

FORD FOUNDATION

Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program

Advancing Achievement and Understanding

Ford Foundation Mission Statement

The Ford Foundation is a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide.

Our goals are to:

**Strengthen democratic values,
Reduce poverty and injustice,
Promote international cooperation and
Advance human achievement.**

This has been our purpose for more than half a century.

A fundamental challenge facing every society is to create political, economic and social systems that promote peace, human welfare and the sustainability of the environment on which life depends. We believe that the best way to meet this challenge is to encourage initiatives by those living and working closest to where problems are located; to promote collaboration among the nonprofit, government and business sectors, and to ensure participation by men and women from diverse communities and at all levels of society. In our experience, such activities help build common understanding, enhance excellence, enable people to improve their lives and reinforce their commitment to society.

The Ford Foundation's grant making around schooling, scholarship, artistic vitality, media and religion has, since 1996, been the responsibility of the Education, Media, Arts and Culture (EMAC) program. As this work expanded internationally, staff and grantees reflected on its overarching vision and underlying rationale. And then, in 2002, EMAC took on two new responsibilities. The first deepens the foundation's grant making designed to build knowledge and enlarge the public's understanding of sexuality and gender roles; the second entails expanded efforts to preserve and ensure the vitality of the cultural knowledge and resources of indigenous communities. Combining these new responsibilities with ongoing and increasingly international fields of grant making led us to revisit the guiding principles and strategies that animate the work of our grantees and thus our approaches.

Several themes emerged in the course of our inquiry. Indeed, we discovered that the program's aspirations are best captured by three key words—*knowledge*, *creativity* and *freedom*. We realized that these words, and the values they convey, together form the basis of the program's grant-making agenda in each of the many arenas with which we are concerned. Whether we are talking about a curriculum that takes account of women's roles and contributions in India, or the need to understand and appreciate the growing diversity of religious communities in the United States, or the relationship of traditional epics to contemporary theater and civic life in Egypt, the work of our program aims to build knowledge, encourage creativity and secure greater freedom of expression for all peoples, especially the poor, women and minorities. In order to articulate the aspirations and values behind this restructured program, we therefore decided to rename EMAC as The Program on Knowledge, Creativity and Freedom (KC&F) and to craft a new statement communicating our sense of the context in which we work.

This publication enables us to share the new KC&F program title and statement with current and potential grantees and others in the philanthropic and public policy worlds. Moreover, it describes a small sample of our grantees whose efforts have achieved significant impact. It offers stories about how innovation and hard work identified new ways of advancing achievement and understanding to the benefit of people and societies.

Our aim in presenting the context, as well as some of the practical experience of the KC&F program, is to impart a sense of the values and accomplishments of our grantees and to encourage reflection on how best to bring about constructive change in these important fields. We also hope that this publication will enlarge the circle of people aware of the work of the foundation—and in particular of our grantees. We invite you to debate, criticize and learn together with us.

Alison R. Bernstein
Vice President,
The Program on Knowledge,
Creativity and Freedom
Ford Foundation

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The Context of the Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program

The Ford Foundation's program on Knowledge, Creativity and Freedom (KC&F) works globally to advance understanding and achievement in five fields: Education and Scholarship; Sexuality and Reproductive Health; Religion, Society and Culture; the Media; and Arts and Culture. This body of work recognizes that knowledge and creativity are central to the richness of people's lives and the problem solving and progress of societies. It also affirms the importance of having freedom to think and act critically, originally and responsibly in facilitating the building of just, pluralistic societies. In its focus and approach, KC&F complements Ford's two other programs—Asset Building and Community Development (Assets) and Peace and Social Justice (PSJ). All three programs pursue the foundation's overarching goals of strengthening democratic values, reducing poverty and injustice, promoting international cooperation and advancing human achievement. This program statement describes the context for the varied grant-making strategies pursued in the different KC&F fields.



“The independent spirit asks the unimagined question and listens to the unwelcome answer.”

Eric Barnow

Around the world, KC&F’s grants support the different ways that societies create, develop and transmit knowledge, meaning, values and identities. This work recognizes that traditions worldwide possess cultural and intellectual resources that enlarge the vision of what it means to be human and offer wisdom and experience that foster respect for difference, empower the disenfranchised and promote social justice.

One of the program’s main objectives is to support institutions in education, religion, culture and the media in ways that expand opportunity and promote inclusion. These institutions help to shape how people understand who they are and what they can achieve. KC&F looks for ways to help the grantees explore fresh interpretations of meaning, values and identity; expand access for historically excluded groups; develop habits of involved citizenship; and encourage the talent and commitment needed to make societies more just, peaceful and creative.

In seeking to cultivate knowledge and creativity, KC&F looks to organizations that respond to the human desire for self-knowledge and joy while inspiring and equipping people to advance the public good. The program supports efforts to safeguard freedoms that, coupled with a sense of civic responsibility, further the knowledge and creativity that can spur positive social change. In particular, the program aims to secure freedom of expression, freedom of religion and conscience, and the right to education, knowledge and sexual health. It also promotes respect for religious differences, including freedom from



“The free expression of the hopes and aspirations of a people is the greatest and only safety in a sane society.”

Emma Goldman



the obligation to espouse any religious belief, and endorses the collective rights of peoples to sustain their languages and cultures. By honoring these values, societies become better equipped to heed the aspirations of their people, celebrate their identities and creativity, address the challenges of development, interact with other societies more constructively and share their achievements with others.

The expansion of KC&F into a global program during 2000–2001—with staff in all 13 of the foundation’s overseas offices as well as in New York—provides new opportunities to work on these concerns in different local and regional contexts. It also calls on the program to increase its learning and impact by becoming more deliberately comparative worldwide and by working more systematically on addressing global trends.

The current wave of globalization may only be the latest manifestation of a long history, but its impact is such that it has become the modality for most KC&F grantees. Globalization is a complex phenomenon whose dimensions and dynamics vary greatly from issue to issue and place to place. At its best, it can be a powerful connecting force that eases the flow of people, goods and ideas. It can unite people who have long been divided and liberate those who have long been isolated. And it can catalyze social movements that recast identities, defy authoritarianism, challenge the control of ideas and empower people to dream.

At the same time, globalization can also engender profound feelings of exclusion, in addition to generating poverty, instability, powerlessness



“Our visions begin with our desires.”

