



**COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS/  
INTERGROUP RELATIONS PROGRAM**  
A PROGRAM FUNDED BY THE FORD FOUNDATION AND  
THE CHARLES STEWART MOTT FOUNDATION

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**Community Foundations Building Bridges and Capacity  
to Strengthen Immigrant Race Relations**

*(This is a work in progress. Please do not quote without permission of the author)*

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# OVERVIEW OF DOCUMENT

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Two national foundations, The Ford and Mott Foundations collaborated to support six community foundations<sup>1</sup> to conduct the Community Foundations/Intergroup Relations Program (CF/IR) from October 1998 until October 2001. The goals of the Program are to:

- Support innovative neighborhood and community projects that work to improve race and ethnic relations between recent immigrants and long-time residents;
- Strengthen community and local foundations to effectively address intergroup relations; and
- Enable community and local foundations to build capacity, expertise, and support to conduct and sustain intergroup work.

The six community foundations include:

- The San Diego Foundation in San Diego, CA
- The Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation in Washington, DC
- The Dade Community Foundation in Miami, FL
- The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta in Atlanta, GA
- The Minneapolis Foundation in Minneapolis, MN
- The Community Foundation of New Jersey in Morristown, NJ

This document contains two parts:

- I. Lessons Learned During the Planning Phase (October 1998-1999); and
- II. Through An Intergroup Lens: Ten Questions A Funder Should Consider For An Intergroup Project

The purpose of Part I of this document is to share the knowledge that the national funders, participating community foundations, and consultants have developed during the first year of the CF/IR Program. The purpose of Part II of this document is to provide a tool for funders to use when they consider and evaluate grant projects that are intended to strengthen intergroup relations between recent immigrants and long-time residents. The information used for developing this tool was derived from a review of the social science research literature on intergroup relations and management research on diversity training, and a review of reports by organizations and foundations supporting intergroup initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation in Washington, DC is not a community foundation. However, it is referred to as a community foundation for ease of reference as well as for the “community foundation” like role it is playing in the Initiative.

# I. LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE PLANNING PHASE (OCTOBER 1998-1999)

## BACKGROUND

This document discusses lessons learned about a community foundation's role in planning for a program to build bridges and the capacity to strengthen intergroup relationships between recent immigrants and long-time residents. The lessons are derived from the documentation of the program conducted by the Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC). They are based on interviews with each community foundation's leaders, staff, consultants, and leaders of immigrant and long-time resident communities. The lessons are also derived from discussions with the national foundation program officers and consultants. The lessons presented in this document are based on the opinions of a cluster of participants (two or more). This document is a "work in progress" as each local program moves forward into the implementation phase of this program.

The lessons learned are organized according to the activities and events that community foundations have undertaken in order to fulfill a four-fold role: serving as a vehicle for channeling community resources; providing grants and funds to support community building activities; bringing institutions and individuals together (Mayer, 1994); and, as the CF/IR Program intended, strengthening institutions and intergroup relations through strategic grantmaking and capacity building support. This four-fold role for community foundations is a challenge in today's increasingly diverse communities across the United States, from trying to develop a board that is representative of the communities that the community foundation serves to reaching out to donors and convening leaders from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

In order to fulfill these four roles, community foundations have engaged in the following capacity building activities and events:

- Organizational development, including building a diverse board and engaging diverse staff members;
- Assets development, including obtaining financial support from diverse donors;
- Development of community facilitation role, including strengthening relations with diverse community leaders and institutions and fostering learning across cultures; and
- Programming and grantmaking, including being proactive and responsive to issues related to the growing diversity of communities served.

It could be argued that community foundations regularly conduct some of these activities and events (e.g., assets development) regardless of whether they participate in a special initiative like the CF/IR Program. However, the lessons learned through the CF/IR Program taught all participating organizations that there are unique considerations that must be addressed even when performing the most routine foundation activities. Short vignettes are used throughout this document to illuminate some of these considerations.

The community foundations, with assistance from advisory committees that were established for their intergroup initiatives, planned an enabling system to support the initiatives. An enabling system is “a coordinated network of organizations which nurture the development and maintenance of a grassroots community development process through the provision of resources, incentives, and education” (Chavis, Florin, and Felix, 1993, p. 49). The components of each community foundation’s enabling system included the following types of activities that developed in the foundation’s implementation plan:

- Regranting for community assessments, community building projects, technical assistance, training, and consultation;
- Identification of local and national resources;
- Dissemination of public information; and
- Development of a learning community.

