

YOUTH COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY

Global
Summit Report
2014

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 COUNCIL *on* FOUNDATIONS

For Youth and Community

Charles Stewart Mott believed that every person exists in a kind of informal partnership with his or her community. He recognized that both can reach their full potential only if they are thriving together.

That's why the Mott Foundation supports institutions that help to build strong relationships between individuals and their communities. Over the past 35 years, we've invested more than \$150 million in the development of community foundations and in community philanthropy. Recently, we supported a series of projects marking the 100th anniversary of community foundations, including the Global Youth Community Philanthropy Summit.

As community foundations enter into their next century, we believe that engaging youth in philanthropy will be vital to the field's continued success and relevance.

The Global Summit provided the opportunity for young people from around the world to forge new connections, share fresh ideas and learn from each other. My hope is that this process continues. As the Mott Foundation has learned from decades of work in the field, global connections and learning definitely lead to community-level improvement. We offer thanks to the Council of Michigan Foundations and the Council on Foundations for organizing the Summit and, most important, to the participants for joining us and sharing.

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Program Officer, Civil Society
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The spirit of **generosity and collaboration is alive in young people** around the world. In convening the Global Youth Community Philanthropy Summit, we had the opportunity to capture the voices and experiences of youth philanthropy participants, practitioners and thought leaders. What we learned and share today provides insight and action steps for foundations and other organizations interested in community-based philanthropy.

We are deeply grateful to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for its leadership and support of the summit and the promise that it holds for young people and the communities they shape.

Vikki Spruill

President & CEO
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Rob Collier

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The Summit

Young leaders from 14 nations gathered for the first ever Global Youth Community Philanthropy Summit in June 2014. They shared perspectives and models and together envisioned the future of local giving by and for young people.

Summit participants represented a great diversity of programs and approaches—all ways to foster community on the part of young people around the world. They found these differences and commonalities to be fertile ground for grappling with pressing issues and entertaining new ideas. Many made personal and professional connections and brought back solutions to try in their home communities. All left with the conviction that youth philanthropy is a field worth investment, commitment and concerted action.

This report documents major themes emerging from the summit, including inspiring approaches, trending topics and the networks needed to amplify youth community philanthropy in the future.

The first convening of this purpose and scope, the Global Youth Community Philanthropy Summit was held in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. on June 16 and 17, 2014. The summit, hosted by the Council on Foundations (COF) and the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) with support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, facilitated connections, ideas and action steps for the global field of community philanthropy as it relates to youth.

Nations represented at the event: Belgium, Bosnia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Mexico, Northern Ireland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.



Inspiration

Good Stories Happening Now

The leaders attending the summit were eager to network and share with one another. These are some of the fresh ideas for youth community philanthropy shared for replication in new places.



Charity Pitch Party

Youth, The Funding Network:
London, UK

Pioneering live crowdfunding in the United Kingdom, the youth offshoot of The Funding Network regularly brings university students and young professionals together for a lively social gathering with food, drink, live music and the main event—three inspiring social change organizations pitching their projects. Guests vote on a project to receive their price of admission (£10 each), and 33% choose to give more. The experience builds relationships: 48% of guests report that they continue to give money to featured organizations after the event and 62% report volunteering time. In the six years since the charity pitch parties began, YTFN has held more than 15 events raising nearly £100,000 for 44 charities. Based in London, the group plans to offer similar events in other major cities in the United Kingdom.



Piggy Bank Challenge

Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area
Community Foundation, USA

Drawing inspiration from similar campaigns in Charlevoix and Mount Pleasant, Michigan, the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) in Petoskey launched a year-long piggy bank challenge. Each member of this committee of community-minded high school students was issued a piggy bank to fill with change throughout the year. The campaign marked the 20th anniversary of the Petoskey YAC and created a direct giving and fundraising experience that resulted in 100% of YAC members contributing personally to the local youth endowment fund.



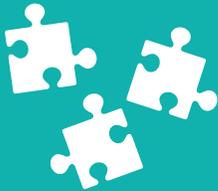
Project Portal

Youth Bank, Bosnia

Setting out to better connect disparate youth groups, the Youth Bank team behind project Mosaik created something more: an online portal that makes the entire youth philanthropy process efficient and transparent for everyone involved across 31 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Donors, youth group members and community leaders access and contribute to the site in real time in the style of social media. There, they see available funds, apply for grants, select recipients and report on progress—creating information that is valuable and visible to all parties. In the process, portal users have increased their technology literacy, improved information flow and achieved their project objectives with greater clarity and speed.



