



WINGS

**WORLDWIDE
INITIATIVES
FOR
GRANTMAKER
SUPPORT**

WINGS-CF: beginning to record the history

March 2005

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Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) is a network of over 100 associations of grantmakers and other grantmaker support organisations around the world which work together to strengthen the institutional infrastructure of philanthropy worldwide. By building a strong, interconnected and collaborative global network of grantmaker associations and support organisations they are helping grantmaking institutions that support civil society to build a more equitable and just global community.

Within WINGS, a primary constituent group is **WINGS-CF**, composed of over 60 organisations which promote the community foundation concept and support the development of community foundations.

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This paper sets out how WINGS-CF came into being, its accomplishments and current activities, and the style of the network. An earlier version was written for participants in a WINGS-CF face-to-face meeting in Berlin on 2 December 2004, many of whom were relatively new to the WINGS-CF network. It tells the WINGS-CF story and lists activities and outputs. Throughout WINGS-CF's development, the number of organisations involved has been growing and currently stands at 62. All activities and publications have had direction and involvement from the network. Participation in activities has been high. These factors, along with some specific pieces of evaluation, indicate that WINGS-CF is important to its participants, adding value to the work done at national and local levels in building community foundations. Every effort will be made by the current WINGS-CF Advisory Committee, working groups and Secretariat to maintain this added value.

It really started around the swimming pool ...

In early 1998 an important gathering of people involved in grantmaker associations was held in Oaxaca, Mexico. It was a meeting called IMAG (International Meeting of Associations of Grantmakers) and was seen as a networking and learning opportunity, hailed by the participants as a brilliant opportunity to look at their own issues and “talk our own language”. They agreed to keep on networking and the outcome, after a couple of years’ preparation, was WINGS. There had been a meeting before this in the early 1990s in Jamaica which was also seen as a valuable first opportunity for international contact, and triggered the idea for IMAG, but it was the Oaxaca meeting that directly led to the formation of WINGS.

The meeting in Oaxaca included some people who worked specifically with community foundations, rather than with a broader range of grantmakers, and they found the opportunity to share their experience and gain ideas and stimulus on their issues particularly useful. Some of them had met in Washington DC in 1994 at a meeting supported by the Mott Foundation which had brought an international group of people together who were involved in community foundation support. This had forged good one-to-one links but not led further. Now in Oaxaca, a plot was hatched around a swimming pool to plan a gathering just for the organisations providing support to community foundations

Then it moved to the beach

Miami Beach 1998: the first opportunity to meet came six months after Oaxaca when many people from organisations supporting and developing community foundation made an effort to go to the Council on Foundations’ Fall Conference and stay on for an extra day. Thirty-nine people from twelve countries learned from each other, shared their experiences and dreams, and decided to maintain this international support network. The report from this gathering was widely circulated and extraordinarily well received around the world and in 2000 was updated and reissued as *Building the Worldwide Community Foundation Movement* – see WINGS-CF Resources at the end of this document.

Just as the Oaxaca meeting led to a move to create WINGS, Miami encouraged us to keep together through a loose network and start to plan some helpful shared activity.

The worst acronym ever?

That first network was called WCFSON – *worldwide community foundation support organisations network*. It included mainly national bodies, with some US-based statewide associations and a few multi-country initiatives – much the mixture as exists now though with many more organisations involved.

We were saved from our cumbersome name by a carefully crafted agreement that WINGS and WCFSON should connect with each other, with WINGS-CF becoming a constituency within WINGS. The two parts of the organisation – WINGS with its concern for all grantmaker support, and WINGS-CF with a focus on community foundation support – ran first from separate offices. At this stage WINGS-CF was a project of Community Foundations of Canada (CFC), with a staff member – Dagne Forrest – focusing on it. It stayed there until early 2003. At the start the WINGS-CF network included any interested organisation supporting community foundations: at that point WINGS was only open to organisations operating as membership associations. As the two parts of WINGS came closer together, WINGS opened its range to a broader group of organisations too.

