

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

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"We simply cannot enter the next century at each other's throats... We are at a crucial crossroad in the history of this nation - and we either hang together by combating the forces that divide and degrade us or we hang separately. Do we have the intelligence, humor, imagination, courage, tolerance, love, respect, and will to meet the challenge?"  
---Cornel West

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**Association for the Study and Development of Community**  
312 South Frederick Avenue " Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
(301) 519-0722 voice " (301) 519-0724 fax " [www.capablecommunity.com](http://www.capablecommunity.com)

**July 2002**

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Ford Foundation joined forces with five community foundations and one local foundation<sup>1</sup> in 1998 to launch the Community Foundations/Intergroup Relations Program. This Program cost \$5.1 million, with \$1.5 million contributed by Ford and Mott each, and a total of \$2.1 million raised by the six foundation partners. During the planning phase, the community and local foundations formed advisory committees comprised of a diverse group of neighborhood leaders, community experts, and philanthropic leaders to determine how best to support intergroup relationship building in their communities. After the planning phase, each community and local foundation received \$225,000 per year for two years for administrative costs and re-granting purposes. In addition, each foundation raised an additional \$175,000 to \$325,000 locally to support their efforts.

## 1. PURPOSE

- Support innovative neighborhood and community projects that work to improve race and ethnic relations between recent immigrants and long-time residents;
- Strengthen community foundations to effectively address intergroup relations; and
- Enable community foundations to build capacity, expertise, and support so that this work can be promoted and sustained at the national and local levels.

One goal of the Program is to strengthen the participating foundations so that they can address conflicts between diverse groups

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<sup>1</sup> The Eugene & Agnes E. Meyer Foundation in Washington, DC led the intergroup relations program in the Washington metropolitan area until 2001 when the program was handed over to the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region.

and to raise awareness and local funds to sustain the work. To help achieve this goal the participating foundations were given technical assistance for program planning and design, implementation evaluation,

### Participating Community Foundations:

- The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta;
- The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region;
- The Community Foundation of New Jersey;
- The Dade Community Foundation;
- The Minneapolis Foundation; and
- The San Diego Foundation.

donor development, and strategic communications. Technical assistance for planning, design, implementation, and evaluation was provided by the Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) in Gaithersburg, Maryland; donor development assistance was provided by Dorothy Reynolds, consultant for the Mott Foundation; and communications assistance was available from the National Immigration Forum in Washington, DC.

## STRATEGY

This Program was built on the belief that bringing diverse groups of people together to pursue common objectives can result in healthier communities and improved racial and ethnic relations. The Program built on previous efforts, including:

- Together In Our Differences, a report published by the National Immigration Forum;
- Changing Relations, a report to the Ford Foundation
- Initiative to Strengthen Neighborhood Inter-Group Assets, a funding collaborative established by

the Eugene & Agnes E. Meyer Foundation;

- The Community Foundations/ Neighborhood Small Grants Program, an initiative with 17 community foundations funded by the Mott Foundation from 1984 until 1994;

- Intergroup Relations in the United States: Research Perspectives, a Ford Foundation-funded report published by the National Conference for Community and Justice; and
- Changing Communities; Changing Foundations, also known as the Ford Foundation Diversity Initiative

## PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING INTERGROUP RELATIONS

The Association for the Study and Development of Community developed a list of 11 principles to guide intergroup relationship building efforts. These principles were derived from a review of the scientific literature on intergroup relations and management research on diversity training, as well as reports about intergroup projects. The full report concerning the principles can be downloaded from [www.capablecommunity.com](http://www.capablecommunity.com).

1. The right people must be engaged and involved in the planning and implementation process.
2. Groups must identify an important common issue and work towards common goals to address the issue. Each group must have a distinct and clear role that reflects its unique and complementary strength.
3. People and organizations representing different groups need to be brought together as equals in terms of power, respect, and importance.
4. There needs to be an opportunity for members of groups to get to know one another as individuals and learn to respect each other's cultures and traditions.
5. There should be an opportunity to identify similarities between groups and at the same time, appreciate each group's history and unique characteristics in order to find common ground.
6. Groups need to identify each other's strengths or assets (e.g., culture, language, history, relations, etc.) and use and exchange them as part of the intergroup process.
7. Conflicts need to be identified, respected, and transformed into improved capacity and relations.
8. Successfully completed collective action not only improves the communities that groups live in, but also strengthens their relations.
9. Relationships must be sustainable at multiple levels (between individuals) to support the process for strengthening intergroup relations and fostering equity.
10. There must be institutional support for promoting intergroup relations and equity.
11. To be effective, intergroup strategies need to operate at multiple levels, including the individual, group, and institutional levels.

## STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT FOR BUILDING INTERGROUP RELATIONS

There is little theory, documentation, or research on the stages groups go through that can be easily applied to the design and implementation of community initiatives. Evaluations of the intergroup projects and a review of the scientific literature on intergroup relations can take on different forms and depth. The extent to which such relationships are built and considered successful depends primarily on the context of the situation, current state of relationships among groups, commitment of leaders to work across groups, and a community's vision of what is possible. These conditions indicate a community's readiness to build intergroup relations and the developmental stages that a community has to experience in order to promote such relations. Building intergroup relations is a community building process that is distinguished by changes in the group's ability to develop common membership, share priorities and meet common needs, share power and influence, and share history and make an emotional connection.

Four stages of development have been identified— co-existence, cooperation, collaboration, and integration.

During the *co-existence* stage, groups may be reaching out to each other while

This work is about investing in relationship building

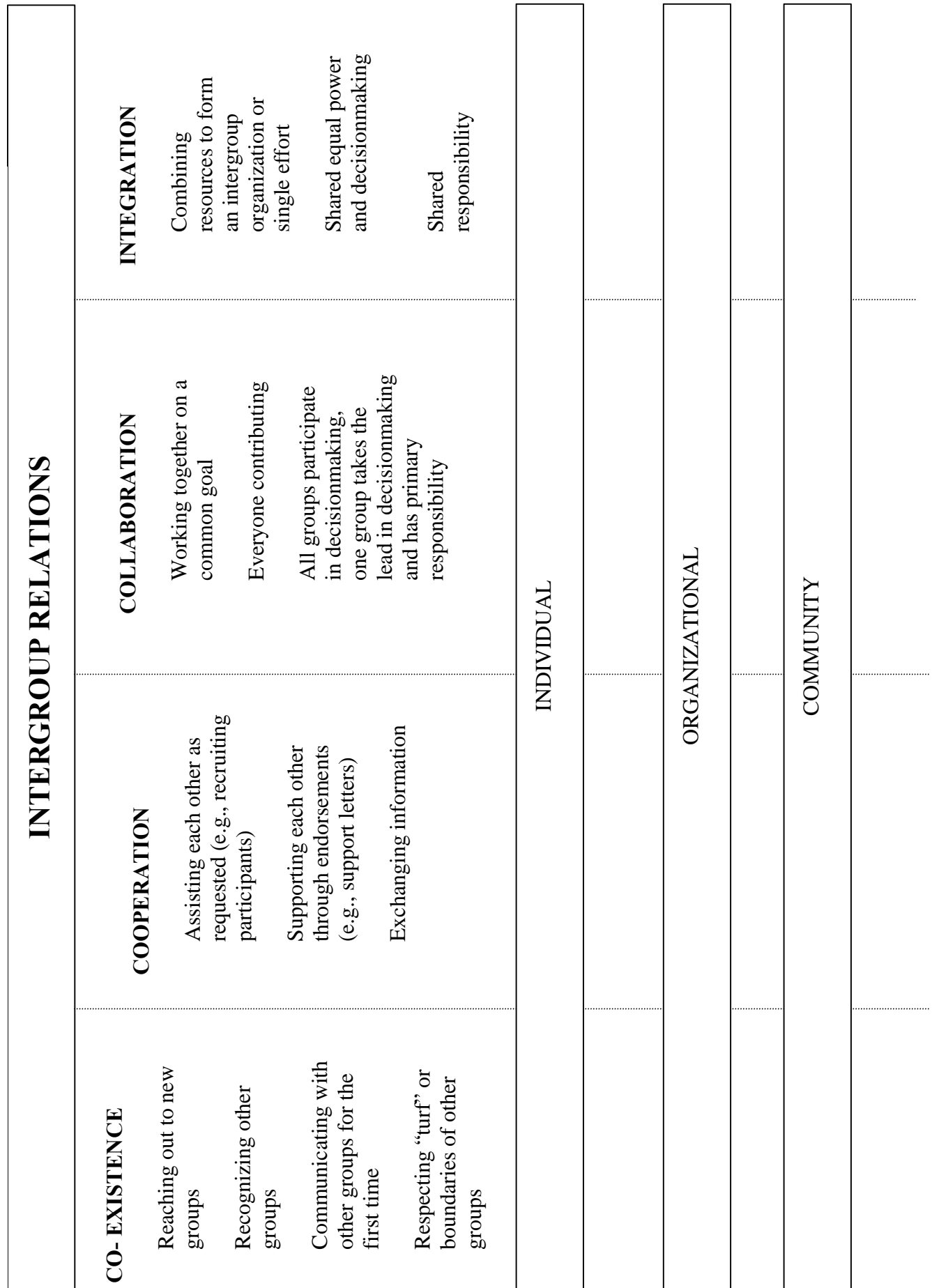
respecting their turfs and boundaries. They are aware of each other's existence and may be communicating for the first time about their respective communities and programs. In the *cooperative* stage, the groups may work with one another by co-sponsoring events, sharing facilities, or assisting each other as requested (e.g., help recruit participants for a project or event,

