



**PROGRAM OFFICER – LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
MEXICO – EDUCATION
Location: Mexico City, Mexico**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), a leading philanthropic institution helping communities create the conditions children need to thrive, is seeking nominations and applications for the position of **Program Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean Programs**, focused on Education for its programs in Mexico. The Latin America and the Caribbean Programs are comprised of foundation efforts in Mexico and Haiti, and the Program Officer will be based in WKKF's office in Mexico City, Mexico. In recent years, the foundation has sharpened its focus on improving conditions for vulnerable children, concentrating on three key factors of success and their intersections: education and learning; food, health, and well-being; and family economic security. The foundation has made a generational commitment to grantmaking in the region that advances the vision of a future in which every child thrives. The Haiti and Mexico teams partner closely with community stakeholders and policy makers to create a network of organizations working together to advance economic stability, racial and ethnic equity, and community and civic engagement, while increasing access to quality education, healthy food, and medical care for children and families in need.

Serving under Rui Mesquita Cordeiro, Director for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Programs, and alongside a team of three Program Officers, including Alejandra Garduño and Veronica Fernandes de Castro, the new Program Officer will provide expanded leadership to key program efforts that nurture opportunities for positive, systemic change in education in the Highlands of Chiapas and the inner areas of the Yucatán Peninsula. The new Program Officer will have the unique opportunity to expand the foundation's work in the region to address both immediate and long term challenges by: fostering efforts to improve the quality and infrastructure for local schools for children in indigenous communities; increasing public awareness of student needs in indigenous communities and building partnerships for long term impact; creating effective intercultural learning environments for both children and educators; and cultivating a wide breadth and depth of knowledge about trends, practices, and issues relevant to education in Mexico, and in turn sharing those learnings across the foundation. The new Program Officer for LAC Programs will join a group of dynamic, passionate, and committed individuals based in Mexico City, Massachusetts (the US base for Haiti team members), and Battle Creek, Michigan dedicated to improving conditions for vulnerable children and families and the communities where they live.

The successful candidate will have a deep and sophisticated understanding of the socioeconomic and cultural disparities within Mexico as they relate to access to quality education. The new Program Officer will bring demonstrated organizing experience including the skill to facilitate authentic, productive dialogue within diverse communities and settings. S/he will have the cultural fluency to curate a portfolio reflective of a community's needs and responsive to the wisdom of local mores and leadership. The new Program Officer will possess a strong team orientation, a high tolerance for ambiguity, and the ability to adapt quickly to change. Expertise in the current systems and structures supporting and impacting education in indigenous



communities in Mexico, as well as a deep and comprehensive understanding of program design and development, systems, and community change is preferred. Fluency in Spanish and English is required, and fluency in any of the Maya, Tzotzil, and Tzeltal indigenous languages is a plus. A Master's degree in education, social sciences, development studies, community development or a field relevant to the portfolio is preferred. This position is based in Mexico City with extensive travel expected.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is being assisted by Carolyn Ho and Courtney Thomas of [NPAG](#). Please see application instructions at the end of this document.

HISTORY AND MISSION

In 1930, breakfast cereal pioneer Will Keith Kellogg donated \$66 million in Kellogg Company stock and other investments “to help people help themselves,” launching the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The foundation began its work in Michigan, but by the 1940s had expanded its work internationally and was breaking ground in areas such as rural children's health, “mainstreaming” children with disabilities, and the development of the healthcare profession. By its 50th anniversary, the foundation was among the world's largest private philanthropic organizations. Its mission reflects the foundation's core priorities of thriving children, working families, and equitable communities, and the dynamic connection between the three.

“The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families, and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.”

