



# **Ford Foundation records, Africa and Middle East Programs (AME), Program Staff Files**

---

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on August 23, 2019.  
Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue  
Sleepy Hollow 10591

[archive@rockarch.org](mailto:archive@rockarch.org)

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

---

## Table of Contents

---

Summary Information .....	3
Organizational History .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	7
Arrangement .....	8
Administrative Information .....	8
Related Materials .....	9
Collection Inventory .....	9
Meeting and Discussion Group Records .....	9
Memoranda .....	11
Reports .....	12
Trustee-Related Records .....	12

---

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository:</b>	Rockefeller Archive Center
<b>Creator:</b>	Ford Foundation
<b>Title:</b>	Ford Foundation records, Africa and Middle East Programs (AME), Program Staff Files
<b>ID:</b>	FA503
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1965-1976, 1987-1994
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1.71 Cubic Feet 4 letter document boxes, 1 half-letter document box.
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>The Africa and Middle East (AME) Program originated in 1958 as the Near East and Africa Program, a regional program area within Overseas Development. It became part of the International Division in 1966 when the Overseas Development Program, along with other international Foundation programs became part of one International Division. A subsequent restructuring of the International Division occurred in 1980-1981 and led to the creation of the Developing Countries Program (DCP). Three new regional offices serving Africa and the Middle East were created within DCP: Middle East and North Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and West Africa. In 1989, the AME Program was reconstituted as a full program and continued to administer programs in the three regions in addition to a fourth, newly created Study Group on South Africa. The Africa and Middle East Programs files span in date from 1965-1976 and 1987-1994. The collection consists of the combined office files of AME program staff members Robert H. Edwards, Dr. John D. Gerhart, Steven M. Riskin, and Anna Wadia. File contents include correspondence, memoranda, meeting and conference minutes and agendas, reports, briefing papers, and information about various trips of Foundation Trustees to Africa. The bulk of the files are meeting and discussion group records from staff participation at internal Foundation meetings and external discussion groups facilitating collaboration with other philanthropies for common goals. One highlight is the rapporteur notes documenting the Foundation's 1989 Human Rights Meeting in Dakar, Senegal. The notes contain an overview of the Foundation's work to date in the field of Human Rights.</p>

## Preferred Citation

Information regarding the Rockefeller Archive Center's preferred elements and forms of citation can be found at <http://www.rockarch.org/research/citations.php>

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Organizational History

---

The Africa and Middle East (AME) Program originated in 1958 as the Near East and Africa Program, a regional program area within Overseas Development. It became part of the International Division in 1966 when the Overseas Development Program, along with other international Foundation programs became part of one International Division. A subsequent restructuring of the International Division occurred in 1980-1981 and led to the creation of the Developing Countries Program (DCP). Three new regional offices serving Africa and the Middle East were created within DCP: Middle East and North Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and West Africa. In 1989, the AME Program was reconstituted as a full program and continued to administer programs in the three regions in addition to a fourth, newly created Study Group on South Africa.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical Note

---

Robert H. Edwards joined the Foundation as a Program Officer in 1966, and rose to be Head of the Middle East and Africa Program. He left the Foundation in 1977 to serve as President of Carleton College.

Dr. John D. Gerhart received his M.P.A. from Princeton in 1969 and began his career at Ford Foundation as an Economic Advisor to the Government of Botswana. Over the next thirty years, he held a variety of positions at the Foundation. From Program Advisor for Rural Development in Kenya, he moved to Cairo in 1980 to work as the Ford Foundation Representative for North Africa and the Middle East. In 1985, he was named Deputy Vice President for Developing Countries, a position that he held until 1989 when he became Director for Africa and the Middle East. He worked as the Foundation's representative in South Africa from 1989 to 1993. He died in July 2003.

Steven M. Riskin worked for the Ford Foundation for eight years between 1985 and 1992, initially as an Assistant Program Officer for AME Programs and then as Program Officer.

Anna Wadia succeeded Mr. Riskin as Program Officer in 1992 and served until 1994.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical / Historical

---

### Segment One: International Activities of the Ford Foundation: An Overview

The Foundation's aspiration to become a national and international philanthropy for the advancement of human welfare was first formally expressed in the seminal 1949 report of the Gaither Study Committee, Report of the Study for the Ford Foundation on Policy and Program (RAC Library, call letters 361.7 GAI ), which was commissioned by the Board of Trustees to chart the Foundation's future. Foundation Trustees launched Ford's international grantmaking activities in 1950 when they approved the committee's report and its embrace of peace, democracy, and freedom. Since then, the Foundation has tackled these goals using a variety of strategies and responding to changing contexts, from the Cold War to the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and beyond.

