



INITIATIVE TO STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOOD INTER-GROUP ASSETS

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED 1998-2000

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INTRODUCTION

The Initiative to Strengthen Neighborhood Inter-Group Assets (“the Initiative”) was conceived in 1997 “to promote and strengthen cross-racial and cross-cultural relationships, including those between recent immigrants and long-time residents, by addressing racism and fostering the equitable distribution of political and economic power and resources to improve neighborhoods.” The Initiative is guided and supported by an Advisory Committee comprised of local funders, community members, and other experts in the Washington metropolitan region. The Initiative supports projects in several neighborhoods in the District of Columbia and northern Virginia.

When the Initiative was first proposed, the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation convened a strategy session with approximately 30 leaders in the Washington metropolitan area. These leaders included funders, experts in the area of community building, community leaders, and directors of nonprofit and intermediary organizations. The participants shared information about issues and opportunities related to inter-group relations and about ways to design the Initiative. Individuals who had the expertise and time and demonstrated strong commitment were invited to be on the Advisory Committee that would guide the Initiative.

During the first two years of the Initiative in 1998 and 1999, the major activities included the distribution of a request for proposals (RFP), briefing sessions to answer questions about the Initiative and the RFP, grantmaking, semiannual monitoring by the Initiative’s evaluator, learning cluster meetings, and an annual meeting of the Advisory Committee. Since that time, the Initiative’s activities and process have evolved into a more comprehensive grantmaking and capacity building strategy that includes a technical assistance case management program and frequent convening of grantees to promote peer sharing and learning.

The Initiative has had four rounds of grantmaking and capacity building support¹ that have led to many new and strengthened relationships among individuals and organizations, as well as to tangible improvements in communities. A great number of inter-group assets have been developed or strengthened through the Initiative. As a result of the Initiative, there is now a large learning community in the Washington metropolitan area that is involved in a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, and knowledge dissemination to strengthen the region’s capacity to improve the quality of life for recent immigrants and long-time residents.

The Initiative has had an impact on three major groups:

- Individual grantees, including their partners;
- Local funders involved in the collaborative that supports the Initiative; and
- The larger community of individuals, organizations, institutions, and other resources that are involved in the Initiative.

The Initiative has led to the emergence of a learning community that is prepared to provide capacity building support to the Initiative and to help sustain its outcomes.

¹ The fourth grant round began in September 2000, and awards were made in December.

GRANTMAKING, EVALUATION, AND CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT

Grantmaking

During its first two years of grantmaking in 1998 and 1999, the Initiative awarded \$10,000 grants to 32 inter-group projects (six of the 32 projects received funding in both years). At the end of the second year, the Initiative learned that this amount was inadequate for projects that attempted to advocate for institutional changes through inter-group activities. This lesson, in addition to other influential factors, prompted the Initiative to add a second funding tier for subsequent years that provided grants up to \$35,000 for inter-group projects that went “deeper.”

Since its first grant round in 1998, the Initiative has supported 46 inter-group projects and provided a total of \$818,404 in grants.² The breakdown of the projects is as follows:

- Thirty-six projects were awarded grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$35,000 through the Inter-Group Grant Program. Since 2000, six of these projects have received \$35,000 each;
- Eight projects were awarded \$2,500 grants through the Inter-Group Assets Building Program;³ and
- Two projects were awarded “opportunity grants” of \$25,000 each to respond to an urgent issue in the community.

Evaluation

The Initiative has included an evaluation component since the earliest planning stage. The purpose of the evaluation is to monitor grantees and to provide the Advisory Committee with opportunities to reflect on grantees’ work and lessons learned and to share this knowledge within the Initiative and with the larger community. The evaluation team also provided management assistance for the Initiative and capacity building services to grantees, the Advisory Committee, and other participants.

Capacity Building

Since 1998, the Initiative has provided basic capacity building support to the inter-group projects. The support has included learning activities such as:

- Strategy sessions in 1997 and 1999 with community members and experts to learn more about issues related to inter-group relations, reflect on resources required to support inter-group work, and identify potential Advisory Committee members;
- A roundtable discussion in 1999 to reach out to leaders of the local Asian community. This was the first time that a discussion between grantmakers and Asian leaders had taken place,

² The amount of funds actually expended may be slightly less because a small number of grants had to be rescinded due to internal organizational conflicts that prevented the grantee from implementing its inter-group project.

