

BUILDING INSTITUTIONS AND NETWORKS

We Believe in Resilience in People

This video transcript captures an interview with Heather McGhee, trustee emeritus and former president of Demos, a public policy organization working toward a just, inclusive democracy—and one of the first organizations to receive a BUILD grant. The Ford Foundation’s BUILD initiative provides grantees with multiyear flexible funding, enabling them to build more durable, resilient, and impactful organizations and networks.

Transcript begins.

[A Black woman with long dreadlocks sits for an interview.]

HEATHER MCGHEE: Ford Foundation support has been essential to Demos’s growth over the past nearly 20 years. But there was a real moment, a catalytic moment, when Ford decided to invest in the institution of Demos with a multiyear BUILD grant.

When I became president of Demos, I undertook a multiyear racial equity organizational transformation process. I knew that it would be the single, most powerful thing that we could do to transform our organization. I didn’t have a project grant for the racial equity organizational transformation work, but I knew, once we set out on the conversation with the BUILD grant, that that was exactly the kind of work that could be supported by Ford. We have been able to invest in understanding how much our group identities shape not only the external circumstances in the world, our politics, our economy, and our society, but also how we as leaders and people who come to work every day show up and interact with one another.

The BUILD grant has also enabled us to really invest in leadership development for our young staff, to give them the tools to be leaders in really multicultural and diverse spaces, to be able to evaluate their own work, and to be able to measure their own impact in relationship to their peers. An organization with a social justice mission in this day and age is only going to be as successful as its core infrastructure, and that’s what the BUILD grant really represents and understands.

[on-screen text: We believe in people.
We believe in building resilience.
We believe in reimagining philanthropy.
fordfoundation.org/build]

[on-screen graphic: Ford Foundation logo]

End of transcript.