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# Crisis Philanthropy: Two Responses to the Pulse Tragedy in Orlando

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*Keywords:* Disaster philanthropy, crisis philanthropy, best practices, grassroots participation, cultural competence, community foundations

*June 14, 2017: A group of funders sits under a tent on the patio of what was once the thriving Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. They listen as local clergy and community members talk about the impact of one of the country's most devastating mass shootings, just one year earlier. The weight of the setting cannot be overlooked: This patio had been a refuge for those who managed to flee the carnage inside the club before an hours-long standoff. Some ran as far from the scene as they could get; others stayed to tend to the wounded. In the end, however, none of them could escape the experience, and one year later, their psychic and emotional wounds were still healing. Fortunately, a diverse and sympathetic community was responding.*

It was Latin Night at the nightclub when, in the early hours of June 12, 2016, a gunman entered Pulse — a unique social space where members of the region's large and growing LGBT Latinx<sup>1</sup> community felt free to come together. By the time Orlando police entered the club three hours after the shooting started, 49 people were fatally shot and 58 more were wounded. Most of them were young LGBT people of color.

The public response was immediate and overwhelming. A plea from Equality Florida, a

## Key Points

- This article examines two philanthropic responses to the mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, on June 12, 2016, a tragedy that particularly impacted the region's growing Latinx LGBT community.
- The Central Florida Foundation's Better Together Fund and the Our Fund Foundation's Contigo Fund, while organized and operating in different ways, looked to best practices in crisis philanthropy and, in the wake of the massacre, provided the region with resources to address both short- and longer-term needs.
- Better Together practiced strategic philanthropy focused on addressing systemic issues. Contigo lifted up new and diverse leadership from the grassroots. Each learned from the other while responding to the Pulse tragedy in ways that adhered to their distinct missions and values. In doing so, they made important contributions to their community and, in planning and implementation, to the field of crisis philanthropy.

statewide LGBT advocacy organization, via a GoFundMe page garnered more than \$8 million for the survivors over the next few months. The OneOrlando Fund, initially a joint effort by the city government and the Central Florida Foundation (CFF), raised over \$30 million from individuals and businesses, locally and nationally. And while the massive public response to earlier tragedies, such as 9/11 or the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School, may have predicted a

<sup>1</sup> This relatively new term — a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina — is used to describe a person or people of Latin American origin or descent. See <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/Latinx>.

similar reaction to the Pulse massacre, the fact that the victims were both LGBT and majority Latinx was especially notable.

Apart from direct assistance funding from public contributions, there were two main responses from organized philanthropy — the CFF’s Better Together Fund and the Contigo Fund, which is housed at Our Fund, the state’s only LGBT public foundation. Better Together and Contigo, while organized and operating in different ways, provided the Central Florida region with resources to address short-term and longer-term needs and, in their planning and implementation, drew from and contributed to best practices in crisis philanthropy.

### Best Practices in Crisis Philanthropy

Across much of the literature on the role of philanthropy in responding to a crisis is the admonition that the sector must take the long view. In its *Philanthropy Roadmap* publication on disaster philanthropy, Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors (n.d.) included the following recommendation:

Often, an effective approach is to split funding — initially supporting the capacity of groups that are already mobilized and deferring part of a grant for weeks or months to see what important needs remain after the first wave of relief aid. Communities eventually need to plan and rebuild, and philanthropists with the patience to fund these longer-term efforts can make a huge difference. (p. 8)

In an effort to disseminate best practices to its membership in the wake of a devastating 2014 mudslide in Oso, Washington, Philanthropy Northwest (2014) urged organized philanthropy to respond by focusing on long-term needs. An article on its website quoting Molly de Aguiar of New Jersey’s Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, which provided support after Hurricane Sandy, cautioned philanthropists to “remember that disaster recovery ‘is a marathon, not a sprint’ and ‘understand the needs of the community and the nonprofit organizations providing service’ in order to identify the most appropriate opportunities for impact” (para. 6).

