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Community-Led Development with Mott and CivSource Africa: A Focus on Community Foundations.

CivSource Africa has for the past year walked the journey of researching, activating, and enabling community philanthropy through a philanthropic vehicle known as a community foundation. Community Foundations are designed to pool donations and resources into a coordinated investment and grant making facility dedicated primarily to serving the development and social needs of people and groups in a given locality. This model is relevant even more in this day and age as we shift the power back to communities, that are well-able and knowledgeable about their needs and can garner resources from within and without to address these needs.

In a bid to support the building of a movement of Community Foundations (CFs) in Uganda, CivSource Africa, enable by the CS Mott Foundation partnered with over forty (40) CFs in the first phase (6 months) of the project and the five (5) viable CFs in the second phase of the pilot. All the CFs are based in Kampala and Wakiso districts in Central Uganda.

While CFs are not new in Uganda, the concept of Community Foundations as independent philanthropic actors was a relatively new concept to the organisations which took part in the pilot. Building on the research work done in 2021 by CivSource Africa that sought to analyze CFs in Kampala and Wakiso districts in Central Uganda, CivSource Africa has engaged with both national and regional partners to foster discussions on CFs and their role in development. **In Central Uganda, 105 CFs were engaged on the concept of community foundations during the study.** However, for the pilot phase, forty-six (46) CFs were studiously selected and categorically divided into four specific groups based on their structures and processes. The latter part of the project then focused on an in-depth analysis of the CFs concept specific to documenting impact and Local resource mobilization within their communities with five (5) viable CFs i.e., 3 from Wakiso and 2 from Kampala district.

The five (5) viable CFs were involved in a 13 weeklong exercise that involved co-creating action steps on documenting impact and Local Resource Mobilization strategies within their communities. This exercise was spearheaded by a team of 8 members who formed the CFs Think tank i.e., 6 consultants and 2 members of the Philanthropy Program Antonio Bweme and Ainembabazi Madonna Vicky.

Summit Day!





From 15th to 17th of August 2023, the Philanthropy Program of CivSource Africa had the privilege of hosting Mamo Mohapi from the Mott Foundation, a partner that has continued to enable the growing movement of community foundations in Uganda and beyond and Jeremy Maarman from the [Initiative for Community Advancement](#), an African leader that has walked the journey of establishing and running a community foundation in Bergrivier, South Africa. The engagement was led by Ainembabazi Madonna Vicky, alongside Afoyomungu Olum Lornah, Joan Nyangoma and Malcolm Mpamizo. Together we visited [Slum Life Survival](#), in Kazo, Kawempe, an organisation committed to making a difference in the lives of slum dwellers and [Kawempe Youth Centre](#), an organisation that works with girls and young women in the community to provide a safe space where they can come and gain access to education and information technology education and services. Kenneth Kavulu and Esther Kyazike, the leaders of the two organisations, graciously welcomed us into their premises, setting the stage for them to generously share their stories and invaluable insights from their journey thus far.

A visit to Slum Life Survival, in Kazo



As a Community Foundation Support Organisation, the opportunity to have Jeremy share his experience of establishing and running a community foundation from a practical and personal perspective was a much-needed exercise for the community foundations to ground themselves better in the modes and ways of establishing themselves within the Ugandan context. The questions raised and the contextual challenges and opportunities presented by both parties presented an experiential learning experience that was critical for the community foundations in attendance. Alongside the two we visited on 15th August, Namayumba Epicenter, Namuwongo community foundation and Youth and Children Development Foundation were some of those that participated in the knowledge sharing session led by Jeremy. The summit of this 3-day engagement ended with Jeremy and Mamo visiting CivSource Africa where we too shared our experiences and learnings we'd drawn from the implementation of this work as a Community Foundation Support organization.

A visit to Kawempe Youth Centre



In the midst of the growing emphasis on recognizing, acknowledging, and harnessing locally driven development efforts, community philanthropy, facilitated through community foundations, offers a significant avenue for advancing the principles of community-led development. The site visits to two of the community foundations presented a **vivid demonstration of community foundations as development models that dances to the rhythm of the community needs** rather than one that stomps upon them, to impose agenda that disrupts local priorities. It was evident that the five (5) organisations worked with an innate sense of accountability given their proximity to the communities they serve and reported a growing support in-kind and cash from the communities that have seen the impact of their programs firsthand. This three-day experience underscored the potential of community foundations to advance local development. For CivSource Africa, this firms our resolve to support local philanthropy including instrumental vehicles like community foundations.



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