



2013

**GLOBAL DETROIT**  
Annual Report





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## Letter from the Chair

Each week the headlines about comprehensive immigration reform shift—either passage is imminent or stalled for another year. While the U.S. Congress considers this important issue, Global Detroit continues to move forward in making our region a national leader in the emerging field of immigration as an economic development driver.

Regardless if and when federal immigration reform happens, local communities face the day-to-day issues and opportunities that immigration and immigrant integration raise. Global Detroit provides an answer and guide for those local strategies—tackling everything from how to retain international student talent, how to build collaborative integration networks, how to foster urban revitalization through immigrant entrepreneurship, and how to integrate communities.

While Global Detroit has been fortunate to have a dynamic leader in our Director Steve Tobocman, we have also benefitted from the collective wisdom, experience, and hard work of a phenomenal board of directors – a group of seasoned and diverse individuals who each bring value and expertise to the organization. I want to thank each of them for their service and insight.

With your support, Global Detroit can continue to lead this emerging field of integration work and alter the trajectory of our region so that we are positioned to be the global economic leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that we were in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Perhaps no strategy offers as much potential to our region than one that embraces, recruits, and capitalizes on the international talent, international trade, and the hard work, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit of our region's immigrants.

Karen Phillippi  
Board Chair

# Letter from Executive Director

2013 proved another strong year of growth and development for Global Detroit and for making Metro Detroit a national leader in working with its immigrant and international community to foster job growth and economic development.

Over the course of the year, ProsperUS Detroit graduated the first 140 low-income, African-American, Latino, and immigrant entrepreneurs in Detroit neighborhoods through its rigorous 12-week business planning course. Welcoming Michigan was recognized by the White House as one of 10 Champions of Change for immigrant integration. Welcome Mat Detroit launched its revamped searchable database of over 350 integration service providers and arts/cultural organizations. The Global Talent Retention Initiative expanded to over 25 Michigan colleges and universities, signed up over 50 Global Opportunity employers, and released a first-of-its-kind data report suggesting that international students use their OPT from their student visa to stay and work. Additionally, they choose Michigan at rates similar to in-state students and three times those of out-of-state students. Upwardly Global made Michigan the fourth state to have a licensing guide for common professions for immigrants and refugees, and began to work with skilled immigrants residing here to place them into unmet talent needs.

Beyond the successes of our partners, Global Detroit hosted the first Global Great Lakes Network convening in Detroit, bringing together leaders from over a dozen Midwest metropolitan initiatives that focus on immigration as an economic development strategy. The groups decided to continue the conversation about building a network and a second convening is scheduled for Pittsburgh in June 2014. In addition to co-authoring the GTRI international student report, Global Detroit worked with Kurt Metzger to issue the most comprehensive analysis of Metro Detroit's foreign-born, including over 100 maps of the foreign-born by national origin.

Finally, 2013 was marked by new partnerships, as well as national recognition of our work. We are grateful to the 25 Michigan companies that met with us one-on-one to discuss collaborative opportunities. We were asked to present our work at the National Immigration Integration Conference, as well as the Transatlantic Council on Migration (at a London convening!) and the National League of Cities. Global Detroit received mention in the Wall Street Journal, the Atlantic, Money Magazine, Fiscal Times, Boston Globe, and ABC News.com, as well as over two dozen local media stories.

2014 promises to be an even more exciting year. With Governor Snyder announcing a Michigan Office for New Americans, as well as a proposal for Detroit-based special visas for 50,000 skilled immigrants, national attention is again turning towards our region. We are excited about the creation of the first Immigration Task Force by the Detroit City Council, the announcement of the One Macomb initiative by Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel, as well as the efforts of Sterling Heights, Macomb County, and Hamtramck to join the Welcoming Cities and Counties program (giving Michigan the highest total of localities participating in this endeavor). In addition to continued success of our launched programs, we look forward to launching an official Cultural Ambassadors program. Moreover, we are excited for the Second Convening of the Global Great Lakes Network and have been expanding our relationships with a number of communities working on immigration economic development.

I hope that you will join us in one of these many capacities to make our region a national leader at welcoming immigrants and capitalizing on the economic development opportunity they present.

Steve Tobocman  
Director



## GTRI helps graduate student stay in Michigan after graduation



Before moving from China to become a graduate student at Michigan State

University, **SKYIN (XIAOYU) YIN** learned that the nearby city of Lansing was the State Capitol. She figured out what a Spartan was. And she learned that her fellow classmates were really into football. Yet, even with her preparation, she felt overwhelmed. "The cities I am familiar with are big cities and are much larger than Lansing, but the university I attended had a small campus – very different from Michigan State. It was difficult at first," she said.

