
FORD FOUNDATION

A New Generation of Social Change

Learn about our strategies
and focus of our work »

Access to
Education

Democratic,
Accountable
Government

Economic
Fairness and
Opportunity

Social Justice
Philanthropy

**Our Core
Issues**

Freedom of
Expression

Sexuality and
Reproductive
Health and
Rights

Natural
Resources,
Sustainable
Development

Human
Rights

A year ago, we set out to ensure our grant making was addressing the challenges of the next generation. The effort has resulted in a profound recommitment to the values that have long defined the Ford Foundation.

Luis Ubiñas
President, Ford Foundation
April 2009

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ONLINE >>

Watch Luis Ubiñas talk about meeting the challenges of a new generation

www.fordfound.org/about/new-generation/

President's Message

OUR NEXT GENERATION OF STRATEGIES

A year ago, we set out to ensure the Ford Foundation's grant making was addressing the challenges of the next generation. Our aim was to produce a set of strategies that look forward but that also draw upon Ford's more than 50 years of experience on the frontlines of social change around the world, fighting for social justice, focused on the poorest and most marginalized among us. »

We dedicated ourselves to a collaborative process, listening carefully to leaders and partners in every sector, from nonprofits and academia to business and government. I thank all of you—more than 2,000 individuals and institutions in all the regions in which we work—whose thoughtful input helped us make this a broadly informed process.

The effort has resulted in a profound recommitment to the mission and values that have long defined the Ford Foundation. This recommitment is expressed in a comprehensive set of new strategies aimed at creating fairness and equity for people everywhere. It is our intention to make certain that the objectives of our programs are clear, that our grant-making approaches are oriented to a changing world and that our contributions help bring about real and lasting change in people's lives.

In short, we embarked on this work to ensure that all our resources—our staff, funding and reputation—are aligned in the most effective way to achieve our mission. To that end:

- Our programs will address eight significant social justice issues. These issues are grounded in our mission and history and should be very familiar to our partners.
- Within each area we have developed coordinated lines of work that, taken together, represent our response to the core social justice issues on which we are focusing our efforts.
- Each line of work will be driven by strategic thinking, with overarching goals, time frames and projected resource requirements.
- Our program officers will be working in teams to implement these lines of work. This marks a shift from individually directed initiatives to more team-oriented collaborations that cut across the foundation's work in the United States and around the world.
- Each of our teams will be led by an experienced director who will guide strategy development and lead an ongoing process of evaluation and learning. These directors will also manage the grant budget, in collaboration with the representatives leading our regional offices.
- Our regional offices have participated fully in this strategy exercise, and each is now finalizing its regional implementation plan. These plans assess the local context and offer an overall strategy that will guide which lines of work will be pursued at the regional level.
- We expect each field office will focus on four to six specific lines of work within our broad issue areas, selecting those that they and our local partners believe will combine to have the greatest impact on regional advancement.

We are very conscious that our grantees have a stake in the choices we have made, as well as questions about how the shift to new strategies will be managed. We are pleased that, thus far, our grant making has experienced minimal disruption, and we are devoting the remainder of 2009 to working with our partners on a smooth transition. To allow time for this, full implementation of our new grant strategies will not begin until October, when our 2010 fiscal year starts.

We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. We believe that the next generation of Ford's work has the potential to help achieve the lasting social change in which we all believe.

But it will not be easy. The challenges of discrimination, economic inequity and lack of access to opportunity are real and growing. In many areas where our past support contributed to significant gains, ground is being lost. More immediately, all of us are feeling the pain of the global economic crisis, and this year will likely be harder than last.

That's why our effort to bring greater focus and strategy to our work is so timely, and why the efforts we will pursue with our partners in the years ahead are perhaps more vital than at any time in the past 40 years. »

President's Message

As we look to the future, we remain fully committed to the courageous people who struggle every day to have their voices heard, find dignity in their work and provide opportunity for their children. These are the people, and these are the issues, the Ford Foundation was created to address.

Now more than ever, we look forward to helping you find lasting solutions for the challenges of these urgent times.

Sincerely,

Luis A. Ubiñas
President
Ford Foundation
April 2009

Frequently Asked Questions

We believe that the next generation of Ford's work has the potential to help achieve the lasting social change in which we all believe. To help you understand how we approached the challenge of strategic focus, we have provided information that will answer some of your questions. »

A Collaborative Process

In January 2008, we initiated a process to define the Ford Foundation's work for the next generation. This renewal of our programs has been a collective endeavor, involving all of our program staff around the world and more than 2,000 partners in the fields in which we work, from nonprofits and academia to government and business.

Our goal was to build on the mission and values of the foundation while ensuring that our programs today are geared to a changed and changing world. We looked closely at the issues that have been at the core of Ford's work—the rights of marginalized people, economic opportunity for all and access to quality education, among others—and examined how best to focus our efforts to help our grantees achieve greater impact over time.

We asked ourselves tough questions intended to help identify areas of pressing need where there was an absence of leadership and where we could bring our resources to bear to make a sustainable, systemic difference.

