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# Community Foundations: Local Organizations, Global Movement

*Vadim Samorodov is a Program Manager of the Global Fund for Community Foundations, a recently established programme of the Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) aimed at supporting community foundations in developing and transitioning countries. Samorodov has been working in the international development sector for the past 15 years. He was involved in community foundation development with the Russian office of the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) and has also spent time working in Uganda for the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. A graduate from the Moscow Civil Engineering University, Samorodov received his Masters degree in Business Administration from California State University-Hayward. He is a member of the Transatlantic Community Foundation Network, a Senior Fellow with the Synergos Institute and an International Fellow with the Centre on Philanthropy and Civil Society (City University, New York.). On his third, yet the most engaging of all trips to India, Samorodov spoke to Dr. Mona Mehta about his organization's efforts to support community foundations world over. Excerpts from the interview:*



**Question: Please tell our readers about the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) and your role in it?**

Answer: As you know, a community foundation is a local grantmaking organization which seeks to accumulate contributions from a variety of local sources and, where possible, to create a permanent asset base in the form of an endowment. Global Fund for Community Foundations was set up by the Worldwide Initiative for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) in order to support community foundations in developing and transitioning countries. It is legally based at the European Foundation Center in Brussels and aims to become an independent grant-making foundation by 2009. The Fund emerged as joint initiative of the World Bank, Ford Foundation and C.S. Mott Foundation. Designed as a vehicle for

broadening community foundation development globally, the Fund has also received funding from USAID, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and a group of established community foundations in North American and Eastern Europe. A project of WINGS and hosted by the European Foundation Centre the Fund is currently mid-way into a three-year pilot phase which runs from January 2006 to December 2008. The plan is to transition the Fund into an independent, sustainable entity through a managed and consultative incubation process. Currently I am engaged in designing approaches to raise the institutional capacities of community foundations in developing and transitioning countries and promoting the concept worldwide. The difference between us and other grant making organizations is that we look at the organizations rather than projects.

**Question: How many CFs, support organizations, associations and countries have benefited so far from GFCF grants?**

Answer: Since the launch of its grantmaking programme in June 2006, the Fund has made grants amounting to US \$1.2 million to 61 organization in 27 countries. We have already given grants to three organizations in India. They are at the emerging stage. Kodagu Model Forest Trust, has been given \$10,000 for start-up activities, Sampradaan Indian Centre for Philanthropy has been granted \$15,000 to pilot community funds in India and another \$15,000 to develop Sampradaan's capacities to serve as a support organisation to emerging community foundations in India.

**Question: What are the kind of grants extended by GFCF? Which grants are demanded most**



**frequently? Is there a regional distribution pattern to grant demand? what could be the reasons if there is such pattern?**

Answer: The Fund gives many types of grants. We have matching grants for re-granting or endowments which can increase a community foundation's profile locally by providing an additional incentive for new donors to give, or by demonstrating the mechanism and credibility of its grantmaking programmes.

We also give grants can allow for peer exchanges, conference attendance and other forms of organizational development support, all of which tend to be harder to raise money for from local donors. Since the Fund emphasizes the importance of **local** resources in the development of strong local philanthropic institutions - and because its own resources are relatively modest, its grants are relatively small (mostly in the range of \$5,000 - \$30,000) and are targeted at **strengthening the capacities** of community foundations rather than at supporting their programmes.

In areas of the world such as Eastern Europe, Russia and parts of Latin America, for example, where a strong infrastructure for community foundations already exists, the GFCF seeks to make grants that benefit groups or clusters of community foundations, or which allow for the opportunity to pilot new approaches in local fundraising or to test a particular type of grants programme. In other areas, however, such as much of Africa and Asia, there are very few fully-fledged community foundations, although cultures of informal giving may be strong. Here, we support the efforts

of both individual community foundations (which may be operating in isolation and would benefit from an injection of technical assistance or an opportunity to visit a more developed institution elsewhere) and more broad-based processes to strengthen the infrastructure of local philanthropy development such as convenings and trainings for local grantmakers.

**Question: Is there some statistics available on actual capital raised by grantees of GFCF with the help of your grant?**

Answer: We have a philanthropy consultancy firm FERA working for us to assess this. We trust that there is a high potential. I can tell you for sure that in Russia, 12 grants have managed to raise US\$600,000 for community foundations.

