

## Impact Report

Systemic racism, by definition, affects/infects multiple aspects of societies, and disasters are no exception because they consistently reveal racial and ethnic disparities in risk and resilience. Those injustices, however, are often concealed, lost to view, or conveniently forgotten as impacted communities seek a return to a pre-impact “normal.” If anything even remotely resembling a healthier and socially just society is to be achieved, this type of marginalizing or ignoring of the susceptibilities to harm and limited resilience of people of color cannot be allowed to continue. Meeting that challenge is at the heart of the Florida International University Commons for Justice (FIU CfJ) project.

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**Project Goal: To identify, illustrate, and address the deep racial and ethnic inequities in pre-event disaster exposures and vulnerabilities and in post-event resilience resources and capacities.**

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The Just Futures Initiative: Race, Risk, and Resilience: Building a Local-to-Global “Commons for Justice” project examines the racial and ethnic disparities in risk and resilience that are exposed by disasters (e.g., hurricanes). Through this project, a research–analysis–awareness–voice–solutions program is being built to identify, illustrate, and address the deep racial and ethnic inequities in pre-event disaster exposures and vulnerabilities and in post-event resilience resources and capacities. This project has been constructed to function as a collaboratory, where a co-identification, co-design, and co-production approach is being utilized with local neighborhoods and communities in southeastern Florida’s north–south “spine of distress” (Miami neighborhoods and communities of color with strong senses of place and history, but also with profound feelings of distrust, neglect, and alienation). The ultimate goal of developing a collaboratory is to encourage community members—from neighborhood residents and community leaders to community organizations as well as FIU faculty—to fully engage with one another in their respective roles as experts and combine their knowledge, perspectives, and resources to catalyze positive change.

The FIU-CfJ has 11 major components outlined within it: (1) a research cluster to identify the most pressing risk and resilience problems (including a lack of secure/sustainable livelihoods) in neighborhoods predominantly of color; (2) publicly accessible presentations on how differential disaster risk and resilience problems “layer” on—and interact with—more everyday racial and ethnic injustices; (3) risk reduction and resilience options for neighborhoods and communities of color; (4) a program to collect, preserve, and curate coping stories from those who live in particularly at-risk neighborhoods; (5)

visiting artists and a journalist able to capture the everyday experiences of living in vulnerable landscapes; (6) curricular development of “Histories from Different Perspectives” and an outreach “History Exchange”; (7) undergraduate research fellowships; (8) predoctoral research fellowships; (9) postgraduate research fellowships; (10) enrichment and exchange with the FIU-based Global Indigenous Podcast Network; and (11) “in-residence” support for local, regional, and/or national experts/activists on racially-based injustices in risk and resilience.



Dr. Marcie Washington, Associate Teaching Professor and Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies, Politics and International Relations, and Dr. Richard Olson, Director of the Extreme Events Institute, serve as principal investigators on this project. The grant began in 2021 and recently concluded its third quarter of its third year. The grant is expected to conclude in late 2024. Funded as part of the Mellon Foundation’s Just Futures Initiative and working in collaboration with community organizations

## Project Impact



Building relationships and forming partnerships with historically marginalized neighborhoods and communities is essential to making meaningful progress on racially-based injustices in risk and resilience. The only appropriate way to address issues of the complexity and size we currently face, from rising inequality to climate change, are to embrace many viewpoints and take multifaceted action.

This report explores how the FIU-CfJ collaboratory is driving outcomes across some of our focus areas: solidarity and social movement; transformative student engagement; diversity, equity and inclusivity;

responsible climate justice through social and environmental sciences; and education. This report aims to capture the extent, scope, and depth of the project’s commitment to race, risk, and resilience in the Greater Miami area.

