

Slovak-Czech Women's Fund one year old

The Slovak-Czech Women's Fund (SCWF), the sole grantmaking organization supporting women's and girls' initiatives in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, is celebrating its first anniversary. Founded in 2004 by the Open Society Foundation Bratislava and the Open Society Fund Prague, with the cooperation of the Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program, its mission is to contribute to the creation of a society where women can fully enjoy their rights and are able to make decisions about their own lives. These founding groups also provided initial funding.

The inspiration behind SCWF was a meeting in 2002 with representatives of successful women's funds from the USA, the Netherlands and Africa. The flexible and strategic support of women and the clear feminist perspective of these funds prompted OSI women's programmes coordinators to draw up plans for a similar agency. Its bi-national character was suggested by the evident similarities of the two countries and the possibility of combining resources and exchanging good practice among Czech and Slovak women activists.

The creation of the Fund was principally motivated by the need to ensure accessible support for emerging grassroots women's groups and the still-fragile women's movement in both countries. In addition, the presence of a strong women's fund can vitally contribute to the development of socially responsible philanthropy and kick-start women-oriented philanthropy.

In its first year of operation, SCWF has sought initiatives to enhance the visibility of women's activism and counter gender stereotypes. It awarded 21 grants in both countries worth a total of US\$47,560. The Fund is aware of the need to create a diversified funding base, and its future strategy will include approaching international funds and foundations, as well as building a network of individual donors and approaching corporate donors.

SCWF is also very much aware of the need for peer support. It is a member of the Women's Funding Network and the International Network of Women's Funds.

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HORIZONTAL PHILANTHROPY (2)

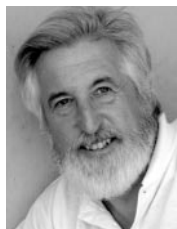
When do poor people help each other and why?¹

Susan Wilkinson-Maposa and Alan Fowler

An article in the June edition of *Alliance* introduced the notion of horizontal philanthropy – poor people helping others in need – contrasted with the more conventional and visible vertical philanthropy from rich to poor. This article takes a closer look at horizontal philanthropy and reflects on some of its implications. It constructs a schema that links four factors affecting the likelihood that a poor person will help another.



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Information gathered through the Building Community Philanthropy Project (BCP) project in Southern Africa² suggests a system of horizontal philanthropy which operates as a self-organized and self-regulating process where people who are poor, in response to a need or problem, mobilize and share resources among themselves. These transactions provide types of mutual assistance and social cohesion that largely increase the chance of survival, share risk, and help resist further deprivation. In some cases they act as savings or investment to improve conditions and future prospects. Since it is so much a part of everyday life, horizontal help can often be invisible and is rarely celebrated.

A horizontal philanthropy act: four key factors

The BCP data so far indicate that four elements are at work in horizontal philanthropy:

- A – Affinity**
- N – Need, urgent and normal**
- M – Motivation**
- R – Reputation**

To aid presentation, a horizontal philanthropy act (HPA) is illustrated in the schema below as a function of the four factors and their interplay.

$$\text{HPA} = (\text{N} + \text{A} + \text{M}) \times \text{R}$$

Affinity

Each factor requires clarification. First, A or affinity refers to the relationship between the actors in a help transaction. It is composed of three elements – close-

¹ For a description of the research on which this article is based, see *Alliance* Vol 10, No 2, June 2005.

² The BCP study draws on the results of some 87 focus group, with a total of around 700 informants and data from interviews in four countries – Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.