BET G Report
Community Reconciliation

“Promising Practices & Strategic Choices”

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In January 2001, the Andrus Family Fund launched the Board Exploration Triads (BETs) project, an experimental approach to learning about grantmaking. Participants were divided into small study groups or triads composed of an Andrus Family Fund trustee, an extended Andrus family member, and an outside expert. Over a period of eight months, each BET explored a different aspect of the Fund’s two program areas: Transition from Foster Care to Independence and Community Reconciliation. In September 2001, the teams met in New York to share what they had learned. This paper serves as a summary of the findings of BET G, which explored best practices and strategic choices in community reconciliation.

Executive Summary

There are two important challenges any family fund faces: how to make meaningful funding decisions in a specific issue area and how to successfully engage trustees and better prepare them to serve as responsible philanthropists. The Andrus Family Fund’s Board Exploration Triad (BET) G tackled both challenges within the Fund’s broad community reconciliation arena, which is focused on community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation settings.

BET G offers recommendations, key questions, and beginning dialogue on important issues delivered through two special lenses. The first lens is focused on promising practices in two areas:

♦ First, what are some of the promising practices used by successful community building efforts, particularly those working with groups of people who do not normally come together, and can these lessons be transferred to the Andrus Family Fund’s community reconciliation areas of community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation?

♦ Second, what promising practices should the Andrus Family Fund employ to strengthen its internal capacity to make wise investment decisions, especially with regards to funding criteria and its theory of change?

The second lens is the voices of the BET participants themselves. To meet the goal of successfully engaging the trustees we decided to let their divergent perspectives speak for themselves. Instead of forcing consensus or drafting a document that merely reflects the views of the BET team leader, each section of this reports begin with the specific thoughts of each trustee and highlights their solutions, on-going questions, and key challenges.

The following points capture the strategic set of issues BET G discussed along with recommendations and key questions raised:
♦ What are the three most important criteria to be considered in making funding decisions in the community reconciliation area?
  o BET G responses and the Andrus Family Fund literature and first-round funding experience provide a starting list of potential top criteria.
  o BET G recommends establishing criteria to direct the funding area through a combined brainstorming and prioritizing process that uses tools such as the top-tier or pair ranking approaches.

♦ What are some of the promising practices from related community building fields that could be used in the broader community reconciliation arena?
  o Facilitated dialogue
  o Ground rules and civic ground rules
  o Small group activities
  o Consensus based and other decision making models
  o Member driven initiatives
  o Working in teams and building the emotional intelligence of groups
  o Creating safe space
  o Building sacred space and using spirituality
  o The importance of building relationships and networks
  o The use of stereotyping exercises

♦ In which target groups or settings would you like to see the Andrus Family Fund working?
  o BET G recommends focusing on youth as a promising target population.

♦ What level of analysis or framing of the conflict should the Andrus Family Fund expect from groups seeking funds?
  o BET G recommends flexible analyses and framing requirements which make use of promising practices such as:
    ▪ Using assessment tools such as one-on-one interviews, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires, power mapping processes, small group conversations, and considering a wide set of variables when framing conflicts.
    ▪ Developing the emotional intelligence skill of recognizing your own biases when assessing and framing conflict.
  o BET G recommends the Andrus Family Fund should continue:
- Developing a theory of change that is plausible, doable, and testable.
- And consider developing separate theories of change for each issue area: community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation.

♦ How "honest and truthful" do you have to be to create a safe space for successful community reconciliation work to take place?

  o Though they all felt comfortable with some strategic holding back of information, BET G participants struggled with this topic, yet they were clear about the question the Andrus Family Fund must answer:

    ♦ Where does the Foundation believe it should stand, with the group focused solely on ends and overall outcomes, who are willing to hold back information whenever necessary, or by critiquing both the means and ends throughout the processes and goal’s of one’s community reconciliation work and making sure full disclosure always takes place?

♦ Should the Andrus Family Fund take sides and support groups that advocate for a particular position or should it fund only neutral groups when it comes to community reconciliation work? Or should it invest in a combination?

  o BET G participants were split on this issue.
  o Some believe the Andrus Family Fund has already accepted advocacy as part of its community reconciliation strategy because of the three issue settings it has selected, particularly conservation.
  o A key question is answering how far the Andrus Family Fund will go in advocating for particular outcomes in the three issue areas, especially in light of its relationship to the Surdna Foundation.

♦ Where should the Andrus Family Fund place its limited resources—in preventive work, projects that help before the actual conflict takes place or in situations where real conflicts have arisen and are currently happening?

  o BET G recommends supporting a combination of preventive and actual conflict projects to learn from both settings.

♦ Should the Andrus Family Fund invest in projects where there are significant chances of success or in areas that are deep and difficult, but where no one else is assisting?

  o Guaranteed success was not a driving force for BET G members.
  o While no one argued for completely dismissing the criteria of success, BET G members were more interested in taking calculated risks and
using a longer-term frame of mind to guide the Andrus Family Fund’s selection process.

♦ BET G recommends the Andrus Family Fund create a clear mission statement that guides the work of the Family Fund in the community reconciliation area and answers the question of focus:

   o Is the focus on the transformation of individuals in the transition process?
   o Is the focus on issue victory in the community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation areas?
   o Is the focus on both transformation of individuals and issue victories?
   o Can the Andrus Family Fund meaningfully support both approaches?

Introduction

From the beginning of our work together, we understood our purpose was twofold: to explore issues related to the community reconciliation arena and to help the trustees become better prepared to play their roles as responsible philanthropists. We knew it would be unrealistic for us to become experts in the community reconciliation world in such a short period of time, but we felt confident our intellectual curiosities would lead us to a provocative set of questions for the Andrus Family Fund to consider. In this report, we share the highlights of these conversations through two special lenses.

The first lens is focused on promising practices in two areas. First, what are some of the promising practices or processes or approaches used by successful groups in building community, especially with groups of people who do not normally come together? Our goal was to see if these different practices, processes, and tools could be used or transferred to the Andrus Family Fund’s community reconciliation areas of community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation.

Second, what promising practices or processes should the Andrus Family Fund staff and trustees employ to strengthen the way it makes funding decisions in the community reconciliation category? In particular, how should it establish funding criteria or expand its theory of change?

The second lens is the voices of the Board Exploration Triad (BET) participants themselves. Instead of producing a report that was written solely by the BET team leader or one that forced agreement on all the tough issues raised in our conversations, we decided to let the divergent voices of the BET participants speak for themselves. We did not feel any pressure to agree on everything. We felt it was important to include our disagreements side-by-side with our agreements. And, if we did not have answers to some of our questions, we
thought it was necessary to identify the difficult challenges and issues that the Andrus Family Fund will likely face in its investment decisions.

To frame this conversation, we focused on a set of strategic issues that were raised in our exchanges, key areas with which we believe the Andrus Family Fund will have to struggle as it determines how best to invest limited funds. The mindset we adopted for this report was: what advice would you give someone who was sitting on a committee which had the responsibility of deciding what grants would be awarded in the community reconciliation area? From what we have discussed, what practical suggestions would you offer? The questions we asked included:

♦ What are the three most important criteria to be considered in making funding decisions in the community reconciliation area?
♦ What are some of the promising practices from related community building fields that could be used in the broader community reconciliation arena?
♦ In which target groups or settings would you like to see the Andrus Family Fund working in?
♦ What level of analysis or framing of the conflict should the Andrus Family Fund expect from groups seeking funds?
♦ How “honest and truthful” do you have to be to create a safe space for successful community reconciliation work to take place?
♦ Should the Andrus Family Fund take sides and support groups that advocate for a particular position or should it fund only neutral groups when it comes to community reconciliation work? Or should it invest in a combination?
♦ Where should the Andrus Family Fund place its limited resources—in preventive work, projects that help before the actual conflict takes place or in situations where real conflicts have arisen and are currently happening?
♦ Should the Andrus Family Fund invest in projects where there are significant chances of success or in areas that are deep and difficult, but where no one else is assisting?

