Building Broader Communities in the Americas – Hendry County Mapping Project Report

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Glossary of Terms

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Data Collection Teams: research team and partners

Lead Researchers: Dr. Cindy Banyai and Dr. Tom Felke, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), Department Chair, BSW Program Director, & Associate Professor

Partners: Healthy Start Southwest Florida, Inc. and Redlands Christian Migrant Association, Inc.

Project Team: Dr. Cindy Banyai and the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, Inc.

Research Assistants: field researchers

Research Team: lead researchers and field researchers (i.e., survey takers, focus group facilitators).

Executive Summary

The Building Broader Communities in the Americas (BBCA) – Hendry County Mapping Project is a collaborative project with the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, Inc., Florida Gulf Coast University, and EnSite, Inc., a private sector planning firm. This project, funded through CF Leads, is an early venture of the Foundation's Collaboratory.

This project seeks to answer the following: Can we physically locate and characterize transnational populations in Hendry County? Can we capture and compile all data gathered in ways that can be analyzed and shared without causing harm? The field work that we completed demonstrated that these goals were difficult, but possible. The maximum number of transnational residents who participated in this study totaled 392. The bulk of the planning, data-gathering, and analysis occurred from March through September 2019.

The research team divided the BBCA Hendry County Mapping Project into four distinct phases or data gathering projects. Initially, the study did Asset Mapping of 15 neighborhoods within Hendry County t0 help identify places with concentrated populations of transnationals. From the initial mapping, the research team and advisory committee identified four potential areas for more study and analysis. Given limited time and resources, the research team identified two communities, Pioneer and Felda, as having the best potential for yielding greater in-depth understanding through the phase 2 focus group methodology.

The second portion or phase of the study, Targeted Neighborhood Focus Groups in Pioneer and Felda, proved difficult to organize and execute for many reasons. These include seasonal migration patterns and increased Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity in Hendry County. Therefore, the research team recruited key trusted partners--Healthy Start of Southwest Florida, Inc. (Healthy Start) and Redlands Christian Migrant Association, Inc. (RCMA)--to administer an interview version of the community focus group question set to transnationals participating in their programs. We only reached 5-10 transnationals via the initially planned and scheduled focus group meetings. We reached another 135 transnationals via the modified focus interview protocol, for a total of 140-145 transnationals reached in phase 2 of the study.

Despite considerable promotion of the Participatory Photography, phase 3 of the study, it yielded few participants and no new or meaningful results. Speculation around the low participation rate yielded many hypotheses with no real clarity or certainty. Lack of engagement could be attributed to a failure to find a suitable trusted partner early, the summer migratory work schedules of participants contributed, fear of ICE, or lack of interest in photo documentation or documentation of any sort. Alternatively, maybe communities did not want to make themselves visible to others. The net result was that despite a lot of effort, this phase of the study did not yield meaningful results.

The final phase of the project, phase 4, the Neighborhood Focal Point Survey, yielded rich results. The team selected target focal point areas from the phase 1 asset mapping and identified places and events that would have large groups of transnationals present. Two hundred forty-seven (247) people responded to the survey offered by community partners in targeted locations. We offered a $10 gift card to each participant as an incentive, and data collection teams captured results in real time on cellphones using SurveyMonkey.

Of the four phases or subprojects that comprised the overall study, each required adjustment and modification in the field to achieve its goals. For instance, in the asset mapping project, research assistants from the University of Michigan School of Information familiar with asset mapping and digital tools assisted with this phase as part of an alternative spring break arrangement with the Foundation. Originally, FGCU students were proposed. However, recruitment did not prove productive at the level of expertise required. Fortunately, the Foundation and FGCU already had a relationship with the University of Michigan, School of Information, to host alternative spring break students to work on local projects. In phase 2, comprised of targeted neighborhood focus groups, the research team had to modify the protocol and rely on partners who already had trusting relationships established with the transnational communities. Rather than students, staff from Healthy Start and RCMA, who were known and trusted by the communities, collected the field data.

From the Neighborhood Focal Point Survey, transnational participants reported that strong ties continue to exist with Mexico, particularly the states west of Mexico City—Michoacán, Zacatecas, and Jalisco (especially Guadalajara, and El Valle de Juárez). Half of the transnationals in the survey cohort reported they were born in the United States and 39.2% of those reported Mexico as their point or origin. Of those engaged in the total Hendry County study, 73.8% reported they have lived in Hendry County for 10 years or more. Transnational people who participated in this quantitative survey data collection phase, reported that they frequently communicate and occasionally visit their home places. Participants also reported sending money every 1-2 months in an amount between $200-$500.

Regardless of the phase of the study, transnational community members in Hendry County consistently said they enjoy the rural lifestyle and small-town feel of where they live. Additionally, they expressed concerns around transportation access, better communication infrastructure, and worry about current US policies toward immigrants. They would like to see more transportation option including neighborhood safety jobs and employment options, assistance with English literacy, and childcare.

We learned many lessons through this study which will benefit the Foundation's subsequent relationship building and work in rural areas of Hendry County. Results from the study will be used to inform the development of relationships with community foundations in western Mexico, particularly around Guadalajara. Projects and programs of the Foundation designed to reach people living in Hendry County (e.g., the Immigration Learning Community and the FutureMakers workforce collective-impact initiative) will be more culturally aware and informed, particularly in relation to transnational communities, because of this study.

Introduction and Background

The Southwest Florida Community Foundation's mission is to cultivate regional change for the common good, achieved through being a catalytic agent in the five counties of the Southwest Florida region--Collier, Charlotte, Glades, Hendry and Lee. The most rural counties (Hendry and Glades) are home to some of the largest agricultural enterprises in the nation. Yet little is known or understood about the region and particularly the transnational communities living there. To pursue that mission in a more participatory and systemic way, the Foundation recently established Collaboratory. Collaboratory seeks to foster a new culture for development in the region, identifying and networking local leaders to engage in the participatory problem solving

and co-design of local projects that can help the region grow and develop in ways that are more diverse and inclusive. The ability to map demographic and other data in a remote area like Hendry County sends a strong signal to transnational and other underserved populations that the Foundation wants all voices to be at the table and is reaching out in new ways to assure that it happens.

The Foundation has developed a system for mapping its projects and programs to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). Starting early sustainability work in 2012 with the STAR Communities framework, the Foundation adapted that effort to the SDGs after they were announced in 2015. Each year, this system expands its reach and sophistication. The BBCA exercise and any follow-on implementation will strengthen that commitment to the SDG's. Better knowledge about transnational circumstances and local leader identification and development foster stronger relationships that build trust and nurture innovation and participation that yield greater impact. This collaborative environment will help generate partnerships that nurture innovation and participatory program design both in Hendry County and in partnership with other foundations and organizations in the Americas.