In spelling out its recommendations for running this “marathon,” Philanthropy Northwest (2014) identified the following strategies:

1. “Convene and build relationships” that will create a broad network of stakeholders to work on recovery planning and long-term prevention (para. 8).
2. “Honor the local culture and support democratic and inclusive decision making” (para. 10) in order to, in the words of Peter Pennekamp and Anne Focke, “put the power of responsibility and choice for lasting solutions in the hands of the impacted communities” (as cited in Philanthropy Northwest, para. 12).
3. “Keep an eye on equity” — focus on building the capacity of formal and informal community-based organizations, for example — because disasters can exacerbate a community’s existing inequalities and the isolation of its most vulnerable members (paras. 13–15).
4. “Leverage government funding” and provide support in the period before federal relief is made available (para. 16).
5. Keep in mind the impact of the disaster on the natural as well as the built environment.

### Short-Term Responses

Recognizing the impact of the Pulse shooting both on Central Florida and nationally, the Arcus Foundation, a private foundation located in New York City that supports global equality and justice for LGBT people, took steps to marshal resources from the national philanthropic community.

#### *LGBT-Focused Funders*

On the Monday after the shooting, Kevin Jennings, then Arcus’ executive director, held the first of what became daily conference calls with leaders of the nation’s LGBT community to share information and plan a community

response.<sup>2</sup> Jennings also convened a group of foundations focused on supporting LGBT communities — including the philanthropic affinity group Funders for LGBTQ Issues — to discuss funding options.

In the first 48 hours, it became clear that the public response to Equality Florida's GoFundMe campaign would enable the organization to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for direct assistance to victims and the families of survivors. Equality Florida quickly announced a partnership with the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC), in Washington, D.C., to receive and disburse the contributions raised through the GoFundMe page.

Arcus staff then reached out to NCVC's deputy director, Jeffrey R. Dion, to address two issues. First, the foundation offered its support and grantmaking expertise if NCVC needed assistance with fund disbursement — and learned that NCVC had extensive experience in that area. Through its National Compassion Fund,<sup>3</sup> the NCVC had assisted in collecting and disbursing victim-support funds after shootings at military bases in Texas and Tennessee and in the aftermath of the 2012 movie theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado. The Center had the systems in place and the contacts with government entities necessary to work effectively and efficiently.

The second issue involved NCVC's cultural competency: Arcus wanted to ensure that in assessing claims filed by those who survived the 49 murder victims, the NCVC would understand and act in accordance with the ways in which many LGBT people define "family" for themselves.

Even with the advent of nationwide marriage equality just one year before the Pulse shooting, many in the nation's LGBT community,

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especially younger people, were unmarried but still living in committed relationships with same-sex partners. Others, notably those rejected by their families of origin, had created "families of choice."<sup>4</sup> Dion informed Arcus staff that the NCVC had collaborated with the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs in 2010 on a joint policy report that stated the need for increased "availability of culturally competent services for LGBTQ victims of crime" (National Center for Victims of Crime & National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2010, p. 16).

What NCVC did need from Arcus was funding: an estimated \$50,000 to cover the costs of

<sup>2</sup> Among the notable outcomes of these calls was a series of press releases from Arcus, signed onto by multiple organizations, that condemned the shooting as a hate crime, called for action against the epidemic of gun violence, and advocated for the need to support the Muslim community and ensure the safety of LGBT Latinx youth.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://nationalcompassionfund.org/about>.

<sup>4</sup> Defined as "persons forming an individual's close social support network, often fulfilling the function of blood relatives. Many gay persons are rejected when families learn of their sexual orientation, while others may remain closeted to biological relatives. In such cases, it is the families of choice who will be called upon in times of illness or personal crisis." (Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling Alabama, 2005-2006)

*It was soon clear, however, that those impacted by the shooting would need long-term therapy and ongoing support that short-term volunteers would be unable to supply. The CFF convened local and regional social service providers to discuss their current capacities, including any needs for assistance in gaining cultural and language competency and for training in providing services to those impacted by a traumatic hate crime. This convening offered the first opportunity for some of these providers to actually meet one another.*

staff time and travel to administer the disbursements from the National Compassion Fund. Within a week of another conference call with LGBT funder colleagues, Kevin Jennings had \$50,000 worth of pledges from five funders, including Arcus. In addition, Arcus made an emergency grant to Equality Florida to cover its unanticipated costs of sending staff to Central

Florida to assist with the overwhelming number of media inquiries and in coordinating efforts with public officials.

