

# FUTURE MATTERS | On the Brink of New Promise

THE FUTURE OF U.S. COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS



FALL 2008

## Communities on the move: Community Philanthropy, Immigrants and Giving

“America is woven of many strands. I would recognize them and let it so remain. Our fate is to become one, and yet many. This is not prophecy, but description.”  
- Ralph Ellison

Of all the ways that life has changed in the last decade or so, one constant theme has been of changing communities. Some of this is the sense that the “world is getting smaller” through global communications. At the same time, there is also a belief that “everyone is on the move” because of expanded transportation options. *On the Brink of New Promise* looked at how community foundations could change their work to fit the shifting contexts of their communities. One of the most fundamental changes facing community foundations is the very nature of their communities.

This second *Future Matters* of 2008 focuses on the many ways that immigrants and their communities, in the U.S. and their nation of origin, interact with community foundations. It also looks at the practices and meaning of philanthropy within immigrant communities, which of course varies by culture, generation, and expectations of the individuals and families. As

### WHAT ARE FUTURE MATTERS?

*On the Brink of New Promise: The Future of U.S. Community Foundations* explored the changing context around community philanthropy and what it might mean for the future of community foundations. But as the context for the field continues to shift, Blueprint Research & Design, Inc. will be developing a number of *Future Matters* Reports to expand on the original report and discuss ongoing and emerging issues and trends that may matter to the future of community philanthropy.

Please write us at [info@communityphilanthropy.org](mailto:info@communityphilanthropy.org) to share examples of how your community foundation is addressing immigration and other issues, or to let us know what other topics you would like addressed in upcoming *Future Matters*.


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varied as they are, these practices may hold useful lessons for community institutions, including philanthropic foundations.

### What does immigration have to do with community?

America has always been a nation of immigrants. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, experts predict that global immigration will grow in size and shift in patterns, driven by age-old economic aspirations, ever-shifting national and cultural dynamics, and possibly shaped by the forces of climate change.



**One quarter of Silicon Valley's high tech firms have immigrant founders. More than 3/4 of the low skill workforce in Silicon Valley is foreign born.**

Immigrants are already a major part of our communities. Nearly 12 percent – or 37 million people - of the overall population is foreign-born. Twenty percent of school-age children (most of whom are citizens) have one foreign-born parent.

Immigrants settle in different communities for many reasons – some are drawn by family or previous generations of countrymen. Some come for specific jobs, in high-tech or agriculture, and their settlement patterns reflect the hot spots of those industries.

For example, in Silicon Valley in 2005 foreign-born individuals filled more than half of the region's science and engineering jobs. One quarter of the region's high-tech companies have immigrant founders. At the same time, the region estimated that between 68 and 90% of its low-skill workforce was made up of immigrant women. (Silicon Valley

Community Foundation, Issue Brief: Immigration)

### Communities within Communities

Immigrants are part of larger communities and they define their own communities. Almost every major city has a Chinatown or Little Italy. Increasingly, we find neighborhoods such as Little Saigon and Little Kabul.

It was in this spirit, of strengthening an established immigrant community that Catalonio Tapia first thought to invest in the future of Mexican American children in Redwood City, California. Tapia, who had immigrated as a child and worked in many industries before building his own successful landscaping business, knew the importance of education. Through his years of work he had raised a family and sent his children to college, and one on to law school.

He turned to his son the lawyer, his clients, and the **Silicon Valley Community Foundation** when the time came to turn his dreams for a scholarship program into reality. His son drew up the legal papers, his clients made donations, and the SVCF provided funds for organizational capacity - for what is now known as the **Bay Area Gardeners Foundation**. Since starting in 2006 other gardeners, and their clients have become regular contributors and the gardeners they make up the advisory council that selects applicants. One result of their commitment – the scholarship program is one of the few that doesn't ask an applicant about citizenship status.

### Funds of Their Own

In Greensboro, North Carolina Mexican immigrants were coming together to pool funds for a nursing home and retirement center in their home city of Mezquital. In 2005, with the help of the North Carolina Latino Coalition, the group crafted a relationship with the **Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro** to hold the funds. The Community Foundation had been working with Hispanics in Philanthropy to learn ways to better serve this part of its local community.

When the Community Foundation staff learned that members of Patronato Mezquital were carrying their donations to Mexico in cash to avoid the expense of fund transfer fees, they agreed to waive their account minimums and fees to help the group. Patronato Mezquital holds numerous fundraising events, which are community-building gatherings in their own right, so they are simultaneously building community in two places. Over time the group has acquired land in Mexico to build the facilities, received matching funds from the Mexican government, and started a local grants program for Greensboro-area families in need.

**The San Francisco Foundation and Asian American Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP)** spearheaded an effort to create the **Civic Engagement Fund for Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (AMEMSA) Communities**, a pooled fund of Bay Area foundations (including some private foundations). The fund is operated by AAPIP with significant financial, advisory and staffing support from The San Francisco Foundation. The fund began as a result of intense interest at a funders' briefing about a research report put out by Grantmakers Concerned about Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR).

