



Ford Foundation records, Reproductive Health and Population (RHP), Reproductive Health Group, Staff Meeting Files

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
Creator:	Ford Foundation
Title:	Ford Foundation records, Reproductive Health and Population (RHP), Reproductive Health Group, Staff Meeting Files
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Preferred Citation note

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Biographical / Historical

Segment One: Population Activities of the Ford Foundation: An Overview

The historical arc of the Ford Foundation's work in population covers the scientific, public health, social, cultural, economic, and policy issues associated with population growth, contraceptives, family planning, women's reproductive health, women's rights, gender rights, and related national policies and programs. Gradually, in response to changes internal and external to the Foundation, the program involved women in the research and policy aspects and of informing public debate and understanding.

In sum, the Foundation's broad swath of activities related to population and human reproduction represents a significant area of continuous attention from the 1950s until the present time. (It is important to note, however, that some aspects, such as the focus in in the 1960s on population-related scientific research, was an outlier in terms of the Foundation's overall emphasis.) Despite all the changes in leadership at the Foundation and consequent reorganizations, changes in local and global contexts, and changes in understanding of what constitutes effective work in population, the Ford Foundation has

maintained a commitment to this field directly related to the health and well-being of women, their families, and their communities.

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Biographical / Historical

Segment Four: Ford Foundation Population Activities, 1981-1992: Renaming and Refocusing the Population Program

In 1980, the new president of the Ford Foundation, Franklin A. Thomas, created two new divisions, (1) United States and International Affairs and (2) Developing Countries, each led by a vice president (two long-time staff members, respectively, Susan Berresford and William Carmichael). He also identified six program areas for work both in the US and overseas- Urban Poverty and the Disadvantaged (soon called Urban Poverty), Rural Poverty and Resources, Human Rights and Social Justice (soon, Human Rights and Governance), Education (soon, Education and Culture), International Political and Economic Issues (soon, International Affairs), and Governance and Public Policy (soon moved to Human Rights, and replaced by Program-Related Investments).

He indicated that the population work as it was conducted would be closed. The work was absorbed into a new area called, "Health, Nutrition and Population," within the International Division. Grants began to support more explicitly the relationship of population and family planning to broader health and development issues. A new focus developed around giving a "fair start" to infants and children. Harkavy, now based in the Urban Poverty Program, remained the responsible program staff member with the title, "chief program officer."

By 1982, however, another change took place: population was separated from health and nutrition. The Population Program regained its distinctive status as a separate initiative under International Affairs. It maintained its traditional scope on limiting population growth, assessing the impact of such growth on social and economic development, and developing new approaches to demographic analyses, along with fostering basic research on contraceptives and fertility control. The work on health and nutrition was taken over by the Urban Poverty program, which addressed the population-related issues of teenage pregnancy and child survival both in the United States and developing countries. Grants concerned with refugees and migration, along with reproductive health rights, were supported under two programs, Human Rights and Governance, and International Affairs.

In 1989, President Thomas implemented another reorganization of the Foundation's programs. He coalesced all of the programs under one vice president, Susan Berresford. Harkavy had retired in 1988, and was replaced in 1989 by José Barzelatto, who joined after serving as director of the Special Program on Human Reproduction at the World Health Organization. He was appointed senior program advisor and placed in the Foundation's Urban Poverty Program. With his appointment, and in the context of the reorganization, the Foundation conducted an external review of the work in population. Following the review, in 1991 Barzelatto was named director of the newly named population program, Reproductive Health and Population. Once again, the program became free standing, and Barzelatto reported directly

to Vice President Berresford. (An important staff note: Margaret Hempel was appointed in 1989 to work with Barzelatto, serving first with as assistant program officer and then moving with him to the new program, becoming deputy director in 1994. Hempel continued to work on reproductive health and population grants until 1999, when she assumed leadership positions outside the foundation. She returned in 2008 to direct the newly configured population program on Sexuality and Reproductive Health and Rights. In 2013, she became the head of the enlarged program focusing on Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice. She left the foundation in 2018).

As described in the 1990 Annual Report, the new Reproductive Health and Population Program built on and expanded the traditional focus on contraceptive research, demographic and social science research, and institution strengthening related to population and family planning. As part of the social science research and training efforts, the team introduced culture as an influential component of family planning programs. The program also gave special focus to the reproductive health issues affecting disadvantaged women in both rural and urban areas. In addition, the program began to support community-based reproductive health programs, women-centered programs in reproductive health including issues associated with maternal morbidity and mortality, and reproductive health rights.

With the increasing spread of HIV-AIDS both in the United States and around the world, the Foundation began to address the complex of issues associated with sexually transmitted diseases. The initial grants fostered public dialogue on the theme of HIV-AIDS, as well as supported the development of culturally appropriate ethical and legal frameworks in the context of women's reproductive health. The Foundation also supported projects that explicitly addressed issues of sexuality and sexual behavior.

During this period, the program actively collaborated with the Human Rights and Governance Programs around grants to improve women's role in society and their legal status. The work on refugees and migrants continued under Urban Poverty and International Affairs. Increasingly over the next few years, the program targeted international level activities, providing support for the 1994 UN Conference on Population in Cairo and the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing. Under Barzelatto's leadership, the program's activities ranged from the most grassroots projects to global strategies, with women always at the center.

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Scope and Contents

Staff meeting notes, agendas and associated background materials.

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Arrangement

Chronological

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Access note

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.

Conditions Governing Use note

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.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

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.

Processing Information

Level 1 Minimal Processing has been conducted to establish basic intellectual and physical control of the material and assess immediate preservation and conservation needs. Material remains as received, in original folders and storage boxes.

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Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Mexico -- Reproductive Health Group -- Oaxaca Notes, May 1992	box 1
Mexico -- Reproductive Health Group -- Oaxaca -- Background Materials, 1992	box 1
RHP Staff Meeting -- Rio -- Staff Meeting Notes, 1993	box 1
RHP Staff Meeting -- Rio -- Memoranda, 1993	box 1
RHP Staff Meeting -- Rio -- Participant's Comments, 1993	box 1
RHP Staff Meeting -- Rio -- Site Visits and Miscellaneous, 1993	box 1
RHP Staff Meeting -- Rio -- Agenda, 1993	box 1
RHP Meeting -- Lisbon -- Itinerary, 1994	box 1
RHP Meeting -- Lisbon -- Notes Draft #1, 1994	box 1
RHP Meeting -- Lisbon -- Meeting Evaluations, 1994	box 1
RHP Meeting -- Lisbon -- Notebook, 1994	box 1
RHP Meeting -- Lisbon -- Agenda -- 1st Round, 1994	box 1
RHP Meeting -- Lisbon -- Agenda -- 2nd Round, 1994	box 1
RHP Staff Meeting -- Athens -- Draft Agenda, 1995	box 1
RHP Staff Meeting -- Athens -- Background Materials, 1995	box 1