All partners on this cross-sector research team believe in studying people in place. This is a grounded theory research project, where the team studied the culture and conditions from the perspective and in partnership with those who were the object of the study. Based on the content from initial efforts to identify and map key populations of transnationals in Hendry County, the project team recruited, trained, and supported culturally appropriate representatives from these communities. This was done to form data collection team(s) to engage transnational residents in interviews and focus groups to collect and map relevant social, economic, and environmental data about their circumstances. This included their points of origin and connectivity with diaspora groups. The research team worked with the data collection teams to compile, analyze and reflect on the data which will be used for discretionary sharing with the communities and other relevant groups. This initial research effort will forms the basic framework for continued dialogue, trust building, and program implementation in Hendry County. It will also help surface organizations in countries of origin to form the basis for broadening the partnership with other foundations in the Americas.

Project Overview

The Building Broader Communities in the Americas (BBCA) – Hendry County Mapping Project is a collaborative project with the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, Florida Gulf Coast University, and EnSite. It brings an experienced team with a broader perspective together. This cross-sector collaboration sets a precedent and hopefully will establish a pattern for future work in the region. Hendry County has a population of 39,064, 51.9% of people living there are Latinx, and 47.2% of the total population speak a language other than English at home (United States Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Hendry County, Florida). Hendry County has the high poverty rate at 25.5% (United States Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Hendry County, Florida). It also has the highest rate of unemployment in the State of Florida at 7.1% (Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, September 2019 Employment Figures). Given this background, the Foundation purposefully decided to identify and build relationships with transnational people in Hendry County first.

This Hendry County Mapping Project sought to answer the following: Can we physically locate and characterize transnational populations in Hendry County? Can we capture and compile all data gathered in ways that can be analyzed and shared without causing harm?

To be effective, the Foundation and its partners had to first physically locate the immigrant and migrant populations in Hendry County and gain a better understanding of their cultures, where they live, what they do, their communities of origin, how long have they been in Florida/United States, and what social, economic and environmental issues most concern them. This mapping project is an initial phase of a larger, ongoing, sustained effort by the Foundation and its partners to engage with transnational groups in Hendry County and across Southwest Florida.

We will share, in a discretionary manner, the information collected and contained in this report with our Foundation staff and board (to inform policies, projects, and programs), community organizations, participants, and county leadership.

Research Design

The research for this project is comprised of four data collection sub-projects or phases which occurred between March and September of 2019:

1. Neighborhood geographic asset mapping
2. Targeted neighborhood focus groups
3. Participatory photography project
4. Neighborhood focal point survey

A mixed-method approach provided the data to locate and understand the people in transnational communities in Hendry County. Each phase was designed to inform the design and implementation of the next phase.

Rationale

The approach for this research is a mixed methodology, applying both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Qualitative research is very good at creating a narrative of a certain time and place and gathering a significant amount of detail. This is because qualitative research studies people and events in their own context (Weiss, 1998, p. 252). Numbers cannot tell the whole story; it is also necessary that the stories and ideas of people be captured, conveyed, and even harnessed for decision-making purposes. This description oriented and narrative data that describes the experiences and perceptions of people (Patton, 2002, pp. 4-5) is the very essence of qualitative research.

Data Collection Process and Findings

Phase 1: Neighborhood Geographic Asset Mapping

Asset mapping is a way of illuminating the resources that a community has at their disposal in the hopes that these local assets can then be mobilized for policy management, human development, and poverty alleviation (Gaarder et al., 2003, p. 4). The recognition of assets is the first step to being better able to use those assets. Taking an asset-based approach helps to highlight and emphasize the local resources in a community with the intention of utilizing them.

An asset-based approach asserts that local actors are significant contributors to local development (Gaarder et al., 2003, p. 12), as well as improvements in their own lives.

There is not necessarily one established methodology to asset mapping (Gaarder et al., 2003, p. 13). Many authors and practitioners have fashioned their own methodology based on an asset-based approach, but they are typically highly contextualized to a country, situation, or issue. Sustainable community development depends on the realization of community capacity, including the commitment to invest in community initiatives, which taking an asset-based approach recognizes (Gaarder et al., 2003, p. 11).

The neighborhood geographic asset map informed later phases of the BBCA-Hendry County Mapping Project, specifically, which neighborhoods, based on observation and interaction with community members, were most likely to have strong transnational connections, and a need for connections with additional assets based on gaps and lack of asset density.

Collection Process

We identified 15 neighborhoods across Hendry County as areas where transnational people are likely to live. To understand which of the neighborhoods is best suited for in-depth, qualitative research, we used field observations and asset-mapping. Under the guidance of lead researcher Dr. Cindy Banyai, teams of field researchers visited each of the neighborhoods to observe and record tangible assets in the area, i.e. stores, churches, parks, community centers, etc. The teams physically visited each neighborhood, photographing, and tagging the geographic location of the asset with GIS-linked app-based software Survey123. Teams coded this data according to the type of asset and curated it in a GIS-compatible database for a visualization of the neighborhoods' assets, asset density, and asset gaps.

The field work and data analysis for this project occurred March 4-8, 2019, with the neighborhood asset map visualizations completed by March 25, 2019.

Findings

The finding of the initial observation and asset-mapping was that most transnational communities and neighborhoods do not have a variety of community-based assets and function as commuter communities. Most of the targeted neighborhoods, with the exception of Labelle, Clewiston, Pioneer, and Felda, do not have a centralized community space that promotes community interactions and cohesion. Lower mobility neighborhoods, such as Harlem, have a higher local concentration of resources, but still do not have much access to healthcare, financial institutions, and nutritious food options. Higher housing density seems to be related to a higher apparent need and lower housing density makes it difficult to develop community cohesion. The asset-map created from this project is in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Hendry County Neighborhood Asset Map
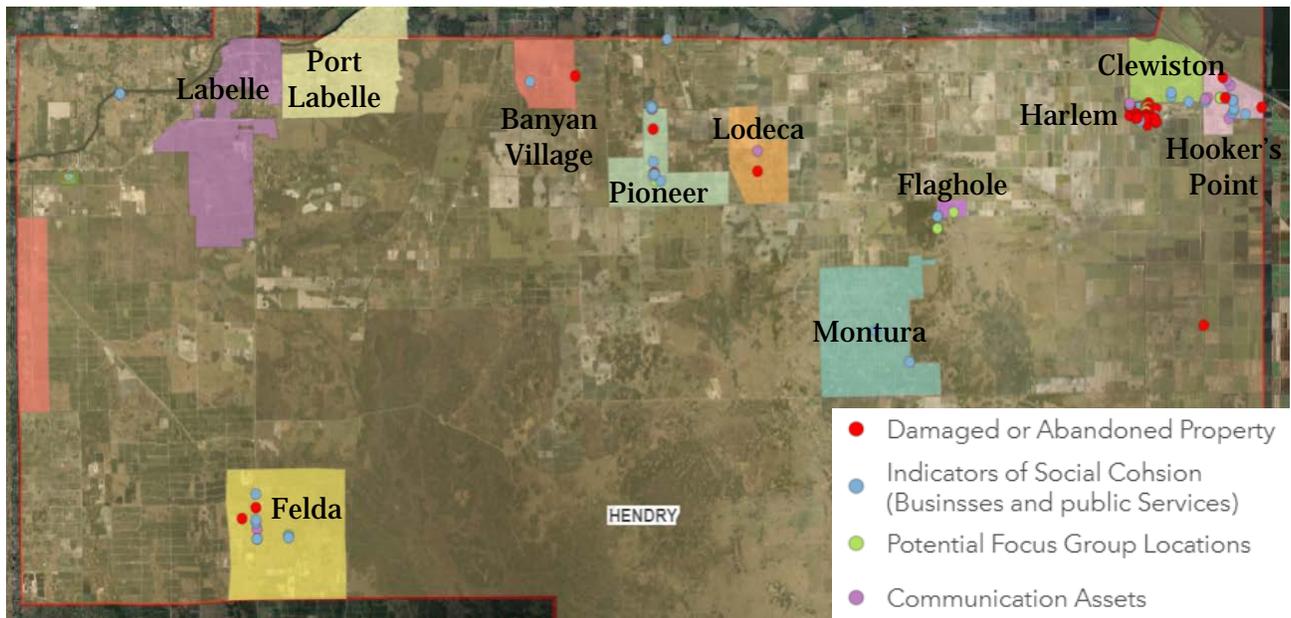
Created by Sabah Pirani and Erin Neaton from the University of Michigan School of Information

