



# **Social Justice Philanthropy:** Perspectives from Five Countries



The Synergos Institute 9 East 69<sup>th</sup> Street NY, NY 10021

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## Organizations Surveyed:

- Esquel Foundation (EF) – Ecuador
- Community Recovery Program (CRP) - Indonesia
- Assisi Foundation (AF) – Philippines
- Vamos Foundation (VF) – Mexico
- Community Foundation of the Western Region (CFWRZ) - Zimbabwe

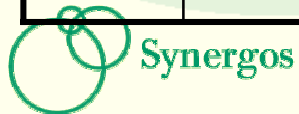


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## What is your mission?

<b>EF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To contribute to sustainable human development, the improvement of the quality of life for poor people and the construction of democratic society.</li> </ul>
<b>CRP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage and stimulate poor communities' initiatives based on local wisdom.</li> <li>• To meet the basic and social needs of poor communities.</li> <li>• To strive to achieve social and gender justice.</li> <li>• To establish local self reliant civil organizations.</li> <li>• To change public policies and provide legal aid to poor communities.</li> <li>• To provide information and public education.</li> </ul>
<b>AF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist the poor and oppressed through development programs that address their basic human needs and help them be advocates for just social structures.</li> </ul>
<b>VF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support peoples' initiatives to improve their living conditions by: mobilizing resources for projects that promote social and economic impact; improving the capacities and entrepreneurship of local organizations and fostering sustainable partnerships and networks.</li> </ul>
<b>CF- WRZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide greater well being in the communities of the Western Region of Zimbabwe by supporting and mobilizing resources for development initiatives from the rural communities themselves.</li> </ul>



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## What is social justice / social change philanthropy?

<b>EF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It promotes a society where fewer people are excluded, less people are poor, where there is a participatory democratic system...a society where people have access to services, where transformations are achieved through consensus.</li></ul>
<b>CRP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social justice is achieving equality in terms of economic and political rights and about ensuring that all have access to economic, political and educational opportunities.</li></ul>
<b>AF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social change is the process of transforming institutions and the individuals within them to fully adopt and live out the values of social justice. The process requires a holistic view of the person and society and a long term view of outcomes and results.</li></ul>
<b>VF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It seeks to create and validate a methodology of transformation, one that addresses root problems.</li></ul>
<b>CF- WRZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social justice philanthropy addresses issues of fairness, awareness, lobbying, advocacy, and convening...it assists communities with issues that impact their lives and connects them with institutions to help solve their concerns. It improves access to basic rights as citizens.</li></ul>



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## How is it different than other kinds of philanthropy?

<b>EF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It strengthen people's capacity to become actors in their own lives and their capacity to negotiate with the public sector.</li></ul>
<b>CRP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Targets communities that do not have sufficient access or equality, promotes awareness of transparency, gender equity and accountability, and has social justice in mind as an eventual outcome of cumulative positive social changes.</li></ul>
<b>AF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is about advocacy, claiming rights, and organizing.</li></ul>
<b>VF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activities that promote social justice are those that, fundamentally, provoke changes in the attitudes of all those involved: the donor, the beneficiary and the intermediary organization. These activities promote dialogue, cooperation and generate new attitudes of inclusion for all three parties. It is typically long-term.</li></ul>
<b>CF- WRZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An activity/grant promotes social change if it benefits the lives of the larger community or if it positively impacts the lives of the poorest people where opportunities did not exist before. A grant does not promote social change if it only benefits an individual.</li></ul>

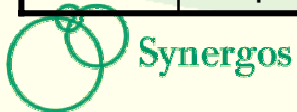


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## Can you give an example of social justice philanthropy?

<b>EF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting a Women’s Hat Making Association, which brings together 800 women in a production and marketing network. The group has cut out middle-men, created a rotating credit fund, and set up a network of community stores that provide goods at affordable prices. Women have broken down the traditional power structure in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>CRP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights training and mobilizing fishermen who are in dispute with large trawling operators; income generation activities for widows of murdered fishermen.</li> <li>• Grants to NGOs for rights training with families whose members have been arrested by military or political factions without cause.</li> </ul>
<b>AF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the efforts of indigenous people to enforce ancestral land claims.</li> <li>• Organizing foundations to lobby the government to take action during the food crisis among indigenous groups in Mindanao.</li> </ul>
<b>VF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Professio Program creates alternatives for social businesses. Our youth programs focus on the educational and developmental needs of youth in situations of exclusion.</li> </ul>
<b>CF- WRZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants to a women’s chicken project that has enabled members to open up savings accounts for the first time in their lives.</li> <li>• Grants to School Development Committees to assist communities engage with local Ministry of Education officers to demand government assistance in improving the quality of education.</li> <li>• Support to Home Based Care Givers to advocate on behalf of terminally ill patients and orphans.</li> </ul>



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## What were critical success factors in these examples?