To advance this mission, W.K. Kellogg Foundation created a framework supported by an innovative matrixed organizational design to prioritize investment decisions and maximize effectiveness toward achieving the desired ends and improvements for children and their families. This new framework supports disciplined choices toward targeted outcomes and stronger alignment across programs. It is a focused and networked approach to strategic programming that relies on close cross-foundation collaboration and agile teams to leverage human capital and knowledge resources to positively impact vulnerable children, families, and communities. Across bodies of work, the foundation implements an array of change-making tools – grantmaking, impact investing, contracting, networking and convenings – to ensure progress. A commitment to racial equity, community engagement, and leadership development are woven into each endeavor as essential to the creation of a social context in which all children can thrive, particularly the most vulnerable.

EDUCATION IN MEXICO

WKKF began building partnerships in Mexico more than 60 years ago to improve the well-being of the most vulnerable rural and indigenous communities. The core belief for WKKF's work in Mexico is that active and inclusive participation is essential to creating conditions where children and families can thrive. Today, the foundation's efforts are concentrated in two regions of the country where poverty is particularly high: the Highlands of Chiapas and the inner areas of the Yucatán Peninsula. WKKF works closely with the Mayan, Tzotzil, and Tzeltal indigenous communities on comprehensive investments in education, health, and family economic security. In keeping with the core belief of active and inclusive engagement, the foundation partners with leaders and members of indigenous communities in creating visioning plans to guide these efforts.



In Mexico, public education is mandatory from preschool to high school. Single classroom and multi-age preschool instruction is standard in rural communities. Elementary public education follows three different models:

- Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo (CONAFE): CONAFE is an organization under Mexico's federal government. CONAFE is a multi-grade system and is the most common form of schooling.
- Indigenous education (usually in larger communities): While students benefit from one teacher per grade, teachers often speak a different language than their students.
- Federal or state education: With the advantage of one teacher per grade and some teachers who speak the local indigenous language, these schools and teachers still lack training and depth in intercultural skills.

Student attendance and access to quality schools tends to diminish with distance from metropolitan urban settings such as in the communities WKKF works with in Chiapas and the Yucatán. While the average years of schooling in Mexico is 7.2, the average is 5.5 in the Yucatán Peninsula, and 4.2 in the Highlands of Chiapas. Relatedly, access to culturally competent and capable instruction in indigenous communities varies significantly.

The educational system in Mexico is generally resistant to external collaboration, but there is recognition of intercultural gaps within programs and eagerness to address and resolve these gaps through collaborative models and curriculums. WKKF knows that strengthening this dialogue and collaboration with the educational system and other funders, NGOs, and civil society organizations is imperative to improving educational access and experience for children in indigenous communities.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE PROGRAM OFFICER

The new Program Officer for Education will join an extraordinary global team of individuals who are passionate about eradicating social disparities and improving well-being for all children and families. S/he will be a key member of the growing and closely connected cross-disciplinary Latin America and the Caribbean team executing the foundation's place-based work in Haiti and Mexico. The new Program Officer will engage in the following challenges and opportunities:

Provide leadership and oversight for on-the-ground execution of programs that foster efforts to improve the quality and infrastructure of local schools for children in Chiapas and the Yucatán. The new Program Officer will determine where gaps exist in federal, state, and local systems in meeting the needs of students in indigenous communities, such as infrastructure for sanitary services and support for technology. S/he will work closely with members of local communities in identifying grassroots initiatives that are aligned with the foundation and deepen its work in improving access to quality education in Mexico.

Partner with and support prospective and existing grantees in developing funding strategies, requests, and plans with a focus on systemic and sustainable change. The new Program Officer will provide high-level technical assistance to grantees, including conducting site visits and consulting on model development, partnership negotiations, leadership capacity building, and coaching that supports effective intercultural learning environments for children and educators in the foundation's target regions. S/he will identify and recommend grantmaking opportunities that leverage WKKF investments for maximum impact in creating systemic change through partnership and policy development and will maintain strong, authentic relationships with grant seekers and grantees, cultivating mutual understanding of the community's aspirations and WKKF program direction, goals, and expectations.



