



European Environmental Funders Group

World Café:

What Role for Philanthropy in Addressing Environmental Challenges?

May 28th 2008 • Istanbul, Turkey

Summary Report

The new EFC European Environmental Funders Group convened a World Café on the role of philanthropy in addressing environmental challenges on 28th May 2008 in Istanbul, as a pre-conference event to the European Foundation Centre's Annual Conference. The event was organised in cooperation with the UK Environmental Funders Network and the US-based Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA).

A key objective of this event was to stimulate learning and networking and generate ideas on how to promote and support more collaboration - among European foundations and between European and US funders.

Two presentations sought to set the stage for the discussions:

- **Sandra Smithey, C. S. Mott Foundation** provided a perspective on key environmental challenges the world is facing and on responses by and opportunities for foundations. Speaking about the challenges, she commented that while climate change exacerbates every other issue, it also provides an opportunity, a framework to mobilise diverse players and link up different policies (trade, agriculture, energy, development, health, etc.). She stressed the importance of addressing the particular threats for the developing countries and most disadvantaged groups worldwide. It is encouraging that there is more discussion about collaboration among foundations, but much more of it needs to really happen at all levels – from policy making to grass-roots actions and citizens mobilisation. She also underscored the need for more attention to and investments in the adaptation agenda. Foundations have an important role to play in strengthening civil society capacity to speak and act on climate issues; in movement building; and in making sure that social justice becomes integral part of the climate change agenda.
- Sevdalina Rukanova, EFC and Dana Lanza, EGA highlighted key findings on the state of environmental philanthropy in Europe and the US based on pilot mappings conducted by the EFC and EGA. The presentations on the state of the field are available at: <http://www.efc.be/5771>. Some discussion took part on the picture that is emerging of where the funding goes and what are the gaps; as well as on the methodology. The collaborative initiative of environmental funder networks (Canada, Australia, UK, USA and Europe-wide (through EFC)) on developing a common taxonomy on environmental philanthropy is expected to contribute significantly to building a more comprehensive picture of the field across different world regions and to support learning and identification of opportunities for synergies and cooperation.

World Café

This part of the event provided an opportunity for more in-depth exchange on specific topics, and for discussion on opportunities for further learning and action – between European and US donors, as well as amongst European foundations. The topics were climate change; environmental justice; and mobilising citizens and building movements.

The main issues brought up during the discussion and ideas for follow up action are summarised below:

Environmental Justice

- There is a need to improve understanding about environmental justice and how it can inform philanthropy; and to invest in developing tools to support environmental justice strategies.
- Overall, foundations have an important role to play in building, globally, a better infrastructure to leverage and match funds, to collaborate; and to harness the energy and resources of new donors.

Citizens Mobilisation/Movements Building

- There is an opportunity to take advantage of the EU elections in 2009: foundations can support actions aimed at mobilising input from citizens on environmental issues – climate change in particular - and feed this input into the agendas of the candidates for EU Parliament. This could be designed as a European-wide “campaign” that is implemented at both the country and EU level.
- The European Environmental Funders Group provides an opportunity to think about the role of foundations in connecting and engaging a wider set of social movements around addressing environmental challenges, as well as supporting better linkages between existing networks in Europe
- Support work on media strategies and look at their effectiveness in changing public behaviour

Climate Change

- It is critical to increase and improve collaboration on climate change issues. New technologies provide potentially powerful tools to support such processes – amongst funders as well as amongst NGOs/grantees.
- More interdisciplinary analysis is needed – particularly on the impacts of climate change in non-environmental fields.
- It was proposed to organise a joint session with NGOs to compare notes and discuss what specific issues to build into the campaign towards Copenhagen 2009; as well as get to know the key players and what they are working on.

Next steps

- A sub-group to work on developing a proposal for the future development of the European Environmental Funders Group
- Build further contacts and cooperation with other environmental networks (EGA, EFN, Climate Change Philanthropy Action Network). Contribute with a workshop on European environmentalism, policy making and environmental philanthropy at the EGA Fall Retreat at the end of September 2008.
- Design a retreat to discuss more in-depth ideas on how to advance the climate change agenda, particularly in view of the Copenhagen negotiations and to develop proposals for concrete collaborative actions (autumn 2008).
- Finalise the European mapping project (autumn 2008)

Presentations

- [Environmental Funding in Europe](#): a snapshot based on the preliminary analysis of the grantmaking of major European environmental funders
- [Environmental Funding in the USA](#): a snapshot based on analysis of the grantmaking of the members of the Environmental Grantmakers Association

For more information about the event and on how to get involved, contact Sevdalina Rukanova at srukanova@efc.be