

Eleanor W. Sacks

ISTR Conference 2008: Paper Abstract

Panel: "Testing the Universality of the Community Foundation Concept: The development of community foundations in Turkey and Egypt"

Abstract: The growth of community foundations in a global perspective

The author will examine from an historical perspective the contexts for the formation of community foundations globally, based on new research on the early history of community foundations in the United States and on the growth of community foundations around the world.

The context for the development of community foundations in the US is not well understood by scholars or practitioners. No full-scale scholarly monograph has been published on the history of the US community foundation movement from its beginnings to the present day. The last overview was written in 1989.¹ Most of the research that exists focuses on institutional histories of a few community foundations. Much has been written about the first community foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, and a handful of others, but not about the movement as a whole. The reliance on a few salient facts about the US community foundation movement has led to misconceptions at home and abroad about where community foundations fit the history of philanthropy in the US and in the intellectual, political, social, and economic contexts of the period.

The establishment of the early community foundations in the United States occurred at a time when only a handful of private foundations had been created. It was an age of reform that was characterized by: efforts to mitigate the problems associated with large scale immigration into the cities; the secularization of social service provision into the hands of local governments and non-profits; challenges to the capitalism; and a belief that solutions to social problems could be identified through scientific study. New research by the author will set the context for community foundation development in the US. Parallels and differences will be drawn with the expansion of the community foundation movement globally.

The growth of community foundations around the world, especially since the fall of communism, has been striking. Not only are community foundations characterized as the fastest growing form of philanthropy in the US, the same is now being said about community foundations in a global context. It has been reported that more community foundations now exist outside the US than inside.³ New research will be undertaken in the first half of 2008 to track the growth of community foundations around the world.⁴ In the past it has been clear that global patterns of growth have not been symmetrical and that the community foundation concept has not received universal support, even though claims have been made about the universality of the concept. In general, community foundations have not taken hold in countries or regions that continue to maintain a strong social welfare state, or where there is the expectation that religious institutions will provide social services. Based on new research in progress, this paper will explore whether the pattern still holds and any new trends that are emerging.

The author will provide the global context for presentations by the other authors of the recent establishment of community foundations in Turkey and Egypt.

¹ Magat, Richard, ed. *An Agile Servant: Community Leadership by Community Foundations*, Council on Foundations and the Foundation Center: 1989. See especially chapter 1: David C. Hammack, "Community Foundations: The delicate question of purpose."

² Marten, A.W. *The Cleveland Foundation*. Cleveland Trust Company: 1950; Howard, Nathaniel R. *A Trust for All Time: The Story of the Cleveland Foundation and the community foundation movement*. The Cleveland Foundation: 1963; Tittle, Diana. *Rebuilding Cleveland: the Cleveland Foundation and its evolving urban strategy*. Ohio State University: 1992.

³ Personal conversation with Peter Walkenhorst of the Bertelsmann Foundation, September 2007. The number of community foundations in the US is estimated to be approximately 700 using 2005 data. Source: "Key facts on community foundations." Foundation Center: September 2007.

⁴ The last research on the growth of community foundations worldwide was published in 2005, using 2004 data. Sacks, Eleanor W. *2005 Community Foundations Global Status Report*, Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS). The report is available on the WINGS website: www.wingsweb.org.

Filiz Bikmen

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Panel: "Testing the Universality of the Community Foundation Concept: The development of community foundations Turkey and Egypt"

Abstract: Social Investment in Turkey

According to recent research, organized philanthropy remains to be the least chosen form of giving in Turkey. The reasons, however, do not suggest that there is no opportunity for this to develop. Responses to a public opinion survey undertaken in 2004 (Carkoglu in Filiz Bikmen, and Rana Zincir, eds. *Philanthropy in Turkey: Citizens, Foundations and the Pursuit of Social Justice* (Istanbul: TUSEV, 2006), suggest that investment in adopting new practices and mechanisms for mobilizing resources may yield a great return on investment.

This panel paper and presentation will start with a brief sketch of the historical and statistical backdrop of the philanthropic and civic sector in Turkey and then delve into recent developments, namely, the establishment of Turkey's first community foundation. The paper will build on an initial study undertaken in May 2006 as part of a fellowship at the Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society at CUNY Graduate center "The Global Community Foundation Practice: Experiences, Observations and Implications for Turkey" and report on progress and outcomes.

Since this paper was published in mid 2006, a new initiative based at TUSEV was launched called the "Social Investment Initiative" with two main objectives: 1) Share information about the community foundation practice and discuss the need and potential for a Community Foundation in Turkey and 2) Undertake a pilot project and establish Turkey's first community foundation in Bolu, a city with just less than 100.000 persons approximately 250 km from Istanbul.

The main part of the presentation will discuss the progress of this initiative vis-à-vis the following clusters (previously defined in the initial CUNY paper) in terms of foreseen risks, actual realities, and potential challenges and opportunities for the community foundation practice in Turkey:

- Contextual (social and economic context, culture of giving, defining community, legal and fiscal frameworks)
- Functional (fund development, grantmaking, convening, community knowledge)
- Relational (relationships with different stakeholders in the public, private and 3rd sector)
- Operational aspects (infrastructure of the CF including staff, technical systems and communications)

Marwa El Daly

ISTR conference 2008: Paper Abstract

Panel: "Testing the Universality of the Community Foundation Concept: The development of community foundations in Turkey and Egypt"

Abstract: Endow a Good *Waqf* and Start by your Neighbourhood – A seed on earth, a plant in heaven: Feasible?

