

REPORT OF THE STUDY  
FOR THE FORD FOUNDATION  
ON POLICY AND PROGRAM

*November, 1949*

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## PREFACE

**I**N THE Fall of 1948, anticipating final settlement of Federal Estate matters and the probable receipt during 1949 and 1950 of income from the gifts of Mr. Henry Ford and Mr. Edsel Ford in amounts sufficient to permit The Ford Foundation to undertake a greatly expanded program, the Trustees asked Mr. H. Rowan Gaither, Jr. to organize and direct a planning study of policy and program for the Foundation.

On November 22, 1948, the Chairman of the Trustees wrote Mr. Gaither as follows:

“The Foundation was established for the general purpose of advancing human welfare, but the manner of realizing this objective was left to the Trustees. Now that the time is near when the Foundation can initiate an active program, I think that its aims should be more specifically defined.

“The people of this country and mankind in general are confronted with problems which are vast in number and exceedingly disturbing in significance. While important efforts to solve these problems are being made by government, industry, foundations, and other institutions, it is evident that new resources, such as those of this Foundation, if properly employed, can result in significant contributions.

“We want to take stock of our existing knowledge, institutions, and techniques in order to locate the areas where the problems are most important and where additional efforts toward their solution are most needed.

“You are to have complete authority and responsibility in this undertaking, and you are to have a high degree of discretion, subject, of course, to general policy approval of the Trustees, in the means you

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employ and in the choice of consultants and other personnel . . . We want the best thought available in the United States as to how this Foundation can most effectively and intelligently put its resources to work for human welfare.”

Pursuant thereto, a Study Committee was appointed to act as independent consultants to the Foundation. This Committee was made up of men widely known and respected in such fields as education, medicine and public health, the natural sciences, political science and government, the social sciences, the humanities, and modern business and industry.

The Study Committee agreed at the outset that the purpose of the Study was not to accumulate a comprehensive catalogue of projects which the Foundation might undertake, but to block out in general terms those critical areas where problems were most serious and where the Foundation might make the most significant contributions to human welfare.

The Study Committee also agreed at the outset that it should view the needs of mankind in the broadest possible perspective, free from the limitations of special professional interests, if it was to discover the most important problems and opportunities of human welfare. The Study Committee invited each member to ignore the confines of his specialty or profession and bring to the Committee the best thinking in his field concerning the most pressing problems of human welfare generally, whether they lay in his field or elsewhere. By agreement therefore each Committee member respected the boundaries of his own experience and training only for the purposes of administrative coordination.

In the opinion of the Trustees, the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee were influenced by and responsive to the best American judgment of our times. Advisers represented every major segment of American life and every major discipline and field of knowl-

edge. In the area of government and international affairs the Committee secured the opinions and points of view of officials in state and federal government, representatives of the United Nations and its affiliated agencies, business and professional leaders, and the heads of private organizations concerned with world affairs. In this and other fields the presidents of many leading universities contributed generously. The views of military leaders were sought and obtained. The viewpoint of labor was solicited. Conferences were held with the heads of many small enterprises — often sole proprietorships — as well as heads of large corporations.

The work of the Study Committee was concluded in November 1949, when its General Report containing the Committee's conclusions and recommendations was submitted to the Trustees. It is significant that this Report, which followed some 22 special and individual reports, carried with it unanimous Committee endorsement.

The Trustees of The Ford Foundation wish to express their grateful thanks and deep appreciation to all those who contributed so generously and so effectively to the Study.

The work of the Study Committee, assisted by its Staff, represents, in the judgment of the Trustees, one of the most thorough, painstaking, and significant inquiries ever made into the whole broad question of public welfare and human needs. Their recommendations were accepted unanimously by the Trustees and are believed to represent the best thinking in the United States today.

The findings of the Study Committee are, in the opinion of the Trustees, of sufficient general interest and importance to warrant the publication of the General Report in its entirety. Publication of the Report was therefore authorized by special action of the Trustees on September 6, 1950. The opinions expressed in the Report are, of course, those of members of the Study Committee and not necessarily those

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of the Trustees. Action taken by the Trustees on the Report, as well as a summary of the considerations underlying that action, has already been published in the Report of September 27, 1950, by the Trustees of The Ford Foundation.

HENRY FORD II  
*Chairman, Board of Trustees*  
*The Ford Foundation*

October, 1950

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE MISSION of the Study Committee was to make recommendations based upon the best available thought concerning the ways in which The Ford Foundation can most effectively and intelligently put its resources to work for human welfare.

In preparing this report and its supporting monographs and memoranda the Committee has consulted more than a thousand persons, men and women of recognized ability and reputation in varied fields of activity and in many parts of the country. Among these were business, labor, and professional leaders, all of whom gave their time and counsel without stint. Numerous university faculties spontaneously organized meetings and conferences and voluntarily prepared reports for the Committee. Unsolicited letters, many containing valuable suggestions, were received from numerous parts of the United States and from several foreign countries. The dominant tenor of these reports and letters was one of unselfish eagerness to assist the Committee's work. The knowledge that at this critical time a great new foundation dedicated to human welfare was seeking counsel on basic policies and programs seems to have caught the imagination and raised the spirits of individuals throughout the world. All were quick to appreciate both its tremendous opportunity and its equally great public responsibility.

The Study Committee had four major objectives as it collected and analyzed data from hundreds of interviews and conferences and from thousands of pages of written materials. The first was to arrive at a clearer understanding of the meaning of "human welfare", as this term, though the keystone of the Foundation's charter, is not further defined or elaborated there. The Committee's conception of human welfare is stated in

Chapter I. As will be seen, it is in large measure synonymous with a declaration of democratic ideals. This concept emerged from the study materials and was present in the minds of the Committee and its advisers, either implicitly or explicitly, throughout their work. It is the consensus of men of judgment today that the real hope for the advancement of human welfare lies in the reaffirmation in practice of democratic principles.

The Committee's second task was to consider the ways in which human welfare is most thwarted and threatened; in other words, to evaluate the magnitude and intensity of the major problems confronting mankind today. The considerable evidence which the Committee received concerning these problems is reviewed in Chapter II. In its analysis, as well as in its later formulation of programs, the Committee found that the democratic concept lent perspective and served as a standard of judgment.

In the Committee's opinion the evidence points to the fact that today's most critical problems are those which are social rather than physical in character — those which arise in man's relation to man rather than in his relation to nature. Here, it was concluded, is the realm where the greatest problems exist, where the least progress is being made, and where the gravest threat to democracy and human welfare lies.

In Chapter III the Committee reports on its third task — that of proposing, in broad terms, programs which The Ford Foundation might sponsor in attempts to cope with some of these problems in our society. In formulating these programs the Committee consulted leaders and workers in many fields, considered the nature and extent of current efforts, and received advice for important new work. The Committee believes that these problems may be attacked and human welfare furthered by programs in the areas recommended in Chapter III: the establishment of peace, the strengthening of democracy, the strengthen-



ing of the economy, the improvement of education, and the better understanding of man.

Lastly, the Committee sought to define the type of organization and operating procedures most appropriate for programs of the kind proposed and for a modern foundation with resources as large as those of The Ford Foundation. The Committee's recommendations on this subject, which are set forth in Chapter IV, rest on a careful study of the policies, procedures, and practices of the larger foundations, and upon the experiences of their trustees, officers, and recipients of grants. Such proposals as have been made are designed to maintain freshness, boldness, and flexibility of operation as well as to ensure a high degree of public responsibility.

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November 1, 1949