



Cross-border Philanthropy Tracking: Promises and Limitations of Administrative Data

Jamie Levine Daniel – Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University |
Galia Feit – Institute for Law and Philanthropy, Tel Aviv University | Osnat Hazan – Institute for
Law and Philanthropy, Tel Aviv University

An understudied aspect of research surrounding cross-border philanthropy regards the transfers between organizations in one country to those in a second in a way demonstrating scope but which also provides details about the characteristics of the flow. Big data may be one such way to help track this information. The authors design a study that aims to capture flows of cross-border philanthropy focusing on remittances from the US to Israel.

The authors demonstrate the advantages and limitations of digital data research. Tracking transfers on a large scale, whilst possible to an extent, is constrained by the structure of the data available and the degree of rigor in reporting. Additionally, the authors highlight the importance and likely necessity of local research partners.

[#CrossborderPhilanthropy](#) [#DiasporaPhilanthropy](#) [#DigitalData](#) [#Transparency](#)
[#Accountability](#)

Background & Context



- **Cross-border philanthropy operates across multiple individuals and organizations and across international borders**, with this study focusing on institutional cross-border philanthropy. This **can be a critical resource for NGOs**, especially if domestic sources are limited or there is no local culture of philanthropy.
- There is a public interest in **how nonprofits and social services are funded**, especially if supported by transnational flows and in particular when there are tax incentives involved, and a moral space gives organizations creditability to pursue their missions.
- **There are domestic challenges to transparency and accountability in cross-border philanthropy.**
- There are at least **three distinct populations engaged in US-Israel cross-border philanthropy**:
 1. Diaspora philanthropy - Israelis living outside of Israel
 2. Diaspora philanthropy - Non-Israeli Jews
 - Both populations donate through various channels such as *Jewish Communal Institutions, private foundations and friends of organizations.*
 3. Non-Israeli non-Jews – Evangelical Christians with Israel representing a boundary object with a distinct meaning within their social world which with identifiable common ground and cooperation across worlds.



ERNOP Research Note

Academic articles on philanthropy through a practitioner lens

Take aways & Learnings



- The study is a **cross-section from the 2015 IRS 990 returns**. The dataset GuideStar returned based on the query 6910 grants from 1569 organizations
- **Each grant was placed into one of five categories regarding where funds were going:** Definitely Israel, Reasonably Assumed Israel, Indeterminate, Maybe West Bank and Gaza, Definitely or Assumed West Bank/Gaza. Findings show 1,179 INGOs giving to Israel with transfers totalling \$1,814,591,898
- For all grants going to Israel, **the authors coded for three known traits related to organizational structure**, in addition to a fourth category of “other” for the remaining organizations:
 - **Centralized Jewish Communal Institutions:** 3.7% of INGOs (international nongovernmental organizations), but nearly 39% of grants
 - **“Friends of”:** 30% of INGOs, and 41% of funding
 - **Family Foundation:** 25% of INGOs, but only 5% of funds
- Boundary-spanning Christian organizations are found in multiple categories, with the majority – 52 organizations, 92% of all Christian organizations – in the other category. Overall they were 4.75% of INGOs and 3% of funds
- Digital data still requires local partners with local knowledge, for example, surrounding origin, destination landscapes, and language

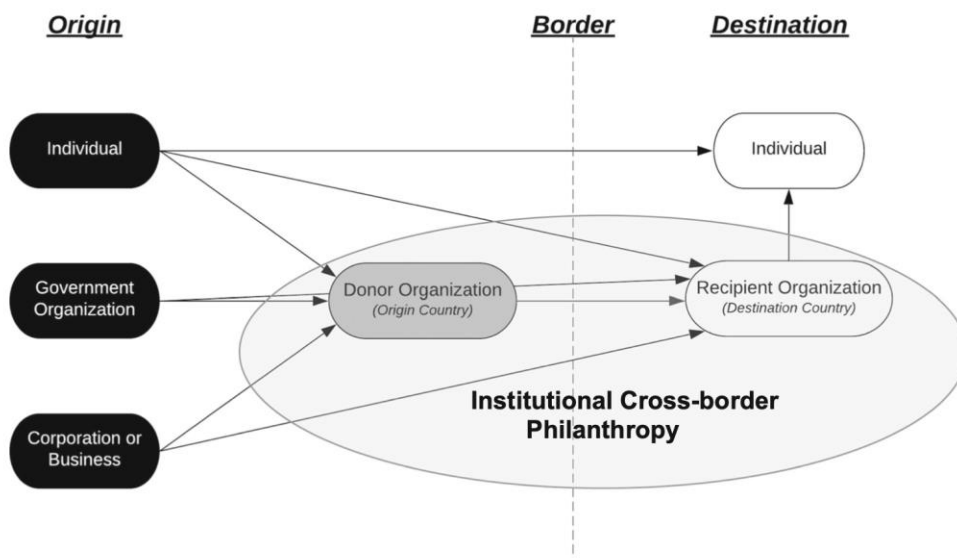


Fig. 1 Visualization of Cross-border Philanthropy

ERNOP Research Notes provide easy-to-read, practice-oriented summaries of academic articles on philanthropy and are written by practitioner experts. This ERNOP Research Note 2024/06 is published in March 2024 and has been written by Jonathan Gunson. More information can be found at www.ernop.eu.

Note: Jamie Levine Daniel is now at New York University. This research was conducted while she was at Indiana University Indianapolis.



The Institute for
Law and Philanthropy
Buchmann Faculty of Law
Tel Aviv University



NYU

WAGNER

ERNOP.EU
European Research Network on Philanthropy