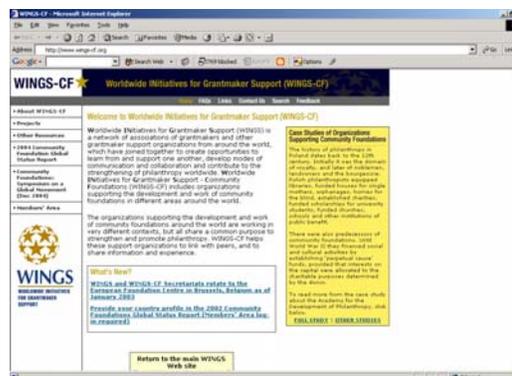
WINGS-CF activity 2000-03: Ottawa-based

In 2000, WINGS-CF published the first global status report on community foundation development. It also revised and republished the lively report of the Miami meeting and these two documents served as very good background papers for the second global meeting, held in Ottawa at the time of CFC's own national biennial conference.

The Ottawa meeting had some very practical outcomes. As the WINGS-CF network participants became more familiar with one another's work they became ambitious in their ideas about shared work which would benefit the whole field. What emerged, with much work by Dagne and her colleagues at CFC and the collaboration of many people in the field, was a series of activities, each with a working group drawn from the network, and funds raised primarily from the Ford and Mott Foundations, with additional support from the Vancouver Foundation and the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

These activities were as follows:

1 **Website:** the heart of WINGS-CF's services and outreach to the network. Originally started by the Ottawa-based secretariat as a stand-alone website with its own URL (www.wings-cf.org, see right), since September 2004 this has been a part of **www.wingsweb.org**, where all material of special relevance to community foundations is marked: **CF**



2 **Directory of support organisations:** we had huge ambitions for this work which started in 2002. We wanted a comprehensive listing of all the world's support organisations in the community foundation field, with contact details; we also wanted to dig deeper and include information on activities, services, publications; and then we planned to mine for gold and have all of us sharing on the website our high level thinking, policies, funding information, and more. Level one was relatively easy. Level two was something a few completed. Level three was largely a dream. Our profiles now in www.wingsweb.org/network/profiles.cfm are more modest but also more consistent: essential contact details, mission, programme activities, publications and a link to each organisation's website.

3 **Compendium of resources:** still on the WINGS website, this is a searchable database of several hundred documents – all developed for community foundations by their support organisations. Our ambition now is to have as many documents as possible available electronically for reference and downloading (in any available language) and to have an effective index so it is easy to find and use what is there.

4 **Peer matching:** an opportunity for people from one organisation to spend a week or two with a carefully matched counterpart. Initially we saw this as newer organisations learning from more experienced ones, but we found both sides had plenty to learn. We also planned just one visit per match: later we saw the value of trying to offer a return visit, eg, Brazil to Canada, then Canada to Brazil. Three matches have taken place, and independent evaluation has found them very effective. In late 2004 we have relaunched this as **WINGS-CF One-2-One**.

5 **Mapping of funders report:** a report by Eleanor Sacks (2002) exclusively for the WINGS-CF network detailing funders of 12 organisations supporting community foundations around the world, during the period 1996-2000.

6 **Serving a wider community:** a study of ways in which individual community foundations can reach out to cover bigger geographic areas, or can enhance their service to parts of their area through using geographic component funds. Available on the website.

7 **Case studies of organisations supporting community foundations:** eight studies which throw light on the development of varied support organisations within WINGS-CF. In the Preface, Dagne Forrest records the process by which they were prepared and gives a vivid picture of collaboration across the world in writing, editing, and reviewing this ambitious volume. The Case studies were not published and released until late 2003, after the move to Brussels (see below).

WINGS-CF 2000-03: developing governance

WINGS-CF created an **Advisory Committee**, initially free-standing, with terms of reference and operating procedures and membership composed of a diverse range of organisations from the global network. Meetings are by conference call, usually three times a year. The Committee's Chair has a place on the WINGS Coordinating Committee which is the main governance committee of the whole WINGS network. Details of both committees are on www.wingsweb.org.

A number of **working groups**, coordinated from Ottawa, did a great deal of work, operating within agreed guidelines and meeting by conference call or working through email contact. The working groups were made up of geographically diverse people, as is the Advisory Committee, and we always found there was excellent participation from a range of organisations and regions.

A **framework for communications** with the WINGS-CF network was established, maintained and reviewed, mainly through email and encouraging people to become familiar with the website and keep visiting it to see how it was developing. Dagne kept a note of all contact with people in the network and analysed levels of participation, targeting and encouraging any organisations she did not hear from much and trying to find out what were the obstacles to their involvement. WINGS has adopted a similar process to monitor and encourage participation.