Audre Lorde

and mistrust. The playing field is glaringly uneven for many of the world's people, who see the rich and powerful reaping most of the benefits and bearing few of the costs. This evident transfer of wealth, coupled with the rapid pace of change, points to deeper social inequality and an increasingly uncertain future. Moreover, the growing commodification of knowledge and creativity, while often improving efficiency and responsiveness to demand, introduces new problems of access, ownership and purpose. Commercialization also raises the question of intellectual property rights over that which is of common and/or community heritage. And technological advances, despite their promise and achievement, often appear relentless and unpredictable.

Thus it is that globalization seems to make our future more perilous at the same time as it offers unprecedented opportunities to build it collectively. Although the number of electoral democracies is growing, and people and ideas now flow more freely than ever before, globalization has coincided with a resurgence of ethnic nationalism, religious intolerance and authoritarian politics. But if it makes the future look more perilous, globalization also opens new possibilities for collective action. The climate of violence and repression that clouds much of the world today may ultimately yield to emerging social movements at local, national and international scales that capitalize on the growing ability to communicate and build international constituencies.

In short, globalization is both simplifying and complicating the world—as well as people's understanding of what is happening in it. As we hurtle toward new conceptions of the state and a new global society, and as people abruptly find themselves in a shared conversation, it becomes increasingly imperative to develop new kinds of understanding, values and sensibilities that make our interactions meaningful.



“Art blows the dust off
our everyday lives.”

Picasso



KC&F grant making seeks to capitalize on new opportunities resulting from the freer flow of people and ideas by helping innovators worldwide work together to address common problems more effectively. It also aims to help scholars and the public gain a better grasp of the causes and consequences of the transformations that are reshaping our world. Such understanding can help bring people greater control over their lives, a greater voice in society, and a greater willingness to embrace a future rooted in pluralism, inclusion and internationalism. Meanwhile, even in an era of globalization, people are finding a sense of place, as well as new energy and vision for valuing the local. Many communities are currently re-exploring ways to reaffirm their cultural vitality, languages and identities, as well as developing interesting new ways to share these with others around the globe. Moreover, there is a growing awareness that the diverse knowledge and culture of other societies, including indigenous peoples, can reveal new and different visions of what it means to be human that are of value to us all.



Program Goals

In response to the complexities of the contemporary world, KC&F seeks to encourage palpable changes that improve people's lives, honor their aspirations, enrich the wider society and achieve lasting impact. To advance these goals, the program supports training, technical assistance, institution building, policy analysis and constituency building at the local, national and international levels. This work engages a wide range of institutions, including schools, universities, religious organizations, research institutes, news agencies, advocacy groups, museums, arts groups and cultural agencies.

KC&F staff develop grant-making strategies, in consultation with grantees, scholars and artists, activists and other stakeholders. The initiatives that result are typically implemented over a five- to ten-year period. A series of "learning circles," for instance, offers a forum for sharing experiences across fields and reflecting on ways to craft and implement effective grant making. This approach recognizes that social change is often gradual and diffuse and that it is rooted in the agency and vision of individuals and social movements that arise from particular cultural and historic moments. As part of the Ford Foundation, which is a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide, the role of KC&F is to facilitate, rather than engineer, their efforts.

More specifically, the program supports efforts to promote:

- The production, preservation, transformation and dissemination of the creativity, heritage, knowledge, ideas, and religious and moral traditions that nourish the human spirit, give joy and meaning to life, build understanding of our bodies and identities, develop individuals' capacities to articulate values and act on them and unite people in celebration of human diversity and achievement.
- The development of identities that do not entail devaluing or oppressing others, thus empowering people to choose, imagine, define and affirm who they are, as well as what they can contribute to their own communities, to broader publics and as world citizens.
- Civic engagement of the creative talents and minds of all citizens, deploying moral energy in the commitment to pluralism and democratic values and to improved legal and policy frameworks for rights to expression, sexuality, education, knowledge, faith, language and culture.
- The continued advancement of the welfare and priorities of marginalized peoples by increasing understanding and respect for their knowledge, languages, cultures and achievements, and by expanding their access to opportunities in education, the media, the arts and culture.

Program Structure and Fields



KC&F, which is led by a vice president and deputy, consists of two units: Education, Sexuality and Religion (ESR) and Media, Arts and Culture (MAC). The ESR unit works in the fields of Education and Scholarship; Sexuality and Reproductive Health; and Religion, Society and Culture. The MAC unit works in the fields of Arts and Culture and in Media.

The five fields within KC&F have the following objectives as their primary goals:

Education and Scholarship: to increase educational access and quality for the disadvantaged, to educate new leaders and thinkers, and to develop knowledge and curriculum supportive of inclusion, development and civic life. Grant making supports policy, research and reform programs in both schools and higher education institutions, with particular emphasis on enhancing the performance of educational systems through improving finance, governance, accountability and training. Scholarship is supported to deepen understanding of such issues as gender, identity, pluralism and social change, as well as of particular areas of the world and the relationships between them.

Sexuality and Reproductive Health: this field—which is addressed in all three of the foundation’s programs (Assets, PSJ and KC&F)—supports efforts to build knowledge, develop policy and deepen public understanding of sexuality and its relationship to human fulfillment, culture, religion and identity.

Religion, Society and Culture: to examine the role of religious traditions of the world in shaping social values, with the goal of strengthening the contribution of these traditions to creating just, healthy and pluralistic societies. Grant making also seeks to support the participation of historically marginalized groups in the interpretation of diverse religious and cultural traditions and of the moral resources they offer contemporary societies.

Media: to seek to promote free and responsible news media, including the use of new technology, and to develop infrastructures that serve the civic needs of society and its diverse constituencies. In addition, to support high-quality productions that enrich public dialogue on such core issues as building democratic values and pluralism.

Arts and Culture: to increase opportunities for cultural and artistic expression for people of all backgrounds; to foster documentation, dissemination and transmission of both new and traditional creative art forms; to broaden audience involvement and access; and to improve the livelihoods of artists and their opportunity to contribute to civic life. Grant making focuses on strengthening the infrastructure of arts and cultural organizations, enhancing artistic expression, attending to artistic and cultural heritage and broadening the diversity of artistic and scholarly voices.