While there may not be clear-cut answers to any of these strategic questions, we felt it was important that the Andrus Family Fund identify the various options up front and then continuously evaluate the choices it is making. In short, we want the Andrus Family Fund to be able to test its investment assumptions and use this information to better determine its overall theory of change and the criteria it chooses to highlight in relation to these three areas of community reconciliation.

We also recognize that in the end, it is the trustees, not the BET team leaders, who will have to make the tough funding decisions, so we thought it would be both important and instructive to see where this subset of trustees currently find themselves when it comes to this set of strategic issues. Each section begins with a quote from all the BET G participants. These quotes are not meant as final answers, but as starting points of an ongoing dialogue that the Andrus Family Fund staff and its trustees will have to continue.
The Importance of Establishing Criteria: Three Most Important Criteria

What would you say are the three most important criteria the Andrus Family Fund should focus on in making funding decisions in the community reconciliation arena?

BET participant one: “Three most important criteria for funding: Personal growth, transition and self-respect (leading to a sense of self) - it seems with these in place, people can do their "work" and have space for exploration and not having the answer so much as discovering what is possible.

My view of where to fund follows my own interests. First, no matter where we fund, I'd like its approach to be under the umbrella of transition rather than resolution, and under the awareness of personal growth, reaching toward each individual's interest/investment in personal growth.”

BET participant two: “(1) The prospective grantee should be able to demonstrate that the project that is to be funded is greatly needed (or needed more than comparable projects). There are many worthy projects waiting to be funded, but with limited resources it is necessary to make tough decisions.

(2) With regard to funding studies or projects that seek to produce a theoretical model to be applied (rather than a direct action grant) I think it is important to ensure that the study does not duplicate research that has already been done.

(3) The prospective grantee should have a clearly stated method for assessing the success of the project, with an allowance for changes in circumstances or an interim reassessment of what will constitute success.”

BET participant three: “Determine Impact (short-term or long-term): Because of its limited resources, AFF must carefully choose where to most effectively apply its funds. Many funding organizations need to see the effects of their funding, and thus choose to fund short-term, product oriented projects. I believe the AFF, striving to make a unique contribution, should fund longer-term, more process-oriented groups. The difficulty arises from the evaluation of long-term projects. That is, how do we know we are getting ‘bang-for-our-buck?’ Quite obviously, I would suggest initially choosing reputable, long-standing organizations that are less likely to be at high risk. However, this would not preclude new organizations from receiving funds. Each group must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine its merit.

Determine Scope of Intervention (how many does the group aim to serve): This should be left open. Because the resources are limited, small amounts of funding would probably be felt more significantly on efforts aimed at smaller groups of people. But I would suggest that size advantage should not eliminate from consideration those efforts aimed at serving larger groups.
Determine AFF Role (are other groups funding the same project or is AFF the only one): Again, this should be determined on a case-by-case basis. It may be worthwhile to help a small group that seems outside the viewpoint of the larger, more resource-laden funding organizations. To some extent, where possible, these smaller ‘outsider’ groups should be given priority. But working with other foundations to fund major projects may be a worthwhile endeavor not only for the benefactors, but for AFF as a way to solidify funding partnerships.”

Developing a set of criteria that can be used to help the Andrus Family Fund staff and trustees compare, rank, and ultimately, decide which community reconciliation proposals it should fund is an important piece of process work. From the BET G participant quotes you can begin to see what some of the major criteria could be. They include:

- A focus on transition, not resolution
- The potential for personal individual growth
- A needs-based analysis
- Evidence of an ongoing evaluation process with built-in check points that allow for immediate changes and flexibility in the project, if deemed necessary by the information being gathered
- Making sure research proposals are not duplicating past research
- Favoring longer-term, more process-oriented proposals
- Initially funding reputable groups with long-standing that are less risky investments
- Favoring proposals aimed at smaller groups of people without completely eliminating the consideration of efforts aimed at larger groups of people
- Favoring smaller “outsider” groups who show potential, but have not had success in obtaining grants from larger foundations

This list is not meant to be exhaustive. It is merely illustrative of certain possibilities. In fact, we did not spend much time discussing what small set of criteria the Andrus Family Fund should use in determining which community reconciliation proposals to fund. We did include this question on our overall set of strategic issues that we believe need to be answered by the Andrus Family Fund staff and trustees. We asked each BET G participant to start the conversation for the entire Andrus Family Fund family (staff, trustees, and BET team leaders) by thinking individually about this question and offering beginning options in writing.

While there is not an explicit set of criteria mentioned in the Andrus Family Fund materials, there are seeds of a set of criteria sprinkled throughout the text for the community reconciliation funding area. They include:

- Whether a proposal gives appropriate attention to transition work
The ability for the Andrus Family Fund to learn from the knowledge or experience of the project

Whether the proposal allows us to learn what is necessary to both create and sustain successful community reconciliation efforts

In the first round of community reconciliation funding, the decisions were made primarily from the gut, by instinct, according to staff. There are some criteria that seem to be developing from this round and from ongoing work. They include:

- The importance of process
- The desire to see dialogue present in the projects
- An acknowledgement of wrongs from the past
- Evidence of a way forward

From our experiences with foundations and community groups, the adoption of a small set of criteria as the guiding force in making funding decisions is a promising practice that the Andrus Family Fund should pursue. While this practice is a standard tool for many foundations and corporate philanthropists, it is startling how many funding sources do not establish criteria. Or if they do, they either employ too many criteria, which diminishes its power as a guide, or they designate criteria that are too broad and lack usefulness in their application.

For funders who do not create a set of criteria or develop ones that do not add value, a number of problems can arise from the inherent weaknesses of making decisions instinctively rather than based on criteria. For example, research shows that at least three problems typically emerge: first, there is a tendency for people to see problems one-dimensionally, to grab on to the first solution that makes sense, that offers an explanation. This means the moment we think of a reason to fund a community reconciliation proposal—any sound, persuasive reason—we tend to hold on to that reason and move on to other proposals without considering other criteria, which may actually be more important to us.

Second, if we do think about more than one criterion instinctively, we tend to direct different criteria to different proposals being considered. It is rare that we will naturally force ourselves to consider all the different criteria when we are examining all the proposals.

Third, we intuitively tend to regard all of our criteria as having equal importance to us when in fact they normally have a lesser or higher degree of importance, depending on how we see the overall purpose of the funding area.

There are many reasons why the Andrus Family Fund should create a small set of criteria for its community reconciliation funding. First, the process will go a long way toward getting everyone on the same page, both staff and trustees, in better understanding what the Andrus Family Fund is looking for and what it hopes to achieve through its strategic funding choices. It will allow staff and
trustees to get clearer and more explicit about what the most important criteria should be when they compare, rank, and select community reconciliation projects. A side benefit from this process is that the brainstorming portion of this work will allow staff and trustees to be exposed to the full universe of possibilities that they are considering when they think of the broad category of community reconciliation.