## *Engaging with Broad and Diverse Publics*

Through the FIU-CfJ, FIU has developed working partnerships with 11 community organizations located throughout the 6 neighborhoods of interest: (1) Allapattah (primarily “Hispanic” but quite mixed within that somewhat problematic label); (2) Homestead/Florida City (racially/ethnically mixed); (3) Liberty City (primarily Black); (4) Little Haiti (primarily immigrant Haitian); (5) Overtown (primarily Black); and (6) West Grove (historically a Bahamian descendant neighborhood but becoming increasingly mixed). These community partners provide a range of services for the Miami community and through FIU-CfJ have collaborated on project initiatives related to oral history collection; hosted storytelling events, workshop events, and art exhibits; gathered data; undertaken advocacy efforts; and distributed extreme weather preparation information to community members.

Community members who have engaged in program activities have been quite diverse with respect to race, culture, personal and family history, and age. The project’s focus on the “spine of distress” has resulted in contributions from Native American, Hispanic, Black, Haitian, Bahamian, Jamaican, and other individuals. Those involved were able to contribute rich historical and cultural context, knowledge, and skills from their diverse backgrounds and experiences as immigrants, migrants, and refugees at various points throughout Miami’s history.

Project activities are also designed to include those of all ages—from youth to elders. While all knowledge-sharing activities and exhibits were designed to be accessible to the public regardless of age, specific project components incorporated age groups in different and intentional ways. Community elders were the primary focus for oral history collections taking place in Coconut Grove, and study faculty were intentional in coaching FIU students to collect these stories from the elders. Another aspect of the FIU-CfJ, Catalyst Miami Inc and the Allapattah CDC’s Community Fellows Program focused on building advocacy knowledge and skills specifically among the community’s youth.

6

**Miami  
Neighborhoods**

6

**Neighborhood  
Studies**

10

**CfJ-supported  
community  
partners**

3

**Community  
Members  
Involved on  
Conference  
Panels**

## *Reaching People Where They Are*

A key goal of the FIU-CfJ is to go beyond embracing the diverse Miami communities and actively engage these communities in resistance and resilience efforts by reaching them where they are. As a result, efforts were made to diversify the methods used to share knowledge, resources, and opportunities with communities. The FIU-CfJ hosted 24 events within and open to the diverse Miami communities. More than 2,200 people registered for the events, which included history exchanges at the Goombay Festival in Coconut Grove, art exhibits, storytelling events, and an oral history teaching workshop.



The FIU-CfJ also launched online initiatives alongside their community-based programming. Undergraduate research fellows led the creation of a monthly newsletter for the project with the goal of increasing connection and communication within the collaboratory. The project also designed a website devoted to FIU-CfJ initiatives. Launched in December 2023, the FIU-CfJ website reflects the intent of the FIU-CfJ Commons—to provide

“an open, safe, and supportive space to articulate and exchange findings, views, perspectives, and solution options; and a set of resources for research and teaching available to, and shared with, neighborhoods and the broader community.” The website serves as a publicly accessible space where experiences, findings, and resources collected from each of the project components can be shared with the broader public. At present, the site



includes information detailing each of the 6 Miami neighborhoods involved in the FIU-CfJ, information and access to digital catalogs for art exhibits, summaries from solution sessions, and access to podcasts. To date, 3 [podcasts](#) have been released on the site. As more of the project components are completed, more materials will be added to the website to be shared with the public.

## *Understanding Risk and Vulnerabilities in Coastal Communities*

At the core of this grant was the objective of moving beyond the traditional definition of risk and re-evaluating how risk and vulnerabilities are defined in this project. The project strived to understand risk and vulnerabilities in underserved/marginalized neighborhoods and communities through multiple lenses/perspectives, including the arts. To meet this objective, art and storytelling were explored as vehicles for promoting agency and voice. Perspectives of the communities' residents, visiting creative artists, and journalists were also shared through multiple modes—via neighborhood study reports, art exhibits, panel discussions that included community member panelists, and college course creation.