Increase public awareness of student needs in indigenous communities and build partnerships for long term impact. The new Program Officer will be a close partner who embodies and builds trust with the indigenous communities with whom the foundation works. S/he will champion strong communication and collaborative decision-making within these communities that raises up solutions from the ground. S/he will support and facilitate grantees' efforts to advance policy change that supports the community's educational goals with local and federal leaders and policy influencers in Mexico. S/he will build partnerships with key stakeholders, influencers, and organizations to provide further support for on-the-ground solutions for educational access and equity.

Develop and manage learning and evaluation for the portfolio and cultivate a wide breadth and depth of knowledge about trends, practices, and issues relevant to education in Mexico. The Program Officer will work closely with WKKF's Learning and Impact team to incorporate assessment components into program efforts to measure progress and impact of education initiatives in Mexico. S/he will document and circulate lessons learned from grant investments, collaborative networks, and other foundation-related activities.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

While no one person will embody all of the qualities enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- Expertise in current systems and structures supporting and impacting education in indigenous communities in Mexico; eight years of relevant work experience and deep familiarity with regional context in Chiapas and the Yucatán with strong on the ground networks; fluency in Spanish and English is required, and fluency in Maya, Tzotzil, and Tzeltal indigenous languages is a plus. A Master's degree in education, social sciences, development studies, community development or a field relevant to the portfolio is preferred;
- Proven commitment to fostering and elevating on the ground solutions that lead to sustainable and impactful program initiatives; a deep and comprehensive understanding of program design and development, systems, networking, and community change is preferred;
- Demonstrated flexible, multidisciplinary thinking required to address the systemic impediments to improving access to quality education for indigenous communities in Mexico and the drive to shape and inform the work based on the immediate issues and opportunities found in communities; holistic and multi-dimensional approach to leadership development, organizational change, and community transformation;
- Sophisticated understanding of educational disparities in Mexico and related policy landscapes; ability to navigate successfully various local, regional, and federal forces at play and avenues for increasing equity particularly among indigenous communities in Mexico;
- Expertise in understanding philanthropy's role in policy development to sustain program success and current trends, movements, and best practices in developing policy to advance and magnify philanthropic investment and capitalize on emerging opportunities;
- Knowledge and sensitivity to effectively work with and support vulnerable communities including appreciation for historical context, discernment of relationship nuances and power dynamics, and understanding of social, racial, and ethnic realities;



- Demonstrated ability to develop and implement programs that have impact; ability to think globally while working locally, representing WKKF to a variety of stakeholders and intermediaries in a credible and influential way and with a selfless manner focusing on the greater good;
- Successful experience working as part of a multidisciplinary team and working effectively with persons from diverse cultural, social, and ethnic backgrounds; willingness to set aside a personal agenda in favor of organizational and/or community goals and objectives;
- Strong relationship building and communication skills; the ability to have authentic dialogue around sensitive issues including funding priorities, WKKF expectations, and community concerns; highly developed emotional intelligence and active listening skills, and the ability to use interpersonal and political skills in collaborative, diplomatic ways; excellent writing, editing, analytical, and oral communication skills including the ability to collect, review, synthesize, and present information and findings;
- Ability to work effectively in a dispersed, international team, multitasking and meeting deadlines within designated timeframes; demonstrated resourcefulness in setting priorities; strong organizational skills and exceptional attention to detail with the ability to work independently, take initiative, and contribute ideas for enhancing performance; an optimistic outlook and the humor, integrity, and patience necessary to work within a transformative environment; and
- Ability to travel approximately 50 percent of the time is required: regular travel to Chiapas and the Yucatán, attendance on-site at the Battle Creek headquarters to facilitate interaction and synthesis of the grantmaking programs is required.

TO APPLY

The search is being led by Carolyn Ho and Courtney Thomas of NPAG. Due to the pace of this search, candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), and where you learned of the position should be sent to: WKKF-POMEX@nonprofitprofessionals.com. Please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your e-mail.

*The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and proudly values diversity.
Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.*