Second, establishing a set of guiding criteria can provide reasoning or grounding for comparing, ranking, and selecting proposals, which can then serve as an historical or institutional memory device. Groups who have submitted proposals will be clearer about how their projects will be reviewed. Staff or trustees who miss a funding round will more easily be able to rejoin the process because of their shared understanding of the criteria. And future staff and trustees, along with prospective grantees, will be able to understand what criteria were used to make funding decisions in the past.

**How To Do The Work**

*From the promising practices, processes, and approaches perspective, what specific elements/characteristics of how this work is done would you like to see from groups applying for community reconciliation grants?*

BET participant one: "Again, all work to be done with transition as the focus, not resolution. Within this, whether community or schools or cities or police relations, taking diversity as the key to community and how to make this safe with a sense of trust and dynamic. How can people be vulnerable and hurt, but hang in there because their stakes or investments are so great. I believe this reaches the dreams people have of a better existence and I want to reach this as the inspiration and commitment."

BET participant two: "Practices will vary from project to project and I believe it is impossible to mandate a particular style or approach. However, as a general point, I think it is helpful to look at grantees that exhibit a true passion for their mission and that present proposals that have been subject to frank internal evaluation prior to a request for funding."

BET participant three: "For me, the most important element/characteristic of community reconciliation groups would be their agenda (stated and unstated). Where possible, I think AFF should fund neutral, seemingly unbiased groups that intend to be involved on the reconciliation process only for the sake of reconciliation. I will expound on this viewpoint later in another question. I would be open to a wide range of practices/methods for approaching the topic. I certainly don't know enough about this topic to suggest best practices."
First, there is no one way or approach to doing community reconciliation work. One size does not fit all.

In our conversations, we examined a number of processes that worked successfully in very different settings. From the BET participants’ responses, several of these elements are highlighted:

♦ A safe space to do the work
♦ A passion for the work
♦ A frank, honest examination of the groups’ themselves
♦ A focus on the journey, not the final resolution, and its impact on individuals
♦ Acting as a neutral, unbiased actor concerned solely with reconciliation

Each of these characteristics may or may not lead to a path of success, depending on the circumstances present, but they do offer a starting point in seeking guidance to the question of how community reconciliation work is done.

While there is no silver bullet approach, there are many lessons we can learn from related community building work. In our conversations, we spent a great deal of time exploring schools and their attempts to resolve conflicts amongst young people. The following list captures some of the lessons learned about how best to do community conflict work in the school context that we believe can be transferred to the broader community reconciliation arena:

1. Facilitated dialogue: Using ongoing dialogue and conversation as opposed to traditional lecturing or even debate when tackling important issues.
2. Ground Rules: Establishing ground rules for group behavior that are self created and self-regulated as opposed to telling people what they can and cannot do or not setting any ground rules at all.
3. Small Group Activities: Constantly working in small group settings (including dyads/pair work, and rarely larger than 6-8 people) as opposed to larger work group settings.
4. Consensus-based and other decision-making models: Learning and using different forms of decision-making tools, particularly consensus models, as opposed to relying on majority vote schemes or not allowing participants to have input in decisions.
5. Member-driven initiatives: Encouraging member-led efforts as opposed to only member-served initiatives. Having participants help shape their own work as opposed to being told what to do is a key process tool that builds ownership and better lasting sustainability.
6. Working in teams and building the emotional intelligence of groups: Understanding that working in groups is not enough. Team-based emotional intelligence where people learn to work with and regulate group emotions such as trust building, group identity, and group efficacy, is just as important as moving from individual to team-based work in the first place.
7. Safe Space: Creating a safe space for this work and these relationships as opposed to large, public settings that foster the opposite reactions.
8. Sacred Space: Not being afraid of introducing spirituality/values/character into the picture, but being aware of the tough questions this work raises: Whose spirituality? Which values? How do we discuss them? How is tolerance achieved?
9. Building relationships and networks: While the content of a conflict is important to focus on, many times, it is the long-lasting relationships and networks that grow out of these activities that are the true signs of success. This allows the individuals involved to be better prepared to take on the next set of conflicts they face.
10. Stereotyping exercises: The use of stereotyping activities where groups are allowed to describe what stereotypes they believe others hold about them and then getting the opportunity to explain which of these stereotypes are false, true, or contain some truth. This is another effective process tool used not only by youth, but also by groups engaged in the Middle East process.

Civic Ground Rules
Another promising practice we want to highlight is the use of civic ground rules as a tool to set a foundation. From this foundation communities in conflict can agree to begin working together to solve their problems.

Civic ground rules is a term used by the Freedom Forum, an organization whose mission is to tap the fundamental principles of American democracy and apply them to current American civic practices. Led by Charles Haynes, the Freedom Forum helps communities in conflict by first asking all the parties involved: what is it you agree on?

By starting with American history and storytelling, Haynes and his colleagues remind individuals that what they do agree upon is something they have forgotten and taken for granted: the first principles of American democracy. These civic ground rules for living together, the American articles of peace, are taken from the framing documents of the United States: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. These civic ground rules are known as the three R’s – Rights, Responsibilities, and Respect.

♦ Groups are asked to recommit themselves to inalienable rights and civic responsibilities.

Fundamental and inalienable rights are the freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition. The first principle is the liberty of conscience, the right of every individual to pursue his or her path to happiness. From this liberty, all other liberties flow. It bestows upon each person the ability to freely direct his or her own life. It creates within every one of us a power that has higher authority than the State.
However, there is a civic responsibility to guard this right of conscience for all, even those with who we are in conflict. They too possess these inalienable rights and it is our duty as Americans to make sure no one is stripped of these freedoms. It is these ideas that are at the core of the American democratic experiment. And it is these notions that we have agreed to defend and pursue as residents in our communities.

♦ Communities in conflict will bring passion, emotion and an almost strident belief that their cause is the right one. It is their inalienable right to push their agenda. However, it is also their civic responsibility to do this respectfully. A robust civic dialogue and debate is how this can take place.

These founding principles of rights and responsibilities are incomplete without the commitment to a respectful, robust ongoing civic dialogue and debate. Issues will be tough. Emotions will run high. But in the end, it is our ability to confront power, to challenge the system, in a passionate but healthy way that will allow communities in conflict to work their way toward solutions neither could have constructed by themselves.

Haynes and his colleagues have succeeded by taking people back in time and reminding them of the civic pact they had made with the American experiment. These groups agree with the fundamental trilogy of rights, responsibilities and respect. They see within this collection of ideas some strong and fair ways in which to begin their deliberations. They understand that these principles do not guarantee results, but allow them as individuals and groups, majority and minority, the freedom to vigorously pursue their passions. It is within this framework that a civic consensus is not only possible, but is necessary, if two warring factions are going to peacefully resolve their problems.

No one would deny that the United States failed to live up to its founding principles in 1791, and that the country still has a long way to go. But the history and the challenge of our nation has been to extend the promise of freedom through these rights and responsibilities more completely and fairly to each and every citizen. We think the Andrus Family Fund should consider promoting this historic path of civic ground rules as its starting point for some its community reconciliation work.

While this is not an exhaustive list, it does showcase some of the promising practices that should be explored in all three areas of community reconciliation funding. In this realm, how you do the work is just as important as the content of the conflict being addressed. Inattention to process detail can cause irreparable harm and set back any progress made in a conflict situation.

**Target groups and settings**
Within the three funding areas of police and community relations, hate crimes, and conservation, are there specific groups of people (youth, minorities, elderly, etc.) or certain settings (schools, communities, churches, etc.) that you would like to see the Andrus Family Fund working in?