Based on this preliminary research, the research team consulted with the advisory committee and planned the next phase of the research, including the focal point surveys and community focus groups. The research team recommended Felda as a target focus group location because it has some prominent central community hubs, such as a multipurpose store with gathering area out front and a community center and park. There were also existing assets to build from that could better serve the community, including existing community-based organizations. Additionally, the team recommended Pioneer for a community focus group because it has a community center and capacity for local development of resources.

Phase 2:   Targeted Neighborhood Focus Groups

Focus groups are when a number of people are brought together and questions are raised for them to discuss (Weiss, 1998, p. 260). When the group is larger and more inclusive, it is then known as a community interview and involves holding a public meeting with a more detailed itinerary and question guide (Kumar, 1987, p. 17). Focus groups allow group dynamics and conversations to be observed (Weiss, 1998, p. 260) and provide a forum for community dialogue.

This technique is most appropriate when:
1. ideas and hypotheses for designing an intervention or policy are needed;
2. reactions to recommended innovations need to be determined;
3. the response of the local population needs to be explained;
4. there are major implementation problems (in policy or interventions), whose nature and implications are not clear, are to be examined and analyzed; and
5. recommendations and suggestions are needed (Kumar, 1987, p. 14).

This study's community focus groups were developed to be consistent with principles of participatory action research (Heron & Reason, 2006; Small, 1995). Each community meeting was conducted following a question guide that was developed following suggestions for community engagement for collective impact from Richard Hardwood's 2014 work, "Putting Community in Collective Impact." This question set has been used across several communities and age groups in Southwest Florida where it was found to provide high-quality, in-depth information about the perspective and desires of people and particularly useful for organizations wishing to serve that community. The question guide is in Table 1. It includes the basic set of community questions and additional questions useful for the BBCA research with transnational communities.

Table 1 - Community Question Guide

Code	Question	Rationale
A	What story do you tell about our community?	To identify positive/negative community narratives
B	What's going on in your community?	To gauge program's "fit" with community; identify community context - issues/situations/conditions/assets that are not obvious to outsiders
C	What challenges do you face in your daily life?	To better understand the challenges people, face in moving toward their aspirations; how people experience those challenges in their daily lives
D	What needs to change to make these challenges less difficult? (also referenced "ideal community)	To articulate community's aspirations; identify community level outcomes
E	Who do you trust to make these changes?	To gauge enabling environment for program development/effectiveness
F	What role would you want to play in this change?	To engage group to become active; develop belief in collective impact potential
G	Where are you regularly connected transnationally?	To identify transnational connections
H	What types of transnational connections do you have?	To identify the types of transnational activities
I	What concerns you most about your transnational community?	To identify connected transnational challenges

Collection Process

Based on the information gathered in the asset mapping, the research team selected Pioneer and Felda for in-depth exploration of community issues and desires. The lead researcher, Dr. Cindy Banyai, trained research assistants in focus group methodology and process. The focus groups sought to better understand the stories, origins, and connections of people in the neighborhoods. The information from the focus groups and focus interviews informed the subsequent survey questions and implementation design for phase 4.

Local leadership and lead researchers coordinated and convened focus group sessions. Research teams were responsible for typing notes from the sessions and providing written reflections on the process, their observations, and their experience in the session. The lead researchers analyzed the meeting notes for trends using qualitative coding and stories.

Recruitment of researchers, design of focus group protocols took place from March 2019 – April 2019 with the training of researchers and staff onboarding in May 2019. Detailed planning and implementation of focus group sessions occurred in May 2019 – June 2019. Community follow-up and feedback meetings occurred in September 2019. Information on the location and participants for each of the community meetings and feedback sessions are in Table 2.

Table 2 - **Community Meeting and Feedback Session General Information**

Location	Date	Total # participants	Gender	Age range	Other demographic information
Felda Focus Group	June 17, 7:00pm	4	2 women, 2 men	65+	1 transnational community member
Felda Feedback Meeting	September 16, 6:00pm	4	3 women, 1 man	50+	1 transnational community member
Pioneer Focus Group	June 10, 7:oopm	15	5 women, 10 men	35-75	4 transnational community members
Pioneer Feedback Meeting	September 9, 7:00pm	15	3 women, 12 men	40-75	4 transnational community members

The research team coordinated and facilitated community meetings (including approximately 10 transnationals). Questions were asked to the group verbatim and additional follow-up questions, clarifications, and age/language-based modifications were made so answers reflected the true intention of the question (based on qualitative data gathering approaches outlined in (Patton, 2002)). Participants discussed questions and answers amongst themselves, reporting on them in shared posters and sticky notes. Participants were then asked to give weighting to their group's answers through positive and negative emphasis using stickers (Paleo, 2012). This data was collected and analyzed using qualitative coding (Saldana) and statistical analysis to find trends. Each percentage displayed on a chart is the percentage of related comments as calculated using the total number of responses for that questions. Community meeting participants (135 transnationals) were also given the same questions as in the focal point survey individually.

After the analysis of the preliminary data, the research team convened and led feedback meetings through a data placemat process to review, comment, and provide additional insight on the analysis before finalization in reporting. Data placemat processes are important to ensure fidelity of the data and ensure community ownership of the research findings (Pankaj & Emery, 2016).

There were challenges when connecting with community partners to coordinate the community meetings, which led to only 2 neighborhood locations being implemented, one each in Pioneer

and Felda. However, the data collected in those community meetings provided an in-depth look at what is most important to people in neighborhoods in Hendry County. But in order to get a more focused perspective from transnational community members in Hendry, two additional trusted community partners, Healthy Start and RCMA, collaborated to administer an interview version of the community group focus question set to participants in their programs. There were 135 individual respondents between the two organizations, providing a total of 145 transnational participants in phase 2.