After nearly one year of thorough and collaborative deliberation, program officers and directors made recommendations intended to allow us to do more, for more people, with limited resources. We conclude this yearlong process with renewed clarity and vision; what has emerged is a refined set of issues and strategies that will guide our program going forward.

Regional Strategies

Working on core issues in multiple places around the world is central to the global mission and purpose of the Ford Foundation. Our effort to ensure that our work is geared to the challenges of the next decade involved our expert staff in each of the regions in which we work.

Working in teams made up of program officers from all parts of the organization, our broad issues and specific lines of work were developed with an understanding of the varying contexts in which our grantees and partners work. Our lines of work reflect this diverse input and experience.

To ensure that our offices are focused on issues most relevant to their unique settings, each is finalizing a regional strategy that takes into account local challenges and opportunities. Based on these regional strategies, each office will implement four to six lines of work. In most cases, this work will continue to reflect longstanding areas of investment by the foundation. In some cases, it will mean exploring new issues and approaches.

A Thoughtful Transition

The Ford Foundation has always strived for its grant making strategies to reflect the dynamism and evolution of the fields in which we work and the changing world around us. The regular transition of our program officers and representatives is one reflection of our commitment to this spirit of renewal, by creating opportunities to continually cycle fresh approaches, ideas and emphases into our work.

Traditionally, we have managed transition with thoughtfulness and respect for those with whom we work. That remains our commitment now, as we prepare for the implementation of our refocused lines of work in October, when our 2010 fiscal year begins. We have been in touch with most grantees to help them plan, and we look forward to continuing to work with all our partners throughout 2009 to ensure that the focus of our efforts going forward is clear and understood.

This renewal effort has not changed Ford's social justice mission or the fundamental approach we bring to our work—a commitment to creating positive change over the long term by supporting those closest to the problems. Where we are shifting strategies, it is with the conviction that doing so enables us to do more with limited resources. »

Impact and Evaluation

The foundation will continue to strengthen the rigorous grant-making evaluation that is integral to the success of our work. Our focused strategies call for continual assessment to gauge progress and make needed adjustments to our grant making. Our aim is to help our grantees achieve greater scale and impact over time.

We regard impact assessment as key to supporting a culture of learning and accountability. Not only does it make our own strategies and practices more self-critical, transparent and successful, but it also will help our grantees become more effective by adding to knowledge in their fields and contributing to wider discussions on impact and accountability in the philanthropic sector as a whole.

To help drive our commitment in this area, we have created a new leadership position at the foundation. Rick McGahey, who formerly served as a program officer in economic development, is now director of Impact Assessment. This is an area of new exploration and growth for the foundation, and Rick will bring to the job his expertise in qualitative and quantitative tools, and day-to-day work with grantees. Rick will lead us in defining this important source of knowledge.

Core Issues

Our programs will address eight significant social justice issues. These issues are grounded in our mission and history and will be familiar to our partners. On the following pages read more about our work in each area.



Access to Education

OUR VALUES >>

Addressing economic, social and political inequality requires measures that account for the critical role of education in society. Our work supports education reform that improves the life chances of young people from marginalized groups by expanding access, improving quality and boosting student outcomes.

OUR WORK >>

EDUCATION IS INCREASINGLY ESSENTIAL for individual well-being and national prosperity. Our work seeks to provide young people with the education necessary to succeed in the workforce and contribute as citizens. We do this by supporting a range of efforts to ensure that all students have access to high-quality schooling.

Worldwide, we fund initiatives seeking to transform the quality of secondary schools and to help students from poor or marginalized communities gain access to quality higher education. In the United States, our work in secondary education focuses on fair and adequate distribution of resources, high-quality teaching and expanded schooling opportunities. Our work in U.S. higher education supports greater access and affordability, as well as instructional innovations that increase the likelihood that students will earn degrees.

Another facet of our work is building knowledge to inform public policy on issues of social justice and to support the next generation of researchers and public intellectuals whose scholarship will contribute to this knowledge base.

We support efforts to improve access to high-quality education because democracies cannot thrive without strong public schools and higher education institutions that provide meaningful opportunities for all.

Access to Education

OUR FOCUS >>

Transforming secondary education

In today's global economy, young people who fail to get high-quality secondary education face increasingly dim prospects. Millions of students from marginalized groups are essentially barred from economic, social and political opportunity because their schools do not adequately serve them. Our work seeks to dispel two myths: that high-quality education is a scarce commodity and that inequalities among our schools are inevitable and intractable. We work with national, state and local partners to supplant these myths with durable evidence and powerful examples of equitable, high-quality schooling for all students. We also support parents, community groups, educators and others seeking to use evidence and examples to achieve policies and practices that provide fair and adequate school funding; recruit, prepare and retain high-quality teachers; expand classroom time and learning opportunities in the school day and academic year; and create meaningful accountability.

