

e-Democratising Philanthropy:

A Proposal for the Repositioning of Community Foundations

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Abstract

The paper re-examines, challenges and attempts to re-focus the founding assumptions of community foundations (CFs), especially in the wake of the new information society era. Mr. Goulandris, General Manager, *access2democracy*, takes the position that with few exceptions, community foundations have not adequately addressed the challenges of the democratization of the public space brought by the internet, where citizens, civil society organizations (CSOs) and communities are self-organized and most importantly self-defined. He goes on to argue that these changes demand a total rethinking of the way citizen engagement is approached and how CSOs impact the issue of governance.

The paper proposes that CFs, due to their unique function and structure, can and should become “communication hubs” for the communities they serve. This is particularly appropriate because the idea of community foundations rests on a fundamental premise of consensus building and “multi-stakeholder” cooperation across a defined sphere of influence. Mr. Goulandris argues that if CFs utilize this enhanced communication function, they can advance the e-democracy paradigm and help reconnect citizens and communities, democratize the way decision-making is practiced and further transparency and accountability of various institutions.

In its conclusion the paper argues that e-democracy challenges the nature and function of CFs and urges foundation leaders to “think out of the box,” which will help invigorate their institutions to meet contemporary challenges.

To request the full version of the paper, please click [here](#)