The Stories

In an attempt to convey the flavor of the grantees' work, we have chosen 10 stories from the thousands of grants that we have made over the years. The stories come from different regions of the world and include each of KC&F's five fields. We believe that they illustrate vividly the kinds of work—and kinds of impact—achieved by our grantees.

Typically, these accounts begin with individuals who long for change and who combine their energy and optimism with a gift for seeing how best to apply knowledge and creativity to tackle difficult and persistent problems. Typically, too, they are driven by two fundamental and complementary values. The first is a universal principle—that everyone should have the opportunity to lead a decent, meaningful and fulfilling life. The second is respect for the specifics of the culture and society in which the grantees work and within which they seek to nurture progress.

The stories we include here express the exciting ways in which a selection of our grantee partners has been working around the world to advance knowledge, creativity and freedom. We trust that they demonstrate how, through the dreams and endeavors of those partners, we as a foundation try to make our contribution to positive social change.



El Warsha: Reconciling Tradition and Modernity in Egypt

The Egyptian theater troupe known as El Warsha is a most unusual group in that it does some of its best work away from the mainstream stage. Whether performing in its Cairo studio, or under tents in villages along the Nile, the company breathes new life into important cultural traditions such as stick dancing and shadow puppetry that have been little celebrated in contemporary Egypt.

Treating cultural legacies as creative tools, not inert icons, is the hallmark of El Warsha, whose name means “the workshop” in Arabic. Its members typically spend two or three years exploring the essence of each art form and improvising in their studio before showcasing it to the public. The result—as with their dramatization of the “Hilaliyya,” an epic poem from Upper Egypt that has been handed on orally for more than 700 years—is often an exhilarating vision in which traditional art forms are combined in ways that make them palpably new.

“What we have done is remove the showiness: the pirouettes, the posing, all the cute things that folkloric companies have added to please Western audiences,” says Hassan El-Geretly, who founded El Warsha in 1987. “We work like plumbers, clearing the tubes.” El-Geretly has long argued that Egypt should free its artistic heritage from state-controlled bodies that tend to package the arts in sterile, predictable formats. “This has resulted in a devaluation of traditional culture,” he explains. “If folk art and theater do not interact through living experience, both run the risk of degenerating into empty rituals.”

As Egypt’s oldest independent theater troupe, El Warsha is less intent on preserving the past than on rekindling its creative spirit. To keep its productions fresh and relevant, the troupe routinely opens its studio to the public to show work in progress and to host evenings of storytelling. Its 25 actors, dancers and musicians include Muslims and Coptic Christians; semiliterate workers and graduates of elite universities; teenage prodigies and seasoned virtuosos like Sayid El Dawi, a renowned ballad singer who is said to be the last Egyptian performer capable of reciting the “Hilaliyya” in its entirety.

El Warsha’s dedication to combining both past and present has great resonance in Egypt, where tradition and modernity are often deemed incompatible. The tension between these views permeates nearly every sphere of society, most strikingly in the deadlock between economic liberalization and religious conservatism. El Warsha has opened new avenues for creative expression, giving rise to a “free theater movement” in Cairo. In recent years the company has teamed up with artists, educators and nongovernmental organizations throughout the country. In Minia,

for example, it has established singing classes, expanded a children’s choir and trained schoolchildren in acting, directing, shadow puppetry and cartoon making.

El Warsha is also in the vanguard of a growing network of independent arts organizations in the Arab world. Besides performing its own work, the company has helped develop an international theater festival in Jordan as well as a regional coalition of theater artists called the Arab Arts Project. Many of these artists share a conviction that independent artistic expression—by fostering critical thinking, experimentation and risk taking—can play an important role in building robust and open societies. “We’re developing a space of our own,” El-Geretly says, “not to do plays on the themes of the development agenda, but to make room for expression, for feeling, for imagination.”

The Ford Foundation’s support began in the early 1990’s. Acknowledging that such precedent requires cultivation to survive and grow, the foundation has continued to finance El Warsha to build its institutional capacity and as part of a broad effort to support independent artistic expression in the Arab world.

“If folk art and theater do not interact through living experience, both run the risk of degenerating into empty rituals.”

Hassan El-Geretly

Alvin Ailey: Creating New Dances and New Spaces

When Alvin Ailey founded the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1958, its future was uncertain. A small, mostly black company, with work rooted in—and promoting—the uniqueness of black cultural expression as part of a larger, richer American modern dance heritage, its market in the early years was unknown and not promising. Yet today, the company is completing a capital campaign for a new building in its home base in New York City and is one of the most acclaimed international ambassadors of American culture.

The Ailey company's mission is to enrich America's modern dance heritage with innovative choreography that honors the beauty and humanity of African-American and other cultures. Mr. Ailey's purpose was not to create a repository for his own works but to showcase a multiplicity of talents. Over the last four decades, the company has performed more than 195 works by more than 60 choreographers, creating one of the world's largest and most diverse repertoires. And each season the New Works program at Ailey commissions established and emerging choreographers to create new dances. The program fosters collaboration between gifted musicians, leading designers and the 31 members of the Ailey company, whose technical virtuosity, versatility and rigorous training make it one of the world's premiere dance companies.

Through the "New Works" program, important and critically acclaimed new pieces make their international debut to multiethnic audiences in communities throughout the country and across the globe. For example, audiences who saw Ailey's fall 2001 season or who attended the 2002 Winter Olympics were treated to an unusual new work choreographed by Judith Jamison, the company's current artistic director, and featuring an original score by Wynton Marsalis of Jazz at Lincoln Center. Commissioned by the Olympic Committee, "Here...Now" pays tribute to the iconic, stylish sprinter, Florence Griffith Joyner, aka "Flojo," who won three gold medals at the 1988 games in Seoul. Audiences and critics alike were thrilled by the performance, which expresses the competitiveness, challenge, style, pain and joy of both sport and dance.

Behind the beauty and creativity that characterize the work of this dance theater is a story of responsible management and fiscal development. The establishment of a sizable working capital reserve fund in 1997 provided financial security, allowing the company to accept an artistic commission or try something new in its repertoire without the risk of

putting the organization in cash-flow peril. While using its working capital fund to stabilize its program and operations, the organization has cultivated new board members, concentrated on increasing both the number of individual donors and the size of their contributions, and increased its annual gift receipts by 90 percent over the last five years.

