

The Ford Foundation's Values and Grant Letter

The Ford Foundation and the organizations that we support seek to:

- reduce poverty and injustice,
- promote democratic values,
- increase international cooperation, and
- advance human achievement.

This work rests on our shared commitment to engagement with diverse peoples, to non-violence, and to the rule of law. Ford's grantmaking has always reflected these values, including when we support people struggling for freedom against harsh repression or other difficult circumstances. We believe this is what the public expects and has a right to expect from a philanthropic and charitable organization.

In January, 2004, the Ford Foundation added text to our standard letter that all grantees worldwide must sign to receive funds, stating that grantees will not use Ford or other resources to promote or engage in violence, terrorism, bigotry or the destruction of any state. We did so for two reasons. First, some of our grantees work in places of conflict and violence as well as in other challenging contexts around the globe. We want to send a very clear message about our values to applicants and others, including people who may question the aims and character of our work. Second, by communicating the responsibilities that we take very seriously, the new language helps protect the freedom from undue regulation that charitable philanthropic organizations now enjoy.

To date, Ford has issued hundreds of the new grant letters around the world, and nearly all of the grantees that received them have signed and returned them to us. We have also received a large number of letters, emails, and other messages expressing appreciation for our clear statement of values in this period in which concerns abound about prejudice, violence, and terrorism.

We have, however, also heard from a small number of grantees with concerns about the implications of our new grant letter language, for example with regard to academic freedom on college and university campuses. In response, we have stated unequivocally that we support academic freedom and do not intend to interfere with the speech of faculty and students on university campuses. Our grant letter relates to

the official speech of the university and to the speech that the university explicitly endorses. In other exchanges, we have stated clearly the distinction between promoting the destruction of a state, prohibited by our grant letter, and expressing a critique of government policy. We vigorously support the promotion and protection of constitutional rights and fund organizations around the world that engage in test case litigation and legal representation, and more broadly, the defense of civil and human rights, even when these are controversial.

The Ford Foundation remains committed to these fundamental principles as we work with men and women around the globe.

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