### **Planning Activities to Build the Community Foundation’s Enabling System**

The planning phase includes the following components:

For each site:

- Establishment of an advisory committee at each site to guide the planning process;
- Information gathering by each site to learn more about the communities and nature of intergroup relations;
- Public awareness and information events by each site to publicize the intergroup program and increase awareness about the local communities’ growing diversity;
- Donor education activities to educate and engage current and potential donors at each site; and
- Development of a grantmaking strategy.

For all the sites:

- Three group meetings and frequent conference calls to share, network, and receive information and technical assistance;
- Annual site visits and follow-up calls to each site to document progress, lessons learned, and provide technical assistance;
- An on-line discussion forum for exchange of information; and
- Distribution of resource packets.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE WITHIN A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TO GET READY FOR AN INTERGROUP INITIATIVE?

### Lesson 1: Engage Board Members to Gain Their Support

The community foundation's capacity to conduct its intergroup initiative is strengthened when its board members are engaged in the process. When board members can be involved in the advisory committee for the intergroup initiative, give presentations to the institutions they belong to, and participate in site visits and public events for the intergroup initiative, they can affect the community foundation's capacity in the following ways:

- Help increase the board's awareness of intergroup issues and encourage the board to increase its own diversity;
- Bring credibility to the intergroup project and help gain the support of other donors and community leaders;
- Allocate more discretionary funds and maintain long-term support for intergroup work; and
- Provide a link between the project and the foundation's governing body.

### Lesson 2: Engage and Gain Support from Community Foundation Staff Leaders

Commitment and buy-in from the community foundations' leadership (e.g., president or executive director) is essential to:

- Mobilize the resources needed (e.g., staff and consultants) to support the intergroup initiative; and
- With the available resources, enable immediate start-up of the intergroup project to provide sufficient time for building relationships and trust among participants (e.g., advisory committee members and community leaders).

In one of the community foundations, a board member served on the advisory committee for the intergroup initiative. He is a well-respected European American gentleman among nonprofit institutions and corporations and is of privileged status. His credibility on the board and his ability to see the intergroup initiative as an opportunity to raise awareness about the impact of diversity on communities that have traditionally been homogenous enabled him to be an effective ambassador for the intergroup initiative. He had the inherent capacity to convince the community foundation's leadership and leaders in other sectors to understand the unique benefits of the intergroup initiative. His support for the intergroup initiative propelled the community foundation to take programmatic strides through the intergroup initiative and enabled the staff members to advance in their efforts to transform the community foundation from a funder to a change agent and community partner. As a result, the community foundation is increasingly engaged in strategic grantmaking and capacity building activities that consider the challenges of the diverse communities it serves.

A community foundation's president supported the decision to hire a consultant to conduct a feasibility study to determine the potential level of local financial assistance that could be solicited for the intergroup initiative. The feasibility study affirmed that it was possible to raise a local match for the intergroup initiative even though some of the local donors and funders did not perceive intergroup relations as an urgent issue. This study also identified that local funders and donors needed to be educated about the city's growing diversity. The feasibility study's results encouraged the community foundation to proceed with a capital campaign, which led to new relationships between the community foundation and other local funders. As a result, the community foundation has adopted a leadership role in educating other funders about the critical need for addressing intergroup tensions in the city and county.

Support can be gained by involving the leadership in the advisory committee; asking them to give presentations to board members and at the institutions in which they participate (e.g., church, professional associations); and inviting them to participate in site visit activities and public and media events.

### **Lesson 3: Provide Adequate and Capable Staff to Address the Intergroup Challenge**

An intergroup initiative requires more time than most other community foundation initiatives. It places several new demands on a community foundation. There has to be sufficient staff and consultant time and, among the staff and consultants, adequate knowledge, skills, and relations to conduct a wide range of tasks. Most of the community foundation staff reported that they underestimated the amount of time and capacities the planning phase took. Additional time was required for identifying representatives of formal institutions and informal networks in newcomer communities, and for building relationships in both newcomer and long-time resident communities.

New relationships often had to be built through “one-on-one” meetings. These meetings were time consuming, but necessary and beneficial. Additional time also had to be spent to understand some of the intragroup issues within a newcomer community to ensure that representatives are engaged from all the religious factions, political parties, or tribal groups that are a part of a newcomer community’s social fabric. All the community foundations’ staff reported that the time spent on building relationships was worth while. The new and strengthened relationships with grassroots leaders, particularly in newcomer communities, not only benefited the intergroup initiative, but also benefited other grant programs in the community foundations and enhanced the foundations’ image as a community resource during challenging times when citizens are struggling with the changing face of their neighborhoods.

