

Enduring Ties

The Human Connection Between Greater Boston,
Latin America and the Caribbean



Prepared for

The Building Broader Communities in Americas Working Group
by The Philanthropic Initiative and Boston Indicators

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About Boston Indicators

Boston Indicators is a research center at the Boston Foundation that seeks a thriving Greater Boston for all residents across all neighborhoods. We do this by analyzing key indicators of well-being and by researching promising ideas for making our city more prosperous, equitable and just. To ensure that our work informs active efforts to improve our city, we work in deep partnership with community groups, civic leaders and Boston's civic data community to produce special reports and host public convenings.

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The Human Connection Between Greater Boston,
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INTRODUCTION

This report comes at an extremely difficult time, when, like so many other states around the country, many Massachusetts immigrant communities are under pressure from increased threats of deportation, the rescinding of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, and the revisiting of Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Perhaps now more than ever, it is important to understand the connections between the communities and to highlight the assets, skills, and strengths that we gain from this diversity. In addition, American citizens from Puerto Rico are coping with the tremendous hardships caused by Hurricane Maria—both those who remain in Puerto Rico and those who have relocated to Massachusetts.

Greater Boston offers a unique example, because our communities come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Latin American and the Caribbean communities vary from large Central American populations, such as Salvadorans and Guatemalans, to Brazilians and others from South America, to Caribbean communities from both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as well as long-standing populations from Puerto Rico.

This research builds on the efforts of others that seek to understand and empower all groups in our society. The Boston Planning and Development Agency Research (BPDA), frequently in partnership with Boston Indicators, has led the efforts to map and document the experiences of those residing in the City of Boston.

This report maps the demographics and economic data of Greater Boston. It explores how these demographics have shifted over time and shares analyses of the economic data for these communities. It also examines the experiences of transnational communities in the Greater Boston area, exploring the assets these communities bring and the challenges they face. It looks at the types of connections communities here have to their countries of origin and considers the financial flows back and forth, both remittances made directly to families and friends, as well as more structured institutional connections through philanthropy and the work of Hometown Associations.

Finally, it explores recommendations made through eighteen interviews as to how the Boston Foundation and BBKA can continue to support and engage transnational communities.

We applaud the efforts of the Building Broader Communities in the Americas Working Group to undertake this research and see it as just the beginning of what could be done in promoting transnational connections.

Research and Mapping Methodology

The research for this report was conducted between September 2017 and February 2018. The methodology included eighteen interviews with experts on Latino, Caribbean, immigrant, and diaspora issues in the Boston area, as well as research that examined the relevant and key literature. It also included extensive analysis of census data to determine the past and current demographic makeup of Boston and the surrounding cities and municipalities. Specifically, throughout this report, we present data on “countries of origin,” which was developed using the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. The “country of origin” designation incorporates all individuals who self-describe their ethnicity as originating from any of the Latin American countries, including Brazil and Mexico. This report also includes information gained from individuals who were born in, or identify as being from, the Spanish speaking and non-Spanish speaking nations or territories of the Caribbean. This report’s countries of origin are collectively a part of “Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Distinct from the above geographic considerations, this paper will use ‘Latino’ to refer to all individuals in Latin America except Brazil, as well as the Caribbean countries and territories of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. In addition, this report references Latin American and Caribbean “foreign born” populations, which are defined herein as individuals born in the above countries of origin but living within Boston and the Greater Boston region. The geographic focus of this paper is the Boston Foundation’s

catchment area, which includes the City of Boston and 79 surrounding communities (see Map 1).

This effort builds on other research, including the BPDA Research Division’s June 2017 publication that profiles the largest Latino populations in Boston and looks at population size, history of migration to Boston, marital status, citizenship, English proficiency, educational attainment levels, employment and occupation, standard of living, poverty rates, and a special emphasis on the experience of children. That publication was intended as a supplement to a study BPDA produced in partnership with Boston Indicators, a research center at the Boston Foundation, titled “Powering Greater Boston’s Economy: Why the Latino Community is Critical to Our Shared Future” and provides a useful complement to this current research effort through the data, mapping, and analysis it includes.¹

Because there is a large and longstanding Puerto Rican community in Boston, this study includes Puerto Ricans as well as immigrants from Latin American and Caribbean countries. As a result, the term ‘transnational’ only refers to relationships with other countries. Several interviewees stressed the need to differentiate the experiences of Puerto Ricans and consider their status as U.S. citizens.² Puerto Ricans have access to resources that many others who move to the U.S. do not, such as existing social security numbers

and credit scores, which give them the ability to easily open bank accounts and take out loans. They also have access to public services and affordable housing (although the wait list in Boston is long for subsidized housing)³, and they do not have the challenge of mixed documentation statuses, faced by some other immigrant communities. Throughout this paper, the expertise and ideas of those interviewed or the written work reviewed is cited in endnotes.

Research Limitations

Demographic data can be limiting, as it relies on self-reporting and restricts the ways in which individuals can categorize themselves.

The census population estimates for Latin American and Caribbean countries of origin were the most current at the time of analysis. Because of this, recent population shifts may not be reflected here. In addition, the Census does not easily allow researchers to distinguish between generations; as such, respondents either identify with a specific country of origin, or they do not. Nuances within these populations may therefore be missing from this research.

Due to time and budgetary constraints, this report focuses on Greater Boston and Boston alone. As a result, it may miss Latin American and Caribbean populations that

exist outside these areas, such as the large Puerto Rican population in the Western Massachusetts city of Holyoke. Further research could focus more fully on all of Massachusetts’ cities and towns.

The majority of interviews for this paper took place in fall of 2017, directly or soon after Hurricane Maria struck the Caribbean and caused catastrophic damage to Puerto Rico in particular. A number of the interviewees discussed both the hurricane and the flawed response to it. The data used in this paper draws on pre-hurricane numbers and may not be accurate for 2018, since more than 5,000 Puerto Ricans have since relocated to Massachusetts.

Budgetary constraints prevented a more robust research effort, which, in future iterations, could include a widespread survey of first and second generation immigrants to capture experience and interest in philanthropy.

MAP 1:

City of Boston and Surrounding Communities



MAPPING RESIDENTS from LATIN AMERICA and the CARIBBEAN

City of Boston

From 2000 to 2015, Boston's total Latin American and Caribbean populations grew rapidly, by roughly 60 percent. Of this growth, the biggest changes in absolute terms were among Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Salvadorans.

Puerto Ricans, the largest Latin American and Caribbean community in Boston, grew by 36 percent between 2000 and 2015. They made up 5.6 percent of the city's total population in 2015, and live predominantly in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Roxbury, and Hyde Park (see Map 2).

The second largest Latin American and Caribbean population in Boston is from the Dominican Republic. Between 2000 and 2015, the Dominican population of Boston increased by just over 19,000, the largest growth in total number (not percent) of any of Boston's Latin American and Caribbean populations. As a result of this growth, Dominicans made up 4.7 percent of the city's total population in 2015, and contributed to Caribbean populations making up 18 percent of Boston's total population. They tend to live in Dorchester, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain (see Map 3).