Findings of the most recent research on philanthropy¹ in Egypt revealed that the majority of Egyptian citizens, both Christians and Muslims, favour giving to relatives as first choice and people of the same neighbourhood as a second choice; al *akraboun awla bel ma'rouf* (those close in kin and geography are most worthy of kindness) was a faith-based driving force behind philanthropy that reflects that Egyptians tend to assist those close to them, primarily by kin and secondary by geographical closeness. Moreover, the geographical aspect in *zaka*² giving is vital, as it is preferable to spend the *zaka* money on those who deserve it in the same area you inhabit as a priority before spending it in other geographical areas. The concept here is to meet the needs of one's surroundings before moving to others. Thus, in theory, community foundations which identify core geographic areas, in which it will raise funds, operate and provide grants and services, have great potential to develop, grow in number, and strategically ensure sustainable development in Muslim societies.

However, findings of the same study referred to above, indicate that philanthropy in a country like Egypt is scattered, ad-hoc, personal and lack organization and institutionalization. In addition, perceptions towards philanthropy remain limited to charity and knowledge on the essence of organized philanthropy as it derives from religious texts and a history rich of organized endowed institutions (*waqf*, plural: *awqaf*), is lacking among the vast majority of the masses. Although, more than USD 1 Billion of donation money circulate at the very modest estimate annually in Egypt, most of this money do not contribute to development activities and remain strangled in a vicious circle of charity³. In addition, laws and regulations governing NGOs in general are still not very conducive to empower the growth of capital and hamper forms of investments such as those using the stock market or any form of investment that could entail potential loss. Tax laws and other policies remain inactive towards encouraging philanthropy and a government ministry monopolizes civic endowment building.

Thus, between a theoretical hypothesis envisioning the success of community foundations as a model, the embedded issues that such a model could challenge, and all the pragmatic obstacles facing the growth of such a model, this paper seeks to present the experience of the emergence of the Maadi Community Foundation – *Waqfeyat al Maadi al Ahleya*, which is a pioneering model attempting to revive the endowment *waqf* tradition through endowment building and the application of modern structures such as the community foundation model focusing on a specific geographical area in greater Cairo. This paper will simultaneously attempt to explore the core aspects promising and challenging the success of this model and similar ones, taken the current legal, social and economic environment. It is envisioned to portray the tension between theory and practical implementation and accordingly propose solution based on tangible attempts for change and positive reform.

¹ Marwa El Daly. *Philanthropy in Egypt: A Comprehensive Study on Local Philanthropy in Egypt and Potentials of Directing Giving and Volunteering towards Development*. Cairo: CDS, 2006

² Third pillar of Islam and it responds to compulsory almsgiving seeking the purification of possessions and the consent of God.

³ Ibid.

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Panel: Testing the Universality of the Community Foundation Concept: The development of community foundations in Turkey and Egypt.

Abstract: Walking a tightrope in South Sinai

Indigenous Bedouin people in South Sinai are poor and marginalized. Now largely settled, their ability to sustain themselves and their families by means of traditional livelihoods have been eroded over the past forty years by war, occupation, economic upheaval and political change (Marx 2003). Egyptian government policy since 1982 has settled Nile Valley Egyptians in Sinai, resulting in huge population growth and the reduction of Bedouin to a socially-excluded minority in what was their own territory. The drive to expand Egypt's profitable tourist sector has damaged the delicate ecosystems in which Bedouin livelihoods evolved, in particular putting unsustainable pressure on scarce water resources. Most Bedouin have no share in the wealth generated by tourism, and official policy relies on merely a 'trickle-down effect' to increase it. There is an urgent need for inclusive sustainable development in this community.

My current research considers the social impact of conservation strategy in the St Katherine Protectorate, South Sinai. Despite its initially participatory approach, the Protectorate has operated as a classic example of a Ferguson (1990)-style 'anti-politics machine', defining local needs in terms amenable to its own technical inputs rather than deeper political solutions. The Bedouin now resent the Protectorate as an agent of Egyptian domination, and complain bitterly of double standards in its application of regulations. I have interviewed members of each of the 29 major lineages in the Jebeliya tribe in St Katherine this year, covering households equivalent to at least 10% of the population. Their resentment of their situation is palpable, and they offer many solutions; yet their second-class education, uncertain work prospects and structural marginalization makes it almost impossible for them to access tools of self-realization without support.

To address these concerns a community foundation has been established to catalyze inclusive sustainable development efforts in South Sinai. The model was chosen for its emphasis on sustainability through building endowment (an approach that fits comfortably with the Islamic tradition of *waqf*, or religious endowment (Khalil 2004)), and for its inclusive governance and decision-making structures. But there are real challenges involved in adapting a secular model which has flourished in Western capitalist democracies to the Islamic environment of Egypt with its heavy-handed state controls and weak third sector (Abderrahman 2002). The paper explores these challenges, hingeing on the need to build trust and to be seen to inhabit neutral, apolitical space whilst working towards distinctly political outcomes. It considers the Millennium Development Goals as a potentially fruitful focus for activity that can only with difficulty be rejected by a Government that is a signatory to the MDGs, whilst offering the promise of meaningful change to Bedouin people.

References

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