**Question: Is the existence of GFCF permanent? What is its future? Are there many more similar funds required? Are there any signs of similar funds in offing globally or regionally?**

Answer: This is a question we want to answer for ourselves. We want to become knowledge and resource base for this region. In Russia there is a well set structure within the country. We are looking into furthering the community foundation movement in Asia and Africa. Community Foundation has proved to be a practical tool in fighting poverty in Russia and Eastern Europe. A community foundation is like a donor service vehicle. They are an instrument for building institutions, it helps raise local funds, channelise funds for development, and make people think how to bring about change. Poverty is in people's head. They either don't do anything or think they cannot do any

thing. So in community foundation is an institution which can stand up in and fight poverty and look after sustainability. Only people funds what they need, when it comes from local people, it becomes sustainable. There are many private donors in India. Khemka Foundation is one of them.

Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation are some of the main players. World Bank often steps in with funds. However they all support community driven development, and view community foundations as part of this. There is no global organization other than except GFCF that is solely dedicated to supporting community foundations. The Fund is the only organization supporting community foundation development across developing countries in the global south as well as countries with transitioning economies in Eastern Europe and Russia. Community foundations in these parts of the world operate in contexts that are very different from the USA, Canada and Europe and vary in their structures and activities. GFCF provides a rich opportunity for learning and networking as well as strengthening local philanthropic institutions.

**Question: Do you have a regional policy towards South Asian region? If yes, then what are the contours of this policy?**

Answer: We don't have any specific policy for South Asia region. There are certain subtle differences in terms of resource mobilization, achievements take for instance the idea of grain bank. This process is being adopted in many countries. Our policy is to tap indigenous ideas rather than impose some alien concepts. The intent of



the Fund is to support the development of institutional forms of local philanthropy that promote a culture of giving, and that support community-based initiatives with their grantmaking.

**Question: Do you accept that there could be forms of community philanthropy in South Asian region different from the Global North? How does GFCF respond to that situation?**

Answer: Yes I think so. We need to build on what already exists. We don't believe in imposing rather we are for partnering. Community Foundation is something required enormous resources to set up. It requires local leadership for work to be done with least effort, when leadership comes from outside, it is almost impossible to implement the programme.

**Question: Do you foresee an increasing involvement of GFCF in South Asian region in future? Are there any partnerships between GFCF and other donors in sight?**

Answer: Yes, there is an increasing funding involvement in South Asia. We are not seeking funds for ourselves, but looking for donors there who can include community foundations in their agenda. There already exist larger institutions like Tata and Khemka. There is certainly a possibility of global funds coming in. but people want to see positive results. Once that happens, more will come in.

**Question: What would you advise prospective grantmakers in South Asia about grant proposals and pre-grant processes?**

Answer: I believe that process and procedures are important. Community Foundation as a important process which makes grantees and donors comfortable with each other. In contexts where levels of public distrust are high, the community foundation offers local donors, including individuals and businesses, a way in which to engage constructively around local problems and a transparent mechanism through which contributions can be tracked and their impact seen - in the form of grant-funded activities in the community. In turn, local philanthropic contributions confer legitimacy on a local foundation and serve to strengthen its voice at both the grassroots and policy level.

To private grantmakers in South Asia, I would recommend or propose that that people equip community foundations. Adopt this grantmaking approach. It will bring in freedom of approach, ideas, transparency and provide good feedback to grantmakers on the impact.

In India most corporate foundations close themselves in one or two projects. They do their own, and don't partner with others, But if they were to try to look at the bigger picture, wider community impact, create alliances between themselves, they could have a larger impact with smaller resources and get bigger benefits for their company.

Community Foundations may be local organizations but are part of a global movement. There is always an opportunity for exchange, make connections, contacts and be more exposed to the world.

