

**“It was Supposed to be a Partnership” –  
The Relationship between Philanthropic Foundations  
and Government in the “Yaniv” Initiative**

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The article presents the findings of a qualitative research which examined the relationship between philanthropic foundations and the government in public policy-making in Israel.

The study examined the "Yaniv" initiative, a philanthropic initiative established in order to change policy for children and youth at risk in Israel. The "Yaniv" initiative began in 2003 and was discontinued in November 2004 after it was not been recognized as national project by the Israeli government.

The study found that the philanthropic foundations, especially those belonging to the “New Philanthropy”, promoted a new and different agenda, which in part draws its origins from administrative-organizational practices and concepts, borrowed from the business sector, focused on ensuring efficiency and a high yield relative to investment. The interaction between the new perceptions of the foundations and the traditional perceptions of the public sector was found to be a complex and problematic one, raising many questions regarding the relationship between philanthropic foundations and the government.

The research findings reveal significant difficulties in the interaction between the government and philanthropic foundations. Among them are: perceptual gaps about the role of the philanthropic foundations and the role of government in policy-making processes; ceremonial and not substantive partnership; using partnership as a means of control; structural barriers; professional and/or personal vulnerability; and an attempt by the foundations to develop a challenging model of foundation involvement in public policy-making processes.

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