

Getting to Know _____



Professional & Personal
Information

Values/Philosophy

Achievements

Philanthropic Interests
or Focus



Profiles in Philanthropy-Aida Rodriguez



Biographical Highlights

"I'm a working person of the city, just like my Puerto Rican and Cuban parents," commented Aida Rodriguez. Rodriguez described herself as "a practical type, a practitioner" who has always been just as interested in social change as in academic research and teaching. This approach to her professional life and society has been reflected in her other interests. While finishing her Ph.D., she took a job her advisors recommended-part-time graduate student work doing research at the Rockefeller Foundation.

Later, as part of a small group of four Latina professionals, Rodriguez was responsible for leading development of a nationwide effort to expand philanthropic interest and support for Hispanic needs and programs. Rodriguez and her colleagues realized that the challenge was greater than just getting foundations and other funders to be sensitive to and supportive of Hispanic causes. They were committed to ensuring that foundations, corporations and individual donors funded initiatives that would help Hispanics nurture their own strong ethnic, cultural, community and social traditions. Rodriguez and her collaborators worked to encourage greater representation and equity for Hispanic professionals within nonprofit and philanthropic leadership positions at board and staff levels.

She and her colleagues achieved these goals by designing and implementing the *Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities*. The Collaborative has become a national/transnational initiative to raise nearly \$17 million from funders to support the work of small- to medium-sized Latino nonprofits organizations while developing the next generation of Latino leaders. Rodriguez and three other individuals in 2003 were named co-recipients of the prestigious *Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking*, awarded by the Council on Foundations.

Rodriguez earned Ph.D. and M.A. degrees in sociology from the University of Massachusetts, and a B.A. degree in sociology from Princeton University.

Historic Roots

Aida Rodriguez is Chair of the Nonprofit Management Program, Robert J. Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy at New School University, New York City. While finishing her Ph.D. degree studies in 1991, she took a part-time job at the Rockefeller Foundation in New York. Since her employer was looking for an economics background and



hadn't thought of a person trained in sociology, Aida convinced him that a sociologist could read, understand and do anything that economists did, and got the job as Research Associate/Policy Analyst for the Equal Opportunity Division of the Rockefeller Foundation after completion of her Ph.D. coursework. She served a total of 15 years with the Rockefeller Foundation; her last two years as the Foundation's Deputy Director. Rodriguez led the Foundation's work promoting basic rights and increasing access to economic opportunities for marginalized populations and communities across the United States. Her career has spanned both domestic and international philanthropy, the design and evaluation of urban programs, resolution of racial and ethnic issues and effective management of nonprofit organizations

She commented: "As a professional at a university, my focus is on community and economic development. There **are** skills in communities with low income and working class people. What is lacking is opportunity. You have to show them where the water is before they can even fish. In many cases the opportunities exists, but people don't know how to access them." Rodriguez has had a key role in a national effort to help other people develop management and organizational skills in community economic development. And as a W. K. Kellogg Foundation Fellow, she has also expanded Hispanic leadership and participation in philanthropy throughout the United States and Latin America.

Importance

Rodriguez's career and accomplishments reflect a belief that social action can be blended with solid academic and social research-resulting in creative and successful approaches to social change. Perhaps the most impressive example has been Rodriguez's award-winning role in creation of the *Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities*. Rodriguez attributed the *Collaborative's* success to "an incredible group of women who worked hard and liked being together. It's an example of what can be accomplished when you know where you want to go, when you don't let problems overwhelm you, when you don't 'lose the light' of productive social change."

Ties to the Philanthropic Sector

Rodriguez's career and achievements show us how leadership, commitment, creativity and perservance are critical to making a difference in the philanthropic sector and in society. Philanthropy is a powerful tool. Rodriguez noted that philanthropy is about much more than just money. As a volunteer or staff member of a philanthropic organization, an individual or group can gain access and exposure to power, influence and networks. Philanthropy has the



great advantage of being able to use money in flexible ways. She commented: "The power of philanthropy is that the sky is the limit, the vision is the limit. If something (in society) has to be changed, you ask 'how,' and there aren't bureaucratic demands."

