



Community Foundation Atlas Now Available: Most Comprehensive Dataset About Community Foundations Just Published

As field celebrates a century of impact, nearly three-quarters of community foundations were created in the last 25 years

CONTACTS: Jenny Hodgson, Global Fund for Community Foundations
Email: jenny@globalfundcf.org
Phone: +27 11 447 4396

Cheryl Loe, Foundation Center
Email: communications@foundationcenter.org
Phone: (888) 356-0354 x701

CLEVELAND (Oct. 20, 2014) – Today at the 2014 Fall Conference for Community Foundations, an international research collaboration unveiled the “Community Foundation Atlas,” the most comprehensive directory of the world’s community foundation movement that has ever been published. The online platform, available at CommunityFoundationAtlas.org, maps the identities, locations, assets, roles and achievements of place-based philanthropies around the world.

Among the key findings:

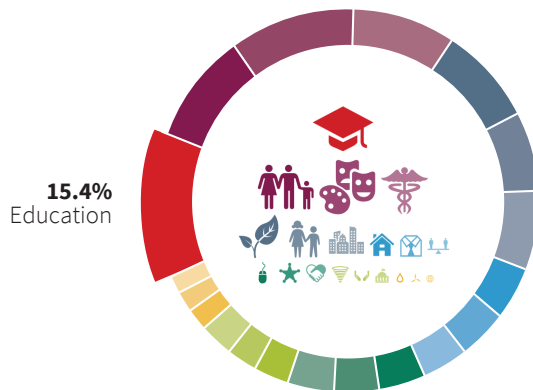
The global community foundation movement is gaining momentum. Embracing an inclusive definition of “community philanthropy” field, the Atlas has identified 1,827 place-based foundations in 67 countries. While the movement began 100 years ago, the last three decades have seen explosive growth. In just the past 14 years, the number of known community foundations and community philanthropies nearly doubled, growing from approximately 1,000 in 2000 to more than 1,800 in 2014.

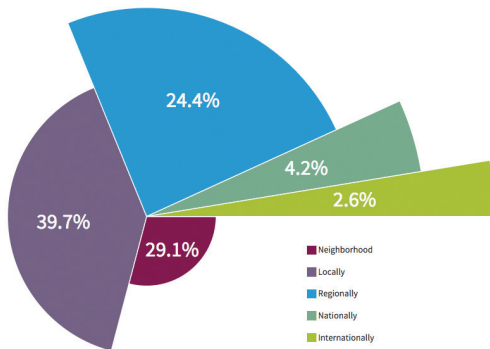
“Place-based philanthropy is on the rise globally in no small part because community foundations have resoundingly demonstrated to the world their ability to bring local people and resources to the table to address local needs,” concludes an analysis of the data gathered from the Atlas’s unprecedented survey of the global field and secondary research.

The international research effort was spearheaded by the Cleveland Foundation—the world’s first community foundation—located in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. Research partners were the New York City-based Foundation Center, the Global Fund for Community Foundations (Johannesburg, South Africa), WINGS, the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (São Paulo, Brazil), and CENTRIS, the Centre for Research and Innovation in Social Policy and Practice (Newcastle, United Kingdom). The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, a private American philanthropy headquartered in Flint, Michigan, and longstanding supporter of community foundations worldwide, funded the project.

Other key findings:

- **Defining characteristics:** Grantmaking and accountability to local residents were almost universally reported by survey respondents as central to the mission of community foundations.
- **Collective impact:** Combined grantmaking from community foundations in the last fiscal year totaled more than \$4.9 billion worldwide.
- **Education the most commonly cited program area:** Foundations most commonly reported extensive programmatic engagement in education, followed closely by human and social services, arts and culture, and health.





- **Strengthening civil society also a priority:** In addition to grantmaking, nearly half of foundations surveyed actively foster collaboration between grantees or provide training and capacity-building services to local organizations.
- **Populations served:** Almost 30 percent of respondents work at least to some extent in a neighborhood-based service area. Forty percent report having a “local” orientation, while the service area of nearly one in four includes a regional focus. A very small percentage work at a national or international level.