BET participant one: "Within the funding areas, I want to focus on youth and schools and communities, but not churches. We didn't discuss conservation as much as community-police relations and hate crimes. I guess part of my interest in youth is that they hold promise... Personally, I'd like to see work in schools - giving under age 14 kids tools for conflict resolution and a sense of self."

BET participant two: "With regard to community relations and hate crimes. I would prefer to see grants targeted at youth. I think it might be a more cost-efficient and effective use of resources. By getting to this population at an early stage, and thereby encouraging preventive measures, there is probably an increased chance of encouraging greater tolerance. This is not to say that adults should be disregarded, and, in fact, in the conservation realm, it may be more effective to target adults -- given that a child would probably more intuitively desire to get along with other children than to take conservation measures."

BET participant three: "My personal interests relate most closely with police/community relations and hate crimes, so I am drawn to address those as potential areas of funding. Specifically, I would suggest working with youth (middle school age or slightly younger if possible) in any setting (school, church, community) to discuss diversity and multicultural issues."

There are an endless number of conflict settings and target groups that the Andrus Family Fund could support under the community reconciliation funding area. In our conversations, we spent more time on the hate crimes and community and police relations arenas than we did on conservation.

All three BET participants agreed that the Andrus Family Fund should place a special emphasis on working with youth. The reasons given spanned a wide gamut. Participants felt working with youth:

♦ Held promise for the future
♦ Would be cost-efficient and an effective use of resources
♦ Could be preventive in nature, not merely reactive
♦ Would successfully develop the sense of self for the youth involved
♦ Would be able to tackle challenging diversity and multicultural issues

While there was no attempt to cut out adults from this equation, there was a strong feeling of potential for long-term success in targeting a younger group that was much more diverse than older sectors of the American population. Participants saw this cohort as less jaded, less set in their ways, and more open to change than their older counterparts.
Current research shows that compared to a decade ago, young people’s lives are getting better. They are less likely to live in poverty, less likely to become teenage parents, less likely to be involved in crimes or go hungry, and are more likely to be enrolled in early-education programs and to get immunized. At the same time, their day-to-day realities have become a cause for concern. Robert Putnam, a pioneer in social capital research, in his book, *Bowling Alone*, found that today’s youth are much less likely to trust other people; less likely to support charities; less likely to vote and not feel guilty about not voting; less likely to attend community meetings; less likely to attend houses of worship; and less likely to keep up with public affairs compared to young people over the past three decades.

This contrast of the lives of young people getting better on so many fronts while simultaneously being more and more socially isolated from one another has caused an alarm. This social isolation has resulted in increased rates of unhappiness, malaise, depression, and suicide. Putnam’s research found that the average American teenager now spends more time alone than with family and friends. He also found that people born in the 1970s and 1980s were three to four times more likely to commit suicide, as were people who came of age in the 1950s.

This startling picture, along with personal experiences, led the participants to put youth at the top of the Andrus Family Fund’s target list. The Saguaro Seminar Group, a national group concerned with the low levels of social capital in America, agreed with the need to focus on young people. In their report, *Better Together*, they reminded the nation that, “As our young people go, so goes our nation. Young people are a reflection of who we are as a society and a sign of where we are headed as a country.”

The one cautionary note raised by a participant was the need to be careful about the role of churches and religion in how spiritually is dealt with amongst young people. The concern was aimed at making sure the introduction of spirituality did not get equated with a particular religious perspective that would exclude and damage the reconciliation process.

**Framing the Conflict**

*Our conversations have shown how complicated and interconnected the issues are that are present in conflict situations. Many times, critical factors that are at the root of some of these conflicts are not even acknowledged by the participants. What advice would you give the Andrus Family Fund as to what level of analysis or framing of the conflict it should receive from groups seeking grants?*

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BET participant one: “Remember, we don't know the answer; to know the answer is the booby prize. Also, to remember that individual's fear can undermine all of the work so safe place is extremely important. Finally, those in conflict need permission to be in transition to find their way and in so doing, find trust, safety and a new way (leadership) together.”

BET participant two: “As a general point, AFF should encourage as much analysis and framing as possible without overburdening the grant applicant. I believe the risk that the applicant will be stuck with a grant that is not flexible enough to adapt to changed circumstances and increased knowledge by all parties as the grant is executed, or that incorrectly assesses the viewpoints of the parties involved, is outweighed by the benefits gained from a diligent and frank assessment of the challenges associated with the grant area.”

BET participant three: “This question relates to my thoughts on question #3. At the extremes, groups may either work toward changing the root of the problem (which is most likely a long–term change, if any change is at all possible) or work toward changing the negative symptoms (in an effort at eventually having some effect on the root). Groups seeking grants should explicitly define their view of the problem and state where their efforts intend to promote the most change. Ideally, AFF would fund those groups that acknowledge the root problem and aim for long-term change by using some combination of short-term and long-term methods/practices.”

To do successful community reconciliation work, groups need to be highly skilled at analyzing community conflicts, defining problems, and designing interventions based on these understandings. Doing this is hard work. Framing community conflicts in a way that helps organizations decide which strategies, processes, and leverage points to use is a tricky and complicated proposition.

Community conflicts are typically messy, multi-layered, interconnected systems that contain numerous different pieces. Many times these ongoing events are fraught with fundamental disagreement on the basic facts, misunderstandings, lack of or poor communicating, and relentless opportunities for escalation of the problems to take place. To even have a chance of making progress, groups have to determine as much as possible, what the real game is.

♦ What are the critical factors present in the conflict?
♦ Who are the major stakeholders and how do they view the conflict?
♦ What are the root causes, not the symptoms, of the conflict?
♦ Of all the connected pieces of the conflict, where should the group leverage its resources?
♦ Once these leverage points are established, does the group have a sense of how working these areas may affect the rest of the system?
♦ What background and history is necessary to understand the origins of the conflict?
These are just a handful of the key questions groups must answer before they can select the right set of strategies for the specific community conflict they are trying to help.

BET G members recognize the challenges of doing this framing work, but they also understand the fundamental role this process plays in any successful community reconciliation venture. While the participants did not claim to have many answers on how best to do this work, they did have concerns and issues they hoped to see addressed by the Andrus Family Fund and its grantees.

One participant focused on the need to let individuals involved in the conflict to transition in their own way, in their own time, without being boxed in by an "answer" to the situation. In fact, this member was adamant in stating that a group cannot have the "answer" after merely assessing and framing a conflict. To have an answer at that stage is impossible. Options can be exposed, but in the end, it will probably be a mix of alternatives that surface throughout the process and get clearer with time. This viewpoint keeps the transition framework in the forefront in whatever processes are pursued.

Another participant supported the need for framing work, but cautioned the Andrus Family Fund not to overburden potential grantees with paperwork. The possibility of "paralysis by analysis" could discourage groups from applying or could bog down efforts that the foundation wants to support. Balance is the key for this team member, and finding out where the line will be drawn between what is enough analysis to ask for and what is too much will need to be worked out, hand in hand with the Andrus Family Fund grantees. The result of this balance will be a strong understanding of the conflicts with the flexibility to adapt and make adjustments throughout the process.

How a conflict gets framed has a tremendous impact on strategies and tools the groups will contemplate using. For example, recently in Chicago, Illinois, a community conflict has arisen regarding a poor, African-American neighborhood and school and a number of affluent Anglo communities and schools. All of the schools are Catholic, private schools. The African-American school was denied entrance into an athletic league with the other Anglo schools.