WINGS-CF 2002 Peer Meeting: Sydney

There was a full one-day meeting, and a networking dinner, in Sydney, with 51 people from 22 countries, immediately before WINGS' first global meeting, *WINGSForum*, in March 2002. The day included updates and discussion of WINGS-CF projects such as the peer matching programme, and several breakout sessions on topics including managing, organising and sharing information with community foundations; acting as an intermediary grantmaker for community foundations; how to offer technical assistance; and effective promotion of philanthropy through community foundations. A full report is on the website.

Among the activities agreed to at this event were plans for a project related to classifying and organising resource material, a translation fund for the benefit of WINGS-CF organisations and the

continuation of programmes such as peer exchanges. Network members were encouraged to add their information to WINGS-CF projects such as the Compendium and the Directory and to keep feeding in ideas and using the website.

The move to Brussels

Greater integration of WINGS and WINGS-CF came about when the Secretariat of both networks moved to Brussels in early 2003 (as part of a broader decision that the Secretariat would move around the world every few years to help ensure that the network remains truly global in its range, style of work and interests). Since then, WINGS and WINGS-CF have shared staffing, while every effort has been made to keep the WINGS-CF network close-knit and active and to maintain work that especially relates to community foundations.

In addition to the publication of the Case studies, the year 2003 saw two publications of importance to WINGS-CF (all available on the website):

- *Establishing a resource center: a guide for organizations supporting community foundations*
- Another edition of the *Community Foundation Global Status Report*, tracking community foundation development around the world (and a further issue, fully updated, was published in 2004).

WINGS-CF, along with the larger WINGS initiative, is increasingly covered and profiled in third sector media, raising awareness of global community foundation development and the activities of support organisations. This started when WINGS-CF was based in Ottawa, and has been steadily building up since then, with the WINGS-CF Secretariat seen as an important information source on organisations supporting community foundations and international enquiries on community-based philanthropy.

Community foundations: Symposium on a global movement

In 2003 the WINGS-CF Advisory Committee was approached by a funder to oversee and host a first-ever global meeting for community foundation practitioners and support organisation representatives on key current issues. This grew into the idea of *Community foundations: Symposium on a global movement*, organised in conjunction with the International Society for Third-Sector Research, and held in Berlin in December 2004. With its own Advisory Committee and a consultant, Eleanor Sacks, in charge of the programme, much of the Symposium's logistics and funding arrangements were coordinated from the Secretariat in Brussels.

Since there was to be good representation of support organisations at the Symposium, WINGS-CF also arranged a half-day meeting for them, to give people a chance to meet, discuss work of importance to support organisations (whereas the Symposium focused on community foundations themselves) and take time to remind everyone about WINGS-CF and seek advice on priorities and communications issues. A report of that meeting will be available on the website in spring 2005.

Promoting the work of support organisations

The Advisory Committee has developed a plan for a new (additional) area of focus for WINGS-CF. This is about taking opportunities, initially mainly through national and international events, to:

- strengthen the arguments in favour of community foundations to persuade funders to support community foundation development,
- promote the community foundation role in social and economic development to private companies and to government,
- find ways in which the argument can be made for the vital importance of community foundation support organisations too, and

- develop links with multilaterals (World Bank, European Union, etc) to raise the profile of community foundations and their support organisations, and also aim to generate increased resources for the field.

At the same there are still many areas of work where there is scope to share knowledge and experience across the network. Sustainability of community foundations is an issue for almost all the countries involved; and for many there are increasingly important questions about the support organisation services needed by community foundations after an early technical assistance phase. The meeting was helpful in identifying priorities for the network: the Advisory Committee is reviewing WINGS-CF's response to these.

A note about being a network

WINGS-CF shows a remarkable picture of an evolving network. Much of the way it developed influenced the structure and style of WINGS ("big WINGS" as the community foundation side nicknamed it). Building and maintaining networks is never easy and given that WINGS-CF is a global network mainly composed of quite new organisations, learning their trade, mostly not knowing each other very well and at best having chances to meet face-to-face every two years, then the challenges become daunting. There are theories about networks but there are few practical models, and WINGS and WINGS-CF are often seen as models and asked for advice.

