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Strengthening Community Philanthropy in the Balkans

A Story About Resilience and Care



KONEKT

trag FOUNDATION

FONDACIJA TUZLANSKE ZAJEDNICE
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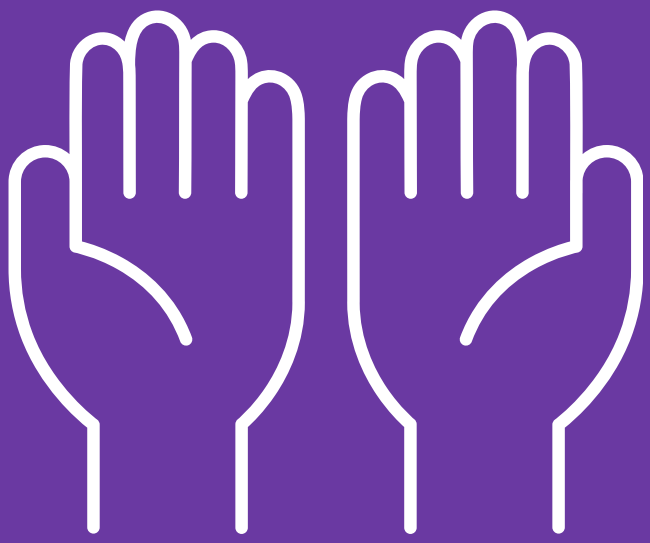
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1. Rooted for Change: The Impact and Significance of Community Foundations in the Balkans



Rooted for Change

Community foundations represent independent entities operating in the local community as a significant resource and source of support for civil society organizations and activist groups. Rooted in the community, recognized and respected by stakeholders and citizens, a successful community foundation creates the bridge between those who have initiative and ideas and those who can support those ideas coming to life.

Community foundations operate within a specific geographic area, whether it's a municipality, city, county, or region, where they are positioned to respond to local needs and opportunities. Experience shows that foundations formed in areas with a population between 50,000 and 500,000 tend to be the most successful. This scale allows a close connection with the community, a healthy mix of civic initiatives that can be supported, and a solid base for local fundraising. Community foundations act as donors, offering financial and other types of support to citizen-led initiatives aimed at improving everyday life in their communities. Through consistent fundraising efforts, they mobilise local assets: from individuals, businesses, and other supporters, and reinvest them in community development through open calls. At their core, community foundations are spaces where people come together, exchange ideas, and find common ground for action, building a deeper sense of trust and belonging. They are grounded in the community, shaped by the people they serve and committed to strengthening local capacities and civic engagement.

Those foundations make a lasting impact in their communities by transparently creating and managing purpose-driven funds, and supporting local initiatives that improve quality of life. They fund a wide range of activities: cultural, educational, environmental, civic, and more, while also offering non-financial support such as advice, skills, and knowledge to help initiatives succeed. In addition to general grantmaking, they sometimes manage thematic and named funds, often established in partnership with diverse donors, to address specific issues or support long-term solutions. Community foundations also engage their surroundings through events that foster solidarity and shared action, while building community philanthropy and developing fundraising strategies. Committed to transparency and public trust, they openly communicate their goals, funds raised and distributed, while conducting annual independent audits and publishing reports that reflect both their programmatic and financial work.

One of the fastest-growing forms of organized social philanthropy in the world today is community foundations. According to the 2022 ECFI report, there are currently over 850 "community" foundations operating in 22 European countries. Worldwide, there are now more than 1,500 such foundations, each in its unique way, building vital and promising communities in collaboration with active citizens.