One of the tasks that demanded the most time was building trust, which was critical in the community foundation’s ability to:

- Learn about different cultures and reach out to the leadership of different communities;
- Identify and invite the “right” representative from a certain community (i.e., a representative who believes in the need for strengthening intergroup relations, can help bridge two more cultures, appreciates the commonalities that newcomers and long-time residents share, and has credibility in his or her community) to be on the advisory committee;

A partnership between a senior program officer and a consultant who is a refugee was very effective for planning the intergroup initiative. The senior program officer was experienced in managing and administering the intergroup grant program and had relationships with long-time residents, while the consultant had the knowledge and skills to identify, reach out, and engage leaders from newcomer communities. The complementary capacities allowed the senior program officer and the consultant to focus on their respective tasks and have sufficient time and capacity to build relationships and complete their tasks.

Taking the time to engage newcomer leaders through one-on-one discussions was very rewarding for one community foundation. The relationships that were built throughout the planning phase of the intergroup initiative led to broader participation during the implementation phase. Many of leaders reported that they decided to participate in the intergroup initiative because of the relationship developed with the program officer. These new relations have led to greater diversity on community foundation boards and committees. Potential new donors from immigrant communities have also been identified.

- Conduct one-on-one interviews and community meetings with leaders from newcomer and long-time resident communities to develop relations and gather information about their communities;
- Prepare information to help the advisory committee’s decisionmaking (e.g., summary of the demographics of the neighborhoods to be considered for the intergroup relations project, summary of intergroup tensions and potential bridge issues);
- Work with other staff in the community foundation (e.g., donor relations and communications staff); and
- Participate in national activities.

The following skills and resources should be available from among the staff and consultants who worked on the intergroup initiative during the planning phase:

- Personal and professional experience addressing issues of racism, intergroup relations, and community building;
- Relations with community organizations and experience bridging across groups;
- Information gathering and planning skills;
- Knowledge of the cultures represented in the project;
- Community outreach skills;
- Communications skills, particularly cross-cultural communications;
- Knowledge of community foundations’ procedures and operations, and an ability to be savvy about the extent to which one can advocate for positive change within the foundation without creating discord and a counteraction; and
- Firsthand knowledge of the experiences of some of the major ethnic groups involved in the intergroup initiative.

#### **Lesson 4: Link Internal Departments**

In some of the community foundations, collaborative relationships between departments (e.g., communications and donor relations) were consistently strong. In the other foundations the intergroup initiative provided an opportunity to strengthen the relationships between departments. Collaborative relationships between departments:

- Enhance the community foundation’s ability to build on existing efforts to reach out to a wider grassroots community and potential donors;

The intergroup project staff of a community foundation engaged the donor relations and communications staff early on in the planning process to establish a common understanding about how the intergroup initiative fits into the community foundation’s overall mission and strategies. The donor relations staff planned and conducted donor briefings about issues related to newcomers. The communications staff organized a roundtable on immigration that was facilitated by a board member who is an immigrant himself. The community foundation’s public education campaign also increased the awareness of the rest of the program staff about intergroup issues. This increased awareness led to the infusion of newcomer issues in every aspect of grantmaking at the foundation. For example, program staff for a housing initiative have discussed the “newcomer challenges” during their discussions. Foundation staff from long-time resident communities reported being more aware of issues facing newcomers because of the discussion and attention regarding immigrant issues that had been pervasive throughout the foundation.

- Allow for an integrated approach to the intergroup relations initiative or project for raising awareness within the community foundation, its board, and the public;
- Ensure that the intergroup relations initiative is benefiting the foundation's overall capacity; and
- Gain the assistance of other staff and departments in the planning process.

## HOW DOES A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BUILD ITS ASSETS FOR INTERGROUP WORK?

### Lesson 5: Involve Donor Relations or Development Staff Early in the Intergroup Initiative

The program staff for each community foundation's intergroup initiative have to work closely with the foundation's donor relations or development staff who know the donor and funder community in order to secure the matching funds. The donor relations or development staff can have a clear understanding of the project's goals if they are involved early in the intergroup initiative. They can then convey the importance of the project to current and potential donors who are not directly affected by their communities' growing diversity and may not see the immediate need for addressing intergroup relations. The donor relations staff should be ready to approach new nontraditional donors, such as banks and corporations that have been affected by changing demographics. They can be involved by jointly planning donor briefings and the matching fund strategy with program staff, participating in site visits, and attending community and advisory committee meetings.