From the Anglo neighborhood’s perspective, the conflict was an issue of safety. Many Anglo families did not believe it was safe enough to send their children to the African-American area after dark. For the African-Americans involved, the conflict was an issue of racism, pure and simple. They believed "safety" was a cover for stereotyped beliefs that low-income African-American neighborhoods are all dangerous, filled with gangs, rapes, and non-stop violence.

How would you decide to frame this conflict? What minimal steps would need to be taken before a group could feel comfortable proposing options? How would
the Andrus Family Fund evaluate whether groups had done an adequate job of analyzing the total situation?

One promising practice has been the combination of strong assessment skills and the ability to consider a large set of variables as possible factors. On the assessment front, knowing what questions to ask, who to ask, and how to ask are basic skill sets needed to do the job. But, beyond these fundamentals, groups need to master a range of instruments and processes connected to the "how" of the assessment phase. These tools include one-on-one interviews, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires, power mapping processes, and small group conversations.

Connected to these assessment tools and techniques is the ability to consider a wide set of variables as possible features in a conflict. The best practitioners accomplish this by starting with a full universe of possibilities including -- culture, class, gender, politics, economics, social forces, technology applications, intergovernmental divides, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, relationships, structures, religion, history, power, language, other internal and external conditions, and so on.

They bolster this system-wide awareness with a keen sense of their own biases. They know if they possess a default mechanism that leads them to see things in a certain manner -- through a racial or class lens, for example -- and they learn to build in check-in mechanisms to make sure they do not find an "answer" before they start looking. This emotional intelligence skill of knowing who you are and understanding how this influences your observational and assessment methods sets apart the top practitioners in this field.

Tied to the framing issue is the larger idea of a theory of change. In simple terms, a group's theory of change paints a picture of how and why they believe change will take place in an initiative or funding area. James Connell and Anne Kubisch define a theory of change as "a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes, and contexts of an initiative". At our first gathering, the staff presented us with a preliminary theory of change for the fund's community reconciliation work. It consisted of successive stages:

- Pilot programs and research
- Some demonstrative success using community reconciliation models
- Increased interest in using community reconciliation as a model
- Increased use of community reconciliation and an increased knowledge base

This early sketch shows how wide open the Andrus Family Fund finds itself as it embarks in an area of practice that has not yet been more narrowly and clearly

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defined. We believe the full set of community reconciliation reports and the conversations that will be sparked by the questions raised in them will move the Andrus Family Fund to the next level of possibilities related to its theory of change.

Connell and Kubisch offer three traits of a strong theory of change that the Andrus Family Fund should keep in mind:

♦ It should be plausible. Do evidence and common sense suggest that the activities, if implemented, will lead to desired outcomes?
♦ It should be doable. Will the economic, technical, political, institutional, and human resources be available to carry out the initiative?
♦ It should be testable. Is the theory of change specific and complete enough for an evaluator to track its progress in credible and useful ways?³

They also offer a six-stage process for generating a theory of change that has proven successful and could serve as a model for the Andrus Family Fund:

♦ What longer-term outcomes does the Andrus Family Fund seek to accomplish?
♦ What interim outcomes and contextual conditions are necessary and sufficient to produce those longer-term outcomes, beginning with penultimate outcomes and moving through intermediate to early outcomes?
♦ What activities should be initiated and what contextual supports are necessary to achieve the early and intermediate outcomes?
♦ What resources are required to implement the activities and maintain the contextual supports necessary for the activities to be effective, and how does the initiative gain the commitment of those resources?
♦ Step 1: Long-term outcomes
♦ Step 2: Penultimate outcomes
♦ Step 3: Intermediate outcomes
♦ Step 4: Early outcomes
♦ Step 5: Initial activities
♦ Step 6: Resource mapping⁴

One question that will have to be addressed is whether the Fund will need four theories of change in the community reconciliation area. One would be a broader overarching theory of change accompanied by three more specific theories directly tied to the funding issues of community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation. As we discuss later in our section on advocates or neutral parties, topics such as conservation may lend themselves more appropriately to advocacy style approaches than do the other two issues, at least in regards to their relation to community reconciliation work. If this is true, it

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³ Connell and Kubisch, page 19.
⁴ Connell and Kubisch, page 22.
could prove advantageous for the Andrus Family Fund to begin work on separate theories of change that add specificity and better direction for the Fund and its grantees.

We also believe that while it was open-minded for the Andrus Family Fund to bring in BET team leaders who were not experts in the larger community reconciliation world, the Fund should shift to tapping the expertise of Community Reconciliation Fellow Lisa Magarell and other individuals who can bring deeper knowledge, specifically in these three subject areas, to offer their recommendations to the host of questions raised in all our reports.

**Trust, honesty and safe space**

*We saw in our earlier discussions that trust and creating a safe space for this work to take place is critical. We also learned that in some cases, success came from not telling the participants what the “real” topic was, but in getting them to work on things together. Others would argue that the process has been tainted from the start if you do not fully disclose the aims of the project. What do you think? Which approach do you think the Andrus Family Fund should support? What considerations should they take into account when discussing trust, honesty, and the creation of a safe space?*

BET participant one: “It is not dishonest not to tell the participants the outcome one wants to achieve through an exercise. Instead it is freeing for the participants to be able to experience what they have done together and within oneself.”

BET participant two: “I think the answer to this will vary based upon the particular project. With regard to kids at school, they may not be able to fully comprehend the “real” topic and attempting to explain it may only create greater confusion and tension. However, as a general point, and almost always with adults, it is probably better for all parties to be fully aware of any agenda or topic. I think that it would be difficult to expect honesty and progress from any of the participants when they are not afforded honesty to start with.”

BET participant three: “With so many of these questions, there is no right answer and good points could be made for funding groups that either fully disclose their goals or groups that don’t. As I expressed to my BET group, my experience with gangs in the Durham school system has caused me to understand the necessity of partial disclosure of goals and the ‘real’ topic. Had the ‘real’ topic been brought up initially, it would have brought failure to many team/group projects. Thus, not fully disclosing goals, in some cases, can be a real advantage. Just being aware that some issues are ‘too hot’ to bring out into the open right away will be an advantage to AFF. Beyond that, AFF should evaluate whether they believe the methods of the grant seeking group will achieve the desired result.”

The issues of trust, honesty, and the creation of safe space was another area where the participants did not come to a final answer. The struggle with this set
of issues was the classic “means” versus “ends” conversation that was made even more difficult by the presence of successful applications in both worlds. The crux of the issue is: how much do you disclose to participants about what is going on? How much of your analysis of a situation do they need to understand? If you do not fully disclose this information, is it possible to create safe space, a place where trust and honesty can flourish?

One team member argued that the lack of full disclosure could be interpreted as a positive sign. By not burdening the individuals involved with the heaviness and explosiveness of broad, abstract notions such as race, class, or ethnicity, participants could be freed to pour their energies into working together as a team, which also translated into working on oneself. A second team member, speaking from experience, agreed with this idea and added that people working on community reconciliation projects need the strategic capability of determining when a topic is “too hot” to be introduced and when it is safe to do so.

The final team member said that the answer would be different depending on the setting of the conflict. In general, and especially with adults, this participant felt it was more effective to fully disclose important information. Without this, particularly early in the process, it would be difficult to build a trusted, safe space where everyone felt secure in opening up and going deeper in the work. This participant agreed with the reasoning behind not fully disclosing the larger framework to young people because they may not be able to comprehend the “real” issues or, worse yet, it could increase the tension levels and allow confusion to set in.