With those two short-term measures addressed, Arcus and Funders for LGBTQ Issues turned their attention to the long-term philanthropic response. Jennings again contacted colleague funders, this time focusing on the larger national foundations that have time and again responded in times of crisis. Commitments totaling \$1.5 million came from the Ford, Annie E. Casey, Robert Wood Johnson, Open Society, and Kellogg foundations and from the members of the Executives' Alliance to Expand Opportunities for Boys and Men of Color.<sup>5</sup>

#### *The Region's Community Foundation*

In the wake of the massacre, many local companies came forward with donations to the CFF, which serves the Greater Orlando area. The Walt Disney Co. and Comcast NBC Universal Orlando, each of which lost an employee at Pulse,<sup>6</sup> made significant contributions. Initially, the CFF partnered with the city of Orlando to raise and disburse donations through a newly created OneOrlando Fund. But the two parted ways when city officials decided to devote that fund to direct assistance for survivors and victims' families, an approach similar to Equality Florida's GoFundMe campaign. (Brewer, 2016)<sup>7</sup>

The CFF went on to create the Better Together Fund, which allowed donors to dedicate their support either to individuals directly affected by the shootings through OneOrlando or toward broader community needs through CCF. In the same way that Arcus and its colleague LGBT funders responded first to the NCVC's immediate need for support in administering the National Compassion Fund, the CFF also focused on immediate needs, awarding two

<sup>5</sup> Arcus made its own commitment of \$100,000.

<sup>6</sup> A member of the Disney "cast" and a Comcast NBCUniversal employee who worked on the Harry Potter ride were killed in the shooting. See <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/pulse-orlando-nightclub-shooting/victims/os-orlando-mass-shooting-jerald-arthur-wright-20160613-story.html> and <http://www.newsweek.com/orlando-shooting-jk-rowling-mourns-harry-potter-ride-worker-luis-vielma-469597>.

<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, the city's OneOrlando Fund and Equality Florida's GoFundMe donations were handed over to the NCVC's National Compassion Fund for disbursement. The NCVC paid benefits totaling \$29.62 million to 305 claimants, according to the NCVC's grant report to the Arcus Foundation.

initial bridge grants, totaling \$172,000, to an assistance center set up by Heart of Florida United Way. The funds offered those whose lives had been disrupted by the Pulse shootings rent assistance and help with other expenses while they awaited aid from the National Compassion Fund and government victim-assistance programs.

## Intermediate Responses

In adhering to best practices in crisis philanthropy, the CFF and Funders for LGBTQ Issues devoted time and energy to a series of listening and learning activities during the summer after the shooting.

In the wake of the tragedy, volunteers from across the country had offered to provide emergency counseling services. It was soon clear, however, that those impacted by the shooting would need long-term therapy and ongoing support that short-term volunteers would be unable to supply. The CFF convened local and regional social service providers to discuss their current capacities, including any needs for assistance in gaining cultural and language competency and for training in providing services to those impacted by a traumatic hate crime. This convening offered the first opportunity for some of these providers to actually meet one another.

By bringing together service providers and meeting with many members of the community, the CFF was able to shape the funding objectives for both the Better Together Fund and the specific grants that followed.

## Assessing Community Needs

Arcus and Funders for LGBTQ Issues, as national organizations, understood that they would need a detailed assessment of the needs on the ground to develop a funding plan for the resources being committed to Orlando by the larger, national

foundations. They determined that a comprehensive community assessment would be necessary to identify those needs and to ensure that the LGBTQ Latinx community was integral to defining funding priorities.