TABLE 1:

Boston's Top 15 Latin American and Caribbean Places of Origin

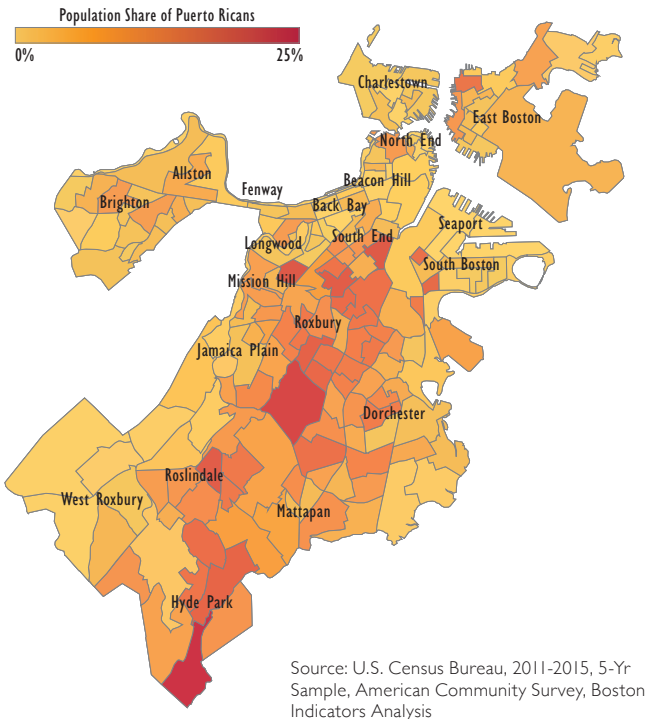
Places of Origin	2015	Percent Change, 2000–2015	Change in Population
Puerto Rico	37,324	36%	+ 9,882
Dominican Republic	32,126	147%	+ 19,145
Haiti	21,245	12%	+ 2,266
El Salvador	14,980	181%	+ 9,647
Jamaica	10,974	33%	+ 2,748
Colombia	8,440	108%	+ 4,375
Mexico	6,834	66%	+ 2,708
Guatemala	4,435	74%	+ 1,881
Honduras	4,125	126%	+ 2,303
Trinidad and Tobago	3,743	13%	+ 434
Peru	3,571	370%	+ 2,812
British West Indies	3,004	121%	+ 1,645
Brazil	3,003	-16%	- 591
Cuba	2,887	30%	+ 666
Barbados	2,596	20%	+ 431
Caribbean TOTAL	117,170	46%	+ 37,002
Central American + Mexican TOTAL	28,106	125%	+ 15,614
South American TOTAL	23,945	85%	+ 11,021
Latin American + Caribbean TOTAL	169,301	60%	+ 63,637

For the purposes of this report, Puerto Rico, the British West Indies and other territories are considered "countries"
Source: 2000 Decennial Census, 2015 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

MAP 2:

Distribution of Puerto Ricans in Boston, 2013

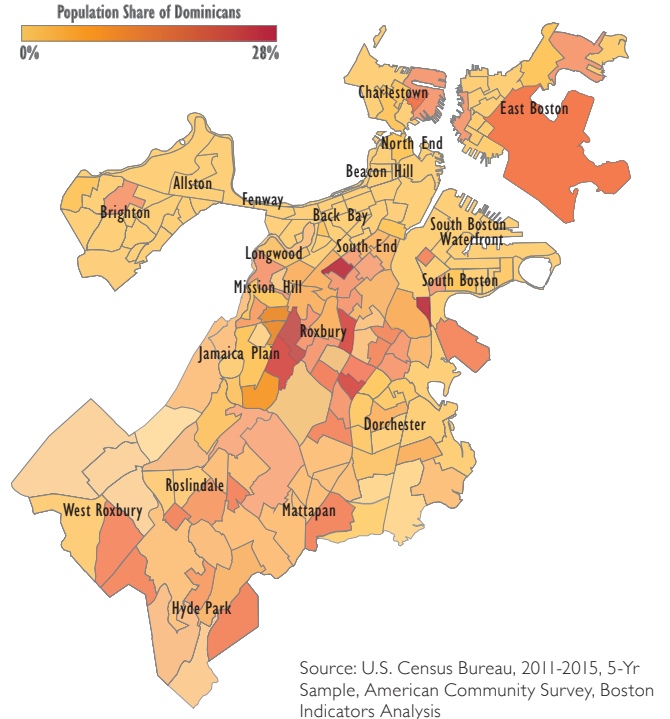
by percentage of total census tract population



MAP 3:

Distribution of Dominicans in Boston, 2013

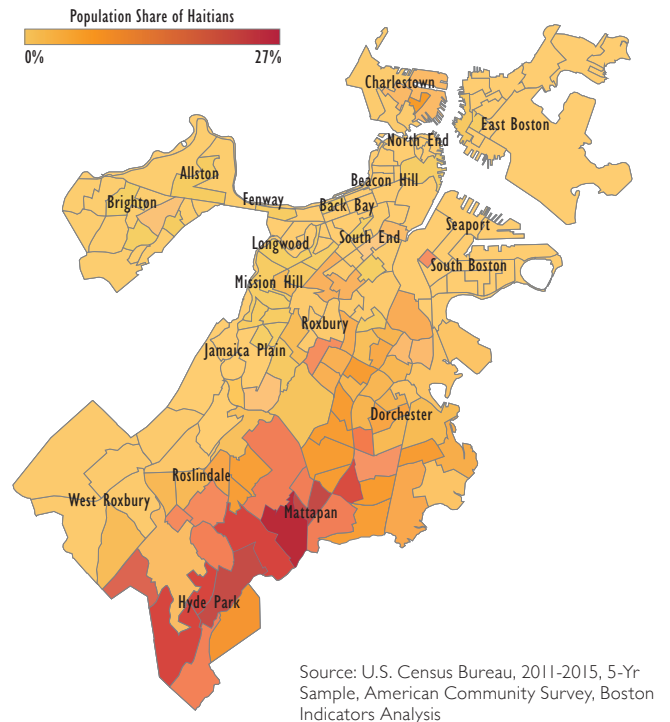
by percentage of total census tract population



MAP 4:

Distribution of Haitians in Boston, 2013

by percentage of total census tract population



Haitians are the largest non-Spanish-speaking Latin American or Caribbean population in Boston. They made up roughly 3 percent of Boston’s total population in 2015 and predominantly live in Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park (see Map 4).

In 2015, roughly 20 percent of the city was Latino. This is up significantly from just 6 percent in 1980, and Latinos have since become the main driver of the city’s growth.⁴

While they are spread throughout the city, the neighborhoods of East Boston (21 percent of the Latino population) and Dorchester (17 percent Latino) hold some of the largest Latino populations. The largest of these populations in East Boston come from El Salvador, making up 26 percent of the neighborhood’s total population in 2013. Citywide, Salvadorans made up around 2.2 percent of Boston’s total residents in 2015.

BOSTON'S LATIN AMERICAN and CARIBBEAN POPULATIONS

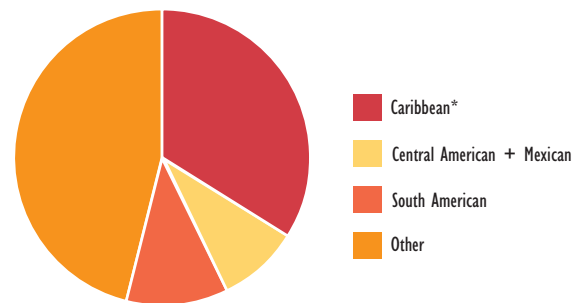
Thus far, this report has focused solely on places of origin, which includes people either born in that country or with familial ties from earlier generations. Here, we analyze Boston's Latin American and Caribbean populations. Combined, Latin American and Caribbean individuals born abroad make up some 54 percent of all of Boston's foreign born residents, with the Caribbean alone representing 34 percent of this entire population.

Greater Boston

Latin American and Caribbean populations are not solely concentrated in Boston. Outside of the city, Puerto Ricans, Brazilians, and other groups have developed strong communities in the Greater Boston region.

