

Czech American Diaspora Philanthropy and the Potential Role of Community Foundations in Strengthening Diaspora Philanthropy

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Abstract

Set against the background of the Czech Republic's transition from a communist system to a democratic one, the research considers new sources of funding to support the country's developing nonprofit sector. Although still young, the Czech-nonprofit sector plays an important role in free market development with democracy and civil society. Because individual giving and corporate philanthropy are not well developed, and government sources favor supporting the "old type," state-founded institutions, Czech funders and NGOs are trying to address and attract new donors. Apart from encouraging corporate and individual giving in the Czech Republic, the Czech diaspora appears as a potential new source of funding for the young Czech civic sector.

Suggesting that in a modern globalized and electronically-connected world community need not always be geographically defined, the paper examines the potential of community foundations to encourage and channel diaspora giving. While keeping in mind the challenges associated with the highly assimilated Czech American communities, Ms. Pichova documents several examples of North American community foundations engaged in or forming partnerships likely to facilitate diaspora philanthropy. She concludes that there is great potential in linking regions in the Czech with regions in the US based on existing community foundations and/or Sister City relations in order to foster stronger ties between the Czech Republic and the communities in the US to which Czechs immigrated.

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