The impact community foundations have on the context they operate in is significant - their work positively affects activism, local development and social change on multiple levels. By providing support to local initiatives, community foundations showcase active solidarity, nurture the sparks of community organizing and mobilize the members of the community to improve the quality of life together. In the social settings where institutions are unresponsive to the citizens' needs and the trust is shattered, community foundations play an important role in the process of rebuilding trust and connections. By communicating openly, providing visible results and tactile change, guided by the

non-negotiable principles of transparency and accountability, community foundations demonstrate that there is, in fact, someone who listens and supports. Their biggest strength is the ability to organically spark and nurture community-based experts and enthusiasts, inspire them to invest time, energy and contacts thus providing the infrastructure for community philanthropy. The support community foundations generate and distribute, through funds, advice and education, acts like a catalyst for other forms of citizen engagement and slowly and gradually changes the culture within the community and society, assuring the peers that small victories and achievements are indeed possible, even though the power of changes on the macro level is still elusive. The ability to tackle the apathy and instigate action puts community foundations in the meaningful role of leaders and promoters of sustainable social change.

Defining a Community Foundation

What is it about this concept that resonates with people all over the world, different cultures, social needs - both in urban and rural areas?

Community foundations have numerous common characteristics, but even so, no two foundations are completely identical. There is a saying in the community foundation movement - if you've seen one community foundation, you've seen one community foundation! Each is shaped by local tradition, history, and culture to meet the needs of the local communities in which they operate. The adaptability of the concept is precisely what makes this model of societal development continuous, sustainable, and, above all, justified. As nonprofit organizations funded by various donor and public sources, which "give back" and invest money in the geographical area where they operate, most often in the form of non-repayable "grant" funds, community foundations are institutions established in a specific geographical area by local people, focused on community development, regardless of the name or definition we use (Mazany & Perry, 2014).



2. Growing Together: Development of Various Models of Community Foundations in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia



Growing Together

But, how do community foundations grow? How does the story of ongoing support and engagement start? There are many ways and approaches to developing a successful community foundation, and we will share the examples of Serbia, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and their community foundation movements.

Guided by the successful stories emerging from the Romanian and Hungarian community foundation movements, **Trag Foundation** developed a tailor made program "Our Local Foundation - Community Has a Say" in Serbia in the beginning of 2020. The implementation of the program later on continued in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which resulted in 9 community foundations - 6 in Serbia, 3 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Trag's approach tends to transform informal citizens groups (minimum of 3 people with history or collaboration on any kind of citizen engagement, with basic experience in fundraising) into functioning community foundations which continuously fundraise and provide financial support to various initiatives via open calls. Informal citizen groups would be mentored by the Trag team, in order to transform from community activists to community foundation leaders, responsible for nurturing and developing activism and community philanthropy. Trag also provided its own organizational infrastructure in order to incubate community foundations: during the initial phase of its development, when community foundation still acts like an initiative group, Trag operates as the fiscal agent. In practice, that refers to collecting donations on their behalf into separate dedicated accounts, tracking the donations and donors, supporting the fundraising activities and administratively covering the contracting process, while simultaneously providing programmatic support, developing initiative groups' skills and knowledge on fundraising, community mobilization, strategic planning, grantmaking and institutional functioning of community foundation. In the future, Trag will work on support and development of community foundations network, continuously sharing the expertise and knowledge collected from the civil society in the last 26 years.

Prior to the program implemented by Trag, 22 years ago, **The Tuzla Community Foundation** emerged as the first community foundation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, founded by the people of the Tuzla region and developed by dedicated professionals and enthusiasts. From the beginning, its role has been to bring people together, support local initiatives, and encourage active citizenship, becoming a driving force for positive social change in the region. It empowers individuals and groups, particularly young people and those from marginalized communities, through training, mentorship, and grants, while at the same time nurturing a culture of local giving and solidarity. Over the years, the Foundation has shaped its programs around community priorities, with a focus on youth empowerment, community development, open education, and local entrepreneurship. In parallel, it has shared knowledge and fundraising practices with other actors in the country, working to raise awareness about the importance of creating a favorable philanthropic infrastructure at the national level. By tailoring these models to the socio-economic context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tuzla Community Foundation has positioned itself as a resource organization that supports not only citizens' initiatives but also civil society organizations across the country to fundraise for their good causes through their crowdfunding platform Doniraj.ba. Since civil society in the region remains largely dependent on foreign donors, this platform creates an opportunity to mobilize resources from local donors and the diaspora, specifically for community development initiatives, rather than

humanitarian aid. Looking ahead, the Foundation will continue this mission in the newly built Center for Democracy, which is envisioned as a home for CSOs, youth, and active citizens, and as a space for fostering innovative ideas and strengthening cross-sector cooperation for the benefit of society.