The \$66 million capital campaign now under way will support the renovation of a new facility for the Ailey school and rehearsal space for the company, as well as the beginning of an endowment. As Judith Jamison says: "A permanent home for Ailey has been a dream of mine as long as I can remember—and now it is becoming a reality. This building is a leap into the future of Ailey, and we hope that our audiences will soar with us."

The Ford Foundation has provided major support to the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater since 1974. As one of the 28 exemplary non-profit arts organizations across the United States selected in different disciplines to join the foundation's New Directions/New Donors Initiative, Alvin Ailey received a challenge grant in 2000 to develop endowments in support of new artistic work, training, outreach and education.

"A permanent home for Ailey has been a dream of mine as long as I can remember—and now it is becoming a reality. This building is a leap into the future of Ailey, and we hope that our audiences will soar with us."

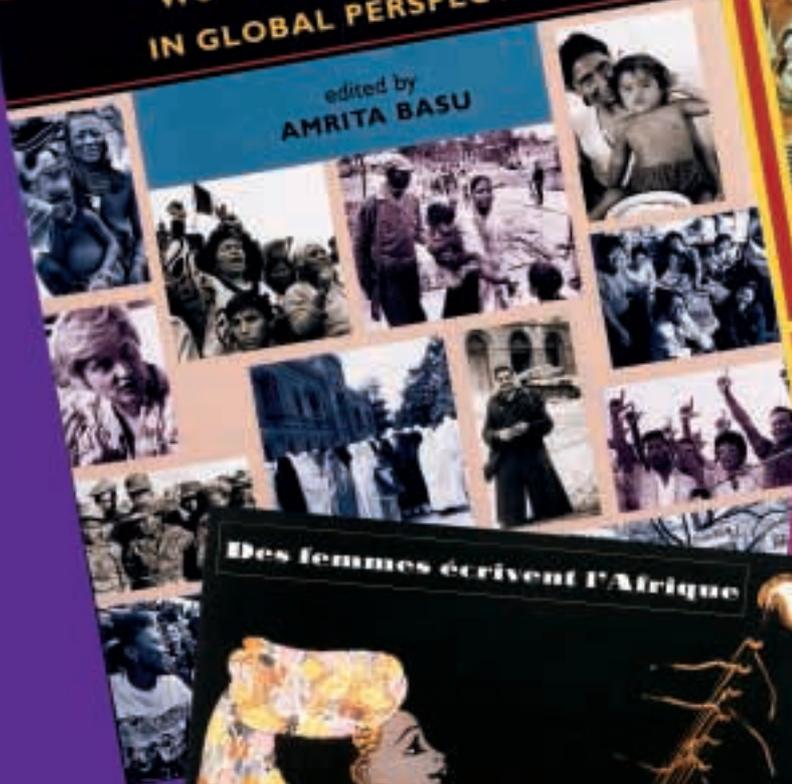
Judith Jamison



THE CHALLENGE OF LOCAL FEMINISMS

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

edited by
AMRITA BASU



Des femmes écrivent l'Afrique

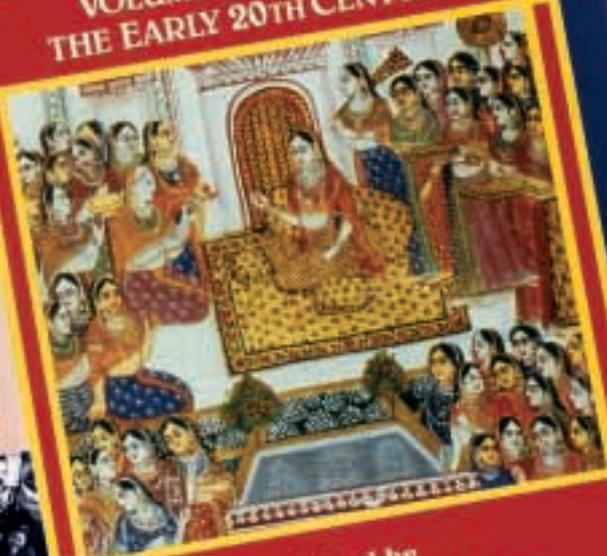


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WOMEN WRITING IN INDIA

600 B.C. TO THE PRESENT

VOLUME I: 600 B.C. TO THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY



Edited by
Susie Tharu and K. Lalita



ELA BHATT

Uniting Women in India



BY **JYOTSNA SREENIVASAN**

Scholarship and Activism: Building Women's and Gender Studies in India

The growth of women's and gender studies as formal areas of teaching and research is one of the major achievements of women in higher education over the last quarter of the twentieth century. Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in India, where Women's Studies as an interdisciplinary field of scholarly knowledge began primarily as a direct response to the findings of the Indian government's 1975 Committee on the Status of Women in India—a committee that included prominent scholars, both men and women. As well as producing the first-ever compilation of the existing research on Indian women, committee members toured different regions to listen to groups of women discussing their problems, priorities and assessments of their own condition.

This pooled mass of information contradicted many established notions about Indian women's roles and demonstrated that, where the government spoke of a universal "women's" status, there was instead great diversity—of occupation, of the social class of the family, and of region, language, community and caste. Moreover, this diversity was largely invisible to the government officials who had responsibility for setting policies and implementing them at the grassroots level. Consequently, the early leaders of Women's Studies efforts in India first set about documenting the multiplicity of women's experiences and then fought to bring their findings to the attention of both the government and the women-led NGOs who formed the backbone of the growing women's movement that was well under way by the late 1970's.

During the next decade, understanding that "the struggle for establishing gender justice must occur through knowledge and praxis simultaneously," Dr. Neera Desai, an eminent Indian sociologist who became director of the Research Centre for Women's Studies at the Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey (SNDT) Women's University in Mumbai (then Bombay), and others in this emerging field of interdisciplinary research sought to bridge the divide between scholarship and activism by opening up opportunities for exchange and participation. SNDT, along with the Centre for Women's Development Studies in New Delhi, headed by the distinguished academic Dr. Vina Mazumdar, who had succeeded in establishing support for Women's Studies at the prestigious government-funded Indian Council of Social Science Research, instigated Women's Studies research, teaching and networking with other colleges and universities in both India and abroad.