Funders for LGBTQ Issues recruited a team to conduct the community assessment during the summer of 2016. Among the members of the team were Felipe Sousa-Rodriguez, at that time with the ThoughtWorks technology company; two staff members from Funders for LGBTQ Issues; the president of the Our Fund Foundation, an LGBT philanthropy in South Florida; and Karina Claudio Betancourt, a program officer at the Open Society Foundations.<sup>8</sup> They interviewed representatives from 12 organizations in Central Florida, including Latinx service providers, LGBTQ groups, and other advocacy organizations; local funders and eight individuals from the local LGBTQ Latinx community were also interviewed.

The team produced a 22-page report<sup>9</sup> that analyzed a range of topics and made the following recommendations:

1. Use creative grantmaking strategies to bring resources to the communities most affected by the Pulse shooting, particularly LGBTQ Latinx communities;
2. Empower community members and constituencies most affected by the shooting to be involved in decision-making around the allocation of resources;
3. Provide capacity-building support to strengthen the infrastructure of nonprofits serving the LGBTQ and Latinx communities in the Orlando area;

<sup>8</sup> Sousa-Rodriguez, a gay Latinx man, lived in Central Florida for many years before beginning his career in social justice organizing work. In February 2017, he became manager of collaborative partnerships for the city of Orlando, charged with overseeing services to the Pulse victims and survivors. <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/pulse-orlando-nightclub-shooting/os-pulse-help-center-felipe-sousa-rodriguez-20170215-story.html> Betancourt, who was funding work in Central Florida's Puerto Rican communities for the Open Society Foundations, became its point person in the Orlando funding effort.

<sup>9</sup> The author of this article was provided a copy of the final report, which was not published and remains an internal document of the Funders for LGBTQ Issues and the Contigo Fund.



*Projects to be considered for support include those that further healing and empowerment; leadership development; bridge building and joint activities among diverse communities; racial, social, and gender justice; and those that are led by women of color, transgender and queer individuals, and youth. Application guidelines specifically encourage groups that do not have tax-exempt status and state a preference for organizations with budgets under \$1 million.*

4. Support efforts to address the regional and transnational impact of the tragedy; and
5. Support programs to advance culture change to make Central Florida's communities more inclusive and accepting of LGBTQ people, immigrants, and of people of color.

#### *Setting the Course: Funding Objectives*

A month after the Pulse shooting, the CFF's Better Together Fund<sup>10</sup> was in operation and announced its priorities: closing gaps in nonprofit

support to survivors and victims' families; addressing the underlying causes of the attack; supporting LGBTQ, Latino, faith, and other affected communities; and responding to unanticipated needs (Central Florida Foundation, n.d.a). A July 15 post on the CFF website detailed the challenges ahead:

We're talking about the long-term repair and healing of our community. This includes things like mental health counseling for those that are living with the grim effects of trauma, increasing our cultural competency in a diverse and vibrant community, organizing and facilitating community conversations between groups that usually don't talk to each other — all of these important pieces come together to make a community stronger than before. (Calderon, 2016, para. 3)

For Arcus, Funders for LGBTQ Issues, and their partners, a key decision was identifying a home for the funds pledged by the national foundations and other contributors. Their choice — the Our Fund Foundation, the only LGBT public foundation in Florida — met with some criticism. Our Fund is in Fort Lauderdale, some 200 miles from Orlando.<sup>11</sup> And although it had a track record in developing grantmaking programs geared to the needs of the LGBT community, it lacked the necessary degree of cultural competency in working with Latinx communities. This was ultimately addressed when Our Fund hired a program director who had worked with both: Marco Antonio Quiroga, a gay Latinx immigrant who grew up in the Orlando area, had experience in community organizing and had retained his local connections. After the shooting, Quiroga left his policy advocacy job in New York City and moved back to Orlando to help with the recovery effort.

In mid-August, Our Fund announced the formation of the Contigo Fund,<sup>12</sup> whose guiding principles “recognize that the LGBTQ Latinx community and other communities of color

<sup>10</sup> Contributors included the Coca-Cola Co., Charles Schwab, Delta Air Lines, Universal Orlando, Wells Fargo, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, a number of individual donors, and colleague community foundations throughout the U.S.

