

GRANTMAKERS EAST FORUM

[30 September – 2 October 2015]



Conference Notes

Grantmakers East Forum (GEF), which is one of the thematic networks operating under the European Foundation Center (EFC), bring grantmaker foundations in Europe, specifically the Middle and Eastern Europeans together. This year, GEF was organized in Istanbul, hosted by the Vehbi Koç Foundation on 30 September - 2 October around the theme “Creating Equal Opportunities: Overcoming Divides.” At the Conference, where the role of foundations and philanthropy on creating equal opportunities was discussed, employment of youth, social entrepreneurship, equal access to resources, freedom of speech and overcoming differences in conflict areas were discussed.

[Below, you can find the prominent subjects and notes of the Conference.](#)

Opening Plenary

At the Opening Plenary, which was given by Gerry Salole, Director of the EFC, Prof. Kathleen Lynch, University College Dublin and Filiz Bikmen, social investment and philanthropy consultant, inequality and the role of foundations overcoming inequality were discussed. **Salole, Director of the EFC**, mentions in his speech that foundations play a crucial role to solve inequalities in societies through their works and grant programs. Salole touches upon that foundations prefer long-term solutions rather than short-term studies in order to create social change within societies and mentions diverse roles of foundations, such as the creation of public opinion, advocacy and the creation of public funds for emergency.

Prof. Kathleen Lynch, who remarks that inequality has become one of the fundamental problems in the world since the economic crisis in the United States and Europe in the early 2000s, states that economic inequality causes lack of solidarity within the society since people feel less secure and less self-confident. Lynch describes two important results of neoliberal capitalism as minimizing public services and changing shape of the relationships between citizens and the state. While the state was responsible of providing public service and public good to those citizens with limited resources before, neoliberal capitalism has caused the privatization of public good. These policies have affected the poor most. According to Lynch, in countries, where inequality is intense, social problems and health remain posing serious problems. In societies, inequality is manifested in four dimensions. These are (1) resources (money, goods etc.), (2) respect and recognition (ethnic, religious and lingual minorities etc.), (3) representation and power (citizen rights), (4) love and solidarity. Inequality is produced in four main social systems: (1) economic system, (2) cultural system, (3) political system and (4) effective equality (the system where love, care and solidarity are produced). According to Lynch, inequality is reproduced in societies either as “economic inequality” or “inequality produced

by culture.” Cultural inequality manifests itself as the lack of respect and recognition by the society. Since children and the young do not have as much power in politics, economics and social life as adults, the former is exposed to more inequality in many societies.

Filiz Bikmen, social investment and philanthropy consultant, remarks the role of foundations and civil society representatives as system integrators. Bikmen points out the importance of foundations for the development of integrated approaches to solve social problems among grant making and strategic giving. In her speech, Bikmen mentions the successes of Turkish foundations as the developers of integrated approaches.

PANELS

PANEL: EMBRACING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO TACKLE INEQUALITIES

Moderator: Suat Özçağdaş, Center for Social Innovation Turkey

Panelists: Luca Mantoan, Unicredit Foundation
Charu Wilkinson, ICF International
Suat Özçağdaş, Center for Social Innovation Turkey

At the Panel, where social entrepreneurship and the role of social enterprises on tackling inequality were discussed, examples of European social enterprises and increased support mechanisms on this issue were mentioned. Charu Wilkinson, who presented results of “A Map of Social Enterprises and their Eco-systems in Europe” prepared for the European Commission, indicates that social enterprise models that bring social benefit and economic development together and the support on this field are in the agenda of the European Union. Wilkinson, who remarks the differences between the structures, models and types of management of social enterprises in Europe, touches upon the hardship measuring the impact of the social enterprises. At the Panel, it is mentioned that there is an increase in the number of programs that support social entrepreneurship as the attention to this field increases. Also, social enterprise support program that is implemented in many European countries by the Unicredit Foundation, social entrepreneurship eco system and social enterprise examples in Turkey are discussed.

PANEL: GENDER-SENSITIVE GRANTMAKING

Moderator: Alina Serban, ERSTE Foundation

Panelists: Joanna Maycock, European Women's Lobby
Rana Kotan, Sabancı Foundation
Bharati Sadasivam, United Nations Development Foundation

Panelists remark that development of gender equality in European countries and studies on this issue has stalled and they state that one in every three women suffer from gender inequality in Europe. They indicate that beside Europe, in many countries from the Western Balkans to Asia similar problems related to gender inequality are observed. Panelists emphasize the absence of women in public institutions as decision-makers and the lack of representation at parliaments as important problems in this field. It is discussed that in many countries CSOs, which are focused on gender issues, have to work functionally instead of doing advocacy due to budget limitations.