SNDT continued to play a key role in planning and conducting Women's Studies programs in India's university system, leading to the creation in 1982 of the Indian Association for Women's Studies. Pressure by the association on the university system and the national government led to the establishment of a Women's Studies grants program at the University Grants Commission, as well as the inclusion of Women's Studies within the Chapter on Education for Equality of the National Policy on Education that was adopted by the Indian Parliament in 1986.

Thus women's studies in India has managed to secure legitimacy at the highest governmental levels, remaining a vibrant interdisciplinary field while it continues to connect its concerns with women's NGOs on the ground. Moreover, Indian Women's Studies scholars' attention to the diversity of women's experiences has influenced the course of Women's Studies globally. The critical shift, in the United States and elsewhere, away from a universalizing gender theory toward examining women's multiple and complex social locations has opened up a whole terrain of scholarly and policy debates where gender is—at best—seen as a "blunt instrument" in understanding the incredible scope of human diversity.

The Ford Foundation's support for Women's and Gender Studies research and teaching in India and other parts of the world began in the 1970's and remains a vital part of the KF&C program. Total funding has surpassed \$25 million worldwide so far.

"The struggle for establishing gender justice must occur through knowledge and praxis simultaneously."

Dr. Neera Desai

Brazil: Decentralization and School Improvement

Over the last two decades, the people of Brazil have made great strides in restoring democracy and repairing the painful legacy of military rule. Their efforts to spur social and economic development, however, have met with somewhat less success. These setbacks stem in large measure from enduring flaws in the country's educational system, including dilapidated classrooms, poorly trained teachers, and administrative and funding policies that are especially hard on African Brazilians, who make up almost half the population.

In recent years, educators in the state of Bahia, in northeastern Brazil, have begun to rectify these shortcomings by embracing a more participatory model for running schools. Scholars at the Federal University of Bahia sparked this trend in 1995 when they began forging unconventional partnerships with teachers and administrators at schools in Salvador, the country's third-largest city. Convinced that administrative decentralization could improve the effectiveness of public schools, Robert Henriques Girling, Sherry Keith and Katia Siqueira de Freitas set out to provide local educators with management skills better attuned to the region's social realities. Specifically, they offered training in leadership, team building, problem solving, school finance, evaluation and the principles of shared governance. As Girling says, "This project is bringing the university and its students into the public school, helping them to get a firsthand understanding of school management, while introducing teachers to new ideas and possibilities regarding the transformation of their schools and lives."

Now in its eighth year, the Program in Participatory School Leadership enlists university professors and graduate students to train public school personnel while conducting research on decentralization. Small teams of graduate students work closely with teachers, principals and superintendents to identify schools' needs and implement changes designed to resolve those needs. Results show that schools improve when those who are responsible for them learn how to give parents and teachers a greater say in how they are run and how classes are taught. At the same time, the graduate students gain insight into how schools operate and learn promising methodologies for strengthening public services.

The program, which started with just 10 graduate students assisting six municipal schools, has become a magnet for progressive educators throughout northeastern Brazil. It currently works with 80 schools that enroll a total of 40,000 students, and because of the results in terms of student progress, the local authorities recently asked the program to conduct leadership training for all 200 of its schools.

Meanwhile, the program has also become a magnet for new graduates at the Federal University of Bahia. Some five doctoral students and 15 Masters students completed degrees as of June 2002, with another 17 dissertations and 11 Masters theses under way. Recent graduates now teach at Catholic University in Salvador and a number of state universities. Moreover, several regional universities recently established postgraduate programs in educational administration with assistance from the program's staff.

The experience gained under this project has also enabled the production of a 1998 textbook, *A Escola Participativa (The Participatory School)*, written by Girling, Keith, Siqueira and Eloisa Lück. UNICEF has distributed 1,000 copies to school superintendents and principals in Brazil, and the book, now in its fourth edition, has been incorporated into the state's curriculum for training school administrators throughout Bahia.

The Ford Foundation has supported the Federal University of Bahia's Program in Participatory School Leadership with grants totaling \$947,000 since 1995. This support recognizes that education can serve as both a cornerstone of democracy and a catalyst for development.

"This project is bringing the university and its students into the public school, helping them to get a firsthand understanding of school management, while introducing teachers to new ideas and possibilities regarding the transformation of their schools and lives."

Robert Girling





A Springboard to Success for Struggling Students in the United States

In the early 1970's, an alarming number of students in New York City were dropping out of school at around 16 years old. Conventional wisdom held that most of them simply lacked the aptitude for academic work. But Janet Lieberman, an educational psychologist at Fiorello H. La Guardia Community College in Queens, saw things differently. “We wanted to design a school where all students could turn into winners, where they could achieve and go on to higher education,” Lieberman recently recalled. She felt that many of the students who fell through the cracks showed considerable promise, but that the social pressures and rigid curricula found in traditional high schools diminished their appetite for learning.

Instead of calling for remedial work in narrowly defined disciplines, Lieberman envisioned a more stimulating setting—part high school and part college—where students would be treated as young adults. This hybrid environment would feature small classes, skilled teachers, attentive counseling, meaningful internships and high expectations. Moreover, students would be able to earn college credit on the way to getting a high school diploma.

The Middle College High School opened its doors on the La Guardia campus in 1974 and for nearly three decades has proven remarkably successful. In the 1998–99 school year, for example, 88 percent of its seniors graduated from high school and 65 percent were accepted to four-year colleges—compared to citywide averages that year of 50 percent and 44 percent, respectively. By plugging gaps in the “educational pipeline,” the school has helped more than a thousand at-risk students make a smoother transition into college. At the same time, it has allowed underserved populations to gain greater access to higher education.

By the late 1980's, a nationwide consortium had been designed to replicate the middle college model. Since then, educators throughout the United States have been building on La Guardia's success. Nationwide, 31 sister schools now enroll about 7,000 students in such disparate places as Seattle, Washington; San Mateo, California; and East Peoria, Illinois. La Guardia officials were so pleased with the results in their first school that they opened a second one in 1987, using Lieberman's framework. The International High School serves recent immigrants in Queens, a county that some residents characterize as “the most diverse county on the planet.” Its students come from 52 countries and speak a total of 39 languages, but all classes are taught in English.

