



Civil Connections Community Foundation (CCCF)

Annual Report 2023

This report is presented and passed at the organization's general meeting held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

On May 6th, 2024



The image is from our Erasmus+ funded The JOURNEY Istanbul project

Contents

Foreword by Civil Connections Founder:	0
Who we are: Introducing Civil Connections.....	1
i. About Civil Connections Community Foundation (Civil Connections).....	1
ii. Our approach:	1
iii. Mission and Vision	1
Report on the year 2023:	2
Launched seven (7) new projects in 2023 – maintaining our drive to reach more local communities.....	2
EU Erasmus+ funded projects in 2023:	2
CISU-funded projects in 2023:	4
Self/member-funded projects in 2023:.....	5
Financial report 2023 – How much money delivered these results?	6
What next – plans for 2024: Renewing/updating our strategy	7
What we will continue with in 2024:	7
1. Defining the organization further – renewing our strategy across 2024:.....	7
2. Continue to ensure a strong resource mobilization and fundraising traction:.....	7
3. Strengthening the organizational management and efficiency:.....	7
4. Expanding and continue to consolidate the Grassroots Community Grant program (GCGP):.....	7
5. Growing our membership and community support mechanisms:	7
Final words:	9

Foreword by Civil Connections Founder:

What happens when grassroots communities stand for humanity?

Dear members, friends, followers, and our global network, thank you so much for yet another full year at and with Civil Connections wherever you are.

The question above has and continues to fill the operations at Civil Connections, both now and in the future – because this is what we started out to do, and 5 years later we are starting to see concrete results of the power of “Development from the grassroots” programming.

For this report, let me specifically highlight a moment that touched me deeply in October 2023 during a visit to the fishing community of Skala Sikamineas on Lesbos in Greece. I call this the story of [Kostas Pinteris](#). The visit was in the frame of our then running project – [THE JOURNEY](#), where we took the chance to interact with a local fisherman Kostas, while we gathered refugee stories towards a graphic book.

You see, at the peak of the refugee crisis in the years 2014 on, a time where Europe closed boundaries for inbound refugees from Syria and routes through Turkey, Kostas and friends decided to do the opposite. While their beaches got swamped by refugees and life jackets, Kostas and colleagues stopped fishing for fish and instead fished for lost boats and people. In one of the stories, "he would stand guard at the harbor, and sail out to meet refugee boats on the way and showed them a safe passage through the treacherous sea". And he on several occasions pulled these boats to safety using his little boat and a couple of ropes.

When asked why they did this, their answer was simple – "we were tired of seeing dead people – our own humanity". And whatever the government directives were, they explained that this village comprised of their local beach, a community of people, a place people should safely arrive at and stay alive, they wanted to make sure this happened. Read about Kostas and our work with him [here](#).



So, how many Kostases do we need at the grassroots for a saner world? I can't answer this, but I hope we get many more. And with what we have seen in the past 5 years of our work, I remain optimistic, and as I say every year – we will move one person at a time until we have everyone with us.

Please join us on this mission. And enjoy the rest of the report.

Andrew Julius Bende, Founder.

Who we are: Introducing Civil Connections

i. About Civil Connections Community Foundation (Civil Connections)

Founded in September 2018, CCCF is an international nongovernmental organization based in Copenhagen, Denmark. The aim of CCCF is to increase value and achievement in international development initiatives at local grassroots communities by building bridges to and for commonly unreached local grassroots development actors especially in the rural areas, to be central in defining how this takes place. We do this through developing partnerships, outfitting these with exposure, capacity, motivation, and mentorship.

With a base of members and supporters across the globe, we have strong will and commitment to identifying local development actors – especially those rarely found on the mainstream development radar, and facilitating, motivating, and mentoring them to keep believing in their work, as well as amplifying their contribution to global development.

To this end, we actively work with engaging all types of actors on the necessity and benefits of strategically focusing on local rural grassroots as a domain of high presence of inequalities. And of course, it is here over 70%, and in some regions up to over 85% of the global population – commonly the poorest and most vulnerable have their livelihoods (UN, 2018). Indeed, targeting local grassroots, especially rural ones, is a decisive focus to bring the most vulnerable, yet commonly unseen and in some cases unreached communities on board the international development agenda.

ii. Our approach:

Our working with partners and grassroots development actors bases on four strategic objectives, including:

- Amplifying – telling our followers and the wider world about their work
- Facilitating sustained capacity growth.
- Resource mobilization, financing, and fundraising
- Long-term motivation, and mentoring.

