



October 9, 2019

Dear Partner,

We hope you are doing well. This letter is to formally introduce Roots4Change Coop (R4C), or Cooperativa Raíces para El Cambio. Even though we have been working for almost one year, we have not properly announced our presence in the community to key partners, due in part for our multiple on-the ground activities that have not allows to have a lot of free-time to do public relations. However, we understand the importance of creating a clear statement of who we are, what we do, and where we are heading, in order to increase our visibility in the different stratum of our community (ies).

Context is everything, so we will start with providing a little bit of our “birth story” which includes people and organizations supporting our work from the beginning, then we will introduce our mission and vision and services, and lastly we will provide you with the best ways to reach out to us. OK-let’s start.

Our story starts at Centro Hispano of Dane County (Centro) and a community yearning for something beyond social services. In 2012, Centro’s leadership, staff, and community members identified the need to invest in the creation of a program emphasizing leadership development, community activism, and enrichment activities. In 2014, Centro, in partnership with the community, created a community-focused *Programa Bienestar* (Wellness Program), with the goal of developing health and wellness educational opportunities proactively fueled by input from the community to reduce observed health disparities among the Latino population. Programming was divided into two components: 1) [Food Security and Culture](#), and 2) Training of community health workers (CHWs), which served as a framework of increasing community capacity from the ground up and with the goal of developing community educators capable of igniting change one family at the time. Six women from the community and designated staff at Centro started to conceptualize this vision, and together they underwent a transformative and active journey of personal, collective, and professional growth.

The training of CHWs took almost one-year and half and the support of UW-Partnership Program, UnitedWay of Dane County, City of Madison (CBO grant), UW-Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic, Public Health Madison and Dane County, Latino Health Council, AmeriCorps VISTA, Center for Children and Family Well-being at the School of Human Ecology, formerly named UW-Health, now UW-Health, Unity Point Health-Meriter & Quartz, Madison Cooperative Development Council, and numerous health care providers who donated their time and expertise, Centro was able to provide the organizational, educational, and funding to support this program. From the beginning Centro set forth the ground work to **DO** community organizing from the ground-up, knowing that the “return in investment” was not going to be guided by a capitalistic view, but rather, by a human development framework based on community education and systemic change from within.

As expected with every birth, comes development. ***In November 2018, the promotoras/doulas created Roots4Change Marketing Cooperative (R4C Coop)***, in order to increase their financial sustainability and embark in a social entrepreneurship model. To this end, the R4C aims to provide community-based wellness services consistent with their mission of grassroots social justice, health equity, and community engagement work, with the goal of breaking down disparities by race/ethnicity, immigration or residency status, gender identity, class, and other categories. To see an example of the work of the promotoras, see [this video](#) on a post-partum program led by the promotoras in partnership with Centro and funded by Wisconsin Partnership Program. *Please see attached flyer with more information about each member and our services.*

After the formation of R4C, its programmatic goals and means to achieve them bifurcated from those of Centro. Now, *R4C and Centro Hispano of Dane County (Centro) are two different entities* working on serving the ethnically rich Latinx and Indigenous communities in Dane County. Their relationship is based on shared values of community development and well-being, with R4C focusing on maternal and child health and social entrepreneurship as a model of liberation. However, it is important to clarify that Centro serves as a fiscal agent for R4C for specific type of funding opportunities, but does not have the power of ONE vote when it comes to R4C’s governance and business-related decisions.

R4C is a for-profit entity, working at providing a social good to its community (ies) in the area of maternal and child health. The labor of the current (and future) members of R4C needs to be equitable compensated by direct payment from clients, contracts with health institutions and partners (like Centro), grants, and fundraising efforts.

R4C business model follows the five P's of social entrepreneurship: passion, purpose, plan, partners, and profit. The passion driving our work lies in the vision of living in a county where the diverse make-up of Latino/indigenous families participates in the co-creation of the high quality maternal and child well-being support, they deserve. Our mission (purpose) is to foster allied health

professions for Latinos (as) in Dane County by supporting the native and traditional knowledge nested in our community on well-being practices. Together, we want to reclaim our collective values of childbirth and parenting.

The members of R4C, doulas and promotoras de salud believe that health is a holistic, necessarily community good in that social wellbeing can only result from living in a healthy community wherein all members have equitable opportunities to thrive. To this end, they aim to provide community-based wellness services consistent with their mission of grassroots social justice, health equity, and community engagement work, with the goal of breaking down disparities by race/ethnicity, immigration or residency status, gender identity, class, and other categories.

Now, almost one year after our creation as a cooperative, we are still (will continue to) pushing structural change in a way that make sense to us, not copying other ways of creating change. Our past (s) of colonialism, internal prejudice/discrimination to those “less white”, strong nationalism among Latin-Americans, diversity of immigration journeys, the legal conceptualization of “illegal vs. legal” immigrant and its repercussions within family and community dynamics, are just a few structural and

But we've got room yet to grow
Ready to Sow your Support?

An investment of \$5,000 could provide:

-  **5-6** moms with culturally & linguistically accessible doula support (\$800 each). Includes prenatal visits and labor, postpartum, & breastfeeding support. Remaining funds to subsidize service fees for other moms.

Or

-  **12** peer support group sessions for postpartum moms in **2** proposed locations in Dane County.

Or

-   Breastfeeding support sessions (\$80 per session) and prenatal yoga classes (10 sessions for \$200). Choose any number of sessions.

Or

-  Educational resource development in Spanish, including an updated postpartum curriculum, trauma-informed care, & more.

Figure 1. Your \$ support equals MCH support

cultural norms we are immerse in and that inform our work on the development of authentic advocacy, policy, and direct service approaches. We are cognizant that the Latino community needs to increase its collective unity and self-awareness of its political power, and even though R4C does not expect to “speak for all Latina’s mothers and families”, we are working in inviting families to recognize the cultural richness nested in the diverse stories and circumstances represented in the almost 6.8% of the population. Working with women and babies allow us to enter people’s life in a stage characterized by great susceptibility and hope, and we strive to serve as an agent of healing, creativity, and action.

How to contact us? If you are interested in learning more about our consulting or community-based doula services, please email Mariela Quesada Centeno, MPH and Coop Manager at soporte@roots4change.coop or call 904-385-8151. You can also reach any of R4C’s members at:

- 1) Maricela Martinez, Co-President: maricela@apapacharcolectivo.com
- 2) Rosalba Montoya, Co-President: rosalba@puentealba.com
- 3) Jennifer Valencia, Treasurer: jennifer@lazoscolectivos.com
- 4) Aida Inuca, Secretary: aida@samaypachallc.com
- 5) Matilde Cachiguango, Outreach Support: matilde@snativakichwa.com
- 6) Virginia Lopez, Curriculum Development Support: virginia@bholistico.com
- 7) Stephanie Mondloch, Administrative Support: sjmondloch@gmail.com

Thank you for finishing reading this introduction of who we are. We hope to work with you in co-creating new paradigms of health and well-being with our Latino/Indigenous community (ies) in Dane County and beyond. Know that your financial support, policy-reach, educational capacity, and on-the ground work is key for our development. Change does not happen in silos, nor knowledge can be fertile if only some have access to it. We want to continue creating real partnerships and to nurture the ones we already have forged, in order to keep pushing the envelope of change and justice.

Gracias, Yupaychani, Thank you,

Roots4Change Cooperative