Toward the Foundation's aspirational goal, "the establishment of peace", its international activities have comprised a wide range of conceptual approaches and focus areas. These include international affairs, international studies, international understanding, arms control and disarmament, international law, international economic concerns, and overseas development in nearly every region of the world. Three distinct periods emerge for the international grantmaking defined by external contextual changes and internal changes in Foundation leadership and structures: the expansion era of 1950-1965; the transition and restructuring years of 1966-1988; and the post-1989 shift away from Cold War dichotomies. During each of the distinct historical periods the consistent objectives were: 1) to ensure freedom and democracy in developed countries; 2) to foster education and international understanding in all countries; and 3) to contribute to the social, economic, and political development of less developed countries.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical / Historical

---

### Segment 2. Period Summary - The Expansion Era 1950-1965

With the ever-increasing budget and trustee willingness to invade capital, presidents Hoffman, Gaither and Heald oversaw vast growth in the Foundation's international activities in the United States, other developed countries and developing countries. Activities crossed disciplines, institutions, and national boundaries, although few crossed intra-foundation boundaries. Under the three presidents, Foundation staff in various domestic and international offices from New York interacted with the regional and country offices headed by representatives. Usually in this period, however, these offices in fact worked

more closely with local governments than with New York staff, reinforcing the commitment to locally led social and economic development in less-developed countries.

The shared values of this early period reflected as much the continuing competition between the Communist and capitalist worlds as the concerns about maintaining peace. The Cold War provided the contextual continuity for grantmaking on the core themes of increasing American understanding of the rest of the world, building and strengthening connections not only with European and Asian democracies but also with Eastern European countries, the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical / Historical

---

### Segment 3. Period Summary - Transition and Restructuring 1966-1988

During this era, the Foundation's earlier interest in business and the economy evolved into a commitment to improving conditions for people living on the margins of society. The Ford Foundation promoted advancements in women's rights around the globe and introduced micro-lending into grantmaking. At the same time, the economic issues that were shaping program strategies also affected the Foundation's assets. Severe cuts resulted in a significant restructuring of country programs and reduced budgets across all programs.

Even with the cuts in country offices, in the 1970s Ford grantees in developing countries received approximately 80% of the International Division budget. The remaining fifth went to Population, Development Studies, and International Affairs. Although representing a much smaller piece, the International Security and Arms Control program from 1973 was the Foundation's most concerted effort to make meaningful inroads in disarmament and nuclear issues - those challenges most directly linked to the Foundation's historic concern for peace. By 1979, the Ford Foundation was the biggest funder of arms control as a field, both in the U.S. and overseas.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical / Historical

---

### Segment 4. Period Summary - The Post-1989 Shift Away from Cold War Dichotomies

Franklin Thomas's presidency, lasting until his retirement in 1995, was defined by a commitment to connect the Foundation's US and international activities around a few key themes. These themes were addressed through grants that created private sector partnerships, enhanced support for local community groups, and enlarged initiatives to promote human rights, with special attention to women's rights. Throughout Thomas's tenure, Ford staff reinforced his special commitment to bolstering marginalized

communities and broadening access to the law and educational opportunity. The Ford Foundation led the way in building the fields of international security studies, arms control, human rights, and governance. Moreover, in this period, Ford was innovative in drawing together the fields of international cooperation and human rights into one program.

Susan Berresford in her tenure as president from 1996-1997 continued and expanded the activities she helped initiate under Thomas. She and her colleagues increased support for the arts and established a variety of major international collaborative efforts implementing the concept of one foundation. Ford staff in this period drew on the Foundation's time-tested grantmaking strategies (supporting individuals and new institutions as needed), while concentrating on under-addressed issues and underserved populations. With Berresford's encouragement, Foundation staff explicitly took into account the new global context, increasing opportunities for inclusion of disadvantaged populations in all of their activities.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Scope and Contents

---

The Africa and Middle East Programs files span 1965-1976 and 1987-1994. The collection is comprised of the combined office files of Robert H. Edwards, Dr. John D. Gerhart, Steven M. Riskin, and Anna Wadia. The largest group of records is Series I: Meetings and Discussion Group Records. The files consist of meeting-related records, memoranda concerning grants and politics, and reports. These document staff participation in Foundation meetings and in discussion groups that brought together representatives from different philanthropies to discuss common goals. A highlight from this series are the Rapporteur Notes from a 1989 Dakar Human Rights Meeting which provide an overview of the Foundation's work in the field of Human Rights.