Inspiration (continued)



Early Learning

Youth Philanthropy Initiative of Indiana, USA

This organization devoted to growing lifelong philanthropists is starting young with a project called “Phil and His Family’s Adventures in Giving.” It’s a hands-on resource providing games and activities designed to teach philanthropy fundamentals to children 4- to 11-years-old through after-school and summertime programs. To date, 27 community foundations and 40 youth-serving organizations have integrated “Phil” into their curriculum and the YPII team has recently developed workshops for preschool classrooms. YPII has secured resources to provide additional hours of technical assistance to power the “Phil” program and more, including an exciting partnership that involves senior citizens as coaches and contributors to provide an intergenerational perspective on philanthropy.



Leaders in Action

Community Volunteers Foundation, Turkey

Each year more than 40,000 project volunteers, aged 17 to 25, are motivated and mobilized around issues of vital importance to communities across Turkey, including human rights, democratic participation, health and more. Their efforts are fortified by leadership and skill-building training, networking opportunities and an advocacy arm that lobbies for the rights of young people. Communities aren’t the only beneficiaries of this intentional infusion of youthful energy and optimism. Young people who participate score higher than peers in terms of their sense of selfhood, autonomy, individuation, self-efficacy, social adjustment, and other indicators that they are becoming well-rounded citizens and empowered political beings.



Flamingo Flocking

Mount Pleasant Area Community Foundation, USA

For two weeks each August, two flocks of 30 pink plastic flamingos appear in front of homes and businesses in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. It’s all part of the annual Flamingo Flocking fundraiser of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) for local high school students. People who have been “flocked” are encouraged to make a \$50 donation for the opportunity to flock a friend, coworker or rival business, creating a continuous chain of donors. Proceeds, totaling nearly \$10,000 since 2006, go to the local youth endowment fund. Flamingo flocking has become a great source of visibility and identity for the YAC, which now applies the distinctive pink form to publications and merchandise. YAC members are now considering creative ways to expand their flock—of flamingos and delighted donors.



Trending

Major Topics on Our Minds

In conversation with each other, summit participants surfaced several topics of great interest. These may be the subject of further exploration.

1. We need to better articulate “youth community philanthropy.”

Summit participants were interested in developing more accessible language to characterize the present and future field in which they work. They wanted to help more people self-identify with this work and see an opportunity to get involved. For example, the demographic of focus, people 7 to 40 years old, is not necessarily connoted by the term “youth” in North America. Internationally, however, the concept of youth is much broader, including any person who is still actively exploring life’s opportunities and shaping his or her sense of identity and role in the world. Similar age-specific terms, e.g., child, young person, millennial, etc., are also problematic in this way. Summit participants were interested in characterizing their work as focused on “emerging” community contributors. Terms of this type were received as more positive and relevant from a global perspective. Likewise, the term “philanthropy” is less clear and compelling to youth, especially in a global context. This term also does not have an appropriate equivalent in many languages. An expression of “community” provides an important distinction, differentiating localized, place-based giving from more broad-based youth philanthropy.

2. Good ideas have value beyond geographical bounds.

One of the greatest values of the summit was the interaction among its global participants. Throughout the event, participants shared unique perspectives and practices, such as the online platform that the Youth Bank in Bosnia uses to track its 31 grantees and reward youth engagement, and the in-person giving circles that are transforming the giving culture in the United Kingdom. Participants enthusiastically discussed new ideas, including how to apply promising approaches in their home communities for the first time. The interaction of summit participants continued after the main event as the delegation from Turkey participated in Michigan’s Summer Youth Leadership Conference as preparation for modeling that convening at home.

3. Youth can play a more central role in community philanthropy.

Summit participants shared a strong desire to find a more central role for youth to play in the process of philanthropy—beyond the role of program beneficiary, participant or even donor. Young leaders are ready to take a more active role in changing their communities. Not only do they think about giving differently from their predecessors, but they bring a new level of creativity and passion as they take risks and try new things. These emerging philanthropists may be more fully engaged by ensuring that they have a seat at the table during initiative development and greater (or all) responsibility for implementation and results. Their performance may be enhanced by providing training, mentorship and leadership development.



Flamingos flock to raise funds in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan USA

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Young leaders think about giving differently from their predecessors, and bring a new level of creativity and passion as they take risks and try new things.

Trending (continued)

4. Giving money is an important way to express values.

Summit participants validated philanthropy’s role of giving time, talent, treasure and ties (spreading the word about what they are doing)—as well as merits of programs that focus on youth service and empowerment. Still, they asserted that at its core, youth philanthropy should strive to also require a financial contribution by all participants. This might involve leaders proactively asking young program participants to give of their own money, and to get involved with fund raising, rather than simply allocating the resources of others. In making even modest financial gifts, young people express their values and become personally invested in community.

