
BUILDING BROADER COMMUNITIES IN THE AMERICAS



Today communities across the Americas face a series of challenges and opportunities – how can we best work together to address root causes of migration, promote widely shared prosperity and peacefully co-exist with our neighbors? A collaboration of community foundations and partner organizations working together to strengthen communities throughout the Americas can help address these and other major challenges.

For more information, or to become a partner organization, please contact Caroline Merenda at cmerenda@cfleads.org.

People move from one country to another for different reasons. They may be in search of social, political, religious, economic or personal freedom; or they may be in pursuit of prosperity. Some move for a more peaceful life as they near retirement. Still others have ties to another country because of their studies, commerce, volunteerism or adoption.

This movement of people throughout the Americas has a profound impact on how people across the Americas view themselves and each other. While it can bring people closer together, it also can make it more difficult to appreciate the underlying connections across the hemisphere. ***What if there were a way create a network of people committed to addressing local and regional challenges by tapping into these vibrant yet often invisible transnational communities?***

Building Broader Communities in the Americas (BBCA) is an initiative led by CF Leads, in partnership with the Inter-American Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, that seeks to create such a network.

BBCA's mission is to build stronger, smarter and more resilient communities throughout the Americas by enhancing the effectiveness of community foundations' responsiveness to them. This can be done by establishing a relationship-building network of peer organizations across the Americas focused on deepening community foundations' understanding of transnational communities' lived experiences.

BBCA organizers believe that:

- Community foundations at their best are deeply connected to the populations they serve in their regions.
- A network of community foundations throughout the Americas will help address the economic, political and social challenges that affect us all.
- Providing community foundations with a network of like-minded peers can help build stronger, more knowledgeable institutions via sharing of best practices, access to resources, and funding opportunities.
- Societal challenges as varied as economic marginalization, trafficking, violence against women and xenophobia have origins and solutions throughout the Americas. By working together to identify common needs and best practices, community foundations can find creative and constructive solutions to these issues and improve local prosperities.
- Community foundations can play a key role in sharing best practices and conceptualizing collaborative efforts across borders that improve the lives of communities in their regions.

BBCA envisions several kinds of efforts to better understand the makeup of transnational communities throughout the Americas. It is developing programs designed to strengthen relationships among community foundations throughout the region to solve common problems. These include:

- **Building understanding of the makeup of people who are part of transnational communities in the hemisphere.**

Mapping transnational communities. Research will uncover examples of transnational communities throughout the Americas and assess the opportunities for partnerships among community foundations. By understanding who lives in our communities, where they live and how they contribute to and participate in community life, community foundations will be able to serve and engage transnational communities better.

- **Strengthening relationships among community foundations throughout the region to solve common problems.**

Creating a platform for transnational learning exchanges. In-country visits will provide community foundations with capacity-building learning opportunities. The hope is that such exchanges will create transnational relationships among community foundations that can advance learning, grow connections and ultimately deepen impact on all sides of borders.

- **Increasing knowledge about community foundation practices that can support transnational communities.**

Uncovering the contexts behind transnational communities. The program will offer insights into the makeup of transnational communities and their lived experience (e.g., sociological, cultural and economic insights) while enhancing connections to employers, diaspora organizations, faith-based congregations and immigrant networks that will support their entrance and integration into their new context. It also will delve into specific issues and subject areas of mutual transnational concern to groups of community foundations (e.g. post-disaster recovery efforts, local economic development strategies, other).

- **Encouraging more effective giving in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

Exploring different models for philanthropy and communication. The program will explore how philanthropy is viewed by different communities based on the regions in which they operate. This presents an opportunity for community foundations to share best practices for mobilizing donors, engaging stakeholders and recruiting volunteers to support the collective good.

The BBCA already draws participants from the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico, and we are eager to expand deeper into these nations and further into Central and South America and the Caribbean. ***Together we have identified the following activities for our work together over the next two years:***

1. Drawing upon the efforts of four community foundations who mapped their transnational communities in 2017-2018, the **BBCA will support and fund additional mapping efforts** in 2018-2019.
2. Having drawn together five US funders to support Mexican community foundations in their efforts to rebuild after the devastating earthquakes of September 2017, the **BBCA will seek out ways to expand cross-border, community foundation-to-community foundation philanthropy.**
3. As an expression of its firm belief in the power of peer learning, the **BBCA will support a convening in the fall of 2018** so that participants can identify the topics and experiences from which they wish to learn moving forward.
4. In order to contribute to current thinking on transnational community and community foundation best practices, the **BBCA will develop a collaborative study that captures what we have learned so far.**

While community foundations are the main focus of our work, we welcome other institutions working to understand and strengthen transnational communities. By working together, we can establish meaningful relationships among community foundations across the hemisphere and foster international collaboration. We hope you will join us in this effort.



CFLeads is a network of community foundations working together to build strong communities.

The **Inter-American Foundation** is an independent U.S. government agency created by Congress in 1969 to channel development assistance directly to the organized poor in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**, established in 1926 by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society.

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