GTRI, along with several other groups which cater to the needs of international students quickly helped Skyin make friends and professional connections. After graduating last spring and obtaining a student visa, she used those relationships to secure a job at Message Makers, an award-winning global event planning, video production, and instructional design company in Lansing.

Thanks to organizations such as GTRI, Skyin was able to see that Michigan is a good place to start her career and settle down. "I came to the United States to see a different world," said Skyin. "I'm glad Michigan is what I found."

## GTRI expands program statewide

This year, the Michigan Global Talent Retention Initiative (GTRI), the nation's first international student retention program really came into being. With an additional \$450,000 in funding from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), GTRI expanded its staff and took its programming statewide. GTRI now partners with 27 Michigan colleges and universities and is thus accessible by the vast majority of the state's 27,000 international students.

The new GTRI Marketing Director completed the organization's branding process. It enhanced our social media and other critical online efforts, rebuilt the website, created a widely acclaimed promotional video and, with the assistance of Global Detroit staff, released our long-awaited report on international students working in Michigan. The report revealed some startling realities about Michigan's international student talent pool—international students using the Optional Practical Training (OPT) portion of their student visa (a common pathway for international students to enter the U.S. workforce) choose Michigan over other U.S. states at rates similar to in-state students and three times the rate of out-of-state students. They are three times as likely to be majoring in a STEM field and close to 80 percent of those staying have graduate degrees, making these students among the most talented new economy workers on the globe.

The Manager of Employer Relations took the **Global Opportunity (GO) employer program** to another level by creating a strategic business plan, bringing new strategic partners on board, and expanding its membership to over 60 companies. GO Employers agree to consider all applicants for open jobs and refuse to dismiss viable candidates solely because of their citizenship. They are willing to hire international students who do not require sponsorship for internships and full-time employment. GO Employers also are willing to consider sponsoring foreign nationals for employer sponsored work visas (i.e. H-1B). GTRI also developed the concept for a student registry. The goal of the registry is to allow participating employers to search for unmet positions within a talent pool of international students whose resumes reside within the GTRI registry. It will increase efficiency for GO employers and candidates to connect.

In 2013 more than 750 international students attended conferences at Michigan State University, University of Michigan, Grand Valley State University, Michigan Technological University, and Wayne State University. Three additional conferences are planned for early 2014.

We hope to continue our outreach to more students in 2014 and to launch implementation of the student registry for the GOemployer program.

## ProsperUS Detroit grows and expands in 2013

2013 was a productive year for ProsperUS Detroit, the Global Detroit created program designed to empower low-income immigrants, African-Americans, and other residents in Detroit neighborhoods through micro-entrepreneurship. Modeled on the Neighborhood Development Center of Minneapolis/St. Paul, ProsperUS Detroit provides training, technical assistance and micro-loans to new entrepreneurs. We provided capacity building grants to community partners, organized summits, and mini-grants to increase the capacity of our community partners.

ProsperUS Detroit trained over 100 Detroiters through its rigorous 12-session business planning program by partnering with five community partners to offer the Entrepreneur Training Program in three neighborhoods. Of the thirteen (13) cohorts, over 85 percent successfully complete the training with 50 entrepreneurs graduating in the early spring; and 62 entrepreneurs graduating in January 2014.

ProsperUS Detroit launched two wrap-around programs designed to support graduates of the Entrepreneur Training Program in 2013. The **Technical Assistance (TA) Program**, overseen by Micro-Loan Officer Matthew Bihun, has a growing number of TA. To date, ten graduates applied for TA and seven were approved.

The **Micro Lending Program** now has a set of bylaws and a lending committee, which has received thirteen loan inquiries and two loan applications since its July inception.

ProsperUS Detroit awarded \$34,800 in capacity building grants to three community partners for numerous projects used to support their local entrepreneurs. These included a holiday pop-up retail event in the North End, the development of a business studio in the North End, a neighborhood enterprise development hub at Focus: HOPE, and entrepreneurial field trips for graduates in Cody-Rouge.

ProsperUS Detroit expanded in 2013 by gaining new community partners and, at the request of two community organizations, are moving into two new neighborhoods the Lower East Side and Grandmont Rosedale in 2014. This is in addition to providing services in Southwest Detroit, the Northend/Woodward Central and Cody Rouge communities.