The next phase of the middle college experiment looks at ways to help students accelerate their education and to have a formal “early college” experience. Students who enroll in selected middle college high schools will be able to earn both a high school diploma and a year of college credit—or perhaps even an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree—by the time many of their peers (those who haven't dropped out or fallen behind) are finishing high school. The idea has helped to leverage funding from many donors, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which recently pledged more than \$40 million to create similar programs for underserved high school students across the country. This amount includes about \$7.6 million to support efforts by Middle College leaders to replicate the new model of early college.

The Ford Foundation's support for middle college high schools, which began in 1986, recognizes the importance of strengthening the opportunities for students to progress through the educational pipeline and expanding access to higher education, particularly for underserved populations. Pathways to Higher Education, a new initiative, advances these same goals for students in overseas countries where the foundation operates.

“We wanted to design a school where all students could turn into winners.”

Janet Lieberman

Scholarship and Changing Views of Rural Societies in Vietnam

Dr. Ngo Duc Thinh, director of the Institute of Folklore Studies at the National Center for Social Sciences and the Humanities in Hanoi, is a scholar who has repeatedly identified opportunities where detailed field research could contribute to changing attitudes and better policy making.

In the late 1970's, the village began to re-emerge out of the cooperative structure as a social body capable of organizing itself. As it did so, customs and institutions that were formerly forbidden were gradually revived. Unable to gauge the direction of these changes, policy makers became concerned about what they perceived to be the collapse of rural management structures. Respected historians and ethnologists, Thinh among them, responded to this uncertainty through research on these historic and re-emerging forms of village organization. Through their writing, this highly influential group re-represented rural social institutions in a positive light and opened the way for major policy changes.

Armed with this experience, Thinh joined with several colleagues at the Folklore Institute to establish a research group on religion, beliefs and culture. As in his earlier work, Thinh's research on village covenants, village festivals and shamanistic practices has influenced both scholarly and policy debates.

Since the mid-1990's, institute staff have drawn on their experience with village covenants to conduct research on customary law among highland minority ethnic groups. The result of this research has been eight comprehensive, widely distributed volumes, each written in Vietnamese and an ethnic minority language. With support from the Vietnamese government and, in particular, the National Assembly's law commission, institute staff also worked in these villages to reestablish customary laws appropriate to contemporary social conditions.

The collection and publication of customary laws has had another important impact. As Thinh explains, "Local (ethnic majority) authorities working in minority areas were often under the impression that minorities had no rules and that their cultures were weak. After reading these customary laws, they became aware that minorities have many more regulations than the Vietnamese legal code." As examples, Thinh cites prohibitions on the taking of fish bearing eggs or on the use of poisons to catch fish among the Raglai, as well as the nearly 200 regulations regarding different forms of theft among the Tai. "Now," says Thinh, "some officials are aware that minority cultures might be more highly developed than their own."

The Folklore Institute's current major project involves the recording of ethnic minority epics, cultural records that date back millennia and many of which are recounted in speech and song over hundreds of episodes. The institute is now training researchers in specialized methods of working with oral literary traditions, training a new generation of ethnic minority people to carry on their own oral literary traditions, and offering a formal academic training to ethnic minority students who will carry on this and similar research over the long term.

As with the institute's work with customary law, this project is also serving to change representations of highland minority cultures, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the lowland majority. As the epics are transcribed and translated into Vietnamese, more Vietnamese people are not only learning to appreciate the culture and traditions of highland people but also beginning to understand the cultural connections between their own ancestors and the ethnic minorities that inhabit the Central Highlands.

The various programs of the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities in Hanoi have received some 27 grants from the Ford Foundation over the last 20 years, in particular for research, training and important conferences and workshops. Support for the work of the Institute of Folklore Studies on customary law dates from 1998.

"After reading these customary laws, some officials are now aware that minority cultures might be more highly developed than their own."

Ngo Duc Thinh





Journalism in a Changing America: Covering Race and Ethnicity

The 2000 census paints a striking portrait of the United States, an ensemble of 281 million people who share many common interests and embrace many disparate identities. Some 87 million Americans (nearly one in three) are African-American, Asian-American or Hispanic; 56 million (one in five) are immigrants or children of immigrants; and nearly 7 million consider themselves multiracial, a new category that reflects changing perceptions of racial and ethnic identity.

Despite such cultural and demographic shifts, the news media seldom discuss race and ethnicity with much complexity or depth. There are journalists whose work dispels stereotypes, illuminates social problems, attracts new readers and viewers and sparks civic dialogue, but they remain rare exceptions in a newsroom culture that is often better at polarizing issues than clarifying them.

After 26 years at *The Milwaukee Journal*, including eight as its top editor, Sig Gissler knew that meaningful change would require constructive appeals to key decision makers. In 1999, as an associate professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Gissler launched an annual workshop aimed at promoting innovative approaches to covering race and ethnicity. The strategy is simple: identify and honor the journalists who are doing good work and then ask them to teach others.

The awards serve several functions. In the eyes of the news editors and producers, they confer legitimacy on a difficult subject that it is often thought easier to avoid. They reward journalists whose work takes a fresh and imaginative look at diversity in America, tackles it with candor, provides context, dispels stereotypes and draws connections that help explain social problems. Finally, by showcasing creative approaches to covering race and ethnicity, the awards provide a range of evocative case studies for the Columbia Workshop on Journalism, Race and Ethnicity.

The workshop seeks to improve coverage by engaging the industry's "gatekeepers"—the midlevel editors and broadcast directors who have the power to assign stories, allocate resources and approve promotions. During three or four days, these decision makers share experiences and discuss techniques with honorees. Together, participants identify practical ways to tackle major projects on racial issues, tap into ethnic communities and write "outside your own race."

The workshop's organizers recently distilled those lessons into a handbook of best practices for covering race and ethnicity. Twelve hundred copies have been distributed through the Associated Press Managing

Editors Association, and 50 more have been sold to the top editors of a major newspaper chain. The text is also available on the workshop's Web site.

To date, the workshop has drawn more than 140 gatekeepers and honorees, from small newspapers as well as major television networks. Moreover, it has spawned an informal support network. Evaluation studies show that participants continue to share ideas, implement strategies discussed at the workshop, initiate new projects on race and ethnicity and feel more confident about tackling sensitive and controversial topics. There are also signs that the workshop is having a ripple effect within newsrooms.

"I am proud to say that 11 of the 20 winners in 2002 were produced by news organizations that had sent gatekeepers or presenters to previous workshops," says Arlene Morgan, who succeeded Gissler as the workshop's director. A former assistant manager at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Morgan says the workshop has shown that positive role models can have palpable impact on news coverage.

