




# The Role of Community Foundations in Rebuilding and Recovery



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# Part I

## Creating Community From Disaster, or Positive Opportunism



Part I:  
Creating Community from Disaster

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*“The Funds coming in for tsunami relief are like rain water. Without a proper container, they will just flow away.”*

Benjamas Siripat  
Local Development Institute



Part I:

## Creating Community from Disaster

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*“We can do more together than we can separately. We need some way to pool our resources and to coordinate our efforts.”*

Kitti Phatanachinda  
Phuket Tourism Association

# Favorable Factors for Creating a Community Foundation Post-Disaster

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- Galvanized community spirit
- Emergence of new community leaders
- External resources and attention
- Appropriate vehicle for long-term rebuilding funds
- LOCAL control and decision-making
- Cross-sector coordination
- Neutrality among NGO's
- Long-term readiness for future events
  - “Build it back better than it was before.”
  - “We’ve got to do better next time.”

# Key Factors for Creating a Community Foundation Post-Disaster

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Local champions

Local cross-sectoral approach; broadly-shared decisionmaking

Positive environment: support for citizen-based decisionmaking and accountability

Coordination and hands-off approach among external donors

Up-front local investment

# Ensuring Sustainability for Post-Disaster Community Foundations

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- Early, comprehensive technical assistance
- Early funding for 1-1.5 staff
- External funding structured to require increasing local contribution
- Strategic planning and sustainability planning
- Governance designed for renewability (rotation)
- Ongoing professional development for Board and staff
- Build indigenous support structure while building the CF(s)



## Part II

# Putting Community to the Test: Post-Disaster Roles of Community Foundations

# Post-Disaster Roles of Community Foundations

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*“If the Dutch can keep the North Sea from flooding the Netherlands, there’s no reason why, with a good levee system, folks can’t live in the Lower Ninth Ward and have it be a much safer, viable, vibrant community than it was before Katrina hit.”*

John Davies

President

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

# Post-Disaster Roles of Community Foundations

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*“Yeah, they’re all here: the big NGO’s, the government, the international donors. But nobody’s asking the community what **THEY** want or need.”*

Participant in Synergos-sponsored  
Discussion on community foundations  
Phuket, Thailand  
March 2005

# What Community Foundations DON'T Do (Usually...)

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- Disaster relief
- Coordinate in-kind support
- Run programs
- Relieve governments of long-term responsibility

# Post-Disaster Roles of Community Foundations: Leadership

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- Repository of community social capital
- Relationships with leaders of all sectors
- Knowledge of and network with all community NGO's: health, education, environment, social services, culture
- Convene and coordinate, convene and coordinate, convene and coordinate

# Post-Disaster Roles of CF's: Local Money

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- Immediate flexible funds for quick response
- In-place vehicle for local contributions
- Coordinate efforts of multiple local funders
- Serve as fiscal agent for new efforts required for disaster

# Post-Disaster Roles of CF's: Money

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- Conduit for external support
  - Known to major donors
  - Communications infrastructure to “get the word out”
  - History of accountability
  - Back-office and legal systems in place
  - Can accept all kinds of gifts
- Bring external funds under reliable and coordinated local control
- Bring external funds in line with local priorities

# Post-Disaster Roles of CF's: Long-Term Rebuilding


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- Locally-controlled endowment, “patient” money
- Long-term perspective
- Cross-sectoral perspective
- Cross-disciplinary perspective
- Bridge between the grassroots and the leadership
- Strong enough to “take the heat.”

# Post-Disaster Roles of CF's: A FEW Examples


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- Oklahoma City
- Prague
- New York
- Beslan
- New Orleans/Baton Rouge
- Belfast



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And finally, the Community Foundation's most important role: fighting the disasters of poverty, hunger, injustice, violence, illness, ignorance, and environmental degradation, that breed and fester within every one of our communities, every day, and building communities that are not only more disaster-ready, but more just, more caring, and more equitable.



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*“The end result of hundreds of millions of dollars of private philanthropic funds, combined with billions of government support, must not be the rebuilding of communities of exclusion, of institutionalized poverty, and of ignored racism.”*

George Penick  
President  
Foundation for the Mid-South