



Community Foundations Worldwide Update 2007

One of the measures used to track the global development of community foundations and the increasing interest in them worldwide has been to count them. Numbers can only convey so much but tracking numbers and changes in regional and country spread provides a good snapshot of activity. Peter Walkenhorst, therefore, with help from numerous national agencies, has endeavoured to update figures on the global spread of community foundations, last thoroughly captured in 2005, to provide interim data until the next full scale survey.

The 2005 survey by WINGS covered 1,175 community foundations while the current one counts 1,449. There is one marked reason for the difference: the figure for US community foundations has been revised using data collected by the Foundation Center which identifies 832 nationwide (while previously only about 700 were counted). The most dramatic increase in numbers in a country newer to community foundations is in Germany where there are more than twice as many community foundations now as there were in 2005. Italy, the Czech Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina have all seen increases which are proportionately great (though each starting from a much smaller base). First community foundations have been established in Egypt, Slovenia, Spain, Thailand and Turkey, since 2005. But as advertisements for financial services say, “investments can go down as well as up”: a handful of countries show decreasing numbers but is not always cause for concern. In the United Kingdom, where community foundations are flourishing, mergers between some geographically small community foundations have reduced the numbers over successive counts while improving developmental strength.

The thorough tracking of community foundation development has been done since 2000 through editions of the Global Status Report on Community Foundations (GSR) www.wingsweb.org/information/publications_community.cfm by WINGS (Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support), and specifically its community foundation constituency, WINGS-CF. The last report was published in 2005 and WINGS is now surveying the primary contacts in each country and region to bring this valuable report up to date to 2008. The research and analysis will be done by Eleanor Sacks whose deep and detailed knowledge of the community foundation field has been brought to each edition. Publication should be in May/June.

The GSR goes a long way beyond just counting community foundations. It looks at stages of development and where community foundations have been embedded in specific countries for some time it reviews their history and place in local development and funding patterns. It makes observations about how the community foundation concept is interpreted in different parts of the world. It also provides the most comprehensive resource on support organisations involved in promoting and developing community foundations. One of the most valuable aspects of the GSR has been to offer a set of characteristics (developed by WINGS-CF) which have become the nearest thing the field has to an international definition of a community foundation. This is carefully worded to allow an appropriate level of elasticity in different social, cultural and economic environments but still remain true to the core concept.

Even just counting community foundations, however, is not a simple exercise. In countries where the concept is new it can be difficult to decide exactly when to start counting – should very early stages of developments be counted or should one wait a little longer to see if the

idea really flies? Does every structure that is called a community foundation demonstrate the broadly accepted characteristics which really do make it a community foundation?

There are bound to be questions too about whether we are sufficiently aware of all the places where the community foundation idea is taking root. We hope that if any readers of this fact sheet see errors or omissions they will contact tcfn@bertelsmann.de with their new information.

The WINGS 2005 Community Foundation Global Status Report identified 1,175 community foundations in 46 countries. **The Community Foundations Worldwide Update 2007** shows 1,449 foundations in 46 countries (though not quite the same list of countries).

Country/Region		Country/Region	
North America		Latvia	5
USA	832	Estonia	2
Canada	158	Lithuania	8
Total	990	Turkey	1
		Total	331
Latin America and the Caribbean			
Mexico	24	Russia	27
Anguilla	1	Ukraine	4
Jamaica	1	Total	31
U.S. Virgin Islands	2		
British Virgin Islands	1	Middle East	
Puerto Rico	1	Israel	1
Honduras	1	Egypt	1
Brazil	2	Total	2
Ecuador	1		
Total	34	Africa	
		Ghana	1
Europe		Kenya	1
United Kingdom	56	South Africa	8
Ireland	1	Tanzania	3
Germany	171	Zimbabwe	1
Belgium	2	Total	14
Netherlands	8		
Italy	22	Asia and the Pacific	
Spain	1	Australia	28
Portugal	1	New Zealand	7
Poland	20	India	5
Czech Republic	4	Philippines	2
Slovak Republic	12	South Korea	1
Bulgaria	10	Thailand	2
Slovenia	4	Japan	2
Croatia	1	Total	47
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2		
		Worldwide Total	1449

Sources: Centro Mexicano para la Filantropia, Community Foundation Network, Community Foundations of Canada, European Foundation Centre, Foundation Center, Global Fund for Community Foundations, Philanthropy Australia, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey, Transatlantic Community Foundation Network, World Bank, Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support