTHROPY  
AND CIVIL SOCIETY

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CITY UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW YORK

*This paper was submitted in partial fulfillment of the 2013 Emerging Leaders International Fellows Program of the Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society at The Graduate Center, The City University of New York. The paper may have subsequently been revised, translated, circulated or published in alternate format by the author.*

*During the course of the program in 2013, the author was Community Mobiliser at Community Action MK and Grants Assessor, Milton Keynes Community Foundation.*

# RESILIENCE RAINBOW

WHAT ROLE CAN  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS PLAY IN  
INCREASING  
COMMUNITY  
RESILIENCE?



*Community Foundations are bees pollinating the flowers and producing the honey.*

## Abstract

What makes a community resilient?

Understanding the dynamics of a community can help it to best adapt and grow in the face of sudden or sustained challenges, be it a natural disaster or an economic crisis. Interest in community resilience is emerging in civil society, the social sciences, and within government. This paper examines the nature of what makes a strong community, and how community foundations can help increase resiliency in their local areas.

Joanna Bevan forms the initial hypothesis that community foundations which undertake 'community needs mapping' are expanding their roles in civil society beyond that of traditional grant maker. She uses selected case studies as a lens to examine community resilience and to look at the role the respective foundations play in these contexts. The author builds a resilience framework with seven elements, which comprise what she calls the 'Resilience Rainbow', in order to explore the topic of community resilience. Her paper focuses on case studies – from Canada, the U.S., Brazil, Mexico and Slovakia – of seven community foundations which have recently undertaken 'community needs mapping'.

In her findings, Ms. Bevan maps the themes of the 'Resilience Rainbow' against those emerging from the case studies. The author goes on to analyse the differences in the foundations' roles and the potential reasons for these. She concludes the paper with a look at why and how certain community foundations' roles are evolving, with a focus on the ways their work has an impact on the resilience of their local communities.

**Key Words:** Community Resilience, Role of Community Foundations

## Background and Rationale

Populations in a majority of countries are facing ever increasing pressures from the effects of climate change, economic pressures and reduction in resources and energy, as outlined in the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2013* report. Societies have also become ever centralised in ownership, access to resources and decision making by national governments or multinational corporations. The disenfranchising of the local to the national or even global is mirrored in the disintegration of what can be termed 'the community'. The age old question of scarcity of resources and who controls those resources is compounded by the stresses of climate change and this centralised/monopolised ownership trend. In this research paper, the term community will be used to refer to a geographic location of people.

Community foundations are finding themselves in key strategic positions in local communities with the potential to pool resources that can increase local resilience. Many community foundations around the world are undertaking 'asset mapping' or 'community needs analysis' to understand the issues and ideas of the local people in order to respond in more effective ways. This strategy raises the question of the role of community foundations not just as grant givers or vehicles for individual philanthropy but as community leaders.

The Transition Town Network from the UK and beyond has grown to be a community-led response to the environmental pressures facing the global community. The network aims to bring together residents of a locality to take small positive steps to change the impact on their community, and become part of a wider global movement for community-led change. The core elements of these changes focus on the following:

- Reducing reliance on fossil fuels
- Re-localising the economy
- Increasing Community Resilience

The concept of resilience emerged from the ecological sciences, through the work of pioneers such as C.S. Holling (1973) and, more recently, academics such as Neil Adger (2009), Brian Walker and David Salt (2006). It looks at why some systems collapse when they encounter shock, and some don't. The insights gleaned offer a useful overview for determining how communities can adapt and thrive in changing circumstances.

Community Resilience is 'Preserving Adaptive Capacity or the umbrella on a sunny day' (2013, Zolli)

Resilience at the community level depends upon:

- **Diversity:** a broader base of livelihoods, land use, enterprise and energy systems than at present;
- **Modularity:** an increased self-reliance (but not necessarily self-sufficiency), with “surge protectors” for the local economy, such as local food production and decentralized energy systems; and
- **Tighter feedback loops:** bringing the results of our actions closer to home, so that we cannot ignore them.

Creating resilience takes time, resources and proactive and creative design. A focus on sustainability doesn't question the notion that higher rates of consumption lead to individual happiness; sustainability instead focuses on low-carbon ways of making the same consumer goods. Yet as we enter the world of severe resource constraints, there is scope for a shift in emphasis that links satisfaction and happiness to less tangible things like community.