For some groups, population sizes in Greater Boston are very similar to those in Boston proper. Slightly more

FIGURE 1:
Boston's Foreign Born Population
by Latin American and Caribbean Region of Birth



* This does not include Puerto Ricans, who are American citizens.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015, 1-Yr Sample, American Community Survey, Boston Indicators Analysis

TABLE 2:

Greater Boston Top 15 Latino American and Caribbean Places of Origin

Places of Origin	2013	Percent Change, 2000–2013	Largest Community for each Country of Origin, 2013
Puerto Rico	39,782	58%	Lynn
Brazil	34,906	120%	Framingham
Haiti	31,453	89%	Everett
El Salvador	29,173	253%	Chelsea
Dominican Republic	28,385	147%	Lynn
Guatemala	22,166	305%	Lynn
Mexico	14,831	72%	Lynn
Colombia	12,980	183%	Revere
Honduras	9,200	266%	Chelsea
Peru	5,611	281%	Watertown
Jamaica	5,193	23%	Randolph
Cuba	4,318	44%	Quincy
Chile	2,809	191%	Cambridge
Ecuador	2,792	245%	Waltham
Argentina	2,631	109%	Cambridge

Greater Boston Population measurements do not include Boston. For the purposes of this report, Puerto Rico, the British West Indies and other territories are considered "countries". 2013 estimate is from 2015 ACS 5YR estimates, taken over the years 2011-2015.

Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Puerto Ricans lived outside Boston in 2013 than in, and nearly as many Dominicans lived outside the city. Both of these groups' largest Greater Boston communities outside of Boston can be found in Lynn.

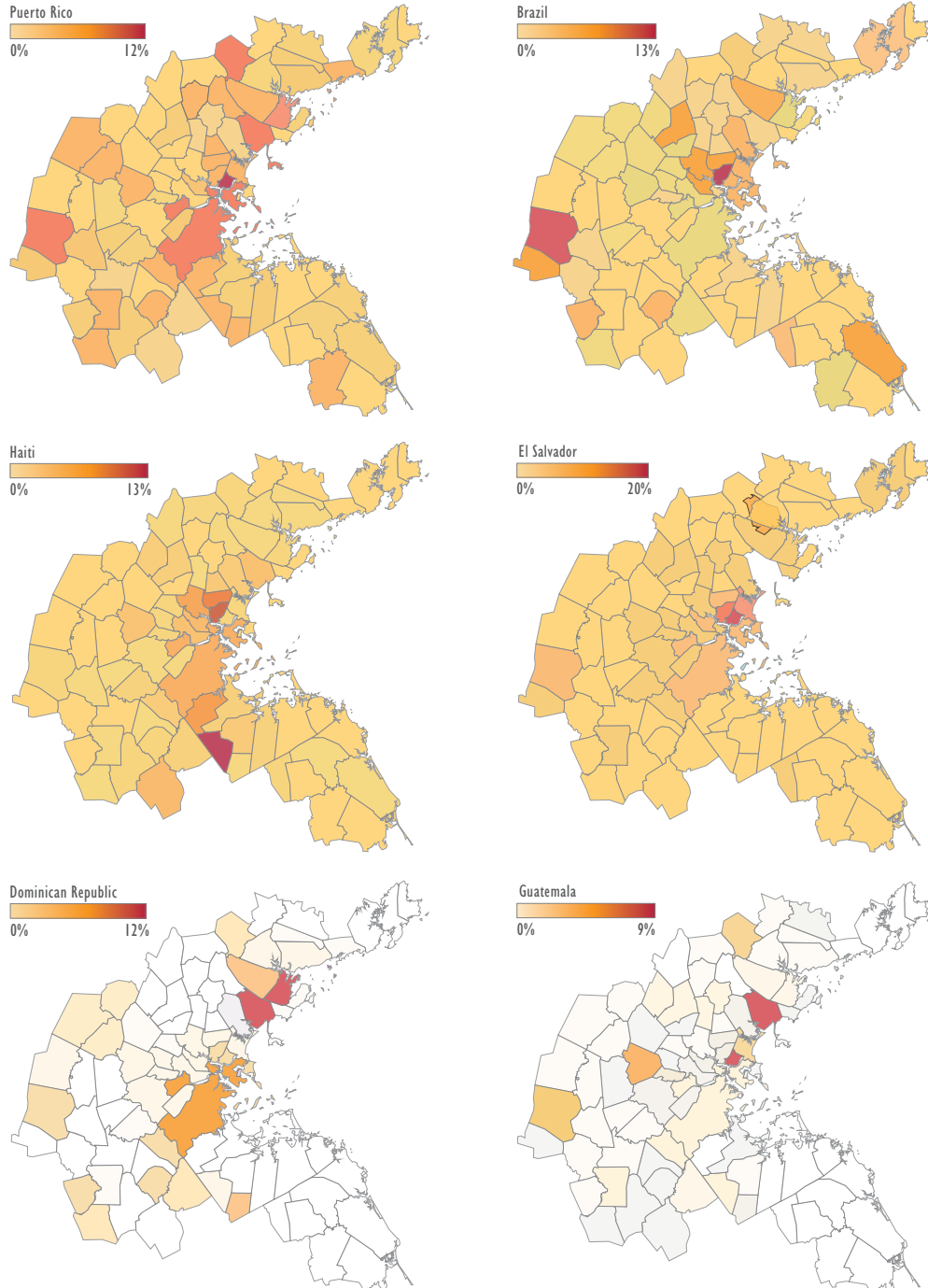
For other groups, the distribution is more varied. Most striking is the fact that nearly ten times as many Brazilians

live outside Boston as in (34,906 vs. 3,003). This makes them the second largest Latin American and Caribbean population in the Greater Boston region, with Framingham as their most sizeable community. Brazilians are also the largest foreign born population in the Greater Boston area, followed by Haitians.

MAP 5:

Top Six Latin American and Caribbean Populations in Greater Boston

Color shading denotes country of origin population share by municipality. Dark tones have larger population shares.



Source: 2013 estimate is from 2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, taken over 2011-2015.

ECONOMIC STATUS

TABLE 3:

Median Incomes for Boston's Top 10 Latin American and Caribbean Populations

Many of Boston's Latin American and Caribbean populations earned below the city's median income of \$57,210 in 2015. The two largest of these groups, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, have household incomes below the federal poverty line for families of four (\$24,257/year).

More Latin American and Caribbean workers are in the 'Accommodations and Food Services' sector (Accommodations) than any other occupation in 2016. The largest group working in Accommodations are Salvadorans. More of Boston's Puerto Ricans (2,051) work in Accommodations than in any other occupation, while Boston's Dominicans work principally in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector.

