

Global Partnerships Podcast Series

Host: Ted Hart | President & CEO, CAF America

Guests: Rana Kotan | Secretary General, TUSEV

Announcer: Learn how to take your caring and giving farther with the *Caring and Funding* Podcast powered by CAF America. CAF America, America's leader in cross border philanthropy. Helps corporations, foundations, wealth advisors, and individuals who wish to give internationally and with enhanced due diligence in the United States. Through its industry-leading grants management program and philanthropic advisory services, CAF America helps donors amplify their impact, and ensure their gifts are made in a safe and effective manner.

This *Caring and Funding* Podcast is dedicated to these donors and the charities they support. Our guests are leaders in their field who join us to share tips for success, and stories that inspire. Our host is Ted Hart, the CEO of CAF America. After the show, you can find all our podcasts at cafamerica.org on iTunes, and now just say, "Alexa, play C-A-F America on TuneIn." Now, welcome the host of CAF America's *Caring and Funding* Podcast, Ted Hart.

Ted Hart: Thank you for joining us here on this podcast, the *Caring and Funding* Podcast. CAF America's global partnerships enable carefully chosen teams around the world to bring together the very best of talents and strengths. In today's world, philanthropy often moves at the speed of the internet, even if human condition has not yet learned to heal, or grow, or change, or rebuild, or host of other things that philanthropy can and will address at the same lightning speed.

CAF America's global partnerships enable us to bridge those great divides by bringing to the American donor the very best of philanthropic expertise and services on the ground in countries around the world.

Through this podcast series, we introduce our listeners, our donors, to partners we collaborate with, and partners who collaborate with us in making it possible for that long arc of history, that long arc of philanthropic change, to bend a little faster, with much more assurance and with a full regulatory compliance, risk management, and regulatory compliance that you've come to rely on from CAF America.

Today, in this special edition of the *Caring and Funding* Podcast, it is my pleasure to introduce you to Rana Kotan, the Secretary General of TUSEV, and our partner in Turkey, as a member of the CAF Global Alliance. TUSEV was established in 1993 by Turkey's leading civil society organizations and has grown to support a network of over 100 associations and foundations that share a vision of strengthening the legal, fiscal, and operations infrastructure of the third sector in Turkey.

Among TUSEV's main objectives are nonprofit law reform, research on civil society and philanthropy, promoting social investment and social justice philanthropy, and facilitating partnerships across the sector, as well as across borders. TUSEV has played an active role in catalyzing events for the development of civil society in Turkey.

For the past 15 years, TUSEV has been a leader in improving civil society laws, generating research and policy for the sector's future, and encouraging dialogue and cooperation among private, public, and third sector actors. Rana Kotan is the Secretary-General. She has nearly 20 years of experience in business and philanthropy.

Before being appointed as Secretary General at TUSEV, she served as the Director of Programs and International Relations at the Sabanci Foundation, where she oversaw the foundation's programs which aim to achieve social inclusion and equal participation for women, youth, and persons with disability. She has worked at Arthur Andersen, EFT Istanbul Securities, and Sabanci's Holding Security and Business Development Group.

Rana has received her MBA degree from Yale School of Management in 2004. More importantly, it's my pleasure to welcome her here to the *Caring and Funding* Podcast. Welcome to the special Global Partnership series, Rana Kotan.

Rana Kotan: Hello, Ted. It's a pleasure for me to be here in your show.

Ted: It's a pleasure to have you here, and particularly, to have TUSEV as our partner in Turkey. TUSEV is at the center of philanthropy throughout Turkey and serves as a leader and a bridge builder across sectors. Help us understand why that is particularly important in Turkey.

Rana: We are an infrastructure organization with 80 members consisting mostly of leading foundations, but also a small number of charities from Turkey. Almost all of the leading civil society organizations are in our network. Therefore, together, we are a strong community. Our purpose is to contribute to achieving a stronger participatory and credible civil society in Turkey, and we can do that only with our community.

Ted: Because of the vast network that you represent and the large number of organizations that are members of your community, you also become a center of knowledge and information for philanthropy. My understanding is that many turn to you for information and have questions for you about how things are to work and how they can succeed. Help us understand the kinds of questions that are asked of TUSEV and the kinds of things that people in Turkey turn to, to understand and learn about philanthropy.

Rana: TUSEV is known for its legal expertise and advocacy power. Yes, as you said, we get lots of questions. We provide legal assistance and consulting to charities. Those questions vary widely. It can be related to legal stuff like they want to change their official documents, but they need guidance about how to do it, or they have text-related questions. Sometimes they file a text document incorrectly, they need guidance, or someone wants to establish a nonprofit organization, but doesn't know how to do it.

They want to convene a board meeting, but they don't know how to do it in times of pandemic, or they demand collaboration for a program, a project. It can be different things. We're always there to provide assistance and consulting and share our knowledge as much as we can. That's one of our main services, actually, under our legal reform program area.

We also do lots of monitoring about how the country performs in terms of basic freedoms, like freedom of speech, assembly, association. We follow the policymaking processes, because sometimes, the charities also ask us about how the policy is going, or whether they can participate in those policymaking processes, so we guide them as well.