Findings – Pioneer

In Pioneer, 12-15 people participated in each of the community focus group discussions, 8 of whom identified as transnationals. Overall people in Pioneer have positive feelings about their community with high levels of trust for residents and local organizations. People want to see their local leadership better address their challenges. The top challenges for people in Pioneer include a need for more access to goods and services and transportation and a desire for more neighborhood safety. See Figure 2 for the breakdown.

Figure 2 - Top Challenges for People in Pioneer

More access to goods and services	Transportation accessibility	Neighborhood safety
25%	19%	19%
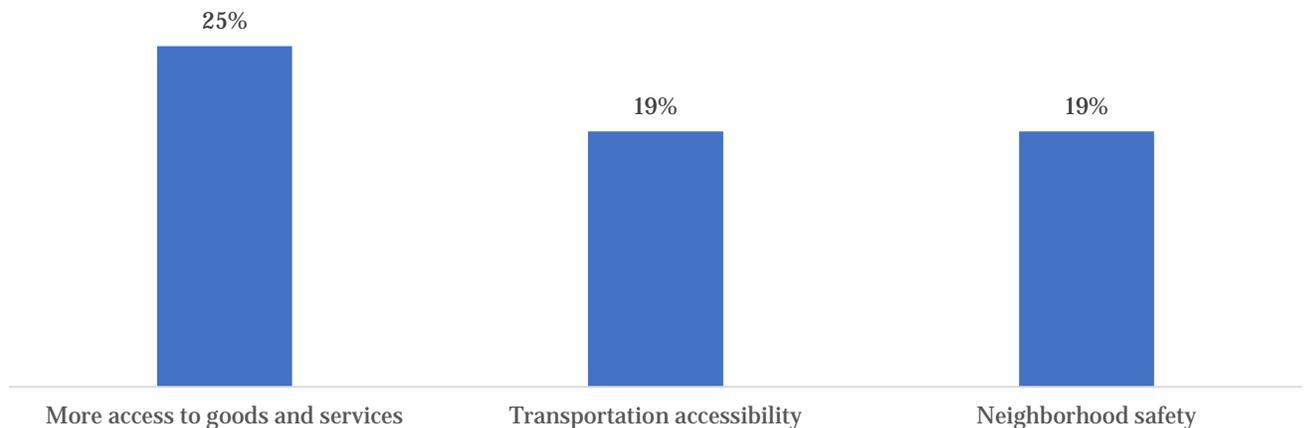
Findings – Felda

Four to five people participated in the community meetings in Felda, two of whom identified as transnationals. People in Felda enjoy the small town and rural feel of their community. They trust leaders in their community the most to make change. The top challenge in the community is internet access and the top desired change is improved road safety, especially with regards to speeding cars.

Findings – Transnational Community Beyond Pioneer and Felda

Transnational people in Hendry County, hosted by partners Healthy Start and RCMA to get a more focused view, reported enjoying many things about their life there. They appreciate the small town and close-knit feel of their communities there- much like others engaged in the study. They also have positive feelings about their community and enjoy local events. There

was discussion on fears and worries related to ICE and other immigration detainments. Another top concern was the desire for more local activities in the county, another item echoed by others in the area.

The most common challenge that transnational people identified is one that emerges throughout data gathering for this project in Hendry County – transportation. Hendry is a rural county with two small town centers and a small population. These factors make it difficult to get from place to place because of distance and a lack of public transportation options. The need for more employment options was also a common challenge, which transnational people in Hendry County mentioned. This is not surprising as Hendry County has the highest unemployment rate in the State of Florida at 7.1%, whereas the state unemployment rate is 3.2% (Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, September 2019 Employment Figures). Access to the internet is also a shared concern of the transnational community, along with neighborhood safety, particularly traffic safety. Transnational community members felt particularly worried about losing their families because of the current immigration policies and practices, which makes them scared to go to work. Challenges for transnational people as reported by participants in Hendry County are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Biggest Challenges Faced by Transnational People in Hendry County
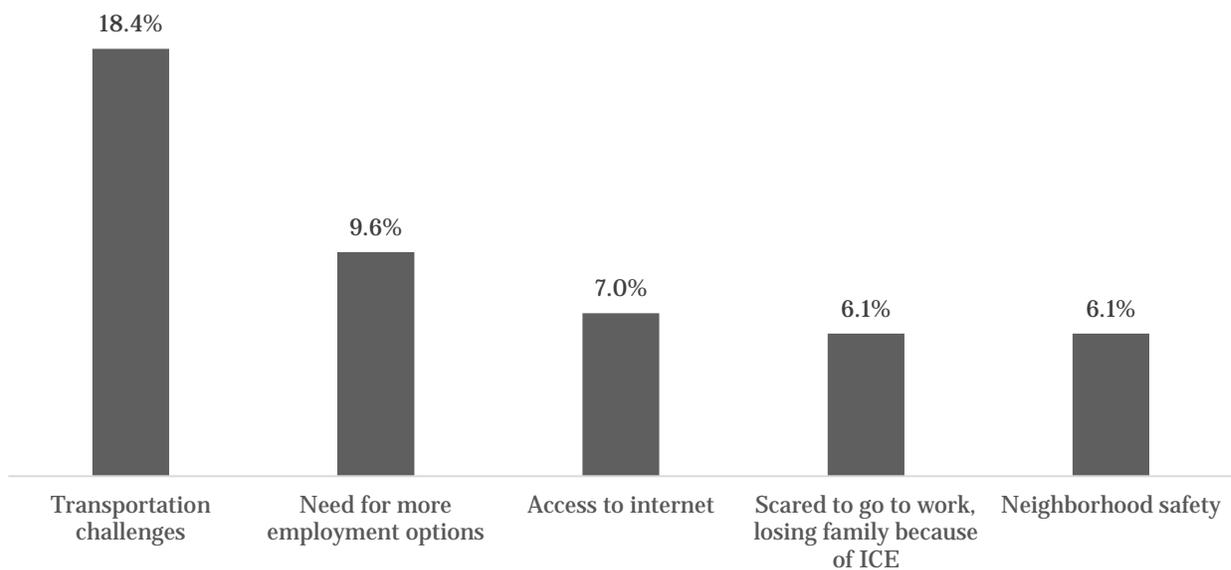
Consistent with the discussion on the biggest challenges of transnational people in Hendry County, the top desired change is improved access to transportation. This is followed closely by improved English literacy. Tied for the third most discussed change are increased neighborhood safety and employment opportunities, which is also consistent with the discussion on challenges. Rounding out the top desired changes increases in program funding for activities and services in the county and improved local leadership to the community. The trends in desired changes are in Figure 4.

