



Program Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean

Description

About W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal innovator and entrepreneur Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

Over the years, the Kellogg Foundation's programming has continued to evolve, striving to remain innovative and responsive to the ever-changing needs of society. Today, the organization ranks among the world's largest private foundations, awarding grants in the United States, Mexico, and Haiti.

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in Latin America and the Caribbean

Since 2010, WKKF has focused its resources in four international priority places: the Highlands of Chiapas and the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, and the Central Plateau and the Southwest Corridor in Haiti. With a deep cultural sensitivity and authentic community engagement approach, the foundation has invested in the community-visioning process within each priority place, to articulate each community's assessment of conditions and a plan to address their collective challenges. The foundation is evaluating and culling our learnings to document, codify and share our knowledge of this community engagement approach for international programming.

Through this process, and through convening and relationship building with community leaders, the foundation has learned that micro-regions have prioritized the need for: (a) Greater access to maternal and child health and nutrition (b) Improved access to quality K- 6 elementary education systems (c) More income generation opportunities.

In Chiapas and the Yucatán Peninsula, health, food and education are the main expenses for families within these regions, and their lack of resources places them under the World Bank definition of extreme poverty. Here, the primary source of income is small-scale farming. Families generally have limited income resources, mainly from coffee (in Chiapas) and honey (in Yucatán) production.

In Mexico and Haiti there are few employers in the micro-regions. The economic system is grounded in individuals and families – who have limited opportunities to generate income, which are more related to farming or productive alternatives, rather than with stable and paid jobs. Economic development takes place in both the informal and formal economies, so building family economic security means strengthening the social economy through building economic alternatives for communities to access markets through financial inclusion, cooperatives and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Purpose of the Role

The Program Officer will be responsible for the Family Economic Security portfolio, focused on the Highlands of Chiapas and the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, as well as contributing to the work of the broader Latin American team portfolios in education and health. In this role, they will be responsible for grantmaking, upholding grantee partnerships, and leveraging the foundation's role in supporting equitable economies, labor markets and workforce systems. Specifically, the Program Officer will contribute to the following Program Strategy:

Income Generation Opportunities for Families: Support the creation of pathways that increase income through market and employment opportunities, improved agricultural production and agricultural product development, investing in promising value chains and the development of diverse, sustainable microenterprises.

1. Strengthen local economic, financial and other institutions to better support and increase income generating opportunities for families (enterprises, co-operatives, incubators, accelerators, credit unions, etc.) in ways that are culturally relevant and appropriate for local contexts.
2. Support community-driven business training and technical assistance, financial education and other activities that foster agriculture production and transformation, economic inclusion and spur sustainable rural economic activity for local communities.
3. Develop alternative value chains, beyond agriculture itself, that support local and sustainable income generation.
4. Foster inclusive economic development and equitable job creation in the target regions.

5. Respond to rapid technological and climate change that is impacting the ability of communities and families to access opportunities and generate income.
6. Build community and institutional capacity to work in alliance and in coalition for income generation opportunities, and address and change policies, regulations and systems.

Duties and Responsibilities

Specifically, a program officer has the following responsibilities:

- Provide leadership and oversight for on-the-ground execution of program efforts.
- Screen and recommend grants for funding, prepare funding documents, conduct site visits and manage and monitor the grant portfolio.
- Maintain strong, authentic relationships with grant seekers and grantees, ensuring understanding of WKKF program direction, goals and expectations.
- Provide high-level technical assistance to grantees, including consultation on model development, partnership negotiations, leadership and organizational capacity building, coaching, etc.
- Develop and maintain strategic relationships to leverage participation of other foundations, businesses, communities, governmental agencies, and other key decision makers in alignment with WKKF core values and program interests.
- Articulate explicit change strategies and convene key stakeholders and intermediaries as appropriate.
- Contribute to the overall strategic direction for the organization and assigned core programming area, and provide input into the development of programming and policy efforts.
- Work with key internal and external partners, identify and recommend grantmaking opportunities that leverage WKKF investments for maximum impact in creating systemic and policy change.
- Incorporate assessment components into program and policy efforts to measure progress and impact.

Skills and Experience

Capabilities

- Strong relationship building and communication skills with the ability to have authentic dialogue around sensitive issues; highly developed emotional intelligence and active listening skills, and the ability to use interpersonal and political skills in collaborative, diplomatic ways.
- Comfort with and ability to work effectively within communities, including appreciating historical contexts, discerning nuances of relationships and power dynamics, understanding racial/ethnic realities, and respecting community needs and desires.
- Deep understanding of the systemic barriers that working families face in both the formal and informal economy, the structural and historic challenges of generating income and building wealth, as well as innovative and promising opportunities to remake the economy so that it includes and benefits all families.
- Excellence in their grasp of the systemic factors and market trends that impact economic mobility, workforce development, and job access; the public, private, and nonprofit sectors who are critical to that work; and the flow of public resources toward that end.
- An understanding of the importance of both high-level policy advocacy and community-level organizing in policy and system change efforts.
- High tolerance for ambiguity and ability to adapt quickly to change.
- Demonstrated commitment to mindfulness, resilience and ongoing personal development.
- Ability to represent WKKF to a variety of stakeholders and intermediaries in a credible and influential way, with a selfless manner focusing on values and the greater good.
- An understanding of how to realize and drive toward social change, not only as a partner with grantee organizations, but also as a leader in philanthropy.

Requirements

- Strong political and socio-economical understanding of Mexico, with an understanding of working in the rural and indigenous context in Chiapas and the Yucatan Peninsula.
- Significant relevant work experience with strong networks and contacts with deep and comprehensive understanding of program design and development, systems, policy, networking and community change.
- Programmatic and policy experience addressing conditions that leave marginalized populations behind (such as access to credit, markets, microfinance, and/or property ownership), as well as economic development, job creation, labor conditions and worker rights.
- Strategic communicator and partnership-builder who has achieved notable success in the field.
- Experience in the formation or management of effective strategic and operational partnerships with other organizations.
- Understanding of and experience navigating political systems and processes.
- Experience working with issues and communities relevant to the programmatic priorities of the foundation.
- Successful experience working as part of a multidisciplinary and multinational team and working effectively with persons from diverse cultural, social, racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Displays respect and cultural competence, willingness to engage in ongoing learning about systemic oppression and its impact on self and communities.
- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field is required and an advanced degree is preferred.
- Fluency in Spanish and English are required.
- Basic knowledge in at least one indigenous Mexican language of Maya, Tzeltal and/or Tsotsil is preferred. Fluency in Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and/or French is an advantage.

Meta Fields