³ The Inter-Group Assets Building Program, which was implemented in 1998 only, focused on building the inter-group skills of small teams of neighborhood grassroots leaders. A grant of \$2,500 was given to each team as seed money.

and it resulted in several proposals from Asian organizations to the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation;

- Briefings in the community about the Initiative and its funding guidelines, and technical assistance to potential applicants during the proposal development stage. After the first grant round, previous grantees were invited to share their ideas and lessons learned with potential applicants;
- Annual new grantee meetings to introduce grantees to each other and to the capacity building support team (Initiative staff, Advisory Committee, technical assistance case manager, and evaluator) and to identify immediate challenges; and
- Neighborhood-based and regional learning cluster meetings to foster peer sharing and learning among grantees; and
- Annual reflections meetings for the Advisory Committee during which members think back on and discuss the Initiative's accomplishments and lessons learned, and set priorities for the subsequent year.

In 1998, the Inter-Group Assets Building Program was implemented to build the inter-group skills of small teams of neighborhood grassroots leaders. The program included a series of meetings with these teams to address the challenges that they face in strengthening inter-group relations in their communities. The teams considered ways to integrate inter-group relations into their existing efforts, which ranged from a skill-building activity for women from diverse backgrounds to a childcare center. A grant of \$2,500 was given to each team as seed money. Some of the teams continued to stay involved in the Initiative after the program ended by collaborating with groups that received inter-group grants.

In 2000, a technical assistance grant program was added to the capacity building support to provide additional resources to the inter-group projects. The program included the following activities:

- Small group grantee meetings at the beginning of each grant round to support grantees that address similar issues and to identify technical assistance needs;
- An all-day grantee retreat in June 2000 to address issues related to racism in inter-group work; and
- Extensive technical assistance and funds to help grantees address a specific need or challenge.

Ten of the 12 inter-group projects in that year received technical assistance funds for a variety of support services, including facilitation and mediation, training workshops, and youth development. The total amount awarded was \$57,810, and the average amount received was approximately \$5,800.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Grantees

The grantees ranged from small, grassroots organizations to large, established nonprofits. The efforts that were designed and implemented with the Initiative's support varied from

projects that used drama and theater to foster inter-group understanding to projects that organized diverse parents to advocate for institutional changes in schools. The projects involved many newcomer groups from South and Central America, Vietnam, Korea, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, as well as long-time African-American and European-American residents. Some of the issues that the projects dealt with were relatively straightforward, such as helping a group of Latino, Southeast Asian, and African-American youth develop understanding about each other's backgrounds and experiences. Other projects addressed issues that were more volatile, such as the tensions between Korean merchants and African-American residents and affordable housing needs of low-income immigrants.

A key accomplishment of the Initiative is the variety of new relationships and first-time collaboration among many community and ethnic groups. This accomplishment alone demonstrates the success of the Initiative in achieving its goal to strengthen cross-racial and cross-cultural relationships, including those between recent immigrants and long-time residents.

The list of grantees' accomplishments and results include:

- ***New and strengthened relationships***
Several ethnic-based organizations collaborated for the first time on projects funded by the Initiative. A drama group developed a new relationship with an education group through the Initiative. This relationship led to a collaborative effort in the subsequent year to include a play-writing activity in an afterschool program in an elementary school. An African-American resource center collaborated for the first time with an Ethiopian organization to foster mutual understanding between the two groups, which now share the same neighborhood. Aside from several "cultural circles" that promoted the exchange of cultural traditions and literary figures in the two cultures, this project also resulted in a support network for Ethiopian and African-American small business owners.

The Columbia Road Project has helped improve the neighborhood's physical conditions by organizing Latino merchants, African-American, Ethiopian and Vietnamese street vendors to install 15 tree boxes along Columbia Road. The Latino Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), the grantee, helped the vendors, merchants, and the Adams Morgan Business and Professional Association to work together. LEDC recruited the Latino Civil Rights Task Force in order to develop a collaboration for addressing police harassment of vendors. The Columbia Road Project has brought together for the first time nine organizations that serve different cultural groups and have never collaborated before. Finally, LEDC expanded its hiring to include Korean, German and Lebanese-Irish Staff members.

- ***Outreach to new ethnic groups and communities***
Through the Initiative, many funders learned about community groups in northern Virginia and in Montgomery County, Maryland, that they otherwise would not have known about. Many of the grantees reached out to groups that they otherwise would not have worked with in order to strengthen inter-group relations. For example, a tenant organization that had traditionally served only the Latino community used its inter-group grant to reach out to African-American residents in its neighborhood. The project resulted in a joint effort, for the first time, between Latino and African-American parents to improve the quality of education

that their children are receiving. In a northern Virginia neighborhood that now has approximately 150 Vietnamese families, the elementary school was unable to develop methods to engage Vietnamese parents in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) activities. With grant funds, a Vietnamese organization collaborated with the school administration for the first time to design an inter-group project that strengthens relationships between Vietnamese parents and other parents (primarily Latinos) and, at the same time, builds the parents' capacity to address their children's educational needs.