Philanthropy also offers many volunteer and career opportunities for young people of all ethnic and social backgrounds. Prior to her own job at the Rockefeller Foundation, there had been no Latinos on that foundation's staff. She found that people didn't always agree, but there were no hidden rules.

Philanthropy has models for younger people, for minorities, for women, for "people who care." If students are interested in exploring philanthropy as their career, they won't find it through job ads, but through internships and networking. She suggests students visit the Foundation Center's offices and libraries (located in New York City, Washington, DC, Cleveland and other locations around the nation) and explore its Web site at <http://fdncenter.org>. College internships can offer a young person "the professional experience of how you can use philanthropy in life, by voluntary work, the collection of money and how to access, raise, and distribute funds. That process is the difference between charity and philanthropy," she noted.

Key Related Ideas

"The power of philanthropy is the power to take risk-to do what others want to do, but can't because they lack financial resources and access to civic leadership and social change structures. Take advantage of philanthropy in your own community, if you want to do something you care about!" Rodriguez urged.

She also stressed the importance of philanthropy in the Latino community. People naturally give a great deal to churches, charities and their countries. She believes a key is greater awareness of philanthropy's power as a catalyst for change. "Young people don't think of philanthropy as theirs. It is theirs!"

For most, philanthropy does not represent a career path (like medicine). Philanthropy is an integral part of how you live in a civil society. It's a basic part of your framework when you think of your life, how you live, how you support your community.



Profiles in Philanthropy-Margarita (Magui) Rubalcava



Biographical Highlights

Jalisco is one of three huge states in Central Mexico, and it is from Jalisco that Margarita (Magui) Rubalcava, her parents and family journeyed to the United States as non-English speaking immigrants. Magui is part of a large family (nine brothers and sisters). She said that as an immigrant "being involved in philanthropy wasn't a career trajectory I planned. What's funny is my parents still don't understand what I do."

And yet, according to Magui, her parents were role models of philanthropy at its best. Jalisco and other states in Mexico have Home Town Associations with which U.S.-based relatives and families work. They send money back home to fix the communities' church roofs, pave parking lots, drill new wells, in fact all kinds of community and public work. Rubalcava said so much money was being generated for the Home Town Associations through these acts of philanthropy that they convinced Mexico's federal, state and municipal governments to match donated dollars, creating a 3:1 contribution. "What projects and amazing things have been done!" said Magui. If she had anything to say to these people and groups, it would be, "Guess what, you're philanthropists!"

If unanticipated, Rubalcava's own career trajectory in philanthropy has been sky high in terms of impact. Joining with three Latina colleagues, Rubalcava helped implement the *Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities*, an initiative to strengthen Latino nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and in Latin America. Up to \$17 million will be raised from foundations, businesses and individual donors from across the United States for the Collaborative. Rubalcava and her colleagues in 2003 were named co-recipients of the prestigious *Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking*, awarded by the Council on Foundations.

Rubalcava earned an M.A. degree in international economic development from Columbia University and a B.A. degree from the University of California, San Diego.

Historic Roots

Magui Rubalcava is Director of Programs for Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) and manages its *Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities*. HIP was founded in 1983 to promote stronger partnerships between organized philanthropy and Latino communities. It is a transnational association of grantmakers, with more than 450 members representing



corporate, public and private philanthropies, nonprofit leadership and academia. Prior to joining HIP, she worked with the New York Community Trust, Otto Bremer Foundation and the General Mills Foundation in program development and communications. Rubalcava also evaluated the Grants for Schools Program of the Mongolian Foundation for Open Society (Soros Foundation).

In 1991, she lived in Finland and learned to speak Finnish: "It's very difficult to step out of your culture, acknowledge your ignorance and communicate in a language other than your own. You discover your whole world view is shaped by where you've lived and where you came from."