A total of 6 neighborhood studies were completed within diverse communities. The FIU-CfJ engaged in group discussions with each of the 6 neighborhood partners—all of whom are social or climate justice organizations working in marginalized Miami communities—as well as individual interviews with 12 leadership and fieldworkers from the organizations. These conversations explored how they understood and addressed resilience in their justice advocacy work. Community partners were then engaged to co-produce a concept map based on the concepts and themes mentioned and their relationships. Following the collaboratory process of abstraction and analysis, FIU faculty have continued to verify the interpretations through FIU-CfJ storytelling events, podcasts, and participatory observation at community meetings, community events, and activist activities. A report draft for these 6 neighborhoods was completed in year 2, and year 3 has been spent finalizing the report, mapping the collective data, and disseminating the findings based on the communities and themes. The methodologies employed in these studies created a space for dialogue around alternative understandings of resilience, such as community capacities to create and defend place, and to resist threats such as racialized displacement, disinvestment and extraction of value. A major finding of this work was that certain issues—such as oppression, marginalization and gentrification—were felt across neighborhoods, laying the groundwork for collective action on issues such as housing equity, understanding gentrification issues, unemployment, and access to grocery stores along with extreme weather issues, such as flooding, hurricanes, and extreme heat.

# 18

**Participating  
Faculty**

# 11

**Experts**

# 6

**Visiting  
Artists**

# 6

**Visiting  
Journalists**

An art exhibit entitled “Climates of Inequality: Stories of Environmental Justice” was on display during spring 2022 in FIU’s Green Library and is now available online as a [digital catalog](#). Together, 2 project faculty, 12 students, and 2 community partners (WeCount! and Catalyst Miami) created art inspired by narratives collected from immigrant workers. This exhibit depicted the ways in which the struggle of immigrant agricultural workers is also a struggle for climate justice with the goal of energizing viewers to combat climate change and support legislation to enforce fair and safe conditions in the fields. This exhibit was also accompanied by a panel discussion about heat stress suffered by outdoor workers, entitled “Withstanding the Heat.” FIU-CfJ faculty have shared that one of the ways that the exhibits have shown their power is through policymakers, speakers, and politicians having been present at each of the exhibits, with them seeing it as a means to get out into the community and engage and try to understand the community in a different way through their art.

To support other ways of building understanding, the FIU-CfJ has hosted 6 visiting artists and 6 visiting journalists, including Pulitzer Prize winners Carl-Phillipe Juste and Leonard Pitts Jr. Two panel discussions have also been facilitated on race, risk, and resilience and have included community members as panelists. One panel, entitled [“A Creative Conversation on Race, Risk, and Resilience”](#) and featuring visiting artists Morel Doucet and Robert Lugo, was also recorded and is publicly available online.



Postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Claudia Garriga-Lopez, has developed 3 university-level course modules focused on the resiliency of communities on a local and global scale. FIU faculty is currently collaborating with Allapattah CDC to develop a transdisciplinary, team-taught seminar course for graduate students to work with and learn from the Allapattah CDC organization on topics such as community history, collaborative research, research ethics, data management strategies, and data visualization.

Faculty members have been involved throughout the FIU-CfJ project. Through project activities, they have gained a wide variety of knowledge and experience—from learning about the histories of Miami’s indigenous and immigrant communities and their rich and diverse cultures and customs to doing community-based work in partnership with and fueled by the communities involved and their cultural values and needs. Project faculty have also begun the work of sharing this knowledge with others through the publication of 4 peer-reviewed journal articles, as well as engagement through 4 conference presentations, 2 panels, and 1 workshop with fellow Mellon Just Futures Initiative award winners. The first panel presentation was on the topic of confronting vulnerabilities and featured community member, Izegbe Onyango, alongside 3 project faculty members and 1 predoctoral student. The second panel presentation focused on the co-creation of community projects, and community member Nicole Crooks and Marcie Washington and Rebecca Friedman were panelists.

## *“A Call to the Ancestors”—Uplifting Voices to Share the Rich Histories and Cultures of Coastal Communities*

Building upon efforts to understand risk and resilience in present-day marginalized Miami communities, the FIU-CfJ continued to delve deeper into the communities’ histories and cultures in respect to resilience. Taking a step beyond art and storytelling as means for promoting agency and voice, the FIU-CfJ acknowledged the roles of community ancestors in sharing knowledge and tools for practicing resilience. This element of the work acknowledged that the communities presently involved in these conversations about race, risk, and resilience are not only living and sharing their own experiences; their ancestors have gifted them with the capacity for resilience. Through mediums such as photography, spoken word, art, and storytelling, the FIU-CfJ curated spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds could engage with different cultures and traditions designed to give homage to the ancestors who learned before them, practiced resilience in shaping Miami, and went on to share that knowledge with them to help them carry that resilience forward.

