



Network of European Foundations

Ten years partnering for impact: 2002–12



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A thought on NEF

NEF is a network weaver. It makes it possible for different actors to connect with each other, to develop a common agenda on a specific issue, and to collaborate in order to make an impact on that issue. In that sense, NEF is not organization-centred, it is mission-centred. It is not about NEF as such – hence its light administrative structure – but about the concrete projects that are developed, projects which are always collaborations on a supranational level.

NEF is an open source changemaker. NEF's sole rationale is to serve as an open source platform where different actors can come together around different projects. Each group works on a project in an independent, transparent and open way and towards a common interest. NEF as an organization doesn't intervene in the implementation of the projects. For this, desire and trust between first individuals and then organizations is needed.

These two very interesting concepts come from a recent article on 'Scaling social impact' in the journal *Innovations* (vol 6, no 2, 2011). They might appear abstract, but I think they help make sense of NEF's work over the past decade.

Luc Tayart de Borms

NEF Treasurer

Foreword



Foundations always strive to initiate changes in their focus areas with their projects and programmes. Of course, the intended changes are always only small steps and small contributions to improve the current status. Changes initiated by foundations require long-term commitment, endurance, and often substantial funding. Considering these factors, it is obvious why foundations strive for cooperation and joint initiatives and projects.

The Network of European Foundations (NEF) offers an ideal operational platform to initiate cooperation among foundations from all over Europe. It can be the first contact while searching for project partners and an agent in establishing strong partnerships. It serves as a launching pad to spark new ideas and initiatives related to Europe.

NEF currently consists of 13 foundations that are core members and provide the financial basis. Joint projects are not limited to these 13 members though. Foundations from all European countries and beyond can participate or bring in their own project ideas in search of partners. On the other hand, not all members have to participate in each project. NEF thus offers the flexibility needed for unique and customized projects.

All NEF projects show certain characteristics: they are transnational in focus; they bundle synergies from all involved parties and countries; and for the most part they could not have been started by only one foundation.

Cooperation among foundations, like any other activity involving more than one party, requires flexibility. Projects initiated via NEF can benefit from a variety of synergies: a broad exchange of experiences, mutual learning, and, last but not least, pooled financial resources. On the other hand, multi-party projects require the willingness to 'cooperate' and the motivation to learn from each other and agree on compromises. Cooperation may not work for foundations that bring in a final, non-negotiable project plan and are in search of financial support only. But it works well for foundations that approach project ideas with an open mind and a modicum of curiosity. At the end of the day, it is always better to have a reliable partner at your side than to stand alone.

If we have made you curious to find out more about what NEF has achieved in the past ten years, you will find some astonishing projects. Following a board review, five NEF projects are highlighted in this booklet. They were chosen because of their impact at the European level, both in Brussels and in member states, their good partnership management and their collaborative advantage.

Dieter Berg

Chairman of the NEF Board

European Citizens' Consultations

2007–09

In 2007 and 2009, 1,500 randomly selected citizens reflecting their country's demographic composition attended National Citizens' Consultations in every EU member state (27 at the time). In 2007, these were followed by a European gathering, which led to a report, *European Citizens' Perspectives on the Future of Europe*, which was presented to the European Parliament. In May 2009, there was a European Citizens' Summit with 150 representatives of the national consultations. National websites gave other citizens the opportunity to get involved in the debate on Europe's future.

Achievements

ECC has opened an innovative route to strengthening pan-European identity and legitimacy. It has created civil society networks in all member states and a European public space where citizens can contribute to the public debate. It has also created a means of deliberative democracy at a time when one of the chief anxieties of European democracies has been the alienation of state from citizen.

European Citizens' Consultations (ECC), launched in 2007, is a pan-European participatory project to involve citizens from all the member states of the European Union to debate the Union's future. The main objectives included:

- promotion of interaction between citizens and policymakers;
- establishment of citizens as policy advisers;
- closure of the gap between the EU and its citizens;
- deepening civil society networks across the EU.

Distinctive features

The programme is distinctive in the number and range of participants and in the level of support from the EU institutions. The 2009 National Citizens' Consultations were run by a consortium of more than 40 organizations, including foundations, NGOs, universities and think-tanks from all the EU member states. Some of the NEF member foundations were involved at the national level only and some at the European level, while the coordinating foundation, King Baudouin Foundation, provided strong leadership. The programme also secured both political and financial support from the EU institutions.

