



## **PUBLIC IMPACT AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

Weighing the pros and cons of the foundation's approach to collaborating with government and to motivating public systems.

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In his book *Strategic Giving: The Art and Science of Philanthropy*, Peter Frumkin writes that philanthropy cannot remain indifferent to government, and must decide where it stands with regard to it: complementing government activity where the government is remiss, opposing the government, or acting completely independently of it.

The Trump Foundation's strategic outline states that it is both impossible and inappropriate for a philanthropic foundation to try to step into the government's shoes. "The government is responsible for education in Israel," the foundation wrote, explaining that it chose to confront an issue whose national, economic, and social importance is obvious to everyone. The foundation therefore assumed it would benefit from public support and the government's willingness to lead.

The government is thus the foundation's key partner. Therefore, when the foundation was established, it started to build partnerships with the government and set out to prove it was a professional, trustworthy, formal, and supportive partner. Although the foundation lacked both a reputation and experience, at the outset it relied on its people and on in-depth partnerships it had built with two important institutions: the Center for Educational Technology and the Weizmann Institute. For example, in "The Virtual High School," project, constructed jointly by the Center for Educational Technology, the Ministry of Education, and the Trump Foundation in 2012, the foundation approved a large development grant (20 percent of the budget) to CET on condition it would create a partnership for broad implementation with the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education joined CET in a tender (70 percent of the budget) on condition it would raise the money needed for development.

In essence, the Ministry of Education and the Trump Foundation are "co-investors" in "The Virtual High School" project, without having a direct legal contract. We thought this was the most appropriate and effective method to use, rather than adopting the traditional method of contracting an external source of financing called a "joint endeavor," in which a direct contract is signed and the allocation of funds is equal. We were worried about the complicated bureaucracy and time required for contracts.

The Weizmann Institute's project "Teacher Communities," begun in 2012 (and is now operating in other institutions as well), operated in a similar fashion. The foundation gave a development grant and the government financed the operation. But, in both projects – "The Virtual High School" and "Teacher Communities" – we discovered that the moment the development grant ended, a crisis erupted. It seems that the operating costs were loaded onto the development funds, and the moment those ended the quality of operating the programs was put at risk.

Even after the national program was launched, the foundation – politely but firmly – rejected the proposal made by senior ministry officials that the move be effected as a "joint endeavor,"

explaining that, in its opinion, it was more appropriate that the ministry lead the program on its own, while the third sector's input was a complementary scaffolding for it. Now that the national program is so high on the ministry's agenda, it is impossible to imagine any other scenario than the ministry holding the reins directly.

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Is the relationship between the foundation and the government effective? Is it being constructed in such a way that the impetus will remain after a change in government and/or after the foundation ceases to exist? How are we to understand the statement made by the mayor of Ra'anana in an interview, that the subject will be prioritized for as long as the foundation provides a grant?
2. What is the function of the foundation from the moment the Ministry of Education adopted the national program and has been leading it so aggressively? Is the statement made by the assistant to the education minister: "Now the foundation needs to look for a new goal" correct, or should the foundation continue to make sure that excellent teaching successfully permeates over the long term?
3. When the foundation prepares for the stage of constructing professional infrastructures, including an institute for advanced teaching, an administration for new teachers, and a clinical teaching support team, should it continue to work as a co-investor or should it adopt a different model?

As **background** to the discussion, we recommend reading the following:

- A. Documentation case: "[The National Impact of the Trump Foundation](#)", Oren Majar
- B. Documentation case: "[The Trump Foundation's Relationship with the Government](#)", Dalit Stauber

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