Places of Origin	Median Household Income, 2015
Jamaica	\$ 58,933
Trinidad and Tobago	\$ 53,496
El Salvador	\$ 52,662
Colombia	\$ 46,267
Mexico	\$ 45,403
Guatemala	\$ 44,950
Haiti	\$ 40,758
Honduras	\$ 38,575
Dominican Republic	\$ 22,333
Puerto Rico	\$ 19,491
Median income of the total population of the city of Boston	\$ 57,210

TABLE 4:

Boston's Top 5 Occupations by Places of Origin

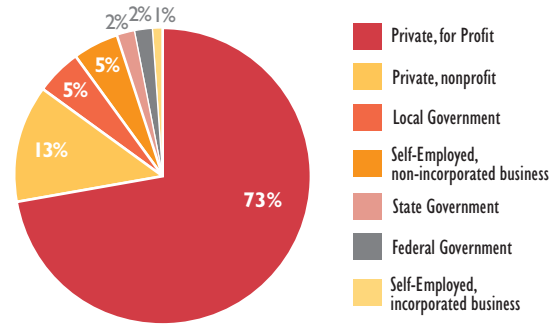
Occupation	Top 3 Places of Origin	Number of Individual Occupation Holders	Total Latin American and Caribbean Occupation Numbers
Accommodations and Food Services	Salvadoran	4,045	18,614
	Haitian	3,373	
	Dominican	2,943	
Health Care and Social Assistance	Haitian	5,299	15,925
	Dominican	3,265	
	Puerto Rican	1,904	
Retail, Trade	Haitian	1,628	7,029
	Puerto Rican	1,530	
	Dominican	1,340	
Administrative, Support and Waste Management Remediation Services	Salvadoran	2,110	6,948
	Dominican	2,064	
	Haitian	1,231	
Education Services	Dominican	1,589	5,760
	Puerto Rican	1,131	
	Haitian	818	

Most Latin American and Caribbean workers are employed in private, for-profit businesses, at 73 percent of total workers. Dominicans (11,921) and Haitians (10,645) lead these groups. Haitians make up nearly 30 percent of all Latin American and Caribbean nonprofit workers, and Latin American and Caribbean workers comprise 38 percent of local government workers.

As Boston's Latin American and Caribbean populations have increased, so have flights to the Caribbean and Central and South America. From 2002 to 2016, Boston's Logan airport has increased flights to and from the Caribbean by 44 percent, and to Central and South America by 834 percent.

FIGURE 2:

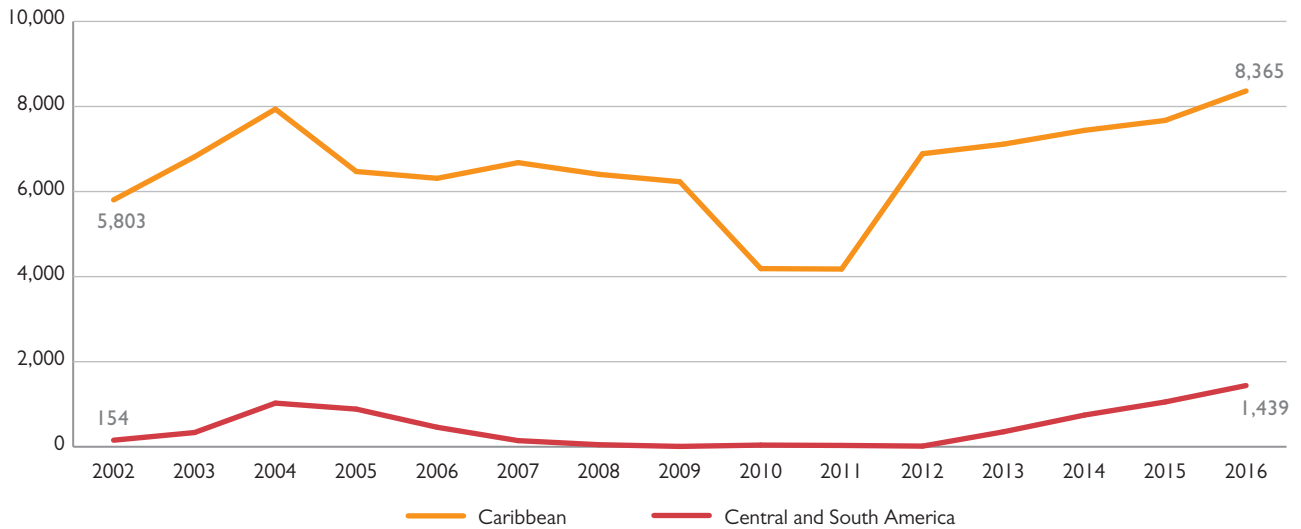
Latin American and Caribbean Worker Employment Types



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016, 1-Yr Sample, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Boston Indicators Analysis

FIGURE 3:

Latin American and Caribbean Yearly Flights to and from Boston



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016, 1-Yr Sample, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Boston Indicators Analysis

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

of the GREATER BOSTON AREA

Assets of Communities in Greater Boston

Eighteen interviews with individuals in the Boston area were also conducted during the research phase of this report. Interviewees shared their perspectives on the greatest assets that immigrants bring to the Boston area. A member of the Brazilian community said that the community works hard and is particularly entrepreneurial. Given that most Brazilians in Boston come from urban centers, they find economic opportunity quickly.⁵ Another interviewee said that Hondurans, Salvadorans, Colombians, and Dominicans are resilient and have a sense of hope, a desire to excel, and an inclination toward education.⁶ One person noted that the Haitian community's greatest asset is its people, who have an interest in leaving behind a legacy that makes the world better for others.⁷ Another said that the Puerto Rican community is resilient and very proud of its heritage. Puerto Ricans are also politically engaged in their own communities, as well as in national politics.⁸

Multiculturalism across communities is an asset that serves people well, allowing them to also operate professionally across cultures, says Juan Carlos Morales, Co-Founder of the Latino Legacy Fund at the Boston Foundation.⁹ Dr. Lorna Rivera from University of Massachusetts Boston highlighted the strengths associated with multilingualism, saying "All of the cognitive research is showing that if you speak multiple languages, you have deeper critical thinking capacity, [and it] literally changes your brain wiring."¹⁰ Dr. Rivera pointed out that research done with children—considered the "1.5" generation—shows that they are able to code switch, crossing not just languages but social relationships, in a way that better navigates the complexity of those relationships.¹¹ There are also a growing number of businesses led by immigrants, both "Mom and Pop bodegas," as well as larger companies.¹² Their entrepreneurial energy contributes to Greater Boston as a whole.

Challenges Faced by Communities in Greater Boston

While these communities make numerous contributions to Boston, their experiences in Greater Boston, particularly now, come with significant challenges. For U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico, the aftermath of Hurricane Maria has caused displacement and increased demand for assistance back home. It is also an extremely difficult time for immigrants. Throughout this research process, interviewees and news articles emphasized that it is "very well known that right now is a very dangerous time to be an immigrant,"¹³ and that differences in immigration status, especially between parents and children, is hard.¹⁴ The increased threats of deportation, and the changes to the DACA system mean that people have been afraid to send kids to school or to go to work.¹⁵ Today was described as a "really ugly"¹⁶ time, and interviewees emphasized that national politics have had a direct impact on the experiences of people in the Boston area, with one person saying that the greatest challenge is "the perception of continuously being thought of as 'less than' in politics or economics."¹⁷

Another critical challenge that immigrants face is educational inequity.¹⁸ Those who have not mastered English are particularly marginalized, and their access to high paying jobs is limited.¹⁹ The Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a ballot measure fifteen years ago that essentially eliminated bilingual education, and students in the Boston Public Schools (BPS) system, where 10%, or 90,000 students are classified as English Language Learners (ELL), have been highly impacted by.²⁰ The inability to learn in a language in which they are fluent limits ELL students' potential for success. This past November, Massachusetts passed a bill to remove the required waiver for schools who wish to provide education in another language, paving the way for increased access to bilingual education.²¹

There is also a continued need to prepare students for a future workforce, with opportunities in STEM

(Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. Initiatives like TBF's Success Boston and the Latino STEM Alliance are working on these critical issues.²²

Other challenges in immigrant communities include: persistent poverty remains;²³ a lack of engagement by young Latinos, among whom youth with citizenship have a low rate of voter participation;²⁴ and racism. Commenting on the Haitian experience in the Boston area, Nesly Metayer, CEO of Youth and Family Enrichment Services, said, "Being black in America, there's a sense that in American society, black is second citizen. Whereas our identity is an identity of owning

our country . . . we are not less than others. The issues we see of discrimination in American society are totally foreign to us."²⁵ There is also a need to give youth cultural activities and a chance to see themselves doing something differently in their career than their parents have. The lack of immigration documentation for many of these young people makes this a particular hurdle.²⁶ Finally, there is a need for cultural organizations to receive funding, to build connections with those who have wealth and influence, and to build capacity. There are many small, local organizations that have closed in recent years.²⁷

Massachusetts United for Puerto Rico/Massachusetts Unido por Puerto Rico

How the Latino Legacy Fund Facilitated a Swift Reaction to Hurricane Maria

On September 20, 2017, Category 4 Hurricane Maria hit the island of Puerto Rico. Some 3.4 million people were left without power in the immediate aftermath, and the flooding and winds caused damage to homes throughout the island. The electricity grid was almost destroyed, leaving many people without access to power for months to come.