The FIU CfJ has hosted 3 art exhibits focused on histories and cultures of Miami communities. “Place and Purpose: Art Transformation in Coconut Grove” is an exhibit that “celebrates the role of community as a creative space as well as a key driver behind a young city’s evolution.” FIU collaborated with the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance (HCAA) to exhibit “A Call to Our Ancestors: Rising Tides, Shifting Ground, and Displaced Bodies” at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex beginning in September 2023. This exhibit is a collection of photographs, documents, poems, songs, and art pieces that tell the story of the Lincoln Memorial Park Cemetery, an institution whose history reflects hatred and disinvestment that has occurred throughout history, as well as the resilience, achievement, and pride of those who worked to build and shape early Miami and the beauty and healing power of cultural/religious practices for transitioning from this life to death. Perhaps best summarized by curator Carl-Philippe Juste, “This project truly embodies the power of art and culture in sparking transformative conversations and fostering healing.” Although originally intended to end in November 2023, the exhibit has been extended and will remain open until March 2024 and is also now available online. This show was chosen as the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance’s Global Borderless Caribbean 2023 Art Basel offering, which is the only off-site, officially sanctioned Art Basel satellite space. The exhibit has received

# 10

**Community  
Storytelling  
Events**

# 6

**Solution  
Sessions**

# 4

**Art Exhibitions**

# 2

**Documentary  
Screenings**

attention from 6 separate print news outlets and was featured on local Miami television news.

The “A Call to Our Ancestors” exhibit has opened up new and interesting opportunities moving forward. HCAA, in conjunction with the exhibition, has begun hosting visiting artists/journalists and community storytelling events. The next phase of the exhibit involves having the exhibit travel to different venues around the country. The FIU-CfJ team is presently negotiating with the African American Research Library and Cultural Center in Broward County (AARLCC), one of the established partners of the Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab (WPHL), and they are currently in discussion with museums at HBCUs across the country.

Finally, “Bridge Deconstruction” is currently on exhibit until spring 2024 at the FIU Wolfsonian Museum. This public installation involving community- and student-submitted work was inspired by bridges in relation to investigating our political, social, and ethnographic experiences. Two additional exhibits, entitled “I am Little Haiti” and “Under a Simple Tree,” are scheduled for the final year.

Additionally, 3 documentaries have been completed to date. The first documentary is entitled “Allapattah Stories: En Nuestras Palabras” and is a collection of oral histories of small business owners in



Allapattah documented through the lens of the community. The documentary serves as part 1 of a two-part series. An in-person premiere of the documentary was held at Allapattah Branch Library’s Storytelling Garden in May of 2022, and it is currently available online with 577 views at the time of reporting. Part 2 of this documentary was completed in year 3 and premiered at the Tower Theater in Allapattah in November of 2023. This documentary portrays the history and resilience of Allapattah. While the documentary is not yet publicly available, the documentary ‘teaser’ has

garnered 156 views. The third documentary was a community storytelling documentary detailing the 2022 Goombay Festival festivities that took place in the West Grove/Little Bahamas neighborhood. This documentary is publicly available and has 278 views at the time of reporting.

Oral histories have been collected as part of the History Exchange aspect of the FIU-CfJ project. The History Exchange delves into strengthening, valuing, and preserving historical experiences from minority and vulnerable communities through transferring and preserving risk and resilience knowl-





edge. Over 40 oral histories were collected as part of the “Allapattah Stories” repository utilized to create the Allapattah documentaries. Overall, 25 oral histories have been collected from other Miami communities, with 6 of these histories collected at the History Exchange during the Goombay Festival in the Coconut Grove/Little Bahamas neighborhood. FIU-CfJ community partners have also been using these oral histories in their own reporting to solicit more advocacy for issues within their communities.