The group discussed the successful cases of various youth, gang, and school-based initiatives where young people were not told at the beginning of the process that they were working on racial, ethnic, class, or gang issues. This lack of full disclosure was deemed necessary because, in the past, when they had told the young people what they were doing, many of the youth either dropped out or did not carry out the project because of a lack of interest. Now, by not telling them up front, and letting them experience the power of working together and achieving success in completing a school project, the students were doing community building work without realizing that was what they were doing. This work was based on Gordon Allport’s “contact theory” first put forth in 1954 and now called “cooperative learning”. Allport believed, “. . .that when individuals of different racial or ethnic groups worked together on a common footing toward a common goal, and are given opportunities to know each other as individuals, they become friends and overcome the prejudice they hold towards one another.”

In the debriefing portions of some of these projects, students were told of the underlying issues they had been working on and they talked about how they had

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overcome these obstacles by doing something together, not by just talking about them. In other cases, the students were never told. The results of the positive interaction between different racial or ethnic groups were never explored further. By tackling issues that did not seem to have anything to do with issues of race, ethnicity, class, or gangs, these students were able to find common ground and mutual understanding and support, all focused on a collective project goal.

On the one hand, a strong case could be made that it is extremely difficult to build lasting trust and safe space if the foundation for this work is built upon half-truths or something less than full disclosure. This view believes it is just as important to scrutinize the means used along the way of the process, as it is to focus on the overall ends. Trust is painstakingly built one act upon another and any diversion off this path can be disastrous. Proponents of this view argue that the process is tainted from the start when you begin by knowingly holding back important information from the group. Once you choose to go down this path, they believe, there is no going back. And even if it proves successful in the short-term, what guarantee is there for the group that the leaders will not decide in the future that it is again proper to hide some of their analysis from the participants?

On the other hand, advocates of the "ends justify the means" school, hold that they are strategic realists. In general, they agree with the other side, and believe you should not censor information flow because of the potential negative impact. But, their experiences tell them that in certain situations, human beings are less able to understand or cope with larger constructs such as race, class, or ethnicity. In fact, the introduction of these topics can sometimes trigger a narrow, stereotypical surface reaction that blocks individuals from ever attempting to build community across wide divides. This is especially true for young people, they believe, because many of them, particularly younger children, have a harder time fully comprehending the underlying issues being addressed and therefore it is reasonable to withhold these pieces of information from them, for their own good. What is needed, they believe, is an astute ability to monitor political, economic, and social environments and to use this scanning ability to make tough decisions on when to hold back certain pieces of information.

They understand that doing this could negatively impact the potential to create and sustain a safe space to do community work so they build in high threshold levels that need to be surpassed before they choose to do this. They see their disagreement with the other side as minimal. Where they disagree with their colleagues is that you have to take a purist viewpoint. They believe there are situations where you can both hold back information and build safe space at the same time.

For the Andrus Family Fund, the key question to be answered in regards to safe space is: Where does the Foundation believe it should stand, with the group focused solely on ends and overall outcomes, who are willing to hold back
information whenever necessary, or by critiquing both the means and ends throughout the processes and goals of one’s community reconciliation work and making sure full disclosure always takes place?

**Advocates or Neutral Groups**

*In our last call, we started to address the question of whether the Andrus Family Fund should take sides (support groups that advocate for a particular position) or whether they should fund neutral groups when it comes to community reconciliation work. Or should they fund a combination of both advocacy groups and neutral conveners? Tell us what you think and why.*

BET participant one: “While AFF does take a definite position and there is no need to hide it, AFF does feel conservative in its roots (Surdna) so at most 1/3 advocacy but need some to stir the pot or no one will wake up or show up at the table living."

BET participant two: “As a practical matter, I believe it will be a combination of advocacy and neutrality. Some projects will come along that can be funded through a neutral group (for example the collaborative process in Cincinnati that is currently being funded) and others will require us to take a position – for example in funding a conservation project. I think it is important for us to also acknowledge that certain groups will attempt to project a neutral agenda when in fact there is a fairly clear agenda.”

BET participant three: “I feel quite strongly on this point. I believe, perhaps erroneously, that reconciliation is best achieved by a neutral third party, and would encourage AFF to ask for grant proposals from community reconciliation groups (CRGs) that explicitly state their neutrality. It seems that if the CRG had an agenda similar to one side of the conflict, the CRG’s position of mediation power would be compromised. For example, if the CRG stated its partial position from the beginning, how could the other side not feel that the addition of this group has made the situation an ‘us against them’ situation? The CRG’s impartiality probably would not prevent successful reconciliation, but I would argue that partiality would hinder the process of conflict mediation.

Let me be clear. Advocacy groups may be absolutely worthy of AFF funds (especially if the cause is determined to be good), but these should not be considered CRGs and should not be funded as such. Instead, these are support agencies with a clear agendas.”

BET G participants are split on the question of whether the Andrus Family Fund should fund advocacy groups or neutral facilitators in the community reconciliation arena. One participant strongly argued for primarily supporting neutral third party intermediaries and even believed the Andrus Family Fund should ask potential grantees to declare their neutrality in their grant proposals.
A second participant thought they should fund a combination of advocacy and neutrality as a practical matter because of the different conflict situations that exist. However, this team member cautions the Andrus Family Fund to be on the lookout for groups that claim neutrality, but actually have a definite agenda. The final participant believed the Andrus Family Fund needed to be a foundation that was stirring the pot, shaking things up, and was not hiding from this support position. This team member did worry, however, that the conservative roots of the Surdna Foundation would limit the Andrus Family Fund's ability to pursue such a strategy.

How should the Andrus Family Fund answer these strategic questions?

♦ With whom should the Andrus Family Fund work—advocates or neutral groups?
♦ Given all the possibilities in the community reconciliation equation, how does the Andrus Family Fund add value? Where is funding needed?
♦ Has the Andrus Family Fund already staked out positions by selecting three community reconciliation areas of community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation?
♦ If the Andrus Family Fund has taken positions and chosen sides, is the Foundation comfortable admitting this? If it has, how far is it willing to go in terms of its support? How far can the Fund go legally?

Foundation history and culture

Political drama, history, and changes dating back over three decades, continue to have a stifling, and at times, suffocating effect on foundations today and what they feel comfortable investing in.

Back in the highly charged political climate of the 1960s, Congress, led by the larger than life conservative, Democratic Texan Congressman Wright Patman, unleashed a fury upon foundations and unions that led to major changes in how foundations could operate. The changes, included in the Tax Reform Act of 1968, sent an instant chill down the spine of moderate and progressive foundations. They had recently begun to fund "harder programming"—community organizing efforts led by young, minority activists of color. But, the politicians who represented them instantly tagged these activists as "radicals" and "communists." These elected officials disliked the fact that they did not have any say in the dollars that were flowing to these "socialist groups" housed in their districts. The disastrous, arrogant, and elitist performance by Ford Foundation President MacGeorge Bundy in his testimony before Congress cemented these politicians' desire to crush this movement and halt this "unpatriotic" behavior.

Almost overnight, foundation grants for hard-core advocacy were rescinded, stopped, or delayed permanently. Grassroots organizations that had hired community organizers were told to fire them because foundation dollars could no
longer support them. Impatient, fiery young advocates were told to cease and desist. Wasn't there a softer, safer set of services they could deliver to their communities, asked overly nervous foundation officers? Relationships were destroyed. Trust was irrevocably broken. And deep fear set in a way that has never been completely exorcised.