Figure 4 - Top Desired Community Changes of Transnational People in Hendry County
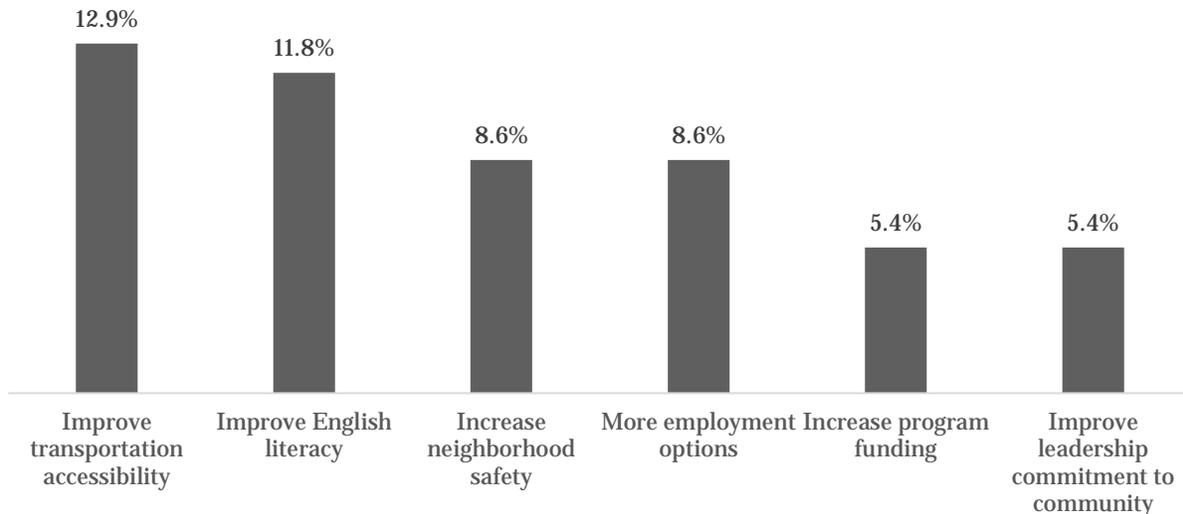
Trust is a complicated issue with transnational people in Hendry County. The common response when asked "who do you trust to make these changes" was "the government." The next most common response was "myself," followed by "no one." Data suggest transnational people in Hendry County look to the government or no one. This helps illustrate how difficult it is for transnational people in Hendry County to address their challenges and make changes.

Phase 3: Participatory Photography Project

From the information gathered in the geographic mapping and the focus group discussion phases, a more in-depth look at the lives of transnational people in Hendry County was explored through participatory photography projects open to the public. The original goal of this phase of the project was to provide rich data and context on the everyday lives of the people in Hendry County to help provide a better understanding of the assets, challenges, and desires uncovered earlier in the research. Participatory photography puts the camera into the hands of those whose story is being told, empowering them to guide the narrative without the biased filter of outsiders.

Action research requires innovation on the part of the facilitator to be able to reach and include their intended target groups and uncover situations and issues (Park, 2006, p. 84), in addition to being able to collect relevant and useful data. Due to this, and the constantly changing needs of the group, it is necessary to develop and utilize new, unique and eclectic techniques, instruments and methods (Small, 1995, p. 943). With this in mind, the use of photography in research was considered for this mapping project.

Although not widespread, the use of photography as a tool for qualitative data gathering (Bleiker & Kay, 2007; Harper, 2001; Pink, 2007, p. 365) and for empowering disadvantaged groups (Bleiker & Kay, 2007, p. 156; Lykes, 2006) or sparking social change (Bleiker & Kay, 2007, p. 141) have been discussed in various realms.

Collection Process

After the initial connections and field work in Hendry County, the BBCA-Hendry County Mapping Project Research Team and Advisory Committee planned to select 2 neighborhood leaders/organizations willing to participate in the participatory photography project. However, no suitable community partner was identified in the early community roundtables. Consequently, the implementation of this process shifted to be fully digital focusing on the question "What's going on in your community?" Opportunities were publicized through flyers during the focal point surveys, community partners, and radio broadcast. Although there was some initial interest in the participatory photography project, there were few submissions, even with a gift card incentive.

Findings

Basically, there were no value-added findings from this phase of the study. Despite attempts to introduce an innovative qualitative approach to design methods, it simply did not get traction in this instance. Despite considerable promotion of the participatory photography, phase 3 of the study, it yielded few participants and no new or meaningful results. Speculation of researchers, partners, and advisors around low participation on this phase yielded many hypotheses, but no certainty. It could be a failure to find a suitable trusted leadership partner in a timely way. Or perhaps it was resident migrant work schedules, fear of ICE, or a lack of interest in photo documentation or documentation of any sort. Maybe the communities do not seek to make themselves visible to others in any way. The net result was that despite a lot of effort, this aspect of the study did not yield meaningful results. The Foundation staff will be looking at this though a Lessons Learned lens to improve practice and use of resources in the future.