■ ***Increased capacity to address multiple community conditions and issues***

In 1999, Arna Valley, a low-income housing development in north Arlington, was being demolished to make way for single-family homes. Approximately 3,000 individuals were going to be displaced. The Initiative provided a \$10,000 grant to a group of concerned

The coalition to help save the Arna Valley housing development used its inter-group grant to organize tenants and help them access the following funds that the county's relocation office had allocated for the relocation:

- \$1.2 million for relocation benefits;
- \$5,000 for the Tenant Assistance Fund; and
- \$400,000 for the Modern Income Purchase Assistance Program.

tenants and homeowners to assist the development's residents in their relocation plans. The process required the homeowners, who were primarily European American, to understand the issues and challenges confronted by low-income tenants (primarily Latino and African American) and to work with organizations that serve minority communities. This project led to the establishment of a coalition whose purpose is to respond to issues related to the changing demographics in northern Arlington. The coalition received an inter-group grant of \$35,000 in 2000 to identify "at-risk" housing developments and to develop strategies for preventing another crisis like the one in Arna Valley.

■ ***Increased access to national and local resources***

After almost three years of groundwork, one of the Initiative's grantees applied for and received a \$200,000 grant from the Mott Foundation to deepen its efforts to increase parent involvement in schools. Another grantee obtained a \$212,000 grant from the District of Columbia Children and Youth Investment Group to make its inter-group project, a play that addressed intercultural and interracial relationships, a permanent program of the Young Playwrights' Theater.

■ ***Physical neighborhood improvements***

A beautiful mural that reflects the neighborhood's diversity is located at the entrance of the Columbia Heights Metro station in the District of Columbia. This mural is the result of a 1998 inter-group project that brought together a diverse group of youth to work on a multicultural mural, while developing better

An inter-group project developed an exhibit about a local neighborhood to show the impact of gentrification on the community. The exhibit includes photographs, excerpts from interviews with residents, descriptions of sites that have significant meaning to the residents, poetry, and reports on building owners. The exhibit is the result of the hard work of a group of youth who conducted interviews with residents from different ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status.

understanding for each other's cultures and histories. Along Columbia Road in the Adams Morgan neighborhood, tree boxes filled with growing trees and flowers line the street. This improvement is the result of another inter-group project, which was led by a community development corporation in 1998 and 1999.

■ ***Development of materials that will be useful resources to communities and groups***

One of the grantees developed a database of land records for 200 properties in Arlington, Virginia. Another grantee produced a publication, "Between Families and Schools: Creating Meaningful Relationships," as a resource guide for groups interested in increasing parent involvement in schools.

■ ***Increased information access***

An inter-group project helped increase the presence of residents of color in county board meetings and other public processes in Arlington County in Virginia. In an inter-group project in the District of Columbia that addresses culturally competent health care, community health advocates learned about the DC Healthy Families Insurance Program, which is available to members of their communities.

■ ***Development of marketable skills among participants***

One of the inter-group projects in northern Virginia succeeded in placing 82 laborers in permanent jobs. One of the participants who received medical training through another inter-group project obtained a full-time permanent job as a medical interpreter at a community-based organization. Youth, in particular, have been able to develop skills in photography, art, play writing, public speaking, and theater production through several inter-group projects.

Through the grantees, the Initiative has learned many lessons about inter-group work. All the grantees demonstrated some degree of success and in a variety of ways. Grantees that were more successful than others were able to:

- Identify a common concern that galvanized different groups;
- Commit adequate time, staff, and resources to support their inter-group projects;
- Develop deliberate strategies and provide opportunities for community participants or partners to get to know each other's histories, cultural traditions, and experiences;
- Build relationships at different levels (e.g., among project staff, between staff and community residents, among institutional leaders and partners, and among project participants);
- Maintain a balance of short-term and long-term activities, large and small group participation, and engagement of formal and informal institutions; and
- Obtain institutional support, whether from their own organizations, community networks, or public institutions.

