CHANGE COMES FROM THE BOTTOM UP!
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Local communities across Europe are confronted with a wide range of social problems, ranging from air pollution and unequal access to education, and on down to poverty. The best way to solve these problems is to act from the bottom up – this solution involves the whole community and that makes the community want to act for the common good.

Sometimes local communities need support – a guide who will tell them how best to organize their activities, where and how to look for funding and how to deal with obstacles. The role of such a guide is played in many communities by community foundations (CFs): organizations with the task of supporting the activities of local communities.

There are approximately 650 community foundations operating across Europe. Thanks to the enormous amount of work done by them, local communities in Europe are empowered in diagnosing crucial social issues and in joining forces with various stakeholders to tackle them. In this way, they successfully make changes at the local level while also contributing to the process of global problem resolution. How? Due to each issue that is being faced at the local level being reflected at the global level. In other words: because local communities across Europe face similar problems, from the broader perspective these can be constructively viewed as global problems.

This is why the United Nations, along with different stakeholders, introduced the idea of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, which form a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity ¹. SDGs can establish a common language for all organizations to communicate about similar activities.

About the Fund

The Global Challenges Local Solutions Fund (GCLS) is the first fund connecting community foundations and Sustainable Development Goals.

It is a grant-making program that supports community foundations and local philanthropic organizations throughout Europe in addressing global challenges at the local level. It was established to provide them with additional resources that can improve local initiatives. The Fund focuses on initiatives referring directly to SDGs.

About this brochure

This brochure showcases the examples of inspiring local projects from across Europe that received grants in the 1st edition of the GCLS grantmaking program.

Join us

Visit http://www.localsolutionsfund.org/ to find out more!

¹ http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE PROGRAM

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Illustrative challenges: eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere; reducing by at least half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty, in all its dimensions and according to national definitions.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Illustrative challenges: ending all forms of malnutrition; doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers; maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals along with their related species living in the wild.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well being for all, at all ages
Illustrative challenges: ending the AIDS epidemic, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases, and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases; strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic-drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol; decreasing the number of global deaths and injuries from road-traffic accidents.

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Illustrative challenges: ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education; increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Illustrative challenges: ending all forms of discrimination universally against all women and girls; eliminating all harmful practices, such as child marriage and early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; enhancing the use of enabling technologies, in particular information and communication technologies, to promote the empowerment of women.

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Illustrative challenges: achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all; improving water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials; protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems.

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Illustrative challenges: achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men and equal pay for work of equal value; reducing the proportion of youth not employed or not in education or training.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
Illustrative challenges: empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion and economic or other status.
Goal 11. Make cities and all urban settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Illustrative challenges: ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, upgrading slums; providing access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport; strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Illustrative challenges: achieving the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, reducing global food waste; reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Illustrative challenges: improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Illustrative challenges: preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds; managing and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid major adverse impacts.

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Illustrative challenges: ensuring the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, combating desertification, restoring degraded land and soil.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Illustrative challenges: reducing all forms of death rates due to violence and related causes everywhere; end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children; reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms.

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
Illustrative challenges: encouraging and promoting effective public, public-private and civil-society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing partnership strategies.
PROJECTS SUPPORTED WITHIN THE 2017/2018 GCLS GRANT ROUND

Făgăraș Country Community Foundation
(Fundația Comunitară Țara Făgărașului)
Project: YouthBank Academy

Romania

About: Făgăraș Country Community Foundation (FCTF) has been active in the area since 2013, supporting local NGOs, civic associations and civic initiatives, as well as individuals, youth, seniors and companies, in their desire to create change. It has a strong focus on youth and development: within a YouthBank (YB) program, youngsters are empowered as leaders, decision-makers and grant-makers, learning how to mobilize resources to better shape the future.

Challenge: Inequality among youth and unequal access to education.

Solution: YouthBank Academy – an education program based primarily on peer-education that includes the necessary experiences for enhancing youth leadership and impact in the local community. YB members designed the education program of the Academy, took part in professional training sessions, and had a chance to test their knowledge in practice by running an evaluation of the local community based on SDGs. The essence of the program was to create a framework in which young people are encouraged to take the initiative where they think things can be done better, become involved in the community, and care about what is happening around them, while being exposed to various activities that helped them develop at both a personal and a professional level. In this context, young people become actors of change for addressing global challenges at the local level, and leaders in identifying local solutions to both global and local challenges.