This lingering fear continues to permeate the foundation culture to this day. Many foundations, including progressive ones, tread lightly over what they can and cannot fund. Anything that remotely hints of political firepower -- voter registration drives, small time lobbying efforts, direct political actions, hard line community organizing, confrontational tactics -- automatically triggers a direct trip to the foundations' counsel office. And a guaranteed delay in the ability for grassroots groups to move forward with their advocacy. While the rules are clear and the guidelines and limitations well known by both foundations and non-profit organizations, this growing sense of "we are watching you," continues to stop or decrease the amount of support given to advocacy organizations that do not play by the respectable, civil rules of proper community building work.

The Andrus Family Fund will have to answer its own internal cultural questions, especially with its relationship to the Surdna Foundation, as to how far it can go in advocating for particular outcomes in these three issue areas. The Surdna Foundation has a great reputation for pushing the envelope in its funding areas, what will the Andrus Family Fund do?

**Case for supporting neutral third party intermediaries**

The case for funding neutral third party intermediaries as part of a community reconciliation portfolio is fairly easy to make. We know that there are many conflict situations where both parties are so mired in the depth of their convictions that only an outside force -- not seen as being a part of either side of the battle -- can step in and help. The traditional traits of a successful neutral third party intermediary include:

- They do not have a position on the conflict/issue
- They do not take sides during the proceedings
- They understand the importance of process
- Their primary goal is resolution
- They seek and help produce win-win situations
- They decrease the gaps that exist between both parties
- They do not carry their own agenda into the work
- They provide "new eyes" and a fresh outsider perspective
- They are good listeners and strong communicators

Intuitively, the role of the neutral third party intermediary makes sense. We are all familiar with the stories of complicated, deeply held and felt community conflicts that are seemingly intractable. Many times the parties get stuck
because they try to resolve the conflict by themselves. Unfortunately, a whole host of factors – history, lack of trust, misunderstandings, process issues, and so forth – get in the way. In these cases, their only hope is a fresh pair of eyes and ears that are not tied to either side that can watch, listen, and learn and then work cooperatively with both sides to gain resolution that benefits all parties involved.

The challenge here for the Andrus Family Fund will be determining how to distinguish between the various neutral third party intermediaries that apply for funding.

**Case for supporting advocacy organizations**

The case for supporting advocacy approaches as part of a community reconciliation funding strategy is a more complicated question. The Andrus Family Fund will have to decide whether the benefits of the advocacy model outweigh the costs. In this strategy, advocates use conflict resolution and consensus building techniques as part of a larger toolbox of approaches for advancing their interest.

In situations where it is not possible to reach a consensus resolution, advocates pursue what Drs. Guy and Heidi Burgess, co-directors of the Conflict Research Consortium, call, "constructive confrontation." This is the use of consensus building techniques -- persuasion, negotiation, and threat as examples of tools to be used to address ongoing controversies, to be part of what they call a confrontation strategy mix. Effective advocacy, they believe, minimizes the use of force-based strategies such as litigation and direct political action, and relies more heavily on persuasion, negotiation, threat, and other consensus based approaches. They understand that the use of force-based strategies, while many times useful, can also create a backlash against advocates because people resent being forced to do things against their will.6

Another piece of the advocacy “confrontation strategy mix” is smaller unit analysis, where advocates take an incremental approach to moving their cause forward. Instead of focusing solely on the overall frame of the conflict, which many times can act as a neutralizer because of the immense proportions of a situation, advocates choose to chip away at the parts of a conflict that can be resolved. An added benefit of this process is that as advocates move their causes forward, piece by piece, the magnitude of the remaining portions of the overall conflict is reduced. This approach, if carried out successfully, may help the advocates create movement, which they need to sustain support and credibility, and strategically delivers a more manageable conflict in which they can focus their limited resources.

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6 Dr. Guy Burgess and Dr. Heidi Burgess, “Consensus Building for Environmental Advocates” pages 1 & 2, 1996, Conflict Research Consortium website, [www.colorado.edu/conflict](http://www.colorado.edu/conflict)
Characteristics of the advocacy model and its use of conflict resolution and consensus building techniques include:

- Not sitting on the fence, taking a definite stance on an issue/conflict
- Understanding the importance of process
- Using conflict resolution and consensus building techniques as part of a larger toolbox of approaches they know and apply in different situations
- Advancing their interest, not resolution, is their primary goal
- Constantly monitoring and understanding their political, economic, and social environments as a key skill
- Strategic thinking skills are critical because they help advocates distinguish between using conflict resolution/consensus building techniques or confrontational tactics
- Advocates are seeking good decisions that support their interests as well as those of society as a whole, they are not focused on resolution for its own sake
- They are seeking justice
- They focus on helping the "underdogs" because of power imbalances

Why advocacy? The Burgess' research shows that while conflict resolution and consensus building processes can be quite effective as a coalition building tool or when the stakes in a conflict are low, they are not as successful when the issues contain deep-rooted value differences, where the stakes are high, or where there is no possibility of win-win scenarios. Under these circumstances, advocates need to use other more confrontational tools such as litigation or direct political action. Environmental disputes, including population control and resource depletion situations, exhibit many of the traits where conflict resolution and consensus building approaches are not as helpful. For example, many community organizing groups in the South are fighting large corporations over the question of mountaintop removal -- the stakes are high and in the end, if the company is allowed to remove large portions of the mountain, then there are real winners and losers. Win-win is a meaningless term for these advocates.

Proponents of the advocacy model see themselves as realists. They acknowledge that in many disputes, particularly in the environmental arena, the power imbalances present between the parties involved turn conflict resolution or consensus building techniques into weapons for big business. For example, to become a part of a mediation process, advocates are frequently asked to give up their confrontational tactics -- organizing efforts, demonstrations, protests, and other direct political actions. Once advocates agree and relinquish their direct action political power they are close to being helpless. Companies and the industries of which they are a part can then more effectively use what they have [dollars and resources] to demolish the other side. In these instances the limited influence of advocacy groups is no match for the full force of corporate power.

7 Burgess and Burgess, pages 1-8.
However, supporters of this advocacy approach understand that force-based strategies and confrontational tactics are by themselves not enough to achieve the results they desire. They believe the most effective form of advocacy is one that constantly looks for better ways to achieve its goals. This means being open to borrowing approaches from both the conflict resolution and consensus building world as well as using more traditional confrontational means. To limit yourself to one school of thought is to limit your potential for victory. Consensus based community organizing and the work of many environmental groups are good examples of this advocacy approach.

It is plausible to see how outside observers could conclude that the Andrus Family Fund has already accepted advocacy as part of its community reconciliation strategy. In the descriptions of restorative justice, the focus on transitions, and by selecting issue areas such as community-police relations, hate crimes, and in particular, conservation, the Andrus Family Fund has shown that it is interested in outcomes that are tied to progressive movement on all these fronts. Conservative or reactionary outcomes will not be deemed successes, no matter what techniques are used -- neutral third party or advocacy. In that sense, the Andrus Family Fund has already made a decision to support a particular view on these issues. While the details of those stances may not be known, issue-by-issue, case-by-case, the overall philosophy is present. The key question is whether the staff and trustees agree with this assessment and are comfortable funding advocate groups that are seeking the same outcomes.

**Preventive or Real Conflict**

*Community reconciliation work can take place at different points in a potential conflict. Some would argue that preventive work—doing projects that help before actual conflict takes place—is the best approach while others would say there is a great need to target resources to situations where real conflicts have arisen and are currently happening. Where would you advise the Andrus Family Fund to place its limited resources?*

BET participant one: “There is no before in a conflict for me. Maybe it is before a BIG explosion. Again, as in size, I would fund a smattering: before, after and during conflict and see what works where and how.”

