
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 the 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 family, studies, commerce, volunteerism or adoption.

This movement of people throughout the Americas has a profound impact on how people across the hemisphere view themselves and each other. While this movement 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 their understanding of and engagement with transnational communities' lived experiences.

The BBCA believes that:

- Community foundations at their best are deeply engaged with their communities, including their transnational communities.
- A network of community foundations and transnational stakeholders throughout the Americas will be ideally positioned to address the economic, political and social challenges that affect us all.
- We can best arrive at solutions through stronger, more effective collaborations, which strengthen communities throughout the hemisphere.
- Societal challenges as varied as economic marginalization, trafficking, violence against 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 and other issues, and improve local prosperities.

BBCA envisions several kinds of efforts to better understand and engage with transnational communities throughout the Americas. We are developing programs designed to strengthen relationships among community foundations and key stakeholders throughout the region to solve common problems. These include:

- **Enhancing our understanding of transnational communities in the hemisphere.**

Mapping transnational communities. Research will explore 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 better able to serve and engage transnational communities.

- **Strengthening relationships among community foundations and transnational stakeholders 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 throughout the region.

- **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 community foundations (e.g. post-disaster recovery efforts, local economic development strategies, etc.).

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

Exploring 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 efforts of four community foundations who mapped their transnational communities in 2017-2018, the **BBCA is currently funding an additional seven mapping efforts** in 2019. We will convene “mappers” for peer learning and support “post-mapping” initiatives.
2. Having drawn together six 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 believe in the power of peer learning, the **BBCA will continue supporting regular convenings of participants.** Following a successful symposium in Los Angeles in November 2018, the next event will take place in Chicago in June 2019.
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 encourage you to 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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