One of the community foundations met with banks, multinational corporations, and local companies to solicit support for the intergroup initiative. The foundation learned that banks were interested in the initiative because they perceived support for the initiative as part of their Community Reinvestment Act responsibilities, and corporations were interested because of the changing face of their labor force. As a result of such meetings, the community foundation developed new relationships and received support from one local company, one multinational corporation, and one bank.

### Lesson 6: Be Aware and Take Advantage of New Opportunities and Challenges

The CF/IR Program provided new opportunities to approach new funders and donors, including banks, national foundations, immigrant donors, and corporate foundations. At the same time, a major challenge is that it is difficult to raise funds for an initiative that does not have immediate tangible outcomes and where institutions and the public have very different views about intergroup relations and the treatment of immigrants and refugees.

The community foundations' intergroup relations initiatives also provided a "safe" beginning for addressing issues of equity and racism among more conservative donors and funders. One of the community foundations' local funding partners expressed that the intergroup initiative enabled her to begin to raise the issue of racism to her board in a practical and amenable manner without provoking a counteraction. Another community foundation "sold" the intergroup relations initiative as a community building initiative for a city that is divided by ethnic lines, and was able to gain the support of more donors.

## Lesson 7: Engage a Broad Base of Donors

A broad base of donors is needed to help secure matching funds. The CF/IR Program provided a unique opportunity to approach and engage donors who have an interest in ethnic or immigrant issues (including donors who are immigrants themselves) in addition to donors who care about the community foundation and the overall community, special interest groups, and corporations affected by the growing diversity of their labor pool. An initial suggestion was made to engage the groups affected by the program in the “asking” process; however, the CF/IR Program participants learned through shared knowledge that this approach may not be appropriate in certain cultures. The community foundations learned that they were able to raise funds by being creative and approaching nontraditional donors (e.g., banks, large corporations, the World Bank, and individuals with a vested interest in immigrant communities).

Another part of this lesson was the greater legitimacy and recognition that the national funders brought to each local initiative. The community foundations used their support to leverage matching funds.

### **WHAT CAN THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION DO TO PREPARE FOR ITS ROLE AS A COMMUNITY FACILITATOR?**

## Lesson 8: Seize the Opportunity

The right timing of an initiative or program enhances the readiness of community foundations and communities to address particular community concerns. The rapidly changing demographics in the six cities in the CF/IR Program are affecting everyone, from construction companies to suburban parents. The community foundations already were beginning to address newcomer issues. The CF/IR Program helped advance the community foundations’ agendas and served as an immediately convenient forum for communities to begin to voice their concerns. In all the communities, a growing need to address immigrants and diversity issues is recognized, and in some cases the opportunity was used to heighten the communities’ readiness to tackle these issues.

One advisory committee decided to work in two neighborhoods that were the least organized and had little capacity to address the growing diversity of residents. The advisory committee and the community foundation saw the intergroup initiative as an opportunity to build the capacity of the neighborhoods, despite the enormous challenge that laid ahead of them. While the neighborhoods did not have the infrastructure to address intergroup relations, they were “mentally” ready to do something about the tensions that were emerging among their residents. The timing was perfect! They focused first on building the relations and the capacity to plan collaboratively for neighborhood development.

## Lesson 9: Do Your Homework

It is important to learn about the different cultures and communities that will be involved in the initiative. Formal and informal meetings with representatives of different groups would be extremely valuable opportunities to learn. Advisory committees collected and discussed information about their communities before engaging in the program design. Advisory committees engaged in several different activities, including collecting and distributing archival data and reports, conducting community

forums, conducting one-on-one interviews, engaging outside speakers and experts, and exchanging their own knowledge. These information-gathering activities also facilitated earlier relationships with a variety of communities.

### **Lesson 10: Plan and Conduct Outreach Activities Early**

Developing new relations takes time. It is a process of meeting people, getting referrals, and meeting with someone new. The community foundation should conduct its own early assessment of its relationships with the targeted communities, as well as the communities' relationships with staff and the advisory committee. The community foundation then needs to develop strategies for reaching out to the targeted communities with which it doesn't have good relations.

The community foundations spent a lot of time at the beginning of the planning process developing relationships and doing its homework. For example, the program staff at one foundation met with 40 individuals within a period of four months, convened a meeting of ten neighborhood leaders, and enlisted a group of 18 youth to conduct interviews with parents and other youth. The youth completed 30 interviews. The information gathering process enabled the community foundation to develop new relationships with grassroots leaders, to continue to engage previous grantees, and to hear firsthand from newcomers and long-time residents about their concerns and struggles.