Read more about these in our strategy here:

iii. Mission and Vision

Our vision is a world where local grassroots development actors (NGOs, CBOs, associations, groups, social enterprises, etc.) have adequate capacities, sustainable approaches, tools, methods, and sustained dedication to achieve their development objectives in facilitating community development.

Our mission is to support local grassroots development actors (with special attention to the rural) to achieve their aims in facilitating community development for a fair and sustainable world. This is done through: amplifying their work to the world, facilitating sustainable growth of their capacity, resource mobilization and funding, and long-term motivation and mentoring. Visit us: <https://civilconnections.org/>

Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/civilconnections/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/53395685/admin/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/civilconnectionsfcf/>

Report on the year 2023:

From a strong 2020, 2021, and 2022, we have achieved an even stronger 2023.

Once again, we have continued a successful fundraising traction year in 2023 – meaning we have gained more resources to implement more projects across the globe and even reach more people.

In 2023 alone, our new projects and activities have reached 11 countries – including Denmark, France, Greece, Ghana, Mayotte (France), Italy, Morocco, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey. And we have reached another at least 10,000 people, cutting across children, youth, women and men in their local communities.

Read a little more about these projects in the following paragraphs.

Launched seven (7) new projects in 2023 – maintaining our drive to reach more local communities

We have across the year launched and implemented seven (7) new projects between Civil Connections and at least 11 partners across 11 countries. Across these projects we have engaged at least 10,000 people – cutting across children, youth, women and men in their local communities.

We have worked with local grassroots challenging problems including – environmental awareness and sustainable local communities in Europe, cultural awareness towards better migrant inclusion in Europe, emancipating of migrant voices in local conversations, Girls rights in Morocco, as well as ICTs and Entrepreneurship in Ghana.

Like last year's report noted – yes, these projects have been varied, and yes, the challenges of coordination have been huge, but we owe this to some very strong partnerships we have built over the years, combined with dedicated people at the frontlines.

In the following paragraphs are snapshots of each project leading up to these results.

EU Erasmus+ funded projects in 2023:

Call2Nature – an EU+ Strategic partnership project

The project objective is to provide education to 18-29 aged youth for a better and more



moderated use of new technologies oriented towards the protection of our natural and physical environment, as well as encouraging them to take digital and or physical initiative to defend our values. We intend to raise youth awareness about their digital practice, develop a training program, encourage

the sense of initiative, and equip the youth supporters. Starting in January 2023, the project runs across Denmark, Italy, Spain, and Greece.

Cultural Connections – an EU+ Strategic partnership project

This project aims to support social and youth workers who interact with ethnic minorities in their everyday occupations. Specifically, we aim to strengthen the capacity of these



professionals to create positive change and more engaged communities through increasing their intercultural communication skills. By working closely with them, the project partners will develop tailored and practical tools for their practice, providing them with new training opportunities and pedagogical tools. The project runs between Denmark and Norway.

Coming to Europe – an EU+ Strategic partnership.

The project aims at contributing to enriching migrant inclusion efforts into European local communities through sharing reflective stories and dialogues on migrant experiences and perceptions. This is to contribute to an EU that is tolerant to diversity and that has increased supportive tools in intercultural citizenship for easier and quicker migrant inclusion. This will be through developing a podcast of 60 episodes of migrant stories contributing to enriching/nuancing the migration dialogue. The project runs across Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.



INSPIRE – an EU+ Training course.

This youth exchange with participants from Denmark, Mayotte, Turkey and Norway will take place in Mayotte, a French territory. Through non-formal learning and activities, the project aims at furthering young people's environmental awareness, giving them a sense of European citizenship and developing their intercultural competences and empathy with rural communities affected by ocean and air pollution and climate change.

Learn and Teach – an EU+ Training course.

The training course taking place in Norway and its aim is "to make non-formal education methods more popular among youth workers and encourage them to think of, create and use such new methods in their day-to-day activities."