At that time, Massachusetts was the state with the fifth largest population of Puerto Ricans, behind New York, Florida, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. There were approximately 317,142 Puerto Ricans living in Massachusetts, with about 30,506 of those people residing in Boston proper.

On September 29, the Boston Foundation, with honorary co-chairs Boston Mayor Marty Walsh and Governor Charlie Baker, announced "Massachusetts United for Puerto Rico /Massachusetts Unido por Puerto Rico," a fund housed at the Boston Foundation to support both immediate relief and medium-term reconstruction throughout 2018 in response to Hurricane Maria. The effort is co-hosted with the Latino Legacy Fund at the Boston Foundation and includes an advisory committee of 15 prominent individuals from the Boston area.

Established in 2013, the Latino Legacy Fund is the first Latino-focused fund in Greater Boston, and is a unique partnership of Latino philanthropists and leaders, the Boston Foundation and Hispanics in Philanthropy. Its mission is to create and maintain a permanent endowment to strengthen the diverse Latino community.

It was the existence of the Latino Legacy Fund and the close relationship between the Boston Foundation and the Fund's Advisory Committee members, all prominent Latino civic leaders, that made the speed and ease with which the special fund was created possible.

Fundraising efforts for Massachusetts United for Puerto Rico, raised almost a million dollars in the first week. Initial donors included people of Puerto Rican descent, as well as many others. The largest contributions came from individual donors, corporations, and foundations that had existing relationships with the Boston Foundation. However, Committee co-chair Aixa Beauchamp said smaller donors also "came out of the woodwork" to give, including some individuals who did not have a previous relationship with the Boston Foundation or the Latino Legacy Fund but who stepped up to respond to the tragedy. The organizers were pleased and touched with the response from the people of Massachusetts.

To date, the fund has raised close to \$4 million and approved more than \$1 million in grants to 40 organizations. Twenty-seven of those were grassroots organizations in Puerto Rico working on relief and reconstruction. The other 13 are organizations based in Massachusetts providing support to families who have relocated here after being displaced by the storm.

RELATIONSHIPS with HOME COUNTRIES

Connections

Transnational relationships among Boston area immigrants and Latin America and the Caribbean are varied – from maintaining cultural traditions and languages, to providing remittances to family members, to business investments. Interviewees for this paper particularly highlighted the importance of cultural connections. Perhaps counterintuitively, Alvaro Lima, Director of Research for the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA), cited studies his department has conducted that suggest, perhaps counterintuitively the greater transnational linkages immigrants have, the better they integrate into society here.²⁹

Food, music, and religion keep people connected to their countries of origin.³⁰ Aixa Beauchamp, Co-Founder of the Latino Legacy Fund at the Boston Foundation said that the immigrant community in Boston “is a transnational community.”³¹ However, these connections tend to be person-to-person rather than strong relationships with institutions in one’s home country.³² The Dominican community, particularly, is well connected, and families who can afford it and who have the documentation to permit it, travel back and forth, with some going to the Dominican Republic for the summer.³³ The Puerto Rican community also maintains strong connections to their home island, and individuals are not limited by documentation given their status as U.S. citizens. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, CEO of Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA), said that this is a good thing, that “it helps people maintain their sense of belonging, identity, and heritage.”³⁴ She also said that it can help economically, as people might be struggling to make ends meet in Boston, but they can go to Puerto Rico for certain things or vice versa.³⁵ Haitians in Boston, too, maintain strong ties. There is a lot of travel between Haiti and Boston, with some families making up to three or four trips a year.³⁶

Language keeps people connected to their countries of origin and also binds communities together in the Boston area. One interviewee said that “Boston is so unfriendly to non-English speakers,”³⁷ that communities

rely on one another. Communities such as Haitians who speak languages other than Spanish tend to be less connected to the broader immigrant community but maintain strong connections among themselves.

Remittances

Immigrants in the Boston area regularly provide financial support to their countries of origin. One interviewee said that it is “rare to see a Haitian family that does not have three to five [family or friends] they are supporting in Haiti.”³⁸

It is important to distinguish between remittances that are directed at poverty alleviation or investment (included below as philanthropy), and those that consist of individual transfers intended for “consumption,” the income replacement that is often critical to people’s day to day lives.³⁹ In many cases, remittances provide important contributions to local economies.⁴⁰ For example, in El Salvador, remittances are the largest contributor to the GDP.⁴¹ In Haiti, remittances are similarly almost one-third of the GDP.⁴² In Brazil, despite a relatively small representation in Boston of 3 million immigrants versus an overall population of 200 million people in Brazil, remittances remain significant and are in fact larger than the contributions of some exports to the country’s GDP.⁴³ Some remittances flow back to Boston; one interviewee noted that “it’s a two-way street. We tend to think of it just as sending money back home, but it’s also back and forth as well.”⁴⁴

Experts, initially led by Wellesley College Sociology Professor Peggy Levitt, have also written about social remittances. Social remittances “call attention to the fact that, in addition to money, migrants export ideas and behaviors back to their sending communities.”⁴⁵

Philanthropy

The dollar amount of philanthropic activities or Hometown Associations is relatively small compared to the direct remittances that individuals provide to other people.⁴⁶ A study by the Inter-American Dialogue, which focused on Central American migrants to the U.S., found that one in three said they would consider donating to

their home country, but only 43 percent of that third had done so within the past year. The Dialogue distinguished between “migrant philanthropists” who support institutions and charitable organizations, and those who send remittances directly to family or others. They concluded that “there may be opportunities to engage migrant philanthropists more frequently.”⁴⁷ While this survey did not focus on Boston, similar conclusions could be drawn based on the community here.

In many cases, the philanthropy that immigrants conduct is often through hometown associations, which this paper will explore further below.⁴⁸ In terms of individual philanthropy, interviewees emphasized that charitable giving by immigrant communities in

Boston tends to be more local to the Boston area – to the local United Way or to local churches, for example.⁴⁹ (Many people were pleasantly surprised, however, in the Greater Boston response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico – *see page 16 sidebar*.) Trust in institutions in immigrants’ home countries varies from community to community, as well as individually, but in general, interviewees for this paper emphasized that there is not great confidence in institutions back home, which may be a factor in individuals’ limiting their philanthropy. One person said that, in Haiti, there is a lack of trust both inside Haiti and from the diaspora, other than with churches where there is more confidence.⁵⁰ Another said that even when individuals do support charitable efforts

The Evolution of the Haiti Development Fund

How the Response to a Disaster Became a Permanent Initiative

Following the devastating earthquake in Haiti in 2010, the Boston Foundation and its donors responded within days by establishing The Haiti Fund, a five-year effort to support human rights and reconstruction efforts in Haiti. The Fund made 140 grants totaling \$2.2 million in Haiti and Greater Boston—home to the country’s third-largest Haitian community.

