

# Strengthening Environmental Justice Across North America by Connecting Communities



Communities for Environmental Justice trinational workshop participants, Oaxaca, Mexico, November 2023

## What is the Communities for Environmental Justice Network (CEJN) Project?

Since April 2023, the [Commission for Environmental Cooperation](#) (CEC) has supported the creation of a trinational network to facilitate the exchange of community-based expertise, lessons learned, and practical guidance between network participants, through its project Communities for Environmental Justice Network (CEJN).

The Network aims to strengthen the capacity of North American Indigenous, local, vulnerable, disadvantaged, and/or underserved communities to address environmental justice concerns in the context of climate change.

## How Will the Communities for Environmental Justice Network be Developed?

The initial development of the Communities for Environmental Justice Network is supported by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation with the long-term goal that it will become a self-sustaining and member-driven structure that fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange across North America.

To help member organizations clarify the overall goals, objectives and structure of the Network, and to catalyze the exchange of resources between participants, the following activities have been prioritized in 2023 and 2024.

- 1 Select and invite communities for inclusion in the CEJN and engage them as founding members of the Network.
- 2 Host a trinational workshop to facilitate the exchange of community-based environmental justice stories, strategies, and lessons learned between founding members, to clarify Network goals and objectives, and to identify next steps to advance Network development.
- 3 Develop and disseminate knowledge exchange tools and culturally relevant information based on information and resources shared during the trinational workshop.

## Connect With Us to Learn More

Visit <<http://www.cec.org/communities-for-environmental-justice-network/>> or contact us at [ej@cec.org](mailto:ej@cec.org).



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# CEJN Trinational Workshop Highlights

16–18 November 2023, Oaxaca, Mexico

## Sharing Our Stories

The CEJN hosted a trinational workshop from 16–18 November 2023, in Oaxaca, Mexico. The event was attended by representatives from thirteen (13) organizations and communities from across North America that have environmental justice concerns. Collaborative team-building exercises, knowledge sharing, and brainstorming activities helped build trust between participants as they exchanged community-based success stories, strategies, and lessons learned. Common resource gaps and project roadblocks were also identified. Workshop participants emphasized that creating a trinational Network to connect members with



needed resources, advice for overcoming project barriers, and encouragement from others was vital to help advance environmental justice initiatives across North America.

## What Did Participants Value about the Workshop?

“As an organization, we believe in collaborative work, and we achieve a lot more together than we would apart. It is through this type of learning community that is so enriching, that the networking opportunities are boundless.”

Omar Muhammad,  
[Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities](#) (LAMC),  
North Charleston, South Carolina, USA

“Hearing stories of success from every participant, and learning about the brave work being done, was truly inspiring. I was also able to network and make connections with people who pointed me in the direction of grants funding, and opportunities to present our work at conferences and to a larger audience.”

Marley Kozak,  
[The Resilience Institute](#) (TRI),  
Canmore, Alberta, Canada

“Meeting people from diverse populations, with diverse knowledge and experiences, always broadens the vision and field of action, and strengthens our own working processes with the Indigenous communities we support. We analyzed the possibility of replicating the work done by other organizations in our region.”

Jesús Granada Bautista,  
[Agrupación de Derechos Humanos Xochitépetl](#),  
Huayacocotla, Veracruz, México

## Moving Forward Together

Trinational workshop participants agreed to continue to work together in 2024 to create an online story map featuring participant profiles and resources, and hosting knowledge-sharing webinars with the public. The Network aims to formalize its structure and expand its membership base in 2025. By scaling up efforts to strengthen community-based environmental justice initiatives across North America, the Network strives to help all community members work together to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.