— *Jeannie Oakes, Director*

Higher education access and success

Despite some progress worldwide over the past few decades in making higher education more accessible, disparities persist in students' access to and graduation from two- and four-year colleges and universities. These disparities limit the workforce opportunities, democratic participation and life chances of students from poor, marginalized backgrounds. Our work seeks to generate policy and institutional reforms that improve standards of teaching and learning and remove the barriers to successful participation in higher education in the United States, the Andean Region and Southern Cone, Brazil, China, Egypt and Southern Africa. In the United States, it will focus on establishing stronger links between two- and four-year colleges; creating robust tuition and financial aid policies geared to the needs of disadvantaged and working students; and scaling up effective remedial and developmental education programs. Similarly, our work in other parts of the world supports reforms that make higher education institutions more accessible to students from excluded backgrounds and that provide financial and academic support.

— *Jeannie Oakes, Director*

Building knowledge for social justice

The current economic crisis and political transition in the United States have kindled in the nation an opportunity to rebuild a social contract around fairness and opportunity, collective responsibility and the common good. This will not happen, however, without compelling ideas, evidence and arguments that inspire and inform concrete steps toward a society where all have fair and decent work, where difference doesn't mean exclusion and disadvantage, and where all participate in democratic civic life. Toward that end, we support think tanks, public intellectuals, scholars and media to create and communicate knowledge for social change. We also support the development of the next generation of public intellectuals and leaders whose work can inform and sustain a social contract based on justice.

— *Jeannie Oakes, Director*

Democratic and Accountable Government

OUR VALUES >>

Effective public institutions are essential for societies to be safe, free and prosperous. Our work explores ways to make the process of governing more transparent, accountable and inclusive—and more effective in achieving fairness and equity.

OUR WORK >>

AN ACTIVE, KNOWLEDGEABLE CITIZENRY is essential to strengthening democratic practice and securing social justice. We support efforts that help people become participants in the decisions that have an impact on their lives. We do this primarily by supporting robust and inclusive civic organizations that bring diverse people together and give them a voice in the democratic process.

Our global work focuses on strengthening the right of people to assemble and advocate, and on promoting greater government transparency and accountability on issues ranging from public spending to the reform of key global institutions that govern the flow of resources. In the United States, we also focus on achieving reform that protects every individual's right to participate in the political process, including ensuring an accurate census count, fair redistricting and full access to voting.

Democratic and Accountable Government

OUR FOCUS >>

Strengthening civil society organizations

Robust civic associations can serve as catalysts for social change. Yet, in some countries, nongovernmental organizations lack the legal basis for registration and operation, regulatory frameworks are fragile and the very legitimacy of the sector itself is constantly questioned. In the United States and other established democracies, regulation has come in the form of new laws that target the nonprofit sector's tax benefits and funding streams, and restrict its right to organize and advocate. Our work seeks to strengthen civic organizations and the infrastructure that supports them. We support policy development to create a legal framework in which civil society can flourish and professional development to enhance the ability of these organizations to function at the highest levels of effectiveness and accountability.

— *John Kowal, Director*

Increasing civic and political participation

Lasting social change depends upon the ability of people to help shape the policies that affect their lives. Yet for some, such as racial minorities, immigrants and the working poor, barriers to meaningful participation in civic and political life persist. Our work focuses on increasing the participation of marginalized communities by strengthening organizations and networks that build and mobilize the grassroots base for social change. We also support leadership development initiatives and alliances that unite diverse constituencies and issues to achieve greater impact.

— *John Kowal, Director*

Promoting transparent, effective and accountable government

Half of the world's population now lives in democratic societies, but government neglect, corruption and lack of transparency continue to hinder efforts to implement policies needed to improve people's lives. To ensure that governments protect the rights of all people and are responsive to their needs, we support community-driven efforts to improve the transparency and integrity of government institutions and processes; encourage broad participation in establishing public priorities and policies; and promote effective implementation and oversight of public programs.

— *John Kowal, Director*

Democratic and Accountable Government

OUR FOCUS >>

Promoting electoral reform and democratic participation

In the United States, millions of people are routinely excluded from democratic participation through failures in the census, redistricting and elections processes. Each decade, the census fails to accurately count communities of color, immigrants, low-income and other marginalized populations; an estimated 4.5 million people were missed in the 2000 census. With census data used to both allocate public resources and draw legislative districts, the impact on these communities can be severe. Public funds and services may not be directed to communities that need them most, while flawed legislative districting can leave these communities underrepresented. Furthermore, the elections system is neither designed nor administered to ensure every citizen's right to vote, often excluding society's most vulnerable members. We support efforts to eliminate barriers to democratic participation in the United States by ensuring that census, redistricting and elections systems are fair and inclusive. These efforts include increasing public understanding of the issues at stake; directly engaging excluded communities in reform efforts; and supporting groups that work to strengthen and enforce the law.

— *John Kowal, Director*

Reforming global financial governance

One of the primary lessons of the global financial crisis is that financial markets need the oversight of democratic institutions to ensure transparency and accountability. The rules governing international trade and financial markets are set by a small group of nations and institutions, offering little opportunity for participation of communities most affected by its decisions. The result is a global financial system that is unresponsive to the inequities of economic globalization. To help democratize global financial governance systems, we support efforts to reform key global institutions to make them more transparent, accountable and effective in delivering financial security. This includes developing alternative governance structures, bringing new voices to global public dialogue and building broad alliances—with academic partners, advocacy groups, global organizations and national governments—to ensure that these institutions advance the public good.