Phase 4:   Neighborhood Focal Point Survey

The research team deployed in-person surveys at focal points (high traffic areas with an array of neighborhood members visiting), as identified in the geographic mapping project, to gather large amounts of quantifiable data on the transnational community in Hendry County. We used the surveys to design a system map to connect Hendry County to their transnational counterparts. The quantity and quality of the transnational relationships are captured through survey, exploring remittances, international travel/phone calls/emails/texts, etc. The map is below in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – System Map of Connections of Hendry County to Their Transitional Counterparts
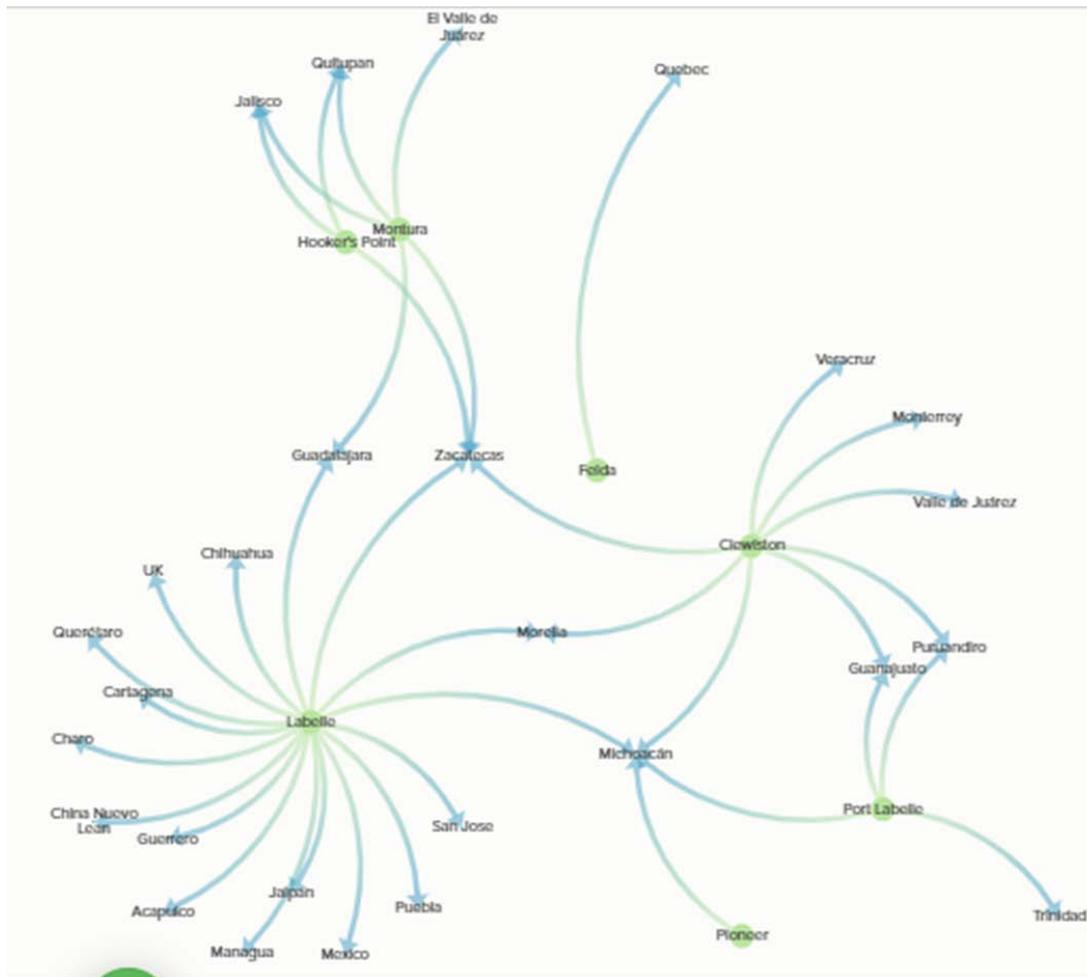
Survey questioning is a type of formal interview. For this work, a large survey is not necessary; therefore, an informal survey method is appropriate. An informal survey focuses on only a few variables, uses a small sample size and non-probability sampling, and permits more flexibility to the interviewers (Kumar, 1987, pp. 2-3). Although it is small in size and limited in focus, informal surveys do generate data that can be statistically analyzed (Kumar, 1987, pp. 2-3). Data from informal surveys with open-ended questions can be statistically analyzed as long as they are appropriately coded and then categorized (Weiss, 1998, p. 168; see also Razafindrakoto & Roubaud, 2002, p. 130). Incorporating qualitative, open-ended questions into an informal survey enables respondents to a) tell their story in their own words; b) encourages freedom and spontaneity in answering; c) allows respondents to use their own language and concepts, and to qualify and elaborate when they feel it necessary; and d) opens the opportunity for unanticipated findings (Kumar, 1990, p. 11).

Generalized Collection Process

The BBCA-Hendry County Mapping Project Team selected focal points across the target neighborhoods based on the geographic asset mapping. Survey takers were stationed at the

focal points with mobile devices to input data into a prepared survey (SurveyMonkey) from willing passersby for 1-2 hours at opportune times to encounter the largest number of people. Focus group sessions were coordinated by local leadership and the lead researchers. Lead researchers analyzed the survey results. Surveys were also implemented through community partners, Healthy Start and RCMA, to their participants and in conjunction with the community roundtable interview question set. Partner participants completing the survey and the interview were given a $10 gift card incentive for sharing their time and thoughts. The focal point implementation and partner implementation were considered purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) to meet the designated needs of this project investigating transnational communities in Hendry County.

The research team recruited research assistants and designed the survey in March 2019 - May 2019. They then trained and onboarded research assistants in May 2019 and implemented surveys in July 2019 – August 2019. Information on the locations for each of the focal point surveys (FPS) are in Table 3.

Table 3 – Focal Point Survey General Information

Location	Date
Labelle – Fourth of July Celebration	7/04/2019
Labelle – Flea market	7/06/2019
Montura – gas station	7/12/2019
Clewiston – pool	7/30/2019
Hooker's Point – ice cream shop	8/03/2019
Clewiston – pool	8/07/2019

The Focal Point Survey (FPS) questions and rationale for each question are in Table 4. This helps to clarify the intention for asking each question.

Table 4 – Survey Question Guide

| Code	Question	Rationale
A	Do you live in Hendry County? ☐ How long?	To identify if applicable to survey
B	Which neighborhood?	To pinpoint locality
C	Where were you born?	To find if there are any transnational connections
D	Do you have close relations with another county? ☐ Which one?	To identify family/friend connections transnationally
E	Do you visit another country? ☐ Which one? ☐ City/state? --? Frequency?	To identify transnational travel patterns
F	Do you send money to another country? ☐ Which one? City/State? ☐ How often? ☐ How much?	To identify transnational economic patterns
G	Do you communicate regularly with someone in another country? ☐ email, text, call, social media?	To identify transnational communication patterns and tendencies
H	Do you have connections with organizations in another country? ☐ types of organizations – churches, etc?	To identify transnational partner organizations

Survey Findings

Overall, 247 people responded to the phase 4 survey, giving the results a confidence interval of 95% within a range of 6.2% for transnational people living in Hendry County. These results should be considered as representative of that group because of the purposeful sampling of this project. The targeted nature of the sampling means that we cannot generalize the results to the entire population of Hendry County, but we can use it for specifically considering transnational people residing there.

Figure 6 shows the age breakdown of survey respondents. The largest proportion of the respondents are working ages 25-64, with 31% being between the ages of 35-44.

Figure 6 - Age of Survey Respondents

2.9% 5.5% 8.8% 11.3% 16.8% 23.5% 31.1%

■ Under 18 ■ 18-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65+
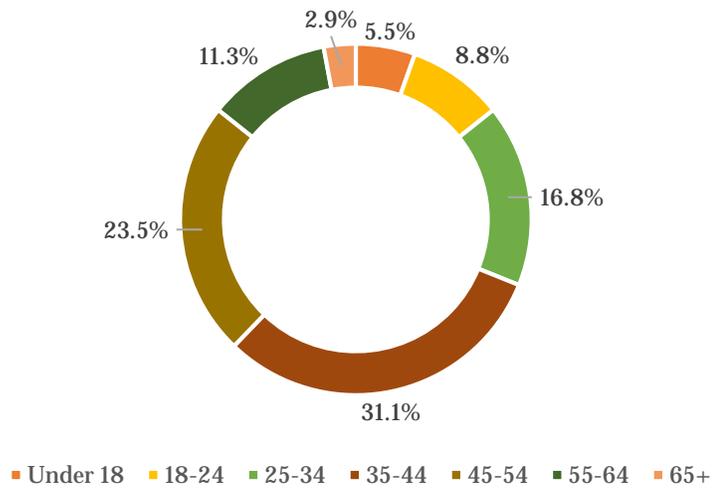
More than half of the survey respondents were female. This is likely because the survey implementation partners (Healthy Start and RCMA) primarily serve women and children and administered the surveys at times as part of their typical service delivery. This information should be considered when interpreting the content of the survey. Figure 7 shows the breakdown by gender.

