

Building Broader Communities in the Americas (BBCA)

Winter 2020
Newsletter

Happy New Year! Prospero Año Nuevo!
We hope that you all had a joyous holiday season, and we wish you, your families, friends, and colleagues all the very best in 2020. We wanted to share a quick look at how the BBCA closed out the year before we share some exciting next steps for 2020.

Overall Results in 2019

- Two rounds of mapping grants have been awarded, totaling \$196,000. All the projects from round one are complete. All round two projects will conclude by summer.
- June Chicago meetings (50 participants from seven countries, including representatives from three new countries: Haiti, Brazil, and Colombia.)
- Exchange visit of representatives of *Fundacion Comunidad* to the Minneapolis Foundation.
- Mexico Earthquake Fund grant to *Fondo Unido*, which provided disaster recovery and preparedness training to ten Mexican community foundations.
- December Mexico Earthquake Fund site visits and Steering Committee meeting (22 participants) in Cuernavaca and Malinalco.
- Draft mapping summary and guide completed.
- Finally, a [BBCA web presence!](#)

2019 also brought the November departure of Michael Layton from BBCA. However, Don Pelon is alive and well, currently residing in Washington, D.C. He is a bit sad because his beloved Philadelphia Eagles got knocked out of the NFL playoffs!

Earthquake Fund Site Visits

On December 4-6, the BBCA Steering Committee visited Cuernavaca and Morelos Malinalco to meet with staff and board members of *Fundacion Comunidad* (Morelos) and *Fundacion Comunitaria Malinalco* and visit projects funded by these community foundations with support from the Mexico Earthquake Fund.

Early morning on December 4th, the group left Mexico City for Cuernavaca by bus. Along the way, the group reviewed its expectations within the context of BBCA's desired outcomes. Once in Cuernavaca, following an inspiring breakfast with board members and staff leaders of *Fundacion Comunidad*, the steering committee met with *Teocintle*, who demonstrated their post-earthquake work to build community resilience through community gardening projects.

We then had lunch and a presentation at Café Resiliente, a truly inspiring youth organization which is a social enterprise based on solidarity economy principles. We were treated to a very compelling presentation of *Comunidad* and the Minneapolis Foundation's mapping project, which is still in process but nearing completion. That afternoon we departed for Malinalco and had a relaxing dinner at *El Tecorral* community house, which is where *Fundacion Comunitaria Malinalco* has its office.



On December 5, the group held a “world café” style reflection of the previous day but in the framework of BBICA desired outcomes. The group then traveled to the nearby town of San Simon El Alto and heard a presentation from *Mezcladora*, which led broad community participation in a reconstruction project of the town square and built a lot of social capital.

The group then visited the *Jose Maria Morelos y Pavon* elementary school and learned about young architects who were teaching the children about earthquake-proof construction in a fun way while also addressing the psychological aspects of the trauma they experienced from the earthquake. The group returned to *El Tecorral* community house for lunch, followed by a presentation of *Fundacion Comunitaria Malinalco*’s mapping project, which is complete and available on Malinalco’s website. We then had dinner with board and staff members.

The third day was a very intense multi-hour session of the Steering Committee, ably facilitated by Public Equity Group (PEG). The session had participants reflect on the past two days, review the BBICA’s past successes and challenges, critique the progress to date (both programmatically and operationally), and brainstorm about the future.



Main themes that arose during this session include: the continued importance of building relationships; the need to document and share impact stories; the need to follow up on mapping; going deeper first before going broader; getting communities involved, not just community foundations; better ways to engage transnational organizations; and the need to reform how the initiative is governed and managed. PEG will be using this to present proposals for a strategy over the next 3-5 years and an operational plan sometime in the first quarter of 2020.

A big thanks to Isabel Hernandez Vega (*Fundacion Comunidad*), Oscar Plens (*Fundacion Comunitaria*), Azucena Diaz Garcia (IAF support), and Monica Bravo (IAF support) for all their hard work on enabling smooth logistics, wonderful accommodations, and interesting meetings for this trip, and to Andrea Dicks (Community Foundations of Canada) for the photography!



What's Next in the New Year

While much of what will happen with BBKA in 2020 will depend on the results of PEG's strategic work, here is what is happening in the near term:

- The BBKA submitted a session proposal for the HIP conference in Los Angeles, CA, on June 1 - 3 and plan to participate in the CFUnited pre-conference on April 5, in Detroit, MI.
- A Request for Proposals for mapping follow-up projects will be developed and issued in the first half of the year.
- The mapping guide, developed by Michael Layton, will be prepared for publication.
- Sandy Vargas and research assistant Vanesa Mercado will continue working on a project to assess the benefits of participating in BBKA to community foundations and transnational organizations.
- CFLeads has advertised the position of BBKA Project Director and has received applications from many interesting candidates. We expect to hire someone by the spring.

- More content will be uploaded to the new BBKA web page, broadening the informational resources available to interested parties.

We look forward to a great year! If you have any questions about the Building Broader Communities in the Americas (BBKA) project, please contact:

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