Increasing Community Resilience can be seen to encompass elements of the previous two points. Community Resilience may be described as the extent to which a community is able to withstand external pressures, draw on 'social capital' skills and resources on the residents from within, and adapt to challenging circumstances. This last item is summarized in an excerpt from “Adapting to Change: The Role of Community Resilience”:

*In this report we have argued for new thinking about community resilience that goes beyond how communities cope with one-off sudden emergencies to how they can manage and adapt to more gradual changes. This becomes more important as communities face increased economic pressures in the short to medium term, but is also pertinent to longer term changes from demographic shifts to the impacts of climactic change.” (p.58, Adapting to change: the role of community resilience. Commissioned by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, 2012, The Young Foundation)*

This paper explores the role of community foundations in strengthening community resilience.

## Research Methodology

I identified the following issues as key considerations in developing my research:

- I use the framework of 'Community Resilience', which is a complex interplay and involves many subjective assessments. I have created the framework based on a summary of existing suggestions of components of a resilient community in order to stimulate a discussion.
- I chose 'Purposeful Sampling' of 7 Community Foundations across 7 countries. I selected Community Foundations which recently completed a Community Needs Assessment and designed questions to investigate their objectives and outcomes.

I explored the following three questions:

- **What were the resilience issues uncovered in the community mapping?**
- **What were the best practices of things undertaken to increase the resilience/address local needs?**
- **What roles are emerging for community foundations going forward and why?**

I looked at examples from the following countries which have recently undertaken community mapping exercises in order to understand local need and reviewed the reports of the community mapping. I then followed up conversations with a sampling of the organisations. I intended to make a study of community foundations in Europe and the Americas. I chose the following community foundations based on their activities around community needs/assets mapping in order to investigate a small, but geographically varied sample:

- Abbotsford Community Foundation, British Columbia, Canada
- Berks County Community Foundation, Pennsylvania, United States
- Fundacion Comunidad Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico
- ICOM Community Foundation Florianopolis, Brazil
- Tyne and Wear Community Foundation, UK
- Milton Keynes Community Foundation, UK
- Banska Bystrica Healthy Cities Community Foundation, Slovakia

### What is Community Resilience?

**Community Resilience can be thought of as...**

*The Immune System of a Community: a universal concept of a complex system of relationships and interrelated elements that together determine the collective community to adapt to change and adverse circumstances.*

## The Study

I asked a representative from each of the 7 community foundations the same questions about their community needs mapping process in order to generate information for comparison. I also asked them to comment on the ‘Rainbow Resilience’ Framework, not as an attempt to define an absolute measure, but to highlight themes for discussion that could be related back to community needs. I used the following descriptions for each element to help stimulate the discussion:

Resilience Element	Example of what an optimal community might look like:
<b>Social capital</b>	Strong community capital will have a mixed and varied skill and knowledge set with high social interactions. The community will enjoy good links with other communities for constant sharing and exchange of resources, skills and knowledge.
<b>Carbon Footprint</b>	A community with little carbon footprint will require low use of fossil fuels in the generation of its energy, food (including growing, manufacture and transportation), transport, and other consumable goods and services.
<b>Community Ownership</b>	Community ownership models such as co-operatives or social enterprises will be common as are community-owned utilities and public institutions
<b>Localised Economy</b>	Local businesses will be owned by and employ local people, and local residents buy local goods and services which keeps the money flow largely within the community
<b>Community-led Planning</b>	The community will be consulted and involved in the leadership of government initiated or public planning initiatives.
<b>Permaculture Design</b>	New urban design will encompass sustainable principles such as Permaculture which encourages the emulation of nature in its closed loop cycles (e.g. waste rain water is able to be used to irrigate gardens).
<b>Social Equality</b>	Residents have real opportunity from the moment they are born to access resources regardless of social or economic status. Although their decisions may have an impact on their life outcomes, social equality means that access is not already predetermined (more/less likely).

## Abbotsford Community Foundation British Columbia, Canada



ABBOTSFORD  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

Abbotsford Community Foundation serves a population of 138,000 and undertook the 'Vital Signs' community mapping with the support of the wider network Community Foundations of Canada, who are global champions of this approach. Abbotsford Community Foundation wanted to increase its local profile as a knowledge hub and create a mechanism to initiate dialogue among local civil society about addressing local needs.