Several of the grantees have taken on very challenging and volatile issues (e.g., tensions between Korean merchants and African-American residents, the discriminatory nature of local public policies, and gentrification). While they experienced setbacks and were not able to

integrate all the inter-group principles into their projects,⁴ they have established a strong foundation for further inter-group work.

A key lesson that can be derived from the Initiative is the importance of relationship building. Relationship building is the most essential and the most challenging component of inter-group work. It requires a conscious effort to transcend differences and find common ground. A tremendous amount of time and resources are therefore required to conduct inter-group work—much more than is typically required of any community building project. In the end, success can take a wide range of forms and shapes. In the Initiative, indicators of success ranged from institutional change (e.g., implementation of a bilingual program in an elementary school) to better understanding and appreciation for other cultures. The definition of success depends on the participants' starting point in terms of experiences, initial capacities, and perceptions of the possibilities.

Local Grantmaking Community

All the local grantmakers that support the Initiative agreed that their capacity as grantmakers has been enhanced in several ways. Examples include:

- Increased knowledge about political, social, and economic conditions in northern Virginia;
- Increased opportunity to learn better ways for conducting grantmaking and providing capacity building support for inter-group work;
- Increased knowledge about organizations that serve particular populations and that are new to the funding partners in the Initiative;
- Stronger relationships among grantmakers and a deepened commitment by some grantmakers to support inter-group work.

The Initiative introduced several innovations and new practices for funders, including:

- An “opportunity fund” that makes it possible to respond to immediate and urgent needs that arise in the community;
- Technical assistance case management that tailors assistance to the specific needs of each grantee;
- Learning cluster meetings to promote peer support as an avenue for providing technical assistance; and
- Extensive assistance to potential applicants during proposal development.
- Evaluation that is used for program development, monitoring, and capacity building.

Several grantmakers acknowledged that their enhanced capacity enabled them to find ways to integrate inter-group issues into their foundations' grantmaking practices in other areas. The Initiative has helped the grantmakers deepen their relationships with grantees as they work together to overcome the challenges facing them. This is particularly evident in the participation of three community representatives on the Advisory Committee who are also grantees. The

⁴ The Association for the Study and Development of Community (ASDC) has developed a set of 10 principles for a successful inter-group project. The principles, which are derived from an extensive review of the research and practice literature, are available from ASDC.

funders have benefited from the representatives' insights into their communities, and together, they have struggled with organizational and policy issues that impact the progress of their inter-group projects.

The Initiative provided an opportunity for the participating grantmakers to establish a learning culture among themselves. During Advisory Committee and subcommittee meetings, the grantmakers were able to share with and learn from each other in a collegial manner, as well as to embrace the knowledge of other experts and community leaders. Advisory Committee members, especially during the planning phase, considered their meetings to be full of insightful and intense discussions. A part of the Initiative's success can be attributed to the commitment of higher-level foundation representatives to participate in the Advisory Committee and their willingness to transform their disagreements about the definitions and concepts related to inter-group work into rich discussions and learning moments. The Initiative has helped the grantmakers establish a support network for each other in their efforts to focus on the link between inter-group relations and larger community issues.

Through the Initiative, the grantmakers were introduced to an evaluation design that not only monitored and evaluated the grantees' progress but also facilitated learning and capacity building. The evaluation process demonstrated creative ways for gathering and using information about outcomes and other results of the Initiative. This approach is being adopted by other local initiatives.

The grantmakers have learned that the variety of resources around the table, including technical expertise, connections, networks, and money, provides the Advisory Committee with the flexibility that is required to respond to immediate and urgent community needs. The two "opportunity grants" that were awarded to respond to tenant eviction in one of the targeted neighborhoods are illustrations of this flexibility.

The grantmakers also learned that with each successive grant round, the grant decision making process becomes more complex, because grantees are taking on tougher issues. The Advisory Committee has to consider larger concerns that will influence grant decision making, and it may become difficult to keep the Initiative's mission in focus. Clearer objectives and expectations for the inter-group projects must be developed and articulated.

Another lesson learned by the grantmakers is the need to create ways through which community members may participate in the Advisory Committee and decision making without making such participation burdensome. Related to this, the Advisory Committee has to identify and rely on a variety of sources, aside from its own members, for insights into community needs and assets. Such a variety of input is critical as the inter-group projects shift from less complicated challenges to more complex and volatile issues.

The Larger Community

The Initiative put significant effort into fostering learning. As a result, a learning community has emerged and continues to evolve through the Initiative's programmatic, capacity building, and evaluation activities.

