



**Welcome** to the Global Fund for Community Foundation's October e-bulletin!

## **Regional focus**

### **Middle East and North Africa**

#### **The Village Decides – Nora Lester Murad, Director of the Dalia Association on a pilot grantmaking scheme that puts funds in local hands**

Palestinians in all manner of situations, in villages, refugee camps and cities, are trying to improve their lives and strengthen their communities. But Palestinian civil society's dependence on international aid distorts development, undermines local leadership, breeds helplessness, and prevents sustainability.

Most donors, for example, require proposals in English, not Arabic, and use complicated frameworks that are foreign to our local work. Even the larger NGOs that can access international funds are forced to invest so much energy servicing the donors that they risk becoming alienated from local priorities and values.

Dalia Association, the first Palestinian community foundation, believes that we have the right to decide ourselves how development resources are used and to lead our own social change and sustainable development agenda. So we fund grassroots community initiatives in a new way, putting control over decision-making in the hands of communities themselves.

Our recent grantmaking pilot "The Village Decides" proved the viability and the value of this innovative approach. After developing trusting relationships with the officials and activists of Saffa village near Ramallah, we held an open, public meeting at which villagers voted to decide which four of their eight community groups they wanted to support. Then, the total grant of \$12,000 was divided among the attendees, each person controlling an equal share of \$353. Each person allocated his/her share to one, two, three or all four of the potential grantees. In the same meeting, with complete transparency, grant amounts were calculated and announced. The Sports Club got about \$3,600; Farmers' Committee got \$3,000; the Cultural Center got \$2,000 and the Women's Committee \$1,700. Local people had been given ownership of the funds and the facility to have them put to use as they saw fit.

In the months that followed, Dalia worked closely with the grantee organizations as they decided how best to use their funds. We saw their attitudes transform as they realized that they didn't need to thank us or please us, since their neighbors were their donors, not us. We saw their thinking become more strategic and long-term as they realized the opportunity to use funds in a way that would position them for income or further funding. We also saw relations among the groups change as they realized they need not compete, and that in fact, they had much to gain from supporting each others' success. The entire process is illustrated in a 13-minute documentary that is available upon request from [info@dalia.ps](mailto:info@dalia.ps).

Such grantmaking mechanisms clearly have great potential to put communities in charge of their own development and reorient NGOs' accountability from donors to local communities. However, they also face a huge obstacle, which is the challenge of local funding. The Saffa pilot, for example, was supported by a grant from the Global Fund for Community

Foundations. In order to achieve sustainability, we need robust, reliable mechanisms for local funding. Given the enormity of local challenges, it is hard to comprehend the time and effort involved in developing new traditions of local philanthropy.

Dalia Association however, remains confident that we can build new traditions of philanthropy and that doing so will have long-term benefits for Palestinian civil society and Palestine as a whole. There are already plans in place for Diaspora philanthropy, letting expatriate Palestinians establish funds to support their hometown development; to facilitate corporate philanthropy, building understanding of corporate social responsibility; and to facilitate small-scale giving through collection boxes so that every Palestinian, regardless of his/her means, can become a donor and a leader in the work of Palestinian-led social change and sustainable development.

For more information about Dalia Association, please visit <http://www.dalia.ps>

### **Incubating Social Enterprise – Hilary Gilbert on taking a new approach at the Community Foundation for South Sinai**

The Community Foundation for South Sinai (CFSS) operates in a climate where grant-making is a tricky proposition: community organizations are limited both in number and freedom of action. Bedouin people are marginalized: many lack education, healthcare, electricity, even water and malnutrition is a real issue. My community research has shown that secure work tops people's list of priorities. As a small, new organization with limited funds, CFSS trustees felt we could support community aspirations best by helping people use existing skills and resources to improve their livelihoods. One of our projects to incubate local social enterprise has been the Mount Sinai Bedouin Wool project.

In the past, when Bedouin were semi-nomadic and lived in tents, all their wool was used for tent-making. There is thus no tradition of making clothes from wool, despite the bitter cold of Sinai mountain winters. Research has highlighted health problems suffered by children in winter due to the cold and we hoped to enable women to use the wool from their small mixed flocks of sheep and goats to spin and knit warm clothing, not only for their own families, but once they'd perfected it, for sale to tourists who visit Mount Sinai in their thousands each year.

I took back wool samples for analysis by experts at the University of Manchester. The results surprised me, and required a change of tack: the sheep's wool was too coarse to knit, but proved suitable for felting. Felting is a technique used by other nomadic people (e.g. in Mongolia), but it is unknown in Sinai. With the help of a felting expert in the Textiles Faculty I was taught the technique.