Based on an analysis of the asset mapping, a clear reference to social inequality can be seen in the gap between rich and poor, as reflected in the data on affordable daycare and housing. A strong localised economy and food production are also healthy indicators of resilience. The sense of belonging and leadership reflects perhaps relatively high social capital, but could show a lack of 'bonding' capital, i.e. the connectedness of people from different backgrounds interacting and sharing skills and knowledge.

Although a short time frame and lack of initial understanding of the purpose of the community mapping were constraints on the process, the newly published report (at the time of writing) is already serving to initiate a dialogue with local NGOs and credit unions. The Community Foundation board will meet to discuss directing funding in response to needs identified in the report. The Foundation will use Vital Signs information to direct its 'Smart and Caring' funding initiative to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Canada to deliver the most 'impactful' outcomes. Other NGOs and partners have expressed interest in promoting 'Vital Signs' in 2014 to increase participation in the Vital Signs online survey.

Abbotsford Community Foundation is in the beginning stages of initiating a role as a local convener, and they are inspired by the strong example of other community foundations within the wider network of Community Foundations of Canada, demonstrating the significance of the 'incubator' role that a national network or partner organisation can play.



*A thriving local food production boosts Abbotsford's Resilience.*

## **Berks County Community Foundation Pennsylvania, United States**



BERKS COUNTY  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Berks County Community Foundation serves an area with a population of around 411,000 with both significant rural farming and a concentrated urban centre (Reading), which was once a heavily industrialised city. As industry declined and the main employment shifted to smaller and more diverse firms, Berks County Community Foundation emerged in a leadership role, in some ways filling the void in local leadership left by the disappearance of large corporations.

The Community Foundation wanted to establish a base line of community indicators in order to have evidence upon which to base leveraging wider social change in the community. There was some concern around the potential to uncover uncomfortable realities and the potential sensitivities around framing these as 'issues'. Nevertheless, the foundation staff believed that the indicators would better inform grant making by identifying need, as well as facilitate convening of a dialogue with the wider civil society. In prior years, the foundation has completed community needs mapping around health, education and youth as well as the most recent more general theme. They felt they were in a neutral enough position to be able to conduct research, and are doing so in conjunction with the new O'Pake institute at local Alvernia University. (The Foundation awarded a grant to the O'Pake Institute to conduct the research.) The interim report in 2013 shows inequality as expressed via differences in health, education, employment, crime and housing outcomes. In terms of the community resilience measures, inequality and the localised economy are emerging threads running through the report. Following the launch of the research findings, the foundation plans to consult community stakeholders, businesses in particular, with the goal of convening a retreat to

initiate dialogue on solutions. The suggestion is for the indicators to become a benchmark for measuring progress of outcomes or a combined civil society approach.

Today under his strong leadership, Kevin Murphy describes the role of the foundation as a regional mechanism for community leadership (or, in the absence of strong metro government, serving as a in his words 'Regional Mayor'). The foundation is a strong advocate of sustainability by having a 'LEED platinum' building, which has inspired many other new "green" builds in the region, an indication of the influence and strong networks the foundation has in the region.



*A desk made from shredded (recycled) dollar bills in the Berks County Community Foundation highlights the heavy focus on sustainability and reduced environmental impact. The building is a "first" in many aspects and has inspired further building initiatives in the area with a greater emphasis on more sustainable techniques and permaculture design.*

## **Fundacion Comunidad Cuernavaca Morelos, Mexico**



Fundacion Comunidad serves Cuernavaca City in Morelos, México. It is a small community foundation with limited funds and was founded by a community activist. These two factors have influenced the strategy of the foundation which, as well as giving grants, works specifically 'in the field' in two geographical communities in the city: El Texcal and La Estacion.

Fundacion Comunidad operates significantly differently from many other foundations in its role as ongoing community needs mapper and capacity builder, roles more commonly found

amongst community development organisations. The focus of the foundation as a convener and connector may have been in part a reaction to a lack of donor funding, but undoubtedly led to a more creative way to build social capital and resiliency. While challenges exist in working alongside the local authorities, the foundation is focused on a sustained grass roots initiative in a concentrated area. Their pilot projects can prove useful and tangible examples of a community-led approach in contrast to a history of top-down initiatives linked with the legacy of colonialism. The foundation is seeking to address the root causes of poverty and inequality by redefining the local narrative and connecting social agents for change. It is an example of establishing supportive community leadership first, which can then provide a strong foundation to sustain social impact as, and when, philanthropic donations increase.