### **Lesson 11: Facilitate and Convene**

There is great diversity among immigrants and other groups. Community foundations have the ability to bring together and facilitate collaboration across groups because of their role in the community. Community foundations also have a history of supporting diverse groups and neighborhood efforts. The community foundation must invest time to learn about immigrant communities and their leaders and their relationships with long-time residents (e.g., through community and one-on-one meetings) to ensure that the appropriate leaders, institutions, and experts are invited to participate. Community foundations should also expect to allow advisory and planning committees to continue to grow even after the start-up period so that as new and key leaders are engaged, they can be invited to participate in the effort.

All the community foundations' advisory committee members reported that it was the first time they participated in such a diverse collaboration and in partnership with the community foundation. One advisory committee even identified a joint project that the members could collaborate on as part of the process for strengthening their own intergroup relations within the committee.

### **Lesson 12: Be Clear About Mutual Expectations, Responsibilities, and Accountability**

Community foundations have taken approaches that fall across a continuum regarding the expectations, responsibilities, and accountability of the foundations and their advisory committees. Some foundations allowed their advisory committees to make final decisions and be responsible for many aspects of the grantmaking process, whereas others were more directive. The community foundation should be clear about its role from the beginning in order to avoid any misunderstandings by community participants who could also be potential grantees, or to avoid arousing apprehension about the foundation's motives.

Another community foundation brought together leaders of grassroots groups and community institutions to advise the planning process and disbanded the group at the end of the planning phase to avoid any conflict of interest during the implementation process when grant review occurs. The community foundation convened a group of funding partners and institutional leaders who would not be the targeted grantee audience to advise the implementation phase.

### **Lesson 13: Engage a Broader Variety of Leaders and Institutions**

The majority of efforts that involve newcomers are traditional service-oriented efforts that are usually led by long-time residents. There is a benefit in emphasizing the engagement of civic leaders of newcomer communities in an effort to reach out to a broader variety of leaders. Civic and emerging newcomer leaders need to be engaged in order to expand the leadership base and because they are more knowledgeable about their communities' infrastructure.

### **Lesson 14: Give The Advisory Committee More Responsibility And They Will Be More Engaged And Will Contribute More Resources**

When the advisory committee was given more responsibility for the decisions regarding the design and operation of the intergroup program, the more involved they became and the more they contributed. Where the advisory committee had strong responsibilities for the program, they developed a sense of ownership that proved to be very valuable for implementation. It is reasonable to believe that the sense of ownership will also be valuable in sustaining the program.

The community foundations approached the role of their advisory committees in different ways. One community foundation made the advisory committee a standing committee of the foundation's board, and the intergroup program staff provided administrative and technical support to the advisory committee. The chair of the advisory committee is also an active board member of the community foundation. Advisory committee members were given the responsibility for helping to convene and facilitate neighborhood meetings. As a result, the attendance and participation of advisory committee members has been very stable and consistent.

## **HOW CAN A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SUPPORT INTERGROUP RELATIONS THROUGH ITS GRANTMAKING AND PROGRAMS?**

### **Lesson 15: Keep the Project's Goals in Focus**

It is important to keep the goals of the intergroup initiative in focus; otherwise, proposed projects can reflect a range of interpretations, for example, to provide services to a multicultural clientele or to address immigrant issues only.

### **Lesson 16: Provide Capacity Building Support for Grantees**

This work is very difficult, and few models are available. Capacity building support during the proposal development stage is

A potential applicant once asked at a briefing session if the intergroup initiative would support the applicant's clinic to expand its nutrition classes to Southeast Asian and African American women because they share a common risk for hypertension. The community foundation's program officer repeatedly explained that such a project would not be appropriate because it did not address how Southeast Asians and African Americans could work together to identify the common factors (e.g., types of food) that place them at risk and to advocate together for better health practices. The applicant's interpretation of the intergroup initiative was typical and common. While the community foundation recognizes the importance of providing health education to underserved populations, it has to keep in focus the intergroup initiative's intent to promote advocacy and strengthen intergroup relations through joint collaboration between newcomers and long-time residents. The program officer talked to the applicant several times to help them understand the goals of the intergroup relations initiative.

critical to ensure that applicants understand the purpose of the initiative and have the capacity to meet the grant requirements. Capacity building support after the grants have been distributed is also critical, particularly for organizations and groups led by newcomer leaders that will require additional support to strengthen their infrastructure. Capacity building support makes the initiative's effects more sustainable.