It is remarked that CSOs should question their own mechanisms in order to solve economic and social inequalities between women and men through a gender-sensitive lens. In other words, CSOs need to question how much gender sensitive they are in their programs and inside operations. At the Panel, the necessities for capacity building for CSOs focusing on women and the support for collaborations with other CSOs from different fields are recommended. In an environment where rights-based organizations' access to funds is limited, it is stated that grant makers should support women's organizations to strengthen their capacities and increase their financial sustainability. The importance for foundations to look at which women's organizations work in their field in order to encourage collaborations is discussed. Supporting efforts to increase the representation of women in politics is recommended.

PANEL: UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING INEQUALITIES IN PROTRACTED CONFLICTS

Panelists: Yuriy Ganin, Transnistrian Chamber of Trade and Industry
Maria van Ruiten, United Nations Development Program
Natella Akaba, Association of Women of Abkhazia

At the Panel, political and ethnic inequalities that took place in the Soviet lands before the official dissolution of the USSR in 1991 and studies to overcome those inequalities are discussed. It is stated that many conflicts happened before and after the dissolution of the USSR are rooted in separatist movements. In other words, it is remarked that although many states, which declared their independence after the dissolution of the USSR, are seen as sole sovereigns over their territories, due to the separatist movements, they cannot form their power within their borders. In those territories, main problems are the increased distance between communities, not only during the conflict but also afterwards, and inequality caused by increased polarization. It is stated that isolation from the society increases due to the lack of public services, youth unemployment and polarization.

Panelists mention that international and local organizations should solve the problems of the youth and work for inclusive growth and economic stability. It is remarked that main roles of the civil society in conflict areas are providing access to main services (health, education etc.) and integrating societies.

PANEL: FREEDOM OF ARTISTIC IMPRESSIONS

Moderator: Christiane Erharter, ERSTE Foundation

Panelists: Dora Hegyi, Tranzit.hu

Natasa Ilic, What, How and for Whom (WHW)

Slaven Tolj, Rijeka Modern and Contemporary Arts Museum

Panelists indicate that limiting freedom of expression increases the obstacles to express thoughts through arts. At the Panel, panelists give different examples and the censorship mechanisms implemented especially on the projects funded by the public institutions are mentioned. It is stated that artists continue their struggle creating new initiatives and developing new methods and tools. At the Panel, the importance and necessity of supporting artists and activism through arts by the grant maker foundations were highlighted.

PANEL: YOUTH (UN)EMPLOYMENT – INCREASING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Moderator: Filiz Bikmen- Social investment and philanthropy consultant

Panelists: Francesco Berlingieri, Centre for European Economic Research

Gökhan Dikmener, United Nations Development Foundation

Irene Daskalakis, World Bank

Panelists remark the problem of youth unemployment especially in the South Europe due to the economic crisis in the Eurozone. Main causes of youth unemployment are:

- 1) Education and/or training system:** The lack of alternative curriculum or education, the delinking between the labor market and the skills of the youth
- 2) Dual labor market:** Different enforcements for formal and informal markets, an increase in the number of short-term contracts.
- 3) Other potential problems:** High minimum wage, inefficient labor market policies and low geographical mobility.

Panelists remark that lifelong learning programs, trainings and multi-skill development programs can be means to decrease youth unemployment. At the Panel, the necessity of collaboration between the private sector and the civil society is stated. In order to reduce youth unemployment, companies should train young people based on the needs of companies rather than give the opportunity to have education or internship. After companies analyze the positions and branches that need employment, they should train young people for these specific branches and positions. Young people should be supported even after they are employed in order to develop their skills. These methods do not only employ young people, but also ease private sector to access qualified employers.

CLOSING PLENARY

Osman Kavala, the Chairman of Anadolu Kültür, mentions the citizenship practices in Turkey and how these practices reproduce economic and social inequalities in the society. Kavala touches upon religious and ethnic inequalities and the role of state policies deepening those inequalities.

Barry Knight, Executive Director of CENTRIS, touches upon the importance of collaborations with foundations to play a key role to solve social problems and work efficiently. Knight arranges the methods that foundations can use while tackling inequality as the following:

- Innovativeness: Leading new ways and methods through trying new models,
- Working in different fields: Accessing the fragile and vulnerable groups, which are affected by inequalities the most,
- Leading,
- Collaborating with public institutions,
- Creating and extending their knowledge on the fields they work on.