— *John Kowal, Director*

Economic Fairness and Opportunity

OUR VALUES >>

Expanding opportunities and providing fair and equitable ways for all people to earn a decent living and build economic resources is essential to creating prosperous societies. Our work helps low-income people build assets and gain economic security.

OUR WORK >>

OUR EFFORTS SEEK WAYS to make markets and public systems and policies work better for low-income families and help them access the opportunities and tools they need to climb out of poverty and achieve economic security. We do this by providing the resources necessary to help low-income people expand their livelihood options, get and keep good jobs, obtain quality financial services, increase their access to opportunities in metropolitan regions and benefit from improved social protection systems.

Worldwide, we work in areas of concentrated poverty, including rural communities and urban neighborhoods, to ensure that residents have access to quality financial products, including savings, insurance and credit, and to business development services that strengthen their livelihood options. In the United States, our work also includes efforts to promote savings through contribution matches, stronger social insurance programs, improved public transportation, land use, and financing for housing and community development, along with workforce development that leads to quality employment.

The goal of our work is to help poor families earn a sustainable income and build assets, enabling them to overcome intergenerational poverty and exert more control over their lives.

Economic Fairness and Opportunity

OUR FOCUS >>

Securing equity for working families

In the United States, millions of families have found that working hard—even in multiple jobs—is no longer a path to basic economic security. One in four working families (and the 21 million children in those households) is dependent on employment that offers poor job security, low pay, few benefits and little opportunity for advancement. To help these workers strengthen their financial position through greater job stability and opportunity, we support a range of efforts, including greater access to proven government supports such as the earned-income tax credit; an increase in the minimum wage; and paid sick days and subsidized child care.

— *Helen Neuborne, Director*

Next-generation workforce strategies

Good jobs sustain our communities, strengthen our economy and stand at the heart of our vision of opportunity. The job market in the United States has shifted dramatically over the past three decades, leaving growing numbers of Americans chronically unemployed or trapped in low-wage jobs with no future. Youth, immigrants and ex-offenders are among the most vulnerable. Expanding the employment opportunities of low-wage workers in the United States requires effective workforce development strategies that are responsive to their needs and provide access to quality training and jobs that increase their earning potential. We support the growth of organizations and research that address these challenges, increasing the quality, quantity and accessibility of training opportunities and work placement services where they can do the most good.

— *Helen Neuborne, Director*

Building economic security over a lifetime

Publicly funded social protection systems are often a critical aid in helping the working poor join the economic mainstream. Our efforts to expand opportunity for low-income people focus on strategies that help families gain access to government initiatives that enable them to build economic security over a lifetime. Our work in the United States focuses on promoting public support for the creation of universal savings accounts and Social Security reforms that increase benefits for low-wage workers. Internationally, we focus on building savings through programs that combine matched contributions and savings services with conditional cash transfer programs (which reward low-income families for adhering to the requirements of a “social contract”) to create permanent financial assets for poor households. Together, these measures can create financial assets that break the intergenerational cycle of poverty

— *Frank DeGiovanni, Director*

Economic Fairness and Opportunity

OUR FOCUS >>

Improving access to financial services

Access to financial products and services provides a way to build long-term assets and weather unforeseen crises. Yet, in the United States, an estimated 19 million households do not have a savings or a checking account. Globally, nearly 75 percent of people living in poverty lack access to financial services. To help poor and low-income people build economic security, we back efforts to increase their access to quality financial services by supporting research to test innovative products that meet the needs of poor households; building an infrastructure to make these products and services widely available; funding advocacy for supportive policy and regulation; and supporting efforts to monitor the effectiveness of financial services.

— *Frank DeGiovanni, Director*

Economic opportunities for the rural poor

Rural communities experience the deepest forms of poverty and face challenging barriers to economic opportunity. Fully 75 percent of the world's extreme poor—more than 883 million people surviving on less than \$1 per day—live in rural areas. In the United States, some 7.5 million rural people are poor. Our work focuses on finding innovative ways to improve the livelihoods of rural producers. We have four approaches: encouraging research and development to test new ways to improve access to markets; strengthening the capacity of organizations that assist rural producers; supporting policy analysis and advocacy to improve private and public policies that affect rural livelihoods; and building robust global networks to support innovation and effective advocacy.

— *Frank DeGiovanni, Director*

Affordable homeownership

Combining housing and community development finance tools with comprehensive community revitalization strategies and policies can spark a more powerful approach to urban revitalization and affordable housing production than either can achieve on its own. Since 2000, the portion of U.S. households burdened by unsustainable housing costs has risen 30 percent; the number of low-income people living in concentrated poverty has jumped 40 percent; and the unemployment rate has almost doubled. To help low-income families in the United States move toward financial stability and security, we promote the development of innovative finance tools to help them purchase and maintain homes that are part of sustainable communities, linked to public transportation, good schools and secure employment. In the short term, our strategy focuses on accelerating the reuse of foreclosed properties and the rebuilding of the national housing finance system. In the longer term, we support community revitalization efforts that improve affordable housing options.

