

PRESS RELEASE

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**AGA KHAN FOUNDATION U.S.A. AND THE CHARLES STEWART MOTT FOUNDATION
RELEASE REPORT ON THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY
IN CIVIL SOCIETY AND AID EFFECTIVENESS**

WASHINGTON, DC, FEBRUARY 21, 2012 – Community philanthropy can be a powerful vehicle for strengthening civil society and enhancing aid effectiveness, according to a new report released jointly by the [Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.](#) (AKF USA) and the [Charles Stewart Mott Foundation](#) (Mott Foundation). The report, entitled [The Value of Community Philanthropy: Results of a Consultation](#), makes the case that increasing local ownership and local accountability leads to stronger communities and should be a main focus of development aid practitioners.

As partners in the pursuit of sustainable development, AKF USA and the Mott Foundation conducted a series of collaborative consultations in North America, Africa and Asia to explore how community philanthropy can help build local capacity. The results of these consultations demonstrate the importance of foundations and development agencies partnering with local communities to achieve lasting development outcomes.

The report, authored by Barry Knight, CENTRIS Consultant and Facilitator, offers a definition of community philanthropy for practitioners and identifies key priorities for building the capacity of the field of community philanthropy. According to Knight, "The roundtable consultations in Washington, DC, Johannesburg and Dhaka revealed an enormous potential for local community foundations around the globe to build links between partners and identify priority areas and next steps to propel forward the field of community philanthropy."

AKF USA and the Mott Foundation will officially release the [report](#) at a launch event to be held at the [Aspen Institute](#) in Washington, DC on March 1, where an additional consultative discussion will take place among practitioners and researchers.

Nick Deychakiwsky, Program Officer at the Mott Foundation noted, "As long-time supporters of the development of community foundations at home and abroad, we are encouraged by growing interest in partnerships between large-scale development organizations and local philanthropic groups. While recognizing its importance for sustainability of civil society organizations, Mott's main lens on supporting community philanthropy is its potential to foster resilient processes for people's participation, on the local level, in decision-making to improve the quality of their lives."

Reflecting on the benefits for enhancing civil society, Dr. Mirza Jahani, Chief Executive Officer of AKF USA said, "Through this consultative process, we have identified how community philanthropy is integral to strengthening civil society while helping communities to develop their own assets, as civil society plays a vital role in providing social services, protecting the marginalized and delivering development programs at the grassroots level."

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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, nondenominational, 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.



Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

The Mott Foundation, established in 1926 by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. It supports nonprofit programs throughout the U.S. and, on a limited geographic basis, internationally. Grantmaking is focused in four programs: Civil Society, Environment, Flint Area and Pathways Out of Poverty. Besides Flint, offices are located in metropolitan Detroit, Johannesburg (South Africa) and London. The Foundation, with 2010 year-end assets of approximately \$2.2 billion, made 456 grants totaling \$87.4 million.

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