Figure 7 - Gender of Survey Respondents

0%

39%

60%

- Female   - Male   - Something else/Unsure
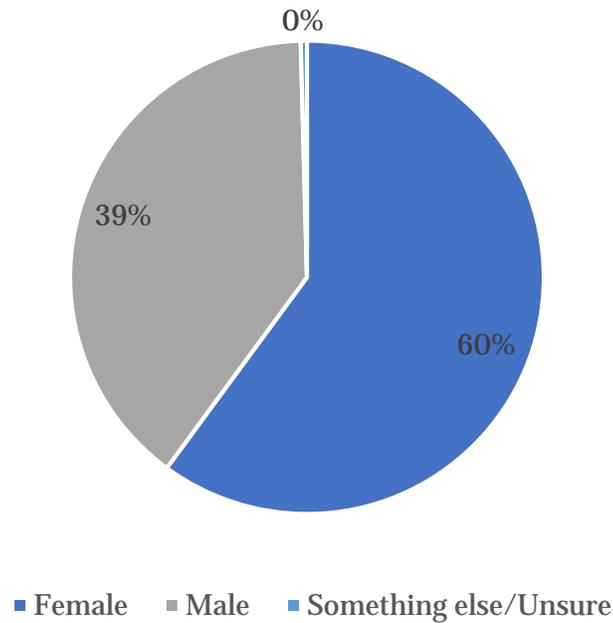
We asked survey respondents how long they have lived in Hendry County, and 73.8% of respondents said they have lived in the county for 10 years or more. This finding helps to paint the picture of the transnational community in Hendry County as one that has a long-term commitment to the area. More information on how long transnational people have lived in Hendry County can be found in Figure 8.

Figure 8 - Years Respondents Have Lived in Hendry County

| 10.1% | 14.3% | 1.7% | 73.8% |
| 1-5 years | 5-10 years | Less than one year | More than 10 years |
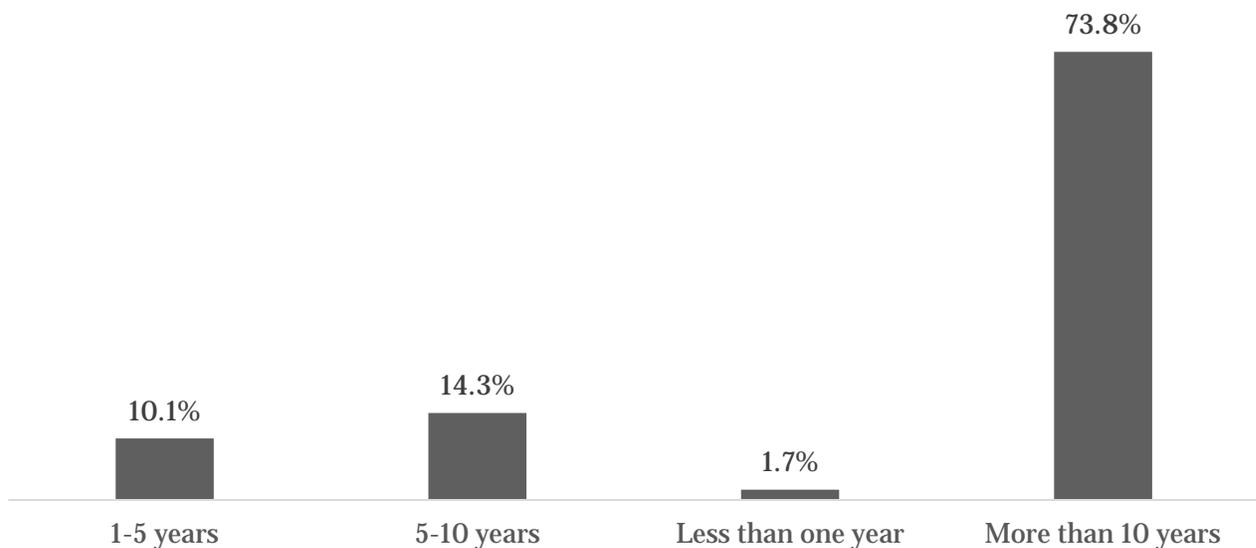
Over half of the survey respondents live in and around Labelle, one of the major towns in Hendry County. These results are likely skewed toward Labelle because the home office of the partner organizations implementing much of the survey are in Labelle. The distribution of the breakdown of survey respondents living in Hendry County are in Figure 9.

Figure 9 - Where in Hendry County Transnational Survey Respondents Live
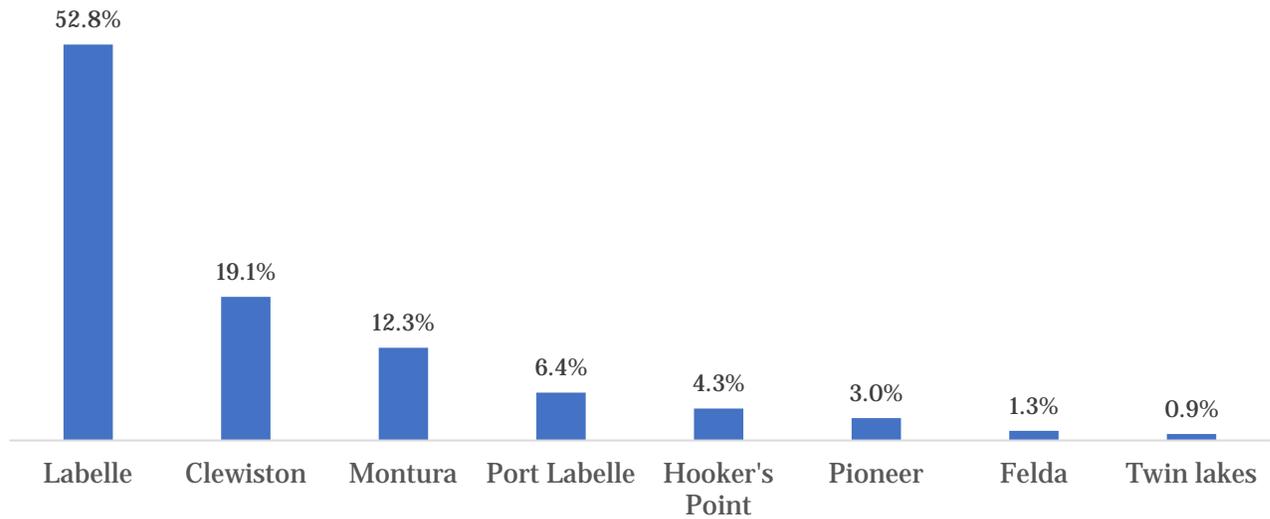
Survey data indicate half of the transnationals responding were born in the United States. The next largest group of people, 39.2%, hail from Mexico. Between 2.5-4.6% of survey respondents are originally from South America and the Caribbean, respectively. The full breakdown of transnational survey respondents by country of origin is in Figure 10.