The Ford Foundation has supported the workshops on journalism, race and ethnicity at Columbia University since their inception, beginning with a planning grant in 1998.

"This workshop has shown that positive role models can have palpable impact on news coverage."

Arlene Morgan

Open Skies: Television Documentaries and Democracy in Russia

With a mandate to foster and support independent media as an important component of Russian society's transition to democracy, Internews Russia, which focuses primarily on broadcasters, has been operating since 1992. It began as a local branch of the United States Internews Network and, since 1993, has been a Russian-registered Autonomous Non-Commercial Organization, as NGOs are called in Russia. Projects range from short- and long-term training of journalists, managers, presenters, producers and technicians from the hundreds of new regional TV and radio stations that have appeared in Russia since 1990 to media and Internet legal support and national media competitions.

A fundamental belief of Internews Russia is that the role and importance of documentary films is equivalent to that of nonfiction in the field of literature. What kind of open and pluralistic society could be built if all books on science, history or general knowledge suddenly vanished from the bookstores, and only fiction, comic books and daily newspapers were available to readers? Yet that is the equivalent of what occurred in Russia at the advent of commercial broadcasting in 1990, when high-quality documentaries virtually disappeared from its television. As Manana Aslamasyan, the general director of Internews Russia, remarked, "What's happening now is that we are reaping the fruits of our romantic illusions about democracy." To make democracy work for people and society, public interest content needs to be included in the media. Thus Internews Russia's longest-running project, *Open Skies*, now in its ninth year, endeavors to compensate for this lack. To date, *Open Skies* has distributed more than 2,000 of the world's best documentary films, both Russian and international, and has helped to complete and release more than 70 Russian nonfiction films.

The *Open Skies—Culture for the New Millennium* project, which started in 2000, added a national production competition where the six winners were each awarded full production budgets to produce feature documentaries on Russian art in the twentieth century, and created a distribution process that for the first time uses large national channels and networks as well as regional stations.

The production competition was successful on many levels. Significantly for Russian filmmakers, the films were judged by an international jury of preeminent television experts for the very first time in Russian documentary history. The participation level was exceptional, and the six films produced have already won several prizes, most notably the Nika (the Russian equivalent of the Oscar in the United States) for the best feature

documentary of the year. They attracted outstanding viewership during their premieres on national television in Russia and have generated considerable interest among international broadcasters and distributors.

Internews Russia also acquired, adapted for the Russian market, then packaged and aired on national stations 65 hours of the best international documentaries on arts and culture from countries including France, Italy, Mexico and the United States. The premiere of Ken Burns' landmark documentary series "Jazz" on Russia's number one channel was a major event—more than 20 million viewers watched each episode, a sizable number for Russian television. The *Open Skies* tradition of the dissemination of cultural programs on both national and regional levels continues to flourish.

Although changing legislation has precluded the hoped-for self-sustainability of documentary based projects, *Open Skies* has achieved almost all its original goals. Leading Russian television managers have until now believed that quality documentaries cannot thrive in their country; Internews Russia has successfully proved that they can.

The Ford Foundation has supported Internews projects around the world since 1994—in particular in Palestine, Indonesia and the Balkans—and Internews Russia since 1996, with the support for this documentary film project provided in 2000.

"What's happening now is that we are reaping the fruits of our romantic illusions about democracy."

Manana Aslamasyan

НОВОСТИ ВРЕМЯ-МЕСТНОЕ





Mapping the Growing Religious Diversity of the United States

A recent headline in the Harvard University alumni magazine reads, “The Mosque Next Door.” It refers to the fact that in the United States a new mosque is being founded almost every 10 days. This may startle the average person in the street, but it is not at all surprising to Diana L. Eck, who heads The Pluralism Project at Harvard. Eck, professor of comparative religion and Indian studies, leads a team of scholars and graduate students who are mapping and studying the growing religious diversity of the United States especially associated with new immigrants. Now an unparalleled national resource for scholars, policy makers, religious leaders and activists, as well as the media, the project was launched more than a decade ago, when few recognized the dramatic changes taking place in the American religious landscape.

These changes, brought about largely by the Immigration Act of 1965 that eliminated national quotas, have resulted in the arrival in the United States of Muslims, practitioners of Yoruba and other traditional African religions, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Zoroastrians and new groups of Jews and Catholics from countries around the world, thus contributing to the rich diversity of spiritual life in the United States. Alongside long-established religious minorities—both indigenous and immigrant—these new immigrants complement the various Christian and Jewish traditions brought mainly to the United States from Europe. Quickly taking root at the community and national level, these traditions that newer immigrants bring with them—once labeled “non-Western”—are now also American religions, and they are changing in response to American life. One dimension of this transformation is that culturally diverse forms of Islam, Buddhism and other religions, widely separated elsewhere in the world, are now neighbors in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and other American cities.

At the same time, too, these religions are changing American society. There are Islamic centers and mosques, Hindu and Buddhist temples and meditation centers in many towns, rural areas and almost every major American city. People of different religions, races and cultures are encountering one another on Main Street, in schools and colleges, in the workplace and in a wide range of public and private institutions. As Eck has pointed out, “The United States is becoming one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world”; yet “pluralism is not a ‘given’ but an achievement.” How Americans of all faiths—and those who are secularists—go beyond mere diversity and begin to genuinely engage one another’s differences, and whether they can shape a new and healthy

pluralistic society, are some of the most important questions facing the United States today and in the years ahead.

The Pluralism Project disseminates the findings from its research through broadcast media and publications, through the creation of a network of scholars and through symposia that explore the implications of growing religious diversity for public policies and discourse. The CD-ROM “On Common Ground: World Religions in America,” along with its affiliated Web site, provides an overview of America’s many religious traditions through text, images, voices and music. It also provides perspectives on the fundamental questions of religious freedom, religious diversity and interreligious encounters that have shaped United States history and continue to challenge Americans today. In addition, the publication *World Religions in Boston*, a useful local resource, has provided a model now used in many cities across the United States and is available in its entirety on the project’s Web site.