*Residents of El Texcal lead an Eco-tour close to the once polluted river.*

## **ICom – Instituto Comunitário Grande Florianópolis, Brazil**



ICom embarked on the community needs mapping to better understand the community, to establish a technical base of statistics and to be able to direct donations more effectively. The foundation wanted to become a 'knowledge hub' and convener to initiate discussions in order to address social needs, which in turn would increase the credibility of the community

foundation. The local government, residents' associations, a research company linked to the university and other nonprofit organisations were key partners in the process, which involved focus groups and secondary data analysis. Resulting themes were health, education, safety, mobility and urban planning, which relate to the elements of social capital, permaculture design, community-led planning and social equality found in the 'Rainbow Resilience'. The resulting report was sent to all the mayoral candidates and they adopted the themes and included a plan with key performance indicators by which they can be measured. The implication is that this needs mapping and its findings create a greater participatory process and accountability.

The themes emerging from the ICom report are broad but resonate with many of the suggested catalysts for community resilience. Equality is a main catalyst present in the health and education themes, and community capital issues, such as trust, parallel the theme of safety. An interesting outcome of this case study is that the mayor adopted points raised in the report and signaled his willingness to address them, which can be seen as an example of increasing the level of community-led planning within the city and a more participatory process. One risk may be the alignment of the community foundation with local government, since it opens the possibility of the foundation's reputation being damaged through politicisation. However ICom appears to mitigate that risk by being explicit and open in their role not as activists but as conveners in providing a knowledge hub. This allows them to transpose their community-led ethos into a governmental strategy and enable greater citizen participation. Each year the foundation's reputation and credibility grows through this widely published reader-friendly report.



*Courtesy of ICOM showing a presentation of the plan and objectives from left to right: Secretary of Education, State University, President of the City Council, Mayor, Executive Director of ICOM, representative of the Military Police*

## Tyne and Wear Community Foundation, U.K



Tyne and Wear Community Foundation, the UK's largest community foundation, is leader in the pilot of 'Vital Signs'. The Foundation chose to study Tyne and Wear (which is largely made up of the city of Newcastle) separately to Northumberland (which is largely rural) because of the contrasting nature of the demographics. From the resulting report, they identified 3 priorities for each geographic area. The Tyne and Wear Community Foundation has had a long history in terms of investigating social capital, and they consulted Robert Putnam (author of *Bowling Alone*) in 2007. They integrated Putnam's concept of social capital into their organisational strategy and practices, and the Foundation is part of the North East Social Capital Forum. The Foundation is building on its role as a knowledge hub, having conducted previous bespoke 'community needs mapping' analysis for donors.

The key needs identified in Tyne & Wear were learning, work and healthy living, and for Northumberland: local economy, fairness and support for community sector organisations. The emerging themes parallel the resilience elements of social capital, social equality and a localised economy. As in Abbotsford, Canada, there was some initial resistance as to why the community foundation should undertake such an exercise and as to why the Tyne and Wear Foundation was playing a leading role in the initial national study deciding on common themes which proved more geographically specific than first anticipated. There was some anxiety locally about 'doing down' the area by highlighting the negatives of the area. The focus of the final report was intentionally asset-based and solution focused. In fact, an overwhelming theme, if a little difficult to pin down, was an overriding feeling of the area having something intangible that made it an enjoyable place to live and of which to be proud.

Going forward, the Foundation aims for Vital Signs to inform its policy work, donor development, philanthropy advice and guidance, grant making, and scrutiny of the grant making cycle. Grants of £100,000 in unrestricted funds are to be made in line with Vital Signs priorities.

The Tyne and Wear Community Foundation was the first in the UK to carry out the Vital Signs assessment and heavily influenced the thematic areas for questioning. They are building on existing experience of conducting 'research' in the form of community needs asset mapping in order to consolidate their leadership role in the local civil society. At this initial stage there is limited 'buy in' from the local authority in terms of findings being used as a tool to inform policy, however the Foundation intends to use information gained from the process to develop their role as a local knowledge hub, to better inform their grant giving and to advise local donors.