A total of 6 storytelling events were held in collaboration with community partners across neighborhoods to highlight how communities are responding to ongoing crises and the risk of future shock events. These events have included photography exhibitions, poetry readings, writing workshops, and the collection of oral histories. The final community storytelling events will take place in conjunction with the two HCAA art exhibitions and the final project programming in 2024.

The 6 oral histories collected from members of the Coconut Grove Community were transformed into 3 separate podcast episodes. A fourth podcast focused on the Goombay Festival history and celebration. All 4 podcasts are available to the public on the FIU-CfJ website, as well as major podcast streaming services.

3

Podcasts

1

History Exchange

1

Visiting Artist Panel

1

Co-sponsored Conference

## *Developing Transformative Activities for Youth*

Another major objective of the FIU-CfJ was to promote voice and agency within the next generation, both on and off campus. The FIU-CfJ team is proud of the transformative opportunities that they have built into the project for their students, with students being intentionally incorporated and intimately involved in each component of the project. Through their work on the project, students have been able to delve beyond academic and research skills and become involved in the community, enabling them to learn how to put their academic training to use in communities to achieve meaningful change. The FIU-CfJ has also applied this mindset to youth in the community by supporting youth fellows in learning how to advocate for their community.



The FIU-CfJ has supported assistantships for 12 undergraduate students. Students have been recruited from various academic programs to serve as interviewers and creative leads for the History Exchange podcasts, archivists, story mappers, newsletter developers, and more. The CfJ project team is discussing and anticipating hiring more undergraduate students to support the two final exhibitions that will occur in the summer of 2024. These students would serve as docents in the exhibition spaces, be trained to provide exhibit tours, and be encouraged to

create a public-facing product (e.g., blog post) based on their experience.

Undergraduate students have also provided support for the project in unanticipated ways. Through students sharing information about the FIU-CfJ and its exhibits with friends, FIU CAPLIN news—comprised of student newscasters-in-training—covered the exhibit's opening event and highlighted it on their news page.

Research fellowships have been provided for 8 predoctoral students, and \$144,000 in small grants funding have been provided for predoctoral students' projects—14 of which have been collaborative projects. Two of these predoctoral students have been working on the Neighborhood Studies report. Research fellowships have also been provided for 3 postdoctoral research associates. Postdocs have worked on a range of projects, including oral history interview collection and translation, neighborhood background reports, university course development, podcast creation, documentary material development, and community engagement activities. One of the postdocs, Dr. Sarah Molinari, has completed her fellowship with the FIU-CfJ and is now serving as a consultant for the neighborhood background reports and community engagement activities.

Regardless of academic level, involved students have acquired a wide range of knowledge and skills. The variety in the project components provided ample opportunity for students to gain training and practice across diverse methodologies for information collection, synthesis, and dissemination, such as conducting individual interviews, collecting oral histories, historical archiving, and story mapping. At the time of reporting, 1 undergraduate, 3 predoctoral, and 1 postdoctoral student have also had the opportunity to contribute to the development of peer-reviewed publications. Additionally, one predoctoral student participated in a conference panel this past year, and another student has submitted a conference panel proposal for the upcoming year.

Students have also been heavily involved in the communities. The FIU-CfJ offers a unique opportunity for students to go into the communities to learn about them and be involved in study activities, such as History Exchange events and solution sessions. Faculty have shared that students have been able to learn a significant amount about the histories of Miami's Indigenous and immigrant communities, their diverse and rich cultures and customs, and the marginalization and injustices faced by these groups throughout history and today. Faculty have also shared that students have been faced with and put effort into countering their biases, and that students even make a point to reach out to the communities on their own. While faculty provide mentorship regarding co-authorship, dissertations, and preparation for what comes next, opportunities for community involvement at this depth provide the chance for students to be mentored by community members as well.

