



# Crossroads Anti-Racism Network Final Report

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## Project Title:

Crossroads Anti-Racism Network

## Location:

A nationwide program administered from Crossroads offices in Chicago and Racine

## Grant start/end dates:

11/1/95 - 10/31/98

## Sponsoring Organization:

Crossroads Ministry

## Contact Person:

Rev. Chuck Ruehle, project manager  
600 21st Street  
Racine, WI 53403  
414/636-8583  
fax 4141636-9058

## Person submitting report:

Rev. Chuck Ruehle

## Date Submitted:

December 31, 1998

### **PLEASE GIVE AN HONEST GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEGREE TO WHICH THIS PROJECT WAS SUCCESSFUL IN FULFILLING ITS ORIGINAL VISION AND PURPOSE.**

The Network Project has been very successful in fulfilling the original vision and purpose of the grant request. As the following report indicates, the National Gatherings, regular communication, and resources supported by this project have strengthened the work of the anti-racism teams participating in the network.

### **LIST EACH OF THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES THAT APPEARED IN THE ORIGINAL GRANT PROPOSAL. BENEATH EACH GOAL AND OBJECTIVE, STATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.**

Objective 1: to link together 24 existing anti-racism projects and teams located in church judicatories and other organizations and communities throughout the United States;

Almost 60 teams have participated in the network. They represent church judicatories, several individual congregations, community groups and other organizations throughout the US. Each team is on its own path of development, ranging from slow progress (in some cases even suspension of activities), to team expansion and growth.

Objective 2: to design and implement a networking process that will facilitate communication, information, resources, exchange and mutual support among these projects and teams;

A small (6 to 8 person) group has guided the work of the Network. These leaders have used conference calls, mailings, and individual contact to plan and carry out activities. In the past 3 years the group implemented the following activities:

a) Two Anti-racism Network Directories have been distributed. The Spring, 1998 edition contained information from 45 teams. The directories assist Institutional Transformation Teams trained by Crossroads to communicate with each other; helping them to share information and resources gleaned while engaged in anti-racism education and organizing work. In compiling this information, we have been pleased and impressed with the variety of projects underway, and the progress already achieved in working to dismantle institutional racism. An update of the directory, with information from more than 50 teams is planned for spring of 1999.

b) Two Network Events have been held.

1. In August of 1997, 50 participants from 13 teams attended the first gathering that focused on information sharing and mutual support.

2. In July 1998, 43 persons from 13 teams plus 3 teams in training) attended the gathering that focused on advanced organizing skills. Following the event, participants received a 17 page summary of the gathering activities.

An event for Network leadership is being scheduled for the summer of 1999

c) Resource Packets have been distributed to each of the teams in the network. Packets have included an updated 90 minute model workshop, reflections on networking and caucusing, a theological perspective on Racism, and other resources intended to help further the work of teams.

d) Regular phone and fax contact with teams was carried out by Racine office staff. These "one on one" contacts often resulted in linking a team with leaders from other teams, resources developed by Crossroads or other teams, and/or information to help a team carry out its mission.

e) A Web Site was started by the People of Color Caucus at the national gatherings. This site, created by New Jersey Synod Team member Bessie Miley Jones, did not generate sufficient activity, so it was closed in mid 1998.

Objective 3: to expand and grow asa network by including 7 - 10 new projects and teams each year, as they come into existence through Crossroads training programs;

More than a dozen teams were added to the network in 1998, bringing the total number of teams participating in the network to 57. This expansion exceeds our initial goal by almost 30%. This success is due in large part to the training work Crossroads is carrying on with National Denominations, i.e.: Mennonites, Lutherans and Unitarian Universalists.

Objective 4: to build affiliations between the Crossroads Anti-Racism Network and other racial justice organizations and networks within church and society;

The process of building affiliations has been slow and intentional. We have found that many other groups do training based on an interpersonal, rather than a systemic, understanding of racism. Therefore, we find we must do

educational work based on our analysis as we attempt to build alliances. Currently, other groups and organizations that are affiliated with Crossroads and the network include: the Peoples Institute For Survival and Beyond, New Orleans; the Chicago Inter-Religious Coalition Against Racism; and the Black Concerns Working Group of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Our network building has also extended to our international colleagues working for racial justice in South Africa and Germany.

Objective 5: to make available the learnings from the network through regular evaluation~ reports and publications.

As we attempt to share the learning from the Network project, we are beginning to plan for a process of more extensive evaluation, documentation and publication. Currently the Network Directory and Resource Packets are shared with other groups and organizations interested in the work of the network. Teams took information from the National Gatherings back to their home settings to share and apply their learnings. The Crossroads Newsletter also shares updates and information about the network on a regular basis.