The Community Foundation Atlas offers a variety of entry points to further understand the reach and influence of community foundations, including:

- **Organization directory:** This alphabetical listing is the portal to profile pages for 1,827 community foundations and community philanthropies. Visitors to the site can select individual organizations to review or filter by geographic region or country of particular interest. A built-in editing function enables foundations to easily update their profiles.
- **Data snapshots:** A series of quick facts, deeper-dive infographics and a comprehensive, downloadable analysis present the Atlas’s baseline data in accessible form. The infographics are programmed to change in real time as organizational profiles are updated.
- **First-person accounts:** Foundations describe in their own words the “most meaningful change” brought about in recent years as a result of their support or initiative. Considered in their entirety, these unrehearsed accounts show how place-based foundations are helping to advance their communities’ aspirations, large and small.
- **Stories of struggle and success:** From the prosperous cities of Canada to the culturally rich matriarchal villages of rural India come 50 narratives chosen to convey the wide-ranging influence of the global community foundation movement. “Adding to Knowledge,” “Encouraging Innovation” and “Stimulating Policy and Systems Reform” are among the highlighted arenas of endeavor.

The Atlas provides a long-needed and detailed baseline of information upon which the field can build to facilitate wider exchange of best practices and high-impact collaborations aimed at addressing tough problems that span geographical boundaries. Post-launch planning for updated content, additional research and data analysis, and enhanced functionality for the Atlas will be spearheaded by the Global Fund for Community Foundations and Foundation Center, the platform’s host.

For more information about the Community Foundation Atlas, visit:



Website: CommunityFoundationAtlas.org



Twitter: [Twitter.com/CommFoundAtlas](https://twitter.com/CommFoundAtlas)



Facebook: Facebook.com/CommunityFoundationAtlas

Data Sources and Methodology

A master e-mailing list of place-based and other community philanthropies, initially assembled from the records of the project partners and membership rolls provided by philanthropic support organizations, was augmented and vetted through additional research. A proprietary survey, conceived by Barry Knight, the executive director of CENTRIS, in consultation with the Atlas's research partners, was emailed to the list in the fall of 2013 and early 2014. In addition to requesting basic contact, financial and operational information, the survey included a set of multiple-choice questions designed to gather baseline data about the nature and effectiveness of the respondents' work. As of April 2014, the Community Foundation Atlas project had received 478 survey responses containing usable data, a statistically valid sampling that was analyzed by Knight. Prior to the Atlas's unveiling, congruent information gathered on an annual basis by Foundation Center was used to fill in gaps in the profiles of the initial set of survey respondents and to create profiles of an additional 1,340 community foundations. Where parallel, Foundation Center data were also factored into the calculation of Atlas infographics.

Comments from the Field

"The Atlas makes clear that, whatever niggles there may be about nomenclature, 'community foundation' is a concept—dare I say a brand?—with worldwide status."

Rob Williamson, Chief Executive
Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland (United Kingdom)

"The Atlas drove home that community philanthropy really is 'of the people,' responsive to local context and needs within a community—not an out-of-the-box philanthropic approach."

Hope Lyons, Director of Program Management
Rockefeller Brothers Fund (United States)

"I was delighted to note how, particularly in the Global South, the emergent community foundations reflect and are supporting grassroots, people-led movements for social change. The best description of what I felt in going through this information was 'affirmation!'"

Chandrika Sahai, Network Coordinator
Working Group on Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace (India)

"The Community Foundation Atlas, more than I have ever witnessed before, has captured in a 'one-stop shop' very accurately and succinctly, what I have come to experience in running a community foundation in the last ten years, but now brings out the global picture as well, which is really refreshing and energizing. I feel in the right company!"

Janet Mawiyoo, Chief Executive
Kenya Community Development Foundation (Kenya)

"We have been modest for too long—time to shine the light on our achievements and celebrate our successes!"

Jane Humphries, Vice President
Knowledge and Foundation Development, Community Foundations of Canada