*Snapshot from the Northumberland Vital Signs findings, indicating inequality as a key theme while it highlights the positive low crime rate to show a balanced picture.*

## Milton Keynes Community Foundation, U.K



Milton Keynes is one of the fastest growing cities in the UK since its conception in the 1960's, with a population of 300,000 and growing. Its grid-like construction is unusual in the UK and its ability to provide mass affordable housing has had some implications for the community development of the city. A regional centre for business, distribution and leisure, the area suffers from less than the national average from unemployment, and the over the last 25 years the Milton Keynes Community Foundation has grown through local philanthropy to support the significant community sector.

Encouraged by the UK Community Foundations Network to pilot the 'Vital Signs' community mapping exercise, the Milton Keynes Community Foundation was interested in developing itself as a local, credible knowledge hub. The foundation was keen to start a dialogue and convene partners to address local needs and opportunities. The community foundation was also keen to educate donors on current need and to translate strengths and weakness into an accessible and inviting format

Milton Keynes Community Foundation wanted to move into a convener role. As a key holder of community assets, the foundation is a key figure in the city's voluntary sector and therefore held great potential to bring together partners to design strategies for wider change. As Milton Keynes is the fastest growing city, both in size and in diversity of residents, it is a clear priority

of the foundation to get a handle on the key issues and opportunities in designing collaborative strategies with partners to address and avoid current and future inequalities of different neighbourhoods in the city.



*Photo from Milton Keynes Community Foundation- A growing diverse community contributes to the newly evolving identity of the city.*

## Healthy City Community Foundation (Komunitná nadácia Zdravé mesto), Banska Bystrica, Slovakia



Healthy City Community Foundation was founded in November 1994 as a first community foundation in the CEE Region. It was re-registered from the Healthy City Foundation that was founded in 1992, inspired by World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities vision. Its funding and operations were supported with matching and general purpose grants, mostly from US private foundations (e.g. C.S. Mott Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund). These funds supported the establishment of an endowment at the Foundation. After almost 20 years, the Foundation has 2 full-time staff members and provides modest support for the local community.

The Foundation is well networked in the region and internationally. Slovakia had a communist government until 1989 and after the change to democracy the NGO sector grew rapidly.

However, many feel that the mentality fostered during communist times under a paternalistic state helps explain the nature of public apathy towards concepts such as civil society or volunteering.

Historically, under communism, the society was quite equal although recent impact of unemployment has led to an increase in the gap between rich and poor. The Foundation has established relationships in the area, but they wanted to have a more objective study to demonstrate local need in order to better channel resources. They wanted to improve communication with donors and to influence municipality decisions, as well as to start and open discussions with other NGOs and stakeholders. As with all the other community foundations considered here, they used existing data from local government and statutory bodies such as health and police.

Themes emerging from the report were as follows:

- Strengthening Neighbourhoods and Civic Activism
- Environment and Public Spaces
- Youth
- Health and Wellbeing

A clear link to the community resilience elements is found in issues related to social capital, and social equality, as well as reduced reliance on fossil fuel with the emergence of the environment and public spaces as a theme. The Foundation has very limited resources and required a grant from C.S Mott Foundation and the participation of student volunteers to get a balanced sampling of participants. In a climate where financial resources are scarce, they facilitate assistance through in-kind donations, advice and signposting on a regular basis, and rely on building a strong local network of contacts. They would like to be more conscious of measuring the impact of their funding, for example the Foundation would like to conduct regular mapping; now they have the model in place they feel they could absorb the cost. They would like to use the report as a tool for measuring impact and in defining the long-term strategy. The Foundation has established good local links, operating informally as a connector with and between stakeholders, although they have not traditionally played a formalized convener role to address wider social need(s). Culturally, activism and civil society are still somewhat fledgling in a country still emerging from a highly state-centered existence. NGOs can sometimes be seen as unnecessary or, worse, a hindrance to effective governance and development of the country. A significant value added could be achieved if the foundation is able to continue to capitalise on and formalize their position as a local knowledge hub and connector.