The fundamental issue in building and maintaining a network is to find a way of linking people that encourages contact with the core (in our case the Secretariat) and also among themselves, in any combinations that seem to work. Any network needs some steering and encouragement but if the central hand is too heavy participants are less likely to be active in linking with each other, instead relying on "the office" to make things happen. It is exciting for the Secretariat to know how people keep in contact with each other in pairs or small groups, after our face-to-face meetings or after working together on a WINGS-CF project. For people to want to make the links and do things together they need to know each other – know who has similar issues, who talks the "right language", who is safe to ask any kind of question, and who can stimulate others to new thinking.

From an early stage WINGS-CF followed a style of working that explicitly embodied four principles:

inclusiveness, openness, transparency and mutual respect

In all its activities, in the way its committees and working groups operate and in its commitment to keep all network members informed of activity and discussions in a timely way, WINGS-CF still aims to operate on these principles and they inform the work of WINGS as a whole.

After the Sydney meetings in 2002, some researchers looked at WINGS and WINGS-CF and concluded that both were impressive networks. When WINGS and WINGS-CF moved to Brussels in early 2003 it took time to settle in: the Secretariat team were new staff; fundraising had to start all over again; the closer integration of WINGS-CF and WINGS needed a lot of thinking through. Work has certainly gathered pace again. Those who have been in WINGS-CF all along are keen to share their enthusiasm and ideas with newer people and to seize opportunities to revisit what networking really means and keep fresh WINGS-CF's purposes, plans and actions.

WINGS-CF resources available on www.wingsweb.org

WINGS-CF publications can be found on this website, either listed under publications, or, if they relate to specific meetings, within the section on programmes. Some are also available in print.

Resource: Building the Worldwide Community Foundation Movement (2000)

Description: Revised report of the WINGS-CF peer meeting, Miami, USA, 1998

Location: WINGS website: www.wingsweb.org/programmes/wings-cf.cfm; also available in print by contacting the WINGS secretariat.

Resource: Case Studies of Grantmaker Associations and Organizations Supporting Community Foundations (2003)

Description: The volume includes eight case studies on the work of organisations supporting community foundations. The first section of each case study provides general background on the organization's structure, resources and activities, its involvement in community foundation development, and a picture of the environment of the region or country in which it is operating. The second section of each case study provides greater detail on an aspect of the organization, such as staffing, services for community foundations, or financial sustainability.

Location: WINGS website: www.wingsweb.org/information/publications_studies.cfm; also available in print by contacting the WINGS secretariat.

**Resource: Community Foundation Global Status Report (2004)
Community Foundation Global Status Report (2003)
The Growth of Community Foundations Around the World in 2000 [2000 Community Foundation Global Status Report]**

Description: WINGS-CF began tracking the international community foundation movement in 1999. The Global Status Report was one of the first projects it undertook as a newly-formed network devoted to providing support for organizations, associations and funders involved in community foundation development. For more about the history of this report, see the introductory page for this resource on the WINGS website. A new edition is planned for publication in June 2005

Location: WINGS website: www.wingsweb.org/information/publications_community.cfm; some editions also available in print by contacting the WINGS secretariat.

Resource: Establishing a resource center: A guide for organizations supporting community foundations (2003)

Description: This Guide is a resource for all organizations engaged in supporting community foundations to use according to their needs and capacity. It was developed to assist the organizations supporting community foundations to review, organize and better access the resource material they already own or plan to. Prepared by Barbara Denmark Long

Location: WINGS website: www.wingsweb.org/information/publications.cfm

Resource: Mapping of Funders Report

Description: A report on funders providing significant financial resources to organizations supporting community foundations. *For WINGS participants only.* (2001)

Location: WINGS website login section: www.wingsweb.org/secure/index.cfm

Resource: Serving a Wider Community (2002)

Description: Community Foundations' Use of Geographic Component Funds and Other Strategies and Structures to Cover Territory; prepared by Eleanor S. Sacks

Location: WINGS website: www.wingsweb.org/information/publications.cfm

Resource: WINGS-CF Directory (2004)

Description: This document captures the contents of the WINGS-CF Directory, an online-database of WINGS-CF organizations holding searchable information on contact details, staffing, governance and other aspects of organizational structure, operating budgets, and services provided to community foundations. *For WINGS participants only.*

Location: WINGS website login section: www.wingsweb.org/secure/index.cfm