It took months to identify locations and leaders; but work is now underway. Several communities wanted to take part. Four communities in which women showed special skill in handling wool were chosen; and we selected Selma, a bright and able woman, as our leading light. Once she'd learned felt-making from me, we planned a programme of meetings and teaching visits to extend the skill to four women in each small community. They will pass their learning to others, thus we hope creating a new and sustainable tradition of felting as a means of meeting basic needs and generating income. The project is run by my capable Bedouin research assistant, Mohammed; rural women do not move about independently for both cultural and logistical reasons. Selma is distantly related to him; a stroke of genius, as it means she can travel in his jeep. They visit each community (sometimes an hour off-road into the desert), introducing the concept then returning to teach the technique. At the end of Ramadan when normal life resumed, the first workshops took place.

In November our felting expert, Gabi, will join me in Sinai for troubleshooting workshops. The women will be familiar with the process by then, and can ask practical questions. Together we will design simple garments (waistcoats, socks, caps etc) and explore traditional decorative motifs. The idea of making something new from familiar material is generating real excitement, and ideas for new products: palm baskets, leather sandals. The beauty of it is that the wool costs nothing: once they can do it, they can keep their families warm, and later sell goods through the Foundation. Clear profit, fair prices, and a share for the community.

Incubating social enterprise may not be home ground for a community foundation; but where grantmaking is tough we think it's got a future.

For more information about the Community Foundation for South Sinai, please visit [www.southsinaifoundation.org](http://www.southsinaifoundation.org)

### **Dr Atallah Kuttab of the Welfare Association on the need for sustainable giving in the Arab region**

Dr Kuttab, Director General of the Welfare Association, an organization of around 100 business leaders mainly from the Palestinian Diaspora, which aims for sustainable social change and to support a vibrant Palestinian civil society, outlines the challenges faced by philanthropy in the region and its enormous potential.

To read the article in full, click here:

<http://www.philanthropyuk.org/Newsletter/Sep2008Issue34/TheMiddleEast>

## **News from other regions**

### **Upcoming East Africa Philanthropy Forums**

Allavida and the East Africa Association of Grantmakers (EAAG) will be conducting three one-day forums in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October respectively. The meetings are part of the GFCF's ongoing regional consultation process and are also aimed at stimulating the debate around local philanthropy at the individual country level. The meetings will be facilitated by Christa Kuljian, independent consultant and former Director of the Mott Foundation office for South Africa. For further information, please contact Linda Ihuthia: [lihuthia@allavida.or.ke](mailto:lihuthia@allavida.or.ke)

### **Dr Sandeep Deshmukh discusses the many faces of Indian philanthropy**

In his recent article in Philanthropy UK Dr Deshmukh, recent former director of GFCF grantee partner Sampradaan Indian Centre for Philanthropy, explores the country's diversity of giving practices.

Read the article in full: <http://www.philanthropyuk.org/Newsletter/Sep2008Issue34/India>

## **Community philanthropy news update**

### **WINGS Community Foundation Global Status Report now available**

WINGS has just released the latest Community Foundation Global Status Report, the first since 2005 and the fifth since WINGS-CF first published this type of global research on community foundations in 2000.

Researched and authored by Eleanor W Sacks, this report, the latest in a series of documents tracking the growth and development of community foundations around the world, also documents key trends, regionally and worldwide.

For an executive summary or to read the report in full, please visit [www.wingsweb.org](http://www.wingsweb.org).

### **Tackling big issues with small steps – thought provoking sessions at the Grantmakers East Forum 2008**

The Grantmakers East Forum 2008 came to a close on 10<sup>th</sup> October after two days of lively discussions and intensive networking, set against the backdrop of the old and beautiful Croatian coastal town of Dubrovnik. Notable among the sessions was a plenary session on environmental sustainability and climate change in the context of economic development in Central and Eastern Europe: speakers included Tomasz Terlecki of European Climate Organisation and Sam Thompson of the New Economics Foundation. In plenary discussion, "The critical role of philanthropy: developing long term support for civil engagement", Michael Edwards, formerly of the Ford Foundation and author of "Just another Emperor?" a critique of so-called 'philanthrocapitalism', provoked a lively debate about the nature and value of the "new" philanthropy. GFCF Director Jenny Hodgson spoke as part of a session on "creating a culture of philanthropy" exploring the idea that while legal frameworks are important, "creating a culture on philanthropy" is above all about people; building their trust in institutions and increasing their participation in community driven initiatives.