We also work a lot to promote collaboration with public administration, between civil society, between public administration, and also with private sector, and academia, and all of these different stakeholders as well.

Ted: There's a very strong role that government plays. The rules are very different in Turkey that might feel a little bit less open for Americans who are looking to be involved with philanthropy. It's important to have a partner who is very knowledgeable, as you said, of the laws, and has a very broad network to work within.

In 2016, there were street protests for many weeks. After that, there was a coup attempt. Many charities and foundations were closed down by the government in the aftermath of that. Help us understand why that period of time is important to understand the current state of philanthropy in Turkey, and the role that TUSEV is playing in prominently helping provide transparency in philanthropy in Turkey.

Rana: Turkey has a strong culture and long history of giving and civil society. I could say that there is an advanced and developed civil society capacity comparable to most of the European countries. At the same time, there is shrinking civic space. After this unsuccessful coup attempt, you mentioned back in 2016, we have been observing this shrinking civic space more and more because the government closed down nearly 2,000 nonprofits.

We are following all these developments in order to defend and protect civic space. At the same time, civil society sector provides crucial services, especially during this time. A good period of this pandemic is over, there will be a time for relief and for healing, and we expect nonprofits to play an even bigger role in this period, but also, the funding is limited, especially for rights based CSOs. In general, international funds constitute the biggest source of funding with EU having the larger share, but also some other foreign funders like embassies, Sida, and a host of other foundations also provide grants.

There is a small number of Turkish grantmakers also available. Individual giving is more targeted towards traditional channels. Private-sector funding is mostly limited to corporate social responsibility, and there is no systematic public funding mechanism available, so we are trying to make sure that civil society can access enough funds to continue their operation. We also have this Aid Collection Law, which is limiting and discouraging for nonprofits, especially after the COVID-19 period.

Ted: I did want to ask you specifically about the Aid Collection Law and what that means, so help us understand what the effect of that is because that's a law that we would not necessarily be familiar with. Then, how the government is interacting with charities and what sort of permission charities must have to undertake fundraising.

Rana: Actually, this law is not comparable to any of the international examples. It's very limiting and very discouraging for nonprofits to collect aid because you need to go through cumbersome and long processes for approval in order to make a fundraising campaign and most of the time, when you have to act quickly, especially when there's an earthquake or a natural disaster, this law really creates a barrier because it takes a long time to get an approval for this campaign and sometimes you can't even get this approval because there are some subjective criteria where your application can be rejected, so we are currently preparing to advocate to potentially amend this law or change it completely.

We are working on different scenarios about how we can make it easier for nonprofits to make their fundraising campaigns with either more or little approval procedures, so we're planning to meet with public officials to make it possible. We'll see.

Ted: So the Aid Collection Law itself is a law that requires that the government provide approval for a charity to run a fundraising campaign before they run that campaign?

Rana: Exactly.

Ted: Is the government currently providing that sort of approval for charities?

Rana: Yes. No approval is needed if someone just comes to you and makes a donation without asking, so there is no approval for that, but if you want to run a campaign, you want to ask for money for this project, then you need to get this approval.

As I said, some rights-based NGOs get rejected based on non-objective criteria, or if they are not rejected it takes too long and then the disaster or earthquake, whatever, it passes. Then several months pass, then the approval comes. So nonprofits cannot really act quickly. It creates a significant barrier for nonprofits in their fundraising activities, especially after the COVID-19 period when government wants to collect the donations themselves.

Ted: That's something again that we would not be as familiar with, the government itself as fundraiser, help us understand how that stands apart from a third sector as fundraiser.

Rana: Right after this pandemic came out, the government started a campaign called "*We are self-sufficient Turkey*". They asked everybody like government officials and big foundations, companies, even individuals, to donate money to this campaign. We know that the collection was used for poor families to provide them support and food and basic stuff, but still, there is no detailed information about how the funds were used. We just know in general that the fund was used for this purpose. At the same time, the local administrations wanted to start a campaign, but they were stopped. I mean, it's difficult, but if we can make an amendment to this law in any way, I think nonprofits will gain a lot from this, so we're working on it.

Ted: Rana, we're going to take a very quick short break. When we come back, I want to explore further the importance of TUSEV's standing in society as a trusted and neutral advisor. We'll be right back.

Announcer: Remember our podcasts and archives are always available 24 hours a day at cafamerica.org, on iTunes, or just say, "Alexa, play C-A-F America on TuneIn." Now, back to the *Caring and Funding* Podcast and our host Ted Hart.

Ted: We're back here with Rana Kotan, the Secretary-General of TUSEV. Rana, this role that TUSEV plays in Turkish civil society is a very important one, one that I think is maybe outweighed in few societies as trusted in mutual advisor, help us understand why that's important and why American philanthropists need to know about TUSEV's role.

Rana: Well, TUSEV has actually different roles. An important role, as I mentioned, the legal expertise and thought leadership. Another role is community building, convening, bridge-building. Yet another role is inspiring and motivating people to give more strategically and effectively. I want to talk a little bit about that.