After five years, so many lessons had been learned about the power of working with locals in Haiti that a permanent organization, the Haiti Development Institute (HDI), was formed as a special initiative of the Boston Foundation to expand and deepen the work. Today, HDI has registered as a nonprofit with the Haitian government and cut the ribbon on its new headquarters in Arcahaie, a coastal city of around 198,550 people, 25 miles northwest of Port au Prince. HDI is staffed with eight employees in Haiti and three in Boston led by Haiti Fund director Pierre Noel.

Recently HDI received more than \$1.6 million from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to fuel its work. HDI’s focus is on delivering programs while it builds itself into an important and historic organization in Haiti.

HDI’s director Pierre Noel has followed the Boston Foundation’s model for community engagement: investing in nonprofits and helping to build their capacity; engaging in research and policy efforts while convening people for challenging conversations about the future; providing space and resources as a center of information; and serving as a philanthropic intermediary and advisor. In Noel’s own words: “We have seen the Boston Foundation’s methods working here in Boston and it has been an inspiration: research-based, community-driven, long-term investments in people solving problems.”

It is this capacity-building effort and the focus on local leadership that sets HDI apart from the many project-based nonprofits that have swept in and out of Haiti, especially following natural disasters. Funders say they’d like to work with locals but they fear the “capacity gap.” So they fund projects that are led and equipped by outsiders; when they are done they leave and that’s that. The funding skips the local economy.

The impact of HDI’s work is illustrated by in an organization called CLES (Collectif de Lutte contre l’Exclusion Sociale), which began as a small community group in northern Haiti. In 2011, the Haiti Fund gave a \$15,000 grant to help develop a community rice-grinding mill. The next year, the Fund gave a second grant to build a center where women merchants could stay when they came from afar to use the mill. The organization has grown from there and participated in HDI’s capacity-building program. It started with 19 employees and now has more than 100—and the trust of global funders—as it reinvigorates rice production in Northeast Haiti, providing a major market to area farmers.

Investing in these small community development organizations is beyond the capacity of large-scale funders. The very personal due diligence required in light of the missing legal/fiscal framework doesn’t match their scope of operations. But these funders can support HDI in good confidence, and thus HDI serves as an intermediary.

back home, they prefer the first point of contact in the country to be a family member – someone they trust to ensure the funds are properly used.⁵¹

There are, however, some efforts, through which individuals provide financial support to “help build schools, churches, and hospitals.”⁵² There are also some nonprofits, particularly several in Colombia, that have begun to cultivate philanthropic giving from their Boston-based diaspora, as well as efforts by local consulates to help build cross-country support for projects.⁵³ Metayer emphasized the importance of building these types of institutional connections, noting that the level of person-to-person remittances drops off when you get to the second generation of immigrants, while the need remains. He said the only way to sustain that financial support is “to build a structural connection to institutions. As Haitians, we have really been thinking about how we build this connection to Haiti.”⁵⁴

While this research paper primarily looks at migrant giving from the Boston area, this area of study overlaps with other research efforts, including a 2011 study by the Foundation Center and Hispanics in Philanthropy. That publication examined foundation giving to Latino and Hispanic populations across the U.S. They point out that the Greater Boston area was the metropolitan area that received the ninth highest amount of funding for Latinos from 2007 to 2009.⁵⁵ In those years, Boston received \$13,298,403 from a total of 249 grants.⁵⁶

Hometown Associations

The most common way that immigrants give back to their home countries philanthropically is through Hometown Associations, or HTAs, as they are known. In this report, we have separated this topic from individual philanthropy, given the different role these associations play in both cultural and financial connections, and the fact that there is more information available about associations than about individual giving. An HTA is defined as “an organization formed by migrants living in the same community and sharing a common nationality” through which financial and other resources are allocated to the home country.⁵⁷ In many cases, the resources are targeted specifically to one or a few communities, and come from migrants in other countries who originated from those communities. All HTAs don’t function in the same way. Their structure and operations, as well as their effectiveness, can vary as the result of the history of colonialism, the level of state interaction, and the relationship of diaspora to their hometown.⁵⁸

There has been significant academic research examining the effectiveness of HTAs as international

development actors. One article described them as being “influenced both by the experience of transnationalism and by a desire to connect with their home and host countries . . . belonging to HTAs has both symbolic links with the migrant’s identity, as well as a tangible impact on the community that surrounds them. HTAs represent channels through which migrants can make a difference in their country of origin and of settlement, and are means for them to engage in philanthropy.”⁵⁹

Maria Elena Letona of Neighbor to Neighbor described HTAs simply as people who “come together, form an association, do events throughout the year to raise money, and then decide to do something together there.”⁶⁰ The money is often used for tangible projects, like fixing a road or supporting a school.⁶¹ Interest in supporting the projects and high levels of engagement tend to align less with an individual’s interest in their country as a whole, especially for countries where immigrants have fled a predatory state government, and more with a very narrowly defined town or village that a person wants to support.⁶²

Case Study: HTAs Associated with the Dominican Republic

Massachusetts is home to approximately 146,038 people from the Dominican Republic, making it the fourth largest Dominican population in the U.S.⁶³ With a history of a “circular migratory pattern with a transnational identity,” migrants in the U.S. maintain strong connections to their cities and towns of origin.⁶⁴ Researchers Peggy Levitt and Deepak Lamba-Nieves have studied two communities that bridge Boston and the Dominican Republic villages of Boca Canasta and Villa Sombrero.⁶⁵ They found that in the early 1980s, Dominican community leaders in the U.S. started to create organized groups to provide support back home; they maintained close ties to individuals back in the Dominican Republic and in some cases structured groups in the U.S. based on the structure of organizations in the Dominican Republic.⁶⁶ The initial creation of HTA-type organizations stemmed from the rural to urban migration that took place during the repressive years of authoritarianism in the Dominican Republic. HTAs established in the U.S. were extensions of previously established associations that had been based mostly in the capital city of Santo Domingo and provided support to smaller villages through the Dominican Republic.⁶⁷ Levitt and Lamba-Nieves found that migrants who brought with them experience with community-based projects—and who had been taught to have a sense of responsibility toward their community—were likely to continue that engagement in their new community in the US.⁶⁸

One example of an HTA initiative that yielded results was when a Massachusetts branch sent a fire truck to its community in the Dominican Republic. That led to development of a community fire squad to serve as emergency responders and a committee to train volunteer firefighters. Eventually, the community in the Dominican Republic pressured local political leaders to take on some of the financial costs, and the local mayor agreed to cover some of the services, transforming the initiative into a public-private partnership. Residents reported being very pleased about the outcome.⁶⁹