provide letters of endorsement for a grant proposal).

As the groups move into a *collaboration* stage and become comfortable with their unique roles and complementary capacities, they may collaborate with each other to work on a common concern. Each group still maintains its unique organizational identity and priorities. One group takes the lead in decision making and has the primary responsibility of coordinating the collaborative effort. During the *integration* stage after the groups have transformed their differences into capacities, they may create a more integrated effort through shared responsibilities, decision-making, and power. The groups combine their resources and act interdependently on priorities, issues, and inequities due to racial, ethnic, and other group differences.

Intergroup relations needs to occur at three levels at which relationships can be built— among *individuals*, *organizations*, and *communities*. In some instances, participants of an intergroup project have strong relationships with one another, but the organization that conducts the project has not been able to develop partnerships with other organizations that represent different racial or ethnic groups. In order to capture and portray the possible range and levels of intergroup relations, ASDC developed the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1. This framework can be used by funders, organizations, program managers, and technical assistance providers to determine the stage of an intergroup effort and the capacities (knowledge, skills, resources, and relationships) needed to advance the effort. It can also be used by evaluators to determine the indicators of the success for an intergroup effort.

**Figure 1**  
**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT FOR BUILDING INTERGROUP RELATIONS**



## EXAMPLES OF INTERGROUP PROJECTS

**The Golden Eagle Program, a Native American organization, and the Somali Beneri Community in Minneapolis** started in the co-existence stage and moved into the cooperation stage at the end of the intergroup relations program in Minneapolis. The two organizations worked with each other to conduct a joint inventory about their community assets. During that process, they learned about each other's cultures, history, and roles in the Phillips neighborhood. They also developed a better understanding about what they have in common. According to a Native American participant, she learned about the different tribes in the Somali community.

**The Partnership for Community Action and the Newcomer Network to Refugee Family Services** (formerly known as the International Rescue Network) in Atlanta started out in the collaboration stage and are moving towards the integration stage. The goal of this partnership is to integrate newcomer families into an existing HeadStart Program. Both organizations shared a common interest to increase the quality of care for all children. The intergroup project enabled the hiring of a Somali family advocate to work with both organizations and to allocate resources for translation assistance. The HeadStart Program also independently hired a Sudanese and a Somali childcare worker. This joint effort resulted in new relationships between Somali and African American parents and children, as well as among teachers and staff. Both organizations have benefited from each other—the HeadStart Program Director learned more about the dilemmas of childcare in today's communities that are becoming rapidly diverse and the childcare workers at the Newcomer Network,

developed skills required to meet the standards for childcare in the United States.

