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Brochures, "Kettering Foundation," 80 pages



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The Kettering Foundation is an operating foundation rooted in the American tradition of inventive research. Its founder, Charles F. Kettering, holder of more than 200 patents, is best known for his invention of the automobile self-starter. He was interested, above all, in seeking practical answers to "the problems behind the problems."

Established in 1927, the foundation today continues in that tradition. The objective of the research now is to learn what it takes to make democracy work as it should. Six major Kettering programs are designed to shed light on what is required for strengthening public life:

- **Citizens and Public Choice.**

The research question: What increases the chances that choices people make about public issues will be wise choices? Since 1982, the foundation has studied and worked with a growing, nationwide network of deliberative community discussions called National Issues Forums (NIF). The foundation produces nonpartisan issue books that form the frameworks for many of these locally sponsored forums. Kettering also assists in the training of moderators for NIF groups.

- **Community Politics and Leadership.**

The research question: How can citizens act together more effectively to solve community problems? The foundation develops and tests a variety of strategies designed to help citizens work collaboratively to address community problems. Kettering is also working with local leadership organizations in developing programs for training a variety of community leaders.

- **The Public and Public Schools.**

The research question: How can we improve public education? Research in this area has led Kettering to the proposition that school reform, alone, is not the answer; rather, the solutions lie in rebuilding the community. The foundation's programs in this area are closely related to its work in community politics.

- **Institutions, Professionals, and the Public.**

The research question: How can we bridge the disconnects between the public and major social institutions that are intended to serve them? Kettering is working with a number of groups — journalists, academics, and executive officers of grant-making foundations — seeking ways to close these gaps.

- **The Public-Government Relationship.**

The research question: How can we overcome the growing distrust that undermines the partnership between citizens and government? The foundation is working on projects that help citizens appreciate the problems of officeholders, and help officials understand the value of citizen input into public policy.

- **The International and the Civil.**

The research question: What strategies can be developed to promote citizen engagement and defuse conflicts in emerging democracies? The foundation has collaborated for many years with like-minded nongovernmental organizations in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa in building democratic roots for newly representative governments. Kettering has also developed a method called sustained dialogue, an interactive process designed to change conflictual relationships. It is currently being applied in periodic China-U.S. dialogues, and in talks between warring factions in Tajikistan, who are trying to maintain a fragile peace.

To carry out its work and share its findings, the foundation maintains an active publications program and conducts a variety of training workshops both on its home campus and at sites around the country and abroad. A small resident staff is supplemented by a widespread network of program associates, contract researchers, writers, and visiting fellows.

Consistent with its history, Kettering focuses its research on problems too big for a single organization to solve alone. Therefore, the foundation continually reaches out to form alliances with other organizations that have related concerns and programs.

Chartered as an operating corporation, Kettering does not make grants. It is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) research corporation supported by a \$250 million endowment.