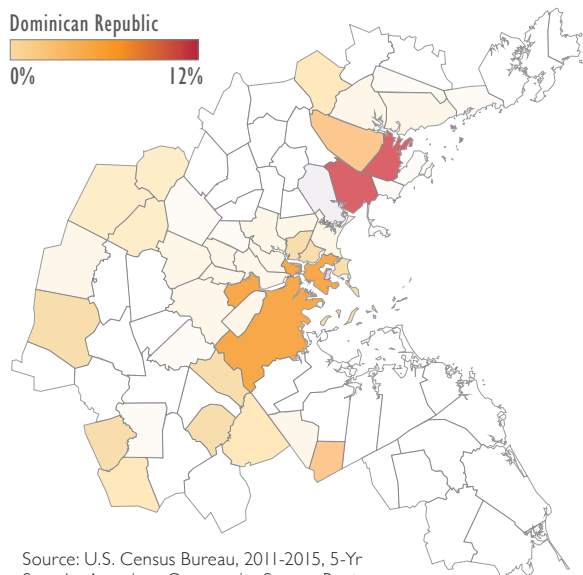
There have been cultural connections, too, including two weekly television shows produced by Boston migrants to showcase their activities to people back in the Dominican Republic. Producers also traveled to the Dominican Republic to transmit back to Boston the “sights and sounds of the hometown community.”⁷⁰ Levitt and Lamba-Nieves highlighted the importance of baseball fields, used both for sports and socialization in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, with residents holding a “kermesse, a day-long community festival organized to raise money for collective projects.”⁷¹

Levitt and Lamba-Nieves point out, though, that not all efforts have been successful. Remittances occasionally can “get translated into costly infrastructure projects that . . . non-migrants do not agree with.”⁷² Similarly, in their 2009 paper, Manuel Orozco and Eugenia Garcia Zanello delve deeper into the complexities of hometown associations and the levels of engagement with the community they support, saying that “many do not effectively work with local community stakeholders to understand local development priorities.”⁷³ Alix Cantave, Program Officer for Haiti at The Kellogg Foundation, reiterated this perspective, saying that the tendency of HTAs can be to start something new and to lead with their own ideas rather than building something based on a regional or local strategy.⁷⁴ They also struggle to provide consistent resources, so they frequently lack the ability to continue support for projects they have initiated.⁷⁵

Lamba-Nieves has continued this research, examining communities in Villa Sombrero, Boca Canasta, and Villa

MAP 6:

Distribution of Dominicans in Greater Boston



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015, 5-Yr Sample, American Community Survey, Boston Indicators Analysis

Fundación in the Dominican Republic together with their counterpart HTAs in Boston and New York City, in which “a significant proportion of households have at least one family residing in the United States.” A 2017 paper provides the example of The Movement for the Development of Boca Canasta (MODEBO), Boca Canasta’s HTA chapter in Boston. Turnover and periods of dormancy at the HTA mean that it lacks historical memory and, as a result, the impact has been up and down. For example, an effort to purchase an ambulance and ship it to Boca Canasta was met with challenges. “Migrant members had moved ahead without consulting their

hometown counterparts who were expected to swiftly get the project going. . . Several months after it began, it became clear that the service would be difficult to maintain due to cost and management issues.”⁷⁶

Lamba-Nieves contrasts these struggles with the example of the HTA associated with the village of Villa Fundación, which has implemented efforts to increase transparency and communication among all of its branches and facilitated shared decision-making between the two countries.⁷⁷

Alix Cantave supports more institutional engagement that leverages diaspora resources, so that the financial support can go toward something very strategic, which The Kellogg Foundation has tried to do.⁷⁸ He pointed out the need for more initiatives like the Haiti Development Institute (*see sidebar on page 18*) which focus on capacity building for local organizations in Haiti. Cantave said this can help strengthen transnational philanthropy, through strong organizations that have the capacity to accept funding from the diaspora and diaspora donors who then have trust the ways in which the money is spent.⁷⁹ Metayer offered a similar perspective, saying “the hometown associations, they do major investments. They are not unfortunately integrated into a plan.”⁸⁰ He pointed out that if the capacity of these organizations in Boston were improved, the organizations could be part of an effective, strategic development process for the long-term.⁸¹

CONCLUSION

This report reflects the demographics as well as the perspectives of the ways that immigrant communities from Latin America and the Caribbean stay connected to their communities of origin. A key part of that is understanding the role of philanthropy and Hometown Associations, which provide structured financial support for development in countries of origin, but also play a role in maintaining and strengthening connections. It is important to understand the connections communities have with countries of origin and how philanthropy can both play a role in supporting these transnational connections, as well as benefitting from them.

Promoting the value of transnational connections to Greater Boston begins with understanding what connections already exist. Now is a critical time to examine these connections and promote the inherent value they bring to all residents in the Greater Boston area. BBKA offers an exciting opportunity to do just that, and there are numerous next steps that could emerge from the work accomplished to date. As Boston and the communities surrounding it grow increasingly diverse and communities made up of immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, it will benefit all residents to understand the assets and contributions they bring to the area.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Towns and Cities Included in the Report

Arlington	Dedham	Lynnfield	Newton	Saugus	Wellesley
Ashland	Dover	Malden	Norfolk	Scituate	Wenham
Bedford	Duxbury	Manchester	North Reading	Sharon	Weston
Belmont	Everett	Marblehead	Norwell	Sherborn	Westwood
Beverly	Framingham	Marshfield	Norwood	Somerville	Weymouth
Braintree	Gloucester	Medfield	Peabody	Stoneham	Wilmington
Brookline	Hamilton	Medford	Pembroke	Sudbury	Winchester
Burlington	Hanover	Melrose	Quincy	Swampscott	Winthrop
Cambridge	Hingham	Middleton	Randolph	Topsfield	Woburn
Canton	Holbrook	Millis	Reading	Wakefield	
Chelsea	Hull	Milton	Revere	Walpole	
Cohasset	Lexington	Nahant	Rockland	Waltham	
Concord	Lincoln	Natick	Rockport	Watertown	
Danvers	Lynn	Needham	Salem	Wayland	

Appendix B

Phone Interviews Conducted

1. Zamawa Arenas, Founder & CEO, Flowetik; Member, Board of Directors, The Boston Foundation; September 25, 2017
2. Aixa Beauchamp, Managing Director, Beauchamp and Associates; Co-founder, Latino Legacy Fund; October 5, 2017
3. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, CEO, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción; Member, Board of Directors, The Boston Foundation; September 25, 2017
4. Alix Cantave, Program Officer, W.K. Kellogg Foundation; November 3, 2017
5. Jorge Capetillo-Ponce, Associate Professor of Sociology; College of Liberal Arts Acting Chair, Latino Studies Program, University of Massachusetts Boston; October 17, 2017
6. Jesús Gerena, CEO, Family Independence Initiative; September 25, 2017
7. Gracia Goya, Vice President of U.S. and Transnational Programs, Hispanics in Philanthropy; November 9, 2017
8. Deepak Lamba-Nieves, Research Director & Churchill G. Carey, Jr. Chair, Center for the New Economy; November 9, 2017
9. Maria Elena Letona, Executive Director, Neighbor to Neighbor; October 24, 2017
10. Peggy Levitt, Luella LaMer Slaner Professor in Latin American Studies; Professor of Sociology, Wellesley College; October 25, 2017
11. Alvaro Lima, Director of Research, Boston Planning & Development Agency; September 20, 2017
12. Nesley Metayer, Executive Director, Youth and Family Enrichment Services; September 21, 2017
13. Celina Miranda, Executive Director, Hyde Square Task Force; October 25, 2017
14. Sebastián Molano, Gender Advisor, Oxfam; November 1, 2017
15. Juan Carlos Morales, Managing Partner, Surfside Capital Advisors; Co-founder, Latino Legacy Fund; September 25, 2017
16. Frank Ramirez, CEO, East Boston Ecumenical Council; September 20, 2017
17. Lorna Rivera, Associate Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; College of Liberal Arts Associate Director of Gaston Institute for Latino Public Policy, University of Massachusetts Boston; September 19, 2017
18. Julia Yansura, Associate, Migration, Remittances & Development, The Dialogue; November 1, 2017

Interview Guide – Community Leaders

Background on Organization

1. Name, Title, and Organization of Interviewee:
2. What is the goal of your work?
3. Where do you work in Massachusetts (cities, neighborhoods of Boston)?
4. What are the primary race(s), ethnicity(ies), age(s), sex(es) of the population with whom you work?
5. Are the people you serve concentrated in one or more geographic areas, or are they more dispersed in various neighborhoods or cities?
6. Is your community primarily first generation immigrants to the US?
 - a) If no, how many generations or years have their families typically lived in the US?