<sup>11</sup> Our Fund's location was a source of consternation among some funders in Central Florida. At a donor forum one year after the tragedy, attended by the author, one speaker recalled her initial unhappiness with the choice and shared a tongue-in-cheek critique that had been making its way around her professional circle: “Don't these national funders know the geography of Florida?”

<sup>12</sup> “Contigo” means “with you” in Spanish.

face significant disparities shaped by long-standing institutional inequalities” and “trust that transformative and lasting change can occur if communities unify” (Contigo Fund, n.d., para. 5–6). The fund’s goals are to support the work of those impacted, by resourcing efforts led by and for the LGBTQ Latinx community; strengthen Central Florida by building bridges among its diverse and marginalized communities; and “address the ripple effects of the Pulse tragedy, particularly involving issues of Islamophobia, xenophobia, and racism” (para. 9).

Projects to be considered for support include those that further healing and empowerment; leadership development; bridge building and joint activities among diverse communities; racial, social, and gender justice; and those that are led by women of color, transgender and queer individuals, and youth. Application guidelines specifically encourage groups that do not have tax-exempt status and state a preference for organizations with budgets under \$1 million. (Contigo Fund, n.d.).

### Grantmaking

Both the Better Together and the Contigo Fund used external allocation committees to make funding recommendations. Better Together’s committee was composed of CFF staff and representatives from its contributing funders, as well as the president of Funders for LGBTQ Issues and the manager of the local donor network in Central Florida; in 2017, the Contigo Fund’s Quiroga also joined. Contigo’s grant committee was a diverse group of grassroots and community leaders, individuals who were directly impacted by the Pulse tragedy, and representatives from two local funders: Sandi Vidal, vice president of community strategies and initiatives at the CFF, and Joan Nelson, senior vice president of community impact for Heart of Florida United Way (Contigo Fund, n.d.).

After awarding its initial bridge grants, the Better Together Fund turned to addressing the gaps in local mental health service delivery. In the fall of 2016, it awarded grants to local

agencies for ongoing weekly support groups, cultural-competency training for service providers, and trauma-recovery “train the trainer” sessions. The fund also awarded \$50,000 to support *Friends Talking Faith*, a radio program hosted by three local clergy representing the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faiths, to discuss how members of the community had been transformed by the tragedy. The grant also supported a series of community conversations on the topic. (Central Florida Foundation, n.d.a)

In an effort to help Orlando’s LGBTQ community work across organizations and sectors, Better Together funded and provided technical assistance to the newly constituted OneOrlando Alliance. As of June 2017, the alliance had 47 member organizations, including QLatinx, an LGBT Latinx organization formed in the wake of the Pulse tragedy; Equality Florida; service organizations; several local businesses; and the city of Orlando. (OneOrlando Alliance, n.d.)

As of May 2017, the Better Together Fund had raised \$1.15 million and awarded \$545,354 (Central Florida Foundation, n.d.a).

The Contigo Fund initiated its grantmaking in September 2016 with three, \$15,000 rapid-response grants awarded to emerging organizations that were integral to providing services and support to those directly impacted by the tragedy: QLatinx; Somos Orlando, a project of the national Hispanic Federation that provides Spanish-language counseling and support services; and Two Spirit Health Services, which serves low-income LGBTQ individuals.<sup>13</sup>

In early 2017 the Contigo Fund awarded its first round of grants, totaling \$452,433, to 15 organizations involved in a range of efforts: direct services to diverse communities impacted by the tragedy (\$126,200); the needs of LGBTQ people of color who are labor union members, farmworkers, and documented and undocumented immigrants (\$109,162); safe schools programming and curriculum (\$80,700); and culturally competent training

<sup>13</sup> This information is contained in an interim report to Contigo Fund donors from the Our Fund Foundation.



on transgender issues (\$14,750); QLatinx was also awarded an additional \$50,000 to hire staff.<sup>14</sup>

## Analysis

### *Adherence to Best Practices*

In the design and the execution of their funding programs, the CFF and the Our Fund Foundation adhered to many of the best practices in disaster or crisis philanthropy while at the same time staying true to their missions.