When you look at the giving behavior of Turkish people, it's very much dominated by charitable giving. We perform a survey and the research, the last one was published earlier this year. Based on this research, we see that social capital is weak, that means people don't trust each other, that's why they want to give directly to people they know, like friends, relatives who are in need, so they prefer to give to the beneficiary rather than donating to an organization.

There is a lot of giving for religious purposes and to beggars on the street, so the giving through institutions to civil society organizations I mean, is only 12% of the entire giving volume. We want to specifically increase this individual giving made to nonprofits. We are working on that and we have a

specific target to increase this giving. Although we find all types of giving important, our goal is to grow this type of giving because civil society really need, even small amount, it doesn't matter, but it needs regular donations from individuals. Our role is really motivating--

Ted: This information is drawn from the State of Giving Survey that TUSEV does every three years that you publish on donor behavior. You've also done surveys of donors during the global pandemic.

Rana: Yes, we have done a survey as well. Actually, during this pandemic, we were creating platforms to share experiences with our stakeholders, and we were trying to understand how the crisis affected them, so we had several meetings with our members, with our affinity groups like lawyers, grantmakers, philanthropy professionals, and then we observed the need to have a further analysis, that's why we made the survey.

Some of the key findings were that about 28% of the nonprofits had to stop all of their activities completely. I looked at the CAF surveys also to compare this number with CAF results. I've seen that in the previous CAF survey, it was 13%. In the last one, it was down to 7.5%. The situation in Turkey is a little worse than what came out from CAF America's survey.

Also, 62% of the civil society organizations reported that there is an increase for the need of their services. They're aware that they have an increased role and a responsibility. This was similar to CAF UK survey where 58% said the same thing. There will be a bigger role for civil society organizations, but they struggle with resilience. They struggle for survival.

Ted: That's a difficult position for these organizations to be in, to have increased utilization of their services but decreased access to funding.

Rana: Exactly. We found out that nearly half of the respondents said that they cannot survive more than six months whereas this number was 33% in CAF UK survey and 18% in CAF America survey. The resilience is weaker in Turkey, as expected, and that's because access to funding is limited. It's limited due to this Aid Collection Law, but it's also limited because individual giving is still low. Although we're trying to increase it, it will take some time. We also want to increase corporate giving, by the way.

The private sector in Turkey was very successful in meeting the immediate needs of hospitals and healthcare professionals in the beginning of the crisis, but since now it's time for healing, we will try to channel their support to the civil society organizations which work on the frontline with communities. I believe, especially during this time, a potential collaboration with CAF America would be really really useful to support Turkish nonprofits because the resilience is weak, fundraising is difficult. We know that CAF America has the means and experience to channel giving from American donors to countries in a secure and tax-effective way. If we can do that together and if we can make this kind of funding available for Turkish charities, I think it would be a huge opportunity.

Ted: Rana, let's talk specifically about the collaboration that we have been discussing for Americans to be able to support charities in Turkey and the role that TUSEV would play in that. How about our donors speaking directly to donors, what role would TUSEV working with CAF America in making it possible for Americans to give to good, trusted charities in Turkey?

Rana: TUSEV is the umbrella organization of this strong nonprofit community in Turkey. We know everybody and we have the power to motivate and inspire. Therefore, I think we can really guide the process by giving you a list of legitimate NGOs who have the expertise and who are doing a good job and a necessary job in terms of relief so that we can work together to validate those NGOs.

Then once they're validated, we can channel funds together to securely and quickly reach these NGOs. Because there is an opportunity for American donors to significantly contribute to the effective operation of leading NGOs so that they can continue to be part of the solution by providing services on the ground to the ones who need them the most.

Ted: That's right. Our donors here in the United States rely on CAF America for full regulatory compliance, risk management, and regulatory compliance. Joining forces with TUSEV, we have the opportunity to get to know these charities, even more, to rely on and to be able to gain the knowledge that TUSEV has of these charities and the deep information that they're able to bring. Together, we're able to provide and assure donors who wish to support philanthropic efforts in Turkey, in even deeper knowledge, but also, the capacity to give to the very desperate charities who can make a difference on the ground, not just during this global pandemic, but in future needs in Turkey. We're quite excited about this.

We want to thank TUSEV and you, Rana, for the hard work that we're putting into making this collaboration possible. We think it's going to be quite important for philanthropy in Turkey, but also very important for philanthropists who have an interest in making a difference in Turkey. Rana, we only have a few minutes left here together, so I want to make sure that you have an opportunity to speak directly to American philanthropists and to share with them the role that TUSEV plays and the importance that TUSEV brings to these collaborations here with CAF America.

Rana: I'm very excited for this collaboration opportunity with CAF America. I think together, we can join forces and create a great opportunity for American donors to contribute to Turkish civil society. I think it's very exciting. I hope this will be the beginning of a fruitful relationship for all of us.

Ted: I have no doubt that it will be, Rana. We want to thank you very much for the work that TUSEV, The Third Sector Foundation of Turkey, is doing. We welcome you as our partner, and we want to thank all of the donors who already gave to Turkey and invite other donors to join us in making a difference in Turkey. Thank you for joining us here on the *Caring and Funding* Podcast.

Rana: Thank you very much.

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