Challenges

The difficulties of managing a project involving so many collaborators and across so many countries are evident but these were managed effectively by KBF and its partners. Also difficult was the question of who should act on what recommendations – which of them were 'national' recommendations and hence properly lay within the sphere of competence of national governments and which were European recommendations and thus came within the sphere of European institutions.

European Citizens' Summit at the Bourse palace on 10 May 2009.
Photo Frank Toussaint

“The European Citizens Consultations have proved that in-depth citizen deliberation at EU level is possible and can provide valuable qualitative input for EU decision-makers, Now it is up to the EU institutions to make use of this tool.”

Stefan Schaeffers, King Baudouin Foundation

Foundations involved

Barrow Cadbury Trust
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Compagnia di San Paolo
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Finnish Cultural Foundation
Fondation de France
ING
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
King Baudouin Foundation (Chair)
Open Society Institute – Sofia
Pears Foundation
Riksbankens Jubileumsfond
Robert Bosch Stiftung
Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland

Programme partners

B&B Consultants
Euractiv
European Citizen Action Service
European Journalism Centre – media outreach
European Movement International
European Policy Centre
Fondation pour les Générations Futures
IFOK
Touteurope.fr
La Netscouade
Many national partners for implementation

European Fund for the Balkans 2007 onwards

EFB gives grants and operates programmes itself. There are three main strands to its work:

- envisioning Europe (developing think-tank capacity, supporting research and stimulating regional exchanges of experience and expertise);
- practising Europe (building a new generation of politicians and civil servants, forging links between administrations in the regions);
- experiencing Europe (supporting emerging leaders).

Achievements

An EFB 'alumni' network for young civil servants as well as young professionals and students has been created. The programme has also contributed to policy making in the Western Balkans through the Gallup Balkan Monitor.

Distinctive features

EFB is run from a NEF office in Belgrade which gives it local presence and a greater degree of involvement in the region. It is based on a very strong partnership between the four partner foundations, who have displayed a long-term commitment to the integration of the Balkans

The European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) was established in 2007 by a group of four foundations – Robert Bosch Stiftung, King Baudouin Foundation, Compagnia di San Paolo and ERSTE Stiftung – in order to help the Western Balkans move closer to the European Union. Building on the work of the International Commission on the Balkans (2004–06), the main objectives of the programme are to contribute to the development of functioning state administrations and build constituencies that help continue the process of reform and democratization.

region. In fact, some initiatives developed by EFB were an extension of successful programmes led by the partners.

It was conceived as complementary to the Balkan Trust for Democracy, which is mainly focused on civil society development. This has ensured that the work of the two entities has been complementary rather than overlapping, which has helped to make best use of donor resources going to the region.

Challenges

One of the challenges facing the Balkans following the collapse of long-lived communist regimes and civil war was to remake the countries' institutions to equip them for democracy and to integrate the countries themselves into a larger Europe. This is a long-term task. Following the war, donor attention shifted elsewhere, which has meant that the EFB has found it difficult to attract new partners and has relied very much on the commitment of the founding partners.

'Southeast Europe and the EU Leadership Development Programme' – young leaders from southeast Europe strengthening cooperation with EU peers.

“The European Fund for the Balkans is a testimony to the power of collaboration, demonstrating what foundations can do when they come and act together.”

Hedvig Morvai-Horvat, European Fund for the Balkans



Foundations involved

- Compagnia di San Paolo
- ERSTE Stiftung
- King Baudouin Foundation
- Robert Bosch Stiftung (Chair)

Programme partners

- Gallup
- OSI Think Tank Fund

European Programme on Integration and Migration 2005 onwards

The programme, which is in its second phase and now has ten foundation members, also includes networking and capacity-building activities for both NGOs and foundations in the form of workshops, newsletters and policy briefings.

Achievements

Since its inception, it has supported over 160 national and international NGOs. It has expanded the amount of funding available for the issue of migration; it has brought foundations into a field poorly served by philanthropy; and it has enabled foundations to work on issues across national borders which alone they would have been unable to do.

Distinctive features

EPIM has been recognized as a continuous and flexible strand of funds complementing EC funding on underfunded areas (as of 2012, the focus will be asylum, undocumented migrants and equality, the integration of vulnerable migrants) and approaches (communication and advocacy). It has also provided a single channel through which NGOs working in the area can get access to funds.

The European Programme on Integration and Migration (EPIM), NEF's largest operational programme, began in 2005 as a joint venture of 11 European foundations to support organizations and projects that have a constructive approach to migration and integration and a positive impact on the European agenda on the question. It seeks to improve the lives of regular and undocumented migrants through grants to these organizations of up to three years.