— *George McCarthy, Director*

Economic Fairness and Opportunity

OUR FOCUS >>

Community development and land use innovation

The foreclosure crisis has resulted in the largest loss of wealth among low-income households and communities of color in U.S. history—both for those who have lost homes and those who have held on to their properties but experienced dramatic declines in home values. Among communities of color, the loss of wealth is estimated at \$213 billion. Conventional community development methods have proven inadequate for addressing these challenges. To stabilize and revitalize distressed neighborhoods across the United States, we support innovative land use and community planning strategies that more strongly influence regional development. In thriving neighborhoods, we aim to secure well-located properties for affordable housing through inclusionary housing ordinances, density bonuses for affordable housing and land acquisition measures. In declining areas, we focus on eliminating blight, acquiring abandoned properties for community-driven redevelopment and helping cities make better use of available land.

— *George McCarthy, Director*

Metropolitan economic opportunity

Geographic isolation and the concentration of low-income people in the United States have worsened dramatically over the past two decades, exacerbated by the dispersion of jobs, services and other opportunities to distant suburban and exurban areas. Gaining access to opportunities—especially for African-Americans and Latinos—increasingly requires long commutes and high transportation costs. Meanwhile, state and federal budget priorities run counter to the needs of low-income workers, with three times as much funding invested in highways as in public transportation. Smarter regional development strategies that expand and connect decent employment opportunities with affordable housing along regional public transportation corridors can reduce concentrated poverty and help regions grow in healthy ways. We support state and regional advocacy groups and coalitions that promote economic development and help ensure that planning decisions and infrastructure investment are made in the public interest and benefit the working poor.

— *George McCarthy, Director*

Freedom of Expression

OUR VALUES >>

The free flow of information and ideas is essential to healthy societies. Our work offers space for creative expression, helps all people access opportunities for expression and supports efforts to ensure that media systems and policies are open and equitable.

OUR WORK >>

FREE EXPRESSION IS CENTRAL to all other freedoms. As change in our communities becomes more constant and as ideas, technologies and people are moving more rapidly within and among countries, our work promotes the right of all people to connect more deeply with others and find meaningful ways to participate. We do this by investing in creative and intellectual capital.

Worldwide, our work focuses on promoting public policies that ensure equal access to all media platforms and strengthening public service media. We also invest in the creative capital of underserved communities by supporting arts spaces that embrace marginalized voices and diverse audiences.

In the United States, we also support religious leaders and institutions that engage in public efforts to promote justice and equity as well as efforts through the media to promote informed, diverse and necessary dialogue on the public role of religion.

All of this work focuses on developing a better-informed and engaged citizenry and encouraging creative contributions to public participation in civic life.

Freedom of Expression

OUR FOCUS >>

Supporting next-generation arts spaces

Arts and culture play a vital role in the creation of more just and vibrant societies. Our work aims to promote public discourse, cultural pluralism and artistic creativity through the development and sustainability of exemplary arts facilities and key networks, particularly in diverse communities. Throughout the world, independent arts organizations are emerging and creating unique and vitally needed spaces where citizens interact in an expanded public sphere. We support exemplars of a new 21st-century arts leadership who share knowledge, build capacity and serve as models of artistic innovation, cultural collaboration, inclusion and social partnership.

— *Orlando Bagwell, Director*

Advancing public service media

Media can help people make sense of the issues that are central to their lives and communities. Yet even as new technologies are making media ubiquitous, public interest values in media are threatened by access and control issues, diminishing the potential for millions to become more informed and engaged in the critical matters shaping the future of our world. To expand media's role in building stronger and freer societies, we are working to develop a vibrant public interest media service for the 21st century in the United States and in countries around the world. Our grants will help create a pipeline of high-quality content; strengthen the technology and distribution systems that allow people to access and contribute to this material; and boost public discussion and research about the ways in which media can better engage and inform all citizens.

— *Orlando Bagwell, Director*

Media rights and access

How media systems and technologies are governed is critical to ensuring that all people have access to the accurate and diverse sources of information that are critical to effective citizenship in a rapidly changing world. We are working to ensure that all people, especially the poor and marginalized, have access to a diverse media system. Our strategies respect and promote the right of countries and communities to shape media policies that work most effectively for their own citizens. Our efforts promote smart public policies that protect the public interest, effective oversight and new technologies that advance openness, fairness and excellence across global media, including high-speed Internet and wireless connections for all, robust privacy protections, and digital transparency and organizing tools.

— *Orlando Bagwell, Director*

Freedom of Expression

OUR FOCUS >>

Religion and the public sphere

Religion has always played a central role in American public life. In recent times, that role has increased notably as religious voices influence policy decisions, debates on values and morality, and the public policy agenda. The aim of this U.S. work is to increase the presence and effectiveness of diverse religious perspectives dedicated to social justice and to encourage a rigorous and informed public engagement of religion and its role in the public sphere.