## Give2Asia Launches Latest Catalog of Greatest Needs Projects

Give2Asia, a US nonprofit encouraging philanthropy to Asia, announces new Greatest Needs projects to help impoverished and at-risk communities. The eight new projects spotlight Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Mongolia, Pakistan and Thailand. Projects tackle such issues as primary education for both boys and girls, women's empowerment, and environmental sustainability. "Greatest Needs highlight critical issues to help the communities we see struggling," said Mike Rea, president and CEO of Give2Asia. "These projects are one way we connect donors who care about Asia with effective local groups and causes. We want to see all of these projects funded." Monitored by Give2Asia staff, projects that receive funding will be carried out by local, charitable groups in Asia and The Asia Foundation. The new projects include: Creating a new farm and three greenhouse to bring innovative farming techniques and youth education to communities in Ladakh.

*Visit [www.give2asia.org/greatestneeds](http://www.give2asia.org/greatestneeds) for more information about Greatest Needs.*



# Functioning of Rural Community Foundations in India

By Dr. Sandeep Deshmukh\*

Part – 2\*\*

## 1.2. Momentum to local ownership

1.2.a. Creating stakes of different sections of society in giving is important. For example, we are encouraging farmers of Alwar to put grain together in Grain Banks (or depositories). These grains would help the needy in the community during crisis. The remaining grains and grains earned out of interest on grains lent out would be sold in bulk in the market. The revenue out of the sale would be locked into community funds after distributing a negotiated dividend to members.

1.2.b. Government could encourage contribution by locals by providing incentives and leveraging funds. Obviously this could be accompanied by disincentives too like increasing land rents if you misuse or waste resources.

1.2.c. Creating an organizational structure that would enable a donor irrespective of stature and amount of giving to question and even veto decisions of trustees. For example, in Alwar we are building an organizational structure from the district down to the village level.

## 1.3. Sustaining local ownership

This can be ensured by creating transparent organizational structure, ensuring convertibility of physical assets

like farm land, property and connecting communities with markets.

## 2. Motivating people and institutions to invest.

### 2.1. Motivating individuals and institutions

It is not only a question of investing but also investing meaningfully. How could this be done?

2.1.a. Appealing to the sense of social status helps a lot. We pointed out to Kodava coffee planters that it is a shame that forest tribes working on their plantations have to live in so much poverty. This feeling of shame pushed them in thinking about organized local philanthropy.

2.1.b. Fear of exposure to irresponsible donors and sham non profits. Therefore, we are creating mechanisms for strengthening credibility among local non profit organizations. Otherwise also donors would be more careful.

2.1.c. Traditional donors are increasingly getting interested in social justice. For example, Ford Foundation has a portfolio of social justice and philanthropy. FES, a German self-funded organization working in India is keen to develop trade unions of marginal sections of society. However, it needs to be pointed out to donors to match the steps of government towards social justice by helping create opportunities and support systems for marginal groups.

2.1.d. Highlighting to the corporate houses to give much more and strategically to augment their own market bases. By sharing wealth and skills you create more customers.

2.1.e. Corporate houses would be keen to build a brand image. For example, the health clinic initiative of Biocon Foundation, philanthropic arm of a pharmaceutical major, gets brand advantage to the parent company. Thus, one needs to create brand opportunities for corporate houses to achieve lasting impact of their investments.

### 2.2. How to gain momentum?

2.2.a. Government could encourage corporate houses into giving for development by extending to them incentives and special facilities in proportion of giving.

2.2.b. Creation of donor networks. All community chaste and funds as mentioned earlier in local districts can



be connected in a Grid and this grid could be further connected with external sources such as emigrants, institutional donors and corporate houses.

2.2.c. Donors need to be more target oriented thus seeking grantees to adopt or define bottom lines for their own performance.

### 2.3. Ensuring sustainable local giving

The giving can be sustained only by strengthening local economy and creating opportunities within adversities. For example, we are trying to develop community funds for maintenance of an irrigation canal affecting lives of a few million people in Alwar and neighboring Bharatpur district. We are also trying to generate a Knowledge Fund by extending IT based services to poor and underdeveloped farming communities of Alwar. The KF would work as a powerhouse for bringing in more and essential technology for developing local economy.

(Concluded)

\* Dr. Sandeep Deshmukh presented a paper on “**How the Rural Community Foundations Work: an Indian Case**” at the Fall Conference on Community Foundations in San Francisco, USA, held between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007. The conference was hosted by Council on Foundations, USA which is the umbrella organization of US foundations/community foundations with above 200 members. Dr. Deshmukh attended the conference thanks to full scholarship provided by the Global Fund for Community Foundations.