## **WHAT CAN A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION DO TO FOSTER LEARNING AND RELATIONSHIPS?**

### **Lesson 17: Develop the Community Foundation's Internal Capacity to Support Learning and Manage Relationships**

The community foundation has to develop and coordinate staff support, the information and referral system for consultants and other resources, program activities, evaluation, and internal communication.

### **Lesson 18: Encourage the Advisory Committees to Work on Short-term Activities Beyond Planning**

Short-term activities create opportunities for the advisory committees to develop their own capacity, cohesion, and ownership. For example, one advisory committee worked during the planning phase on a small project that would support its goals and enhance its capacity. The committee's sense of accomplishment led to more participation at all levels of the project's development, from attending committee meetings to facilitating linkages between the community foundation and the communities it serves.

One of the program officers conducted "brown bag lunches" and distributed information through electronic mail to keep the rest of the foundation staff informed about intergroup issues and events. Other foundation staff members were also invited to attend neighborhood meetings to hear directly from the residents about their concerns. Program officers and consultants continuously summarized the information they collected through site visits and neighborhood meetings, and presented the information in a concise format that could be shared with the rest of the community foundation staff.

### **Lesson 19: Conduct a Public Information Campaign to Support the Intergroup Initiative**

Some of the community foundations found that a public information campaign helped support their ability to convene and strengthen the larger community's knowledge of intergroup issues and successes.

## WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT CAN BE PROVIDED TO A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TO STRENGTHEN ITS ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS INTERGROUP RELATIONS?

One of the major lessons learned through the CF/IR Program was its effects on the participants' (i.e., community foundations and national capacity building team members) ability to understand, address, and transform intergroup relations at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels. There were many opportunities and challenges in building the capacity of community foundations to address a topic that provokes strong opinions, emotions, and reactions. ASDC considers the lessons described in this section to be extremely valuable for future grantees and initiatives similar to the CF/IR Program, as well as technical assistance providers and evaluators who work on such initiatives.

### Lesson 20: Address Personal Values and Issues

In order to improve intergroup relations, community foundations' staff has to explore their own beliefs and attitudes. The CF/IR Program brought up many personal values and issues regarding their own ethnic identity, how others perceive them, and how they perceive others. It is critical that they understand how their personal issues could inform and affect the development of the initiative and who is involved, often unintentionally. It is inevitable that friction will occur in communities when newcomers and long-time residents from different ethnic backgrounds are expected to work together to build and strengthen intergroup relations. The CF/IR Program participants are no different. The interaction that occurred on several levels—including among the program participants nationally; between the community foundation representatives and community leaders; and among the advisory committee members—is affected by personal values and issues.

Many of participants also had strong values and opinions about the struggles of their own groups and the institutional resources that are available to address the needs of their own groups. There is an inherent tendency to think that two people who share the same skin color will always put the needs of their own group above the needs of other groups. The CF/IR Program brought to light the possible contradictions to this tendency and enforced the need for everyone to transform their allegiance to group identity in order to address intergroup relations as a way for promoting equity and justice for all oppressed groups.

We assume that people who have the same skin color share similar perspectives and people who don't share the same skin color cannot understand each other's perspectives about discrimination and privilege. This assumption was challenged for one of the CF/IR participants who learned that allies and foes can be found in unexpected places, and this realization illuminated the reality that diversity exists even within a particular group. Another participant who is an immigrant assumed that African Americans have similar perspectives as immigrants about racism because of the shared history of oppression, and that African Americans unquestionably perceive immigrants as inherent allies in their struggles for equity and justice. This assumption was challenged when some of the African American participants expressed that they did not have an emotional connection to Ellis Island because it did not speak to the African American experience. This lesson learned enhanced the participant's understanding of the critical need to engage African Americans in any effort by immigrants to promote equity, and to acknowledge the connection between the earlier struggles of African Americans and how the struggles enhanced the efforts of immigrants for social justice.

The personal values and issues discussed above can at times become program barriers. The grantee meetings should include sessions that examine how our personal values and issues could affect the expected process and outcomes of the intergroup initiatives.