For the CFF, that meant shoring up and better coordinating the area's mental health service-delivery system and ensuring that providers had the training they needed to work with diverse communities. The CFF also pursued a leadership opportunity to improve coordination among the diverse organizations within the local LGBTQ community through the development of the OneOrlando Alliance.

The Our Fund Foundation's Contigo Fund focused on building grassroots leadership and capacity, prioritizing communities most deeply impacted by the Pulse tragedy. Like its colleagues at the CFF, Contigo funded a great deal of alliance building, embracing intersectionality<sup>15</sup> to encourage and foster community engagement across lines of race, faith, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Contigo's decision to invite community leaders and representatives from two local philanthropies to serve on the fund's grant committee enabled grassroots activists — many of whom are addressing community needs outside of the mainstream nonprofit infrastructure — and key funders to forge relationships and negotiate funding decisions.

The Better Together and Contigo funds clearly adhered to the five strategies outlined by Philanthropy Northwest (2014) for the “marathon” that is crisis philanthropy:

1. By convening and building relationships, the CFF was able to identify and, later, address important service and coordination gaps. Equipped with the findings of an extensive assessment of community needs, Funders for LGBTQ Issues was able to engage diverse stakeholders in articulating priorities and identifying strengths.
2. To ensure a local voice in grantmaking by Contigo, which was funded by national foundations and housed at an organization outside the region, Our Fund hired a program manager with strong local ties who recruited a grant committee composed of diverse grassroots leaders.
3. Both kept “an eye on equity”: The CFF focused on strengthening cultural competence within the local mental health system; Contigo, in all its grantmaking, elevated the needs of underrepresented groups and built the capacity of emerging organizations like QLatinx.
4. The Better Together Fund ensured that those impacted had money for necessities like food and rent while they waited for their claims for government assistance to be settled. It also supported the ability of Two Spirit Health Services, the small provider of services to the LGBT community, to maintain staffing levels and cash flow while it waited for grant payments from the U.S. Justice Department's victim assistance fund.
5. While recognizing that the impact of a disaster on the natural as well as the built environment is more relevant to natural disasters such as hurricanes and forest fires, Better Together and Contigo acted in accordance with the spirit behind that strategy — to create a community that was better off than the one that existed on June 12, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> The Contigo Fund's internal document lists the amount and duration of each grant. The fund's website — <http://contigofund.org/en> — lists only the grantees and the purpose of the grants.

<sup>15</sup> The term has been defined as “the complex and cumulative way that the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, and ... intersect — especially in the experiences of marginalized people or groups.” See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/intersectionality-meaning>.

Furthermore, while each funder created a program consistent with its mission and values, the cross involvement of key Better Together and Contigo staff and stakeholders in each other's advisory committees fostered constructive relationships and coordinated funding goals. This, in itself, is one of the ways these two funds expanded the knowledge of best practices in crisis philanthropy.

### *Tensions and Challenges*

While assessment, design, and implementation for both funds largely proceeded without major disruptions or conflicts, some instructive tensions and challenges did arise.

The CFF had initially partnered with the city of Orlando to pool donations through the OneOrlando Fund, but it soon became clear that the city needed to respond to growing public demand that those funds go directly to individuals impacted by the shooting. For CFF, however, such a focus was not compatible with its core mission of funding “local initiatives that build and inspire community” (Central Florida Foundation, n.d.b). The reasonable outcome was the separation of the two efforts, offering donors options for the allocation of their contributions.

This situation highlights the tensions that can arise in crisis philanthropy when the needs of individuals, service providers, and, in cases such as Orlando, social justice advocates compete for limited funding. In Orlando, fortunately, the response from the public and the philanthropic sector was sufficient to provide direct assistance to individuals, help service providers handle increased caseloads in a culturally competent manner, and address the more structural issues of inequality and community capacity. It should be noted, however, that support for policy advocacy — which could have helped with longer-term solutions — was specifically excluded in the funding guidelines of both Contigo and the Better Together Fund.