These experiences taught Rubalcava a lot about social democracy and the importance of knowing your roots and being flexible. With a very strong Mexican identity, she said it was hard for her to acknowledge how much she felt like an American and viewed her Finnish experience through the lens of being an American. "Culturally, linguistically, you should force yourself to be in a place you're not comfortable."

Importance

Rubalcava's current philanthropic work is vital to the future of philanthropy, and its ability to serve and embrace people of color. By the year 2050, forty-nine percent (49%) of the U.S. population will comprise people of color. One quarter of this ethnically diverse population will be Hispanic, accounting for ninety-eight million people—a two hundred percent (200%) increase from the present Hispanic population. As people of color will compose nearly half of the U.S. population, the economic stability and social well-being of these communities will be increasingly critical for national vitality. The Latino community already is the single largest minority community in the U.S., representing more than 13% of the total population. Yet, private philanthropy gives less than 2% of its grant dollars to Latino organizations. The new Collaborative which Rubalcava manages recognizes this dramatic shift, its social implications, and provides a way for funders to support Latino organizations in communities across the nation.

When asked about her philanthropic interest and focus, Magui replied that she "cares deeply about access to education, the Latino community, young people and awareness of culture." Her passion is that she's "proud to be Mexican." She values the opportunities she has in this country. She's an American citizen and believes in voting as a privilege and a right. She is also proud of being a Latina, and that it's important not to think of life as a "zero-sum game." You can have identity in both worlds. "Young Latinos and kids of color don't get the message that it's o.k. to be proud of your culture and your background. You can be proud of



traditions, community and have a 'sense of being' in that cultural community. You can and should be proud of that connection."

Ties to the Philanthropic Sector

She thinks that most people associate philanthropy with dollars and focus too much on the donation of money-it has far more to do with time and talents. People of low income and minorities have a difficult time understanding that this type of volunteering and their own contributions to help others is "the best of philanthropy."

When Maqui was growing up, her father's interaction with his Home Town Association was a part of her life. She can't count how many people lived with them as they needed help, the number of fundraisers and raffles that were held, the toys, food and clothing that was collected and sent. Everything was recycled and almost nothing was thrown away. The strongest message that was conveyed was responsibility to the community.

She has enjoyed interacting with the large number of philanthropic organizations that have been a part of the *Funders'* Collaborative and is pleased that nonprofits are re-thinking the way they view people of low income. For example, Asset Building models are being used to build on the strengths of low-income neighborhoods, rather than just concentrating on their weaknesses or shortcomings.

Key Related Ideas

The message that Magui would like to convey to students is "You **are** a Philanthropist, and philanthropy is what comes from the heart, it's not the tax write-off or the technical, financial benefits of giving."

Profiles in Philanthropy-Barbara A. Taveras



Biographical Highlights

Barbara Taveras comes from a family of 13 children who immigrated from the Dominican Republic to the South Bronx (New York City) in 1970. She saw poverty in the Dominican Republic, but it was a different kind of poverty than she found in the South Bronx.

In the Dominican Republic, Barbara said they lacked "things" like adequate food, health care, clothes and automobiles, but there was



a strong sense of being part of a real family, a real community. In contrast, her life in the South Bronx suffered from lack of community. It was a place where as a youth, Taveras and her friends were told, "get out (of the South Bronx) and don't look back." Instead, Taveras affirmed the South Bronx as her community. She still lives there, and has achieved much on behalf of her community, the city of New York, Hispanics, and in the world of philanthropy.

One of those achievements was Taveras' central role with three Latina American collaborators in developing and implementing the *Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities*. All were part of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's "Leadership in Philanthropy in the Americas" program, and used the Fellowship as a springboard for designing the *Funders Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities*, which is a project of Hispanics in Philanthropy. The Collaborative has become a national/transnational initiative that is seeking to raise nearly \$17 million to strengthen the infrastructure of the Latino nonprofit sector and to cultivate the next generation of Latino leadership within the United States and Latin America. In 2003, Taveras and three other individuals were named co-recipients of the prestigious *Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grant making*, awarded by the Council on Foundations.