In North Macedonia, **Konekt** took a slightly different approach and took on a challenge of transforming community based organizations into community foundations. The idea remains the same - the experts on the community have already mastered the skills of community organizing and resource mobilization, which provided the organizations with a great starting point. The country's legal and social framework shaped this process: foundations were regulated only from 1998, with most created by companies and based on corporate giving, while locally rooted examples like the Local Community Development Foundation in Shtip showed the potential for proactive communities to improve quality of life. Still, civil society remains donor dependent, with foreign funding covering most activities and domestic support from individuals and companies rare, which weakens cross-sector ties and limits collective action. To counter this, Konekt established Local Action Hubs coordinated by local leaders and supported by cross-sector Local hub leadership boards that ensure diversity and civic participation. Via mentorship and training, Konekt introduces the key elements of CF in a context where there is an organic capacity to create fully fledged CF. These groups are trained in local fundraising, citizen engagement, and philanthropy and are now creating Local Philanthropic Funds to support initiatives. The early success of LAHs in mobilizing local resources and engaging diverse stakeholders shows that the CF model is viable and impactful - even in small communities. Moving forward, CFs must be integrated into national development agendas, supported by enabling legal frameworks, and recognized as key actors in civic engagement and local development.

3. Strong and Unique: Crucial Characteristics of Community Foundations in Balkans



Strong and Unique

Community foundations in the Balkans are emerging as vital pillars of local development and social cohesion. Although the concept of community philanthropy is relatively young in the region, the foundations that do exist are demonstrating a clear and shared commitment to shape their programs based on the needs and close ties to the people in the communities they serve. These foundations often emerge in response to a growing recognition that development must be locally led, with local leaders taking the initiative to address their community's unique needs and priorities. What makes a community foundation truly 'local' in the Balkan context is not merely its geographic placement, but a set of defining characteristics that ensure its relevance, sustainability, and credibility within the community. They are engines of civic engagement, trust-building and local development. As more communities in the region recognize the value of locally rooted philanthropy, the role of community foundations will continue to expand, serving as bridges between people, ideas, and resources for the common good.

Knowing community needs

A true community foundation is, first and foremost, based in the community. Its physical presence is not symbolic, it is functional, enabling regular engagement with local citizens, institutions, and stakeholders. It operates from within the community, not from above or outside, ensuring that its priorities are shaped by local aspirations. Continuously consulting community members about their needs, allows them to build trust over time and become a reliable partner in addressing local challenges.

Local resources mobilization

One of the most significant indicators of a genuine community foundation is its reliance on local resources. While external support can play a role in kickstarting or scaling certain initiatives, sustainable foundations prioritize mobilizing local contributions, whether they are financial donations, volunteer time, in-kind support, or expertise. By cultivating a culture of giving within the community, these foundations promote local ownership and decrease dependency on foreign donors. This not only strengthens their legitimacy but also empowers citizens to take an active role in shaping their future.

Supporting local initiatives

Community foundations in the Western Balkans thrive when they act as catalysts for local initiatives. Rather than imposing projects from the top down, they respond to ideas and needs that originate from within the community. They provide small grants, capacity building and networking opportunities to grassroots groups and individuals who may otherwise lack access to funding. This approach nurtures innovation, encourages civic participation, and ensures that the solutions are tailored to the specific context.

Strong and Unique

Building philanthropic infrastructure

Another crucial role of a community foundation is to build and maintain local philanthropic infrastructure. This goes beyond fundraising - it involves raising awareness and educating the public about philanthropy, creating mechanisms for giving (such as local funds, donor-advised funds, donor circles, crowdfunding campaigns or endowments), and creating transparency and accountability standards. In the Balkans, where trust in institutions can be fragile, community foundations serve as models of ethical and effective philanthropic practice.

