



HIGHLIGHTS



Welcome to CoLab's Spring 2017 Newsletter! We are excited to share some recent updates about our work. Over the past year, we have continued to fulfill our mission by further honing our three core capacities:

- **LINK:** Building networks and leadership capacity with partners in marginalized communities across the Americas.
- **THINK:** Co-creating new knowledge with communities consistently overlooked in traditional development planning.
- **DO:** Innovating from the margins alongside socially excluded communities, and catalyzing social change through art and storytelling.

Please email Allegra Williams at Allegraw@mit.edu to stay tuned for future updates. We thank you for your interest in our work and we hope to have the opportunity to connect with you!

GET INVOLVED

Upcoming

[Panel + Exhibit on Prison Adaptive Reuse](#)

[Values-Based Banking Online Course](#)

[Role of Art in Activism Book Talk](#)

[Community Agency + Health Symposium](#)

[Listening to the City Conference](#)

[More events...](#)

Work with Us

[Internship/Volunteer Opportunities](#)

Share your Story

Write for the [Alternative Futures Collective](#)

Drop by our Office Hours on Wednesdays from 2-4 to find out more about [how to contribute to CoLab Radio!](#)

GLOBAL ALLIANCE OF VALUES-BASED BANKS CONVENES IN NEPAL

In March, CoLab's Just Money program launched the second cohort of the Global Alliance for Banking on Values (GABV) Leadership Academy. The GABV is a network of 38 banks around the world that use finance as a tool to achieve positive social and economic change. The first cohort graduated in Cambridge this past Fall. The most recent module, with 16 participants, took place in Kathmandu, Nepal. The goal of the Leadership Academy is to improve the personal leadership skills of participants and build connections and knowledge sharing within the values-based banking movement. For more information, please contact Katrin Kaeufer at kaeufer@mit.edu.



CO-CREATING NEW KNOWLEDGE

MEL KING COMMUNITY FELLOWS BUILD LEARNING NETWORK ACROSS THE AMERICAS



Building on its tradition of bridging practice-based knowledge with academic tools and theories, each year CoLab convenes a cohort of Mel King Community Fellows to build a learning network around a particular topic. In 2016, CoLab's [Transnational Mel King Community Fellows](#) class was launched with the intention of building connections between CoLab's community partners throughout the Americas to investigate frameworks for advancing economic democracy and self-determination across their diverse contexts. The fellows first met in Colombia in the Fall, and will hold their second convening later in April in Fortaleza, Brazil where they will visit Instituto Banco Palmas, a community bank with its own currency, a youth innovation lab, and soon, a school to develop community-led research from the urban periphery. For more information, please contact Camilo Esquivia-Zapata at esquivia@mit.edu.

RESIDENT RESEARCHERS ANALYZE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON HEALTH IN BOSTON



In 2016, CoLab forged a partnership with MIT Professor Mariana Arcaya and the Conservation Law Foundation to design and conduct a Participatory Action Research (PAR) process exploring the relationship between community health and urban development across metro Boston. This winter, the first year of the process culminated with a series of collaborative data analysis workshops facilitated by CoLab staff and students from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, and attended by over 30 Resident Researchers and community organizers from the nine different study communities. This Spring, the CoLab team is working with the Resident Researchers and other partners to determine how best to share findings and contribute to local grassroots campaigns for wellness-based development. Learn more about the PAR process through [stories shared by resident researchers on CoLab Radio](#)! For more information, please contact Leigh Carroll at leighmc@mit.edu.

INNOVATING FROM THE MARGINS

COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIAN PACIFIC REGION



Over the past year, CoLab has been working with 12 community-led innovation initiatives poised to contribute to equitable development in the post-conflict region of Colombia's Pacific. The initiatives, which come out of an accelerator program (EIC Lab) developed by CoLab in partnership with Colombian partner, Manos Visibles, approach economic democracy from different sectors, including eco-tourism, media and culture, and youth empowerment. In collaboration with these local initiatives, partner organizations in Colombia, and students from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, CoLab worked over the course of 4 weeks in January to identify opportunities for the initiatives to leverage local and regional assets and networks to build shared wealth from the ground up. Learn more about this collaboration [on CoLab Radio](#) and through the [MIT Public Service Center's blog](#). For more information, please contact Juan Constain at constain@mit.edu.

VENDOR PLATFORM STRENGTHENS LOCAL ECONOMY IN POOREST U.S. URBAN COUNTY



In early February, the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative - a collaboration between CoLab's Just Urban Economies Program and a diverse set of Bronx stakeholders - launched the [BronXchange](#), a digital marketplace and matching service connecting Bronx institutions with local businesses to improve the Bronx economy. The online platform has since been made available to a select group of

purchasers and vendors who are committed to strengthening community networks and who assisted with beta testing in February. The BronXchange will soon become fully available to all interested vendors and purchasers. For more information, please contact Maggie Tishman at mtishman@mit.edu.

BRONX BUILDS COMMUNITY POWER THROUGH GREEN AND HEALTHY BUILDINGS

Through a partnership with the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC), Emerald Cities Collaborative, and the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative, CoLab has been helping to launch the Healthy Buildings Program, which is leveraging the NWBCCC's federally funded weatherization program to improve energy efficiency and air quality in the homes of low-income families. Through its current pilot program, three buildings in the Northwest Bronx are receiving energy efficiency retrofits that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce exposure to asthma triggers, generate financial savings for local residents, promote community ownership, and build a broader movement for community-centered energy systems. For more information, please contact Maggie Tishman at mtishman@mit.edu.



CREATING CHANGE THROUGH ART + STORYTELLING

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED ART HELPS FAMILIES FIGHT LEAD POISONING IN FLINT AND D.C.



This winter, CoLab's Empathetic Aesthetics Program, in partnership with renowned artist and former Mel King Community Fellow, Mel Chin, expanded its initiative to deepen awareness and democratic engagement around lead poisoning by leveraging the creative currency of Fundred Dollar Bills. For nearly a decade, the [Fundred Project](#) has worked with cross-sector partners to fight lead. With the water crisis in Flint comes a new opportunity to use this creative platform to fight for change on a local and national scale. A project kick-off was staged at the National Lead Summit in

December and the Fundred team has since launched a major exhibit at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. This Spring, the team is focused on policymaker education and engagement, collaboration with DC public schools, and continuing to build connections with Flint-based activists, teachers, and impacted families to plant the seeds for future advocacy efforts. For more information, please contact Allegra Williams at allegraw@mit.edu.

AUDIO STORYTELLING COURSE ILLUMINATES POLICY AND PLANNING IMPACTS ON EAST BOSTON



In January, CoLab's Media Program partnered with Radio Producer, Marie Choi from the social justice radio show, Making Contact, and East Boston arts non-profit, ZUMIX, to offer a 2-week IAP course called [Media for Movement Building: Making Podcasts about Urban Planning in East Boston](#). After being trained in field and studio audio production, participants interviewed several people who live or work in East Boston: a Spanish radio and newspaper editor, two community organizers, and an immigration lawyer. Through these firsthand stories, the interviewees and participants explored how forces from immigration law to airport expansion impact the quality of life for residents in East Boston. The four audio pieces produced will be part of Season 1 of CoLab Radio's podcast, launching in late Spring 2017. Stay tuned and please contact Lawrence Barriner II at lqb@mit.edu for more information!

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

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