Taveras earned her M.A. degree in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University, Washington, DC and B.A. degree in political science from Pace University, New York City.

Historic Roots

Since 1993, Taveras has been President of the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, a 75-year old private charitable foundation which assists young people, particularly minorities and those disadvantaged by poverty, to achieve their full potential as individuals and active participants in a democratic society. Taveras came from a family that cared for each other. "It wasn't enough for one family member to 'make it'; the whole family had to come along and take care of each other," she recalled. She attributes her family roots as an important part of her call to her work in philanthropy. She learned about philanthropy not only from a caring family, but also through her church. She was involved in her church youth group at St. Jerome's Catholic Parish, where youth talked about not just religion but also issues affecting their families, lives and communities. She continued as a volunteer in her church and served on the Parish Council

Taveras always wanted to work in the nonprofit sector. She started out working for Catholic Relief Services (CRS), handling disbursement of grants in Central America and the Caribbean. She oversaw the Agency's community development and food distribution program in Haiti, and also maintained relations with church representatives, government agencies as well as local and international development organizations. Taveras would serve as a training



specialist on international issues with the YWCA National Board, and then as a policy analyst in the New York Mayor's Office of Education Services. She also helped establish a "Women of South Bronx" support group for women in the community...a network for women to support one another.

Importance

Taveras said her awareness of philanthropy grew slowly out of her varied life experiences. She has been motivated—like so many others—by seeing a critical need and wanting to do something about it.

She joined with three other Latina professional women to develop and launch the *Funders Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities*, Taveras said, "because there is still so little (charitable) money going into the Hispanic community across the nation...it was really Aida Rodriguez (one of the 2003 *Scrivner Award* co-recipients) who saw the need and the rest of us said, 'Let's do something about it!'"

Another much needed goal of the *Collaborative*, she said, is to educate funders about issues in the Latino community. The Collaborative will offer a combination of direct capacity building grants, peer training, as well as convening and networking for Latino nonprofit organizations. Taveras pointed out that it doesn't have to be a million dollar project to make a lot of difference in the lives of people.

The church group was there for each other when she was growing up. Now, when church group members see each other as adults they still talk about what a difference the group made in their lives.

Ties to the Philanthropic Sector

Taveras has never forgotten her roots in the Dominican Republic, nor the poverty she saw there and which still exists today. She would like to start a Fund for the Dominican Republic because of what she learned there.

To young people, she would say they should not believe all the negative perceptions that are out there about youth. "Youth, along with their families and communities, can change things," she observed. But they need to be part of a network of peers who can work together to achieve a vision. Young people are not in a "waiting period...waiting to be leaders, waiting to make a difference. Young people matter today, right now."



Key Related Ideas

Ideas matter a lot in philanthropy, and in making a difference in society, she believes.

It also matters that you "bring people together and have other people embrace an idea." We need to share ideas and bring other people together to create and own the solution.

Profiles in Philanthropy-Luz Vega-Marquis



Biographical Highlights

Joining with three Latina colleagues, Vega-Marquis helped design and implement the *Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities*, an initiative to strengthen Latino nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and in Latin America. Up to \$17 million will be raised from foundations, businesses and individual donors from across the United States for the *Collaborative*. The *Collaborative* is based on the premise that a strong Latino nonprofit sector will help these communities gain greater access to full civic and economic participation in U.S. Society.

The *Collaborative*, administered by Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP), was launched in 2001.

Vega-Marquis' role in creating the new *Collaborative* garnered her and her colleagues the prestigious 2003 Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grant making, awarded by the Council on Foundations.

Vega-Marquis has been an innovator and a leader in the philanthropic sector for more than twenty years. In 1983, she was one of the founders of Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP), which promotes stronger partnerships between organized philanthropy and Latino communities. Today, HIP is a transnational association of grantmakers, with 450 members representing corporate, public and private philanthropies, nonprofit leadership and academia.