GFCF programme manager Vadim Samorodov was also at the event and moderated a session entitled "Working Small – Thinking Big", which aimed to spark debate about the value of small grants and small funding in community development. The session was supported by three speakers from Bosnia- Herzegovina, Serbia and Latvia – small countries that appeared on the World's political map less than 20 years ago and that have had something of an uneasy past. The speakers told anecdotal stories about their experience of mobilizing communities with very modest resources that they were struggling to raise. Jasna Jasarevic from the Bosnian Tuzla Community Foundation shared a story of how local youth had helped in removing the garbage that had been accumulating all over the place since the war and attracted attention of the whole community to this issue; Tanja Bjelanovic from the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund told of the local youth clubs that appeared in one village owing to a BCIF grant and then came to be replicated all around Serbia as a successful self-organizing model for youth engagement; and Ansis Berzins from Valmiera Region Community Foundation (Latvia) attracted the audience's attention with his story of one donated washing machine that changed the life of a whole village.

The stories gave rise to a lively discussion around the issue which ultimately raised the question of how foundations can identify these kinds of interesting initiatives and the people active in implementing them. The moderator's answer to this was that it is important to provide open access to small grants, because often it's not the money that is needed but the sense that someone cares.

An online summary of the event can be found here: <http://www.gef.efc.be/>

### **New TCFN Book "Local Mission Global Vision" published**

Edited by Peter deCourcy Hero, Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Peter Walkenhorst, Bertelsmann Stiftung this volume from the Foundation Center in collaboration with the Transatlantic Community Foundation Network (TCFN) looks at new roles for community foundations in the 21st century. With contributions from 17 leading thinkers in

the fields of social investment, venture philanthropy, strategic program planning, and nonprofit governance, it brings together a unique range of insights and expertise.

For more information about the book, please visit: [http://www.tcfn.efc.be/whats\\_new.php](http://www.tcfn.efc.be/whats_new.php)

### **WINGS Peer Learning Event held in Brussels**

September 10 - 12 saw the gathering of WINGS member grantmaking associations and support organizations in Brussels, for a peer learning event focusing on the question: "How can we strengthen and support peer learning among and within our WINGS network participants?" The event provided an opportunity for colleagues from across the world to come together to share ideas and information and to forge lasting relationships for future collaboration.

More information about this and other WINGS peer learning events can be found at [www.wingsweb.org](http://www.wingsweb.org)

## **Calendar**

**Global Fund for Community Foundations Peer Learning and Sharing Meeting, 7 November, 4:30- 6:30 pm** GFCF grantee partners present at the Community Foundations of Canada Conference 2008 are invited to take part in this session, which will provide an opportunity for GFCF grantees to network, share experiences and to offer feedback on challenges and successes in their work.

The session will be facilitated by Karin Tice, GFCF evaluator, who can be contacted at [ktice@comcast.net](mailto:ktice@comcast.net).

**Applications for the 2009 ERSTE Award for Social Integration now open** The Awards are for projects that create social change and foster social integration – understood as all activities aimed at creating a stable and just society that includes disadvantaged groups and people with special needs – in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The Awards are worth a total of €275,000; organizations from the public sector, civil society and the private sector, as well as religious initiatives and the media, are eligible to enter. The deadline for applications is 14 November.

More information can be found at: [www.socialintegration.org](http://www.socialintegration.org)

**Global Entrepreneurship Week (17 - 23 November 2008)** Global Entrepreneurship Week will connect young people everywhere through local, national and global activities designed to help them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators. Students, educators, entrepreneurs, business leaders, employees, non-profit leaders, government officials and many others will participate in a range of activities - online and face-to-face - to harness the energy of social networking, to connect people taking action in their local and global communities and to celebrate entrepreneurship across the globe.

Click here to find out more: <http://unleashingideas.org/welcome>

**3rd GuideStar International Assembly 2008 - From Local to Global: The Importance of CSO Information (2-3 December 2008)** The 3rd GuideStar Assembly, to be held in London, will convene civil society leaders around the world to discuss how information can empower civil society and decision-makers at all levels to rise to the challenges confronting us today. Key issues to be discussed include the role of

information and technology in engaging citizens in policy and social action and the impact of new media on CSOs and the reporting of their work.

For more information, please see <http://www.guidestarinternational.org/>

## **Coming up in the next GFCF e-bulletin...**

A focus on the Asia Pacific region.

Please send your news items and any other suggestions to [info@wings-globalfund.org](mailto:info@wings-globalfund.org)