



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A.

PRESS RELEASE

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AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A., THE C.S. MOTT FOUNDATION AND THE ROCKEFELLER BROTHERS FUND RELEASE PUBLICATION ON COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY: WHERE IT HAPPENS AND HOW IT BUILDS LOCAL ASSETS, CAPACITY AND TRUST

WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 8, 2013 – Community philanthropy can be a powerful force for strengthening civil society and building on local initiative, according to a new brief released jointly by the [Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.](#) (AKF USA), the [Charles Stewart Mott Foundation](#), the [Global Fund for Community Foundations](#), and the [Rockefeller Brothers Fund](#). The publication, entitled [The Case for Community Philanthropy: How the Practice Builds Local Assets, Capacity, and Trust – and Why It Matters](#), makes the case that increasing local ownership and local accountability leads to stronger communities and should be a main focus of development aid practitioners.

The [community philanthropy](#) approach works at the grassroots level by looking at local assets – financial and otherwise – and by building capacity and trust for addressing community needs and priorities.

The case statement crystallizes an understanding gathered in recent years. Last year AKF USA and the Mott Foundation released a [report](#), based on a series of collaborative consultations in North America, Africa and Asia, that explored how community philanthropy has worked around the world to help build local capacity. Amid increasing public interest, those foundations, along with the [Rockefeller Brothers Fund](#) and the [U.S. Agency for International Development](#) (USAID) have supported development of a Global Alliance for Community Philanthropy.

The new publication synthesizes trends (one form of community philanthropy organization – community foundations – grew by a remarkable 86 percent from 2000 to 2010), the rationale, and views from experts. It addresses the role that donors can play in a community-driven practice. “It’s a challenge for outside funders investing a lot of money to expect programs to be sustained,” notes Shannon Lawder of the C.S. Mott Foundation. “From our experience, the work does continue when you’ve supported community philanthropy. It works.”

The partners will officially release the new [publication](#) at a launch event to be held at the Society for International Development (SID) in Washington, DC on June 12. That event, entitled [“Fresh Approaches to Building Assets, Capacity and Trust: Community Philanthropy in International Development”](#) is

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organized by [Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.](#), the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the [Rockefeller Brothers Fund](#). For information and to register, visit the [SID website](#).

Reflecting on the benefits for civil society, Dr. Mirza Jahani, Chief Executive Officer of AKF USA observes, "We have worked on civil society for a long time. When people do things for themselves, those programs have been the most sustainable. Leadership, financial resources, and voluntary support are all sustained."

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About Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.

AKF USA, established in 1981, is a private, non-denominational, not-for-profit international development organization committed to alleviating poverty, hunger, illiteracy and poor health. AKF USA works to address the root causes of poverty by supporting and sharing innovative solutions in the areas of health, education, rural development, civil society, and the environment. AKF USA is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service code.

AKF USA is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (www.akdn.org), a network of private, non-denominational, development agencies around the world, established by His Highness the Aga Khan to empower communities and individuals, often in disadvantaged circumstances, improve living conditions and opportunities. The Network's agencies work for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion and its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

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