The project continues to increase its outreach to other mapping activities around the country and, increasingly, overseas, while also extending its research by involving the participation of affiliate religion departments, theological schools and researchers, and by offering teaching development grants to schoolteachers. The Pluralism Project’s major purpose is to ensure that, in the future, the United States remains committed to defending all forms of religious practice and worship as a bulwark of democratic freedom.

The Ford Foundation has made three major grants since 1997 to support the Pluralism Project’s research, its dissemination through symposia, publications and the broadcast media, and for the creation of a network of scholars.

“Pluralism is not a ‘given’ but an achievement.”

Diana L. Eck

Gender Inequality, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS: The Work of the International Center for Research on Women

When she discusses the spread of AIDS in the developing world, Geeta Rao Gupta, president of the nonprofit International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in Washington, D.C., emphasizes that gender inequality is as important a cause of the epidemic as poverty, war, genocide, drug use or prostitution.

Gender inequality is especially visible in developing countries, where women constitute the fastest-growing category of new HIV infections, and where ICRW conducts its research as well as providing technical assistance and advocacy. Gupta says that gender inequality increases both women and men's vulnerability to AIDS, explaining that, "Gender is not sex. It is society's way of defining the roles, responsibilities and behavioral traits of women and men." Those definitions foster society's unequal treatment of both, inhibiting many not only from being able to protect themselves—and others—against AIDS but also from leading safe and sexually fulfilling lives. Given the entrenchment of gender inequality, nothing but a complete cultural transformation would seem likely to eradicate it, a prospect that could easily invite resistance. But Gupta is optimistic: "I like to believe that if you give women power, you're not taking away men's power, you're adding to the power of the entire household, the community, the country."

Culture is not immutable, but change has to come from within a society, because people feel the need for it. As an example, Gupta cites an early ICRW research project. In a Bombay slum years ago, when the AIDS epidemic was not yet visible in India, ICRW researchers set out to find out what girls knew about their sexuality and about HIV and how ICRW could provide sex education. They had planned to bring girls together in small focus groups to talk about their bodies and sexual practices, as well as what they feared and wanted to know. Fathers and older women in the community wouldn't let their daughters attend the group discussions, however, worrying that it would make their girls promiscuous. The researchers then came up with the idea of talking to the whole community about what it is to be a girl, how it is when daughters cannot speak up in a marriage or do nothing if their husband is treating them badly or putting them at risk. When those conversations began at the community level, fathers wanted to know if their daughters could join the focus group. Later, when the researchers went forward with the sex education intervention, the room was packed.

ICRW works under the assumption that many years of shame and silence around sexuality have had hidden costs and that, because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is important to get past this silence. The center is doing research in Tanzania, Zambia, Ethiopia and Vietnam to understand stigma and discrimination in society, the experience of people living with HIV, and ways in which such stigma can be diminished. And, realizing that community involvement is necessary, the center has advised UNICEF to set up community advisory boards where men, older women and representatives from all segments of society would come up with ways to reduce stigma and increase the use of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care services.

As Gupta puts it: "AIDS is teaching us the importance of community involvement, of partnerships between governments and non-governmental organizations and that it is important not to marginalize, not to discriminate. It's teaching us to work toward gender equality. Gender inequality kills people. It's no longer just costly. It's fatal." ICRW's continuing work on both sexuality and HIV/AIDS is helping to diminish the prospect of such a bleak future.

The Ford Foundation has for the last two decades supported women's reproductive health programs and is increasingly supporting research and advocacy on sexual health and well-being.

"Gender inequality is no longer just costly. It's fatal."

Geeta Rao Gupta



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Contact:

El Warsha Arts Foundation
Hassan El-Gerety, Artistic Director
17, Sherif Street, Apt. 8
Cairo, Egypt
T/F: 20-2-3959286
E: elwarsh@stamet.com.eg

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Contact:

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
Judith Jamison, Artistic Director
Sharon Luckman, Executive Director
211 West 61st Street, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10023
T: 212-767-0590
F: 212-767-0625
www.alvinailey.org

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Contact:

Centre for Women's Development Studies
Vina Mazumdar, Director
25 Bhai Vir Singh Marg,
New Delhi 110001, India
T: 91-11-3345530/3365541/3366930
F: 91-11-3346044

Research Centre for Women's Studies

Neera Desai (Retired Director)
SNDT Women's University
Mumbai, India
E: desaineera@hotmail.com
www.sndt.edu

Brazil: Decentralization and School Improvement

Contact:

Katia Siqueira de Freitas
Coordinator: PGP/LIDERE - ISP - UFBA
Universidade Federal da Bahia Av.
Adhemar de Barros, Campus Universitário de Ondina, Pavilhão IV, Sala 219
Bairro de Ondina
40170-110 Salvador, Brazil
T/F: 71-235-8290
E: katiassf@ufba.br
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Contact:

Middle College HS National Consortium
Cecilia Cunningham, Director
LaGuardia Community College/CUNY
31-10 Thomson Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11101
T: 718-349-4000
F: 718-349-4003
E: CECCUNNIN@aol.com
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Contact:

Institute of Folk Culture
Professor Ngo Duc Think
Director, NCSH
27 Tran Xuan Soan
Hanoi, Vietnam
E: ifs@netnam.vn

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Contact:

Graduate School of Journalism
Arlene Morgan
Columbia University
2950 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
T: 212-854-5377
F: 212-854-7837
E: am494@columbia.edu
www.jm.columbia.edu/workshops

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Contact:

Internews Russia
Tsentralnyi Dom Zhurnalista
8A Nikitskii Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Moscow 121019, Russia
T: 7-095-956-2248
F: 7-095-291-2174
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Contact:

Pluralism Project
Professor Diana L. Eck
Harvard University
Committee on the Study of Religion
Barker Center
12 Quincy Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-0279
T: 617-495-5781
F: 617-493-1602
E: Dianaeck@fas.harvard.edu
www.pluralism.org

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Contact:

International Center for Research on Women
Geeta Rao Gupta, President
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 302
Washington, DC, 20036
T: (202) 797-0007
F: (202) 797-0020
E: info@icrw.org
www.icrw.org

Knowledge, Creativity and Freedom Program Staff are located in the following Ford Foundation Offices:

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F: 7-095-935-7052
E: ford-moscow@fordfound.org

UNITED STATES

New York, NY (Headquarters)

Serves: United States

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New York, NY 10017
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F: 212-351-3677
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Carla Hall Design Group

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Ken Wilson

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