Our future looks bright as we strive to contribute to the future of Detroit's success by providing opportunities to entrepreneurs in Detroit's neighborhoods.

## Second Generation Immigrant opens new Tequila Business



**TONY LOPEZ** has been working in his family's tire shop, Lopez Tires, since he was a kid, and now he owns it. This lifetime entrepreneur not only runs Lopez Tires but also owns and runs Cabestro Tequila.

His family grows agave in Jalisco, distills the tequila, and they bottle and distribute it in Detroit.

**CABESTRO TEQUILA** has received national awards and is the only Detroit Tequila company we know of!

This serious business man now calls his ProsperUS peers his family.



**SANDRA DE LA FUENTE** – Valeria's Magic Touch



**NANA DANSOA** - Dansoa Marketing and Design Firm LLC

## Upwardly Global Participant succeeds in landing job

*"I would not be here without the help of Upwardly Global. It was the only organization I found that helps professional people suffering from underemployment," said Amr. "When I meet [other immigrants] and they ask me how to get back to work in this country, I say 'the problem is not you, it's your resume.'"*



**AMR** arrived in the United States from Syria in December 2012.

Despite a strong skillset and seven years of experience in his home country, he spent his first nine months seeking employment with no results. He learned about Upwardly Global through ACCESS and joined the online training program in September 2013 where we worked with him on targeting alternative positions and revising his resume. He also practiced interviewing with volunteers at the Accenture office in Southfield. In January, Amr was hired as an IT Team Leader at a growing employer in Plymouth, Michigan where he is happy to again be working in his field and filling an in-demand position within the southeast Michigan economy.

## Upwardly Global produces 11 licensing guides for Michigan's new Americans

*I*n 2013 Global Detroit provided Upwardly Global with data on professional positions in demand within the state of Michigan, as well as provided key connections with State of Michigan personnel within Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). Information gleaned from the data and from these important connections resulted in the development of 11 online Licensing Guides for skilled immigrants and refugees who had obtained their education and skills abroad. The guides were launched in June on the Upwardly Global website and attracted nearly 1,000 visits in the first two months alone, with a total of 3,000 visitors in 2013. Upwardly Global has never received better cooperation from a state government than for its efforts in Michigan.

Upwardly Global unveiled the new Licensing Guides to relevant agencies in southeast Michigan and helped to facilitate a corporate outreach breakfast at the Detroit Chamber where its work was presented to several employers as part of Global Detroit's corporate engagement strategy.

In addition to the development of the 11 licensing guides, Upwardly Global developed a comprehensive online employment training program where it is coaching more than 25 skilled immigrant and refugee job seekers in Michigan who have completed the program. Upwardly Global provided assistance with resume and cover letter development, interview preparation, and network building, including an information session and training in Troy with more than 40 immigrant, refugee, and workforce agency staff in attendance at Lutheran Social Services of Michigan offices.

Upwardly Global hopes to expand these services significantly in 2014 and will continue our valuable partnership with Accenture whose employees volunteer for mock interview and networking practice with program participants.

## Welcome Mat Detroit launches website and database in 2013

In September, The Welcome Mat Detroit launched a robust, user-friendly website with an extensive database which can be searched by culture, language, service, and geographic location. The database features more than 450 entries which include immigrant services and ethnic organizations. We believe the database is the first of its kind in the nation, and certainly the most comprehensive guide ever to be developed in Michigan.

The website incorporates Google Translate technology making it accessible in more 50 languages. It also displays a comprehensive calendar of ethnic cultural and artistic events throughout the metropolitan area.

In addition to the database, the website includes up-to-date information on issues important to those organizations that provide services to the immigrant population. They include:

- An alphabetical listing of updated ESOL providers
- A listing of ESOL providers arranged according to class location
- An up-to-date listing of statewide immigration legal services providers arranged by type of service
- Tips on how to avoid the unauthorized practice of immigration law
- Tips on how to wisely select an immigration legal provider or lawyer
- An up-to-date listing of citizenship classes
- Maps with locations of services

Welcome Mat continues its work to promote collaboration among nonprofit service providers, creating three committees to focus on critical areas of need: legal, ESOL and employment services. The committees have met regularly throughout 2013 to tackle important issues related to gaps in service to the region's immigrant population. Welcome Mat conducted two networking meetings which brought the organizations together to encourage networking and collaboration.