— *Orlando Bagwell, Director*

Human Rights

OUR VALUES >>

Fulfilling the rights that belong to all people by virtue of their being human depends upon an engaged populace and public officials and institutions committed to the inherent dignity and worth of every person. Our work supports efforts to secure equal rights and opportunity for all.

OUR WORK >>

FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS are required for people to achieve their full potential and contribute to society. We support efforts to help vulnerable populations gain access to the social, political and cultural institutions that govern their rights. We do this by strengthening the organizations and mechanisms that enforce human rights and by monitoring the policies and practices of institutions that affect the well-being of individual citizens.

Worldwide, we support legal and advocacy efforts to establish and retain basic civil, economic and social rights and to ensure that civil and criminal justice systems are fair, effective, accessible and nondiscriminatory.

All of this work focuses on the world's most marginalized populations, notably women, racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, immigrant communities and people living with HIV/AIDS. These groups, which are among the poorest and most vulnerable in every society, face some of the most severe forms of discrimination.

Our efforts to ensure human rights for all at the global, regional and national levels are based on the premise that for societies to advance, the value of every citizen must be recognized and each citizen's right to equal opportunity must be secured and upheld.

Human Rights

OUR FOCUS >>

Advancing racial justice and minority rights

Racial, ethnic and caste-based discrimination persists worldwide. Despite real gains, racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples still face discrimination in virtually every sphere of life—from education and employment to housing and political participation—and suffer from many of the attendant socioeconomic disparities. To achieve equal rights and greater opportunity for these communities, we support efforts to reform policies where they do not adequately exist and to enforce them where they do, and efforts by applied research and advocacy institutions to strengthen racial justice and human rights.

— *Sara Riós, Director*

Protecting the rights of women and girls

Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours and produce half of the world's food yet earn only 10 percent of the world's income and own less than 1 percent of the world's property. Among the poorest and most vulnerable in every population, women and girls encounter an uphill struggle to realize their legal and human rights—not only for themselves but also for their families and communities where they serve as essential caretakers. Although gender equality is recognized in constitutions and laws around the world, in practice women and girls still face enormous discrimination. We support efforts to fully implement laws and international commitments that address gender inequality and discrimination; build effective women's networks and human rights organizations that attempt to rectify structural causes of inequalities and gender discrimination; and strengthen the leadership capacity of marginalized women to articulate the problems that affect their lives and craft solutions to help solve them.

— *Sara Riós, Director*

Protecting immigrant and migrant rights

A greater influx of immigrants has come to the United States in the past 25 years than at any time in history, engendering a backlash that has stripped large segments of the immigrant community of their rights. This population confronts large-scale immigration roundups, the denial of due process in deportation proceedings, abusive detention conditions and increased hate crimes and bias attacks. A growing number of aggressive local measures attempting to restrict every aspect of life, including housing, education and employment, push immigrants into a marginalized existence. In addition, migrants suffer increased violation of their human rights along their routes of travel to the United States and other destination countries such as Mexico. We support organizations at the national, state and local levels that are engaged in immigrant rights advocacy, including efforts to secure comprehensive immigration reform that addresses the realities of migration in both sending and receiving countries. We also support institutions that are crucial to building an effective and lasting movement to protect immigrants' rights.

— *Sara Riós, Director*

Human Rights

OUR FOCUS >>

Reducing HIV/AIDS discrimination and exclusion

Globally, 90 percent of all HIV infections are found in lower- or middle-income countries. In all country contexts, the picture is the same: The poor and excluded are at greatest risk for HIV infection and indeed encompass the largest proportions of people living with HIV/AIDS. Despite the global response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the most vulnerable people and communities still lack access to prevention, treatment and care. Gender inequalities, stigma and discrimination, the absence of meaningful participation by affected communities and a lack of government accountability drive the epidemic worldwide and hinder progress toward meeting the United Nations goal of universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support. Few countries protect equal rights for people living with HIV/AIDS, and some nations have adopted laws criminalizing this population. To overcome systematic discrimination against people living with, affected by or vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, we support work in multiple regions around the world that pilots and advocates for appropriate legal, policy, health, economic and other measures that will create a culture of respect and dignity, protecting and securing this population's human rights.

— *Sara Riós, Director*

Reforming civil and criminal justice systems

The United States has the world's highest incarceration rate, locking up one out of every 100 adults, with poor people and people of color filling a vastly disproportionate number of prison and jail cells. Both in the United States and in other countries, civil and criminal justice systems face immense challenges in providing equal protection under the law, access to a fair legal process, adequate legal representation and information about legal rights and opportunities. We support organizations that carry out research and legal and policy advocacy to secure meaningful legal reforms. We focus on increasing the quality and accountability of state and local public defenders and prosecutors and on encouraging collaboration among key players that share a commitment to systemic improvement and fairness. Our partners include law schools, research centers, public and private legal aid systems, and community-based organizations, in addition to government and court officials on the leading edge of change.