CISU-funded projects in 2023:

STAND: Building Greater Girls' Rights Movement II. Taking a Stand Against Child Marriage



“STAND: Building Greater Girls' Rights Movement II. Taking a Stand Against Child Marriage”, has as its overarching goal to reduce child marriage in Morocco by expanding on the efforts of our previous intervention: Building Greater Girls' Rights Movement (“BIGGER”). STAND sought strengthen the previous intervention's outreach to a different target group of young grassroots girls, by building the capacity of local CSOs and collaborating with them to achieve a critical mass and stronger advocacy power to close legal loopholes around child marriage in Morocco.

Training and empowerment of a new generation of young ICT-entrepreneurs in Sunyani, Ghana

Through this intervention we want to establish 4 ICT-entrepreneurship hubs in selected high schools in Sunyani to capacitate a first generation of local ICT-entrepreneurs, who will be supported by a local community-effort to deal with local misunderstandings and myths about professional use of ICT. To achieve this, we have three main objectives:

1. Objective 1 By April 2024, 2160, Senior High Schools (SHS) students have gained the required mindset and capacities to become digital entrepreneurs via 4 new entrepreneurial ICT hubs in 4 SHS Sunyani. These hubs will build on the successful Inspinest entrepreneurship hub model and have an added focus on training future generations in ICT entrepreneurship in Sunyani.
2. Objective 2 By April 2024, 8 trained advocacy ambassadors will have impacted 1600 citizens in Sunyani directly and 20000 indirectly to debunk negative myths about use of ICT and gain knowledge about the societal benefits of its usage especially in entrepreneurship. This will create a supportive community among the people that impact the youth outside the schools - especially their parents and the churches.
3. Objective 3 300 SHS students from the previous project will be trained in content based on learnings from this intervention. 270 students from this and our former intervention will also take part in a regional hub summit to consolidate a strong network of young entrepreneurs to change the future of Sunyani, and further strengthen and sustain the impact of the Inspinest entrepreneurship hub model. 30 invited relevant stakeholders and media outlets will spread awareness about the impact of hubs in high schools in Ghana.

Self/member-funded projects in 2023:

A Community House in Mayuge – Uganda



Civil Connections founders Andrew and Stine own a house in Mayuge in Uganda and have turned this into a community house for civil society groups and actors to have a place to call their workspace. We have continued to build this into a shared workspace as well as an incubator where ideas are supported to grow. This will with time also have services that are commonly not accessed by young people – especially schools. These first ideas are:

- A community library with the national school’s syllabus and other reading materials.
- A computer center where youngsters can access computers, internet, and ICT training.

Mayuge Sports League:

We have also continued to sponsor a sports league in the rural district of Mayuge. The tournament has grown to involve twenty-four sports teams made up of twelve (12) senior football. Six (6) junior football, and six (6) girls netball/football clubs.



Each of these clubs is comprised of a minimum of 30 players/members, which gives the league a total player population of around 540 youths between 12 and 30 years, and at least 54 managers and trainers.

Community-wise, the league has a spectating rate (people that follow closely, watch, and cheer the teams up) of at least 2800 closely connected community members per month. And, in one way or another it has impacted close to 250,000 community population in areas surrounding central Mayuge.

Financial report 2023 – How much money delivered these results?

We are ourselves both bewildered and extremely proud about how much our dedicated team and partnerships have achieved within the limited resources we have had available.

Below are our numbers – remaining true to our principles of value for money and utilizing every single coin that comes our way towards facilitating the delivery of grassroots impact.

Resultatopgørelse

	Note	2023 kr.	2022 kr.
Nettoomsætning	1	624.438	665.484
Dækningsbidrag I		624.438	665.484
Personaleomkostninger	2	-595.757	-565.421
Dækningsbidrag II		28.681	100.063
Andre driftsindtægter	3	2.969.036	4.941.196
Administrationsomkostninger	4	-77.328	-56.036
Andre personaleomkostninger		-315	-391
Andre eksterne omkostninger		-77.643	-56.427
Andre driftsomkostninger	5	-2.969.034	-4.947.919
Driftsresultat		-48.960	36.913
Finansielle omkostninger		0	-351
Årets resultat		-48.960	36.562
Forslag til resultatdisponering			
Overført resultat		-48.960	36.562
		-48.960	36.562

Our key funders for 2023 have been the following:

The EU through Erasmus+ program: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>

