



MONTREAL RESEARCH LABORATORY ON CANADIAN PHILANTHROPY

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Case Study on the Collaborations Linked to Community Food Centre Canada

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Methodology

Archives and organizational documents were analysed to document the history of CFC, identify the activities and programs implemented by the organization and help to understand the collaborations between the organization and the grantmaking foundations. A series of interviews helps to illustrate the collaborations between the foundations and support our position.

Sources

- 2 semi-structured interviews of approximately 2 hours were conducted with the key persons of the funded organization (Community Food Centre Canada).
- 3 semi-structured interviews of approximately 2 hours were conducted with the foundations.
- 1 semi-structured interview of approximately 1 hour was conducted with a second food security organization.
- 1 semi-structured interview of less than an hour was conducted with a core alliance of food security organizations.
- Grey and academic literature on philanthropy, philanthropic collaborations, the CFC's approach and Canada's food security issues (32 sources).
- Reports produced by food issue Foundations (6).
- Canada Revenue Agency / Fundtracker: Source of the financial resources of CFC Canada and the foundations to identify the funding network, the foundations' areas of action, the financial resources mobilized by them and the funded food security organizations.

Analysis method

Literature review

Qualitative content analysis to identify emerging themes

Summary of the case study

The Stop Community Food Centre is a non-profit organization located in Toronto, Ontario. It was first set up as an emergency food distribution centre in a church to respond to the economic recession that hit in the 70s. The organization now exceeds its original mandate as well as the physical space it takes up. At the turn of the 21st century, the organization developed a more socially and politically committed approach and adopted the name *The Stop Community Food Centre*. The 'community food security' concept is at the centre of this approach, which seeks to increase the community's ability to improve local food security. This approach extends beyond simple food assistance to address systemic causes of hunger. One of the first programs meant to support the food security and health of populations was the development of an urban agriculture (1998) and agroecological production component. Today, the organization continues to operate its drop-in food programs but has also integrated capacity-building, education and training programs that include community kitchens, community gardens, educational workshops and citizen participation programs.

Thus, over the last 25 years, emergency food supply (food banks, food programs) has taken on the form of a more institutionalized fight against hunger. The purpose of this case study is to better understand the

role of the foundations in the evolution of this problem. Indeed, it is in collaboration with the Metcalf Foundation that CFC develops its integrated approach, namely through the production of “*Metcalf Food Solution Papers*”. The organization develops an intervention model that is meant to be distributed and reproduced, first in Ontario, and then elsewhere in Canada. The organization now subsidizes food security initiatives that adopt the model developed by CFC. More specifically, this case study is interested in the collaborations between the food issue foundations, but also between CFC and the grantmaking foundations (Metcalf Foundation, Trillium Foundation, McConnell Foundation and Lawson Foundation) in the development of their approach.

Research issues

Difficulties encountered during the research:

The case study conducted on *Community Food Centre Canada* raises research issues on the collaborations between the foundations on the theme of food security.

- This case study asks methodological questions regarding the anonymity of the subjects participating in the interviews. Indeed, the special relationship and unequal power relationship between the funder and funded organization obstructs the feeling of trust and security felt by the funded organization in the exchange of information.
- Furthermore, a longer commitment would help to deepen the personal and professional trajectories of participants and thus rebuild the collaboration network, or at least approach it from a different perspective.

Future research

- During a 2nd research phase, it would be interesting to compare public action and philanthropy by taking a closer look at the issues involved in the investment and support cycle of funded organizations. As well, typography could be produced: are there distinctions between the types of foundations (private/community, etc.)?
- A next research phase would help to develop measures meant to identify the impacts of food security funding cycles. This step could be coordinated in partnership with CFC, which developed a questionnaire on the matter. It would therefore be interesting to compare funding cycles that have goals to meet and those that target the sustainability of funded organizations.
- What place does the research hold? University research as a goal: data validation and interpretation versus data coproduction.

Practical issues and avenues

- A collective reflection on the funding mechanisms was necessary. Indeed, food security organizations depend on the subsidies provided by foundations, and it turns out that food security investment cycles meet their goals. A questionnaire was produced by the funded organization and targets food security organizations. It is meant to identify how they receive funding and how it impacts their organization. The questionnaire has two goals: first to support the argument meant to convince foundations that improvements are needed and second to analyse the source of funding (who funds what).
- The need to set up a joint theme or site on food security became relevant to agree on the matter. Pooling funds and including other actors may be possibilities that would help to move from a form of collaboration to a more structured partnership.
- Identify actions for the plea that can be taken by the foundations to guide their investment and action strategies toward a common goal.