### Series III. Reports, 1965-1990 (bulk 1989-1990)

This series includes a 1965 report on "Planning the Receipt of Aid" and a 1990 program strategy paper on "Planning for Democratic Governance and Public Policy in Eastern and Southern Africa."

### Series IV. Trustee-Related Records, 1991-1992

This series documents visits by several Foundation trustees to Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal and Zimbabwe. The files hold correspondence, notes, travel agenda, briefing material, and biographical information about the trustees.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Arrangement

---

The collection is arranged into 4 series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Publication Statement

Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue  
Sleepy Hollow 10591

[archive@rockarch.org](mailto:archive@rockarch.org)

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Ford Foundation archive was deposited at RAC in 2011. Ford Foundation records, correspondence, reports, program files and officers papers were transferred to, and accessioned by, RAC beginning in 2011. Accessions continue as necessary.

### Provenance

This collection combines the office files of four Africa and Middle East Programs staff members: Robert H. Edwards (1965-1977), John Gerhart (1988-1992), Steven M. Riskin (1985-1994) and Anna Wadia (1993-1994). The Ford Foundation Archives received the office files in five accessions in 2004 and 2010. Ms. Wadia's files evidently were misattributed to Stephen Weissman and Mora Mclean when they later were packed and sent to storage by program staff.

### Processing Information

The original volume of 8 cubic feet was reduced during processing to 1.8 cubic feet.

Duplicates, reference files, and chronological files primarily consisting of form rejection letters for unsolicited grant requests were not retained.



## Conditions Governing Use

Completion of a use agreement is required prior to providing scholarly access. See RAC Head of Reference (or applicable designee) for details. Ford Foundation holds title, copyright and literary rights in the collection, in so far as it holds them. The Rockefeller Archive Center has authority to grant permission to cite and publish material from the collection for scholarly purposes. Permission to publish extensive excerpts, or material in its entirety, will be referred to the Ford Foundation.

## Conditions Governing Access

Records more than 10 years old are open for research with select materials restricted as noted. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Related Materials

---

### Separated Materials

Appendix A: Reports – Unpublished reports written by Ford Foundation staff and consultants were removed from their original folders, scanned and transferred to the Archives' collection of staff and consultant reports. See Appendix A for a list of these reports and their specific assigned number. The reports are listed in alphabetical order by author. The assigned number may be used to access reports in the online catalog.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Collection Inventory

---

### Meeting and Discussion Group Records, 1966-1976, 1987-1992

#### Scope and Contents

This series is comprised of correspondence, agenda, rapporteur notes and memoranda from Foundation staff who attended meetings and discussion groups. The records document internal Foundation meetings and working groups such as division conferences, as well as external meetings, conferences and working groups where Foundation staff met with representatives of other foundations or foreign governments. There also are files for the Donors in African Education working group and a file on the Ford Foundation's relations with the government of Sudan.

Title/Description	Instances
-------------------	-----------

Law and Development Conference -- reports (separated) and outline of possible topics, 1966-1968	box 1	folder 1
American Society of International Law -- Panel on U.S. Law Schools and Developing Countries by Robert H. Edwards, 1968 February 15	box 1	folder 2
International Legal Center -- Research and Training Committee (1 of 3), 1968-1975	box 1	folder 3
International Legal Center -- Research and Training Committee (2 of 3), 1968-1975	box 1	folder 4
International Legal Center -- Research and Training Committee (3 of 3), 1968-1975	box 1	folder 5
Committee on Women -- memoranda, reports, notes regarding the position of women at the Ford Foundation, 1971-1974	box 1	folder 6
International Division Conference, September 1975 (1 of 2), 1975 September-December	box 1	folder 7
International Division Conference, September 1975 (2 of 2), 1975 April-September	box 1	folder 8
Committee on Women -- memoranda and discussion papers on women's programming at the Ford Foundation, 1975-1976	box 2	folder 1
West Coast Trip -- Notes and Schedule, 1976	box 2	folder 2
Council on Foundations -- notes, correspondence and background for a meeting of the committee on international grantmaking, 1987-1988	box 2	folder 3
World Conference on Philanthropy, 1988-1989	box 2	folder 4
1989 Dakar Human Rights Meeting -- Rapporteur Notes, 1989	box 2	folder 5
Program Review 1989 -- Rapporteur Notes, 1989 January	box 2	folder 6
Donors in African Education, 1989-1990	box 2	folder 7
Interview Skills Seminar, 1989-1990	box 2	folder 8
Sudan Government Relations, 1990-1991	box 2	folder 9
Reproductive Health Meeting, 1990 June-December	box 2	folder 10
Sterling Forest/Tuxedo Governance Meeting, 1990 July-October	box 2	folder 11
African Development Finance Conference, 1990-1991	box 2	folder 12
Africa LEIG Meeting, 1990-1991	box 3	folder 1
Donors in African Education, 1991-1993	box 3	folder 2
African Museums Meeting, 1991 March-August	box 3	folder 3
MacArthur Foundation Meeting, 1991 March 4	box 3	folder 4
Council on Foundations, Chicago, Illinois, 1991 March-April	box 3	folder 5