Challenges

Overall, the issue of migrants remains a difficult one, with feelings of antipathy often exacerbated by the financial crisis. Creating a sense of shared ownership among participating foundations and grantees also remains difficult. Finally, on another aspect of collaboration, a recent evaluation of the programme noted that: 'different foundations . . . look for different types of information and different levels of detail. How to provide this in an efficient manner is a key challenge to both grantees and the programme secretariat.'

EPIM grantee workshop.

Photo Sara Prestianni

A migrant camp in Petras, Greece.

Photo Sara Prestianni



“EPIM has enabled its grantees to exchange information on national agendas and develop common ground, laying the framework for major policy changes such as access to healthcare for asylum seekers in Europe. No single foundation had sufficient resources to do this.”

Zakeera Suffee, European Programme on Integration and Migration



Foundations involved

Atlantic Philanthropies

Barrow Cadbury Trust

Compagnia di San Paolo

Diana, Princess of Wales

Memorial Fund

European Cultural Foundation
(until 2008)

Fondation Bernheim

Freudenberg Stiftung (until 2008)

Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian

Joseph Rowntree Charitable
Trust (Chair)

King Baudouin Foundation

Oak Foundation

Robert Bosch Stiftung

Religion and Democracy in Europe 2006–09

The reports were drafted by acknowledged experts and published by Alliance Publishing Trust. The aim was to inform debate and, ultimately, to help policymakers, civil society organizations, the public and the press to better understand the issues involved.

In addition to the reports, which were presented in a number of forums and to the European Parliament, the programme also produced a book, *Religion and Democracy in Contemporary Europe*, a collection of papers that were presented at an international conference held at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute in September 2007. The success of the programme was due in large part to the heavy investment of time and the hard work of the implementing team, which ensured continuity.

Achievements

Dissemination was widespread not only in Europe, at both regional and national level, but also to a certain extent internationally. This was partly due to the active part taken by the authors themselves in dissemination, using their professional and media contacts. The report on mosques was particularly timely since the issue was current all over Europe

The Religion and Democracy in Europe programme was based on a partnership of 11 foundations. The programme produced a number of thematic briefs addressing specific aspects of the interaction between religion, the state and society:

- *Religion and Healthcare in the European Union*
- *Teaching about Religions in European School Systems*
- *Religion and Prejudice in Europe*
- *Conflicts over Mosques in Europe*

(there was a referendum in Switzerland on the question of minarets) and it helped to inform the policy debate.

Distinctive features

Unlike the other programmes featured here, the main focus of the programme was on research, with universities and think-tanks producing the bulk of the work. The publications drew on experts in each area, which gave them greater authority and influence on the public debate.

Challenges

Ultimately, although individual representatives of EU institutions were supportive of the initiative, providing contacts and valuable information, the institutions themselves proved difficult to involve.

While it was acknowledged that follow-up work would have been valuable as topics remain to be explored, no NEF member had the capacity (staff, time, expertise) to take on the project once the coordination team was dismantled.



The Khadija mosque in Berlin.
Photo Ceddy Fresse

“The Religion and Democracy in Europe project has enhanced the political and public discourse in Europe about the role of religion in the public domain. The basic premise was that foundations stand for an open society, for a democracy characterized by cultural and religious plurality.”

Rien van Gendt, Religion and Democracy in Europe



Foundations involved

- Arcadia Trust
- Barrow-Cadbury Trust
- Compagnia di San Paolo
- Fondation Bernheim
- Ford Foundation
- Freudenberg Stiftung
- King Baudouin Foundation
- Riksbankens Jubileumsfond
- Stefan Batory Foundation
- Van Leer Group Foundation (Chair)
- Volkswagen Stiftung

Programme partners

- Cafébabel.com
- European Foundation Centre
- European Youth Forum
- Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme

2001 onwards

The Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme (YEPP) is NEF's oldest programme, its first phase beginning in 2001. YEPP's mission is to bring together the public, private and NGO sectors to address the complex social challenges related to young people and to promote civic participation in disadvantaged communities.

Initiated and supported by a group of European and US foundations working in partnership with the International Academy (INA) in Berlin and the OECD, YEPP has been through two phases. In its first phase, the programme was implemented in seven programme sites in six countries. In the second, it expanded to 18 sites in eight countries. To complement its work at local level, YEPP has an international dimension, with representatives from the local sites taking part in transnational workshops, trainings and conferences. From 2012, YEPP's local and international actors will take ownership of the programme through an inclusive governance model and the creation of the YEPP International Resource Centre at INA.

