

CSIO Program Highlights from 2016

Grassroots Leadership Institute and Grassroots Leadership Network

CSIO held two daylong workshops for 45 Latino activists from over 20 grassroots groups and unions in 2016. One workshop, co-facilitated by Penn Loh, introduced the solidarity economy framework, a set of practices promoting democratic, just, and sustainable development. In the second, Equipo Maíz from El Salvador shared tools that helped activists connect popular education to their work in community organizing. We also provided a board of directors training for Mass Communities Action Network and developed a 5-session grassroots leadership institute that we will launch in January 2017 for residents of Somerville via partner group SomerViva.



SEIU 32BJ members told me they came away refreshed from these trainings, ready to fight, and ready to teach their coworkers in their worksites and communities.

- Victor Yang, SEIU 32 BJ Organizer



Immigrant Executive Director Network

In 2016 8 Latina, African and Asian immigrant Executive Directors from grassroots and social justice organizations formed CSIO's new Immigrant E.D. network. The cohort met quarterly to share best practices around building sustainable, grassroots-led organizations. Trainings addressed grassroots leadership in organizations, understanding movement cycles, & annual appeals. Directors cherished the space for mutual support & strategizing.



Having a group of ED's of color share ideas and support other each was something I was craving for a long time. As a Latina and as a woman, I have felt isolated in many of the spaces where traditional non-profit leaders are invited to. - Myriam Ortiz, The City School

The network encourages me when I hit hard times... I know other EDs bear the same difficulties and responsibilities that I do. - Thuan Tran, Vietnamese-American Civic Assn

On-site support

Agencia ALPHA, a Latinx-led community group supporting over 4,000 immigrants annually, has long been sending its staff, leaders and Director to CSIO leadership activities. In 2016, CSIO provided ALPHA on-site support to help ALPHA move from a service to organizing orientation. ALPHA set up systems that move people seeking services to community leadership.

CSIO has helped me see that the answer is to open space and ask people – what are your fears, what is working, what more do you need? To treat people as your advisors, constantly. What were social coffee hours are now organizing hours.

- Damaris Lopez, ALPHA Organizer

Immigrant teen leadership and solidarity

With ACEDONE - an East African grassroots organization - and the BPS dual language bi-lingual high school, Margarita Muñiz Academy, CSIO coordinated a leadership and solidarity program for immigrant teens. In the summer, our cohort brought 45 Latino and African youth together to uncover the root causes of migration, and to learn and practice participatory facilitation. We also held neighborhood exchanges between East Boston and Roxbury. In the fall, we launched a youth leadership & organizing project with a team of 14 high school students to improve English Language Learner outcomes for Somali students in the BPS, and to fight xenophobia and Islamophobia.



2016 summer and current Youth Leadership Teams

Network of Immigrant and African American Solidarity (NIAAS)

NIAAS African American and immigrant leaders facilitated various racial justice dialogues among communities of color. Using images from the “*Shut It Down*” exhibit at the Harriet Tubman House, NIAAS led a dialogue on the intersection of racial justice and immigrant rights with the Black Lives Matter movement. As keynote speaker for Boston College’s *Black in Boston: Black ... and Immigrant* Conference, NIAAS involved 120 participants in the Theater of the Oppressed methodology with the theme of developing transformational relationships. And in the wake of the November election, NIAAS held a *Circle of Healing and Unity* that brought people of color together to foster collective resistance.



NIAAS facilitates grantee gathering

CSIO’s infrastructure and field building

CSIO launched a documentation project to articulate the impact of our training and networking activities on participants, organizations and immigrant communities. Led by Co-founder Ann Philbin, the research project explores whether CSIO’s cross community convenings for training and support have fostered collaborations that lead to social change, and whether they help build the infrastructure to sustain movements for the long haul. The research, covering CSIO’s 16-year history, will be completed in the spring 2017.

CSIO’s activities over the years have given me the tools to be a leader. They made me self-confident, helped me learn how to see problems in the community, and work across differences.

- Yamilet Torres, President of Mildred C. Hailey (formerly Bromley Heath) Tenant Task Force