BET participant two: “As with my response to question #3, I believe that we can get a greater return by addressing conflicts before they start. Having said this, it is often difficult to motivate people to address potential problems until they occur and, as such, there will always be a need for projects addressing conflicts in process.”
BET participant three: “Our BET spent some time discussing whether support in diverse, volatile (the problem is occurring right now) communities or diverse, relatively calm (with building animosity) communities would be most effective. I have come to no resolution in my thinking on this issue. While the immediacy of the problem and need for a solution is clearly with the first type of community, it seems possible to think that resources directed at the second community might be more effective in creating real change instead of just working with the ‘symptoms.’ Thus, my leaning would be toward funding those communities not yet facing obvious turmoil. Efforts aimed toward serving this community would probably utilize more long-term prevention and communication strategies and would need to be evaluated from a more process-oriented standpoint.”

BET G participants leaned toward having the Andrus Family Fund place its limited resources in projects that help before actual conflict takes place, but there was also support for experimenting with a combination of situations. One group member advocated for before, during, and after conflict situations to see what works where and how.

For those favoring working with projects that would step in before an actual conflict had taken place, there were several possible outcomes that attracted them to this direction. First, there was the belief that these situations could result in greater returns because they would be dealing with situations before things exploded and people become stuck in their roles. In this sense, it would be easier to work with this setting. The challenge would be in motivating individuals to participate. While this is a more rigorous approach, it may be less difficult than dousing passions enraged by actual conflicts.

Second, the potential to focus in root causes, not just symptoms, could be another benefit from working with settings that have not yet exploded. Because you would not be as pressed to do something right away, there would be more opportunities to take a longer-term prevention approach. You could try processes that you might not otherwise have the time frame or the luxury to do in an ongoing conflict.

In the end, the group seemed comfortable with supporting a combination of preventive and actual conflict projects. They speculated that places that had actual conflicts in motion would be motivated to do something to better their circumstances and would, by definition, have a more pressing time frame from which to work. Overall, this mix will allow the Andrus Family Fund to learn from its experimental universe and see whether these projects have something to add to the fields of preventive and actual conflict work.
Potential for Success

What sorts of conflicts should the Andrus Family Fund invest in—those where there are significant chances of success or in areas that are deep and difficult, but where no one else is assisting?

BET participant one: “I go for the deep and difficult in funding - with chances of success of course but I don't think the outcome can always be measured, especially when we recognize transition as our role. The outcome or the effect may not be realized until long after some project has closed. This can be the nature of transition.”

BET participant two: “Again, there will probably be a combination of the two. In short, we should diversify our grant making. We need to invest in projects that will produce results, but we will also need to take risks with certain grants if progress is to be made.”

BET participant three: “I mentioned my thoughts on this question in a few of my previous answers. On the whole, I would like to see the AFF invest in often overlooked projects that work on seemingly insurmountable problems with little hope of 'success.' My hunch is that many funding organizations choose to fund projects that can demonstrate their potential for clear-cut success. But as we discussed in our calls, success needn't be determined as a short-term product and could be a process of long-term intervention. Were I in charge and the worthiness of the applicant groups equal, I would try to give priority to those groups that were doing long-term intervention in deep and difficult areas.”

Guaranteed success was not a driving force for BET G group members in deciding where the Andrus Family Fund should invest its funds. Two members pushed for focus on the deeper and more difficult conflict areas, especially those project settings that are being overlooked by other foundations. The third member recommended a combination approach that would allow the Andrus Family Fund to diversify its funding base. While no one argued for completely dismissing the criteria of success, the group seemed more interested in taking calculated risks and using a longer-term frame of mind to guide the Andrus Family Fund’s selection process.

From an organizational process perspective, we recommend that the Andrus Family Fund staff and trustees create a clear mission statement for the community reconciliation funding area. Because there is not a one sentence mission statement that captures the purpose of why the Andrus Family Fund is even doing community reconciliation work, it is hard to answer questions such as those related to potential success levels. Instead of clarity and focus, the case can be made to fund almost any community reconciliation proposal that includes some reference to working on "transitions."
Community organizing groups that have not adequately created the one-sentence mission statement that directs their day-to-day work find themselves in a similar situation. For example, one of the classic unanswered questions for many community organizing groups is: which is more important - the transformation and development of individuals or winning on the issues the organization cares about? By default, many community organizing groups either never ask the question or take the easy way out by answering, "both are equally important so we'll do both."

Similarly, the Andrus Family Fund must answer its own version of this question. Which is more important -- the transformation and development of individuals in the transition process or "winning" in the areas of community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation? The Andrus Family Fund's focus on the transitions framework could lead one to deduce that the primary mission of the community reconciliation work is the development and transformation of individuals. The three issue areas could be seen as merely specific targets of where this transition work will be done. From this viewpoint, the key is whether the transitions process is managed successfully. Whether or not groups succeed on these issue fronts is not as important.

On the other hand, one could argue that the clear delineation of the three issue areas makes it obvious that the Andrus Family Fund also expects clear-cut progress to be accomplished. From this view, managing a successful transition process is not enough. There have to be real tangible issue victories that further the Andrus Family Fund's interest in these areas.

Which perspective is right? The easiest answer is to say, "a little bit of both -- issue success and individuals transformed." If this combination is the crux of the mission of the Andrus Family Fund’s community reconciliation work, the Fund must then answer the next set of questions that logically flow from this conclusion. They include:

♦ Does the Andrus Family Fund have the capacity to focus on both of these areas meaningfully?
♦ If transformation of individuals in the transition process is one of the two overarching goals, how will the Andrus Family Fund know if this has been achieved? How will this be measured or evaluated?
♦ If issue victories in community-police relations, hate crimes, and conservation is the other primary focus, will the Andrus Family Fund continue to fund only groups that produce actual victories, or will a strong, well-intentioned effort which falls short be dubbed a success?

Of course, the Andrus Family Fund staff and trustees may decide that the mission of the community reconciliation work is both the transition process and issue progress, but that one is more important than the other. Or, it may develop a completely different focus for its one-sentence mission statement. Whichever
path it chooses, we believe the first major step must be for the staff and trustees to work together to design a mission statement that gets everyone on the same page and offers clear direction for all the tough questions that will appear along the way.

Final Thoughts

Finally, are there any other pieces of advice you want to share with the Andrus Family Fund that we have not discussed in any of the previous questions?

BET participant one: “My biggest question and issue is "What motivates people" to change, to grow, to look at conflict - and my answer is that suffering is a great motivator but the only promise seems to come from personal growth, finding one's self and one's voice and having the safe place or even a place in which to be related/connected to others. Someone once said to show up is half of it.”

BET participant two: “I would only add that in assessing grants we should not be so limited by our program statement (and our reliance on the William Bridges transition model) that we fail to notice the wider positive impact that many projects potentially have.”

BET participant three: “I really think the questions covered the major general ideas we discussed as a group. Some thoughts I have about potential funding situations are so situation/group specific that they would be inappropriate to include here.”

Constantly learning from the multitude of experiences that are taking place in a particular sector is a daunting task for all organizations today. This report has highlighted a number of themes related to the community reconciliation area that this group of trustees feels the Andrus Family Fund should continue to explore. It also includes promising practices that the Andrus Family Fund can apply to its internal practices and provocative questions which groups working in these fields often confront. We hope these ideas will serve as catalysts for the Andrus Family Fund staff and trustees.