5. Technology is a tool, not a strategy.

Most young people are digital natives, who have a great deal of comfort with technology and an expectation that it will be used to communicate, mobilize and help solve problems. Nonetheless, summit participants stressed that technology tools should not be confused with a strategy needed to engage young philanthropists. They also expressed that face-to-face encounters and personal relationships are vitally important to this work.

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Social change entrepreneurs pitch their projects in London, UK

Networks

Ways to Amplify Our Impact

To become an effective field with clear goals and significant impact, youth community philanthropy requires additional definition, structure, connections and financial resources. The following networking ideas may represent areas of investment by interested funders and leaders.

1. Knowledge base

The youth philanthropy field remains mostly disconnected and unrecognized. Conducting a robust landscape analysis to better map the field can establish understanding of current efforts taking place throughout the world. In addition to identifying known entities and programs, this effort can include the ongoing collection of high quality data on activities, participation, outputs and outcomes.

Where currently the knowledge supporting youth community philanthropy is widely and inequitably distributed, summit participants recommend a shared portal that provides online access to:

- Qualitative and quantitative data describing the field, including illustrative case studies and anecdotes
- Resources for participating organizations and practitioners, including training, program models, effective practices and available grants

Participants caution that contributors to the portal should be actively facilitated and content actively curated to ensure relevance and encourage use.

Key players identified

- The Foundation Center is currently planning a portal that promises to serve as the resource hub described above; similar initiatives underway (e.g., the Council on Foundations Philanthropy Exchange) should integrate with rather than duplicate this effort.
- The U.S.-based Council on Foundations may spearhead the gathering and aggregating of meaningful information from community philanthropy organizations that serve and involve youth worldwide.
- The Council of Michigan Foundations will continue championing the community foundation Youth Advisory Committee model, its Learning to Give supporting organization (focused on K-12 philanthropy curricula) and family philanthropy programming.
- The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation may continue its leadership in building infrastructure for sharing and aligning similar work happening around the world.
- The Global Fund for Community Foundations is currently preparing a report drawing from data and qualitative information collected over several years of its Youth Civic Engagement Grantmaking Programme.

2. Communities of practice

Summit participants advocate the formation of learning communities for practitioners to share and explore common values, effective models, best practices and lessons learned. Where feasible, organizers can weave these communities of practice together to learn from one another, increase awareness of programs operating around the world, and promote a broader, international perspective.

Key players identified

- Youth banks and community foundations with youth-driven grantmaking programs may pilot these learning communities.
- The Council on Foundations may focus on advocating for and supporting learning communities for community foundations and other organizations implementing youth community philanthropy programs.
- Youth Philanthropy Connect, a peer advisory network program of the Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation, may provide models and support for the youth philanthropy field as a whole, bringing together youth and the adults who support them from families and community- and school-based youth philanthropy programs.



Learning communities would enable practitioners to share and explore common values, effective models, best practices and lessons learned.



Networks (continued)



3. Councils and convenings

The summit validated the importance of personal connection—among peer practitioners and across geographic lines—for several reasons:

- Achieving greater recognition and visibility as a youth community philanthropy field
- Establishing language to describe the field that is relevant to and representative of the people involved
- Advocating for the meaningful participation of youth in program strategy and design
- Aligning strategies and leveraging global knowledge for greater impact; this includes reducing disparity and duplication
- Keeping key leaders and investors apprised of developments within the field and external environment

Participants advocated for the creation of youth community philanthropy councils and regular convenings at the regional, international and global levels. They asserted that these efforts should be networked and informed by one another through a formal process of communication.

Key players identified

- Well-established regional organizations may take responsibility for gathering local groups and connecting them to the larger field. The Council of Michigan Foundations Youth Philanthropy and Service Conference may serve as a model for effective regional convenings.
- The U.S.-based Council on Foundations, in partnership with the youth community philanthropy groups in Canada, may take the lead in convening regional leaders from North America.
- Youth Bank International may facilitate convenings across Europe, South America, Asia, Africa and Australia—and possibly a global gathering in the future.
- Youth Philanthropy Connect may facilitate regional convenings on youth philanthropy throughout the United States.



Summit participants hope to increase recognition and visibility of the youth philanthropy field.



Focused on the Future

With more than half of the world's population under age 30, young people have important roles to play in guiding and participating in philanthropy and contributing to common good. Their voices matter and their actions can be transformative to community life. Participants and organizers of the Global Youth Community Philanthropy Summit look to the future with great hope for their work, which they believe will be strengthened through further investment and connection among funders and practitioners in communities around the world.

Are you interested in youth community philanthropy?

Contact the Council on Foundations at www.cof.org/youthphilanthropy to learn more.



Resources

www.michiganfoundations.org/youth
www.youthbankinternational.org
www.learningtogive.org
www.cof.org/youthphilanthropy
www.grantcraft.org/next-gen

Acknowledgments

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