Serving community in perpetuity

Perhaps the most defining feature of a successful community foundation is that it belongs to all citizens. It does not serve the interests of a specific group, political party or donor. Instead, it strives to reflect the diversity of the community - ethnically, economically, and socially. This inclusive approach ensures that the foundation is a neutral and safe space for dialogue, cooperation, and community building. Citizens see it as “their” foundation, which encourages engagement and sustained support. Crucially, by actively involving younger generations in its work, the foundation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among youth, helping to ensure long-term commitment to strengthening community philanthropy and perpetuity.

Leadership and governance

Behind every impactful community foundation is a dedicated executive director who provides day-to-day leadership and strategic vision. This role requires a deep understanding of local dynamics, excellent communication skills, and the ability to balance multiple stakeholders' expectations. However, the executive director does not work alone. A committed and active board of directors, often consisting of prominent citizens of different backgrounds, is essential to guiding the foundation’s mission, ensuring transparency, and participating actively in its work. In the best cases, board members are not passive overseers, but visible and engaged contributors to fundraising, outreach, and decision-making processes.

Resilience through trust building

In the often-complex socio-political environments of the Balkans, community foundations must demonstrate adaptability and resilience. They navigate shifting funding landscapes, political pressures, and sometimes skepticism from citizens who have lost trust in formal institutions. By staying focused on their core values and maintaining close relationships with the community, they can withstand these challenges and even grow stronger through them.

4. Paving Their Own Path: Stellar Examples of Fundraising and Grantmaking



Paving Their Own Path

Community foundations are well known for their creativity and innovative approach to fundraising. Motivating the community is often tricky, but community foundations are always ready for a challenge. By closely listening to their community and its pulse, community foundations provide the opportunity to connect and recharge. Community foundations understand that people are most inclined to give and relate when the cause is close to home, close to the heart. They value seeing the tangible impact of their contributions and trust community foundations to handle their donations, no matter how small, with care, transparency, and respect.

When you gather the friends and supporters, offer them wholesome and heartwarming activities and remind them how far you've come together, the fundraising part comes gently and naturally. Community foundations are experts for their communities on every level, especially when it comes to nurturing it. They are constantly reminding their peers of principles of active solidarity and more importantly - they always put fun in fundraising.



3x3 basketball tournament
Photo credits: Community foundation Niš

Community Foundation Niš has recognized the potential of athletic spirit and the passion for sports in their town and decided to invite their corporate partners and donors on special quests - big tournaments where everyone can feel like a champion for a day. CF Niš started with 3x3 basketball tournament, the idea enthusiastically greeted by Nišlijas* who packed their sneakers, invested in participation fees and helped Community Foundation Niš raise the funds for local initiatives. The tournament gathered 30 teams from 22 companies from Niš and managed to attract the attention of other big and small enterprises, which offered sponsorship deals and help with the organization. Being very well aware of the fact that fundraising is a marathon, CF Niš decided to raise not only money but also the expectations. The next adventure was a Business Run, organized in cooperation with a Deli Space, a hub which supports the local development in their own magical ways. Nišlijas, exactly 1500 of them, were more than ready for this challenge and they wanted more from the CF Niš

team. So, like every successful community foundation they met their needs and desires and organized a paddle tournament, proving that exotic forms of sport and fresh philanthropy practices go great together. These events generated the attention and popularity much needed and desired for the community foundation's work, gave the community a sense of belonging and directly connected Community Foundation Niš to the feeling of accomplishment and unity.