<b>EF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respecting women’s priorities.</li> <li>• The Foundation’s legitimacy in the community.</li> </ul>
<b>CRP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs AND community representatives decide how funds are allocated. This ensures transparency.</li> <li>• Supporting income generation as a first step to achieving social justice: if people can not eat, they can not advocate for the root changes needed for equity.</li> <li>• Communicating the vision and mission of CRP to communities.</li> </ul>
<b>AF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying and working with the poorest of the poor; remaining small and close to the community; pursuing advocacy by using connections with government to make change; being flexible and able to respond to needs.</li> </ul>
<b>VF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowering the beneficiaries, stimulating the community as a whole and contributing to a broader process of social transformation.</li> </ul>
<b>CF- WRZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation, empowering grantees, supporting grantee leadership, being sensitive to the needs and hardships of grantees and their environment.</li> <li>• An open-door policy: people travel from way out in rural areas to come and speak to us about their issues and/or concerns, so we make time to speak to them. We promote social justice as we are a vehicle for people to be heard. We must practice what we preach.</li> </ul>



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## What challenges does your foundation face in promoting social justice?

<b>EF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability for the foundation, to increase our long-term capacity to act...this is a not just a financial challenge, but one that involves our relationship with social organizations, grassroots groups, and the environment. There is also a political dimension – harmonizing the interests of different sectors to achieve transformation and development.</li> </ul>
<b>CRP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Indonesia it is not possible to fully engage the government in effecting policy change to improve conditions for communities. It is not possible to achieve social justice right now. Government structures are too weak and political corruption runs too strong for communities to have full access to opportunities and rights. There is little space for NGOs to talk with government.</li> <li>• The attitudes of NGO partners are a problem. Many NGOs are concerned about money and forget who their constituents are.</li> </ul>
<b>AF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling helpless in the face of government inaction.</li> </ul>
<b>VF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary challenge is the lack of resources and the lack of creativity. Influencing and impacting public policy is also an obstacle.</li> <li>• Another challenge is to shake off the ties that impede us, to be more audacious. Those are the ties of charity, of social assistance, of altruism.</li> </ul>
<b>CF- WRZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges include limited resources, the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe, government bureaucracy, and the poor climate for NGOs to operate.</li> </ul>



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## Does your foundation draw upon a particular model of social change?

<b>EF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Esquel does not follow any particular model of social change. Ecuador is a diverse country, and it would be very difficult to try to impose a unique model within this diversity. We promote different models of social change that emerge from society.</li></ul>
<b>CRP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No. Each regional office develops their own strategy that works in their particular context.</li></ul>
<b>AF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Foundation draws heavily from Church encyclicals.</li></ul>
<b>VF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We do not have a specific model...although we do believe that the marginalized must achieve their own inclusion and their own equality through their own efforts.</li></ul>
<b>CF- WRZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yes: building on community ideas, drawing upon local traditions of collective support and mutual help</li></ul>



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## What would encourage foundations in your country to take on the challenge of injustice and inequality?

<b>EF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of a regulatory framework for foundations; foundations need to adhere to a series of basic rules in terms of efficiency and transparency.</li> </ul>
<b>CRP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil society and government forums to advocate for changes in policies and laws; focusing advocacy efforts on government ministries that are more receptive to change.</li> <li>• Increased networking and unity between foundations; advancing coordination between foundations working on common social justice themes from different perspectives; developing a Code of Ethics among NGOs to increase transparency.</li> </ul>
<b>AF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most big foundations in the Philippines are dependent on corporate funding. This constrains them from rocking the boat and addressing underlying issues of social justice. Corporate foundations will have to increasingly play a role in transforming companies to better understand and practice social justice.</li> </ul>
<b>VF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to create a language of social change. We need people with a social vision that is more pointed, more acute. We run the risk of being pragmatic: looking for donor funds and facing the perennial crisis of survival, we do not transcend. We need to transcend as a sector. We also need more interchange between foundations.</li> </ul>
<b>CF- WRZ</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing best practices among organizations, skill training, improving the enabling environment, improving institutional governance, additional financial and technical resources, information and access to resource people and expertise in Zimbabwe and in the region.</li> </ul>



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