## **Lesson 21: Provide Initial Guidance on Staff Selection and Preparation**

The national funders and consultants can provide assistance or guidance to community foundations on the qualities (i.e., skills, knowledge, experience, cultural background, and relations) to look for in the staff and consultants for their intergroup initiatives. The required qualities include:

- ***Knowledge about one or more of the immigrant groups in the targeted communities.*** The community foundations' experiences in the CF/IR Program demonstrated the benefits of having staff and consultants who have complementary capacities where either the staff or consultant has this type of knowledge.
- ***Ability to build relations at the grassroots level.*** Three community foundations demonstrated the advantage of having a staff member or consultant who has personal experience as an immigrant. In some newcomer communities, the leadership structure can be very different from structures in which long-time residents in the United States may be familiar. Therefore, it is critical that the staff or consultant has the ability to build relations at the grassroots level to be able to reach and engage the appropriate representative.
- ***Understanding of social and institutional processes.*** It is important that the staff understand the dynamics of intergroup relations on the social and institutional levels, and how to transcend some of the personal experiences and relationship to social and institutional linkages. Some of the community foundations relied on personal relationships to connect with the leadership of different groups to gain institutional commitments. Other community foundations stopped at the personal relationship level and assumed that it was adequate institutional representation for a certain group. It is important to understand and consider social and institutional processes because many newcomer communities are organized around processes that are based on their cultural norms. These processes may be different from those of American institutions, and not easily recognizable through personal relationships and experiences.
- ***Awareness and comfort with one's own cultural identity, how other groups perceive it, and the level of privilege, power, and oppression associated with that cultural identity.***

## **Lesson 22: Provide Capacity Building Support to the Community Foundations and Advisory Committees**

Technical assistance and training should be available to community foundation staff and consultants to enhance their capacity to plan and implement the initiatives. Initial grantee meetings should include interactive sessions that focus on helping staff and consultants understand how their personal values and issues could inform their approach to the CF/IR Program and group work (e.g., coalition building).

A major challenge in conducting intergroup work is developing a common language to talk about it. One of the community foundations' advisory committee struggled during their initial meetings to define "intergroup," "newcomers," and "cross-cultural." The meetings sometimes reached a crescendo of frustration and disagreement, but the members had developed a commitment to use those conflicts as learning moments and to take the time to arrive at a consensus. One of the factors that allowed this process to occur was the explicit acknowledgement that each member was equally committed to strengthening intergroup relations, despite their differences in their understanding of how to reach that goal.

Technical assistance and training should also be provided to help community foundations assess the capacity building needs of their advisory committees in order to address intergroup tensions that arise as part of the planning process.

### **Lesson 23: Allocate Enough Time for Planning**

Many of the community foundations reported that the intergroup initiative required more time and work compared to previous experiences. It is important to take into account, therefore, the level of staff (senior versus junior) and the amount of their time that will be dedicated to the initiative. Many of the community foundations also reported the benefits of having a planning phase that allowed them to prepare properly for the implementation of such a complex and critical initiative.

### **Lesson 24: Be Prepared to Address Power Dynamics Because They Don't Go Away**

The dynamics of power as a result of socioeconomic and other differences don't go away. The dynamics occur on at least three levels: between the community foundations and the communities they seek to engage in their initiatives; among advisory committee members; and between the national funders and the community foundations. The CF/IR Program participants should be made aware of the power dynamics and issues that arise when they work with community leaders and residents and how those dynamics are further affected by issues of race and ethnicity.

Initial grantee meetings should include sessions that address power issues, and technical assistance and training should also be provided on this topic. Time should be made available for the community foundations to address some of their challenges in a supportive and nonjudgmental environment, even if that means excluding the national funders from the dialogue when issues about power between the grantor (i.e., national funders) and the grantee (i.e., the community foundations) were raised.

### **Lesson 25: Be Clear About Program Goals and Expectations**

Clear communication about the program's goals is essential at the start of the CF/IR Program. The national funders' and community foundations' expectations of each other should be made explicit, and the inherent benefits and challenges of two national funders collaborating with community foundations should be recognized. Clear communication is also essential between the national funders and the capacity building team to ensure that the funding guidelines and capacity building support are consistent. The national funders should collaborate with the capacity building team to conduct an independent evaluation of the latter, as in any good evaluation. A plan should be developed so that the national funders can provide feedback to the capacity building team and institute the corrective measures.