Achievements

Evaluation results provide evidence that the overall programme goals of youth and community empowerment, partnership and advocacy have been largely achieved. Many of the local programme sites have produced lasting legacies, which include increased confidence and abilities among the young people involved, closer relationships with local authorities, changes in local youth policies, and the creation of a wealth of youth-led initiatives and projects such as youth councils, youth parliaments, a youth

channel and youth banks. The international gatherings have proved inspirational for the young people, local teams and foundation partners.

Distinctive features

Local people, including young people, are the motor of change in YEPP. They form local partnerships and decide what activities they will undertake. Although the work of the local programme sites is varied, they are linked by a common approach and methodology, the YEPP Concept of Change.

Challenges

Marrying the diverse and geographically scattered local and pan-European dimensions of YEPP was a challenge that was successfully met by the commitment of the YEPP programme team at INA. Although some of the partner foundations found it difficult to meet the stipulated financial commitment over the ten-year period, nearly all have remained involved throughout. There remain a number of challenges which the YEPP community will address as a priority. These include reaching the most marginalized young people, reducing youth unemployment and children and youth poverty, and building partnerships with the private and corporate sector.

The YEPP community gathered in Görlitz-Zgorzelec on the German-Polish border for the 5th YEPP Community Conference and Youth Meeting in November 2011.

“YEPP’s innovative model of partnership among foundations and with other stakeholders has created a unique transnational platform promoting local youth and community empowerment and influencing policies.”

YEPP Programme Team



Foundations involved

.....
Barrow Cadbury Trust
.....
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
(Vice Chair)
.....
Compagnia di San Paolo (Chair)
.....
ERSTE Stiftung
.....
Evens Foundation
.....
Fondation Bernheim
.....
Freudenberg Stiftung
.....
Irish Youth Foundation
.....

Programme partners

.....
International Academy at the Free
University of Berlin
.....
OECD
.....

NEF projects

NEF's predecessors

In 1977 the *European Cooperation Fund* (ECF) was established with the aim of promoting partnership between private foundations and intergovernmental bodies in the fields of education, training and culture.

In January 1996, the activities and responsibilities of ECF were transferred to the *Association for Innovative Cooperation in Europe* (AICE), which was set up to act as a launching pad for trans-European initiatives undertaken by leading Europe-based foundations.

With effect from 1 January 2002, AICE changed its name to become the *Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation* (NEF).

Creative Europe 1998–2002

Aimed to identify the issues and people setting the patterns for creativity in the 21st century.

European Drug Policy Fund 2000–04

Aimed to create a new paradigm for drug policies in Europe and to communicate alternative drug policies to the global community.

Worldview Global University 2001–02

Launched to provide internet courses for students from Europe and Asia, but NEF's involvement ended when the project lost its main support.

Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme (YEPP) 2001 onwards

Enables disadvantaged young people across Europe to achieve youth and community empowerment and to influence policy through their own projects.

The Europe We Need 2003

Advocated integration of the Charter of Fundamental Rights into the European Union Treaty.

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) 2003–04

Researched ways to protect undocumented workers.

Europe in the World 2003–04

Aimed to encourage international funding by European foundations.

Mercator Fund 2003 onwards

The Mercator Fund serves as a catalyst for initiatives in areas where European foundations and international partners can cooperate on pressing global issues.

Anna Lindh Programme on Conflict Prevention 2004

Aimed to strengthen the role of civil society organizations in conflict prevention, and to provide both a platform for international dialogue on the issue and a clearing house for European research institutes.

Science and Society Programme 2004–05

Looked at innovative ways to overcome public distrust of, and lack of interest in, science.

Working Group on Global Environmental Governance 2005

Through its Mercator Fund, NEF commissioned the Federal Trust to produce a feasibility study to inform the proposed working group.

European Civil Liberties Network 2005

A network of national groups to provide information in the field, a networking space, and research and publications.

Religious Bigotry and Tolerance in Europe 2005

A number of European foundations shared their experience of work in this field, especially in regard to Islamophobia and anti-semitism.

European Programme on Integration and Migration (EPIM) 2005 onwards

Aims to improve the lives of regular and undocumented migrants through a grants programme.

Roma Education Fund 2005 onwards

Aims to help Central and Eastern European countries close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma children.

Initiative for Learning Democracy in Europe (ILDE) 2005–10

Aimed to pool foundations' experience and expertise in promoting democracy in order to make such work more effective.