Vega-Marquis received her B.A. degree in modern languages from the University of San Francisco, and M.A. degree in Latin American Studies from Stanford University.

Historic Roots

Luz A. Vega-Marquis has been President and CEO of the Seattle-based Marguerite Casey Foundation since 2001. She served as Executive Director of the Community Technology Foundation of California, supporting efforts to bring information technology to under-served



communities throughout the state. Her other nonprofit experience included her role as Vice President of the National Economic Development and Law Center, which provides technical, law and business expertise to distressed communities. Vega-Marquis was on the staff of the James Irvine Foundation for 17 years, as Director of Grants Programs, Senior Program Officer in Charge of the Foundation's Northern California Office, and Program Officer.

Unlike most, Vega-Marquis actually began working in philanthropy at age 21, while still in college. She recalled: "I was studying to be an accountant, and the James Irvine Foundation was very supportive of higher education, so they called my university. I became an accountant for the Foundation. You gain experience by learning the basic workings of any management structure, (e.g., finance). They liked how I approached things and moved me from accounting to program work."

Importance

The *Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities* is literally the product of a need, vision, and action plan developed and implemented by Vega-Marquis and her colleagues Aida Rodriguez, Barbara A. Taveras and Magui Rubalcava. The Latino community is the single largest minority community in the U.S., representing more than 13% of the total population. Yet, private philanthropy gives less than 2% of its grant dollars to Latino organizations. The new Collaborative recognizes this dramatic shift, its social implications, and provides a way for funders to support Latino organizations in communities across the nation.

Philanthropy is about the power of connecting and sharing, about working with people and letting them know what you believe in and why—all of these elements are important, she observed. Such leveraging of local and national philanthropic resources has been a unique element of the *Collaborative*. Funds will be distributed to Latino nonprofit organizations through a network of between 15 and 20 geographic "sites." There is a powerful incentive for local donors built into the Collaborative model. Local philanthropic dollars granted to the *Collaborative* are matched by the *Collaborative's* national funds.

As reflected in her professional roles and earlier leadership with the *Collaborative* and in founding Hispanics in Philanthropy, Vega-Marquis has been a visionary in exploring ways that philanthropy can fulfill its role as a catalyst in addressing current and future social needs and trends.

She sees Hispanics in Philanthropy now as an organization that is thriving and making a difference in the lives of communities and calls that "very rewarding." When I began (in philanthropy)," Vega-Marquis recalled, "There were very few other Latinas in the business. I



am very proud of the work that has been done and how Hispanics in Philanthropy has grown far beyond the dimensions I anticipated when we began."

Back in 1987, there was little attention being paid in philanthropy to such issues as women's economic development. While at the Irvine Foundation, Vega-Marquis helped structure \$4 million in micro loans for women. "I'm really proud of that work and how it has evolved," she said. "It's a very important lesson that you must research, know your subject backwards and forwards. You can't go just on the idea, you must learn the unknowns. Have a vision, but make sure that there is grounding in reality and solid research."

Ties to the Philanthropic Sector

"So many lives have been changed as a result of what we do (in philanthropy)," she said. "People will tell me 'I'm a grown woman now and I'm a different person because I received that grant.' We're doing this type of life-changing work indirectly through grants - it's really about the lives of poor people and their lives in their communities. Many in the field of philanthropy are concerned only about outcomes, and measuring the details of how we make a difference. That's black and white. I see the gray. The gray is beautiful."

A quote hangs on Vega-Marquis' office wall by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary."

Key Related Ideas

Vega-Marquis believes that "If you are a young person and start with an idea, know that it's important, know you want to stick with it. Even though you may begin with something minor or begin with obstacles, stick with that idea. "

"If I were offering any information to high school students, I would tell them not to shy away from opportunities in life. Build upon what you know. When I began in this field, I knew about bookkeeping and accounting, and I built on my strengths."