\*\* The first part appeared in the Sampradaan, Number 54, January 2008 Issue.

## IT for Social Good

*Webel's digital tool enables people with cerebral palsy to communicate.*

Kolkata-based Webel Mediatronics Ltd, a subsidiary of West Bengal Electronic Industry Development Corporation Limited, has developed a software for people affected with cerebral palsy to help them communicate.

Webel is the only information technology company in West Bengal which is using IT for its social sector initiatives to manufacture IT-enabled products for the needy, like the software for cerebral palsy patients. Its earlier innovations include a Braille keyboard. It is also in the process of manufacturing motorised wheelchairs and digital hearing aids.

Webel's latest innovation, the audio-visual software, christened 'Pictorial', has specially developed keypads that help cerebral palsy children communicate their feeling by selecting pictures. The software and keypads could be attached to any computer.

For children who cannot use hands, Webel has developed foot-switches that can be used to select pictures for expressions.

The software has a database of 2000 pictures to select from and the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy has provided Webel with these specially designed icons.

In each icon, there is a sound file, which can generate audible expressions. By clicking on any icon, the user will be able to play the sound file and make people understand their feelings.

The system is quite simple: The child has to hold a specially designed mouse or hand-switch or foot-switch, according to the need, and select a picture to express his/her feelings. Each picture depicts a particular mood or expression or some regular activity. Each picture has a sound file attached to it. So every time a child selects a picture, the sound file announces what the child is trying to communicate.

For instance, if a child selects a picture depicting food, the audio system will announce “I am hungry”.

According to Gautam Burman, director and CEO of Webel Mediatronics, the concept was developed by the International Society for Alternative and Augmentative Communication, which pointed out that this as a way to help people with cerebral palsy express themselves.

Webel's software will be available in Hindi, Bengali and Nepali, apart from English. Burman said it took almost two years to develop this software. “We had received grant of Rs 44 lakh from the Department of Information Technology, Government of India, for this project. We have got an additional Rs 18.5 lakh grant to roll out this product in Sikkim too which we will do shortly,” Burman said.

(Source: *Financial Express*, January 15, 2008)



# Community Foundations - Catalyst of Self Regulation by Civil Society

By Dr Sandeep Deshmukh \*

Part - 2\*\*

What is a community foundation?

A community foundation is a people's organization

- existing with willing involvement of local people in a rural district or large part of a district
- including at least a few hundred rural communities with a direct role in the organization and management of the foundation
- serving as a formal institution for sharing of human, natural and monetary resources between communities, government, individuals, voluntary organizations, donors and business
- mobilizing resources in a strategic manner to serve both immediate developmental needs and building long-term assets

In nutshell a community foundation would be a donor organization created by the community and even poor communities can do that. It would serve as a speed machine for development and thus occupying the space left vacant by the government.

We recommend community foundations as a serious mechanism of self regulation in India because:

- We are a plural society. There are communities in India that are distinct with regard to geography, culture and economy.
- These communities exist in both urban and rural area. Thus there is a scope to incorporate them in development administration in both areas
- These communities are increasingly interacting with modern conditions of production - a process that threatens their boundaries, identities; nonetheless creating opportunities.
- Communities ensure the security support and well being of individuals and groups.

· Communities are strong mechanisms of social integration.

Are there any examples of community foundations?

In the world, there are almost 1200 community foundations. The highest density of them is to be found in North America, UK and central Europe. In North America one finds their spread across social divisions from foundations based in large industrial cities like Boston Foundation to foundations based among poor, indigenous communities such as Tennessee Community Foundation. The mechanisms employed by them to mobilize and distribute resources vary drastically yet they commonly play an important role in partnering with the government in addressing welfare needs of the community.

In India there are three such urban based foundations while there are three emergent rural community foundations. The three rural foundations receive support from Sampradaan Indian Centre for Philanthropy in soliciting external funding and advice on organizational, asset development, legal and financial aspects. The three community foundations in Alwar in Rajasthan, Pauri Garhwal in Uttarakhand and Kodagu in Karnataka are pioneers of modern rural philanthropy in the country. There are couples of things to learn from them about self-regulation by civil society. I am narrating them here briefly.