— *Sara Riós, Director*

Human Rights

OUR FOCUS >>

Strengthening human rights worldwide

Fundamental human rights remain threatened around the world. In dozens of countries, people are tortured, tried unfairly and denied freedom of expression, among myriad other human rights violations. While much has been done in recent years to develop human rights laws and standards, a critical gap remains in the enforcement of these measures. We support efforts to create an effective infrastructure of organizations, institutions and mechanisms through which human rights are enforced at the global, regional and national levels. This includes reinforcing existing accountability mechanisms through litigation and other advocacy, expanding individual and group access to these mechanisms, and strengthening national human rights organizations that work on behalf of those who are oppressed and excluded.

— *Sara Riós, Director*

Advancing economic and social rights

Access to food, water, shelter, health care and education are basic human rights safeguarded by international law. Yet across the world, nearly 1 billion people live in extreme poverty on less than \$1 a day and the majority of the world's people are chronically malnourished, lack basic sanitation and do not have access to land, safe housing or water. Beyond humanitarian assistance that meets immediate needs, it is essential to help people establish their basic social and economic rights. We believe that organizations that help people become active participants in the struggle for these rights are critical strategic players in efforts to break the long-term cycle of poverty. We support institutions around the world through which people can demand their economic and social rights, gain access to those rights and have remedies available when their rights are violated. This work encompasses public interest litigation; community organizing and advocacy targeted at policy reform; monitoring, documentation and applied research; and working to strengthen organizations, networking and alliance-building to effect change.

— *Sara Riós, Director*

Natural Resources and Sustainable Development

OUR VALUES >>

Many of the world's poorest families rely on natural resources—forests, grasslands and other natural assets—for their basic livelihoods, yet they have limited rights over these resources. We believe that promoting greater access among the poor to natural resources is critical to achieving two interrelated goals: reducing global poverty and sustaining the quality of our environment.

OUR WORK >>

WE SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT of natural resource policies and programs that give poor communities more control over these resources and a stronger voice in decision making on land use and development.

We focus these efforts on the most vulnerable communities—notably indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and women—whose access to natural resources is most threatened.

Rural poor communities are also particularly susceptible to the threats posed by climate change. We work to ensure that the international response to climate change respects the unique circumstances of the poor and contributes to their livelihoods. We promote smart environmental policies that increase poor people's access to natural resources while simultaneously addressing climate change.

Natural Resources and Sustainable Development

OUR FOCUS >>

Expanding community rights over natural resources

Many of the world's poorest families live in rural areas that are not conducive to commercial agriculture. These households depend heavily on forests, grasslands, marginal farmland and other natural resources for their livelihoods. In developing countries, these communities have gained ownership rights or secure access to nearly 25 percent of the national forest areas. However, their access is often restricted by private interests and the failure of governments to develop policies that address the unique needs and potential of these communities. Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and women are disproportionately affected by these restrictions. We support the development of improved natural resource policies and programs that offer poor and marginalized groups more access and ownership over natural resources, along with greater influence in decision making on land-use planning and development. To advance these goals, we partner with think tanks, grassroots organizations, governments, advocacy groups, universities and private companies at all levels—global, national and regional.

— *David Kaimowitz, Director*

Climate change responses that strengthen rural communities

The majority of the world's poor live in rural areas that face severe vulnerability to the threats posed by climate change. Effective land and resource management are key contributors to mitigation of climate change and at the same time form the basis for livelihoods of significant rural populations, particularly indigenous groups and ethnic minorities. The evolving international response to climate change is particularly relevant for the rural poor, because payments for environmental services provide potential new sources of income and benefits for poor rural families. At the same time, flawed policies can limit poor people's access to the natural resources they depend on and can foster land speculation and conflict. To address these issues, we support research, advocacy, networking, communications and training activities to promote rural climate change policies that also meet the needs of poor rural families.

— *David Kaimowitz, Director*

Sexuality and Reproductive Health and Rights

OUR VALUES >>

Sexuality and the right to reproductive health are fundamental to the human experience. We support those working to ensure that all women and men are able to exercise these rights free from coercion and violence and that young people have access to the information and services they need.

OUR WORK >>

IN SOME SOCIETIES AROUND THE WORLD, discussion of human sexuality and reproductive health and rights has often been considered too sensitive or too personal for serious exploration. At the same time, governments implement laws and programs that have direct or unanticipated impacts on these basic human freedoms, with little or no input from those most affected. As a result, healthy development and the exercise of personal decision making in these areas have often been compromised. Our work is directed toward strengthening sexual and reproductive health rights and encouraging comprehensive sexuality education and evidence-based public discourse on sexuality.

Our efforts focus on young women from poor and excluded communities, because they bear the greatest burden of violence and disease. We support sexual and reproductive health policies, innovative programs and research that address the social, cultural and economic factors that undermine improved outcomes for girls and women.

All of this work is motivated by the belief that a deeper understanding of human sexuality is an essential element of human rights and healthy social relationships and that those most affected must be at the fore of efforts to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights are addressed as a cornerstone of individual, family and community health.