Grant total: $13,034
Forever Manchester

**Project:** Reducing Inequality Through Community Philanthropy

**About:** Forever Manchester (the Community Foundation for Greater Manchester) funds and supports local grassroots community activity, focusing on encouraging those living in communities to use their physical assets (buildings and spaces) and personal strengths (skills, talent and experience) to devise and deliver solutions to the issues they identify. They do this through an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which informs both community-development activity (workers in communities) and our own grant-making.

**Challenge:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Across Greater Manchester, many communities face multiple disadvantages including poverty, lack of housing, poor health and lack of education. Such key deprivation markers when combined, along with a reduction in statutory community health and provision for social care, result in poor mental and physical health and well-being that begins at a young age.

**Solution:** Increasing the connections young people have within their community, encouraging them to recognize the ability they have to design and deliver solutions toward the changes they want to see. To do this, there was an education program implemented in secondary schools, during which youngsters could: identify their own strengths and abilities through a range of activities including a specially developed game, think about what already exists in their community and is available to them (asset mapping), identify the type of activity they want to see in their community and explore the changes they would like to see as a result, identify which projects are both most wanted and most deliverable – which skills and assets do they have available to them to make their idea a reality, and facilitate project delivery, in conjunction with the school.

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Milton Keynes Community Foundation

**Project:** Vital Thinking – Poverty

**About:** The Milton Keynes Community Foundation is a charity that connects people and resources to projects and ideas to create positive change for Milton Keynes communities. They award over £1.7 million of support to the local charity sector each year, and lead local knowledge through their annual Vital Signs report. They also run a series of events called Vital Thinking, which are intended to transform the facts and figures into specific actions that will impact identified local issues.

**Challenge:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere. The statistic that one in five children locally live in poverty in Milton Keynes has not changed for several years, despite the fact that Milton Keynes appears relatively affluent. This hidden poverty means that pockets of deprivation have established themselves in many poorer estates, and perpetuates the increasing divide between rich and poor. The challenge locally is to reveal the scope of this challenge to its full extent, and make communities aware that there are many in Milton Keynes who are struggling.

**Solution:** Joining forces with different local actors and stakeholders to tackle the challenge of poverty in a holistic way, using the findings from the Vital Signs report. Several actions were undertaken, such as: reviewing existing local research on levels of poverty, discussing the results with key organizations working with people living in poverty to ensure that “real life” experiences are concurrent with the research, and hosting two events that created opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience. The project has helped bring the issue of poverty to the forefront of local work within the voluntary sector.
**Mission Bambini Foundation**  
(Fondazione Mission Bambini)  
**Project:** Nove+ Project

*About:* Mission Bambini was founded in Italy in 2000, with the aim of helping and supporting children who are poor, sick, without education or physically and morally abused, to give them the opportunity and hope of a better life.

*Challenge:* To make Zone 9 in Milan, Italy, an inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable zone, where inclusive and equitable quality education is ensured. Zone 9 problems arise from several factors: immigration, a precarious housing situation and difficult economic and social conditions. The resources, services and projects put in place by partners and institutions are fragmentary and cannot properly face the multidimensionality of problems; those are often temporary solutions because they relate to individual projects and not to services, and produce only short-term effects.

*Solution:* Promotion of a self-educating community by experimenting with generative-welfare models. To do so, five territorial community centers were opened in Zone 9 of Milan. They organized many different initiatives dedicated to children, teenagers and foreigners, from Italian-language courses through trainings for people suffering from psychological problems, to sewing workshops and creative laboratories for youngsters. To showcase available resources and to encourage people to take advantage of them, a map was created that was then promoted in the community.

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**Nidzica Community Foundation**  
(Nidzicki Fundusz Lokalny)  
**Project:** Active – Creative

*About:* The Nidzica Community Foundation is a philanthropic organization that aims to support children’s and youth education through scholarship programs, activities in favor of development of local community, gathering and redistributing funds for charity goals in the areas of culture, education and environment. The organization implements programs within the framework of innovative forms of education and promotion of social engagement by businesses.