The rural community foundations work on the premise that creation of resources of value and that can be invested in local development creates their stake in governance and creates a space for local social and economic classes to say and do things as they like.

Some of the organizational features with strong emphasis on self regulation by community are:



- Ø Creation of layers of committees and clubs with asset creation functions from village up till district level.
- Ø Creation of formal collaborative associations between committees and clubs with Panchayat administration.
- Ø Creation of development infrastructure through leveraging of resources.
- Ø Ownership of assets by the community foundation which is a public trust.
- Ø Institutionalized distribution of power to dispose off or deploy resources at various levels within the foundation. For example, in Alwar collection of grain and their distribution to meet exigencies through a grain bank would be handled by village committees but sale of balance grain and conversion into cash assets would be within power of working group on agriculture and the trustees.
- Ø Building donor networks and NGO networks at local level that would work around functional agenda within a broad framework of development plan.
- Ø Promotion of accountability norms among local donors and NGOs by the community foundation through educative activities coupled with grant making.
- Ø Joint mechanisms of funds planning between government and community foundations on a yearly basis. For example, Mewat Development Board in Alwar; collection of environment sustainability donations from tourists visiting Pauri Garhwal; joint management and financing of forest fences with forest department in Kodagu for protection of human life and property from wild elephants.
- Ø It always helps to mobilize communities along the lines of geographical and social homogeneity when faced with development challenges. For example, in Alwar there are three cultural zones, while in Kodagu and Pauri there are valleys which serve as natural units for mobilization.
- Ø Sustenance of traditional faith and institutions that are converging with the objectives of development. There is need for evolving mechanisms of joint action between government and communities with faith and traditional institutions as the strong base. For example, protection of 'Devara Kadu' sacred forests in Kodagu, creation of elephant care zone in Kodagu with the help of vast land of Lord Iguthappa temple trust in Kodagu.

- Ø Creating diverse portfolio of community funds helps in generating local contributions and donations faster as we could find out in our feasibility studies in the three districts. The three rural foundations all together have planned twenty four different funds dealing with issues as diverse as need based education (Alwar), health insurance (Kodagu), agricultural credit (Alwar), herbal conservation (Pauri), tourism compensation (Pauri), mining and sustainability (Alwar), grain banks (Alwar), irrigation fund (Alwar) etc.

Besides playing an important role in expediting development efforts, the Community Foundations can play a solid role in ensuring social justice and amity among social sections. This was amply demonstrated by the Alwar based Mewat Foundation Trust during the political strife over reservation quotas in Middle of 2007 in eastern Rajasthan. While the neighboring districts were reeling under violence, Alwar was largely immune to the violence due to the active peace maintenance campaign led by MFT along with citizens group. They played this role in cooperation with the district administration.

Definitely many of these ideas are already being practiced in discrete fashion in other parts of the country. The need is to strong these mechanisms together in a formidable organization directly under the control of local communities. A community foundation working as an umbrella for donors, NGOs, citizen groups is the most relevant form of organization that one could imagine. At the end of all self regulation is not new to our society. In the pre-colonial times too our society had autonomous organizations like *Sthannatars* that took care of individual welfare and community needs without interference by the State.

In modern times too, no doubt the community foundations would create a steady and reliable source of local resources - matching government efforts at development.

### (Concluded)

*\* Dr. Sandeep Deshmukh presented the above paper at the annual convention Voluntary Agencies Network of India on December 17 and 18, 2007 in Kolkata.*

*\*\* The first part appeared in the Sampradaan, Number 54, January 2008 Issue.*







Warren Buffet

**There was a one hour interview on CNBC with Warren Buffet, the second richest man who has donated \$31 billion to charity.**

**Following are some very interesting aspects of his life**

1. Warren Buffet bought his first share at age 11 and he now regrets that he started too late! Things were very cheap that time.

**Encourage your children to invest**

2. He bought a small farm at age 14 with savings from delivering newspapers. One could have bought many things with little savings

**Encourage your children to start some kind of business**

3. He still lives in the same small 3-bedroom house in mid-town Omaha, that he bought after he got married 50 years ago. He says that he has everything he needs in that house. His house does not have a wall or a fence.