#### **LIST ANY NEW GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ESTABLISHED SINCE THE GRANT WAS APPROVED.**

As several denominations established teams at the regional judicatory level, we found that there was a need to coordinate the work of the Crossroads network with the work of denominational networks. In 1998 a "Strategy Table" with representatives from three denominational and regional anti-racism groups was formed. They are: the Damascus Road Project of the Mennonite Church; The Journey Toward Wholeness program of the Unitarian Universalist Association; and the Minnesota Councils Anti-Racism Initiative. The long-range objective of members of the Strategy Table is to institutionalize anti-racism training and organizing throughout their institutions.

It is anticipated that the Greater Dallas Community of Churches and the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ will participate in the Strategy Table in 1999. These five groups represent many of the teams participating in the network. As more denominations develop national strategies, they will also be invited to link up with the Strategy Table.

#### **WHAT MAJOR CHANGES (IF ANY) IN PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES ESTABLISHED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT DID YOU MAKE?**

During the duration of this project, the proposal's vision, goals and objectives have remained constant, though the context for carrying out the vision has evolved. As noted above, we have recognized that an institution-wide commitment to transformation is necessary for this work to be most effective. This has helped Crossroads focus not only on individual teams (as the original proposal implied), but also to develop the Strategy Table as a "Network of Networks."

#### **WHAT HAVE BEEN THE UNEXPECTED SUCCESSES, STRENGTHS, AND BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT?**

The task of network building and information sharing continues to strengthen the teams in their primary work of training and organizing. The advanced organizing training is an example of an expressed need for

deepening team capability. Regular contact by staff reminds teams of their purposes and goals, creating a context of mutual accountability. The continued desire on the part of teams for a national network, led by team members in a flat (non-hierarchical) structure is consistently affirmed by the participation of teams in network activities. The deepening commitment by Wheat Ridge to explore institutional racism in its ministry context has been an unanticipated, but welcomed benefit of this project.

#### **WHAT MAJOR OBSTACLES OR PROBLEMS DID YOU ENCOUNTER?**

The major obstacle continues to be in obtaining additional funding. We have had a number of foundation proposals rejected, and even teams struggle to contribute support, since resources for the network are competing with resources needed for anti-racism tasks like training, organizing, team expansion, etc.

#### **WHAT NEW IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THIS PROJECT OR IDEAS FOR OTHER PROJECTS SURFACED AS YOU LEARNED FROM THIS PROJECT?**

The creation of the Strategy Table, as a kind of "Network of Networks" is a new direction for the network. This will have long term, positive implications for our ministry, since it deepens the involvement of denominational leadership in developing anti-racism strategies for their institutions.

The trust and communication that the network established with denominational leaders facilitated work on the Leadership Development Institute, slated to begin its work in mid 1999. The goal of the Institute is to equip religious and community-based organizations to internalize the capacity to create, implement, and institutionalize programs for dismantling racism, and to develop skills and strategies to bring about long term institutional change.

#### **OVERALL, WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THIS PROJECT? WHAT ADVICE OR ENCOURAGEMENT CAN YOU OFFER TO OTHERS WHO MAY ATTEMPT A SIMILAR EFFORT?**

The importance of networking has been clearly affirmed by this project. We see that the isolation of teams working for racial justice can be lessened through a network of sharing and support.

Teams gain additional insights and skills with they have an opportunity to share with each other. We see that teams become better trainers and organizers when they have contact and/or meet with other teams in a context of mutual accountability.

The national gatherings, communication, and resources fostered by this project have sharpened and improved the Crossroads process of training, teaching and organizing.

#### **PLEASE SHARE ANY OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT IT WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR AGENCIES.**

As we talk to potential teams and other Crossroads contacts we include information about the network. The network helps people see that continued support and resources are available for the long-term work of dismantling racism. This sharing has included our work with the three Roman Catholic groups, two community groups, several Lutheran Synods,

and the Christian Church - Disciples of Christ national offices.

**IF THIS PROJECT WAS INTENDED TO CONTINUE BEYOND THE TERM OF THE GRANT, WHAT PLANS ARE NOW IN PLACE TO ASSURE ITS CONTINUATION?**

Contact with teams we have trained is a priority for Crossroads. A strong framework for this has been established. The members of the Strategy Table and the work of the Leadership Development Institute will further shape the networking model. Providing opportunities the networking is also a priority in the resource developmental efforts carried out by staff. The teams participating in the network are invited to make a financial contribution to the Network. The Crossroads core budget will continue to support Networking.

**PLEASE COMMENT ON YOUR PARTNERSHIP WITH WHEAT RIDGE MINISTRIES DURING THE COURSE OF THIS GRANT.**

We feel very fortunate to have a partnership with Wheat Ridge Ministries that is one of mutual learning and support. We are grateful for the financial support provided for the Network Project, but just as importantly, we are pleased that the Wheat Ridge staff have been willing to explore the meaning of Anti-Racism work for their ministry. We are confident that this strong foundation will continue to grow, and our ministries will continue to strengthen and support each other.

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