### **Lesson 26: Educate Program Officers on the Use and Benefits of Evaluation for Capacity Building as well as Accountability**

People have a wide range of experiences and interpretations about evaluation. Evaluation is a new expectation and component for most of the community foundations. Among those that did have evaluation experience, most had either a negative experience or an experience that did not support the idea that evaluation can be "on their side." Many assumptions that are held about evaluation have negative connotations, particularly the notion that evaluation is an audit of a group's performance. Evaluation could potentially have numerous benefits to the national and local efforts if the role and methods are designed and discussed properly. One of the roles of evaluation is to document the lessons

learned in any program or initiative and to disseminate information about strategies that work and don't work. As such, evaluation can take the form of "documentation" and "technical assistance provider" and this role is even more critical in an initiative as innovative and progressive as the CF/IR Program. Evaluation can promote learning if it is integrated within the overall capacity building strategy. We recommend that time be invested in learning how to make evaluation mutually beneficial rather than reacting to the worst fears and stereotypes about evaluation. More time should also be devoted to understanding the positive applications of evaluation for building the capacity of community foundations and their initiatives, and for understanding the evaluation team's values about the approach to evaluation.

## REFERENCES

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- Mayer, S. (1994). *Building community capacity: The potential of community foundations*. Minneapolis, MN: Rainbow Research

Further information is available on the CF/IR Program's website:  
[www.capablecommunity.com/cfir](http://www.capablecommunity.com/cfir)

## **II. THROUGH AN INTERGROUP LENS: TEN QUESTIONS A FUNDER SHOULD CONSIDER FOR EVALUATING AN INTERGROUP PROJECT**

Supporting evidence for these questions was derived from a review of the scientific and practice literature on intergroup relations and diversity training. For a full report of the literature review, please contact the Association for the Study and Development of Community.

**1. Do all the participating groups share a common goal that will benefit all of them when the goal is achieved?**

Intergroup relations can be improved if there is a goal that has a compelling appeal for members of each group involved, but that neither group can achieve without participation of the other. Each group must have a distinct and clear role that reflects its unique strength. The identification of the common goal must be demonstrated by each group and not assumed. The goal must also be challenging, but achievable.

**2. Do the members from different groups recognize each other as equal sources of knowledge and resources?**

Intergroup relations can be strengthened by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in pursuit of common goals. Successful community efforts have recognized the importance of involving local grassroots leaders and representatives of formal institutions as equals. Grassroots leaders provide important knowledge about their community's needs, while leaders of formal institutions provide linkages to resources.

**3. Are there adequate opportunities and processes for members of different groups to get to know each other on an individual level and not as representatives of a particular social group?**

By getting to know someone on the individual level, there is less tendency to perceive another group as monolithic and homogenous. This allows members of groups to recognize that even though they differ on one social category, they may share a common identity on another dimension. Dialogues that allow for a certain extent of self-disclosure can help create an atmosphere that will be viewed as more trusting, friendly, and warm.

**4. Are there adequate opportunities and activities for members of different groups to share their traditions and history and discover their commonalities?**

Studies have shown that similarity (e.g., customs, beliefs, practices, history, etc.) leads to attraction and helps de-emphasize differences that are related to increased bias.

**5. Is there a process where different groups recognize and appreciate each other's unique assets and build on their strengths to bridge differences and work together?**

Groups must recognize, acknowledge, and appreciate each other's unique and specific cultures, traditions, languages, and history as part of the process to bridge differences and maximize each other's strengths when working together.

**6. Is there a process for developing constructive norms for handling conflicts so that conflicts are viewed as opportunities and not as obstacles for strengthening collaboration?**

Conflict is not managed or resolved, but seen as an opportunity to improve the ability to achieve common goals. An environment that fosters constructive norms for how error, risk, and disagreement are to be handled should be established.

**7. Are there opportunities for celebrating collective actions to illuminate the successful cooperation across different groups?**

The more positive the experience in relationships, the greater the bond. Successful cooperation increases intergroup attraction because the feelings of satisfaction get generalized to the individuals associated with the positive experience. There also needs to be a sense of completeness to events and activities.

**8. Is there a process for frequent contact and cooperation among different groups to foster their relations and build trust?**

Frequent contact and cooperation among groups with equal status is critical for fostering intergroup relations. Sufficient time must be provided for groups to overcome their initial feelings of anger and prejudice towards one another and develop trust.

**9. Is there support from institutions to sanction and reinforce the intergroup relations?**

Support from institutions (e.g., local governments, funders, the media, federal government agencies, and intermediary organizations) are instrumental in promoting and facilitating constructive efforts to strengthen intergroup relations. They sanction the effort and can reinforce relationships or divisions among groups. The coordination of such institutions also creates a system that can provide resources, incentives, and education to promote intergroup relations.

**10. Are there strategies and processes to strengthen intergroup relations at the individual, institutional, and systems levels?**

The above principles emphasize the importance of providing opportunities for individuals to get to know one another as individuals, while at the same time, institutions must be able to provide the support essential to encouraging individuals and groups to strengthen intergroup relations.