The emerging learning community provides a strong foundation for more dissemination of lessons learned about inter-group work. Every grantee since the first round of the grant program in 1998 agreed that its project has been a worthwhile effort, regardless of whether it received additional support to continue its project. The relationships and increased awareness among organizations, community leaders, and residents about the importance and challenges of inter-group work are the best illustration of the capacities that have been developed and sustained through the Initiative.

Through the learning community, knowledge about inter-group work has been developed and strengthened. One of the biggest lessons learned is the extensive support and time it requires to support inter-group work. Other lessons learned about inter-group work include:

- Deliberate strategies must be articulated by grantees, regardless of whether these strategies address inter-group relations implicitly or explicitly;
- Issues related to racial stereotypes and structural racism must be raised as part of the process for strengthening inter-group relations;
- There has to be a commitment to learning at *all* levels; and
- Intensive efforts to plan the capacity building support must be initiated as soon as grant awards are announced.

The combined experiences of grantees, Initiative staff, Advisory Committee members, and the rest of the capacity building team (i.e., the technical assistance case manager and evaluator) have led to many additional lessons learned about what it takes to support an inter-group effort. These lessons include:

- Small grants can lead to big changes, given the appropriate support and commitment;
- Public education can play a key role in supplementing and supporting inter-group work;
- More dissemination of lessons learned to the wider community, including policymakers, is essential to expand the learning circle; and
- More direct feedback from the evaluation to the grantees would be helpful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Several strategies have worked well in increasing the Advisory Committee's capacity to develop and implement a grant process to support inter-group work, according to information provided by grantees and Advisory Committee members and observations of the evaluation team. The evaluation team recommends that the Advisory Committee continue to implement and build on these strategies, as well as to consider new strategies for enhancing the capacity of the Initiative and its grantees. The strategies include:

- ***Continue outreach and diversity of relations.***
Community organizations and groups have learned through the Initiative that inter-group relations is not just about providing services to a multicultural clientele. It is about engaging marginalized and underserved communities so that they can voice their concerns and participate in decision making processes in a more equitable way. The number of advocacy and community development groups that applied for inter-group funding increased in Round

4. The Initiative should continue reaching out to such groups in diverse communities to expand the pool of potential grantees and the learning community.

■ ***Strengthen the procedure for assessing capacity and needs.***

The technical assistance and other supportive services provided by the Initiative have been developing their own capacity, along with that of grantees and other participants. This past year, the introduction of a technical assistance case manager marked an important milestone in the evolution of the capacity building strategy. The technical assistance case manager had to quickly become familiar with the program, grantees, the local community, and local resources so that the provision of assistance can begin immediately after the grant award. Critical decisions are made during the start-up of local grants, and vital issues need to be addressed to form the proper foundation for projects that may be quite complex.

In addition, a more extensive focus on assessing inter-group relations in the larger community should be considered. Since there are several multiyear grantees, the assessment should also consider different developmental needs in order to promote a continual process to enhance inter-group relations and improve communities.

■ ***Strengthen the technical assistance program and tailor it to the capacities, needs, and conditions of grantees.***

Rarely, if ever, was a grantee sufficiently prepared for the challenges of this Initiative. While no one can deny that community-based organizations have a great deal of knowledge and ingenuity, they have very little experience with deliberate strategies to improve inter-group relations. Experience and research have shown that many "common-sense" strategies have been ineffective, or even harmful, to inter-group relations. A proactive technical assistance strategy may be needed for grantees that do not have the capacity to address the significant challenges that they may be facing. The Initiative should begin to consider these needs at the time of the grant review site visit and be prepared to respond to them appropriately.

The technical assistance process needs to be helpful, but not burdensome. The process of applying for technical assistance funds should not be time-consuming; when it is, it takes away from the time that grantees have to actually implement their program. A consulting relationship for obtaining technical assistance, rather than a more formal application or grant-like process, should be considered for grantees with limited capacity. This consulting relationship should also include more assistance to grantees in selecting consultants.

■ ***Make special effort, as part of the capacity building plan, to link grantees beyond just learning and sharing***

The Initiative has made great accomplishments over the past three years in creating a learning community by promoting learning and sharing among its grantees and other participants. Now, the Initiative has the opportunity to build on this foundation to deliberately broker relations among grantees and other resources in order to "lift" an entire community. Additional and special effort must be made to link grantees that have complementary goals and capacities so that they can collectively address issues that concern an entire neighborhood or community.