Working with the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit to offer office space, as well as support services to small ethnic nonprofit organizations, Welcome Mat attracted two organizations to move to the Midtown location this past year, with more organizations showing signs of interest.

Welcome Mat looks forward to 2014 as it continues to expand the website's database to include ethnic religious services and sports groups. Welcome Mat is planning quarterly networking meetings to showcase topics of interest, including a panel with the City Council of Detroit and the new director of Governor Snyder's Office of New Americans. It will also continue providing workshops on best practices for all of our hardworking organizations in the Welcome Mat Detroit Network.



## Welcome Mat website instrumental with One Macomb efforts

One Macomb is an initiative designed to promote multiculturalism and inclusiveness, strengthen Macomb County's economy by supporting its multicultural entrepreneurs and by bringing internationally—based business into the County. It is also committed to identifying and implementing multiculturalism and inclusiveness "best practices" in all Macomb County government policies and practices.

After meeting with Welcome Mat Director Mary Lane, Assistant County Executive Pamela Lavers worked with the OneMacomb Committee to begin an outreach to organizations on the Welcome Mat website and make them aware of the One Macomb initiative. "It's been a great resource," said Lavers. "We're making valuable connections and developing significant collaborations which can help us in our work. We share the word about the Welcome Mat with everyone."

She said they're working with the Welcome Mat members to provide information on government services, as well as share other important information with these organizations.

Lavers and her committee are planning a Welcoming Center for New Americans. She said the Welcome Mat has provided a sound format for them to follow as they move forward with their work.

## Welcoming Michigan builds bridges



Welcoming Michigan's efforts has resulted in building mutual respect among foreign-born and U.S.-born residents. Here is what some of the program's participants are saying.

**GETTING INVOLVED** – "I'd like the opportunity to be involved in more events like that and helping our newer residents find their way in this land of ours – and now theirs. I'd love to help in any way I can." ESL chat participant

**FOSTERING UNITY** – "I see the changes with people participating in Welcoming Michigan, where before I would think that many people only assisted their community members – if they were Filipino would mostly just service Filipino, or Asian or Chaldean or Arab and now I find that people involved are really interested in helping everyone that is an immigrant, not just their community or their culture." Ethnic Community Leader.

**FEELING WELCOMED:** "I just saw your billboard. I have never felt so affirmed and welcomed. Thank you for the work you are doing. It makes me feel like I belong here." Immigrant Community Member

## Welcoming Michigan expands and receives national recognition

2013 was a busy year for Welcoming Michigan as it continued to move communities toward mutual respect and cooperation among immigrants and longtime residents in southeastern and southwestern Michigan. From education sessions on immigration to a forum with local business leaders, Michiganders learned about the experiences of their immigrant neighbors and how immigrants contribute to local communities.

Welcoming Committees comprised of local leaders from diverse sectors were established in southwest Michigan's Van Buren County, as well as Sterling Heights, Hamtramck, and southwest Detroit's Chadsey Condon neighborhood in southeast Michigan. Leaders and volunteers planned and executed 70 community events for 3,500 attendees, bringing together immigrant residents and their neighbors at film screenings, dialogues, cooking classes, neighborhood clean-ups, and more.

In honor of National Welcoming Week, Governor Snyder issued a Welcoming Proclamation for the second year in a row, announced at a press conference in Lansing celebrating the unveiling of a new billboard declaring "When Michigan Welcomes Immigrants, Michigan Thrives." Welcoming Michigan celebrated the first "Welcoming Michigan Day at the Capitol" where state lawmakers had the chance to hear first-hand the inspiring stories of immigrants and how they were welcomed by U.S.-born Michiganders.

Cities and counties in Michigan are clamoring to be more welcoming with eight municipalities passing Welcoming Resolutions declaring their locality welcoming to immigrants and refugees. The City of Sterling Heights and Macomb County joined Welcoming America's **Welcoming Cities and Counties Initiative**, a cohort of 25 municipalities from across the country sharing ideas and resources for making their communities more immigrant-friendly.

2013 was truly an award-winning year for Welcoming Michigan. The project won the Arcus Center Regional Prize for Collaborative Social Justice Leadership and staff member Christine Sauv  was recognized as a **White House Champion of Change** for her work in immigrant integration. In December, three Welcoming Committee members also received Diversity Distinction Awards from the City of Sterling Heights.

Looking toward 2014, Welcoming Michigan is excited to move the needle and build more immigrant friendly communities.







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