*Challenge:* Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Only aware, knowledgeable people can introduce social changes, improving living conditions of the entire community. Through inclusive and quality education and social engagement in local initiatives, youth from smaller communities will acquire the equal educational chances available through positive motivation toward education. Therefore, along with supporting the process of education through scholarships, an integral element of Nidzica’s activities is creating attitudes of social engagement among pupils and students and equipping them with universal social skills.

*Solution:* Promotion of universal forms of improving skills and qualifications of young people by practical study within the framework of voluntary service, sharing knowledge with others, creative search for innovative forms of social and educational activity. Several activities were organized, including: 1) the public A Penny for Happiness collection, run by the volunteers, who then organized educational classes for children, 2) a series of interactive workshops for project participants, who improved their skills in areas such as social communication, creative thinking, design and volunteer work, 3) a crowdfunding campaign prepared by the project participants, thanks to which the Blockland – a space for creative fun – will be created.
SDG: Obrenovac Youth Foundation – OYF
(Fondacija za mlade Obrenovca)
Project: Let’s connect the dots – working together to solve the issues we care about

About: Obrenovac Youth Foundation (OYF) is one of the few community foundations in Serbia. It was established in June 2014 by youth activists in an effort to support and rebuild the local community after devastating floods that severely affected 90% of the municipality of Obrenovac. Their mission is to connect people through events and projects that build community spirit, promote local philanthropy and support initiatives that make our city a better place to live.

Challenge: Obrenovac as a municipality has been affected by numerous issues that are also part of the problems being solved through global agendas. The most urgent ones are: the Nikola Tesla power plant, the largest system in Serbia operating on coal – a major ecological hazard, but also the biggest and the most important local employer; devastating floods in 2014, with consequences still affecting many neighborhoods, local businesses and people’s properties; a major immigrant center in Obrenovac, which currently accepts about 1,000 male-only migrants.

Solution: Substantive discussion among people in the community, organizing events that bring together various actors and stakeholders to talk about important local issues. Within the project, OYF has organized: online and offline research on local-needs assessments from 125 citizens, Community Markets events where local entrepreneurs meet with the local community, presenting their creative work, supporting the local economy, and promoting local entrepreneurship. They have also organized: a Community Forum, gathering participants from municipality, local CSOs, local media and non-formal groups and partner organizations to discuss key local issues that affect our municipality; Spring Run and Bike-a-thon/Bike Ride. OYF will continue to organize these events in the future, with support from local partners and other donors.

Grant total: 15,000 $

SDG: Odorheiu Secuiesc Community Foundation - OSCF
(Fundația Comunitară din Odorheiu Secuiesc – Székelyudvarhelyi Közösségi Alapítvány)
Project: Active Odorhei

About: OSCF is as an independent local fundraiser and grant-maker, a builder of philanthropic culture who builds a conscious, active and creative community that is attentive to one another, through programs and grants. In our very new organizational strategy, we defined five main activity fields: education and family, development of community living space, civil-society development, developing the culture of philanthropy, organizational development.

Challenge: As a center in a rural area, there are many people coming daily to work and to learn in Odorheiu Secuiesc. There isn’t a very good public-transportation system. Under these circumstances and thanks to the comfort of inhabitants, there are too many cars on the roads. Due to this, the city faces two serious problems: the air is polluted by cars and traffic is really heavy every day. In the given circumstances, there is a need to change inhabitants’ behavior, respectively to begin to walk and to travel by bike. There is no culture of safety for biking or of safe driving to respect others on the road.

Solution: The main goal was to develop a sustainable, resilient city by promoting healthy, active lifestyles among inhabitants, teaching safe cycling to students, then raising awareness of natural-environment values and of their protection among the inhabitants. Main project activities were the following: 1. “Go to school by bike”: a theoretical education in safe biking addressed to ninth-grade students; designing and installing bike storage in four schools; developing a hiking trail around the city with marked roads and information tablets (about natural values) and some resting places; organizing a community hiking event focused on three different groups of participants: families, beginner touring and advanced touring.

Grant total: 14,916 $
Community Donation Fund Sliven Foundation / CDF Sliven
(Фондация Обществен дарителски фонд Сливен)
Project: Equal opportunities and future for all in our common European home

About: CDF Sliven was established in 2012 in order to promote philanthropy among private persons and companies as a factor in local development. The Fund works in the Sliven region. The main target groups of the Fund are NGOs, informal groups, individual citizens (including children and young people, as well as those with special needs: minority ethnic groups, disadvantaged people, poor people, etc.) from the town of Sliven and the region.