*The Free library micro project supported by the Healthy City Community Foundation encourages the development of social capital.*

## **New York: When disaster strikes — A tale of two responses**

### **The role of New York Community Trust in convening the AIDS Fund**

The New York Community Trust (NYCT) is a large established foundation and, in the late 1980s, it initiated two collaborative funds, the first around the issue of supporting new undocumented citizens and the second in response to the rapidly emerging AIDS epidemic that was affecting many, predominantly young male, New Yorkers. Because of the stigma, prejudice and ignorance attached to these issues, both causes were traditionally unpopular to funders. Political will and action was also uncertain at the time. A health program officer at the NYCT saw the emerging need and the Trust acted as a convener to bring together other funding organizations to focus on solutions to the problem and, ultimately, pool resources for local organisations in addressing the two issues. Today, both resultant funds are still running, since the issues remain, although they have evolved over time. For example, while many of those potentially at risk for AIDS due to ignorance have stayed healthy as a result of increased awareness, new populations with their own barriers are today's sufferers.

The NYCT is currently using this convening approach in the area of environmental resilience to forestall future impacts of climate change, as well as on the issue of 'workforce development' enabling the up skilling of the large numbers of low skilled workers in the city. The idea remains the same -- to convene a collective funding response and where possible engage wider authorities. Bob Edgar of the NYCT explained how the approach is somewhat effective in addressing underfunded needs, however experience shows that complex issues cannot be

solved outright, regardless of how much funding is pooled. Such issues have a tendency to change over time, so that this long-term collaborative approach must also incorporate an equally realistic and flexible strategy.

## **The role of a local authority in building Community Resilience: The case of PlaNYC**

PlaNYC was developed by the local New York authority initially with a sustainability focus as a means to plan land use and infrastructure strategically to mitigate the pressure on resources with an expected increase in population. Hurricane Sandy affected several neighbourhoods in New York in October 2012. It served as something of a catalyst for the resilience plan of PlaNYC to build on mitigating effects of climate change to creating a comprehensive and integrated adaptive strategy. The Plan involves over 20 local government departments. Stacy Lee, Policy Advisor for the NYC Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS), identified energy efficiency as a key opportunity to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions, and its policies are targeting this area as well as building codes (Greener Greater Buildings Plan) and energy sources. Policy Advisor Amy Furman of the Resiliency team within OLTPS explained how Hurricane Sandy also initiated a surge in volunteering with over 15,000 volunteers engaged in almost 500 projects. The 'social capital' element of resilience, i.e., neighbours helping neighbours, inspired a more community-led strand of the approach to counterbalance the top-down resilience and sustainability strategy. This is apparent in volunteer-led initiatives of GrowNYC, NYC CoolRoofs and a MillionTreesNYC, symbolizing an inroad into the often challenging area of bringing about behaviour change. Although these initiatives were started pre-Hurricane Sandy, their significance came into sharper focus once the disaster had struck. Partnerships were highlighted as a key thread to an integrated approach, bringing together everyone from large corporations, non-profits to small start-ups, to innovate new technology solutions. These examples from New York Community Trust and PlaNYC show a merging of changing by design, in the initial stages and then learning from disaster in order to create more adaptive and resilient communities.

## **Conclusion**

### **What resilience issues were uncovered in the Community mapping?**

As the examples from the different settings have shown, the elements of community resilience appeared in some form in most or all of the mapping exercises. However the framework described here is in no way an attempt to be an absolute measure, rather it is a tool to uncover and compare different contexts and community dynamics. The 'Rainbow Resilience'

Framework served to initiate discussions and seemed to be a natural fit with the themes emerging from the individual reports examined.

**Social Capital** – This theme ran through all of the community mapping analysis one way or another, manifesting in the skills or knowledge of the community and how these were distributed and shared. It was visible as well in the wider issue of trust, which is linked to the focus on community safety and community representation.

**Carbon Footprint** – Community foundations have increased the amount of support they give to environmental sustainability; however, becoming more environmentally sustainable was not specifically covered or expressed in the community mapping projects. It is, however, interesting to note that themes such as poverty and cost of living can be directly related to a dependence on finite resources and therefore the increasing cost of fossil fuels, especially when related to heating or transport. The example of Berks County Community Foundation's investment in a consciously low carbon head office as a visible statement and commitment to sustainability, and it has already influenced the local community and the construction industry on a more resilient building agenda in the region.

**Community Ownership** – Although community-owned models were not specifically mentioned, the symbolic ownership of community assets was highlighted in the reports, particularly that of Baska Bystrica, which recognized the impact of the communist past in a malaise resulting from the notion that the state will provide. The foundation actively promotes community ownership; as the owner of its building it helps to ensure the sustainability of the foundation. Community Ownership also manifests within projects such as a community-led park project, which involves a public space maintained by the residents which was still well used long after state-implemented parks had become dilapidated and were abandoned.