Relationships and Links to Latin America and the Caribbean

7. We are seeking to understand historic family links, as well as current relationships, between people living in the Boston area and people living in Latin America and the Caribbean.
Do people in your community descend from one or more countries in Latin America or the Caribbean?
 - a) If so, which countries are most represented?
 - b) Are there specific cities or towns within those countries that are highly represented?
8. In what ways do you see connections or ties among diaspora communities with their communities/countries of origin? Why are these ties important? What benefits do you see from these interconnections?
 - a) Are you familiar with remittances flowing from your community to family members or friends in Latin American or the Caribbean?
 - b) How are these efforts organized? Do financial remittances generally go to other family members or friends, or are they given through charitable organizations based in other countries? Do you know of connections to beneficiary organization in the communities of origin?
9. Are there other non-profit organizations based here in MA that receive significant support from your community?
10. Do you have a formal or informal relationship with any organizations based in Latin America or the Caribbean?
11. Are there companies you are aware of here in Massachusetts that have offices or production facilities in Latin America or the Caribbean?
 - a) Which companies?
 - b) In which countries?

Community Institutions & Foundations

12. What are the greatest assets in your community? What are the greatest needs?
13. Are there cultural or ethnic based organizations or networks in your community?
14. Have you ever applied for or received funding from the Boston Foundation?
15. In your opinion, how can the Boston Foundation effectively engage Latino/a and Caribbean communities in Massachusetts?
16. What structures in Massachusetts (non-profits, universities, churches, government, private sector, etc.) effectively engage Latino/a and Caribbean communities, and how?
17. Are you in communication with any foundations (family foundations, community foundations, local philanthropists, etc.) in Latin America or the Caribbean? In the US?
18. Are there opportunities to strengthen organizations in the Boston area that have links between Massachusetts and communities in Latin America and the Caribbean? Beyond money, what type of support is needed to strengthen this sector?

Other

19. Who else do you recommend we interview?

Interview Guide – NGOs

Background on Organization

1. Name, Title, and Organization of Interviewee:
2. What is your organization's mission?
3. Where does your organization work in Massachusetts (cities, neighborhoods of Boston)?
4. What are the primary race(s), ethnicity(ies), age(s), sex(es) of your organization's target population?
5. Are the people you serve concentrated in one or more geographic areas, or are they more dispersed in various neighborhoods or cities? (This may depend on the mission of the organization.)
6. Are those served by your organization primarily first generation immigrants to the US?
 - a) If no, how many generations or years have their families typically lived in the US?

Relationships and Links to Latin America and the Caribbean

7. We are seeking to understand historic family links, as well as current relationships, between people living in the Boston area and people living in Latin America and the Caribbean. Do your organization's beneficiaries descend from one or more countries in Latin America or the Caribbean?
 - a) If so, which countries are most represented?
 - b) Are there specific cities or towns within those countries that are highly represented among the people you work with?
8. In what ways do you see connections or ties among diaspora communities with their communities/countries of origin? Why are these ties important? What benefits do you see from these interconnections?
 - a) Are you familiar with remittances flowing from the communities with whom you work to family members or friends in Latin American or the Caribbean?
 - b) How are these efforts organized? Do financial remittances generally go to other family members or friends, or are they given through charitable organizations based in other countries? Do you know of connections to beneficiary organization in the communities of origin?
9. Are there other non-profit organizations based here in MA that receive significant support from your organization or from your beneficiaries?
10. Does your organization have a formal or informal relationship with any organizations based in Latin America or the Caribbean?
11. Are there companies you are aware of here in Massachusetts that have offices or production facilities in Latin America or the Caribbean?
 - a) Which companies? b) In which countries?

Community Institutions & Foundations

12. What are the greatest assets in the communities in which you work? What are the greatest needs?
13. Are there cultural or ethnic based organizations or networks in the communities in which you work?
14. Have you ever applied for or received funding from the Boston Foundation?
15. In your opinion, how can the Boston Foundation effectively engage Latino/a and Caribbean communities in Massachusetts?
16. What structures in Massachusetts (non-profits, universities, churches, government, private sector, etc.) effectively engage Latino/a and Caribbean communities, and how?
17. Are you in communication with any foundations (family foundations, community foundations, local philanthropists, etc.) in Latin America or the Caribbean? In the US?
18. Are there opportunities to strengthen organizations in the Boston area that have links between Massachusetts and communities in Latin America and the Caribbean? Beyond money, what type of support is needed to strengthen this sector?

Other

19. Who else do you recommend we interview?

ENDNOTES

1. BPDA.
2. Interview with Morales.
3. Interview with Rivera.
4. <http://www.bostonindicators.org/reports/report-website-pages/latinos-in-greater-boston>
5. Interview with Lima.
6. Interview with Ramirez.
7. Interview with Metayer.
8. Interview with Calderón-Rosado.
9. Interview with Morales.
10. Interview with Rivera.
11. Interview with Rivera.
12. Interview with Arenas.
13. Interview with Letona.
14. Interview with Letona.
15. Interview with Rivera.
16. Interview with Rivera.
17. Interview with Gerena.
18. Interview with Rivera.
19. Interview with Arenas.
20. Vaznis, James.
21. Vaznis, James.
22. Interview with Arenas.
23. Interview with Calderon-Rosado.
24. Interview with Rivera.
25. Interview with Metayer.
26. Interview with Lima.
27. Interview with Metayer.
28. The Inter-American Dialogue.
29. Interview with Lima.
30. Interview with Morales.
31. Interview with Beauchamp.
32. Interview with Beauchamp.
33. Interview with Miranda.
34. Interview with Calderon-Rosado.
35. Interview with Calderon-Rosado.
36. Interview with Metayer.
37. Interview with Morales.
38. Interview with Metayer.
39. Interview with Lima.
40. Interview Rivera.
41. Interview with Lima.
42. Interview with Cantave.
43. Interview with Lima.
44. Interview with Rivera.
45. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves.
46. Interview with Cantave.
47. The Inter-American Dialogue.
48. Orozco and Garcia-Zanello.
49. Interview with Morales.
50. Interview with Metayer.
51. Interview with Yansura.
52. Interview with Beauchamp.
53. Interview with Beauchamp.
54. Interview with Metayer.
55. Shah, Mukai, and McAllister.
56. Shah, Mukai, and McAllister.
57. Orozco and Garcia-Zanello.
58. Interview with Lamba-Nieves.
59. Orozco and Garcia-Zanello.
60. Interview with Letona.
61. Interview with Letona.
62. Interview with Yansura.
63. BPDA.
64. BPDA.
65. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves.
66. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves.
67. Lamba-Nieves.
68. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves.
69. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves.
70. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves.
71. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves.
72. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves.
73. Orozco and Garcia-Zanello.
74. Interview with Cantave.
75. Interview with Cantave.
76. Lamba-Nieves.
77. Lamba-Nieves.
78. Interview with Cantave.
79. Interview with Cantave.
80. Interview with Metayer.
81. Interview with Metayer.