Civil Society in Development/Civilsamfund I Udvikling (CISU): <https://www.cisu.dk/>

Globalt Fokus: <https://globaltfokus.dk/en/funds-and-grants/capacity-building>

Membership fees: <https://civilconnections.org/become-a-member/>

What next – plans for 2024: Renewing/updating our strategy

What we will continue with in 2024:

For the year 2023, we have a few organizational forming programs/activities that will be the backbone of our operations in 2023. These are as follows:

1. Defining the organization further – renewing our strategy across 2024:

As our current strategy ends, we set us a goal to renew it by the end of 2023, however, this being such a critical process we agreed to use the entire 2024 to carefully reflect on what we set out to do, what we have achieved, and what we want to achieve in the future.

We aim to have a new strategy by December 2024.

2. Continue to ensure a strong resource mobilization and fundraising traction:

On top of the projects that will run into 2023 – thanks to the success of fundraising in the final part of 2023, we will continue to strengthen our fundraising efforts into 2024 – as we all know that our survival as an organization and the value, we deliver out in the world depend on this.

3. Strengthening the organizational management and efficiency:

This has been a priority across 2023 and will continue to be so in 2024. With many new projects, fast growth, and spread across the globe comes huge demands on our organization needing to be efficient in carrying out our work.

4. Expanding and continue to consolidate the Grassroots Community Grant program (GCGP):

To support our ambition to create robust communities at the grassroots and to remain true to this, we will continue to work towards running a Small Grants program where we will award small grants of between 1.000 DKK and 10.000 DKK (150 and 1,500 USD) to causes, projects, actors, organizations, ideas that our grants committee will deem impactful at the grassroots. To build this grant program we are saving up 20% of all our administration portions across the different projects and incomes we gain, to distribute these further down the value chain. Our ambition is to increase this gradually up to 50% of all our administration budgets over the years.

5. Growing our membership and community support mechanisms:

To be able to sustainably run and grow Civil Connections, we need as many members as possible on our side. This gives us both community legitimacy as well as financial support to run impact projects at the grassroots level in marginalized communities.

We hope to get you interested in becoming part of our community determined to build robust communities... We have made this our mission in pursuit of a sustainable world and future for all. Your membership of **100 DKK per year** enables us to achieve this obligation, along with the following benefits.

Choosing a membership with Civil Connections ensures that you are part of:

- A global network of passionate and determined global citizens who are committed to reaching the most marginalized communities and creating enabling environments for development.
- You are working with a group of activists that have wide and varied experience within the development field and have throughout their careers been witnesses to what works, and the importance of open dialogue about this. You also become a central player in this dialogue.
- We are committed to developing models that are easy to replicate and tailored to different contexts; this means that your support will create wide and long-term impact—you are supporting something scalable and sustainable.
- Our model is lean, saving you from supporting unnecessary costs for unnecessary overheads. We emphasize impact at the heart of your support, and we thus work directly with recipient communities—this reduces the middleman effect and related expenses.



Join us here: <https://civilconnections.org/become-a-member/>
Or contact us to hear more: <https://civilconnections.org/contact-us/>

Final words:

Just as we stated in last year's report, our position has not changed.

As our future aspiration remains to stabilize Civil Connections as a model, not just an NGO, what we want to achieve is not just results but a way of building others and local grassroots communities to oversee their own development, on own terms, in a robust way.

And yes, we have been asked what 'Robust' means several times. For us it simply means that someone, no matter what the resources they have, always oversees their decisions and aspirations. That they know that even when they do not have resources and must depend on support from other people, then it is a sacrifice/compromise they do with clear awareness. And that they do not lose their agency to aspire – their aspirations need to be kept alive.

So, as we say, we are striving to reveal to all other actors that when you meet people where they are– for us especially rural marginalized contexts and look them in the eyes and ask them for what works for them, and honestly believe in them, you have a higher chance of not only paving way for their aspirations and agency, but also for co-creating change together with them than bringing the change to them. The earlier (co-creating with them) is for us the more sustainable one – and it is the foundation of creating not just developing communities but equal communities both locally, but also across boundaries, especially in closing the power gaps between funders and local marginalized communities.

Thank you for your support in 2023, we look forward to continuing our cooperation in 2024.

The Board:

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