**Community-led Planning** – The most progressive link to community-led planning was that of ICom in Brazil, where the mayor incorporates the community mapping into the aim and outcomes framework for his term of office. As the process becomes more established, there is great potential to use the soft data generated to influence strategic community planning.

**Localised Economy** – A high level of employment has always been an economic measure of a thriving, healthy and diverse local economy, which can more readily absorb shifts in production and consumption patterns. Employability and livelihoods are issues that community foundations are exploring to support further, understanding the implications of this dynamic for the community. Employment was consistently represented as a need or a potential challenge, and, again, it is a complex and nationally, if not globally, dependent issue, which could only be addressed through a collaborative response.

**Permaculture Design** – Berks County Community Foundation in Pennsylvania, USA, was the strongest promoter of permaculture design, with the concept embedded into its own headquarters design and operational mantra. However the theme of urban design did not

specifically arise as a community need, and this is perhaps something for the community foundation to consider when reviewing possible solutions.

**Social Equality**— This topic came up time and again, whether expressed as inequality of wealth, housing, education, health or between different generations or sections of the community. This frequency offers a strong argument for foundations to support more specific actions to increase social equality. Taking up this challenge could have significant implications for foundations, such as the risk of becoming politicised or challenging larger more powerful stakeholders, which could compromise reputation, relationships and therefore donations. As we have seen, the relative neutrality of the community foundation affords it the opportunity to convene different stakeholders around the core underlying issues. It is undoubtedly a fine balancing act to spearhead progress on social equality, while at the same time not jeopardizing the coveted neutral position.

In “The Case for Community Philanthropy” from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the three building blocks of assets, capacity and trust described there echo the ‘Rainbow Resilience’ model of building social capital and equality.

Specific themes common to many of the findings from community mapping projects were often expressed as issues relating to youth, health and well-being, employment, and poverty. Inequality was a key theme running through all of the findings of the reports, and it was presented sometimes through the measure of affordable housing. Roberta Brandes Gratz, whose work since the 1980s has focused on understanding urban environments, summarised the increasing trends of community involvement leading to a more positive community development that she observed during her research; although the projects may differ, the process of community-led initiatives to build social capital is a core component to increasing resilience to any community.

### **What were the best practices undertaken to increase resilience and address needs?**

Most of the community foundations used the needs mapping exercise to better target their grant making with existing funds, as well as add value and attract new donors as they strengthen or legitimise their position as local knowledge hubs. As they become aware of current community needs, community foundations are able to provide the mechanisms to facilitate community impact via strong links with community. Community foundations and community needs mapping are very much an emerging direction and one in which each independent foundation is finding its way. The outcomes of an existing study into how community foundations could increase social capital could offer some insight into practical steps that community foundations could take to increase community resilience. All of the community foundations initially encountered skepticism from various stakeholders within and outside of the organisations about undertaking community mapping, but the tool itself seems

to be initiating dialogue within the community on underlying broader themes and may symbolise a paradigm shift in delivering longer-term sustainable support.

In 2006, Doug Easterling of the Harvard Saguaro Seminar examined Community Foundation Benchmarking in a survey where a learning group looked at how community foundations could increase social capital. The results follow some of the ideas emerging from the community mapping processes in this report. Firstly, it is important to raise awareness of the emerging themes with stakeholders. Specific programs/projects can be developed to target certain needs. Inspiring residents' actions shifts the foundation closer into the role of an advocate or local leader. Another approach, especially where financial funds are limited, is to mentor and encourage local leadership and ownership, as seen in the example of Fundacion Comunidad in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

All of the community foundations studied in this paper worked in partnership with other institutions to carry out the asset mapping. This may have been out of necessity or deliberate intention, but the very process of partnering in itself helps to shape the foundations' increasingly collaborative roles and sets a firm basis for any subsequent dialogue or initiation of joint actions. As we have seen from the PlaNYC and New York Community Trust examples, community resilience issues are broad, complex and evolving. They require a multi-layered response; the notion that issues can be solved with a singular project/program or even "sufficient" philanthropic funding is increasingly outdated. Community-focused and non-partisan in nature, the community foundation is often in a neutral but influential position that allows them to initiate a wider call to action.