Figure 10 – Transnational Survey Respondents by Country of Origin
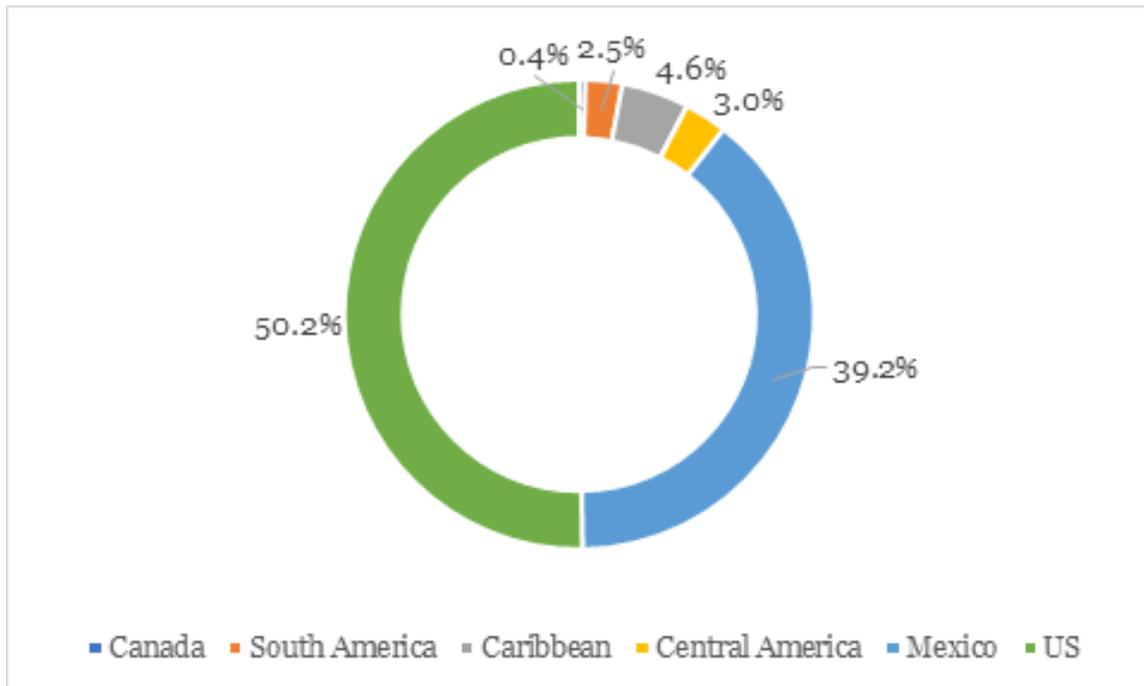
Survey data show that 86.8% of the people with transnational connections are connected to Mexico. This is by far the strongest transnational connection of the people in Hendry County. The next place where people are connected is Cuba, with 3.1% of the people reporting connections to Cuba. All other connected places have less than 2% of people reporting connections.

We asked survey respondents if there were any organizations in the United States with whom they have close transnational connections. There were very few responses to the question and, among those, only churches were mentioned without any specific name(s).

The survey also asked people to report on the places they regularly visit. The top locations mentioned, in order or frequency were three states in west central Mexico, Michoacán, Zacatecas, Jalisco (particularly Guadalajara, and El Valle de Juárez). These are the specific locations within Mexico that are likely to have strong connections in Hendry County.

Survey respondents described their habits related to sending international remittances, and 83.2% of the people who report sending money send it to Mexico. The remaining remittances are to the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Overall, transnational people in Hendry County who responded to the survey typically send money every 1-2 months, with the most frequently sent amount between $200-500.

When we asked about communication transnationally, transnational people in Hendry County reported that 61.68% of them communicated transnationally regularly with 79.1% of transnational communication with Mexico. Most respondents indicated using a mix of phone calls, texts, and email when communicating transnationally.

Next Steps

This project sought to answer the following: Can we physically locate and characterize transnational populations in Hendry County? Can we capture and compile all data gathered in ways that can be analyzed and shared without causing harm? This report demonstrates that yes, we can physically locate and characterize transnational people in Hendry County, and we did so while building trust with local people and organizations. This was not easy and required many adjustments during the field work

Through this project, we gained insight into and gleaned valuable information about the transnational community in Hendry County. There are strong connections with Mexico. This is demonstrated through visits, remittances, and communication, which are all important for fostering continued networks within the transnational community and related organizations. Developing connections with community foundations and service agencies in the states of Michoacán and Zacatecas, and city of Guadalajara and the Valle de Juárez are logical next steps.

The Foundation can facilitate and support this work in partnership with other funders. The team at the Foundation is also actively engaging in a process to utilize the data from this study. The Foundation will continue to use the study to inform the work of its Immigration Learning Community and share this report with stakeholders to inform their program and policy development. At the Foundation, there is energy around establishing a Hendry County Fund that could potentially link with transnational partners or be spun off as its own foundation, serving the needs of the people and the transnational community in Hendry County.

Some of the additional and potential further steps are generating executive summaries for specific stakeholders in Hendry County and other institutional and governmental entities. We also want to consider acting on and proposing to other entities to act upon some of the findings, such as:

1) Exploring transportation and communication support in-depth (difficulties and issues expressed)
2) Considering setting up an incubator in the county that serves transnational entrepreneurs (self-drive expressed)
3) Strengthening relationships with trusted entities identified by respondents (churches, associations and so on)

It would be worthwhile to explore potential connections with the Guadalajara Community Foundation to see how issues of communication and mutual support might be addressed.

Lessons Learned

Through this project, we learned several valuable lessons. First, recognize the need to adjust and modify the project to achieve its goals. An example of this is when we used research assistants from the University of Michigan School of Information familiar with asset mapping and digital tools assisted as part of an alternative spring break arrangement with the Foundation. Second, our research team enlisted trusted community partners in the research design, so that the methodology and forms of data collection are appropriate and suitable to the community and subjects researched. Third, a participatory photography project, which yielded no new or meaningful results in this project, may not be suitable for every community or every project, especially when immigration enforcement officials are actively present. Feelings of trust and safety may be key factors in getting participation for this type of documentation.

In addition, we were frequently reminded that working in rural locations is difficult, resource intensive, and time consuming. Planning efforts need to keep this in focus. Also, the proposed design did not anticipate the number of Hendry County transnationals who migrate north for the growing season. These and other lessons will help inform future work in Hendry.

Closing

This initiative successfully connected to transnational communities and their members that are almost forgotten or live on the fringes of society in Southwest Florida. Ascertaining their needs, possibilities, and potentials is a worthwhile effort to bring our awareness to the conscious level. We are better prepared around these issues and their connections and influence in our region and potentially regions beyond our borders. These communities and people studied represent a culture that we need to understand as its own as well as its influence on the culture of mainstream society. While their potential influence creates an impact of yet unknown proportions and correlations, we know they will have a growing effect on our social structures and the fabric of Southwest Florida. Such growing communities have increasing economic impression and inter-dependence on our region and again regions beyond our borders. These efforts of research and building connections must continue for all of us to comprehend their role in our economic, social, and environmental development. Ignorance and bias must be expelled

and potential realized, so that the social and economic force they represent can be integrated into the mainstream to enhance the quality of all our lives and communities.

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