For those who are feeling a bit lucky, **Community Foundation Stara Pazova** prepares a unique experience of participating in the annual raffle, an event where everybody wins, at least a chance to become a donor. For a very modest price of a ticket, Community Foundation Stara Pazova offers a night of extraordinary entertainment, an opportunity to connect with friends and peers, and to become a significant part of the support system. The raffle is an all time favourite event for parents, CEOs and board members, along with local activists and small business owners, because everybody wants to try their luck out. The secret ingredient of the raffle's success is a variety of presents - all of them collected as a donation from the community. A ticket is buying you a chance to win a hot air balloon ride, a gym membership, a spa treatment, a plate of delicacies or a 25 kg of paint. Most importantly, a ticket is buying you a place in the Community Foundation Stara Pazova's heart, which is the most exclusive place you can ever dream of visiting. By hosting the annual raffle, Community Foundation Stara Pazova has provided enough funds for the annual call for support for civil society organizations and neighbourhood initiatives, sending the message that, when it comes to fundraising, everybody can contribute and have an amazing time while doing it.



Annual raffle
Photo credits: Community foundation Stara Pazova

Paving Their Own Path



Annual raffle
Photo credits: Community foundation Bijeljina

Community Foundation Bijeljina had a special audience in mind when they designed their fundraising event. The team knew exactly how their community looks and functions and they knew that people are willing to participate in various events if they offered meaningful content adjusted to their needs. They knew that the parents and children were craving fun and engaging activities suitable for the entire family, and that's where the community foundation seized the opportunity to shine. Their plan includes a couple of crucial elements: the big holiday followed by a day off, a beautiful park and a fun activity - Easter Egg Hunt. Parents and youngsters rushed to purchase their tickets, and provide support to both good times and Community Foundation Bijeljina. The events gather an average of 350 children and around 700 adults, enjoying separate activities sponsored by local companies and entrepreneurs. With this type of event, which is unique for their town, Community Foundation Bijeljina secures the funds that will be further distributed to initiatives on open calls. But the event offers more than that - it builds the special bond between the people and restores the trust, a value mildly neglected. The giggles and joy of their participants helped Community Foundation Bijeljina to reach almost every home (or at least every home with the passion for treasure hunts) and spread the word that their town might seem small, but the desire for change is bigger than ever. Community Foundation Bijeljina might be hiding easter eggs once in a while, but their attentions are clear and transparent - they are there, they are listening and they are ready to give the love back to the community.

Paving Their Own Path

Near Bijeljina, an older sister, **Tuzla Community Foundation** has learned that its strength lies in the bonds it builds. By partnering with socially responsible businesses, local institutions, and committed individuals, TCF transforms every connection into a source of support for community initiatives. Fundraising here is more than collecting money - it's about sharing a vision, listening, and creating moments where people feel part of something bigger. Every partnership, every collaboration, helps keep programs alive and responsive to local needs, ensuring the Foundation not only survives but flourishes. In Tuzla, generosity travels fast: when the community comes together, resources grow, ideas thrive, and the ripple of impact spreads far beyond the Foundation's walls. As a philanthropic organization at its core, TCF employed a variety of fundraising tools, starting with donation boxes in shopping malls and later offering services to local businesses. Over time, it also learned to manage thematic and donor-advised funds to back local initiatives. A notable example of strategic philanthropy within the Tuzla Community Foundation is the creation of the "Dobrovoljni Fond Mensur i Jasmina Alić", a three-year voluntary fund established by philanthropists and business owners Mensur and Jasmina Alić. With a commitment of 45,000 EUR, the fund supports local projects in environmental protection, public health, and culture across Tuzla Canton, awarding small grants. The fund reflects the founders' desire to give back to the community that supported their success and to inspire others to do the same. The Foundation ensures transparent management and alignment with community needs, while also emphasizing the importance of nurturing long-term relationships with donors like the Alić family. These partnerships are key to sustaining a vibrant local philanthropic ecosystem and ensuring lasting impact beyond the initial financial contribution.