### **Challenges for community foundations in evolving their role to increase community resilience**

It is important for community foundations to be knowledgeable about potential partners and avoid duplication of roles with stakeholders such as community development organisations. Depending on the local context, the relationship with local authorities may prove problematic or put the reputation of the community foundation at risk if perceived as a threat to the neutrality of the foundation. Organisations must be thoughtful in their quest to establish themselves in a new role of facilitating and advocating in the 'space between' the community and larger societal structure consisting of local authorities and corporations. For example, it is important that the change in role be communicated and negotiated with potential or existing partners within civil society to avoid reinventing the wheel or duplicating services, which would risk diluting the significant links and relationships gleaned from the field of philanthropy.

## What roles are emerging for community foundations going forward and why?

A key theme emerging from all the studies discussed in this paper is the need to strengthen social capital. Therefore, the convener role of community foundations is an evident progression in approach of providing more support in building social capital than just the traditional financial one. Foundations can strategically capitalise on their ability to build bridges between communities, local authorities, the private sector and philanthropists. Patten (2008) explores the 'redefinition' of the 'Assets' of a community foundation, expanding these to include knowledge and relationships. Community foundations that undertake community needs mapping exhibit signs of consciously acting as a communicator of those needs. This follows upon their role convening stakeholders in an effort to address the issues in a more holistic way. Community needs mapping allows the community foundations to leverage significant knowledge of resources from partners and local authorities, and as they develop their reputation as a neutral, trusted community leader there is opportunity (as in the case of ICOM in Brazil) to become an advocate and catalyst for social change. The strength of community foundations is their deep and broad knowledge of community issues and ideas and, as Irvine (2003) describes in his book, their *Power to Convene*. As any organisation needs to evolve its strategy in order to stay relevant and prove its social impact to sustain and increase donations, this could indicate a strategic 'repositioning' of the role of a community foundation in an often increasingly competitive philanthropic environment. The question of creating value requires an increasing demonstration of its impact, as explored in 'Philanthropy's new agenda' (Porter and Kramer, 1999). The community foundation as a long-term community institution is starting to move from a project-based approach to a more collaborative agenda-based approach in order to bring about a significant social change. The case studies in this paper give a picture of moving beyond the 'sticking a plaster quick fix' approach.

### Summary of Key Findings:

- The incubator role of national networks can provide support for the needs mapping by linking with other foundations in the process.
- Community needs mapping can establish a baseline of community resilience in order to allow foundations to convene community stakeholders and leverage wider support.
- Community resilience and sustainability is a key agenda in civil society, and community needs mapping can be adopted as a framework for local government.
- Where financial resources are scarce, community needs mapping can be used as a capacity building tool.
- Smaller foundations especially can play strong 'connecting' roles, and may provide in-kind goods and services and use the mapping to better measure their impact.
- Community needs mapping provides a mechanism to initiate local dialogue about Community Resilience.

- Strong partnerships in the mapping process can help engage diverse members of the community, reflecting a broader range of assets and needs.
- Strong leadership is important for shifting the role of the foundation. In most of the cases described, it was the idea of one individual inspired by another individual in the network that initiated the ideas around community needs mapping.
- Most resilience issues are long-term, complex and evolving. Community foundations are also long-term institutions; however, it is key for them to work in partnership with others in order to think about global issues and connect them with local action.
- An understanding of the dynamics involved in the elements of community resilience can help reposition the foundation as a neutral knowledge hub which is able to convene and leverage wider civil change.

As we began our journey, we considered community resilience as made up of diverse, modular feedback loops. It is a web of evolving, organic relationships between a myriad of elements. Resilience manifests as individualistic at the edges and more homogenous in its shared purpose, values and goals at the core, a pattern which is recognisable in any society. Community foundations and community resilience are seemingly natural bedfellows, although an understanding of the nature of community resilience is primary to creating a response and further defining a community foundation's role in increasing resilience in the wider community. While some element of trial and error will be expected among any 'trailblazers' of a new role, a comparative approach to looking at community foundations around the globe and the wider community development field provides some solid examples on which to base strategic plans. One example is the Rockefeller Foundation's '100 Resilient Cities program' which has a learning networking element that links cities participating in the program. With the exploration of this nature of the community, community foundations inevitably bring about a change in their role from a static, passive grant giving vehicle to a living, connecting component of civil society. Perhaps no longer just a traditional bedrock of local civil society, but an active breathing life-force.

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