The FIU-CfJ has found ways to incorporate the knowledge gained from working with the community into university coursework to benefit both students and the community. As previously mentioned, 3 college-level courses focused on community resiliency have been developed for FIU students, and planning is underway to launch a transdisciplinary, team-taught, graduate-level seminar course in collaboration with Allapattah CDC. The FIU-CfJ has held additional undergraduate-level seminar courses that require students to work with leaders and individuals within Miami's local neighborhoods. Student project topics have ranged from affordable housing to public space to landscape justice, and one student project about the Lemon City Cemetery has been slated to become a Washington Post article. These course projects have provided excellent opportunities for students to learn from community members and receive direct feedback from them in addition to their teachers.

**30**

**Students  
Enrolled in  
CfJ-supported  
Courses**

**10**

**Undergraduate  
Students**

**8**

**Pre-docs**

**3**

**Post-Docs**

## *A Call to Action--Planning for Resilience*

As the project team enters the last year of the grant term, they are taking what they have learned and built thus far and focusing their efforts on meaningfully and sustainably planning for community resilience moving forward. A major goal has been to work with the community to co-create actionable tools for resilience planning in a forum where everyone's voice is being heard equally. Other major components involved in supporting this work have been bringing in visiting experts to share knowledge in partnership with community members and FIU faculty and promoting civic engagement among neighborhood residents.

Solution sessions have been held within the local communities with the goal of brainstorming pre- and post-disaster and actionable resilience planning efforts with community members. At this point, 6 out of 12 solution sessions have been completed in collaboration with community partners, with individuals from 7 different communities attending the events, and individuals from 4 different commu-



nities attending every session. These solution sessions are topic-specific, with topics being determined from the results of the neighborhood studies (C1) in conjunction with community partner feedback. Solution sessions have also incorporated guest speakers for the educational portion of the meetings, including a community partners (WeCount! and GRACE) and a meteorologist along with speakers discussing extreme heat effects and challenges in community resilience. Dr. Imani Fredericks-Lowman, with Lowman Consultants LLC and Assistant Assistant Vice President of Academic Engagement and Student Success and Professor of Sociology at Florida Memorial University, has facilitated these sessions to guide the discussion, deliver tangible outcomes, and further facilitate a sustainable collaboratory.

Some of the tangible goals of these sessions are to evaluate how actionable items are that are being brought to the table and what real-time ideas and actionable items are. Equally valuable is simply getting communities into shared spaces and letting them learn more about each other's work. The intent and impact of having communities come together to develop solutions can be seen in the example of Allapattah and Overtown. A schism had existed for a while between these two neighborhoods, as Allapattah's boundaries have come to overlap with Overtown's, which has resulted in encroachment in Overtown. This boundary overlap causes stress and competition between the neighborhoods, especially as unemployment and gentrification rise, and this weakness has historically been exploited and leveraged by others. However, through attending a solution session on heat

stress that took place in Overtown, an Allapattah CDC leader was able to come together with leaders from Overtown, and they are developing a relationship with one another. The FIU-CfJ has supported efforts encouraging community leaders and communities to come together in these ways, because community cohesion is a key requirement for effective community-level organization—bringing these communities together and uniting them under a common goal will ultimately strengthen their initiatives.



During year 3, 8 experts were brought onto the project to share their knowledge with the project and communities, with each expert serving in a unique capacity akin to their expertise. Jessica Williams, Arthur Kennedy, and Malcolm Laredo provided their expertise on Lincoln Memorial Cemetery for the 'A Call to the Ancestors' exhibition. Dr. Monica Barra, Dr. Elisa Turner, Dr. Joanne Hippolyte (Supervisory Museum Curator at the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC), and Pulitzer Prize winners Dr. Marvin Dunn and Leonard Pitts, Jr. participated in panel discussions at community storytelling events.

### *Solidarity in Social Movements*

The FIU-CfJ has served to unify the communities with one another and with FIU through shared goals, shared responsibility, and mutual respect. The project team has built the project with intentionality to support and empower community members and develop meaningful collaborations. This process has incorporated true knowledge-sharing, with discussions occurring in bottom-up and top-down directions, allowing everyone involved to meet in the middle and talk with each other rather than at one another. This intentionality and investment in building relationships based in equity and acknowledging community expertise allowed space for people from all arenas to truly engage and develop strong collaborations.