Philanthropy Days 2024
Photo credits: Tuzla Community Foundation

Paving Their Own Path

Apollonia Foundation (CF initiative) in Gevgelija, North Macedonia had a very special idea in mind when they organized their first Giving Circle. The team understood exactly how their community connects - they knew that people would contribute when invited in a genuine, inspiring way. They sensed that neighbors, businesses, and schools were ready for a moment of togetherness and purpose, and that's where Apollonia Foundation stepped forward to guide the way. Their plan included several thoughtful approaches: they actively engaged local companies to secure matching donations while encouraging contributions from citizens, organizations, and philanthropists; they mobilized the community through personalized outreach, social media campaigns, and direct communication, making sure people of all ages and from schools were included; they ran awareness campaigns online, highlighting the significance of the Giving Circle and the impact of community philanthropy; and their leadership team stayed hands-on throughout, from selecting the CSOs to connecting the local action hub with the business community. The results exceeded expectations: over 110 donors joined, and more than 471,000 MKD was raised, far above the initial goal of 180,000. Schools "Vlado Kantardjiev," "Krste Misirkov," and "Risto Shuklev" got children and parents involved in bazaars, talent shows, and donation boxes, adding to the total funds. The event grew into a celebration of solidarity, with local CSOs supporting one another's initiatives and the community showing its power when people come together.

The Apollonia Foundation was not in charge of the Apollo mission, but their efforts reached just as far - they are here, they are listening, and they are helping their community soar to new heights.



Giving circle Gevgelija
Photo credits: Apollonia Foundation

5. A Glimpse into the Future: How to Build Enduring Support Network Beyond Borders



A Glimpse into the Future

Community foundation supporting organizations play a critical role in strengthening the infrastructure, capacity, and sustainability of community foundations through technical assistance, strategic guidance, and knowledge sharing. Community foundation supporting organizations and Champion community foundations in Serbia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Trag, Konekt, Tuzla Community Foundation) share a common commitment to core values such as trust, transparency, and community empowerment, yet each develops a slightly different model shaped by specific inherent features. While the approaches to capacity building, resource mobilization, and advocacy may vary, those who provide this distinct type of support are united by the same vision of strengthening community foundations as sparks of local change. At the same time, CFSOs face specific challenges within each national movement, from navigating legal frameworks to ensuring financial sustainability, that require tailored strategies, but also open space for learning and mutual inspiration across borders. The combination of these specific traits will shape the future of the movements and collaborations.

Tuzla Community Foundation will build on its innovative fundraising and community engagement to strengthen the newly established Center for Democracy, deepen partnerships with citizens and businesses, and foster locally led initiatives that create sustainable solutions. Guided by Tuzla's rich philanthropic tradition, Tuzla Community Foundation will aim to grow a culture of giving and solidarity that empowers people to shape the future of their community. TCF's endeavors towards a foundation of national relevance and presence will continue through further developing and serving doniraj.ba crowdfunding platform, a significant channel for Bosnian solidarity. By sharing its 22 year expertise and resources with the emerging CFs in the country, TCF will stay devoted to its intention to contribute to further development and growth of the CF movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Western Balkans.

Trag Foundation will continue to invest in community foundation movements in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while simultaneously mapping the needs and desires of the community foundations and their teams. The next steps will be carefully designed and tailored to nurture the aspirations, meet their priorities and reflect the enthusiasm community foundations invest in the movement. By the end of 2025, three new community foundations from Kraljevo, Kragujevac and Braničevo County will be officially registered and will continue the path of learning and development, along with their older peers - a functioning network of community foundations will be Trag Foundation's pledge for the following years, while constantly enhancing the expertise and presence of community foundations.