Some of the grantees are on the fund's various planning committees. They have created a learning network with the grantees and one funder that is preparing the groups to leverage other foundation dollars. Within its first year, the fund attracted the support of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

### Building communities of funds

The **Chicago Community Trust** has long made grants to train to leaders of Mexican hometown federations. In 2003 these individual efforts began to meld together when leaders of the City's seven Mexican federations formed a Confederations of

Mexican Federations in Chicago. This collective has led immigrant rights rallies and is involved in local and national policy advocacy. It continues to receive leadership-training grants from the Chicago Community Trust and from Hispanics in Philanthropy. Known as **CONFEMEX**, the group's structure as a consortium of seven different federations from seven different parts of Mexico lets it reach broadly across Chicago's immigrant community. CONFEMEX has received national attention from Mexican advocacy and support organizations, and was chosen by the Mexican Consulate in Chicago to coordinate the September celebrations related to Mexican national holidays, a large civic event in the city.

**The Somali population in Minnesota is the largest outside of Somalia.**



### More than Money

In addition to the financial resources and fund management expertise that community foundations offer, many reach out with technical assistance to serve the newcomers to their communities. At the **Women's Foundation of Minnesota (WFM)** this takes the form of financial literacy classes, an intensive grant application process with lots of support from the foundation, and additional assistance once a grant is made. This cooperative approach is the hallmark of WFM's work with **Aishah Center for Women**, a local Somali women's organization. As Aishah and its clients have advanced their skills they have been able to develop a business plan for a women's communal lending program, that will ultimately help individual Somali women entrepreneurs start their own businesses. WFM provides business plan expertise, financial support, and credibility, all of which have allowed Aishah to raise additional foundation funding and establish a hub of entrepreneurial activity and business ownership in a Somali shopping district. The relationship has also bolstered WFM's expertise and credibility, and it is now a sought after issue expert for other funders interested

in gender issues in Somali culture, which is large and growing in Minnesota.



**Community foundations that engage deeply with immigrant populations gain new expertise and credibility on key community issues.**

## Communities on the move

In many of these examples, the immigrant community in discussion has been long established in a region before engaging with a community foundation as partner. For some of these community foundations, the lessons learned from working with specific communities have been stepping off points to broader engagements on the issues facing all immigrants.

For example, in the summer of 2008 the Silicon Valley Community Foundation issued an Issue Brief on Immigration. The document, distributed to all of the foundation's mailing list and available in its offices and on its website, discussed key policy issues facing immigrants, provided data on different population groups in the regions, and made connections between the changing demographics of the region, its growing prosperity, and some of the challenges the area faced.

Silicon Valley Community Foundation also improved its own practices to better meet the needs of immigrants in its region. Recognizing the strong connection to home countries that many immigrants maintain, SVCF invested in its own ability to facilitate international giving, as this was an increasing interest among many of its current and potential donors. These structural, human capacity and policy changes will better enable the foundation to serve its existing constituencies, and those who

come to the region in the future, no matter where they may come from.

## What does all this mean for community foundations?

Stories about community foundations and immigrant communities demonstrate several common themes.

- *Demographic change is part of all communities.* Some places have more immigration than others, some experience more out-migration than new growth or diversity. Whether it is a function of new cultures coming in, old faces moving away, trying to attract young professionals or repositioning a region as a retirement hub, every community has its own demographic dynamic.
- *All departments of a community foundation have roles to play in better serving immigrant communities.* Programmatic approaches that rely on asset mapping and community building techniques are effective at identifying new resources for the community foundation – in terms of human expertise and financial assets. In all of the stories, program staff worked with donor services and executive leadership to develop the community foundation relationships. (Finance staff needed to be on board too.)
- *New relationships build new expertise.* New relationships require new expertise on the part of community foundation staff. Investments in this expertise pay off in better service to the community as a whole and also in positioning the community foundation as a resource to other funders
- *New policies also may be necessary.* Investments in expertise are not enough – a commitment to working with immigrant communities and others may necessitate changes to grant programs (providing technical assistance) and/or development

policies (international giving or fee structures).

Demographic trends and immigration/migration patterns are often quite visible and projections can be found for nearly any community. These patterns are often one of the few trends that can be reliably tracked and projected allowing organizations and foundations to make well-informed decisions about this critical component of every community's future.

## Resources

Asian American Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy  
[www.aapip.org](http://www.aapip.org)

CFSV Issue Brief, Immigration, Summer 2008  
[www.cfsiliconvalley.org](http://www.cfsiliconvalley.org)

Diversity in Philanthropy Project  
[www.diversityinphilanthropy.org](http://www.diversityinphilanthropy.org)

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees  
[www.gcir.org](http://www.gcir.org)

Hispanics in Philanthropy  
[www.hiponline.org](http://www.hiponline.org)

Migration Policy Institute  
[www.migrationinformation.org](http://www.migrationinformation.org)

John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
"Global Migration," Newsletter, Fall 2008, Vol. 1  
[www.macfound.org](http://www.macfound.org)

Global Forum on Migration and Development  
<http://www.gfmd-fmmd.org/>

United Nations Population Fund  
<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/>

### The Future of Community Philanthropy

project builds on joint work of Blueprint Research & Design, Inc. and the Monitor Institute that took place from 2004 to 2006. That effort produced the report, *On the Brink of New Promise: The Future of US Community Foundations*, the website [communityphilanthropy.org](http://communityphilanthropy.org) and its online tools, and the first four *Future Matters* Reports. The work is funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation and the Ford Foundation. Lucy Bernholz of Blueprint Research & Design is continuing the project's work. Ms. Bernholz wrote this report. For more information about the project, visit [www.communityphilanthropy.org](http://www.communityphilanthropy.org).