A Soul for Europe 2006

Organized the Second Berlin Conference on the future of European Cultural Policies in November 2006, which recognized the potential of culture as a vital force in European integration.

Cultural Cooperation 2006–08

Commissioned a documentary illustrating the challenges of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue from film academy students from across Europe; also supported the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue to feed into the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

Religion and Democracy in Europe 2006–10

Focused on the relationship between religion and democracy in European societies and aimed to help policymakers, civil society organizations, the public and the press better understand the changing role of religion in Europe.

Alliance magazine 2006 onwards

Provides both news and analysis on philanthropy and social investment worldwide and a forum for exchange of ideas and experiences among practitioners.

European Citizens' Consultations 2007–09

The first pan-European participatory project to involve citizens from all 27 EU member states to debate the future of the Union.

Strategies for Impact in Philanthropy 2007–10

Sought to improve the management and leadership capacity of philanthropy by identifying high-impact approaches by European foundations and comparing the practice of European philanthropy with that in the USA and Canada.

European Fund for the Balkans 2007 onwards

A joint initiative of European foundations which both undertakes and supports initiatives to bring the Western Balkans closer to the European Union.

European Fund for Investigative Journalism 2008–09

Provides stipends to support research journalism across European borders.

Young Ideas for Europe 2008–09

Aims to interest and involve young people aged 15 to 17 in the process of European integration and motivate them to develop their own ideas for the European Union.

PING 2009–10

Aims to sensitize youngsters on the poverty issue using their own channels of communication, in their own language through a video game realized in several European languages.

HIV/AIDS Funders Group 2009–11

Dedicated to strengthening European philanthropy in the field of HIV/AIDS.

European Volunteer Centre (CEV) 2009–11

A network of 67 national and regional volunteer centres and volunteer development agencies in 28 countries. To mark the 2011 European Year of Volunteering, CEV has launched activities to celebrate volunteer efforts and to support efforts to encourage volunteering.

European Foundations Initiative on Dementia (EFID) 2010 onwards

Aims to improve the perception of dementia and stimulate solidarity at the local level in order to contribute to a better quality of life for people with dementia and their carers.

Children and Violence Evaluation Challenge Fund 2011 onwards

A pooled funding initiative aimed at reducing the prevalence of violence against children by funding robust and rigorous evaluations of violence prevention and child protection interventions in low- and middle-income countries.

European Alliance for Democratic Citizenship 2011 onwards

Helps young Europeans up to the age of 30 to develop their skills as responsible European citizens and to take action for a democratic and sustainable Europe. In 2011 members started their first common project: FutureLab Europe, the Council of Young European Citizens.

**NEF
members**

Bernard Van Leer
Foundation
Netherlands

Charles Stewart
Mott Foundation
USA

Compagnia di
San Paolo
Italy

ERSTE Stiftung
Austria
European

Foundation Centre
Belgium (observer)

European Cultural
Foundation
Netherlands

Fondation de
France
France

Fundação Calouste
Gulbenkian
Portugal

Gabriel Foundation
Belgium

Institusjonen
Fritt Ord
Norway

Joseph Rowntree
Charitable Trust
UK

King Baudouin
Foundation
Belgium

Körber Stiftung
Germany

Robert Bosch
Stiftung
Germany

**NEF's main
foundation
partners**

Atlantic
Philanthropies
Ireland

Bertelsmann
Stiftung
Germany

Barrow Cadbury
Trust
UK

Carnegie UK Trust
UK

Charities Aid
Foundation
UK

Diana, Princess of
Wales Memorial

Fund
UK

DSW German
Association for
World Cooperation
Germany

Erinnerung
Verantwortung und
Zukunft EVZ
Germany

Esperanza
Medicines
Foundation
Switzerland

Evens Stichting
Belgium

Finnish Cultural
Foundation
Finland

Fondation
Bernheim
Belgium

Fondation Médéric
Alzheimer
France

Ford Foundation
US

Freudenberg
Stiftung
Germany

Fundação Oriente
Portugal

Irish Youth
Foundation
Ireland

Oak Foundation
Switzerland

Open Estonia
Foundation
Estonia

Open Society
Institute
Belgium branch

Real Maestranza
de Caballeria de
Ronda
Spain

Riksbankens
Jubileumsfond
Sweden

Stefan Batory
Foundation
Poland

Swedish Cultural
Foundation in
Finland
Finland

UBS Optimus
Foundation
Switzerland

Volkswagen
Stiftung
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