Konekt remains committed to advancing local philanthropy, supporting Local Action Hub initiatives. Konekt's role as a CFSO is pivotal in mentoring, training, and connecting CFs with donors and stakeholders. Initiatives like Giving Circles can help in building visibility and credibility. However, sustainability remains fragile and dependent on encouragement and mentoring from the CFSOs side. Inspired by successful fundraising examples from local foundations in Niš and Tuzla, Konekt will replicate proven models, such as Niš's online auction (including Novak Djokovic's donated tennis ball) and Tuzla's experience promoting smart giving through crowdfunding platforms like www.opop.mk in North Macedonia and Doniraj.ba in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A Glimpse into the Future

The vision of future collaborations between community foundation supporting organizations in the Western Balkans is shaped by their recognized potentials - to exchange knowledge, expand expertise, and advocate for community foundations locally and globally. Most importantly, to help each community foundation protect its uniqueness while remaining open and flexible to new ideas and approaches. The complex context in which CFSOs in the Western Balkans operate can sometimes feel isolating, with efforts appearing unnoticed compared to more developed contexts, and even discouraging amid the constant state of emergency many of them face. Yet, the added value of their collective work lies in the synergy, adaptability, and solidarity between the organizations, enabling them to learn from each other, respond to local challenges, and reinforce the region's community foundation movement. As part of the broader European network, they remain connected to the global community, ensuring that despite diverse socio-economic realities in each Balkan country, the movement continues to advance in step with the rest of the world. While keeping their eyes on the future, community foundations and supporting organizations in the Western Balkans know that, no matter the obstacles, there's nothing stronger than a true friend to lean on.

6. Mapping the Movement: Community Foundations and Supporting Organizations in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia



BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA

Tuzla Community Foundation

Web: www.fondacijatz.org
https://www.facebook.com/FondacijaTZ/
https://www.instagram.com/fondacija_tuzlanske_zajednice/
https://ba.linkedin.com/company/tuzla-community-foundation

The Tuzla Community Foundation, established in 2003, was created as a joint initiative of the citizens of Tuzla, the International Youth Partnership Program YEPP, and the German foundation "Freudenberg Stiftung". It is the first community foundation in BiH and a pioneering example in the Western Balkans. Based in the city of Tuzla, it was created to support citizen-led initiatives and foster sustainable local development through philanthropy, civic engagement, and inclusive decision-making. By investing in local leadership, education, youth, and cultural programs, nowadays the foundation plays a key role in building social cohesion and empowering communities throughout the country.



Tuzla Community Foundation

SERBIA

Trag Foundation

Web: https://tragfondacija.org/
https://www.facebook.com/tragfondacija
https://www.instagram.com/tragfondacija
https://www.linkedin.com/company/trag-fondacija

Trag Foundation is a leading national and regional grantmaking foundation that empowers civil society organizations and citizens to actively shape their communities. Through its flagship program, "Our Local Foundation – Community Has a Say", Trag supports the establishment and growth of community foundations as long-term, citizen-led platforms for philanthropy and civic engagement. As a result, community foundations have been established in Pančevo, Stara Pazova, and Niš in Serbia, as well as in Bijeljina, Zenica, and Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while initiative groups in Braničevo County, Kraljevo, and Kragujevac are on their way to becoming fully developed community foundations. By fostering this growing regional network, Trag plays a key role in building sustainable local development, solidarity, and meaningful citizen participation across Serbia and the Western Balkans.



Trag Foundation

NORTH MACEDONIA

Konekt

Web: https://konekt.org.mk/
https://www.facebook.com/Konekt.mk
https://www.instagram.com/konekt.ngo
https://www.linkedin.com/in/konekt-skopje

Konekt is a leading civil society organization in North Macedonia that empowers citizen groups and communities to actively shape their environment. Through its programs, Konekt supports the development of community foundations as long-term, citizen-led platforms for philanthropy and civic engagement. Local Action Hubs have been established in Strumica, Ohrid, Gostivar, Bitola, Shuto Orizari, Chair, and Gevgelija, with leadership groups trained and mentored by Konekt to develop local philanthropy. Early results, including the first local Giving Circles where nine civic initiatives raised funds from around 200 local donors, demonstrate the model's effectiveness. Building on this momentum, Konekt supports the LAHs in creating their first Local Philanthropic Funds and launching grant programs. By providing guidance and sharing experience from Western Balkans community foundations, Konekt strengthens local engagement, encourages giving, and helps communities across North Macedonia thrive.



Konekt



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