### **The Latino and African American parents who are involved in the Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee's**

(TWSC) intergroup project in Washington, DC developed relationships that reflect the integration stage. The parents developed new relationships with each other after a discussion that helped them understand the

### **MAJOR LESSONS LEARNED**

It takes time, energy, risk, flexibility, and humility;  
 It takes a lot of upfront work to learn about the nature of intergroup relationships in the community(ies);  
 Not every organization or group is ready to do intergroup work;  
 A deliberate strategy that includes explicit steps for building intergroup relations is necessary; otherwise the intergroup component can easily get "lost" within a larger social issue;  
 It is important to engage African American in intergroup work right from the beginning;  
 Technical assistance, especially in cross-cultural community organizing and coalition building, is critical during the beginning of an intergroup program;  
 Opportunities for leaders to develop the knowledge and skills required to work across race, ethnicity, and culture must be made available;  
 Strategies for addressing racism must be integrated into the overall program; and  
 Don't take on this work unless you are absolutely able to commit the time and resources; otherwise you can create more harm than good.

parents understood the importance of developing a relationship with members of the School Board and to advocate on behalf of their shared concerns, including the need for bilingual education. This project resulted in the availability of literature classes taught in Spanish in the George Washington Middle School, as well as English interpretation for Spanish speakers attending school board meetings. It also led to a new relationship between TWSC, an

organization that has worked primarily with Latinos, and the local NAACP chapter.

## APPLYING AN INTERGROUP LENS TO DIFFERENT INITIATIVES

There are unique factors that must be considered in order to ensure that intergroup relations are addressed as part of different topic areas, such as affordable housing, education, and health. The principles for building intergroup relations can be used to guide the consideration of such factors. Here are some examples.

### **In education:**

*Who are the “right” people to engage?*  
Afterschool programs, sports programs, parent advocacy groups, schools, and ethnic organizations that promote culture or provide language classes for children in their communities.

*How do you identify a common issue?*  
Use an asset-based and culturally appropriate approach, convene the various partners, and ask each group about its role in ensuring a better future for children and youth. Help each group learn about the cultural traditions and values related to schools and education.

*How do you provide opportunities for people to get to know each other?*  
Consider a generational strategy (seniors and youth), use sports as a bridge building activity, or ask parents to share their dreams for their children.

*What policies could potentially facilitate intergroup relationship building?*  
Some communities are not used to going outside of their own community for childcare. This means that individuals from within a community need to be trained and licensed to care for the children in their own

community, and eventually their expertise and services can also be offered to people in other communities.

*What policies could provide potentially hinder intergroup relationship building?*  
Lack of access to advanced placement programs, unequal distribution of educators and resources, and lack of support for English as a Second Language programs.

### **In economic development:**

*Who are the “right” people to engage?*  
Community Development Corporations, mainstream and ethnic credit unions, micro-lenders, Small Business Administration, neighborhood and family businesses, chamber of commerce and banks.

*How to identify a common issue?*  
Examine the self-interest of each group

*How to provide opportunities for people to get to know each other?*  
Ask participants why they got involved in economic development or what motivated them to establish their own businesses. Identify each group’s strengths and contributions to their communities. Help each group learn about the cultural traditions and values related to informal economic support systems.

*What policies or conditions could potentially facilitate intergroup relationship building?*  
Advocacy against discriminatory and illegal acts like redlining. Requirements for the Community Reinvestment Act.

*What policies or conditions could potentially hinder intergroup relationship building?*

Unequal access to loan programs and other economic support. Myths that some ethnic groups are more “business oriented” than others.

*What role can a Community Foundation play to facilitate intergroup relationship building in efforts to address issues related to education, economic development, healthcare, civic participation, and other matters?*

A Community Foundation can help convene leaders and organizations in the private and public sectors;  
A Community Foundation has the capacity to provide and mobilize funds to support an idea or effort;  
A community Foundation can help educate donors and other local funders about a particular issue; and  
A Community Foundation can engage experts to provide technical assistance and other capacity building support to grantees.

For further information, please contact:

Lori Villarosa  
The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
1200 Mott Foundation Building  
Flint, MI 48502  
Tel: (810) 766-1741  
Fax: (810) 766-1748  
Lvillarosa@mott.org

Taryn Higashi  
The Ford Foundation  
320 East 43<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10017  
Tel: (212) 573- 5384  
Fax: (212) 351- 3657  
t.higashi@fordfound.org

Kien Lee  
Association for the Study and Development of  
Community  
312 South Fredrick Avenue  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
Tel: (301) 519-0722 ext. 108  
Fax: (301) 519- 0724  
Kien@capablecommunity.com