

SUPPORTING UGANDA'S COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS MOVEMENT: A PILOT EXPERIENCE

CivSource Africa has dedicated the past two years to championing the growth of the community foundations movement in Uganda. Community Foundations (CFs) are charitable organizations focused on enhancing the lives of individuals within a specific geographical area. Recognizing the potential of this movement as a bridge between philanthropy and civil society, we believe it has the capacity to expand, transform, and amplify the impact of local community and individual philanthropy in Uganda. In line with the definition provided by Manuel Pastor, we understand social movements as sustained groupings that develop a frame, a narrative, and a vision for the future. Such movements aim to create long-term shifts in power by building a broad base of support.

A Research Study:

To establish a solid foundation for this movement, comprehensive research on community foundations was conducted in Kampala and Wakiso districts. Our interaction with the study revealed the effects of conflating the term “community foundations” with organizations that operate as community-based organizations in the Ugandan context – especially because of the absence of community foundation-specific legislation and policies. Approximately 40 organizations from Wakiso and Kampala were selected from the sample to receive support in the form of documentation and storytelling training. Our objective was to enhance the capacity of Community Foundations as civic actors within their respective areas of operation.

Co-creation of a Support Plan:

Through a participatory approach, we collaborated with the selected organizations to develop a support plan. This plan encompassed improving local resource mobilization skills for fundraising, enabling organizations to support their own operations and the community needs. Additionally, storytelling and documentation trainings were included to help organizations effectively communicate their impact for reporting and fundraising purposes.

Identifying Needs and Building Support:

The initial two sessions held in November 2022 for CFs from Wakiso and Kampala highlighted the importance of assessing the specific needs of this CF Cohort. It became evident that each CF required a clear sense of purpose and well-defined strategies (roadmaps) to address the community's challenges effectively. Through deeper interactions, it became apparent that many organizations identified more as community-based organizations rather than community foundations. Thus, we went back to the drawing board and re-evaluated the characteristics of these organizations. We continued our journey with those that most closely aligned with the concept of community foundations.

Training Sessions:

The training sessions commenced on May 1, 2023, and concluded on May 3rd. They were conducted in person over a three-day period at Eureka Hotel, Ntinda. A total of 15 organizational leaders from five organizations participated in the training. Subsequent onsite trainings are currently underway within the following five organizations: Namuwongo Community Foundation, Namayumba Epicentre, Kawempe Youth Centre, Slum Life Survival Kawempe, Kazo, and Youth and Children Development Foundation.

Key Elements of Social Movements:

Drawing upon [Manuel Pastor's analysis](#), we identified ten key elements of social movements, including the necessity of a vision, an authentic base in organizing and real constituencies, commitment to long-term goals, an underlying theory of the economy, a theory of government and governance, a strategic approach, solid research as a scaffold, a pragmatic policy package, a geographic scaling strategy, and networking with other organizations. CivSource Africa is committed to embracing and incorporating these elements into our work as we strive to build a strong and sustainable community foundations movement in Uganda.

Building a movement is an incremental process, and as a learning organization, CivSource Africa continually improves its support for community foundations to foster the growth of a capable and sustainable movement in Uganda. We remain to promoting the development and impact of community foundations, aligning philanthropy with civil society, and creating long-lasting transformations in power for the benefit of communities in Uganda.