Establishment of the Contigo Fund created a second set of challenges. It was launched with foundation support in the aftermath of a national tragedy and with virtually no guarantee of

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renewed funding. While large private foundations are able to tailor their grant guidelines in response to unexpected events, such adjustments are for the most part viewed as one-time exceptions. It is, therefore, unclear how funding that originated in response to extraordinary circumstances can be sustained beyond the first few years of its existence. And in the case of Contigo, the fact that it is based at a foundation outside the Orlando area further complicates its efforts to participate as a full member of the local philanthropic community. If Contigo is to remain in existence, it is likely that the issue of its fiscal and operational home will have to be addressed.

### *The Long-Term Response*

The funders and community leaders who came together at a donor forum one year after the tragedy had an opportunity to examine how a community became united in the face of a horrific tragedy and set about the tasks of addressing gaps in service delivery and community infrastructure, focusing on those most vulnerable and marginalized who had been especially impacted by the shooting, and forging new ways of promoting leadership, activism, and understanding.

*[P]hilanthropic entities that come forward to address short-term, intermediate, and long-term community needs in the wake of a crisis can do their best work and make a lasting impact if they work in accordance with their own missions and values while coordinating with and learning from one another.*

The combined efforts of Better Together Fund and the Contigo Fund can teach us that the philanthropic entities that come forward to address short-term, intermediate, and long-term community needs in the wake of a crisis can do their best work and make a lasting impact if they work in accordance with their own missions and values while coordinating with and learning from one another.

In the Orlando area, the community foundation and the startup fund learned from each other as each did what it could do best. For Better Together, it was the practice of strategic philanthropy focused on addressing systemic issues. For Contigo, it was lifting up new and diverse leadership from the grassroots. The CFF's Sandi Vidal forged new relationships through her work on Contigo's grants committee, and Contigo benefited greatly from her grantmaking expertise and knowledge of the area. Marco Quiroga's presence on the Better Together committee allowed him to build relationships with prominent, long-term funders in Central Florida while helping to connect them to emerging grassroots efforts and their leaders.

The Better Together Fund will continue for another few years — as long as its funding

criteria remain relevant to the post-Pulse needs of the community. One legacy might be a dedicated field-of-interest fund at the CFF to address the LGBT community's ongoing needs; through its experience with the Better Together Fund and its broader, deeper connections to the LGBT community, the CFF is in an improved position to create such a fund. The Contigo Fund also plans to continue its work — if it can persuade existing and new funders and donors to help address the intersectional needs of the diverse grassroots in Central Florida.

Meanwhile, grantmaking in both funds continues and relationships that did not exist before the tragedy continue to be made and deepened. This is the case because, at its heart and at its best, philanthropy is a relational practice that often operates in iterative and serendipitous ways. What is possible for the future of Better Together and Contigo may not yet be apparent, but might be built upon what was created when people in a community wracked by tragedy were determined to find new ways to work together.

**TABLE 1** Philanthropic Responders to Pulse Nightclub Shooting

Name	Geographical Focus	Issue Focus	Funding Approach
<b>Central Florida Foundation's Better Together Fund</b>	Greater Orlando	Communitywide needs	Strategic philanthropy; donor/philanthropic advisory committee
<b>Our Fund Foundation</b>	Greater Fort Lauderdale, Florida	LGBT community needs	Responsive to community needs; donor-advised funding
<b>Contigo Fund</b> (based at Our Fund)	Greater Orlando, Florida	Communities directly impacted by Pulse nightclub shooting	Intersectional social justice lens; community advisory committee
<b>Equality Florida</b>	Statewide	LGBT policy issues	GoFundMe campaign distributed by NCVC
<b>National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) – National Compassion Fund</b>	Nationwide	Support for victims of violence; research and related activities	Cash assistance in coordination with verification by law enforcement
<b>Arcus Foundation</b>	Global	LGBT social justice, conservation of great apes and their habitats	Strategic philanthropy
<b>Funders for LGBTQ Issues</b>	Nationwide	Philanthropic infrastructure for LGBTQ issues and communities	Grants for efforts to expand LGBTQ philanthropy
<b>City of Orlando – OneOrlando Fund</b>	Orlando, Florida	Direct assistance to those impacted by Pulse tragedy	Funds distributed by NCVC

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