Sexuality and Reproductive Health and Rights

OUR FOCUS >>

Sexuality research

Research into human sexuality is woefully underfunded, concentrated in biomedical disciplines, focused on individual behavioral change and often highly politicized. Little is understood of the social and cultural dimensions of this basic aspect of humanity. Moreover, research in developing countries and communities of color in the United States is not grounded in the realities of the communities. Our work seeks to fill the knowledge gaps so that public policy and programs can be informed by research-based evidence rather than assumed norms. In the United States and globally, we support efforts to strengthen and expand research that addresses the diverse social and cultural dimensions of sexuality and reproductive health. We also fund training for researchers to build the skills and resources to engage the public, policy makers and advocacy communities with new perspectives based on sound research.

— *Margaret Hempel, Director*

Sexual and reproductive rights

Human rights include sexual and reproductive rights, yet many governments fail to provide quality services or adopt and enforce health policies and laws that work for all. We believe that promoting and protecting sexual and reproductive rights is critical to building strong families and communities. The global consequences of government inaction are dire: sexual and gender violence, pervasive discrimination, and inadequate sexual and reproductive health services result in the death or injury of millions of women, men, and children every year. Where programs do exist, the most marginalized are frequently denied access to services and information based on their age, gender, HIV status, sexuality, race, ethnicity or economic status. We support organizing, alliance-building and advocacy among those who are most affected by these challenges. We also work to strengthen the capacity of key leaders across the legal and health sectors to advocate for proven best practices and effective reforms and support alliance-building with movements that address related social inequities. In some countries we seek to strengthen best practices among governments that are committed to achieving reforms with the broadest reach and impact. Across all this work, we are concerned to ensure that the rights of young people and girls in particular are recognized and addressed.

— *Margaret Hempel, Director*

Sexuality and Reproductive Health and Rights

OUR FOCUS >>

Sexuality education

Young people around the world are increasingly sexually active, initiate sexual activity earlier, marry later and are often victims of sexual violence. Despite these trends, many are denied access to information and support that could enable them to protect their own sexual and reproductive health in an environment free of fear, coercion or shame. Here, too, the consequences are dire: Young people ages 15 to 24 account for 40 percent of new HIV infections; nearly 13 million adolescents give birth each year; and sexual- and gender-based violence against youth is widespread. To address these challenges, we support school- and community-based programs and advocacy efforts that expand access to sexuality education, especially among marginalized youth. Working in partnership with key nonprofit organizations, funders and government agencies, these programs enable young people to access accurate information and provide a space for discussion of sexuality, gender roles, and sexual and reproductive health and their relationship to poverty and discrimination.

— *Margaret Hempel, Director*

Addressing social and cultural barriers to sexual and reproductive health

Young women from poor and excluded communities face the highest risk of sexual violence and disease. In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, one in three teenage girls has HIV and over the past two years, the number of HIV-positive women and girls has increased in every region of the world, with rates rising most rapidly in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America. The World Health Organization estimates that worldwide one in three women will be beaten or coerced into sex in her lifetime. In many parts of the world, gender inequality and poverty close off many life options for girls. Yet sexual and reproductive health programs often ignore the social, cultural and economic factors that prevent young people from making healthy decisions and that contribute to their vulnerability to poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes, exposure to HIV, sexual violence and undesired pregnancy. We support efforts to bring to scale promising initiatives that address gender and economic inequalities; challenge social stigmas that prevent services from meeting the needs of youth; and apply an integrated approach to HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health.

— *Margaret Hempel, Director*

Social Justice Philanthropy

OUR VALUES >>

By virtue of its independence, philanthropy is uniquely positioned to advance social change by seeding and supporting the work of civil society organizations that address complex and enduring problems. Our work focuses on strengthening the role and effectiveness of philanthropy around the world on issues of fairness, equity and justice.

OUR WORK >>

DESPITE PHILANTHROPY'S POTENTIAL to address barriers to opportunity and fairness, only 11 percent of funders in the United States support work on social justice, and globally the figure is considerably lower. Lasting social change requires mobilizing significant resources worldwide to address economic, political and social disparities that prevent people from realizing their full potential. We are committed to increasing the amount and effectiveness of philanthropic resources devoted to supporting work aimed at changing unjust structures and unfair practices.

Social Justice Philanthropy

OUR FOCUS >>

Mobilizing philanthropic resources for social change

Philanthropy is a critical source of innovation and support to communities and organizations in their effort to address society's most pressing needs by offering vital risk capital that neither the public nor private sector can provide. Our work seeks to increase resources for philanthropic giving that focuses on creating opportunity, fairness and inclusion and that strengthens the voice and impact of social justice philanthropies. We work to build new knowledge and learning tools to promote philanthropy for social change and to ensure an enabling legal and regulatory environment for foundations. To accomplish this, we develop, strengthen and partner with regionally focused institutions and networks of funders and with community- and faith-based philanthropic institutions, including giving circles created within marginalized communities. We also partner with individual philanthropists who, in the contexts of their own countries, will lead the way on social change.

— *Suzanne Siskel, Director*