Challenge: Sliven can be regarded as a typical area of concentration of ethnic minorities. The biggest minority are Roma people, often called Gypsies, constituting a third of the total population. Although an EU member, Bulgaria and particularly Sliven are still places where the Roma ethnicity remains marginalized and excluded from society. Integration of Roma people isn’t only their own problem, but is a problem of the entire society and can be successful only with comprehension and empathy by both the Roma minority and the majority. Unresolved economic, social and cultural-educational issues may activate ethnic contradictions and rupture ethnic peace.

Solution: Integrating the Roma people from Sliven into the life of the community through: motivating Roma children to read, write and study; raising the Roma cultures of education and health, increasing the self-confidence of Roma children while overcoming anti-Roma attitudes and prejudices. Project activities: educational and creative activities with Roma and other children; lessons and workshops in their schools; health discourses for youths and adults; organizing student exhibitions.

SDG:

Grant total: 11,991.98 $

Snow Mountain Community Fund
(Fundusz Lokalny Masywu Śnieżnika)
Project: “I’m every woman... it’s all in me!”

About: The Snow Mountain Community Fund (SMCF) began to operate in 1997, analyzing local potential and local needs. Its mission is to change the mentality of people and convince them that everybody can be a “change maker.” During nearly 20 years of existence, they’ve given more than 800 grants to local initiatives, more than 1,300 scholarships to poor and gifted students, set up the Common Room for children and youth in Bystrzyca Kłodzka, and established 14 memory funds helping people better understand the idea of philanthropy.

Challenge: One of the biggest challenges in the project was reinforcing both internal and external power of women in community. Based on their experience, the Snow Mountain Community Fund could see great enthusiasm and potential in women to undertake a multitude of actions: social, economic and political. Unfortunately, we are still lacking a driving force that would convince these women to make the best of their skills. Although most of them have enough experience and knowledge, their lack of self-confidence and readiness to take up challenges are the most serious obstacles. SMCF members felt a strong need to change such an attitude, as we believe that only women – with their sensitivity, empathy and their emotions – can make the real change.

Solution: Organizing various workshops for woman: WenDo for 12 teenage girls (a method that teaches one how to stop feeling helpless and defenseless in every situation), legal workshops, meetings with psychologists, mind and body workshops, training for young women leaders. During the project, SMCF organized an open conference for woman, full of workshops and debates. The organization believes that stronger and self-confident local women become more active in participation in public, political and social life.

SDG:

Grant total: 15,000 $
Tuzla Community Foundation
(Fondacija tuzlanske zajednice)
Project: Clean Water for All Children in Tuzla Canton

Bosnia and Herzegovina

About: Tuzla Community Foundation was founded in 2003 through efforts of local people to rebuild local communities and social cohesion after demographic changes and horrible experiences during the Bosnia-Herzegovina War from 1992 to 1995. Eighteen local people established the local foundation to support citizen participation in the democratic development of their communities through networking and partnership, inclusion and empowerment of young people, and through financial support to civic initiatives and projects for sustainable community development.

Challenge: The critical situation of water and sanitation conditions in primary schools situated in rural areas of Tuzla canton (Bosnia’s biggest canton, with 450,000 inhabitants). There are 122 schools that have increased risk of infectious diseases because of unsafe, unsustainable water services. Unfortunately, in Tuzla canton, a system of regular control of drinking water in public spaces exists only for those connected to central water-pipe systems. Many public spaces, particularly schools in rural areas, get water from alternative sources, which are not regularly monitored for water quality.

Solution: A database of water-supply systems for all school buildings, and identifying schools that are exposed to risk because no regular water control is carried out. Our organization addressed the problem and involved public institutions in implementation, including the Public Health Institution and the Ministry of Education, and signed Memorandum of Understanding to work together. As a result of this work, we have succeeded in setting up water-purification filters in 18 schools, providing clean water for about 1,600 students.

Grant total: 15,000 $
More information about the Global Challenges Local Solutions Program: http://www.localsolutionsfund.org/

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