### **Community-Building and Community-Bridging: Promoting Solidarity Within Communities**

Through community solution sessions and other FIU-CfJ efforts, many diverse organizations and community leaders have been brought together—opening the door for other opportunities, such as community organizations what would not normally engage with one another being able to come together and engage with one another in meaningful and productive ways. As Miami can be “siloe” into different neighborhoods, collaboration through the Commons for Justice project has allowed building of a “trusted messenger and trusted friend,” because “we’ve been able to make a closer relationship just because we’ve been in proximity with each other.” Similar to the aforementioned example of Overtown and Allapattah CDC, this increased cohesion has allowed communities to leave behind contentious behavior—such as being pitted against one another to fight for small amounts of money or resources—that reinforced division within the larger community. Now, community leaders can be observed attending one another’s events, working together to promote the effectiveness of their activities.

They are also teaching and learning from one another. Leaders from Catalyst Miami and Allapattah CDC first began interacting with one another through the FIU-CfJ solution sessions. After becoming closer-knit with Catalyst Miami and being able to learn from their methods, Allapattah CDC is now re-envisioning their youth advocacy Community Fellows Program. Allapattah CDC wants to restructure the program to merge the community's youth with adults so that all generations can learn from one another and work as one to advocate for their community. Having observed and learned from Catalyst Miami's programs and methods, Allapattah CDC believes that restructuring the program in this way will not only strengthen the mentorship and advocacy outcomes of the program but that it will also create a more sustainable model that will allow Allapattah to grow and maintain the program in the future.

## Bridging the Academic–Community Gap

The FIU-CfJ project team has achieved significant gains in building relationships within the community that have been truly positive and collaborative. Similar to many other academic research institutions, FIU's engagement of the community in research had historically been extractive, resulting in limited trust between the two. Through the FIU-CfJ, faculty have been working to reach beyond building trust to build relationships with community members that will be extended and maintained beyond the grant period. One faculty member shared that being able to build these deep relationships within the communities has been a major success of the project, and that the grant support was integral to accomplishing this. They explained that what matters most to the community members is consistency and being present within the community on a regular basis; funding

for the FIU-CfJ supported course buyouts for many faculty members, which allowed them to reinvest their course-planning time into being present within the community and attending community events.



Building these bridges has also afforded the FIU-CfJ the opportunity to achieve the many important outcomes detailed throughout this report alongside some of the most at-risk communities in Miami. Due to the collaboratory nature of the FIU-CfJ, the project has led many faculty and community members

to work together on projects outside of the grant, including conference presentations, the creation of college courses, and joint applications for new funding opportunities. One example is the development of the Allapattah Syllabus Resiliency Hub, which is an online resource hub that is being built from the neighborhood study but is specifically based on the desires of Allapattah and what resiliency looks like to them. The development of the transdisciplinary, team-taught, graduate-level seminar course in collaboration with Allapattah CDC is also being developed based on the organization's explicit data and resource needs and is intended to involve Allapattah CDC members as teachers and community historians. The project also has constructed many transdisciplinary bridges among faculty, with faculty within various schools working more intentionally together and promoting co-authorship, thus moving away from siloed behavior.

### *Imagining Next--Forging Knowledge and Agency*

As the project team thinks about next steps and moving forward beyond the grant term, they are placing their focus on fostering sustainable investment and meaningful collaboratory practices within the communities they have been working with. More specifically, they are now moving into evaluating how their activities have been able to generate deeper conversation within communities and how they have been able to meaningfully connect with them to further develop and deepen their relationships. One example of this is faculty expressing interest in continuing collaborative work with the Little Haiti Cultural Complex, with them explaining that "we are in these spaces, we need to learn how to work with each other."

For more information about the Florida International University Commons for Justice (FIU CfJ) project, including partnership opportunities, please contact:

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