

# Stanford SOCIAL INNOVATION<sup>Review</sup>

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*SSIR Online*

**Design Thinking for Soil Cultivation / Rehabbing  
the Republic / Perpetuity and Foundation Spending /  
Debating Foundation Spending During a Crisis**

By SSIR.org Editors

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## Design Thinking for Soil Cultivation

**ONLINE:** "Using Design Thinking to Tackle Climate Change When 'What You Know No Longer Works,'" by Sarah Stein Greenberg and Madhuri Karak

Some smallholder cultivators can no longer rely on traditional farming methods to raise their crops as climate change destabilizes growing seasons and renders their land less arable. In this essay, Greenberg and Karak explore how the inclusive and collaborative principles of design thinking have helped such farmers manage soil productivity. The article is one of many that *SSIR Online* has rounded up on the topic—including "The Next Chapter in Design for Social



Farmers work an onion field in El Moral, Valle del Cauca, Colombia.

Innovation" from the Winter 2021 issue—to mark the 10 years since *SSIR* published the seminal article "Design Thinking for Social Innovation," by IDEO's Tim Brown and Jocelyn Wyatt.

## Rehabbing the Republic

**ONLINE:** "How Can Philanthropy Help Rehabilitate US Democracy?," by Mohit Mookim, Rob Reich, Nadia Roumani, and Ayushi Vig

Part of *SSIR*'s series on the effects of the US presidential election, this essay offers suggestions for donors looking to repair civic and democratic institutions in America. The essay pinpoints vulnerabilities in government infrastructure, the electoral process, civic education and participation, the press, social media, and information systems that charitable dollars can help strengthen.



## Perpetuity and Foundation Spending

**ONLINE:** "The Myth of Perpetuity in Foundation Strategy," by Katie Smith Milway and William Galligan

How much should articles of incorporation that require perpetuity constrain foundation spending? Milway and Galligan report on their analysis of the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the top 50 private foundations in the United States. They found no indication that founding intent, or endowment recovery after severe recession, prevented or constrained trustees from leveraging endowment dollars when they felt that circumstances and mission merited it. In an era of COVID-19, rampant inequality, and political crisis, the article issues a call to action: Instead of letting founding intentions constrain conscience, the best tribute that boards can pay their founders is to revisit their purpose and rethink their compact with government and society.

## Debating Foundation Spending During a Crisis

**ONLINE:** "Foundation Payout Policy in Economic Crises," by Larry Kramer

Should a big crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic compel philanthropists not just to maintain their outlays but to disburse more? "A funder might credibly think it wiser not to increase payout during an economic downturn, even a severe one," argues Larry Kramer, president of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, in the keystone article to an "Up for Debate" series on the topic. Nine other authors, including Darren Walker, Kathleen Enright, and John Palfrey, respond.

# 62%

The percentage of Americans who believe the fundamental structure of US government needs to change. For more, see "Grassroots Organizing and Preparing for the Unprecedented," by Lissy Romanow.

# 34

The number of the top 50 US foundations (73 percent by assets) who have living donors, are family controlled, or are not founded explicitly in perpetuity.

# 70%

The percentage of the world's food produced by smallholder cultivators.