- ***Develop strategies to help grantees consider how to more directly address racism.***

The Initiative has learned that racism among immigrants and long-term residents runs very deep and is very complicated. The grantee retreat in June 2000 revealed widespread bigotry and tensions among different racial and ethnic groups, but generally directed towards African Americans. This event and other intentional activities, such as discussions at a learning cluster meeting, are only the beginning of a strategy to address racism. The Advisory Committee, support team (technical assistance and evaluation), and other resources need to consider more thoughtful and deliberate strategies that can be used with grantees and their community members to address racism. The Advisory Committee should also think about ways for the Initiative to have a more active role in facilitating relations among African-American and immigrant communities. Recent efforts have begun to engage more African Americans in this Initiative. It may be useful to engage representatives of African-American institutions in the Advisory Committee and other Initiative activities. The Initiative should also continue to encourage discussion of these issues among grantees and to promote broader awareness of efforts among African Americans and immigrants that address racism. Because of the delicate nature of relations between certain immigrant groups and African-American communities and the endurance of bad memories, the Initiative may want to provide extensive assistance in brokering such relations and in developing appropriate strategies.

- ***Continue to develop and use the “opportunity fund” as a regional resource.***

The development of the opportunity fund was a major achievement in several ways. It provided a mechanism for local funders to respond to an emerging community issue in a thoughtful, timely, and flexible manner. The target neighborhood to which these grants were awarded is not isolated from the larger forces facing its municipality and the region. It is important that this Initiative be able to respond to issues in the region as an opportunity to demonstrate the potential for improving inter-group relations. A perfect example of this is the current tensions between African Americans and Korean merchants in the northeast section of Washington, DC. The Initiative is funding organizations that are involved in this issue. The Initiative can also engage its Advisory Committee and other resources in an equally thoughtful manner.

CONCLUSION

The Initiative to Strengthen Neighborhood Inter-Group Assets has been an important capacity building opportunity for all participants. The Initiative has used grantmaking to create pockets of improved relations among individuals and organizations in selected neighborhoods in the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. Funders that have been involved in the Initiative have consistently commented on the numerous opportunities to improve their relationships, not only with their peers, but also with community-based organizations and other resources. Several of the grantmakers who are on the Advisory Committee reported that the process enhanced their work as funders and that it had an impact beyond this particular work related to inter-group relations. For many grantmakers, this was their first experience working closely with grantees, as well as with their colleagues in the funding community. Grantees and participants have broadened their own personal and organizational networks, and their capacity has been increased through new technical and financial resources. The Initiative has also been an incubator for

innovative community building strategies. Several physical improvements, including murals and improved commercial areas, have been made through this Initiative. Perhaps the most important long-term contribution this Initiative has made is to have raised hard questions and engaged grantmakers and grantees in what is, sometimes, an uncomfortable process of learning and relationship building in pursuit of answers to very difficult questions.

The next year poses many challenges and opportunities for the Initiative. The transition to the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region is a move closer to institutionalizing this Initiative and its purpose within the region.

The greatest challenge facing this Initiative is to identify ways to have a larger impact on intergroup relations in the region. There are several ways this may occur including, but not limited to; collaborating with related initiatives, launching a public information campaign, addressing relevant public policy changes, and engaging public officials from the region. These initiatives have the potential to collaborate with other immigrant, anti-racism, and capacity building efforts in the region. The Initiative can also consider having a larger impact in the region through increased public information efforts that highlight successful inter-group relation projects. The initiative can use public information to advocate for institutional and policy changes that promote social justice and equity for immigrants and their neighbors. Lastly, public officials from Maryland, District of Columbia and Virginia need to be engaged in the Initiative's advisory committee. These governments have their own initiatives, enact policies that affect intergroup relations, and have valuable knowledge and resources that can benefit this initiative. Addressing these opportunities can strengthen the Community Foundation's regional leadership in promoting inter-group relations.

Another challenge is the widespread bigotry and tensions among different racial and ethnic groups, particularly the racism that is directed at African Americans and its residual effects. The racism has major implications on the project's ability to engage African Americans. This issue has to be integrated into the Initiative's overall capacity building strategies.

Finally, the Initiative is confronted with the opportunity and, at the same time, the challenge of enhancing its capacity building support for inter-group work. The Initiative needs to find ways to promote cross-fertilization of capacities among grantees, while not disregarding their varying levels of capacities and stages of development. The large number of grantees and other supports that have been involved in the Initiative since its inception provides strong foundation for pooling resources and capacities to move beyond just learning and sharing, and to maximize the Initiative's impact on the Washington metropolitan region. As many Initiative participants have acknowledged, "This is very hard and complex work, but it is important work to continue."