

**Hometown Association as Catalysts for the Development of community Foundations:  
*The Zacatecan Case***

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**Abstract:**

Alejandra Cervantes's study focuses on Zacatecan Hometown Associations (HTAs)—grassroots philanthropic organizations formed by Mexican immigrants in the United States and built on traditional immigrant networks. Reflecting their transnational reality, HTAs seek both to preserve the traditional culture of Zacatecan immigrants living in the U.S. and, through donations, to improve life back in their communities of origin.

Ms. Cervantes contends that through their federations, HTAs are a strong vehicle for promoting the development of a community foundation in the state of Zacatecas. By mobilizing their two main assets—financial resources and social capital—Zacatecan HTAs have a strong capacity to grow, innovate, and channel donations to development in their home state. Given its transnational character such an enterprise can benefit from a strategy centered on collaboration, and there are numerous institutions in the nonprofit and governmental sectors alike that could partner in such an initiative. Examples include such intermediary organizations as Caja Popular Mexicana; cross-border grantmakers like El Paso Community Foundation and the Pan-American Development Foundation; membership organizations such as The Hispanic Federation; and transnational projects (e.g. the Chicago-Mexico Leadership Initiative and the US-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership). Ms. Cervantes maintains that the cohesive nature of HTA federations argues strongly in favor of their serving as key actors in the establishment of a Zacatecan community foundation with strong cross-border ties that will facilitate effective local economic development.

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