**Don't buy more than what you "really need" and encourage your children to do and think the same**

4. He drives his own car everywhere and does not have a driver or security people around him.

**You are what you are**

5. He never travels by private jet, although he owns the world's largest private jet company.

**Always think how you can accomplish things economically**

6. His company, Berkshire Hathaway, owns 63 companies. He writes only one letter each year to the CEOs of these companies, giving them goals for the year. He never holds meetings or calls them on a regular basis.

**Assign the right people to the right jobs**

7. He has given his CEO's only two rules.

Rule number 1: do not lose any of your share holder's money.

Rule number 2: Do not forget rule number 1.

**Set goals and make sure people focus on them**

8. He does not socialize with the high society crowd. His past time after he gets home is to make himself some pop corn and watch Television.

**Don't try to show off, just be yourself and do what you enjoy doing**

9. Buffet does not carry a cell phone, nor has a computer on his desk.

10. Bill Gates, the world's richest man met him for the first time only 5 years ago. Bill Gates did not think he had anything in common with Warren Buffet. So he had scheduled

his meeting only for half hour. But when Gates met him, the meeting lasted for ten hours and Bill Gates became a devotee of Warren Buffet.

**His advice to young people: "Stay away from credit cards**

**(bank loans) and invest in yourself and**

**Remember:**

**A. Money doesn't create man but it is the man who created money.**

**B. Live your life as simple as you are.**

**C. Don't do what others say, just listen them, but do what you feel good.**

**D. Don't go on brand name; just wear those things in which you feel comfortable.**

**E. Don't waste your money on unnecessary things; just spend on them who really in need rather.**

**F. After all it's your life then why give chance to others to rule our life."**

*"The HAPPIEST people DO NOT necessarily have the BEST of all. They simply APPRECIATE what they find on their way"*

Let us choose the way to live.



## India Studies Endowment Fund Established at University of Kentucky

The University of Kentucky has announced a \$1 million gift from Melappalayam S. and Sowmya Vijayaraghavan to establish the President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam India Studies Endowment Fund. The gift will help fund endowed professorships for the proposed Center of Excellence for India Studies and research support in India Business Studies through the Gatton College of Business and Economics. Named for the former president of India, who recently visited the university, the fund will work to raise additional private funding for the center. Plans call for the center to utilize endowed professorships in areas such as business, language, religion, health care, agriculture, politics, and culture to promote the cross-fertilization of ideas and enhance academic, economic, and cultural relations between India and Kentucky. Other objectives include the development of exchange programs for students, expanding investment opportunities for Kentucky-based businesses, and promoting a better understanding of India in the United States.



## \$272-Million Bequest to Benefit Two Universities

*Tufts and Lesley Universities are sharing a \$272-million gift from trusts established by the late Frank C. Doble, a businessman and Tufts alumnus, the universities plan to announce today. Each institution's \$136-million share of two dissolved trusts will be the largest gift in its history. Tufts will use the gift to build a new laboratory for collaborative research in engineering and biology, a project the university was already contemplating. Some of the remaining money will go toward student aid. The gift triples the size of Lesley's endowment, bringing it to the \$200-million mark. The university plans to put the full amount in its endowment and is still determining how much of the money to spend on academic programs, student aid, facilities, and endowment growth. Mr. Doble graduated from Tufts in 1911. His Doble Engineering Company, which tested the safety and reliability of power systems, was based on Tufts's campus. He was also a trustee at Lesley. He named the universities as the primary beneficiaries of two trusts that together owned 87 percent of his company.*

## Update on Nonprofit Boards:

Trustees of nonprofit organizations in the USA aren't doing enough to raise money for their groups or to make their boards diverse, according to the Nonprofit Governance Index 2007, available from Board Source at [www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org). — Only 40 percent of charity board members said they felt comfortable asking others to support their organizations, while three-quarters of the trustees said they had themselves made donations.

- . 51% of boards require their members to solicit donations for the organization.
- . 60% of boards require members to attend fundraising events.
- . 61% of boards require members to identify prospective donors.
- . 68% require board members to make a personal contribution.
- . 86 percent of board members were white and 57 percent were male. About half were 50 to 64 years old.
- . While nearly half of CEOs cite a lack of diversity as a big concern, fewer than a third of trustees rate diversity a top issue.

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