Africa/Middle East Regional Program Review, 1991-1992	box 3	folder 6
Reproductive Health Meeting, 1991 August 7	box 3	folder 7
Rural Poverty and Resources Meeting, 1991-1992	box 3	folder 8
African Rural Poverty Meeting, 1991-1992	box 3	folder 9
Bellagio Conference, 1991-1992	box 3	folder 10
Nelson Mandela Luncheon, 1991 October-December	box 3	folder 11
Harvard Center for International Affairs -- Political Liberalization in Africa, 1991-1992	box 3	folder 12
DAE Working Group on HE, 1991-1992	box 3	folder 13
Africa Staff Meeting, 1991 December	box 3	folder 14
Worldwide International Affairs Program Meeting, 1991-1992	box 3	folder 15
South Africa, 1992 January-February	box 3	folder 16
International Conference on Culture and Development, 1992 February-May	box 3	folder 17
Namibia/South Africa, 1992 April-August	box 3	folder 18
John Gerhart Meeting Correspondence, 1992 May-November	box 3	folder 19
South Africa Visit, 1992 September	box 3	folder 20
South Africa Trip, 1992 October-December	box 3	folder 21

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Memoranda, 1965-1994, bulk 1985-1994

### Scope and Contents

This series combines the files of three past program officers. Anna Wadia's memo files for 1992-1994 focus on grant proposals or grant-related meetings. Her files also contain correspondence between program staff. Robert Edward's files hold Foundation memoranda on the U.S. Balance of Payments (1965-1968), and Steven Riskin's files describe the political situation and repercussions for ordinary Sudanese during the civil war in Sudan (1985-1992) and South African television and newspaper ownership (1992-1994).

Title/Description	Instances	
U.S. Balance of Payments, 1965-1968	box 4	folder 1
Sudan, 1985-1992	box 4	folder 2
Reflections on Foundation Programming Related to Disaster Preparedness and Response, 1989 February 10	box 4	folder 3
Higher Education in Africa, 1989-1993	box 4	folder 4
7th United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, June 27-29, 1990, 1990 July 9	box 4	folder 5

South Africa Media, 1992-1994	box 4	folder 6
Anna Wadia Memoranda File -- Meetings, Grant Updates (1 of 4), 1992	box 4	folder 7
Anna Wadia Memoranda File (2 of 4), 1993 January-July	box 4	folder 8
Anna Wadia Memoranda File (3 of 4), 1993 August-December	box 4	folder 9
Anna Wadia Memoranda File (4 of 4), 1994	box 4	folder 10

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Reports, 1965, 1989-1990

### Scope and Contents

This series includes a 1965 report on "Planning the Receipt of Aid" and a 1990 program strategy paper on "Planning for Democratic Governance and Public Policy in Eastern and Southern Africa."

Title/Description	Instances	
"Planning the Receipt of Aid" by O. S. Knowles, 1965 August	box 4	folder 11
"Programming for Democratic Governance and Public Policy in Eastern and Southern Africa: A Program Strategy Paper", 1990 January 2	box 4	folder 12

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Trustee-Related Records, 1991-1992

### Scope and Contents

This series documents visits by several Foundation trustees to Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal and Zimbabwe. The files hold correspondence, notes, travel agenda, briefing material, and biographical information about the trustees.

Title/Description	Instances	
Frances Fergusson Visit to Southern Africa, 1988-1992	box 4	folder 13
Senegal, 1991 August-October	box 4	folder 14
Preiskel/Ridings Africa Visit, 1991 September-November	box 4	folder 15
Nigeria, 1991 September-October	box 4	folder 16
Zimbabwe, 1991 September-October	box 4	folder 17
Namibia Visit, 1992 January-February	box 4	folder 18

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)