

Making Connections between Calderdale (UK) and Nidzica (Poland)

Steve Duncan, CEO and Laurie Calvert, a volunteer of the Community Foundation for Calderdale in Halifax, England visited the Nidzica Community Foundation in Poland in late May 2007. Andrzej Zawieska, a member of the Executive Board and Chairman of the Scholarship Committee of the Nidzica Community Foundation, has prepared a brief summary of this visit, including an overview of each Foundation and his personal observations on success factors for community foundations.

Andrzej writes: "Steve Duncan and I first met last year during a fellowship organized by the Robert Bosch Foundation¹. As part of that trip I visited the Community Foundation for Merseyside in Liverpool, the Community Foundation for Calderdale, the Quartet Community Foundation in Bristol, and the Kent Community Foundation, as well as the membership organization Community Foundation Network in London). Steve and I had also both attended the Transatlantic Community Foundation Fellowship. I visited the Maine Community Foundation in the US in 2000 and Steve visited the Community Foundation in Oregon in 2002."

"Steve and Laurie stayed in Poland for six days in late May and during that time they stayed at my house. During their visit they:

- visited the Art Academy in Pultusk and met with the Academy's President
- attended "The Benefactor of the Year in Poland" gala in Warsaw, which is organized by the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland
- visited the headquarters of the Nidzica Community Foundation and attended a training session for volunteers from our county
- attended a meeting with members of the Board of the Nidzica Community Foundation in Nidzica Castle
- met up with the Mayor of Nidzica and the Mayor of Janowo
- made site visits to two nonprofit organisations in our county that received grants from the Nidzica Community Foundation (in Orlowo and Jablonka)
- visited the Primary School in Janowo
- visited two companies in Nidzica which sponsor our community foundation, Insbud and Wiejak
- visited the Cooperative Bank in Nidzica, also a sponsor of our Community Foundation (the bank received a reward at "The Benefactor of the Year in Poland" gala mentioned above)
- visited Olsztyn, the capital of our region (Warmia and Mazury).

"During the visit we learned about the activities of the **Community Foundation for Calderdale**. The organization was set up in 1989. Kate Hinks is the Foundation's President, Dr Ingrid M Roscoe is the Foundation's Patron, and Steve Duncan is the CEO.

¹ Andrzej Zawieska's study visit to the UK was part of the International Fellowship Programme, a learning and exchange programme initiated by the Robert Bosch Foundation together with other European and US foundations, which is now being managed by the European Foundation Centre (EFC): www.efc.be/ifp.

“Community Foundation for Calderdale operates in Calderdale Shire which has 196,000 inhabitants. Halifax is the capital of Calderdale and has about 100,000 inhabitants. Calderdale is a part of the county of West Yorkshire England.

“The Foundation’s Board consists of 16 members, including representatives of business, non-government organisations, local government, the health service and retired individuals. The Foundation currently has 17 employees. Donors include the government (80%), private individuals (10%), companies and banks (7%) and other foundations (3%). The Community Foundation for Calderdale has an endowment of 6 million GBP. In 2006 they made some 920 grants totalling 2.3 million GBP.

“The **Nidzica Community Foundation** began in 1999, ten years after Calderdale. Barbara Margol is the President of our foundation.

“The Foundation operates in Nidzica County, which has about 36,000 inhabitants. Nidzica is the capital of the county and has about 16,000 inhabitants. Nidzica is a part of the Warmia and Mazury Region in northern Poland.

“The Executive Board consists of three members and the Advisory Board has 18 members, including representatives of business, NGOs, banks, local government, and retired individuals. We currently have two employees. Our endowment stands at USD \$295,000. Since 1999 we have given USD \$308,000 in grants and scholarships (546 of these in total).

“Our two Foundations plan to work together in future. Mr Laurie Calvert, a volunteer of the Community Foundation for Calderdale, funded a scholarship for a student from our county during the visit (250 GBP). We also plan to organize in Calderdale an English language training session for members of our Board. In June 2008 teenagers from Halifax will have an opportunity to attend a soccer tournament in Nidzica. We also plan to explore cooperation between the Calderdale College and the Art Academy in Pultusk, and between the local governments in Calderdale and Nidzica County.

“I have been involved in the establishment of two community foundations in Poland and the Community Foundation in Ulan Bator (Mongolia) and have visited a wide variety of community foundations in the UK and the US. In my opinion the success of a community foundation depends on the following factors:

- the economic and legislative environment of the country
- the political situation of the country and whether the government is supportive of community foundations
- the economic situation of the region to be covered by the community foundation (e.g. Do large companies exist in the region? What is the unemployment rate in the region?)
- the political situation of the region (i.e. Does local government support the activities of the community foundation?)
- the presence of wealthy individuals
- the composition of the Board (i.e. local VIPs with good contacts)
- the involvement of members of the Board
- employees and their level of involvement.”

Prepared by Andrzej Zawieska for Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support – Community Foundations (WINGS-CF) in June 2007. Posted on the WINGS website, www.wingsweb.org.